

Denver  
Cummings

**THE  
RUDDER**



**OF THE METAPHORICAL SHIP OF THE ONE HOLY  
CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

**(PEDALION)**

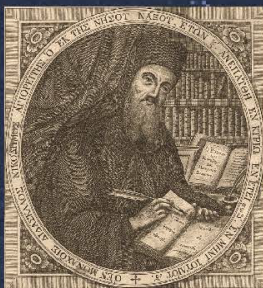
**VOLUME II**



## ***“The Seven Thunders Sounded Their Voices...”*** **- Revelation 10:4**

The Rudder (also called the “Pedalion” in Greek) is a compilation of all of the Holy Canons in the Orthodox church. It was compiled by Nicodemus the Hagiorite and Agapius the Monk of Mount Athos in the year 1800. The fifth edition of the Greek text was translated into English by Denver Cummings in 1957 and published by the Orthodox Christian Education Society of Chicago, Illinois. This extensive work includes the 85 Canons of the Holy Apostles, the Canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Canons of the Region Synods, and the Canons of the Holy Fathers of the Church, in addition to other instructions and forms used within the Church. This new edition of The Rudder is divided into two volumes and replicates the complete material and formatting of the 1957 version published in English, including the full introduction and related editor commentaries added throughout the book from the Orthodox Christian Education Society. Volume I contains the Canons of the Apostles and Seven Ecumenical Councils, while this book in the series, Volume II, includes the Canons of the Regional Synods and Canons of the Holy Fathers of the Church.

The Cover artwork of the book is based on iconography used in the Orthodox Church showing the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as a ship at sea. Jesus Christ is often depicted as the navigator of the ship. The sea is symbolic of our journey through life, with the rudder of the ship represented by the Holy Canons of the church. These canons are the critical navigation instruments to keep the Church on course and safe from corruption and danger through the treacherous rough seas of heresy and assure us that by staying the course, the gates of hell will never prevail against the Church-Bride. She who is the Church of the Seven Ecumenical Councils – the ‘Seven Thunders’ (Rev 11) defending the birth of the man child (Rev 12) – the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.



Nicodemus the Hagiorite (also referred to as Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain) is a saint of the Eastern Orthodox Church. He was tonsured an Orthodox Christian monk at the Dionysiou monastery of Mount Athos who was also the co-author of THE RUDDER. Nicodemus was also known as a theologian, philosopher, and writer of liturgical poetry and author of other famous works such as The Philokalia. Born in Naxos, Greece in 1749, he reposed in the year 1809 and was canonized as a Saint by the Orthodox Church in 1955. His feast day is celebrated on July 14.



**The Rudder (Pedalion) – Vol. II**  
**Translated by Denver Cummings**  
**Eastern Light Publishing, LLC.**  
**ISBN: 978-1-949940-23-7**

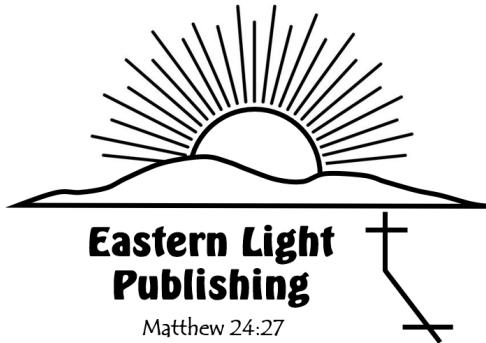
# THE RUDDER

(PEDALION) – VOLUME II

---

OF THE METAPHORICAL SHIP OF THE ONE  
HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH

by Denver Cummings



Eastern Light Publishing  
Sheridan, WY

Originally published in 1957 the Orthodox Christian Education Society. 1956 Henderson Street, Chicago, IL Translated by Denver Cummings from the Greek Pedalion 1908 version for the Orthodox Christian Education Society.

Copyright © 2023 by Jonathan Photius on limited portions of this translated work, such as the modern English language syntax edits to some of the footnotes, errata fixes and grammatical corrections, and interior design and cover artwork. All rights reserved.

Eastern Light Publishing, LLC.  
30 N. Gould Street, Suite 2302  
Sheridan, WY/82801  
[www.easternlightpublishing.com](http://www.easternlightpublishing.com)  
Email: [info@easternlightpublishing.com](mailto:info@easternlightpublishing.com)

The Rudder (Pedalion) – Volume 2/Denver Cummings  
ISBN 978-1-949940-23-7 (Paperback)  
ISBN 978-1-949940-24-4 (Hardcover)



# Contents

EDITOR'S FORWARD.....	9
CANONS OF THE REGIONAL SYNODS.....	1
CONCERNING THE SO-CALLED FIRST AND SECOND COUNCIL.....	1
CONCERNING THE COUNCIL HELD IN THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY WISDOM .....	25
CONCERNING THE COUNCIL HELD IN CARTHAGE IN THE TIME OF CYPRIAN.....	35
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN ANCYRA .....	41
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN NEOCAESAREA ....	61
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN GANGRA.....	77
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN ANTIOCH.....	91
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL HOLY COUNCIL HELD IN LAODICEA .....	111
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN SARDICA.....	141
CONCERNING THE REGIONAL HOLY COUNCIL HELD THE SECOND TIME IN CONSTANTINOPLE.....	165
CONCERNING THE HOLY REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN CARTHAGE .....	167
BEGINNING OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANONS OF THE HOLY FATHERS.....	283

CONCERNING SAINT DIONYSIUS THE ALEXANDRIAN .....	283
CONCERNING ST. GREGORY OF NEOCAESAREA.....	297
CONCERNING THE MARTYR PETER OF ALEXANDRIA .....	313
CONCERNING ATHANASUS THE GREAT.....	333
CONCERNING ST. BASIL THE GREAT .....	347
CONCERNING SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA.....	445
CONCERNING SAINT GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN .....	463
CONCERNING ST. AMPHILOCHIUS.....	465
CONCERNING TIMOTHY OF ALEXANDRIA .....	471
CONCERNING THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA .....	487
CONCERNING DIVINE CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA .....	501
CONCERNING ST. GENNADIUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.....	509
CONCERNING ST. JOHN THE FASTER.....	515
CONCERNING ST. TARASIIUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE .....	539
CONCERNING ST. NICEPHORUS THE CONFESSOR .....	549
CONCISE AND ACCURATE INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGES.....	565
FORMS OF SOME LETTERS .....	591
IAMBOI.....	599



THE  
RUDDER

by

D. CUMMINGS

*"Wisdom has built her house,  
she has hewn out her seven pillars"*

—Proverbs 9:1

*"The words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried in fire, proved to  
the earth, purified seven times over."*

—Psalm 12:6

*"And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he  
had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven  
thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a  
voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven  
thunders uttered, and write them not"*

—Revelation 10:3-4





## EDITOR'S FORWARD

This new version of the 1957 English Translation of *The Rudder/Pedalion* is now available in two volumes (Vol. I and II) for the benefit of English-speaking clergy and those students entering Orthodox Christian seminaries in the United States, and for clergy and students around the world. It is a useful resource to aid in the study and understanding of the historical canons of the Holy Orthodox church. It can also be used as a research tool for clergy working with their bishops to interpret and apply the proper canons to the current issues of the day within their own churches. The Rudder is NOT intended for just anyone (i.e. the laity) to read and woefully misinterpret and misapply for their own use, especially without ecclesiastical supervision, causing more harm and damage in one's spiritual development and journey in the faith.

This two-volume set contains (almost) all of the original content from the 1957 translation by Denver Cummings and the editors of the *Orthodox Christian Education Society* publishing company, based out of Chicago, IL until the mid 1980s. Some will ask why I decided to proceed with a reprint including all of the original content. First of all it was to give proper honor to the original editors of this publisher, like Kostas Andronis, who worked tirelessly to produce the very large first English translation of the Pedalion for our benefit. But some Orthodox have taken the material contained in this original translation and removed various sections, making it seem as if it was a "new revised translation" while not really changing the majority of the translated English text. The Rudder's 1957 English translation was even edited in PDF copies to the point that it looks more like the public release of a top-secret national security document with blacked out sections covering up the missing and removed content, which the revisionists felt polluted the Pedalion as they even cited the additional commentary as "dangerous" for reasons explained below. We know for certain that the editors of the Orthodox Christian Education Society frequently translated and produced many works by a Greek nineteenth-century philosopher and theologian Apostolos Makrakis. And it was only these same editors who occasionally inserted commentary and some advertisements to some of the reprinted books through out the 1957 translation of *The Rudder*.

These additions were often to be looked on unfavorably by some Orthodox given the controversy surrounding Makrakis and his attacks on the Holy Synod, who then tried to silence him. However, it is incorrect to assume, as it is claimed, that the 1957 version of *The Rudder* was actually compiled by

Makrakis and edited with his own footnotes and additions. This is simply not the case. Any additions were clearly noted by the editor's comments ("By the Editors", or "From the Editors", etc). This edited English translation by D. Cummings was primarily based on the 1908 Greek edition and all of the footnotes included therein. But, for those uncomfortable with the additional commentary should not be worried with the restored content. I have designed to book such that the reader is left on their own to decide to examine the additional commentary or to simply skip over these sections. I have painstakingly identified and clearly marked these sections with greyed out boxes surrounding the sections to easily identify them for the reader. In some of these sections, the editors merely included their own commentary on a particular canon, while other times they included related theological works from Makrakis to provide additional insight on a canon, or they drew inspiration from other Greek authors like Abba Aristarchus. However, it should be noted that the publisher did also include some advertisements for some of their other works and how to purchase them. I have removed all of these sections as this material no longer seemed applicable today and I felt that content was rather outdated. Regardless, it is left to the reader to decide if they find the related material to a particular canon useful and edifying, or to simply ignore it.

The sacred Canons are why the Orthodox Church has maintained the purity of the ancient faith through the decrees of the seven Ecumenical Councils and guidance by the Holy Apostles and other Fathers of the Church. These seven councils, and the canons resulting from the councils, are most certainly the *Seven Thunders* and *Seven Pillars* spoken of in the scriptures. These are explained to us by saintly men such as Fr Daniel Sysoev (see his work – *Explanation of the Apocalypse, Rev ch. 10*). These seven councils, and their decrees or "thunders" have guided our mother church, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the *ark* or *ship* of our salvation. This ark, the Bride of Christ, holds steadfast to this day the defense of the true nature and identity of the God-Man. But a *ship* without a *rudder* is doomed to fail, and wander aimlessly in the moral darkness that exists in our world today. We see the results of the rejection and misapplication of the canons today which led to the creation of thousands of other denominations of Christianity, resulting in a darkened and obscured view of our *Sun*, and a *moon* that does not shed its light upon the world, as the *stars* (leaders and bishops) meant to guide us through the rough seas and moral darkness of this world have fallen out of favor in these churches, resulting in the power and authority of their kingdom shaken to their very foundation and core (Matthew 24:29). The Holy Canons are meant to be our navigation instruments used to help us steer and keep the church on course. Without them we would surely become just another "denomination."

May we stay the course. And may the Lord guide you in our study and application of the Holy Canons as you shepherd your flocks within the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church – the Ark of our Salvation! Amen!

Jonathan Photius  
Eastern Light Publishing, LLC  
2/19/23



# CANONS OF THE REGIONAL SYNODS

---

## CONCERNING THE SO-CALLED FIRST AND SECOND COUNCIL

### PROLEGOMENA

This Council is given this title by Zonaras, Balsamon, Blastaris, and others. The great and holy First-and-Second Council, which was held in Constantinople in the all-venerable temple of the holy Apostles,<sup>1</sup> was assembled in the time of Emperor Michael, the son of Theophilus, and of Bardas Caesar, his uncle on his mother's side, in A.D. 861.<sup>2</sup> It was attended by three hundred and eighteen Fathers, among whom<sup>3</sup> the most distinguished were: Most holy Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, who had been elevated anew to the throne of Constantinople at that time after divine Ignatius had been exiled to Mitylene, by force and power of Caesar Bardas; and the legates, or deputies, of Pope Nicholas, namely, Rodoald of Porto and Zacharias of Anagnoea, who were then in Constantinople on a mission against the iconomachists.<sup>4</sup> The reason why it is called the First-

---

<sup>1</sup> Dositheus (page 702 of the Dodecabiblus), I know not how, asserts that this Council was held in the temple of Holy Wisdom (usually, but improperly, called St. Sophia in English). But perhaps it is either an oversight, or perhaps this Council met first in the temple of Holy Wisdom, but the second time in the temple of the holy Apostles. Or it may be that it is simply a typographical error, on that same page where there is obviously and indisputably a typographical error saying, "Fifth and Second," instead of "First-and-Second so-called Council." And see this corrected on page 728 of the same Dodecabiblus.

<sup>2</sup> That is the year in which Dositheus says that it was held (*ibid.*). But Blastaris says in the year 863. Illustrious Theotokes, however, agrees with Dositheus (page 11 of the second volume of the Octateuch concerning reporters).

<sup>3</sup> Dositheus says that this was the number present.

<sup>4</sup> There were two reasons, says Dositheus (page 702 in the Dodecabiblus), why the present Council was held: either (as some assert) the fact that after Bardas had exiled divine Ignatius because the latter refused to administer communion to him on the day of Theophany, on the ground that he had thrust his wife away and was suspected of fornicating with his sister-in-law,

and-Second Council is, according to Zonaras, Balsamon, Blastaris, and Milias (p. 920 of the second volume of the Conciliar Records) as follows. There was held a first convention of this Council,<sup>5</sup> and after the Orthodox participants engaged in a discussion with the heterodox participants (perhaps these were the remnants that had remained from the iconomachists, as we have said), and the Orthodox members won and the heterodox were defeated, it was decided to keep a written record of everything that had been asserted in the Council, in order that it might remain certain and sure. But the heretics, being discomfited averse to having these records preserved, lest they be seen to have been defeated, and lest in consequence they be expelled from the Church and the congregation of the faithful, made such a disturbance and fight, even drawing knives and engaging in murderous assaults, that the first convention was dissolved without any definition and result being committed to writing. After some time had passed, a second convention of the same Council, and again there was a discussion of the Orthodox participants with the heretics concerning the same subjects; and at this meeting the dogmas asserted concerning belief were written up. Hence, this Council having on this account been properly and truly but one, it was styled the First-and-Second because of the circumstance of its having held a first and a second convention. At its second convention the present seventeen Canons were promulgated, which are essential to the decorum and regulation of the Church, being corroborated and confirmed by the Nomocanon of Photius, by the interpreters of the Canons, and by the whole Church. Note, however, that in some manuscript codices there are thirty Canons bearing an inscription in the name of the present Council: but we have interpreted only those recognized by the Church and interpreted by the exegetes; as for the others, we have left them out on the ground that the Church does not recognize them.<sup>6</sup> The present Council has been assigned by all commentators a place

---

he forcibly and domineeringly elevated to the throne of Constantinople most wise Photius, who was Chief Secretary (or, as the Greek language of that period has it from the Latin, Protosecretus or Protosicrites). The supporters of Bardas persuaded the legates of Pope Nicholas, who had been sent there on a mission against the iconomachists, to convoke and assemble the present Council, and indeed bringing Ignatius from Mitylene, they deposed him in his presence. Hence Balsamon too says that this Council acted against Ignatius; and so does Nicetas David the Paphlagonian who wrote the biography of Ignatius. Or (as others insist) the fact that in order to exterminate the iconomachists or to get rid of them entirely, and in order to put an end to the schism which had occurred in the Church on account of the two Patriarchs Ignatius and Photius, Emperor Michael sent magistrates to Rome with gifts and brought the legates of the Pope. But after the Council ended, Emperor Michael sent two Tomes to Pope Nicholas — one containing the transactions concerning the holy icon, the other containing the deposition of Ignatius. At the same time it is to be remarked that he also sent letters through Leo the Secretary (or Asecrites), as plainly to be seen from the tenth letter of Nicholas, to be found on page 486 of the sixth volume of the minutes published by Vinius. But Cave is not right in stating that Adrian was Pope at the time of this Council; for Nicholas was Pope, as it is plain from the second letter of Nicholas to Michael, to be found on page 489 of the said volume, and from the seventh, to be found on page 495.

<sup>5</sup> In its first convention Ignatius was deposed in his presence, and the throne of Constantinople was confirmed to Photius, according to what is said by Cedrinus in the sixth volume of the said minutes, and by Zonaras (page 162 of the second volume of his *Chronicles*), and by Pope Nicholas (tenth letter to the Patriarchs of the East. See also page 486 of the sixth volume of the minutes above mentioned).

<sup>6</sup> Note that three Councils were held in the days of St. Photius. The first one was the present Council; the second one was the Council held in the year 869 against Photius himself; and the third one was the Council which convened in 879 in behalf of Photius and concerning which

preceding the other local Councils held previously to this one, either because of its having been a large one and one more numerous attended than were those, or rather because it followed immediately in the wake of Seventh Ecum. Council both in respect of the date and in that it was convoked against the same iconomachists as those against whom that one was convoked, and, in a way, this Council was, in that respect, a continuation or successor of that one.<sup>7</sup>

---

we shall have something to say separately further on. So those authors erred, who, without having duly examined the matter, called the Council held against Photius the first-and-second or said that this First-and-Second Council was held in the year 868, or 869, which is the year assigned by those who supposed that these two distinct Councils were one and the same as that held against Photius. For the First-and-Second Council was assembled, as we have said, during the reign of Emperor Michael in the second year of Basil the Macedonian. At this Council 318 Fathers were present, but at the former only 102. According to the librarian (or *bibliothecarius*) Anastasius (page 713 of the *Dodecabilus* of Dositheus) no minutes of this one are extant, whereas of the former Council ten Acts have been preserved. The present Council was held in the time of Pope Nicholas, whereas the former was held in the time of Adrian II. This Council issued seventeen Canons; the former, fourteen, all of which are different from those of the present seventeen. The present Council is called only the Great First-and-Second Council, whereas the former, though unreasonably, was magnified by being dubbed the Eighth Ecumenical. The present Council was sanctioned and confirmed by one which convened in Holy Wisdom (improperly called St. Sophia in English); whereas the former and its proceedings were so utterly invalidated that it was ruled that it should stand rescinded and repudiated and not be called a council at all or be numbered among the Councils. And in general it may be said that the present Council asserted nothing against Photius; wherefore its Canons are corroborated and referred to by Photius himself in his *Nomocanon* (something he would not have done if this Council had been against him or opposed to him): the former Council, on the other hand, though it was held illegally and factitiously and venomously against Photius, and blurted many blasphemies against his holiness, yet it did but one thing that was right, to wit, it affirmed and confirmed the Creed (or Symbol of the faith) uninnovated and without the addition (*of Filioque*). For it says that "the Definition of the same eighth Ecumenical Council was read, containing the Creed, and (containing) a confession that it recognizes the seven previous Ecumenical Councils, and anathematizes those whom these latter anathematized." And, a little later, when this was read, the Council declared: "All of us entertain these views; all of us cherish these beliefs." And please note that in these words the ancient (i.e., old established) tenets were corroborated, and concerning the addition no mention was made. Hence it is evident that Andrew of Rhodes lied when he said at the seventh convention of the Council held in Florence that the Council held against Photius knew about the Creed with the addition. As for the fact that our Greeks did not have the minutes of the pseudo-Council held against Photius, this was confessed by St. Mark of Ephesus in the sixth Act of the Council held in Florence. As for the fact that its minutes were destroyed, and that in their stead fraudulent and illegal ones were foisted in by the Latins, it is attested by Dositheus (p. 709 of the *Dodecabilus*). Note, however, that although we said hereinabove that the minutes of the First-and-Second Council are not extant, yet some persons assert that these were printed in Moutene in the year 1708 by Benedict Bachinius. And see the Note on page 77 of the first volume concerning authors of the Church by Cave.

