

0787-0787 – Concilium Nicaenum II – Documenta

The Seventh Ecumenical Council.

The Second Council Of Nice

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THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL.

THE SECOND COUNCIL OF NICE.

A.D. 787.

Emperors.—CONSTANTINE VI. AND IRENE.

Pope.—HADRIAN.

Elenchus.

Introduction.

The Sacra to Hadrian.

The Sacra read at Session I.

Extracts from the Acts, Session I.

Session II.

Session III.

Session IV.

Session VI. containing the Epitome of the decree of the iconoclastic Conciliabulum.

Excursus On the Conciliabulum.

The dogmatic Decree of the Synod.

Excursus On the present teaching of the Latin and Greek Churches on the subject of images.

The Canons, with the Ancient Epitome and Notes.

Synodal Letter to the Emperors.

Excursus On the Two Letters of Gregory II. to the Emperor Leo.

Excursus On the Reception of the Seventh Council.

Excursus On the Council of Frankfort, A.D. 794.

Excursus On the Convention of Paris, A.D. 825.

Historical Note On the so-called "Eighth General Council" and subsequent councils.



Introduction.

Gibbon thus describes the Seventh Ecumenical Council of the Christian Church: “The decrees were framed by the president⁵⁰⁷ Tarasius, and ratified by the acclamations and subscriptions of three hundred and fifty bishops. They unanimously pronounced that the worship of images is agreeable to Scripture and reason, to the Fathers and councils of the Church; but they hesitated whether that worship be relative or direct; whether the godhead and the figure of Christ be entitled to the same mode of adoration.⁵⁰⁸ Of this second Nicene Council the acts are still extant; a curious monument of superstition and ignorance, of falsehood and folly.” (*Decline and Fall*, chapter xlix.)

And this has been read as history, and has passed as such in the estimation of the overwhelming majority of educated English-speaking people for several generations, and yet it is a statement as full of absolute and inexcusable errors as the passage in another part of the same work which the late Bishop Lightfoot so unmercifully exposed, and which the most recent editor, Bury, has taken pains to correct.

I do not know whether it is worth while to do so, but perhaps it may be as well to state, that whatever may be his opinion of the truths of the conclusions arrived at by the council, no impartial reader can fail to recognize the profound learning⁵⁰⁹ of the assembly, the singular acumen displayed in the arguments employed, and the remarkable freedom from what Gibbon and many others would consider “superstition.” So radical is this that Gibbon would have noticed it had he read the acts of the synod he is criticising (which we have good reason for believing that he never did). There he would have found the Patriarch declaring that at that time the venerable images worked no miracles, a statement that would be made by no prelate of the Latin or Greek Church to-day, even in the light of the nineteenth century.

As I have noted in the previous pages my task is not that of a controversialist. To me at present it is a matter of no concern whether the decision of the council is true or false. I shall therefore strictly confine myself to two points: 1. That the Council was Ecumenical. 2. What its decision was; explaining the technical meaning of the Greek words employed during this controversy and finally incorporated in the decree.

1. *This Council was certainly Ecumenical.*

507 Who was possibly at least not the president, vide Michaud, *Sept. Conc. Œuméniques*, p. 330.

508 Worship is “relative” or “absolute,” what Gibbon means by “direct” would be hard to say. How entirely false the whole statement is, Gibbon himself would have recognized had he read the acts.

509 Dr. Neale complains that the acts display a painful lack of critical knowledge and that several spurious passages are attributed to the Fathers. But I confess this does not seem to me either surprising or disgraceful. The attributing of books, even in our critical days, to persons who were not their authors is not so uncommon as to make us wonder such a thing might have occurred in such stormy times, when learning of this sort must have suffered by the adversities of the Church and State, the Iconoclastic persecutions and the Moslem incursions.

It seems strange that any person familiar with the facts of the case could for a moment entertain a doubt as to the ecumenical character of the council which met at Nice in 787.

(a) It was called by the Roman Emperors to be an Ecumenical Council. *Vide* letter of Tarasius.

(b) It was called with the approval of the Pope (not like I. Constantinople, without his knowledge; or like Chalcedon, contrary to his expressed wish), and two papal legates were present at its deliberations and signed its decrees.

(c) The Patriarch of Constantinople was present in person.

(d) The other Patriarchates were represented, although on account of the Moslem tyranny the Patriarchs could not attend in person, nor could they even send proctors.