<sup>7</sup> This First-and-Second Council is referred to by Nicetas in his biography of Ignatius, and by George Cedrinus (page 551 of the Paris edition).

## THE SEVENTEEN CANONS OF THE SO-CALLED FIRST- AND-SECOND COUNCIL HELD IN THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY APOSTLES INTERPRETED

### CANON I

*The building of monasteries, which is something so seemly and honorable, and rightly excogitated by our blissful and devout fathers of old, is seen to be done wrongly today. For some men, bestowing the name of monastery on their own property and domain, and promising God to sanctify this, have recorded themselves as owners of the consecrated lands and buildings, and have contrived to devise a way in which to devote them to a divine purpose in name only. For they do not blush to assume the same authority over them after the consecration as they could have exercised before this without overstepping their rights. And so much commercialized has the thing become that many of the lands and buildings consecrated are being sold openly by the consecrators themselves, inspiring beholders with amazement and indignation. And not only have they no regret for what they have done in appropriating to themselves authority over what was dedicated to God once, but they even fearlessly confer it upon others. For these reasons, then, the holy Council has decreed that no one shall have a right to build a monastery without the consent and approval of the bishop. With his knowledge and permission, after he has executed the necessary prayer, as was enjoined legislatively by the God-beloved fathers of olden times, they may build a monastery together with all its accessories, recording everything belonging thereto in a breve and depositing the latter in the archives of the bishopric; the consecrator having no right whatever to make himself an abbot, or anyone else in his stead, without the consent of the bishop. For if one is no longer able to exercise ownership over what he has given away to some other human being, how can one be conceded the right to appropriate the ownership of what he has sanctified and dedicated to God?*

(cc. IV, XXIV of the 4th; c. XLIX of the 6th; cc. XII, XIII, XVII, XIX of the 7th; c. II of Cyril.)

### Interpretation

In view of the fact that some persons who built monasteries and consecrated their goods to them, again after the consecration not only exercised ownership over them, but even sold them and made others their owners, on this account the present Canon decrees that every monastery shall be built with permission and approval of the local bishop, who is to execute the usual prayer when its foundations are being laid. It is to be recorded, moreover, in a breve,<sup>8</sup> or, more plainly speaking, in a small and brief codex, what goes to make up both the

---

<sup>8</sup> Breve is a Latin word derived from the verb *brevis*, from which comes the English verb abbreviate and which signifies to cut short. The signification of the word breve here is a brief and comprehensive memorandum or record, or what used to be called a codex, but is now commonly called a brief (or brief of title).

## CONCERNING THE COUNCIL HELD IN CARTHAGE IN THE TIME OF CYPRIAN

### PROLEGOMENA

There were three regional councils<sup>33</sup> that were held in Carthage, a city in Africa, with regard to rebaptism, in the time of St. Cyprian the martyr. One was in the year 255 A.C. and in the fourth year of the reign of Valerian and Gallienus,<sup>34</sup> at which council it was decreed that no one could be baptized outside of the Church, since the Church recognizes only one baptism; hence heretics who join the catholic Church have to be rebaptized. But persons that have been canonically baptized previously by the Orthodox and have later become heretics, must be accepted upon returning to Orthodoxy, not by baptism, as Novatian was asserting, but solely by prayer and imposition of hands (concerning which see also c. VIII of the 1st), as is plainly evident from the letter addressed to Quintus by Cyprian and numbered 71. A second council was held in the year 258 (or 256 according to Milius in the first volume of the Councils). It was attended by 71 bishops from Numidia and other parts of Africa, whom St. Cyprian had assembled in order that they might affirm with greater force and effect and confirm the decree concerning rebaptism which had been set forth at the preceding council. They first decreed that all those who were in the church, i.e., were clerics, and left the faith, were to be accepted upon their return only as laymen; and secondly, that the baptism performed by persons who were

---

<sup>33</sup> Note that the same characteristics or peculiarities that differentiate ecumenical councils from regional councils, differentiate conversely regional councils from ecumenical councils; and see these characteristics in Footnote 1 to the Prolegomena to the First Council. A regional council differs from a so-called diocesan synod, or council, in that a diocesan synod is one that is held by a Bishop, or a Metropolitan, or a Patriarch, together with his own Clerics only, without Bishops, according to Dositheus (page 1015 of the *Dodecabiblus*) whereas a regional council is one held when a Metropolitan or Patriarch convenes with his own bishops or metropolitans, respectively, in one place, and, generally speaking, when the bishops of one or two provinces assemble in order to consider ecclesiastical cases and questions which have come up. The designation regional councils includes also the councils decreed by the Canons to be held every year and to be attended by the bishops of each province, since they too are held by the bishops, according to Ap. c. XXXVII, and the concord of the other Canons therewith.

<sup>34</sup> One of the reasons why this Council was held is that a practice of rebaptism had begun in Africa previously pursuant to the doctrine of the Bishop of Carthage named Agrippinus, or, as others assert, that of Tertullian (as is plainly stated in the words which divine Cyprian wrote in the present canonical and conciliar letter to Jovian (a bishop) saying that "it is not a new Opinion and one recently established that we are citing, but one which has been tried and tested of yore with all accuracy by fathers who were our predecessors"). Another reason is that those times witnessed the appearance of Novatus, who, though a presbyter of Rome, became a schismatic because he taught that those who in time of persecution turned idolaters and afterwards repented were unacceptable as penitents unless they consented to be baptized from the start. Hence he was led by this cacodoxy of his to split off from the catholic Church, and a large part went with him. So there was some doubt concerning those persons, or, at any rate, as regarded those whom they baptized, as to whether they ought to be baptized later upon returning to the catholic Church. And on this account some bishops sent to divine Cyprian asking for a solution of the problem confronting them. So this Council, when assembled, decreed what is mentioned above. See Dositheus, page 53, of his *Dodecabiblus*.



heretics was so invalid that when converted they would have to be baptized in the Orthodox manner, but were not to be deemed to be baptized a second time, but to be considered as receiving baptism for the first time in their life, on the ground that they never had had any true baptism at all. But a third council was also held in Carthage in the same year by the same St. Cyprian, and was attended by 84 bishops. It sent the present conciliar canonical letter, which is the same as saying the present Canon, to Bishop Jovian and his fellow bishops, as Zonaras asserts (and as the letter itself plainly indicates), because this bishop had asked divine Cyprian whether the schismatic Novatians ought to be baptized upon joining the catholic Church. But as very learned Dositheus (p. 55 of the *Dodecabiblus*) says, it was because a letter had been sent by the above-mentioned second council to Pope Stephen of Rome revealing what it had decided and decreed concerning rebaptism; Stephen, convoking a council in Rome, invalidated the letter by decreeing that the baptism of heretics who baptize as the Church<sup>35</sup> does ought not to be in effect doubled, i.e., repeated, as Cyprian states in his letter to Pompeius Sabratensio, a bishop in Africa. Hence for the purpose of affording complete confirmation of the necessity of rebaptism and of the baptism performed once and twice as determined by conciliar decision, and with a view to the rejection of what had been decreed by Pope Stephen, this third Council was assembled by St. Cyprian, and it issued the present Canon. Note that although this Council ought to have been placed in front of all the Ecumenical Councils and other regional councils because of the fact that it preceded all of them in point of time, it has been placed after them in sequence here and the Ecumenical Councils have been introduced ahead of it, on the ground that the present Council, being a regional one, is of less importance and has less claim to a front seat. (See Dositheus concerning these councils on pp. 53 and 975 of the *Dodecabiblus*; and see p. 98 of the first volume of the conciliar records.) This same rule has been observed also with respect to the other regional councils which preceded the Ecumenical Councils, that of being placed, that is to say, after the Ecumenical Councils on account of their authoritativeness. As for St. Cyprian, who assembled these three Councils, he suffered martyrdom in the reign of Emperor Decius. The wonderful encomium which the theological tongue of St. Gregory bestowed upon his holiness suffices for his praise.

---

<sup>35</sup> Note that not only in Africa, but also in Asia it was the custom for persons baptized by heretics to be rebaptized. Hence this same Stephen himself wrote to them to give up rebaptism. But the Asiatics not only would not be persuaded to do so, but they even assembled a Council in Iconion in the year 258, with St. Firmilian acting as the exarch as bishop of Neocaesarea, which was attended by Fathers convened from Cappadocia, Lycia, Galatia, and other provinces of the East. They decreed that no sacred act of heretics should be accepted; but, on the contrary, their baptism and ordination, and every other mystery of theirs was decreed impossible and not worth talking about (Dositheus, page 55 of the *Dodecabiblus*). Note further that divine Dionysius of Alexandria, a contemporary of St. Cyprian, agreed with the opinion of the same Cyprian, to wit, that heretics must be rebaptized, just as Jerome says in his list of ecclesiastical authors. And see the Prolegomena of Dionysius.

## THE CANON OF THE THIRD HOLY REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN CARTHAGE IN THE TIME OF CYPRIAN INTERPRETED

### CANON

*While assembled in a parliament, dear brethren, we have read letters sent by you concerning those who are presumed among heretics or schismatics to have been baptized and who are joining the catholic Church, which is one single institution in which we are baptized and are regenerated, concerning which facts we are firmly convinced that you yourselves in doing so are ensuring the solidity of the catholic Church. Yet inasmuch as you are of the same communion with us and wished to inquire about this matter on account of a common love, we are moved to give you, and conjoin in doing so, not any recent opinion, nor one that has been only nowadays established, but, on the contrary, one which has been tried and tested with all accuracy and diligence of yore by our predecessors, and which has been observed by us. Ordaining<sup>36</sup> this also now, which we have been strongly and securely holding throughout time, we declare that no one can be baptized outside of the catholic Church, there being but one baptism, and this being existent only in the catholic Church. For it has been written: "They have forsaken me who am a fountain of living water, and have dug themselves shattered pits, which can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). And again the Holy Bible forewarningly says: "Keep away from another's water, and from another's fountain drink not" (Prov. 5:15) For the water must first be purified and sanctified by the priest, in order that it may be able to wipe away with its baptismal efficacy the sins of the person being baptized. Through Ezekiel the prophet the Lord says: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and will cleanse you; . . . and a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I bestow upon you" (Ezek. 36:25-26). But how can one who is unclean himself purify and sanctify water, when there is in him no Holy Spirit, and the Lord says in the Book of Numbers: "And whatsoever an unclean person toucheth shall be unclean" (Num. 19:22). How can anyone that has been unable to deposit his own sins outside the Church<sup>37</sup> manage in baptizing another person to let him have a remission of sins? But even the question itself which arises in baptism is a witness to the truth. For in saying to the one being baptized, "Believest thou in an everlasting life, and that thou shall receive a remission of sins?" we are saying nothing else than that it can be given in the catholic Church, but that among heretics where there is no Church it is impossible to receive a remission of sins. And for this reason the advocates of the heretics ought either to change the essence of the question for something else, or else give the truth a trial, unless they have something to add the Church to them, as a bonus. But it is necessary for anyone that has been baptized to be anointed, in order that, upon receiving the chrism, he may become a partaker of Christ. But no heretic can sanctify oil, seeing that he has neither an altar nor a church. Not a drop of chrism can exist among heretics. For it is obvious to you that no oil at all can be sanctified amongst them for use in connection with the Eucharist.<sup>38</sup> For we ought to be well aware, and not ignorant,*

<sup>36</sup> I.e., decreeing by vote.

<sup>37</sup> Meaning while outside of the Church.

<sup>38</sup> It would be more correct to say "for use" than "the Eucharist."

of the fact that it has been written: "let not the oil of a sinner anoint my head" (Ps. 140:6); which indeed even in olden times the Holy Spirit made known in psalms, lest anyone, having been sidetracked<sup>39</sup> and led astray from the straight way, be anointed by the heretics, who are opponents of Christ. But how shall one who is, not a priest, but a sacrilegist and sinner, pray for the one baptized, when the Bible says that "God heareth not sinners; but if anyone be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). Through the holy Church we can conceive a remission of sins.<sup>40</sup> But who can give what he has not himself? Or how can one do spiritual works who has become destitute of Holy Spirit? For this reason anyone joining the Church ought to become renewed, in order that within through the holy elements he become sanctified. For it is written: "Ye shall be holy, just as I myself am holy, saith the Lord" (Lev. 19:2; 20:7), in order that even one who has been duped by specious arguments may shed this very deception in true baptism in the true Church<sup>41</sup> when as a human being he comes to God and seeks a priest, but, having gone astray in error, stumbles upon a sacrilegist. For to sympathize with persons who have been baptized by heretics is tantamount to approving the baptism administered by heretics.<sup>42</sup> For one cannot conquer in part, or vanquish anyone partially. If he was able to baptize, he succeeded also in imparting the Holy Spirit. If he was unable, because, being outside, he had no Holy Spirit, he cannot baptize the next person. There being but one baptism, and there being but one Holy Spirit, there is also but one Church, founded by Christ our Lord upon (Peter the Apostle in the beginning saying) oneness and unity. And for this reason whatever they do is false and empty and vain, everything being counterfeit and unauthorized. For nothing that they do can be acceptable and desirable with God. In fact, the Lord calls them His foes and adversaries in the Gospels: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). And the blissful Apostle John, who kept the Lord's commandments, stated beforehand in his Epistle: "ye have heard that the antichrist shall come, but even now there have come to be many antichrists" (1 John 2:18). Hence we know that it is the last hour. They came out of us, but they were not of us. Hence we too ought to understand, and think, that enemies of the Lord, and those called antichrists, could not give grace to the Lord. And for this reason we who are with the Lord, and who are upholding the oneness and unity of the Lord, and after the measure of His worth imbuing<sup>43</sup> ourselves therewith, exercising His priesthood in the Church, we ought to disapprove and refuse and reject, and treat as profane, everything done by His opponents, that is, foes and antichrists. And to those who from error and crookedness come for<sup>44</sup> knowledge of the true and ecclesiastic faith we ought to give freely the mystery of divine power, of unity as well as of faith, and of truth.

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps the Greek word here, say the authors, is *siniastheis*, sifted.

<sup>40</sup> The words "to be given" should be supplied at the end, as necessarily implied; for otherwise there would be an incomplete expression or omission.

<sup>41</sup> This is to be understood as follows. In order that one who has been deceived by error may get rid of this, i.e., free himself from the error, in true baptism in the true Church.

<sup>42</sup> In other manuscripts it says "and schismatics."

<sup>43</sup> Perhaps, say the authors, the word is "supplying."

<sup>44</sup> More correctly, "in quest of knowledge," say the authors.

(Ap. cc. XLVI, XLVII, LXVIII; c. VII of the 2nd; c. XCV of the 6th.)

### Interpretation

The present Canon proves, by means of many arguments, that baptism administered by heretics and schismatics is unacceptable, and they ought to be baptized when they return to the Orthodoxy of the catholic Church. 1st) Because there is but one baptism, and because this is to be found only in the catholic Church. Heretics and schismatics, on the other hand, being outside of the catholic Church, have, in consequence, not even the one baptism. 2nd) The water used in baptism must first be purified and be sanctified by means of prayers of the priests, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit; afterwards it can purify and sanctify the person being baptized therein. But heretics and schismatics are neither priests, being in fact rather sacrilegists; neither clean and pure, being in fact impure and unclean; neither holy, as not having any Holy Spirit. So neither have they any baptism. 3rd) Through baptism in the catholic Church there is given a remission of sins. But through the baptism administered by heretics and schismatics, inasmuch as it is outside of the Church, how can any remission of sins be given? 4th) The person being baptized must, after he is baptized, be anointed with the *myron* prepared from olive oil and various spices,<sup>45</sup> which has been sanctified by visitation of the Holy Spirit. But how can a heretic sanctify any such *myron* when as a matter of fact he has no Holy Spirit because of his being separated therefrom on account of heresy and schism? 5th) The priest must pray to God for the salvation of the one being baptized. But how can a heretic or a schismatic be listened to by God when, as we have said, he is a sacrilegist and a sinner (not so much on account of his works, but rather on account of the heresy or schism, these being the greatest sin of all sins), at a time when the Bible says that God does not listen to sinners. 6th) Because the baptism administered by heretics and schismatics cannot be acceptable to God as baptism, since they are enemies and foes with God (i.e., mutually), and are called anti-christs by John. For all these reasons, then, and others the present Canon, with an eye to accuracy and strictness, insists that all heretics and schismatics be baptized, adding also the remark that this opinion — that any baptism, that is to say, administered by heretics or schismatics is unacceptable — is not a new one of the Fathers of this Council, but, on the contrary, is an old one, tried and tested by their predecessors<sup>46</sup> (who nearly reached to the very successors of the Apostles) with great diligence and accuracy; and it is consistent in all respects with Ap. cc. XLVI, XLVII, and LXVIII. Not only did the present Canon reject baptism administered by heretics and schismatics by common agreement, but also in

---

<sup>45</sup> The present Canon calls the holy Myron oil because the greater part of the material of which it is composed is olive oil. For the oil must always be much more than the other ingredients, consisting of spices, that are taken to prepare it. Note, though, that the present Canon, being a much earlier one than c. XLVIII of Laodicea, is the one which teaches that a person being baptized must be anointed with Myron, and not the said c. XLVIII of Laodicea, as some persons have said. Yet, to tell the truth and be just to both, the Laodicean Canon was issued specially in regard to this point, whereas the present Canon merely mentions the seal of the myron in passing.

<sup>46</sup> From the time, that is to say, of Agrippinus, the bishop of Carthage, as we stated in the Prolegomena to the present Council.

## CONCERNING THE REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN ANCYRA

### PROLEGOMENA

The holy regional Council held in Ancyra, the archdiocese of Galatia, took place, according to those who have written discourses about it, in the year 315 A.C., but Milias in the second volume of the conciliar records says that it was assembled in the year 314. The number of Fathers who attended it was eighteen, of whom the exarchs were: Vitellius, patriarch of Antioch, Syria; Agricola, metropolitan of Caesarea, Cappadocia; Marcellus, archbishop of the same Ancyra; and the martyr St. Basileus, bishop of Amaseia. They issued the present 25 Canons regarding those who denied Christ during the reign of Maximus the tyrant, and who sacrificed to idols, but thereafter joined the Church. These Canons are definitely confirmed by c. II of the 6th Ec. C., and indefinitely by c. I of the 4th and c. I of the 7th; and by virtue of the latter's confirmation they acquire an ecumenical force in a way. Concerning this Council Gregory of Neocaesarea made predictions even 53 years before it in his c. VIII. (See Dositheus, p. 976 of the *Dodecabiblus*, concerning it.)

### THE TWENTY-FIVE CANONS OF THE HOLY REGIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN ANCYRA INTERPRETED

#### CANON I

*As for presbyters who sacrificed to idols, but afterwards succeeded in recovering their senses, not with any trickery, but in truth, not after previous preparations, and pretenses, and persuasions, in order to seem as though being put to tortures, but actually having these inflicted only seemingly and in sham, it has been deemed but right that they should share the honor of sitting in the seats of their class, without, however, being allowed to offer the host, or to deliver homilies, or to perform any function pertaining to priestly offices.*

#### Interpretation

Of those Christians who used to deny Christ and sacrifice to idols in time of persecutions, some, when tortured and unable to endure the severity of the tortures, would deny the name of Christ, while others even before suffering any tortures would betray the religion. The latter, however, in order to avoid appearing to deny it voluntarily, would persuade the torturers, either by means of money or by entreaties, to pretend that they were putting them to tortures, without really doing so, but merely in appearance. These facts having become known to have been so, the present Canon decrees that those presbyters who



when really put to tortures, without any trickery or hypocritical acting, and unable to endure them, sacrificed at first to idols, but later again, having regretted this, confessed the faith and reaped a victory, are to have the outward honor and the right to sit with the presbyters (to be honored, that is to say, like priests, and to sit together with the priests — concerning which see c. I of Antioch and the Footnote to c. XXVI of the 6th), yet not to have permission to conduct divine services, nor to teach, nor to perform any other priestly office.<sup>47</sup> See also Ap. c. LXII, and c. I of the 1st.

## CANON II

*As for deacons who likewise sacrificed to idols, but thereafter succeeded in recovering their senses, they are to enjoy the other marks of honor, but are to cease all sacred services, including both that of the bread and that of offering the cup, and that of preaching. But in case some of the bishops, however, should sympathize with their toil, or humility of meekness, and wish to give them something further, or to take away anything, the power shall rest with them.*

### Interpretation

The same things that the above Canon decreed with reference to presbyters is decreed by the present Canon with reference to deacons. That, in other words, if in consequence of the severity of the tortures they were overcome and sacrificed to idols, but thereafter again confessed the religion (here called, in Greek, the “piety”), they are to enjoy whatever other honor is due to deacons, but are to cease from every kind of sacred service that pertains to deacons, and from holding the holy bread and the holy cup (see the Footnote to c. XXIII of the 6th), and from preaching.<sup>48</sup> If, however, any local bishops should become convinced that they are showing toil or moil in their repentance for the denial, and have been contritely humbled on account of the sin, and that they treat with meekness those who reproach them on this account, and not with audacity, it lies in their power to allow them anything more than the mere outward honor of deacons on account of the fervency of their repentance. If, on the contrary, they are convinced that they are little concerned and lukewarm in their repentance, again they have the power to deprive them even of that outward honor of deacons. See Ap. c. LXII, and c. XI of the 1st-&-2nd.

<sup>47</sup> It is plain, by contrast herewith, that those presbyters who had not been really tortured, but only in appearance, or who even before being tortured denied Christ, are not even worthy to be allowed the outward honor and the right to sit in company of presbyters.

<sup>48</sup> It is manifest that such persons are not worthy either to say the so-called bidding prayers, or prayers for peace, nor to voice petitions. As for the idea of preaching, perhaps the Canon means the reading of the holy Gospel to the laity, or their pronouncing the prayers in church aloud, and not in secret. That is why Socrates, in Book II, ch. 11, says that when the Syrian general was surrounding the church with his soldiers in Alexandria in order to catch him, Athanasius the Great, taking precautions to prevent any injury to the laity, commanded the deacon to “preach” a prayer: “And, having commanded the deacon to preach a prayer, he again prepared a psalm to be sung.” But in other manuscripts instead of the Greek word for “preach” (*kerytton*) the word written is the Greek word meaning “to deliver a homily.”

### CANON III

*As for those who were fleeing and were caught, or who were delivered up by their own intimates, or who otherwise had their property taken away from them, or who had to undergo tortures, or were cast into a jail, while crying out that they were Christians, and being torn to pieces, or who had anything put in their hands for violence by those employing force against them, or who had to accept some food of necessity, though confessing throughout that they were Christians, and ever exhibiting mournfulness over the occurrence in their whole make-up and their habit, and humbleness of life, they, as being without sin, are not to be excluded from communion. Even if they were excluded by someone as a matter of excessive strictness, or by some even through ignorance, they must immediately be admitted and restored to their rights. This applies likewise both to those who belong to the clergy, and to other members of the laity. A further question examined into was whether laymen can be promoted to orders if they incur the same necessity. It has been deemed but right that these persons too, as not having committed any sin, provided that their previous life has been correct and upright, be advanced to orders by imposition of hands.*

### Interpretation

Since, according to St. Gregory the Theologian, the law of martyrdom is that one ought not to run of his own accord and voluntarily into martyrdom, with provision for both the weakness and the possible faint-heartedness which he may exhibit, and on account of the perdition and punishment in hell which those persons are bound to sustain who put him to martyrdom, nor again if he should happen to get caught in the net of martyrdom, ought he to flee and lose faith. For this reason the Christians of that time, being conscious of the weakness of their nature, were wont to flee from persecutions and hide themselves, in accordance with that passage in the Gospel which says: “*when they persecute you in this city and drive you thence, flee ye into another*” (Matt. 10:23). So, with reference to these fleeing Christians, the present Canon says in its decree that if these persons in fleeing were caught, or were delivered up by their own relatives who were Greeks (i.e., heathen), or were deprived of their property, or underwent tortures, and were cast into prison, or had their clothes torn off and were stripped naked, or the tyrants forcibly thrust into their hands incense, or some sacrificial object, or into their mouth thrust food which had been offered sacrificially to idols, and while suffering all these things cried out nevertheless that they were Christians, without any utter denial, they, I say, if they mourn over that occurrence which has befallen them, and display their mournfulness outwardly both by a show of humility and depression and plainness of clothes, and a face revealing their life, they are not to be prevented from partaking of divine communion, since they too are considered as not having sinned in any respect. But if some persons have excluded them from divine communion, either because of too great strictness, or on account of their indiscreetness, they must forthwith be admitted thereto, whether those who have suffered such an embarrassment were clerics or laymen. In fact, such persons are so far removed from any such sinfulness that even though one person among them should be a layman, he may become a priest, provided his previous life is unimpeachable

and worthy of holy orders.<sup>49</sup> See also Ap. c. LXII, and c. I of Gregory the Miracle-worker.

#### CANON IV

*As concerning those who have sacrificed under duress, and in addition to these, those who have eaten supper at the idols, it has been deemed fitting that those persons who in being led away thereto went up in too gay raiment, and wore luxurious clothes, and partook of the prepared supper indifferently, should do a year as listeners, and three years as kneelers. They shall partake of prayer alone for two years, and then shall come to perfection.*

#### Interpretation

The present Canon decrees that as regards those who have been forced to sacrifice to idols, or to eat food that was offered to idols, they must first be examined as to their disposition when doing that, and according to the disposition shown they are to have their penances meted out to them. For if when dragged off to be compelled to sacrifice, or to eat things offered to idols, they displayed a joyous attitude, and adorned themselves in valuable garments, and ate it in a nonchalant manner, that is to say, without being troubled in their heart, and grieved on this account, they are to do a year in the station of listeners, three years in that of kneelers, two years in that of co-standers (or *consistentes*) and after all these years they are to partake of the divine Mysteries.

#### Concord

As for all those who patiently suffered unendurable tortures at first, but later on account of the weakness of the flesh were overcome and caused to deny, they are canonized three years and forty days according to c. I of Peter. But as for those who merely underwent imprisonment, and the stench connected therewith, but without other tortures were induced to deny, they are canonized four years, according to c. II of the same man. As for those, on the other hand, who when being tortured wore mourning while eating things that had been offered to idols, they are canonized three years and beyond, according to c. V of the present Council. But if they merely ate foods of their own at a heathenish festival in a temple of an idol, they are to spend two years in kneeling, according to c. VII of the present Council. As for those who sacrificed two or three times under duress, they are canonized seven years according to c. VIII of this same Council. See also c. XIV of the 1st Ec. C. and the drawing of a temple.

---

<sup>49</sup> It is plain, by likeness of the case, that priests who have suffered this are not to be deposed in accordance with c. XIV of Peter. What am I saying, are not to be deposed? Why, they are even to be classed with the confessors, according to the same Canon of Peter.

## CANON V

*But as for those who went up with clothes of mourning, and upon reclining ate in the meantime weeping throughout the time they were reclining, if they have fulfilled the three years' time of kneeling, let them be admitted without any offering. But if they did not eat, after doing two years of kneeling, let them commune in the third year, without any offering, in order that they may receive perfection in the fourth year. But Bishops are to have the power, after examining into the mode of the conversion, to exercise philanthropy (or charity) or to add more time to the penalty. But above all let the previous life be inquired into, and let the life thereafter be investigated, and thus shall the philanthropy be meted out in due proportion.*

### Interpretation

The present Canon does not harmonize with the one above. For it says that all those who were forced to sacrifice and went with humble and mournful garments and ate things sacrificed to idols, weeping throughout the interval of their meal, shall, after doing three years in company with kneelers, stand with the faithful, though they are not to partake.<sup>50</sup> But if they have not eaten anything at all that has been sacrificed to an idol, let them do two years as kneelers, and in the third year let them stand with the faithful, but without partaking, and after four years let them commune. These are the penalties provided by the Council. Bishops, however, have it in their power to consider the way in which they are repenting. Accordingly, if they are genuinely and fervently repentant, they are to lessen the number of years decreed as penalties. But if, on the contrary, they are unconcerned and nonchalant in repenting, they are to increase the number of years decreed as penalties. Moreover, bishops are obliged to investigate their life both before they ate the abominable things and after they ate things abominable. Then, if that life was and is virtuous, they are to reduce the penalties; but if it was and is blameworthy and wicked, they are to augment them. See also cc. XI and XII of the 1st, and c. IV of the present.

## CANON VI

*As concerning those who merely in obedience to a threat of being imprisoned and punished, and of having their property taken away, or of being forced to change their abode, have sacrificed, and up to the present time have failed to repent, and have neither been led to return, but have now come to join the Church and have become minded to return at a time coinciding with that of the Council, it has been deemed but right that until the great day they be admitted as listeners, and that after the great day they be obliged to serve three years as kneelers, and after two more years (as co-standers) they are to commune without an offering, and thus to arrive at perfection; so that they shall fulfill the whole period of six years. But if any persons were admitted to repentance before this*

---

<sup>50</sup> It is manifest that these persons ought not to partake in the fourth year, like those who have not eaten things offered to idols, but at a later time and after more years have passed, though the Canon does not so state explicitly.

---

# BEGINNING OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANONS OF THE HOLY FATHERS

---

## CONCERNING SAINT DIONYSIUS THE ALEXANDRIAN

### PROLEGOMENA

Our Father Dionysius among the Saints was one of the pupils of Origen.<sup>257</sup> Having formerly become a presbyter of the Church situated in Alexandria,<sup>258</sup> about the year 232 after Christ he undertook to teach the catechism;<sup>259</sup> later, in the year 247, he became Bishop of Alexandria, as the successor of Heracles, who had been the thirteenth Archbishop of Alexandria.<sup>260</sup> Having been captured by soldiers in the time of the Decian persecution, he was taken to Taposiris,<sup>261</sup> which was a small town situated between Alexandria and Canobius, according to the Dictionary of Bow-drant. In the year 257, in the time of Valerian the persecutor, when the thrice-blessed man appeared before the governor Aemilian and made the good confession of the faith, he was exiled to Cephro, a desert city in Libya.<sup>262</sup> At the end of three years<sup>263</sup> having been recalled from exile to Alexandria, at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Galienus, who though a son of Valerius, appeared in the beginning to be of a milder temperament in regard to Christians. With all his power the thrice-blissful man struggled to convert the heretics and to weld together the schisms which had been produced at that time in the Church by the Novatians, and to reconcile Pope Stephen of Rome and Pope Cyprian of Carthage, who had been at variance with each other on the question whether heretics and schismatics ought to be baptized or not upon

---

<sup>257</sup> Eusebius, book VI of his *Eccl. History*, p. 29 (of the Greek edition).

<sup>258</sup> St. Jerome, in his list of ecclesiastical authors.

<sup>259</sup> Cave, vol. I, p. 124.

<sup>260</sup> Both Eusebius and Cave, *ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> Eusebius, *ibid.*, ch. 10.

<sup>262</sup> Eusebius, book VII, ch. 11.

<sup>263</sup> Cave, *l.c.*

returning to Orthodoxy,<sup>264</sup> (in spite of the fact that he was in agreement with Cyprian, who wanted such persons rebaptized, as St. Jerome asserts, in his list of ecclesiastical authors, concerning which see the Prolegomena to the Canon of the Council of St. Cyprian (held in Carthage). He put up a valiant fight against Sabellius,<sup>265</sup> and with his wise debates he persuaded those called by Nepos millenarians or chiliasts (concerning whom see the Prolegomena to the Second Ecum. C.) to abandon their cacodoxical views.<sup>266</sup> In the year 265,<sup>267</sup> when asked to attend the Council assembled in Antioch against Paul of Samosata,<sup>268</sup> though he was unable to go to it bodily owing to old age and illness, he made his orthodox view of the faith clear in a letter, and controverted the man of Samosata by means of ten replies.<sup>269</sup> In the same year, which was the twelfth year of the reign of Emperor Galienus, he departed to the Lord after having acted as Archbishop of Alexandria for seventeen years.<sup>270</sup> Besides his other writings (for which see page 14 concerning shorthand writers in volume I of the series of the Octateuch), he wrote this Canonical Letter in the year 260, according to Miliars (in Vol. II of the Conciliar Records), and sent it to a certain bishop named Basilides attached to the parishes of the Pentapolis, according to Eusebius (book VII, ch. 26), it being divided into four Canons and indefinitely confirmed by c. I of the 4th, and definitely by c. II of the Sixth Ecum. C.; and by virtue of this confirmation it acquired what amounts in a way to ecumenical force. It is to be found in the second volume of the Pandects, and in the first volume of the Conciliar Records (page 106).<sup>271</sup>

**The FOUR CANONS of our Father among the Saints DIONYSIUS, the Archbishop of Alexandria and Confessor, interpreted, into which his Canonical Letter to Bishop Basilides has been divided.**

**CANON I**

*You have written me a letter, my most faithful and learned son, inquiring about the hour when one must cease fasting on Easter day. For you say that some*

<sup>264</sup> Eusebius, book VI, ch. 16; and book VII, ch. 4 and 5, and chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>265</sup> Eusebius, *ibid.*, ch. 24. See also the Footnote to c. I of the 2nd.

<sup>266</sup> Eusebius, *ibid.*, ch. 6.

<sup>267</sup> Cave, l.c.

<sup>268</sup> See the Footnote to c. XIX of the First EC. C. Note, however, that the last and most numerous Council against Paul of Samosata was assembled in the reign of Aemilian, in the year 272, according to Eusebius, book VII, ch. 29, as also in the same c. XIX of the First EC. C. is stated.

<sup>269</sup> See these in vol. I of the Conciliar Records, p. 111. Dositheus, in his Dodecabibius, says that it was from this letter of Dionysius that all Bishops and Patriarchs who lived after time took example to write such letters to Councils about to be assembled, containing a view of their faith, when on account of old age or illness or any other unavoidable circumstance they were unable to attend the Council in person.

<sup>270</sup> Eusebius, *ibid.*, ch. 28.

<sup>271</sup> St. Basil the Great, in his c. I, calls this divine Dionysius canonical. This saint, in fact, was the first one to lay the foundations of the faith embodied in the dogma of the substantial union of the two natures of Christ. For he asserts in his reply 10 to the man of Samosata: "It was the one Logos Himself who became to me a God and Lord Jesus, His one substance, and one person." It was upon this foundation that divine Cyril and the Third Ecum. C. erected the great dogma of substantial union later.

of the brethren assert that one must do this shortly before the time when the cock crows or thereabouts, while others assert that it must be commenced with or from the time of evening. For the brethren in Rome, as they say, wait for the cock; whereas in the case of persons here you said that it would be earlier. But you are asking to have the exact condition fixed, and the hour accurately measured, which is both difficult and misleading. For the fact that after the time of our Lord's resurrection the festival and the festivity ought to commence, though humbling the soul with fasting up to that point, is one that will be acknowledged by all alike. It is apparent, however, that you have quite soundly affirmed by what you have written to me and have noticed from the divine Evangelists, that there is no precise information in them concerning the hour at which He rose. For the Evangelists have presented a different account about those who came to the tomb at times far apart and said that they had found the Lord to have risen already. "And late on the Sabbath day," says St. Matthew (28:1). "In the morning while it was still dark," says St. John (20:1). "Very early in the morning," says St. Luke (24:1). "And very early in the morning when the sun was rising," says St. Mark (16:2). Accordingly, it may be said that as to exactly when He rose, not one of them declares anything clearly. That it was late on the Sabbath, at the dawn of one of the Sabbaths, until the rise of the sun on one of the Sabbaths, those who visited the tomb found Him not lying in it, this is a fact which has been acknowledged over and over again, and there is no disagreement about it either, nor have we entertained any suspicion that the Evangelists conflict with each other in regard to this matter. But, on the contrary, though it may seem to be "much ado about nothing" to discuss the question any further as to whether they are all in agreement on that night that the Lord who is the Light of the world had already dawned upon it, the dispute is about the hour. Let us gratefully welcome, however, what has been said, and let us do our best to conform faithfully therewith. As for what has been asserted by St. Matthew, it runs as follows: "It was late on the Sabbath about the time of daybreak on one of the Sabbaths that Mary Magdalene and another Mary came to take a look at the sepulcher. And lo, a great earthquake occurred. For an angel of the Lord, having descended out of heaven, came and rolled away the stone, and sat down upon it. His countenance was like a flash of lightning, and his raiment was as white as snow. And for fear of him the watchers quaked, and became like dead men. The angel, however, in reply told the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye are seeking Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here: he is risen, as he said" (Matt. 28:1-5). As respects the word "late," some will imagine it to denote the evening of Saturday, in accordance with the affinity of the verb; those, however, who are supposed to be the ones able to judge the matter more wisely and more learnedly, will not assent to this, but will insist that it was deep night; because, as is patent, the word "late" denotes lateness and a long time, and because the statement that it was "about the time of daybreak" implies that it was nighttime. And they came, not as the rest say, bringing spices, but in order to look at the sepulcher; and they found the earthquake to have occurred, and the angel sitting upon the stone, and were told by the latter, "He is not here; he is risen" Likewise John says: "On the first day of the week early in the morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb; and she saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb" (John 20:1). Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that it was still dark, she went



forward to the tomb. Luke says: "And they rested on the sabbath day in accordance with the commandment. But upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb" (Luke 23:56 and 24:1-2). It may be that the phrase "very early in the morning" indicates the approach of dawn of the first day of the week, on account of the fact that the entire sabbath together with the night succeeding it had completely passed away, and another day was beginning when they came bringing the spices and perfumes. Hence it is plainly evident that He must have risen a long while before. Evangelist Mark confirms this by saying: "They bought spices, that they might come and anoint him; and very early in the morning of the first day of the week they came unto the tomb, after the sun had dawned." He, too, says "very early in the morning," which is the meaning of the Greek words both here and in Luke. And he adds "after the sun had dawned." For their rush and the way they came make it plain that it must have been very early in the morning, and that morning must have just commenced; in fact, they had been delayed during their journey, and were lingering about the tomb till sunrise. And then the Young Man in a white robe said to them: "He is risen; he is not here" These facts being as stated, we venture to express our opinion of the matter to precisionists as follows:<sup>272</sup> As for the question respecting the precise hour, or half hour, or quarter of an hour, it would be fitting to commence rejoicing over the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, we are inclined to find fault with those who accelerate the time too fast, and want to have it allowed to start even before midnight, on the ground that they are heedless of the hour and imperious, as nearly having stopped the race, whereof a wise man has said: "The least is not a little in life." On the other hand we espouse those who procrastinate and advance the hour as much as possible, and show fortitude in waiting till even the fourth watch, in which our Savior appeared walking upon the sea to those in the ship (Matt. 14:25), as we consider them brave and assiduous. But let us not quarrel with those who take the middle course, as they have been actuated or have been able to do, since not all men can endure even the six days of fastings equally, nor in the same manner; but, on the contrary, some of them pass all of those days without any food, while others pass only two, and others only three, and others only four, and some none at all. Accordingly, to those who have striven to the utmost in passing through all the days of fastings, and have afterwards become exhausted, having all but expired, it is pardonable for them to taste of food so much the sooner. But if some men, not as having passed through all those days fasting, but not having even fasted or having even spent the first four days in luxuriating, and afterwards coming to the last two remaining days, namely, Friday and Saturday, confine their fasting to these alone, we do not deem them to be doing anything great and splendid; if they stick it out till dawn, I am not of opinion that they are entitled to equal credit for their exploit with those who have fasted a greater number of days. These things I have written by way of advice as what I think.