(e) The decrees were adopted by an unanimous vote of the three hundred and fifty bishops.

(f) They were immediately received in all the four Eastern Patriarchates.⁵¹⁰

(g) They were immediately accepted by the Pope.

(h) For a full thousand years they have been received by the Latin and Greek Churches with but a few exceptions altogether insignificant, save the Frankish kingdom.

In the face of such undisputed facts, it would be strange were anyone to doubt the historical fact that the Second Council of Nice is one of the Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church, and indeed so far as I am aware none have done so except such as have been forced into this position for doctrinal consistency.

Nor have all Protestants allowed their judgment to be warped in this matter. As a sample I may quote from that staunch Protestant whom Queen Elizabeth appointed a chaplain in ordinary in 1598, and who in 1610 was made Dean of Gloucester, the profoundly learned Richard Field. In his famous "Book of the Church" (Book V. chap. lj.), he says: "These" [six, which he had just described] "were all the lawful General Councils (lawful, I say, both in their beginning and proceeding and continuance) that ever were holden in the Christian Church, touching matters of faith. For the Seventh, which is the Second of Nice, was not called about any question of faith but of manners. So that there are but Seven General Councils that the whole Church acknowledgeth, called to determine matters of faith and manners. For the rest that were holden afterwards, which our adversaries [the Roman Catholics] would have to be acknowledged general, they are not only rejected by us but by the Grecians also, as not general, but patriarchal only, etc."

Of course there are a number of writers (principally of the Anglican Communion), who have argued thus: "The doctrine taught by the Second Council of Nice we reject, ergo it cannot have been an Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church." And they have then gone on to prove their conclusion. With such writers I have no concern. My simple contention is that the Council is

⁵¹⁰ "It is certain," confesses Dr. Neale (*History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. II., p. 113; in his attempt to overthrow the authority of this council) "that Politian approved (S. Theod. Stud. Ep. xvij.) although he was not present at the council of Nicæa; and the controversy, which had never much disturbed Africa, may henceforth be considered as terminated in the Diocese of Alexandria."

admitted by all to have been representative of East and West, and to have been accepted for a thousand years as such, and to be to-day accepted as Ecumenical by the Latin and Greek Churches. If its doctrines are false, then one of the Ecumenical Synods set forth false doctrine, a statement which should give no trouble, so far as I can understand, to anyone who does not hold the necessary infallibility of Ecumenical Synods.⁵¹¹

Among those who have argued against the ecumenical character of the Seventh Council there are, however, two whose eminent learning and high standing demand a consideration of anything they may advance on any subject they treat of, these are the Rev. John Mason Neale and the Rev. Sir William Palmer.

Dr. Neale considers the matter at some length in a foot-note to his *History of the Eastern Church* (Vol. II., pp. 132–135), but I think it not improper to remark that the author ingenuously confesses in this very note that if he came to the conclusion that the council was ecumenical, “it would be difficult to clear our own Church from the charge of heresy.” Entertaining such an opinion at the start, his conclusion could hardly be unbiassed.

The only argument which is advanced in this note which is different from those of other opponents of the Council, is that it had not the authentication of a subsequent Ecumenical Synod. The argument seems to me so extraordinary that I think Dr. Neale’s exact words should be cited: “In the first place, we may remark that the Second Council of Nicæa wants one mark of authority, shared according to the more general belief by the six—according to the opinions which an English Churchman must necessarily embrace by the first five Councils—its recognition as Ecumenical by a later Council undoubtedly so.” But surely this involves an absurdity, for if it is not known whether the last one is ecumenical or no, how will its approval of the next to the last give that council any certainty? If III. Constantinople is doubtful being the sixth, because there is no seventh to have confirmed it; then II. Constantinople, the fifth, is doubtful because it has only been confirmed by a synod itself doubtful and so on, which is absurd. The test of the ecumenicity of a council is not its acceptance by a subsequent synod, but its acceptance by the whole Church, and this Dr. Neale frankly confesses is the case with regard to II. Nice: “It cannot be denied,” he admits, “that at the present day both the Eastern and the Latin Churches receive it as Ecumenical” (p. 132). He might have added, “and have done so without any controversy on the subject for nearly a thousand years.”