---

<sup>272</sup> Other manuscripts say "we venture to give our account of."

### Interpretation

It seems that divine Basilides had asked this blissful Dionysius to tell him in writing the exact hour that Christ rose from the dead and when the rejoicing over the Lord's resurrection ought to begin, and when the breaking of the fast ought to occur. For, as it appears from the present letter, the Christians had some dispute about this amongst themselves; some of them asserting that the rejoicing of the festival and the breaking of the fast ought to start in the evening, and others maintaining that it ought to start with the crowing of the cock, as did those in Rome. So on this account he asked him to state in writing exactly the hour of Christ's resurrection in order to fix the time for the beginning of the festival and the breaking of the fast by everybody consistently. In reply, therefore, to this question sacred Dionysius says that the exact and precise hour of Christ's resurrection which he is asking about is a thing that is difficult and precarious to determine. For (he says) as to the fact that the festivity, or rejoicing of the festival, and the breaking of the fast ought to start after the resurrection of Christ is one that is proclaimed and acknowledged by everyone. But at what hour He rose, that is a puzzle, since the sacred Evangelists have disclosed only the fact that various persons came at different times to the tomb, and have said that they found the Lord to have risen, without, however, noting exactly at what hour He rose. Matthew, for instance, says that the women came late on the sabbath day; John says that it was early in the morning while it was still dark; Luke, that it was very early in the morning; and Mark likewise that it was very early. But as for the hour at which the Lord actually rose, not one of them has revealed it. All acknowledge, and there is no dispute about the fact that the persons who came to the tomb after the sabbath toward daybreak of Sunday failed to find the Lord in the grave; or we must not suspect that there is any contrariety in their accounts. Nevertheless, though the question is a little one, touching, that is to say, the agreement of the divine Evangelists in reference to the fact that it was on the same night of Sunday that the Lord, the Light of the world, dawned from the grave, and that they differ only as respects the hour; yet we ourselves, says the saint, would like to correct this little matter — or, in other words, we will find that the divine Evangelists are in agreement as respecting the hour if we take care to reconcile the divine assertions with one another gratefully. For as to that which sacred Matthew says, that it was late on the Sabbath day, most people, in accordance with common usage, will take it to mean Saturday evening, but those who take the wiser view will understand it to mean deep night. For the word "late" in its proper sense (in Greek) denotes lateness and great tardiness; this amounts to saying the interval after Saturday,<sup>273</sup> and on this account the Evangelist goes on to say "about the time of daybreak on the first day of the week." So the word "late" in Matthew, and the expression "while it was still dark" in John, and the phrase "very early in the morning" in Luke and the similar one in Mark, all signify the same thing. For they denote that, after Saturday and all the night of Saturday was past, and when the dawn of Sunday had

---

<sup>273</sup> The fact that the word "late" denotes a later time and is to be taken in the sense of the preposition after (Note of Translator. — The "word is used in Greek as a quasi preposition, but not so in English, which requires the addition of a preposition, such as "on" or "in.") is attested also by Xenophon in his *Cyropedia* where he says: "Late in the war," or as one might say in English, "at the end of the war."

begun, the women came and brought spices; but before they went it is evident that the Lord had risen. For they had set forth on their journey very early in the morning, as Mark says, but since they had spent their time on it they stayed at the tomb until the sun came up. That is why the same Evangelist adds “after the sun had dawned.” These facts being as has been stated, says the saint, to those who inquire about the exact hour of the night, or at what half hour, or at what quarter of an hour they ought to commence rejoicing over the Lord’s resurrection, and ought to break their fast, we vouchsafe the opinion that as for those persons who are in a great hurry and break their fast even before midnight, we upbraid them for being faint-hearted and ravenous, because, in spite of the short time they have to wait yet patiently fasting, they break the course of fasting they have been following, at a time when, as a wise man says, the least thing done in this life is not really little,<sup>274</sup> (for if it is something good, it will beget a great reward, and if it is something evil, it will entail a great penalty in the other life). As for those who, on the contrary, go slow and show patience in fasting till the fourth watch of the night, at which time the Savior appeared in life walking upon the sea and coming to His disciples, which is the same as saying those who patiently wait with fortitude till the dawn of Sunday, we praise them as brave and assiduous. As regards those who have broken their fast somewhere between midnight and dawn, according to their ability to hold out, we are not going to scold them on the pretext that they failed to wait patiently and with fortitude till dawn, since not all persons fast alike throughout the six days of Passion Week, but, on the contrary, some fast only two days, others three, others four, and others do not go without food at all even for one day. Hence those who got weakened and nearly fainted because of their fasting and could not hold out any longer are entitled to a pardon for having broken off their fast earlier than others. But as for those who not only did not remain foodless for a single day during Passion Week, but did not even fast by confining themselves to zerophagy or monophagy (i.e., eating but a single kind of food), instead rather luxuriating during the first four days, and afterwards passing only two days, Great Friday and Great Saturday, without food, and who think that they are doing something great and splendid in the way of achievement if they keep on fasting till the dawn of Sunday — as for these persons, I say, I do not think that they have undergone the same hardship as those who fasted the entire four days. Read also c. LXXXIX of the 6th.

## CANON II

*Concerning menstruous women, whether they ought to enter the temple of God while in such a state, I think it superfluous even to put the question. For, I opine, not even they themselves, being faithful and pious, would dare when in this state either to approach the Holy Table or to touch the body and blood of Christ. For not even the woman with a twelve years’ issue would come into actual contact with Him, but only with the edge of His garment, to be cured. There is no objection to one’s praying no matter how he may be or to one’s remembering the Lord at any time and in any state whatever, and petitioning to receive help;*

<sup>274</sup> This maxim, which says “What is little in life is not the least little,” is cited verbatim by St. Basil the Great in the beginning of his second discourse concerning baptism, where he says that one of our sages said this. But who was that sage? We know not.

*but if one is not wholly clean both in soul and in body, he shall be prevented from coming up to the Holies of Holies.*

### Interpretation

When asked about this too, as to whether women in their menses<sup>275</sup> ought to enter the temple of God, the saint replied that there is no need of asking the

---

<sup>275</sup> For this is what is meant by the term “menstruous,” the literal sense of the corresponding Greek words being equivalent to the English word “sitting;” because Jewish women used to sit ftpart, that is to say, in other words, separately from the seats of the other women and remain quiet whenever the catamenial flux would come upon them, until seven days were past, or even more, according to the interpretation given by Zonaras. “For any woman,” says he, “that is running with blood and whose flux shall be in her body shall remain on her separate seat for seven days. Anyone that touches her shall be unclean until evening” (Lev. 15:19). And again: “If a woman shall have an issue of blood for a number of days not in the time of her separate seat, or if it flow beyond the time of her separate seat, all the days of flux shall be days of uncleanness, precisely as the days of her separate seat; and she shall be unclean” (Lev. 15:25). But why did God call the flux of such blood and the woman having it unclean? For it appears that this flux, being a natural process instituted by God, and having been permitted to occur thus after the transgression, is neither a sin nor an uncleanness. “For these things are not truly sin nor unclean-ness,” according to St. Chrysostom (p. 1059 of vol. I of the series); and no natural occurrence is truly unclean, according to Theodoret (ibid. 1057); and according to Theodore, or Diodorus, there is nothing unclean except a wicked disposition (ibid. 1032). Wherefore the Apostolic Injunctions assert (in Book VI, ch. 26) that neither lawful intercourse, nor childbed, nor issue of blood, nor nocturnal emission, can pollute a human being’s nature, or separate him from the Holy Spirit; but only impiety and an unlawful act. Why then, if such be the case, not only the Old Law, but also the Canons of the Fathers decide that a woman having the menses is unclean? To this question, drawing again upon the Fathers themselves, we reply that the flux of these menses is called unclean, 1) in accordance with the general repute of human beings. For all of us human beings commonly feel disgusted at and loathe, and deem unclean and abominable whatever nature through the pores and passages of the body ejects as useless and superfluous. I have reference to the exudation of earwax, the gummy secretion in the corners of the eyes, the mucus of the nose, the phlegm from the mouth, urine, and excrement from the abdomen, and likewise indeed to the so-called courses, or menstrual discharges, of women 2). These things are called unclean, because by means of natural processes God chastens the mental ones, or, to use a different word, the moral ones, and, thereby teaches things that are exceeding hard to understand, according to Theodoret (p. 1057 of vol. I of the series). “For if involuntary actions pollute, much more dealing are actions that are voluntary” (ibid. 1062); or, in other words, if actions that occur naturally and without the exercise of the human will are unclean, how much more unclean are sins, which he does with the exercise of his will! 3) God calls the menstrual discharges of women unclean (which as a matter of fact is the only and proper reason) in order to prevent men from having intercourse with women when the latter have such menstrual discharges, according to what Theodoret says (ibid. p. 1062); for one thing, by way of promoting the modesty of men and the honor of women, according to what Isidore says (ibid. 1058); and awe of the law of nature, according to Philo: but properly and preeminently by way of providing for children being begotten. For any infants that are conceived and formed from such rotten, useless, and contaminated blood of the menses become weaker in nature, and besides being liable to many and various other diseases and ailments, are especially and most easily capable of producing leprosy, and become leprous, as is said concordantly by both Theodoret and Isidore and Diodorus (pages 1031 and 1058 and 1062 of vol. I of the series). So for this reason God called unclean both the woman that is having the menses, and the man that unites with her, according to Theodoret. Accordingly, He made it a law that lepers should be chased out of cities and kept away from all association with human beings, as Isidore says, in order that He might prevent parents from having intercourse at such a time, on account of the uncleanness and the leprosy and the ostracism of their children to be born thereafter. Hence the Apostolic Injunctions (Book VI, ch. V) decree this same thing, by saying: “To provide for the safety of their offspring let men not come together with women in the midst of physical phenomena.” Proceeding further forward, God even commands that men who sleep with their wives when the latter are having the menses shall be put to death and exterminated. “And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness, he hath discovered her fountain, and she hath uncovered the

question, since if the women themselves have a proper reverence for things divine, they will be inhibited by it from daring ever to approach the Holy Table and to partake of the Lord's body and blood when they are in such a state of their menstrual affairs. For they can recall that woman who had an issue of blood and who on account of the flux of her blood did not dare, because of her great reverence, to touch the body of Christ, but only the hem of His garment. None of them is forbidden to pray, whatever be her predicament (whether she

---

*fountain of her blood; and both of them shall be exterminated from amongst their generation*" (Lev. 20:18). That is why God says through Ezekiel that it is a sign of a righteous man that he does not mingle with his wife when she has the menses: "*neither hath come near to a menstruous woman*" (Ezek. 18:6). So for all these reasons, wishing to instill reverence and fear not only into women, but much more into the impetuous vehemence of the natural instinct of men, both of old and now again through His saints, God has prohibited these women from coming into the temple proper and partaking of the divine Mysteries, just as this Canon of the divine Father decrees. But also c. VII of Timothy likewise prohibits them from participating in communion until they have been duly cleansed and purified. His c. VI prohibits them also from being baptized until they have been cleansed and purified. In agreement with these divine Canons Novel 17 of Leo the Wise also makes a decree providing that women in childbirth as well as those in menstruation, if unbaptized, shall not be baptized; and if baptized, they shall not participate in communion unless they first be cleansed and purified, except only in case they should incur a deadly disease. But if some persons would offer the objection that it is said in chapters 27 and 28 and 30 of Book VI of the Apostolic Injunctions that seminal emissions and salacious dreams and natural purification and such things are Jewish observances, and other such phenomena contrary to the above Canons, we reply: 1) that the reason why the divine Apostles said these things has been explained by these Apostles themselves. The reason was that women in their menses used to think that during the days of their purification they were devoid and destitute of the grace of the All-holy Spirit; hence they did not even want to pray, nor to read a divine book, or even to listen to one being read. Wherefore, in order to eliminate this suspicion, they said all that they said there. "For if you think, O woman," it says, "that by being seven days on the separate seat you become devoid of Holy Spirit, then upon suddenly dying devoid of Spirit, you would depart without clinging to the hopeful trust in God." And again: "You, then, O woman, as you say, if you are devoid of the Holy Spirit during the days of the separate seat, you are filled with the unclean one. For by not praying, nor reading, you are inviting him without so wishing" (ibid. ch. 26). "Wherefore spare yourself vain words, O woman, and be always mindful of God, who created you, and continue praying to Him," etc. Notice that the divine Apostles permit such women only to pray and to remember God, just as this Canon of Dionysius also contains these two permissions verbatim. They do not, however, permit them also to participate in communion or to go to church. For what is written on the side in the margin (in other manuscripts it says "partake of the Eucharist") has very little if any force, as not being found in the text proper of the Injunctions. 2) We reply to them with this true and surer answer that we have but one obligation, to obey and to follow the Canons with implicit obedience, and not to sit as judges and examiners of what has been commanded by the Holy Spirit, and to keep saying why this? and why that? lest we incur the exceedingly horrible penalties imposed upon those transgressing the Canons. Let St. Basil the Great be the seal of everything that has been said. For he too in his ascetic works (see his Epitomized Definition No. 309) prohibits such women from communing. For he equally denies both men and women communion when they have their natural and usual predicaments — namely, of men, their lascivious dreams, and of women, their menses. For he says further on: "But I know that these things have been accomplished with the grace of Christ, and both in men and in women with genuine faith in the Lord." But this is not all. For even John the Faster decrees the very same thing in his Canon, adducing in witness thereof the present c. of Dionysius and c. VII of Timothy and the Old Law. I said hereinabove that such women must not go into the temple proper, for into the vestibules (or in the pronaos and the narthex) of the temple they have permission to go, according to Balsamon. Besides all the others mentioned, Peter the Deacon and chartophylax of the Great Church, in his reply 18, further confirms the present Canon of the Saint by saying that if a woman gets ready to be blessed and she happens to have her usual trouble, she must neither be blessed nor participate in communion until she has been purified (page 1002 of vol. II of the Consular Records). It was on this account too that deaconesses lost their rank owing to their troublesome menses, and see the Footnote to c. XIX of the 1st.

be at home or in the pronaos of the church), by imploring God and asking Him for help and salvation. One is forbidden, however, to go near the Hovies of Hovies, which is the same as saying to partake of the sanctified portions (i.e., the Eucharistic species) when he is not clean in soul and body, like women who are taken with their menses.

### CANON III

*Persons who are self-sufficient and married ought to be judges of themselves. For we are told in writing by St. Paul that it is fitting that they should abstain from each other by agreement for a time, in order that they may indulge in prayer, and again come together (1 Cor. 7:5).*

#### Interpretation

And when asked about husbands and wives whether they ought to be continent respecting each other, the Saint answers that on this point the parties themselves ought to be sufficient judges, since it is fitting and proper according to blessed Paul for them to engage in no bodily association and intercourse when they are indulging in prayer;<sup>276</sup> and this course ought to be adopted by agreement between both parties — that is to say, by both the husband and the wife agreeing thereto — lest it should come to pass that one of the parties is tempted by the enemy, and the continence of the other become an injury to the one so tempted. For if one party is overcome by desire and is not permitted by the other party to enjoy the satisfaction of it, he is liable to fall with another woman and sin, according to Zonaras.

### CANON IV

*As for those men who involuntarily become victims of nocturnal emission, let them too be guided by their own conscience as to whether to indulge or not, and decide for themselves, whether they have any doubt about this matter or not, as also in the case of foods, “he that hath any doubt is damned if he eat” (Rom. 14:23). And let everyone be conscientious in these matters, and outspoken, in*

---

<sup>276</sup> One might wonder as follows. Since the Apostle says, “Pray continuously (or unintermittingly) and always (or forever), while, on the other hand, married persons must abstain from intercourse in time of prayer, according to the same St. Paul and the present Canon, so then must they always be continent and never have any intercourse at all? But this wonderment is solved more self-sufficiently by the two Canons of Timothy of Alexandria, his cc. V and XIII, which say that by time of prayer the Apostle means when there is a synaxis (or church-meeting) and liturgy, which in those times used to be celebrated for the most part on Saturday and Sunday, on which days married couples were required to be continent, in order to participate in communion, or partake of the divine Mysteries. Hence this Canon of Dionysius gives every sensible person to understand that it is immediately addressed to Basilides, who has asked whether married people are to abstain from each other whenever they have to commune. For it answers that on this point the married people themselves are sufficient judges — meaning, that is to say, that they ought to remain continent during the time of Communion. Though (I know not how) Zonaras and Balsamon failed to interpret the Canon thus, having taken prayer to mean the more serious kind of prayer, which is done with travail and tears. Note, however, that the Apostle adds that aside from prayer married people ought to remain continent during the time of fasting, which is prescribed by the Church, that is to say (and see concerning this point the third Footnote to Ap. c. LXIX).

*accordance with his own inclination, when he approaches God. In honoring us (for you know you are, dear) by asking these questions, you have taken us to be like-minded, as indeed we are, and you are making us partners in your decision. As for me, it is not as a teacher, but as one who deems it fitting for us to talk with each other with all simplicity, that I have set forth my own conception of the matter for our common benefit. After finding that this conception of the matter meets with your approbation, my most sensible son, when you come to see whether it is so, you may write in turn about these matters whatever appears to you right and better. Farewell, my dear son, and I pray that this finds you in peace ministering to the Lord.*

### Interpretation

In the present Canon the Saint is speaking about involuntary emission, or what is more commonly called a wet dream, which occurs during our sleep; and he says that all men who suffer this should make their own conscience the judge. For if the wet dream resulted without any obscene imagination and erotic thought, and furthermore without overeating and overdrinking, and instead nature alone did this of herself, as if it were a natural superfluity in the way of excrement, they are not prevented from coming to communion. But if it resulted from the causes above mentioned — that is to say, from imagination and erotic thought, or from excessive eating and excessive drinking, they ought to be forbidden communion, on the ground that they are not pure, not because of the emission itself of the semen (since this is not unclean, seeing that it is a natural product, precisely as neither the flesh is unclean in itself, of which the semen is an excretion), but because of the wicked contemplation and imagination which polluted the mind. Such men as these, then, are not conscientious, and accordingly they are not outspoken, owing to the wicked contemplation and imagination they give rein to. Hence both as doubters and as being convicted or reproved by their conscience,<sup>277</sup> how can they approach God and the

<sup>277</sup> 1 Canon XII of Timothy is in effect a more detailed explanation of the present Canon. For it interprets this reproof of the conscience of one who has had a wet dream. Accordingly, if he is reproved and convicted of having had this happen to him as the result of a desire for a woman — or, in other words, an erotic thought and imagination — he must not partake; but if it was the result of the influence of demons that this happened to him, he may commune. Since, however, it is difficult for one to discern when the cause of his wet dream is traceable to the enviousness and influence of demons, without his providing any occasion for it himself, the safest way is not to commune. For a wet dream may result from either overeating or overdrinking or oversleeping, and from negligence and repose, and from languor of the body, and from pride, and condemnation, and aspersion, and from some illness of the body, and from a wicked habituation to fornication, and from toil and the drinking of cold beverages. Oftentimes it is due to fear of having a wet dream, according to Symeon the modern Theologian (and see the reply No. 8 of Anastasius the Sinaite, and Philocalia on page 906). For this reason too the Faster in his c. VI forbids one who has polluted himself in sleep from communing for one day. John of Citrus and Balsamon in Reply No. 1 likewise excludes priests and laymen for a day if they have had a wet dream, with the sole exception that in case of danger a layman may partake of the body and blood of the Lord, or a priest may celebrate mass, even though he has had a wet dream. So say also Symeon of Thessalonica in his replies No. 14 and 15, and the Lusaicum in the discourse concerning Dioscorus, and Barsanuphius the great one among Fathers. But above all and on all scores the great and accurate nomograph of the Spirit St. Basil insists that one ought not to commune when he has his usual trouble (see his Epitomized Definition No. 309), and is not free from every pollution of flesh and spirit (Question 3 concerning Baptism). But a wet dream due to desire and imagination is a pollution both of the soul and of the body; that, on the other hand,

Mysteries? For if they approach while thus doubting, they are rather condemned, and not sanctified, just like one who is condemned for eating the common and unclean animals forbidden to Jews, if he doubts and hesitates about these, as the Apostle says.

*(By the Editors of the Orthodox Christian Education Society)*

### PRAYER TO THE FATHER

Lord, Lord, the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! the God who arrayeth Himself in unapproachable light, as in a garment, thou art the one arrayed in eloquence and magnificence, the one magnified with exceeding magnitude, the Father without a beginning the perfect Mind having before thy face thy co-eternal Son and Logos as the radiance of thy glory, the similitude of thy substance, the exact image of thee, and the effusion of thy tenderness; thou projectest Holy Spirit, a Lord and a giver of life, animate love, and the bond of perfection. Thou art the Trinity, the Unit, the perfection; the actual, living, true God, who doest things great and inscrutable, both glorious and superb, without number; who lovest judgement and mercy and faith; who art exceedingly good in every respect. Inasmuch as of thine own will thou didst beget us by word of truth, lead us up to thy truth, to thy Son and Logos, and unite us with Him by an indissoluble union and bond in a spirit of love. Give us the Spirit of truth, that guideth into all truth, that we may know thee the only true God, as well as Jesus Christ, whom thou didst send, because this is the eternal life, which thy beloved Son givest to all who believe in Him. Fit our souls by the measure of thy wisdom, of thy goodness, and of thy greatness. And knowing that before we make our requests thou dost grant them, and that thou dost anticipate us with blessings of goodness, we confess to thee in all heart, and proclaim thy rich mercies; because thou didst so love the world, that thou didst give thy only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, because, being rich in mercy, for the sake of thy great love, with which thou didst love us, and when we were dead in sins thou didst make us alive in Christ, — by

---

which occurs without imagination or insensibly, is a pollution of only the body; and there is scarcely anyone to be found who when he has a wet dream thus or otherwise is not reproved by his conscience as having polluted himself, owing to the prejudice which men have firmly rooted about this matter in their imagination. But some critical individuals have attributed pollution of the flesh even to that little pleasurable moistness of semen felt by one in his generative member and caused either by erotic contemplation or by seeing and hearing erotically some passionately loved person; from which sort of pollution as this too those going to Communion ought to be free. I cannot conceal here by silence the great cunning and craftiness employed by the Devil in regard to this affliction of a wet dream, which cunning and craftiness that sage Nilus brings out in one of his letters. The heinous wretch, says he, goes to such great lengths to pollute miserable man with an erotic wet dream that he is not satisfied to have a man suffer this misfortune while asleep, but after the accursed one excites the malignant development in a man with the imagination of certain persons, and especially of those whom we have had time to make an effort, and after nature has already prepared herself for action, he awakens the man at that moment in order that he may feel more vividly, while awake, that impure pleasure and be enabled to remember it the better. Hence by taking a cue from this fact let everyone understand how precious a treasure virginity is, and how much the Devil envies and plots to steal him away from us, and let us be on our guard.



His grace we are saved through faith, — didst make us to sit in heavenly places, in the highest. Holy Father, righteous Father, good Father, how great a love hast thou given to us, that we should be called thy children! Now are we thy children, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when it shall appear, we shall be like thee, for we shall see thee as thou art.

Wherefore we praise, bless, and glorify thy ineffable goodness and love, and sing unto thee a new song before the angels and before all the visible and invisible creation, saying: Thou art the actual living true God, who art exceedingly good in every respect, because thou art light, and there is no darkness in thee, for thou didst make us, and didst love us with all thine heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy understanding. And since, as thy true Logos said, no commandment is greater than this, neither is any hymn greater than this. Blessed therefore is thy Son and Logos, our Lord and Preceptor, who teachest us to praise thee and bless thee, as is pleasing unto thee. Having Him as our great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, sitting at thy right hand, and interceding for us, through Him we offer to thee our honor, worship, adoration, confession, and thanks; for unto thee all glory, honor and worship and adoration are fitting, and to thy only-begotten Son and thy all-holy and good and lifegiving Spirit, now and for ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

#### PRAYER TO THE SON

My Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son and Logos, who art in the bosom of the Father, who didst become flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, thou art the perfect God and the perfect man. Thou art the perfect man, pure in heart, meek and humble, righteous and merciful, a peacemaker, who endured the cross for the sake of mercy, peace and righteousness, our Great High Priest, holy, guileless, undefiled, separate from sinners, cleansing and sanctifying us sinners with thy own blood, who sittest at the right hand of the Father, having become higher than the heavens, having been placed above all rule and authority and power and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come. Thou art that elect stone, the precious one, the chief cornerstone, who hast knocked down the image of the old man, and has thyself filled all the earth like a great mountain; the true vine, cultivated by the heavenly Father; the tree of life, planted of old in the Paradise of God. Thou art the mighty, the eternal, the Great King, and thy kingdom hath no end. Thou art the perfect God, perfect Logos of perfect Mind, the Being of the Being, the Living One of the Living One, the True One of the True One, the radiance of glory, the similitude of substance, the exact image, the effusion of tenderness, exceedingly good in every respect, my righteousness, my sanctification, my redemption, my life, my joy, my peace, my light, my truth, my beginning, my science, my wisdom, my perfection, my good, the one, the perfect help of which all have need, the good portion, the perfect gift coming down to us from above from the Father of Lights. I desire as thou desirest, that I may be with thee forever, that I may behold thy glory, which the Father gave to thee, having loved thee before the foundation of the world. Give unto me grace and mission to teach obedience to the faith unto all nations, in order that I may conciliate with thee the people who have departed from thee, for whom thou didst die, whom thou didst redeem from the curse by the precious blood. Amen.

---

## CONCERNING ST. GREGORY OF NEOCAESAREA

### PROLEGOMENA

This divine Gregory was a contemporary of St. Dionysius of Alexandria, though a little later than he. Thus the blessed man served together with him the same Emperors, Valerian and Gallienus, and during the persecutions of the Christians which they incited. Having first acquired all the learning of the Greeks while in Alexandria, and having later become a disciple (or pupil) of Origen,<sup>278</sup> thus thereafter he was ordained Bishop of Neocaesarea in the region of the Pontus (or Black Sea) by Phaedimus, the Bishop of Amasia, who was distant in respect of location but near in respect of the indescribable charm due to the grace resulting from divine inspiration. When he commenced trying to find out exactly the dogma of the Christian religion (called in Greek “the piety”), there appeared to him in person both the Lady Theotoke (called in English “the Blessed Virgin”) and John the Theologian (generally called “John the Divine” in English), who at the command of the Mother of God revealed to him the mystery of Theology, which runs as follows (the English translation here being necessarily imperfect):

“One God Father of a living Logos, of Wisdom substantiate and of power, and of an eternal stamp, the perfect Generator of a perfect Being, the Father of an only-begotten Son.”

“One Lord sole out of sole, a God out of a God, the express image and stamp of the Deity. A perspicuous Logos, a Wisdom comprising the constitution of all things in the universe, and a power creative of all creation, a true Son of a true Father, an invisible exemplar of the one who is invisible, and an immortal of the Immortal One, and an eternal of the Eternal One. One Holy Spirit having Its existence from God, and manifested through the Son, that is to say, to men. A perfect image of the perfect Son; Life which is the cause of all living beings; a holy Source of holiness; a bestower of sanctification in whom is revealed God the Father who is over all things and in all things; and God the Son, who is through all things. A perfect Trinity whereof the glory, the eternalness and the kingdom are neither divided nor alienated. In the Trinity, therefore, there is nothing creatural or servile, nor adventitious or adscititious, as formerly not having been existent, but having crept in later; neither, therefore, at any time was the Father lacking a Son, nor had the Son any lack of the Spirit; neither did a unit grow into a dyad, nor a dyad into a trinity, but, on the contrary, the same Trinity has ever and always been immutable and unalterable.”<sup>279</sup>

He attended the Council convoked against Paul of Samosata in Antioch with Firmilian the bishop of Caesarea Cappadocian Caesarea, and many

---

<sup>278</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa says this in the highly rhetorical encomium which he wrote in regard to the life of this saint.

<sup>279</sup> These are the very words contained in the written work of Gregory of Nyssa, *ibid.*

others.<sup>280</sup> He lived even down to the time of Emperor Aurelian, when in the year 272 the last Council<sup>281</sup> was held against the man of Samosata. The Church of Christ celebrates him on the seventeenth day of the month of November. It is noteworthy that St. Basil the Great, in his letter to the clerics in the vicinity of Neocaesarea, asserts that this Gregory did not cover his head when he was praying, being a genuine disciple of St. Paul the Apostle; that he avoided taking any oaths, contenting himself with a yea or a nay. That he called no one a fool. That he hated invective (or uncomplimentary remarks) and many other things does he state concerning him: "But where shall we place Gregory and his utterances? Can we deny him a place alongside the Apostles and Prophets, a man who walked in the same Spirit with them? and one who stalked throughout his life in the footsteps of the Saints? and who achieved throughout his life an accurate copy of the evangelical model of behavior? a man who in view of the superabundance of gracious gifts in him energized by the Spirit with all power, and with signs and wonders, was hailed even by the enemies of the truth themselves as a second Moses." It was this man, then, who aside from his other written works<sup>282</sup> wrote also this canonical epistle in the year 262, according to what Miliars says in vol. II of the Conciliar Records, which was divided into twelve or eleven Canons, and is confirmed indefinitely by c. I of the 4th, but definitely and by name by c. II of the 6th Ecum. C.; and by virtue of this confirmation it acquires what is in a way an ecumenical force. The epistle is contained in vol. II of the Pandectae, and in vol. I of the Conciliar Records, p. 107. He sent it either to the same Dionysius of Alexandria, or to Maximus, the successor of Dionysius, according to Eusebius (Book VII, ch. 28). For it is this man that he calls a Pope and that asked, it appears, this divine Gregory about those persons who ate things sacrificed to idols and did other things in the course of the incursion of the barbarians which occurred as much in the region of the Pontus as in the region of Alexandria. That the same persecutions ensued both in regard to the Pontus and in regard to Alexandria at the instigation of the same Emperors is a fact which anyone can learn both from the life of this saint and from the history written by Eusebius (*ibid.*, ch. 11), who narrates the evils that befell Egypt in the time of Dionysius.

## THE TWELVE CANONS OF OUR FATHER AMONG SAINTS GREGORY, ARCHBISHOP OF NEOCAESAREA, THE MIRACLE-WORKER, INTERPRETED

### CANON I

*It is not the foods that concern us, most sacred Pope, if the captives ate them,  
which the conquerors offered them, especially since it is said by all of them that*

---

<sup>280</sup> Eusebius (Book VII, ch. 28), and Zonaras, and Balsamon.

<sup>281</sup> See the Horologion on the 17th day of November, and the Prolegomena to St. Dionysius, and the Footnote to c. XIX of the First EC. C.

<sup>282</sup> The written works of this Saint were published in printed form in Paris in the year 1622, and together with them was published also a translation of the Commentary on Ecclesiastes, which is spuriously entitled as a work of St. Gregory the Theologian. For in reality it is a genuine work of this man of Neocaesarea, and see page 12 of the first volume of the series of the Octateuch concerning Commentators.

### CANON V

*Let no one deceive himself as having found it, either, for not even a finder is permitted to profit from it. For Deuteronomy says: "On seeing thy brother's calf or his sheep going astray, thou shalt not overlook them on the way, but thou shalt in any case restore them to thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring them unto thine own house, and they shall be with thee until thy brother seek after them, and thou shalt give them back to him. Thus shalt thou do with his ass; and thus shalt thou do with his raiment; and thus shalt thou do with respect to every loss of thy brother's, whatever may be lost by him and thou may find" (Deut. 22:1-3). That is what Deuteronomy says. In Exodus, not only if thou find goods of thy brother's, but even of thine enemy: "Thou shalt surely return them," it says, "to their owner's house" (Exod. 23:4). But if it is not permissible in time of peace to profit as a result of your brother's or your enemy's indolence or luxuriation or neglect of his own belongings, much more is it forbidden when he is in woe and fleeing from foes and necessarily abandoning his own property.*

### Interpretation

In continuation of the preceding Canon, the Saint says thus in the present Canon. Let no one fool himself among such persons by pretending to have found his brother's property thrown away and not looked after (or, instead of all these words we might say in English "derelict"), and to have taken it on this account or for this reason; for, though one may have found it neglected, he is not permitted to appropriate it and to retain it, since he is obliged to take it and to safeguard it in his custody until its owner seeks it. And the Saint adduces two testimonies in regard to this: one from Deuteronomy saying that if anyone should happen to find a lost calf or lost sheep or lost ass of his brother's, or a lost garment or any other lost thing, he must give it back to his brother. If, however, he does not know who owns it, he must keep it until his brother asks for it or seeks it, and must then give it back to him. And the other testimony which he cites from Exodus says that if anyone find property not only of his brother's but even of his enemy's that has been thrown away (*Note of Translator*. — By "thrown away" the author means "apparently thrown away"), he must return it to him. But if, as these divine words assert, one is not permitted to retain property of his brother's or of his enemy's which in peacetime the owner has carelessly left neglected, much more is it true that he is not permitted to retain anything belonging to his unfortunate brother who is fleeing from enemies and has necessarily abandoned his own property. See also his c. III.

### CANON VI

*Many persons deceive themselves in that they hold on to property of others which they have found and claim it instead of the property which they themselves have lost, since by the same treatment as they received from Boradi and Goths they are making themselves Boradi and Goths to others. We therefore have sent brother and fellow senior Euphrosynus to you for this, that in*

notwithstanding the fact that the riot and disturbance occurred because it was he that had persuaded a great multitude to return to knowledge of God. Again, when the Angel rescued Peter from prison, Herod arrested the soldiers who had been guarding him and punished them, or hanged them. But neither the Angel nor Peter was blamed on this account, because the soldiers might have fled when they saw that Peter was not in the prison, yet they did not do so. Moreover, when our Lord Jesus Christ was born, whose name was, according to the prophecy, “rapidly despoil those despoiled by the Devil,” which is to say, in other words, that the Wizards too, as having been despoiled by Him figuratively, paid adoration to Him, presenting him with gifts, of gold as a King, and of frankincense as a God, and of myrrh as a dead Man; and without returning to the Assyrian king, or, more expressly speaking, to Herod,<sup>310</sup> but by another route they departed to their country. When, I say, all these things had occurred and the Lord, thanks to the Angel’s admonition, had escaped into Egypt, then bloodthirsty Herod, being angered because he had been hoaxed by the Wizards, put to death all the infants in Bethlehem, from two years old and down; yet the Lord is not blamed on this account. After seeking the forerunner John and not finding him, the same Herod put his father Zacharias<sup>311</sup> to death because his mother Elisabeth had taken him and escaped; yet neither John nor Elisabeth deserve any blame on this account.

#### CANON XIV

*If there are some persons who have suffered great violence and coercion, having had a crucible put in their mouth and bonds, and having persisted with fortitude in the disposition of the faith, and having endured having their hands*

---

<sup>310</sup> In view of the fact that at the time of Christ’s birth there was a different king in Assyria, whose name was Obodam, according to what is said in the historical account contained in the sixteenth book of the work entitled *Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus, chapter 6, and a different one in Judea and Samaria, named Herod, how is it that the Saint here says that the Wizards did not return to the Assyrian king Herod? Or perhaps he calls Herod an Assyrian with respect to his viciousness and murderous propensity, in the same manner as Isaiah called the Devil an Assyrian mind because of his wickedness.

<sup>311</sup> St. Basil the Great in his discourse on the birth of Christ says that there was an account handed down by ancient tradition to the effect that Zacharias, being acquainted with the fact that the Lady Theotoke was virgin when she gave birth placed the latter even after the birth of the Lord in the rank of virgins. But the Jews, having blamed him on this score as producing that paradox of a virgin’s giving birth without suffering the destruction of her maidenhead, killed him. It is possible, however, that both things might have happened; and that then when he introduced the Virgin, Zacharias gave the Jews occasion for murdering him, as St. Basil says, but later, owing to his child’s being sought, he was really killed by Herod, just as divine Peter says. For the sake of curiosity let this be added too: that in the time of Theodosius the younger the remains of this prophet Zacharias were found on the site called Cophar in Eleutheroupolis, Palestine, by a certain man named Calemerus, and he had on a white garment, a gold miter on his head, and gold-trimmed sandals on his feet, just as he stood at the altar. (He was not the son of Jehoiaada the priest, as some say, whom Joash the king put to death in the court of the house of the Lord; for that man was called Azariah, and not Zechariah, according to the twenty-fourth chapter of the second book of the Chronicles (Chron. 24:20), in the Septuagint. (Dositheus, page 267 of the *Dodecabiblus*). At present his relic is in Italy, according to what Neetarius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, says on page 192 of his refutation of Popery. George Cedrinus, on the other hand, narrates that forty days after the murder of her husband Zacharias Elizabeth died in the cave where she was hidden with her child John; an Angel of the Lord took care of the orphanage and bringing up of the child in the desert. (Dositheus, Book I, ch. 2, of the *Dodecabiblus*.)