I do not think there is any need of my delaying longer over Dr. Neale’s note, which I have noticed at all only because of his profound scholarship, and not because on this particular point I thought he had thrown any new light upon the matter, nor urged any argument really calling for an answer.

Sir William Palmer’s argument (*A Treatise on the Church of Christ*, Pt. IV., Chapter X., Sect. IV.) is one of much greater force, and needs an answer. He points out how, long after the Council

⁵¹¹ As a sample of all that bigotry and dishonesty can do when writing on such a subject, the reader is referred to a little book by the Rev. F. Meyrick (a canon of the Church of England) published in Paris for the Anglo-Continental Society, 1877, entitled, *Du Schisme d’Orient et de l’authorité du prétendu septième concile.*

of Nice, the number of the General Councils was still spoken of as being Six, and that in some instances this council is referred to as the “pseudo” General Council of Nice. Now at first sight this argument seems to be of great force. But upon further consideration it will be seen to be after all of no great weight. We may not be able to explain, nor are we called upon to do so, why in certain cases writers chose still to speak of Six instead of Seven General Councils, but we would point out that the same continuance of the old expression can be found with regard to others of the General Councils. For example, St. Gregory the Great says that he “revered the four Ecumenical Councils as he did the four Gospels,” but the fifth Ecumenical Synod had been held a number of years before. Will anyone pretend from this to draw the conclusion that at that time the Ecumenical character of the Fifth Synod (II. Constantinople) was not recognized at Rome? Moreover, among the instances cited (and there are but a very few all told) one of them is fatal to the argument. For if Pope Hadrian in 871 still speaks of only six Ecumenical Synods, he omits two (according to Roman count), for this date is after the synod which deposed Photius—a synod rejected indeed afterwards by the Greeks, but always accepted by the Latins as the Eighth of the Ecumenical Councils. Would Sir William pretend for an instant that Hadrian and the Church of Rome did not recognize that Council as Ecumenical and as the Eighth Synod? He could not, for on page 208 he ingenuously confesses that that Council “had been approved and confirmed by that Pope.”

But after all, the contention fails in its very beginning, for Sir William frankly recognizes that the Popes from the first espoused the cause of the council and were ready to defend it. Now this involved the acknowledgment of its ecumenical character, for it was called as an Ecumenical Synod, this we expressly learn from the letter of Tarasius to the other Eastern Patriarchs (Labbe, *Conc.*, Tom. VII., col. 165), from the letter of the Emperor and Empress to the bishops throughout the empire (L. and C., *Conc.*, Tom. VII., col. 53), and (above all) from the witness of the Council itself, assuming the style of the “Holy Ecumenical Synod.” In the face of such evidence any further proof is surely uncalled for.

We come now to the only other argument brought against the ecumenical character of this council—to wit, that many writers, even until after the beginning of the XVIth century, call the Seventh a “pseudo-Council.” But surely this proves too much, for it would seem to imply that even down to that time the cultus of images was not established in the West, a proposition too ridiculous to be defended by anyone. It is indeed worthy of notice that all the authors cited are Frankish, (1) the *Annales Francorum* (A.D. 808) in the continuation of the same (A.D. 814), in an anonymous life of Charlemagne, and the *Annales* written after 819; (2) Eginhard in his *Annales Francorum* (A.D. 829); (3) the Gallican bishops at Paris, 824;⁵¹² (4) Hincmar of Rheims; (5) Ado, bishop of Vienne (died 875); (6) Anastasius acknowledges that the French had not accepted the veneration of the sacred images; (7) The *Chronicle of St. Bertinus* (after 884); (8) The *Annales Francorum* after the council still speak of it as pseudo; (9) Regino, Abbot of Prum (circa 910); (10) the *Chronicle of St. Bertinus*, of the Xth Century. (11) Hermanus Contractus: (12) the author who continued the Gestes

512 The true date is 825.

Francorum to A.D. 1165; (13) Roger Hoverden (A.D. 1204); (14) Conrade à Lichtenau, Abbot of Ursburg (circa 1230); (15) Matthew of Westminster.

No doubt to these, given in Palmer, who has made much use of Lannoy, others could be added; but they are enough to shew that the council was very little known, and that none of these writers had ever seen its acts.