*burned when offered against their will to the atrocious sacrifice, precisely as the thrice-blessed martyrs have written to me concerning those in Libya, and as other fellow ministers have stated; such persons, especially when there are other brethren who joined in their martyrdom, may serve in the ministry, being placed in the rank of the Confessors, as also those who have been utterly deadened amid numerous tortures, and no longer able to speak or to use their voice, or to move themselves by way of resisting when in vain trying to force themselves to do so. For they have not even consented to their abominableness, as I have been told again by fellow ministers. Anyone, therefore, that lives publicly and privately in accordance with the rules of Timothy shall be placed in the rank of the Confessors, too. seeing that he obeys the one who says: "Pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the everlasting life, whereunto thou hast been called and hast confessed the good confession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:11-12).*

### Interpretation

Those who used to chastise martyrs, after numerous tortures would forcibly insert in their mouth either wine from libations or meat from animals that had been sacrificed to idols, or putting incense and charcoal in their hands would drag them to the altar of an idol bound hand and foot, in order that, being unable to endure the pain of burning, they might throw the incense on the altar and thus appear to have sacrificed. So, regarding these men, the present Canon decrees that if they stood firm in the faith and preferred to have their hands burned rather than to throw incense on the altar of an idol, as did the Martyrs in Libya (and Barlaam the saint and martyr), they may not only keep their holy orders and clericate, but are to be enrolled among the Confessors too. And not only these men, but even those too who have been so deadened because of numerous tortures that they could not speak or offer any resistance to their persecutors, who would put wine or meat sacrificed to idols in their mouth; and they are likewise to be enrolled among the Confessors. The Saint thereafter goes on to speak of the conscience, saying that whoever lives and behaves in accordance with the rules written by Paul to Timothy, and cherishes righteousness, piety, faith, love, patience, and meekness, and fights the good fight of the faith, and holds on to the confession which he made at the time of holy baptism in front of many witnesses, is also to be numbered among the Confessors. See also c. III of Ancyra.

From the same Saint's Discourse on Easter.

### CANON XV

*No one shall find fault with us for observing Wednesday and Friday, on which we have been commanded to fast with good reason by tradition. On Wednesday owing to the council held by the Jews for the betrayal of the Lord; on Friday, owing to His having suffered for our sake. As for Sunday,<sup>312</sup> on the other hand, we celebrate it as a joyous holiday because of His having risen from the dead, on which day we have not even received instruction to bend a knee.*

<sup>312</sup> In other manuscripts it says "For (we celebrate) Sunday."

### Interpretation

The present Canon decrees that no one shall blame us Orthodox Christians for always fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays every week in accordance with Apostolic tradition. For we fast on every Wednesday because it was on this day that the council was held by the Jews for the purpose of betraying the Lord. We fast on every Friday because it was on this day that the Lord suffered for our sake. But we observe Sunday as a holiday and day of joy, because it was on this day that the Lord rose from the dead; and on this day we have not had any traditional instructions even to bend and bow a knee. Read the 64 Ap. C. and the XX of the First.

*(By the Editors of the Orthodox Christian Education Society)*

#### CONCERNING FASTING

Fasting is not a virtue, but a means of acquiring virtues. Fasting, therefore, is needful until the faithful convert has acquired the virtues of Christ and has become secured against falling. Faith, prayer, and sobriety require fasting in order to be perfected and become permanent habits of the convert.

"Fasting" this Greek word means abstaining from foods of all kinds, and not an exchanging of one diet for another. Such fasting was carried out by our Lord Jesus Christ and the prophets Moses and Elijah, who for forty days and nights ate nothing and drank nothing, being sustained by prayer and the Spirit of God without becoming, hungry (Matt. 4:2); (Exod. 34:28; Deut. 9:9; I Kings 19:8). But to fast with the sensation of hungering is fasting of human freedom; such fasting is undergone by ascetics during a variable number of days.

Christ, the perfect lawgiver, laid down no law as to fasting, but did prescribe how to fast (Matt. 6:16-18). He vested the right of legislation with regard to fasting in the Apostles, judging from what He said; "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. (Matt. 9:14-15). The divine Apostles, however, have laid down the following rule as regards fasting: "If any Bishop or elder (Presbyter), or Deacon, or Subdeacon, or Reader (Anagnost) or Psalmist (Psaltis) fail to fast during Holy Lent (40 days preceding Easter), or on Wednesday or on Friday, he shall be deposed (i.e., disrobed), unless he was prevented on account of bodily illness. If a layman, he shall be excommunicated (i.e., unchurched). (Apostolic Canon No. 69). The Apostles prescribe no other fasting, nor what one should eat or refrain from eating.

As concerns fasting at other times than on Wednesday and Friday and during the Great Lent of the Holy Apostles preceding Easter, the Synods added the fasting of Advent for a period of 40 days preceding Christmas; the fast before the memory (i.e., the festival) of the Holy Apostles; and the fast before the memory of Dormition (improperly called "Assumption" by non-Orthodox churches) of the Holy Virgin (called "Theotokos" in Greek, which means "giving birth to a god") for a period of 15 days. The Lent of the Holy Apostles commences on Whit Monday (i.e., the day following Whitsunday, or Pentecost) and may last until June 29th. It is a movable fast following Easter in accordance with the Orthodox Julian calendar.

According to the Typicon of the Greek Church (of Constantinople) during the above fast one must abstain from meat, cheese, eggs, fish, oil and wine, except on Saturdays and Sundays, on which days, excluding Holy Saturday, wine and oil are permissible. These two items are also permissible whenever a memory of a saint is celebrated on a day that falls during Lent, including Wednesdays and Fridays. Two other fasts are obligatory upon all Orthodox Christians: the festival commemorating the Exaltation of the Cross, called in English "Holy Cross day," September 14th, and that of the beheading of John the Baptist, August 29th.

Fish is permissible on the following festivals: the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, September 8th, the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple, November 21st, The Annunciation "of the Virgin Mary," March 25th; the Dormition (improperly called "the Assumption" among the non-Orthodox) of the Holy Virgin (or Theotokos), August 15th; and the Transfiguration of Christ, August 6th.

All foods are permissible in the following periods: from Christmas to the eve of Epiphany (called Theophany in the Greek Church); Easter week; Whitweek (the first week of Pentecost); and the week of the Publican and the Pharisee. During Cheese Week both cheese and eggs are permitted.

For the mystery of the divine Eucharist neither the Apostles nor the Synods decreed any special fasting. The three-day fast before the divine Eucharist, which ignorant and biased persons among both the clergy and the laity are trying to impose (under the name "Rogation Days") is a Satanical invention for the purpose of hindering, as far as may be, the Christians from partaking of this saving mystery of the Lord's Supper. Christ the lawgiver, following the supper to the body, gave a supper to the soul, communing thereof His disciples. The Holy Spirit demands fear of God, faith and love through the officiating Seraphim from those who desire to partake of the body and blood of Christ out of the chalice of the divine Eucharist. But a Christian is free to fast of his own accord as much as he desires besides the regular fasts—not Pharisaically but in a Christian-like manner with tears and alms so far as he can. According to divine Paul; "But meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better, nor, if we eat not, are we the worse." (I Cor. 8:8). "Meats for the belly and the belly for meats; but God will destroy both it and them." (ibid. 6:14). In his First Epistle to Timothy (1:8-9) he writes: "But we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man." But before one can become righteous a great deal of struggling is necessary. Without unwavering faithfulness and obedience to Christ and reception of the Holy Spirit, a man cannot expect to become righteous.



## CONCERNING ATHANASUS THE GREAT

### PROLEGOMENA

Our Father among Saints Athanasius flourished in the time of Constantine the Great.<sup>313</sup> For, as a Deacon, he was present at the First Ecumenical Council, held in the year 325, together with Alexander the Patriarch (or Bishop) of Alexandria;<sup>314</sup> and in the year 326<sup>315</sup> he was appointed Bishop of Alexandria.<sup>316</sup> But because of his unwillingness to participate in communion with Arius (in spite of the fact that Emperor Constantine commanded him to do so, thinking that Arius had accepted the definition of the Nicene Council), those forming the party of Eusebius the Bishop of Nicomedia moved against him the terrible accusations and calumnies.<sup>317</sup> Accordingly, in the year 335 he was deposed from office by the latrocinium,<sup>318</sup> or “robber council,” held in Tyre; in the year following<sup>319</sup> he was exiled to Tribes, France, because the Arians had misrepresented him to the Emperor by accusing him of not allowing the fixed allotment of wheat<sup>320</sup> to be taken from Alexandria to Constantinople. Eighteen months<sup>321</sup> later, Constantine the Great having died, he returned to Alexandria at the command of Constantius II, the second son of Constantine the Great, in the year 332.<sup>322</sup> In the year 341, however, he was deposed from office by the Council held in Antioch.<sup>323</sup> Then, going up to Rome, and proving himself innocent of the charges which had been brought against him both by the Council held in Rome A.D. 342, and the one held in Sardica A.D. 347, he was recalled again to his throne by Emperor Constantius, as a result of the intercession and threat of his brother Constans.<sup>324</sup> Six years later he was condemned by the Councils held one in Arelatum in the year 353 and another in Milan in the year 357<sup>325</sup>, and thereupon he retired to the desert of Thebais<sup>326</sup>, and remained there until the end of Constantius. Julian the Apostate having become Emperor (A.D. 361), he was recalled to his throne; and, having convoked a Council on the question of essence and substance, he succeeded in uniting the Westerners with the

---

<sup>313</sup> Note that not only has Rufinus historically recorded that which Athanasius is said to have done when a young child — that is to say, that he baptized the unbaptized children of his own age among his acquaintances, but even Socrates mentions it (Book I, ch. 16).

<sup>314</sup> Sozomen, Book I, ch. 17

<sup>315</sup> Cave, vol. i, p. 190.

<sup>316</sup> Socrates, Book I, ch. 15; and Sozomen, Book II, ch. 12.

<sup>317</sup> The same, *ibid.*; and Sozomen, Book II, ch. 12.

<sup>318</sup> Socrates, *ibid.*, ch. 32.

<sup>319</sup> Cave, *l. c.*

<sup>320</sup> Socrates, *l. c.*, ch. 35.

<sup>321</sup> Cave, *l. c.*

<sup>322</sup> Nicephorus Callistus, Book IX, ch. 3.

<sup>323</sup> See the Footnote to c. IV of Antioch.

<sup>324</sup> See the Prolegomena to the Council held in Sardica, and Socrates, *l. c.*, ch. 22 and ch. 23.

<sup>325</sup> See page 589 of vol. I of the Conciliar Records, edition of Binus.

<sup>326</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus in his encomium of Athanasius.

Easterners.<sup>327</sup> In the year 362<sup>328</sup>, however, he was exiled from Alexandria at the command of the Apostate Emperor, whereupon he told the Christians weeping on his account, “Be ye of good cheer; it is but a cloudlet, and will soon pass away.”<sup>329</sup> In the year 363, having come to Antioch, he taught Jovian the dogmas of the Orthodox faith.<sup>330</sup> Having met with persecution during the reign of Valens, he secretly hid himself in a Father’s tomb.<sup>331</sup> Shortly thereafter being summoned by Valens himself, and having lived in peace till the year 371 or 373,<sup>332</sup> he gave up the spirit to God, after serving as a bishop for forty-six years and remaining adamant in the face of many great dangers.<sup>333</sup> Besides his other written works, which comprise three volumes published in Paris in the year 1698, he also left us these three Canonical Epistles, which are necessary to the good order and constitution of the Church, and which have been confirmed indefinitely by c. I of the 4th and c. I of the 7th, but definitely by c. II of the 6th Ecum. C., and by virtue of this confirmation they acquire what is in a way Ecumenical force. They are to be found in the second volume of the Pandectae, and on p. 333 of vol. I of the Conciliar Records.<sup>334</sup>

### **First Epistle of Athanasius the Great, addressed to the monk Amun**

*All creatures of God are good and clean. For there is nothing useless or unclean that the Logos of God has made. “For we are a fragrance of Christ among the saved” says the Apostle (II Cor. 2:15). But inasmuch as the Devil’s arrows are various and versatile, and suffice to disturb the minds even of the most honest men, by inseminating them with cogitations of uncleanness and of pollution, let us proceed to dispel the Evil One’s delusion briefly, with the grace of our Savior, and bolster up the mind of simpler men. “Unto the pure all things are pure” (Titus 1:15): but the conscience and everything of the impure. I am moved to admiration by the Devils ingenuity, because though it breeds corruption and pestilence it suggests thoughts that seem to be pure, yet the result is rather an ambush than a test. For, as I said before, in order to occupy ascetics with, mannerly and salutary meditation, and appear in this respect to the winner, he nevertheless breeds such maggots as produce nothing good in life, but only empty argumentations and twaddle which one ought to forgo. For tell me, dear and*

---

<sup>327</sup> Sozomen, Book V, ch. 12; and Gregory of Nazianzus; and the Footnote to the present Second Epistle.

<sup>328</sup> Cave, l.c.

<sup>329</sup> Sozomen, ch. 15.

<sup>330</sup> The same, in Book VI, ch. 5.

<sup>331</sup> The same, *ibid.*, ch. 12.

<sup>332</sup> Cave, l.c.

<sup>333</sup> Socrates, Book IV, ch. 2.

<sup>334</sup> Justinian (in his letter to the Fifth Council) calls Athanasius a great Teacher of the Church. St. Basil (in his letter to Athanasius) calls him a sound head conferring health upon all the body. And again he says (in his letter to the brethren in the West) “our most precious Father Athanasius.” Cyril of Alexandria (in his letter to John of Antioch) calls him an accurate Defender (or Ecclisic) of the catholic Church and faith. St. Chrysostom calls him Apostolic. Paul of Emesa (in the homily which he delivered in Alexandria in the presence of Cyril) calls him a Pillar of Orthodoxy. And the Seventh Ecum. Council (in its fifth Act) calls him a Pentathlus (i.e., pentathlete) of the Church.

most reverent friend, what sin or uncleanness is there in a natural excretion? It is as if one should find fault with mucus exuding from noses, and with the spittle expelled through the mouth. And we can say still more than this: the secretions of the stomach, which are necessary to the animal economy and to its vital processes. Furthermore, if we believe man to be a work of God's hands, in accordance with the divine Scriptures, how could any work be polluted when made by a pure power? And if we are a race or kindred of God (cf. Acts 17:28-29), as the divine Acts of the Apostles assert, we have nothing in us that is impure or unclean. For it is only then that we may be polluted when we perpetrate the foulest sin. But when any natural excretion occurs involuntarily, then, as we have said before, we must patiently put up with the necessity of nature. But simply because those who are inclined to dispute whatever is said aright, or rather done by God, are wont to cite a passage in the Gospel, on the ground that "it is not what goeth into the mouth that defiles a man, but that which cometh out" (Matt. 15:11), we must needs disprove also this illogicality (for we shall not call it an argumentation). For first of all, being unbolstered, they force the Scriptures to fit their ignorance. For the explanation of this divine assertion is as follows. Some men like these used to be in doubt about foods, and the Lord Himself, by way of exposing their ignorance, or, at any rate, making the deception patent to all, says that it is not what goes into a man that defiles him, or makes him unclean, but what comes out of him. Then he goes on to say from where it comes out, namely, from the heart. For there He knows the evil treasures of profane thoughts and of the other sins to be. The Apostle who has had it taught<sup>335</sup> to him says more concisely: "Food commendeth us not to God" (I Cor. 8:8). But even now one might reasonably enough say that no natural excretion commends us to God for punishment. Even the children of physicians (to be ashamed of their externals) might counter to this that certain necessary passageways have been given to the animal for the purpose of enabling each of us to eliminate superfluous humors that accumulate in our members. Thus, for instance, the hairs of the head are superfluities, or excess baggage; and the aqueous ejections from the head, and the expulsions from the stomach, and above all the emissions of seminal passages. After all, what sort of things, for God, O most God-beloved old fellow, constitute the sinfulness when the Lord has created the animal such and has wanted to have it have such passages in its members? But inasmuch as we have to anticipate the objections of the wicked ones (for one might say that even their true use is not a sin either if the organs have been formed by the Creator), for this purpose let us cease asking them questions. What use are you referring to? That in the Law which God allowed by saying: "Be fruitful, and multiply; and replenish the earth!" (Gen. 1:28), which the Apostle accepted when he said: "Marriage is honorable, and the bed un-defiled" (Heb. 13:4): or the popular kind, performed clandestinely and adulterously? Since in other transactions in life too we shall find differences to occur in some way or another: for instance, it is not permissible to murder anyone (Exod. 20:13), yet in war it is praiseworthy and lawful to slay the adversaries. Thus at any rate those who have distinguished themselves in war are entitled to and are accorded great honors, and columns are erected in memory of them reciting their exploits. So that the same matter in some respect and at some time or other is not permitted, but in another respect and at some

<sup>335</sup> In other manuscripts it says "proved to him says."

other time when there is a good occasion for it, may be allowed and permitted. The same argument holds also with regard to coition. Blessed is the man who in his youth having a free yoke employs his natural parts for the prudence of creating children. But if he employs them for licentious or lascivious purposes, he will receive the punishment prescribed by the Apostle for fornicators and adulterers (Heb. 13:4). For, there being two roads in life as regards these matters, the one a more moderate and helpful road conducive to life, that of marriage, I mean; the other one being angelic and unsurpassable, that of virginity; but if anyone should choose the mundane life, that is to say, the way of marriage, though he is not liable to censure or blame, he will not receive so many gracious gifts. For what he will receive when he bears fruit will be thirty. But if he embraces the chaste and supramundane life, though the road is rough in comparison with the first and difficult to achieve, yet it has more wonderful features in the way of gracious gifts: for it has produced the perfect fruit, the hundred. So that their unclean and evil questions have their own solutions and have been solved by the divine Scriptures long before in times of old. Therefore, O Father, bolster up the herds under your care by giving them comfort from Apostolic passages, by refreshing their souls with passages from the Gospels, by offering them pieces of good advice derived from the Psalms, By saying, for instance, "Revive me, in accordance with Thy words" (Ps. 138:7); for it is in accordance with His words to worship Him with a pure heart. Being aware of this the same Prophet, as is translating his own utterance, says: "Create me a clean heart. O God" (Ps. 51:10), in order to prevent any dirty thoughts from disturbing me. And again David says: "Uphold me with a princely spirit" (Ps. 51:12), in order that even though any thoughts should ever disturb me or disconcert me, a strong force lent by Thee may support me like a scaffold and prevent my falling. He himself, therefore, while recommending these and such things, tells those who are tardy in obeying the truth: "I will teach transgressors Thy ways" (Ps. 51:13); and having confidence in the Lord that you will be able to persuade them to abstain from such wickedness, chant to them: "And impious men shall be converted unto Thee" (ibid.). But God grant that those who are malignantly seeking satisfaction shall cease from such vain labor, whereas those who are in doubt about the goodness of piety shall be reinforced with a princely spirit. All of you who certainly understand the truth, have it unbroken and unshaken in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom be glory and dominion unto the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