Sir William is of opinion that by what precedes in his book he has “proved that for at least five centuries and a half the Council of Nice remained rejected in the Western Church.” I venture to think that the most he has proved is that during that period of time he has been able to find fifteen individuals who for one reason or another wrote rejecting that council, that is to say three in a century, a number which does not seem quite sufficient to make the foundation of so considerable a generalization as “the Western Church.” The further conclusion of Sir William, I think, every scholar will reject as simply preposterous, viz.: “In fact the doctrine of the adoration of images [by which he means the doctrine taught by the II. Council of Nice] was never received in the West, except where the influence of the Roman See was predominant” (p. 211).

Sir William is always, however, honest, and the following quotation which he himself makes from Cardinal Bellarmine may well go far toward explaining the erroneous or imperfect statements he has so learnedly and laboriously gathered together. “Bellarmine says: ‘It is very credible that St. Thomas, Alexander of Hales, and other scholastic doctors had not seen the second synod of Nice, nor the eighth general synod;’ he adds that they ‘were long in obscurity, and were first published in our own age, as may be known from their not being extant in the older volumes of the councils; and St. Thomas and the other ancient schoolmen never make any mention of this Nicene Synod.’ (Bell. *De Imag. Sanct. Lib. II. cap. xxij.*)”

2. *What the Council decreed.*

The council decreed that similar veneration and honour should be paid to the representations of the Lord and of the Saints as was accustomed to be paid to the “laurata” and tablets representing the Christian emperors, to wit, that they should be bowed to, and saluted with kisses, and attended with lights and the offering of incense.⁵¹³ But the Council was most explicit in declaring that this was merely a veneration of honour and affection, such as can be given to the creature, and that under no circumstances could the adoration of divine worship be given to them but to God alone.

The Greek language has in this respect a great advantage over the Hebrew, the Latin and the English; it has a word which is a general word and is properly used of the affectionate regard and veneration shown to any person or thing, whether to the divine Creator or to any of his creatures, this word is προσκύνησις; it has also another word which can properly be used to denote only the worship due to the most high, God, this word is λατρεία. When then the Council defined that the

⁵¹³ Vide Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, tom. vii., col. 59.

527

worship of “latria” “was never to be given to any but God alone, it cut off all possibility for idolatry, mariolatry, iconolatry, or any other “latry” except “theo-latry.” If therefore any of these other “latries” exist or ever have existed, they exist or have existed not in accordance with, but in defiance of, the decree of the Second Council of Nice.

But unfortunately, as I have said, we have neither in Hebrew, Latin, nor English any word with this restricted meaning, and therefore when it became necessary to translate the Greek acts and the decree, great difficulty was experienced, and by the use of “adoro” as the equivalent of προσκυνέω many were scandalized, thinking that it was divine adoration which they were to give to the sacred images, which they knew would be idolatry. The same trouble is found in rendering into English the acts and decrees; for while indeed properly speaking “worship” no more means necessarily divine worship in English than “adoratio” does in Latin (*e.g.* I. Chr. xxix. 20, “All the congregation bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord and the King” [i.e. Solomon]; Luke xiv. 10, “Then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee”), yet to the popular mind “the worship of images” is the equivalent of idolatry. In the following translations I have uniformly translated as follows and the reader from the English will know what the word is in the original.

Προσκυνέω, to venerate; τιμάω, to honour; λατρεύω, to adore; ἀσπάζομαι, to salute; δουλεύω, to serve; εἰκών, an image.

The relative force of προσκύνησις and λατρεία cannot better be set forth than by Archbishop Trench’s illustration of two circles having the same centre, the larger including the less (*New Testament Synonyms, sub voce* λατρεύω).

To make this matter still clearer I must ask the reader’s attention to the use of the words *abadh* and *shachah* in the Hebrew; the one *abadh*, which finds, when used with reference to God or to false gods its equivalent in λατρεύω; the other *shachah*, which is represented by προσκυνέω. Now in the Old Testament no distinction in the Hebrew is drawn between these words when applied to creator or creature. The one denotes service primarily for hire; the other bowing down and kissing the hand to any in salutation. Both words are constantly used and sometimes refer to the Creator and sometimes to the creature—*e.g.*, we read that Jacob served (*abadh*) Laban (Gen. xxix. 20); and that Joshua commanded the people not to serve the gods of their fathers but to serve (*abadh*) the Lord (Josh. xxiv. 14). And for the use of *shachah* the following may suffice: “And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers and bowed down their heads and worshipped (Hebrew, *shachah*; Greek, προσκυνέω; Latin, *adoro*) the Lord and the King” (I. Chr. xxix. 20). But while it is true of the Hebrew of the Old Testament that there is no word which refers alone to Divine Worship this is not true of the Septuagint Greek nor of the Greek of the New Testament, for in both προσκυνέω has always its general meaning, sometimes applying to the creature and sometimes to the Creator; but λατρεύω is used to denote divine worship alone, as St. Augustine pointed out long ago.