### Interpretation

As this great Father of ours was asked, it would appear, about the emission which we have from the natural parts during sleep, or what is more commonly called a wet dream, whether it is sinful, he wrote the present letter in reply, wherein he says that all things created by God are clean, and that God created nothing that is unclean or polluted. Yet, since the machinations of the Devil are many and various, with which he is wont to confuse men, and to annoy simple servants of God, meaning the ascetics, and to deter them from their accustomed virtue by sowing unclean thoughts in their imagination, we ought to banish that machinery of the Devil with the help of Christ, and to bolster up the confidence of our innocent brethren, in order to prevent them from being annoyed any

they claim to have effected. For they offer the defense, or apology, that they did not join the heresy in reality, but only in pretense, and that they did this with a view to economy and concession, in order to avoid having themselves completely driven out of the Church, that is to say, and others of the most impious type take their place and be appointed in their stead and corrupt the Orthodox Christians utterly. Hence they deemed it preferable to bear patiently the burden of forced denial and thereby prevent the multitude of the Orthodox from being lost. In maintaining this assertion they cite also the example of Aaron the brother of Moses wherein he submitted to the unreasonable vehemence of the Israelitic laity and gave them permission (on account of the tardiness of Moses) and allowed them the concession of making an image of the calf. He later offered Moses the apology, or defense, that he committed that breach of law in order to prevent the laity from returning to Egypt and be led to perpetrate a still greater impiety. For, of course, if they remained in the wilderness they might be induced to turn away from impiety, but if they returned to Egypt they could by no means be induced to do so, but, on the contrary, would actually exceed the bounds of impiety. They likewise bethought themselves that if they themselves should temporarily join the heresy in appearance, they would remain Christians in Orthodoxy and not be cast upon the rocks of cacodoxy, in that they would not be subject to coercion by anyone, which of course would be their fate if other bishops who were zealous adherents of the heresy should be appointed to the churches. On account of this defense, therefore, and economy, such bishops were allowed to retain their clerical status. Accordingly, as regards those in holy orders who actually went into communion with the Arians, thus much is what the Saint has to say. As touching laymen who were deceived or forced by the Arians to join their heresy, pardon, he says, is to be granted to them when they repent and revert to Orthodoxy, being accepted and “economized,” in accordance with the Canons of the Holy Fathers. These things, he says. I have written to your godliness in the conviction that the views which have appeared to me to be reasonable will also appear to you too to be so. Accordingly, it is to be expected that you will not blame this Council of ours for holding a truce — delay, that is to say, and laboring in vain. This amounts to saying that you will not accuse us of having met idly and vainly, and of failing to come to a canonical and reasonable decision in regard to those who have joined the heretics. After saying these things and exhorting Rufinianus to read his Epistle to all the priests, in order to let them know too, the Saint adds also what any persons reverting from communion with the heretics are obliged to do, which is, that is to say, that they ought to anathematize openly the heresy of Euzoius and of Eudoxius, the protectors of the Arian heresy, and to confess the Creed (or Symbol of the Faith) adopted by the God-bearing Fathers in Nicaea, and not give the preference to any other Council but this First Ecum. C. Read also Ap. cc. XLVII and LXI and LXVIII, and c. VII of the 2nd.

**From the same Saint’s thirty-ninth Festival Epistle,  
which as the Third here runs as follows**

But inasmuch as we have mentioned heretics as dead persons, and ourselves as having salvation in the divine Scriptures, I fear lest, as Paul wrote to the

Corinthians (II Cor. 11:3), some of the honest ones be led astray from simplicity and chastity by the craftiness of men, and thereafter begin relying upon other things, the so-called apocrypha, deceived by the likeness of the titles with the names of the true books, I beg you to be tolerant if what things I am writing about with a view to their necessity and usefulness to the Church are things which you already know and understand thoroughly. Since I am about to state these things, by way of excusing my boldness in doing so I shall make use of the formula of St. Luke the Evangelist, who himself says: "*Forasmuch as many men have taken in hand to set forth in due order a declaration on their part*" (Luke 1:1) of the so-called apocrypha and to intermix these with God-inspired Scripture, concerning which we have full confidence, just as those who were eye-witnesses and servants of the Logos in the beginning have handed down the facts by tradition to the Fathers, it has seemed, good to me too to set forth, at the express request of genuine brethren and after learning the following facts from above, the rites which have been laid down as canons and delivered as teachings and believed to be divine books, in order that anyone, if deceived, may lay the blame on those who deceived him, or if he has remained clean and pure, he may rejoice again in finding himself reminded thereof. Now, therefore, he it said that the total number of books in the Old Testament is twenty-two; for, as I have been told, such is precisely the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In order and by name each of them stands as follows. First comes Genesis, then Exodus, then Leviticus, and after this Numbers, and thereupon Deuteronomy. The rest of them are: Joshua of Nun. and Judges, and after this Ruth. And again the next are Kingdoms, four books; of which the first and the second are counted together as one, and the third and the fourth likewise as one. After these come Paralipomena (or Chronicles, first and second, likewise counted as one book. The Esdras, first and second, likewise counted as one. After these comes the Book of Psalms, and thereupon Proverbs. Then Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. In addition to these there is the book of Job. This followed by the Prophets, the twelve of which are counted as one book. Then come Isaiah and Jeremiah, and together with the latter are Baruch, Lamentations, and the Epistle, and with them are also Ezekiel and Daniel. Up to this point those enumerated have been books of the Old Testament, Those of the New Testament, again, must not be left out of the reckoning. They are: Four Gospels, according to Matthew, according to Mark, according to Luke, according to John;<sup>343</sup> then and after

---

<sup>343</sup> Many persons, in view of the fact that they find that the divine Fathers when interpreting or commenting upon the holy Gospel according to St. John fail to interpret or even to mention the account recorded in its eighth chapter of the woman caught in the very act of committing adultery, are prone to wonder about this or even to assert that this passage is spurious, therefore, with due diligence having made a searching study of this question, for the sake of the truth and with the object of furnishing reliable information on this point to those who would like to learn it, we have arrived at the following results, which we take pains to note here. Accordingly, we state that this account is mentioned by the divine Apostles in Book II, ch. 24 of their Injunctions, and by Eusebius of Pamphilus in his Ecclesiastical History, Book III, ch. 39, and Book IV, ch. 14, in which books while telling about Papius of Hierapolis he says the following: "He has made use of testimony derived from the First Epistle of John and from that of Peter likewise. He has also set forth another account concerning a woman guilty of many sins, in the time of the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews (this perhaps is the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which was written in Hebrew, but the present translation of which does not include that particular passage)." The account in question is also mentioned by this Athanasius the Great in his summary of the books of the Bible. For he says with reference to the Gospel according to St. John: "Coming again Jesus talks to them (sc. the Jews), and they tried to refute

these come the Acts of the Apostles and the seven so-called catholic (or general) Epistles of the Apostles, these being as follows: of James, one; of Peter, two; then of John, three; and of Jude, one. In addition to all these there are also fourteen Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle, which are found written in the following order: the first one to the Romans; then to the Corinthians, two; and after these the one to the Galatians and one to the Ephesians. then one to the Philipians, and one to the Colossians, and two to the Thessalonians; after which comes the Epistle to the Hebrews, and thereupon come two Epistles to Timothy, one to Titus, and lastly one to Philemon;<sup>344</sup> and, again, the Revelation of John. These are all sources of salvation, so that anyone thirsting should take pains to fill himself with the sayings and facts recorded therein. In these alone it is that one may find a teaching ground on which to proclaim the good tidings of the Gospel, and to acquire the religion of piety. Let no one superimpose anything thereon, nor delete anything therefrom. Concerning these the Lord rebuked the Sadducees by saying: “*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor their powers*” (Matt. 22:29; Mark 2:24, John 5:31). Nevertheless, for the sake of greater exactness, I add also this, writing as I do the fact as a matter of necessity, that there are also other books than these outside of the list herein given, which, though not canonically sanctioned, are to be found formally prescribed by the Fathers to be read to those who have just joined and are willing to be catechized with respect to the word of piety, namely: the Wisdom of Solomon; the Wisdom of Sirach: and Esther, and Judith, and Tobias; and the so-called Didache (i.e., salutary teaching] of the Apostles,<sup>345</sup> and the Shepherd.<sup>346</sup> And yet, dear readers, both with those canonically sanctioned and these recommended to be read, there is no mention of the Apocrypha; but, on the contrary, the latter are an invention of heretics who were writing them as they pleased, assigning and adding to them dates and years, in order that, by offering them as ancient documents, they might have a pretext for deceiving honest persons as a consequence thereof.

### Interpretation

The Saint divides the Books into three in this Epistle of his, to wit, into Apocrypha, into Canonical, and into Anaginoskomena (i.e., books to be read). Thus, he calls the Apocrypha deceptive and spurious books which the heretics wrote and asserted to be ancient and to be parts of the divine Bible, whereby they

---

what He said.” This has reference to what was said in regard to the woman accused of adultery. This account is also contained in many Tetraevangelia (i.e., all four Gospels assembled together in one volume) written by hand on parchment and preserved in the sacred Monasteries of the Holy Mountain (of Athos), and these were written eight hundred years and more ago. It appears, however, that this account was an unwritten tradition which was inserted into the divine Gospel by way of addition thereto. But I mean Apostolic tradition. For John himself says: “*And there are many other things that Jesus did and that are not recorded in this book*” (John 20:30 and 21:25).

<sup>344</sup> But now the last one is the Epistle to the Hebrews.

<sup>345</sup> He calls the Injunctions of the Apostles the Didache of the Apostles.

<sup>346</sup> We have spoken about the book called the Shepherd in connection with Ap. c. LXXXV, in the Footnotes thereto. We merely add here that this book was written, according to some persons, by the Apostle Hermas, whom St. Paul greets in his Epistle to the Romans. Further, that divine Jerome asserts that the book of the Shepherd is one that is most beneficial and most necessary (taken from vol. I, p. 172, of the Ecclesiastical History by Meletius, the Archbishop of Athens).

succeeded in leading astray the more simple-minded persons and into believing that they are genuine and good. The canonically sanctioned books, on the other hand, are those of the Old and of the New Testament, all of which he enumerates by name. As for the books to be read, or *Anaginoskomena*, which, though not included among the Canonical Books, are not apocryphal, but, on the contrary, have been appointed by the Fathers to be read to catechumens; and these books too he enumerates one by one. The Saint says that he was compelled to mention these books separately, in order that if perhaps there be anyone who has been misled and has accepted these apocryphal and heretical books he may be corrected and warned to reject them; or, if one has not accepted them, he may rejoice at receiving further information about them. The Saint aptly employs in regard to this matter the principle of the holy Gospel according to St. Luke, both in enumerating the said canonical and to-be-read books and in urging everyone to search them, just as the Lord told the Jews to do, at which point he concludes his epistle. See also Ap. c. LXXXV.

(By The Editors of the Orthodox Christian Education Society)  
**Assigning the Time of the Liturgical Services, and their Origin**

In order that the Church may preserve the unity of faith and divine worship in every place, she ordained that the foregoing Masses be celebrated at set times, as follows: The Mass of James the Apostle is celebrated on the day of his feast, on the twenty-third of October, and may be celebrated at other times, as the elder may wish. The Mass of St. Basil is celebrated ten times during the year. As for the Mass of St. John Chrysostom, it is celebrated throughout the year, except on Wednesdays and Fridays of Holy Lent and on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Passion Week. The Mass of St. Gregory is celebrated on the days of Lent and is called the *Proegiasmena*, or *Presanctified Mass*, because the gifts or oblations used therein may not be transubstantiated (or, in the terminology of the Western Church, “transubstantiated”) again, having already been consecrated in a previous Mass. However, the commemoration of the faithful is fulfilled in this Mass, as mentioned in the service.

The first of these Masses, is that of St. James, which had its origin in the first century. Then followed the Mass of St. Basil in the fourth century; then that of St. John Chrysostom in the fifth century, and lastly the Gregorian Mass in the sixth century. There is no difference in the essence of these four rites.

St. James, the brother of God, was ordained Bishop by the three Apostles John, Peter, and James. See footnote 1 of C.I of the Holy and renowned Apostles. So any Mass contrary to original Masses is heretical; the cause of the heretic teachings is the wrong Idea, and the wrong idea is the seed of the Evil Spirit, the inventor of heresies.



## CONCERNING ST. BASIL THE GREAT

### Prolegomena

Our Father among Saints Basil, who was born in Caesarea, situated in a part of Cappadocia lying along the Black Sea (or Pontus), and formerly called in ancient times Mazaka, in the year 329.<sup>347</sup> In the year 364 he was promoted by Eusebius the Bishop of Caesarea to the rank of Presbyter.<sup>348</sup> And shortly thereafter, giving way to the envy of Eusebius, he departed for the Black Sea, taking with him also divine Gregory Nazianzenus,<sup>349</sup> who was like-minded with him. Having become superintendent of the monasteries situated in that region, and having set forth Definitions and Canons to govern the monks there, he adopted the wilderness of the desert, because he was burning with a yearning for more perfect quietude. But in the year 365,<sup>350</sup> having learned that the heresy which had arisen during the reign of Valens the Arian was about to find its way into Cappadocia, he forthwith returned and gave himself to his mother Church, and made friends again with Eusebius, and most valiantly lent his help to Orthodoxy.<sup>351</sup> After the death of Eusebius in the year 370,<sup>352</sup> having become Bishop of Caesarea, he bravely fought to overcome the heresies of that period of time. Presenting himself to Modestus the eparch (or governor of the province), who tried in every kind of way to shake him from his stand on piety, he shouted to him the following memorable words with a manly mind: "I will come back to you tomorrow the same as ever: do not change your point of view, however, but make use of threats."<sup>353</sup> But finally, after shepherding his own flock for eight years,<sup>354</sup> he departed for the Lord. Besides his other written works, which were published in the year 1730 in Paris, the highly renowned Saint has also left us these canonical epistles, which are necessary for the good order and constitution of the Church and which are confirmed indefinitely by c. I of the 4th and c. I of the 7th, but by c. II of the 6th Ecumenical Council definitely (that Council, in fact, borrowed many Canons of St. Basil and made them its own); and by virtue of this confirmation they acquire in a way an ecumenical force. They are

<sup>347</sup> In his biography of St. Basil contained in the third volume of the Saint's written works (on page 60 of part 8) Garnerus says that he was born in the year 316; Oudinus, on the other hand, says in the year 328 (on page 543 of the first volume of his treatise on ecclesiastical matters).

<sup>348</sup> Garnerus, *ibid.*, page 66.

<sup>349</sup> Socrates (Book IV, ch. 26) says that he was appointed Deacon by Meletius the bishop of Antioch.

<sup>350</sup> Garnerus, *ibid.*, page 68.

<sup>351</sup> According to the Theologian, in his funeral sermon, and Nicephorus Callistus, Book XI, ch. 18.

<sup>352</sup> Garnerus, *ibid.*, and Fabricius.

<sup>353</sup> Theodorct, Book IV, ch. 19 of his History.

<sup>354</sup> The Theologian in his Epigram says, "Having held the reins for eight years with a godlike mind over the laity." So that the full and total number of years of his life were 49, and not 45, as his biography says. I need not mention that according to Garnerus he lived to be 62 years old, but according to Oudinus only 50.

to be found in the second volume of the Pandectae, and in the first volume, p. 335, of the Conciliar Records.<sup>355</sup>

## THE CANONICAL EPISTLES, OR, MORE EXPRESSLY, THE NINTY-TWO CANONS, OF OUR FATHER AMONG SAINTS BASIL THE GREAT INTERPRETED

### PREAMBLE

*“Even a simpleton, when he asketh after wisdom, shall be accounted wise. But the question of one who is (apparently) wise maketh even a simpleton wise” (Prov. 17:28), which by the grace of God is what happens to us whenever we receive the letters of your labor-loving and industrious soul. For the questions they ask make us better acquainted with ourselves and as it were more conscious of ourselves and we are taught many facts that we did not know about; and the pains we take in replying to them becomes a teacher to us. This is still more remarkable in view of the fact that never after receiving your questions and taking care of them have we been compelled to resort exactly to consulting either what we have been told by the Presbyters nor to recollecting kindred things that we have learned when consulted by them”*

### Interpretation

The preamble to this epistle is brimming with great humility. For St. Basil the Great commences with the citation of a passage of the Paroemiast (or Proverb-writer) which says that even a simpleton shall be deemed a wise man if he asks wise questions; and adds, conversely, that a wise man’s question makes a simpleton wise. In connection with this citation of Scripture the Saint is alluding to St. Amphilochius as a wise man asking questions while deeming himself a simpleton and one in quest of wisdom. He then points out the way in which he acquires wisdom. For, before being asked something, he says, without having taken care to ask the questions, he became more careful after paying attention to them, recollecting all that he had been told by more aged men, and himself considering everything to be found in those old works that was consistent and consequent.

---

<sup>355</sup> Concerning his eloquence Photius (in Code 141) says the following: “Basil the Great excelled in all his discourses. They are marked by clear and well stamped, and literal, and wholly civil and fair diction of a mighty orator, if anyone else can be so called; in point of thoughts and orderliness and purity at once he was first, and second to no one else. He was passionately fond of plausibility, and of suavity, and of splendor withal, and was fluent of speech, and precisely like a stream gushing with extemporaneous conceptions. In fact, he employed plausibility with as telling effect that if anyone should take his discourses as models for political speeches and should afterwards study these out, even though he were inexperienced in the factors contributing thereto, viz, the laws, he would have no need, I opine, of anyone else, neither of Plato nor of Demosthenes.” The Seventh Ecumenical Council called this divine Basil (in its Act 6) one “great in deed and word.” St. Isidore of Pelusium, in his Letter No. 61, speaks of Mm as “our God-inspired Father Basil.”

## CONCISE AND ACCURATE INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING MARRIAGES

(GATHERED FROM VARIOUS AUTHORITIES)<sup>617</sup>

Since the sacred Canons, Apostolic, Conciliar, and Patristic, in speaking in various parts about lawful and unlawful marriages (e.g., Ap. c. XIX; cc. III and LIV of the 6th; c. II of Neocaesarea; cc. XXIII, XXVII, XXVIII, LXVIII, LXXVI, LXXVII, LXXVIII of Basil; c. XI of Tim.; and cc. V, XIII or Theophilus), requires a knowledge of marriages to be combined with them, therefore and on this account we have judged it reasonable, after interpreting the sacred Canons, to insert in a special place within the volume, for a clearer comprehension on the part of the more unlearned, a concise and at the same time accurate set of instructions regarding marriages allowed by the laws as well as those prohibited, in view of the fact that such instructions are needed by all persons in general, but especially by the holy Prelates and Spiritual Fathers and Priests, who have an obligation to examine into all these matters: Prelates, when they issue a license; Spiritual Fathers, when they are hearing confessions; and Priests, when they are solemnizing a marriage, according to c. XI of Timothy, in order to avoid falling into a very grave sin by confusing cognate blood, through ignorance of kinship. Kinship, be it noted, is divisible on the whole into five varieties, to wit: into blood kinship, or, more explicitly speaking, that of one lineage; into affinity, or that of two lineages; into that which is the result of three lineages, or trilineal; into that resulting from Holy Baptism; and into that created through adoption. We shall treat of each variety by itself. Before beginning, however, it is well to lay down nine principles here, as axioms, which apply to every kind of kinship in common, to wit: 1) that the rights of kinship apply to both men and women; 2) that in regard to marriage it is requisite not only that it be one allowed by law, but also that it have the character of modesty and propriety;<sup>618</sup> 3) that wherever it will happen that the surnames of the lineages will become confused

<sup>617</sup> These instructions were gathered especially out of the book entitled *Juris Graeco-Romanum*, or, as it might be called in English "a compendium of Greek-Roman law."