This distinction comes out very clearly in the inspired translation of the Hebrew found in Matthew iv. 10, “Thou shalt worship (προσκυνήσεις) the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou

serve (λατρεύσεις).” “Worship” was due indeed to God above all but not exclusively to him, but latria is to be given to “him only.”⁵¹⁴

I think I have now said enough to let the reader understand the doctrine taught by the council and to prove that in its decree it simply adopted the technical use of words found in the Greek of the Septuagint and of the New Testament. I may then close this introduction with a few remarks upon outward acts of veneration in general.

528

Of course, the outward manifestation in bodily acts of reverence will vary with times and with the habits of peoples. To those accustomed to kiss the earth on which the Emperor had trodden, it would be natural to kiss the feet of the image of the King of Kings. The same is manifestly true of any outward acts whatever, such as bowing, kneeling, burning of lights, and offering of incense. All these when offered before an image are, according to the mind of the Council, but outward signs of the reverence due to that which the image represents and pass backward to the prototype, and thus it defined, citing the example of the serpent in the wilderness, of which we read, “For he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by thee, that art the Saviour of all” (Wisdom xvi. 17). If anyone feels disposed to attribute to outward acts any necessary religious value he is falling back into Judaism, and it were well for him to remember that the nod which the Quakers adopted out of protest to the bow of Christians was once the expression of divine worship to the most sacred idols; that in the Eastern Church the priest only bows before the Lord believed to be present in the Holy Sacrament while he prostrates himself before the infidel Sultan; and that throughout the Latin communion the acolytes genuflect before the Bishop, as they pass him, with the same genuflection that they give to the Holy Sacrament upon the Altar. In this connexion I quote in closing the fine satire in the letter of this very council to the Emperor and Empress. St. Paul “says of Jacob (Heb. xi. 21), ‘He worshipped the top of his staff,’ and like to this is that said by Gregory, surnamed the theologian, ‘Revere Bethlehem and worship the manger.’ But who of those truly understanding the Divine Scriptures would suppose that here was intended the Divine worship of latria? Such an opinion could only be entertained by an idiot or one ignorant of Scriptural and Patristic knowledge. Would Jacob give divine worship to his staff? Or would Gregory, the theologian, give command to worship as God a manger!”⁵¹⁵

514 Vide the Synod’s Letter to the Emperor and Empress.

515 The treatise of St. John Damascene on *The Holy Images* has very recently been published in an English translation by M. H. Allies. (London. Thos. Baker, 1898.)



The Divine⁵¹⁶ Sacra⁵¹⁷ Sent by the Emperors Constantine and Irene to the Most Holy and Most Blessed Hadrian, Pope of Old Rome.

(*Found in Labbe and Cossart, Concilia, Tom. VII., col. 32.*)

THEY who receive the dignity of the empire, or the honour of the principal priesthood from our Lord Jesus Christ, ought to provide and to care for those things which please him, and rule and govern the people committed to their care according to his will and good pleasure.

Therefore, O most holy Head (Caput), it is incumbent upon us and you, that irreprehensibly we know the things which be his, and that in these we exercise ourselves, since from him we have received the imperial dignity, and you the dignity of the chief priesthood.

But now to speak more to the point. Your paternal blessedness knows what hath been done in times past in this our royal city against the venerable images, how those who reigned immediately before us destroyed them and subjected them to disgrace and injury: (O may it not be imputed to them, for it had been better for them had they not laid their hands upon the Church!)—and how they seduced and brought over to their own opinion all the people who live in these parts—yea, even the whole of the East, in like manner, up to the time in which God hath exalted us to this kingdom, who seek his glory in truth, and hold that which has been handed down by his Apostles together with all other teachers. Whence now with pure heart and unfeigned religion we have, together with all our subjects and our most learned divines, had constant conferences respecting the things which relate to God, and by their advice have determined to summon a General Council. And we entreat your paternal blessedness, or rather the Lord God entreats, “who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” that you will give yourself to us and make no delay, but come up hither to aid us in the confirmation and establishment of the ancient tradition of venerable images. It is, indeed, incumbent on your holiness to do this, since you know how it is written—“Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, ye priests, saith the Lord,” and “the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and the law shall go forth out of his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts.” And again, the divine Apostle, the preacher of the truth, who, “from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, preached the Gospel,” hath thus commanded—“Feed with discipline the flock of Christ which he purchased with his own blood.” As then you are the veritable chief priest (*primus sacerdos*) who presides in the place and in the see of the holy and superlaudable Apostle Peter, let your paternal blessedness come to us, as we have said before, and add your presence to all those other priests who shall be assembled together here, that thus the will of the Lord may be accomplished. For as we are taught in the Gospels our Lord saith—“When two or

⁵¹⁶ “Divine” here, as usually in such connections, means “imperial.”

⁵¹⁷ Mendham (*The Seventh General Council, the Second of Nicæa*. London, s.d.) by a curious blunder takes the adjective for the substantive, and translates “The Sacred Divalis.” This is a mere trip, for he knows the word “sacra,” as appears a few pages further on.

three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” — let your paternal and sacred blessedness be certified and confirmed by the great God and King of all, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by us his servants, that if you come up hither you shall be received with all honour and glory, and that everything necessary for you shall be granted. And again, when the definition (*capitulum*) shall be completed, which by the good pleasure of Christ our God we hope shall be done, we take upon us to provide for you every facility of returning with honour and distinction. If, however, your blessedness cannot attend upon us (which we can scarcely imagine, knowing what is your zeal about divine things), at least, pray select for us men of understanding, having with them letters from your holiness, that they may be present here in the person of your sacred and paternal blessedness. So, when they meet with the other priests who are here, the ancient tradition of our holy fathers may be synodically confirmed, and every evil plant of tares may be rooted out, and the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may be fulfilled, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.” And after this, may there be no further schism and separation in the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which Christ our true God is the Head.

530

We have had Constantine, beloved in Christ, most holy Bishop of Leontina in our beloved Sicily, with whom your paternal blessedness is well acquainted, into our presence; and, having spoken with him face to face, have sent him with this our present venerable jussio to you. Whom, after that he hath seen you, forthwith dismiss, that he may come back to us, and write us by him concerning your coming—what time we may expect will be spent in your journeying thence and coming to us. Moreover, he can retain with him the most holy Bishop of Naples, and come up hither together with him. And, as your journey will be by way of Naples and Sicily we have given orders to the Governor of Sicily about this, that he take due care to have every needful preparation made for your honour and rest, which is necessary in order that your paternal blessedness may come to us. Given on the ivth before the calends of September, the seventh indiction, from the Royal City.

The Imperial Sacra.

READ AT THE FIRST SESSION.

(*Found in Labbe and Cossart, Concilia, Tom. VII., col. 49.*)

CONSTANTINE and Irene—Sovereigns of the Romans in the Faith, to the most holy Bishops, who, by the grace of God and by the command of our pious Sovereignty, have met together in the Council of Nice.

The Wisdom which is truly according to the nature of God and the Father—our Lord Jesus Christ, our true God—who, by his most divine and wonderful dispensation in the flesh, hath delivered us from all idolatrous error: and, by taking on him our nature, hath renewed the same by the

co-operation of the Spirit, which is of the same nature with himself; and having himself become the first High Priest, hath counted you holy men, worthy of the same dignity.

He is that good Shepherd who, bearing on his own shoulders that wandering sheep—fallen man, hath brought him back to his own peculiar folds—that is, the party of angelic and ministering powers (Eph. ii. 14, 15), and hath reconciled us in himself and having taken away the wall of partition, hath broken down the enmity through his flesh, and hath bestowed upon us a rule of conduct tending to peace; wherefore, preaching to all, he saith in the Gospel, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God (Matt. v. 9). Of which blessedness, confirming as it does the exaltation of the adoption of sons, our pious Sovereignty desiring above all things to be made partakers, hath ever applied the utmost diligence to direct all our Roman Commonwealth into the ways of unity and concord; and more especially have we been solicitous concerning the right regulation of the Church of God, and most anxious in every way to promote the unity of the priesthood. For which cause the Chiefs of the Sacerdotal Order of the East and of the North, of the West and of the South, are present in the person of their Representative Bishops, who have with them respectively the replies written in answers to the Synodical Epistle sent from the most holy Patriarch; for such was from the beginning the synodical regulation of the Church Catholic, which, from the one end of the earth to the other, hath received the Gospel. On this account we have, by the good will and permission of God, caused you, his most holy Priests, to meet together—you who are accustomed to dispense his Testimony in the unbloody sacrifice—that your decision may be in accordance with the definitions of former councils who decreed rightly, and that the splendour of the Spirit may illumine you in all things, for, as our Lord teaches, No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house; even so, should ye make such use of the various regulations which have been piously handed down to us of old by our Fathers, that all the Holy Churches of God may remain in peaceful order.