<sup>618</sup> See also Basilius Achridenus in his assertion to this effect (p. 309 of the book *Juris Graeco-Romani*), and Blastaris (alphab. sec. Beta).

or confounded, there a marriage is illicit and unlawful;<sup>619</sup> 4) that the husband as to his wife, and, conversely, the wife as to her husband, are not of any degree at all, or, that is to say, they are of zero degree:<sup>620</sup> 5) that a single never sustains any distinction of degree, but that a degree applies only to two persons; 6) that the laws relating to marriages and degrees of kinship ought to be observed also in regard to children born by fornication — for the law chastises relatives joined together by virtue of fornication just as it chastises relatives joined together by virtue of legal marriage, according to Blastaris (alphabetical section Pi, — i.e., the Greek letter corresponding to English P — ch. 18); 7) degrees of kinship ought to be observed also in the case of a perfect and lawful betrothal. Hence if a girl is betrothed to a man who dies, the man's debarred relatives cannot take her to wife, just as they cannot do so in the case of marriage; and see ch. 11, concerning Betrothal; 8) the consanguinity holds also in the case of a man who was indeed married but who died before he had carnal knowledge of his wife; for it is not coition, but the rite connected with the prayer that makes a marriage, according to Balsamon and Blastaris and the jurists; 9) that consanguinity holds even in connection with arsenoquity (i.e., male homosexuals); for according to the most holy Patriarch Lucas, men who practice arsenoquity with each other are estopped from taking one another's sister to wife.

## CHAPTER I

### *Concerning Consanguinity, or Blood Relationship, that is to say, of one Lineage or Kindred.*

Blood relationship is divided into three varieties, namely: ascending relatives, descending relatives, and collateral relatives. Thus, in the ascending line are parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents; in the descending line are sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons, and so on; collateral relatives are brothers and sisters, direct uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces,<sup>621</sup> first cousins (i.e.,

<sup>619</sup> The said Basilius (l.c.), and Blastaris (alphab. sec. Beta), and most holy Patriarch Sisinnius (p. 199 of *Juris Graeco-Romani*) all say that these words were taken verbatim from Basil the Great. For your own satisfaction look up c. LXXXVII of Basil, at the end of which the Saint insists that there be no confusion of names in marriages, since this is unnatural, because nature, he says, keeps the names of each kindred, or lineage, distinct. For, "from which of the two consanguinities," he asks, "shall they draw the name of the offspring? shall they say that they are brothers and sisters of one another, or that they are nephews and nieces? for both characterizations will befit them, because of the confusion."

<sup>620</sup> Armenopoulos, Book IV, Title VI.

<sup>621</sup> Uncles and aunts are of three kinds in relation to nephews, namely: immediate, grand, and petit. Thus, immediate uncles and aunts are the brothers and sisters, respectively, of my father or mother. Grand uncles and aunts are brothers and sisters, respectively, of my grandfather or grandmother. Petit uncles and aunts are the first cousins of my parents. Likewise nephews and nieces are called immediate if children of my brother or sister; grand nephews and nieces if my brother's or sister's grandsons or granddaughters, respectively (who are also called remote nephews and remote nieces, as having been begotten of a petit nephew or niece); petit nephews and petit nieces if children of my first cousin. Even second cousins, however, are also called uncles and aunts in relation to the children of their second cousins, and those children in relation to them are also called nephews and nieces. In Greek both the brothers and sisters and the cousins of parents are called *theioi* (i.e., uncles or aunts, as the case may be), from the parents, who, according to the ancient Greeks, used to be called gods; for the word *theioi* also means divine. That is why Philo the Jew called parents domestic gods, from the fact that the

cousins german), petit uncles, aunts, nephews, and nieces, second cousins, and so on. Here it may be said that those in the ascending and descending line, which is the same as saying lineal blood relatives, never intermarry, because their life does not last until the eighth degree.<sup>622</sup> For no man lives long enough to marry his seventh granddaughter, or, as we say in English, his great-great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter. As for collateral relatives, which is the same as saying prohibited marriages with side lines, they are as follows:

### Prohibited Marriages

1. A brother cannot marry his sister; whether she be of the same father and mother, or of the same parent on one side only, or even if she be born of fornication; or vice versa: because such a relative is of the second degree.

2. An immediate uncle cannot marry his immediate niece (or, in other words, the daughter of his brother); or vice versa: because such a relative is of the third degree.

3. A granduncle cannot marry his niece for, in other words, the daughter of his immediate niece); or vice versa: because such a relative is of the fourth degree.

4. A male first cousin cannot marry his female cousin, because she is of the fourth degree.

5. A granduncle cannot marry the daughter of his grandniece, because such a relative is of the fifth degree.

---

Greek word for gods is theoi, and derived therefrom is the adjective theioi, meaning divine and used also as a noun to denote uncles or aunts.

<sup>622</sup> The degrees of relationship in regard to marriage were called degrees in reference to the degrees, or steps, of stairs and ladders, according to Demetrius Chomatinus the Bishop of Bulgaria (p. 312 of *Juris Graeco-Romani*) and Balsamon; because, just as by means of the steps of stairs, starting from the bottom, we can ascend to the top of the stairs, and again from there we can descend by means of the same steps. In a somewhat similar manner by means of the degrees, or steps, involved in marriage we can ascend until we find the root and starting-point, or origin, of the lineage, or kindred, and again we can descend from there. When we speak of degrees here what we mean is births, since each particular birth is a degree, according to the said Demetrius (*ibid.*). For example: a father in relation to his son is one degree, because there is but one birth by which they are correlated. A brother (or sister) with another brother (or sister) of his makes two degrees, even though they be twins; because they have come into the world through two births. First cousins are four degrees, because they have been born by four births; and so on. So that whoever wants to determine the degrees as easily as possible ought to bethink himself of two things. First, to find the root and origin, or starting-point of the lineage; and second, to count the births: and the number of these is the number of the degrees. For instance, if he wants to find out of how many degrees an immediate uncle (or aunt) is with an immediate nephew (or niece), or, in other words, a son (or daughter) of his brother (or sister), he will first find the father of the two brothers, and inasmuch as it was by two births that the two brothers were begotten by him, here, behold, he has found two births and two degrees. Since, again, the son of his brother was begotten by him with one birth, here, behold, this one birth constitutes one degree. Accordingly, the three births taken together form three degrees. Thus second cousins are of the sixth degree; or, in other words, from the father of two brothers to second cousins six births have intervened. Thus also are third cousins of the eighth degree, because from the first root of the two brothers to third cousins eight births have intervened. For it is on this account too that this kinship is called blood relationship, or consanguinity, to wit, because relatives ascribable thereto are traceable to one blood and one root of lineage, and to one father, from whom its degrees derive their origin, and again they come to it as their stopping-point. In this manner by finding and counting births, you can easily find also the degrees. See also page 416 of the same book, where Eustathius Patricius the Roman says the same things as the above-mentioned Chomatinus concerning the subject of degrees. See also Balsamon.

6. A petit uncle cannot marry his petit niece (or, in other words, the daughter of his first cousin), because she is of the fifth degree.

7. A petit uncle cannot marry the daughter of his petit niece (or, in other words, the granddaughter of his first cousin), because she is of the sixth degree.

8. A granduncle cannot marry the granddaughter of his grandniece (or, in other words, of his remote niece), because she is of the sixth degree.

9. An immediate uncle cannot marry the great-great-granddaughter of his immediate niece, because she is of the seventh degree.

10. A male second cousin cannot marry his female second cousin, because she is of the sixth degree.

11. A petit uncle cannot marry the granddaughter of his petit niece because she is of the seventh degree.

12. A male second cousin cannot marry the daughter of his female second cousin, because she is of the seventh degree.<sup>623</sup>

<sup>623</sup> Note that since the law, in Title V of Book XXVIII of the Basilica in regard to consanguinity expressly prohibited marriages of the sixth degree, but did not permit marriages of the eighth degree and kept silent as regarding marriages of the seventh degree and neither prohibited them nor allowed them; therefore and on this account some persons taking a cue from this silence of the law have prescribed that consanguineous marriages of the seventh degree if asked about before contracted are to be forbidden and not to be contracted, though otherwise, if they come to be contracted without being asked about they cannot be dissolved. Those who have asserted this view are Alexius and Neophyte the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Theophanes of Jerusalem. Sir Alexius, however, imposed ameracements upon a married couple of the seventh degree if the marriage was performed before an inquiry, the penalty being that they should abstain from eating meat for two whole years, not to drink any wine on Wednesdays and Fridays (whenever it so happens, that is to say, that these days are feast days on which there is no fasting), and to partake of the divine Mysteries only on Dominical festivals (but not, that is to say, on the other days on which Christians not subject to ameracements may commune). But that the above-mentioned Patriarchs failed to understand the law aright, and that they did not act lawfully in permitting marriages of the seventh degree not to be dissolved, is shown 1) by the fact that in having permitted consanguineous marriages of the eighth degree, but not having permitted such of the sixth degree, the law showed from these two enactments that one of the seventh degree too is not to be permitted, any more than one of the sixth degree; for it set the eighth degree as the limit of permission which must not be transgressed; 2) by the fact that in this seventh degree there is a confusion of the names of consanguineous relatives, and wherever any such confusion results there also a marriage is unlawful, as we said in the beginning; 3) by the fact that the seventh degree is not of as great distance as the permitted eighth; 4) by the fact that if a blood marriage of the seventh degree be permitted just as a seventh-degree affinity is permitted, blood relationship will be put on a par with affinity. But since these kinships differ greatly from each other, and they are not characterized by one and the same familiarity, because that due to blood has one root and one lineage, whereas affinity is a combination of two distinct and strange kindreds, therefore and on this account neither ought the seventh degree to be permitted in connection with consanguinity, just as it is permitted in connection with affinity; 5) by the fact that felons and cunning rogues, knowing that a marriage of this seventh degree cannot be dissolved once it has been actually contracted, have secretly and before asking entered into such marriages unlawfully, and thus the economy, or indulgence, set up by the above-mentioned Patriarchs has afforded a ground for transgression of the law; 6) and last, by the fact that such a consanguineous marriage of the seventh degree was prohibited synodically by most holy Patriarch Lucas and the Synod supporting him, and that he ordered that not every marriage by blood of the seventh degree should be prohibited when asked about, but even if contracted before an inquiry it should be dissolved without fail and be abrogated altogether; and thus by this measure all those persons were prevented from entering into this unlawful marriage who had previously and secretly contracted such a marriage of the seventh degree before inquiry in the hope that after being blessed they would no longer be subject to separation. This synodic decision was confirmed thereafter by the edict of Emperor Manuel Comnenus and by the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople Michael 'Cerularius and the synod supporting him. So and on this account ever since then all married couples that are found to have entered into such an unlawful marriage before making inquiry, not only are separated completely by the bishop, but

# FORMS OF SOME LETTERS

## **Form of a Commendatory and Dimissory Letter**

Apostolic and Conciliar Canons bid men in holy orders who are desirous of leaving their country or home to provide themselves with commendatory and dimissory letters to be obtained from those who ordained them. The commendatory letters are for the purpose of commending, or verifying, their dogma, their life, and their ordination; in exceptional cases, they may also have the purpose of upholding their traduced or calumniated reputation. The purpose of the letters dimissory is to certify to the permission which they have received from them to perform the duties of holy orders wherever they may be going. Following, therefore, the divine and sacred Canons, and addressing the men in holy orders and laymen everywhere, by the present Commendatory and at the same time Dimissory Letter, we too first of all commend the bearer thereof as a most reverent and in all respects most devout one among Hieromonachs (or as a very reverend one among Priests) the Rev. (So-and-So) and vouch for the fact that he is tenacious of the Orthodox dogma, and is of a pious and unassailable reputation; and that he has been legally and canonically ordained by us by virtue of the grace of the All-holy and officiating Spirit, according to the joint testimony of his Spiritual Father and of other credible witnesses, by steps as an Anagnost, a Subdeacon, a Deacon, and a Presbyter, in the all-venerable temple of (such or such a Saint). Consequently we dismiss him and give him authority, wherever he may go, to exercise the functions of the priestly order and office without hindrance, together with the canonical permission and consent of the local Bishop. Hence in witness hereof and for the sake of safety these presents were placed in his hands by us (see also Ap. c. XII) (March, . . . . A.D. . . . .).

## **Form of a Facultative Letter**

Our mediocrity (or humbleness), through the grace of the All-holy and officiating Spirit, entrust thee, one in all respects devout among Hieromonachs (or among Priests) Rev . . . . (So-and-So) as an honest gentleman, and worthy of reverence, with the ministry of Spiritual paternity. As such indeed thou art obliged to undertake the examination of the thoughts of all men who come to thee with a view to confessing their own sins, and to probe the depths of their

hearts, to search their mind and to ascertain their acts: for the purpose, be it understood, of checking and restraining as far as possible the origins and causes, and to direct canonically the end and operations of these also with regard to the habits and moods of those approaching thee, and to administer to them the proper remedies; and to become all things to all men, in order to win all men, at times by reproofing them, at times by reprimanding them or begging them, and in every manner negotiating their salvation. Hence thou shalt bind whatsoever requires to be bound, and shalt loose whatever requires and deserves to be loosed. Thou art further obliged so to investigate and scrutinize those coming to the office of the Priesthood, as the divine and sacred Canons demand; lest at any time thou become implicated in the sins of others and consign or abandon thine own soul together with theirs to the everlasting fire. Furthermore to tonsure Monks, after testing them and in the presence of their sponsors, in accordance with the Canons, as usual. And in all matters thou art obliged to associate with men in all reverence and decency that befits spiritual gentlemen, as having to render an account to God. Hence, in witness hereof there was given thee our present Facultative Letter.

(Note that the style "mediocrity" is affected by Patriarchs, and even by the Archbishops of Thessalonica and of Monembasia, in accordance with some royal love of honor, but only in their own territories; the style "humbleness," on the other hand, is affected generally by all Metropolitans, Archbishops, and Bishops.).

### **Form of a Canonical Testimonial**

The Apostles preaching God and arranging divine things right, and the association of the God-bearing Fathers who came after them have canonically prescribed that no one shall be deemed to deserve the divine degree of holy orders without much investigation and strict examination, lest the most divine functions be performed by men who are unworthy. Now, therefore, my spiritual son (So-and-So), a son of (So-and-So) of the district (So-and-So), having come to me, asked to receive the great office of the Priesthood, and after I had him stand before the sacred icon of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, and having probed the depths of his heart, and not content with this having also obtained information from other credible witnesses who have firsthand knowledge of his conduct both in public and in private, and having found nothing in him that would present an obstacle with respect to laws, I certify him to be worthy of the Priesthood and to be of mature age, just as the sacred Canons bid. Hence there was given to him the present document in evidence thereof, confirmed by mine own hand and signature, and by the testimonies aforesaid of credible witnesses. And thus it is signed by both the Spiritual functionary and the witnesses, . . . . A.D. . . .

### **Form of a Letter for Indigents**

Most honorable Clerics, most reverent Priests, and all other blessed Christians of our province, grace be unto you and peace from God. The bearer of our present letter most honest brother in Christ (So-and-So), being of (Such-



or-Such) city, as a result of unseasonable circumstances and troubles incurred a very heavy debt of (so many) ... dollars,\* as we have learned well enough and have been informed by persons familiar with his affairs. Hence, not having any other recourse for help and mercy, the unfortunate man is appealing to the Christ-loving compassion of you charitable Christians. All of you, therefore, without exception having welcomed him with a benign countenance, showing that you have been taught by God to love one another (I Thess. 4:9) as the Apostle says, be pleased to grant him alms each of you in proportion to your means (Matt. 5:7), for the sake of the Lord who macarizes the merciful and charitable. For you are well aware that "*alms rescueth from death,*" as Tobit says (Tobit 10:8), and that, as the author of Proverbs says, "*he that bestoweth alms upon the poor man is lending to God*" (Prov. 19:17), whose grace and mercy, and our own prayerful wish and blessing, be with all of you. Amen.

### Form of a Last Will and Testament<sup>677</sup>

Because of the fact that the first-formed man Adam, becoming a prey to the Devil's envy, transgressed God's vivifying commandment, all of us who are

---

<sup>677</sup> Mark, therefore, that by three ways does one leave his possessions unto some (people) either by testament, or by codicil, or also unwrittenly. A testament, therefore, is a righteous will, which one makes unto some (people), when having his mind in a sound condition, to those things, that he wills to occur after his death, according to Armenopoulos (book 5, Title I); through the testament one leaves unto some (people) firstly: the phalcidion, namely, the share and inheritance unto his lawful heirs and relatives, that is, if he has four or less children, he leaves unto them the third portion of his property, and if more than four, (he leaves) the half part of his property, and the rest of the two portions, or the half, he leaves, by a second reason, (same title IX), as a legaton, namely, he leaves these unto them as a donation and favor, that they may remember him, unto whomsoever of his beloved, or relative, or even a stranger, that he wishes or wills. Or he leaves them unto the poor; unto Monasteries; unto hospitals; unto schools and unto other such God-beloved charities. Legaton, therefore, is a donation that is left behind in a testament XLIV Book of Kings, Title I) and according to Armenopoulos (same, Title X); this also becomes a secret testament, which must possess the autograph and seal of the testator. But if he (the testator) is illiterate, the clerk and the witnesses should write: that they truly write these things in the fear of God, just as they have heard them from the mouth of the maker of the testament. And the open testament must be assured with the signature and seal of the Governor (that is, of the chief), and with the unanimous testimony and seal of seven or five witnesses, and, in time of necessity, even of three or two witnesses, and the testator autographically writing the name of the heir (Armenop., same, Title I). Of testaments, some, on the one hand, are being wholly torn or in parts, when the testator does not write down his adopted son e-s an heir in the testament, and, when he has a subordinate daughter or grandson and does not write them down as heirs, the testament is being torn in part, and for many other causes. Other testaments, on the other hand, become annulled, when the lawful second testament annuls the first, and for many other causes. And other testaments are imperfect, when there are not present seven or five witnesses; nor if they do not comformably sign and seal the same; neither if the testator does autographically write the name of the heir (Armenop. same, Title V). But one should not, in his testament, leave donations and legaton(s) unto some people), outside of the common and lawful, namely, firstly he must not leave the lawful part to his children and afterward, from the remaining part of his property, to take out also the dowry and the antenuptial donation, and then if there is any left, to leave them as a donation and charity, wherever he wishes (Armenop. same, Title I, and Title IX). There can also be made a first, and a second, or a later testament; and if the later is perfect he destroys the first (Armenop. same, Title I), and if it is imperfect, he can not tear it (same, Title V; therefore, the first becomes assured when it is being mentioned by the second. And these are indeed the things concerning the testament. A Codocil, however, is a replacing of the lacking