531

As for us, such was our zeal for the truth—such our earnest desire for the interests of religion, our care for ecclesiastical order, our anxiety that the ancient rules and orders should maintain their ground—that though fully engaged in military councils—though all our attention was occupied in political cares—yet, treating all these affairs as but of minor importance, we would allow nothing whatever to interfere with the convocation of your most holy council. To every one is given the utmost freedom of expressing his sentiments without the least hesitation, that thus the subject under enquiry may be most fully discussed and truth may be the more boldly spoken, that so all dissensions may be banished from the Church and we all may be united in the bonds of peace.

For, when the most holy Patriarch Paul, by the divine will, was about to be liberated from the bands of mortality and to exchange his earthly pilgrimage for a heavenly home with his Master Christ, he abdicated the Patriarchate and took upon him the monastic life, and when we asked him, Why hast thou done this? he answered, Because I fear that, if death should surprise me still in the episcopate of this royal and heaven-defended city, I should have to carry with me the anathema of the whole Catholic Church, which consigns me to that outer darkness which is prepared for the

devil and his angels; for they say that a certain synod hath been held here in order to the subversion of pictures and images which the Catholic Church holds, embraces, and receives, in memory of the persons whom they represent. This is that which distracts my soul—this is that which makes me anxiously to enquire how I may escape the judgment of God—since among such men I have been brought up and with such am I numbered. No sooner had he thus spoken in the presence of some of our most illustrious nobles than he expired.

When our Pious Sovereignty reflected on this awful declaration (and truly, even before this event, we had heard of similar questionings from many around), we took counsel with ourselves as to what ought to be done; and we determined, after mature deliberation, that when a new Patriarch had been elected, we should endeavour to bring this subject to some decisive conclusion. Wherefore, having summoned those whom we knew to be most experienced in ecclesiastical matters, and having called upon Christ our God, we consulted with them who was worthy to be exalted to the chair of the Priesthood of this Royal and God-preserved city; and they all with one heart and soul gave their vote in favour of Tarasius—he who now occupies the Pontifical Presidency. Having, therefore, sent for him, we laid before him our deliberations and our vote; but he would by no means consent, nor at all yield to that which had been determined. And when we enquired, Wherefore he thus refused his consent?—at first he answered evasively, That the yoke of the Chief Priesthood was too much for him. But we, knowing this to be a mere pretext coveting his unwillingness to obey us, would not desist from our importunity, but persisted in pressing the acceptance of the dignity of the Chief Priesthood upon him. When he found how urgent we were with him, he told us the cause of his refusal. It is (said he) because I perceive that the Church which has been founded on the rock, Christ our God, is rent and torn asunder by schisms, and that we are unstable in our confession, and that Christians in the East, of the same faith with ourselves, decline communion with us, and unite them with those of the West; and so we are estranged from all, and each day are anathematized by all: and, moreover, I should demand that an Ecumenical Council should be held, at which should be found Legates from the Pope of Rome and from the Chief Priests of the East. We, therefore, fully understanding these things, introduced him to the assembled company of the Priests—of our most illustrious Princes—and of all our Christian people; and then, in their presence, he repeated to them all that he had before said to us; which, when they heard, they received him joyfully, and earnestly entreated our peace-making and pious Sovereignty that an Ecumenical Council might be assembled. To this their request, we gave our hearty consent; for, to speak the truth, it is by the good will and under the direction of our God that we have assembled you together. Wherefore as God, willing to establish his own counsel, hath for this purpose brought you together from all parts of the world, behold the Gospels now lying before you, and plainly crying aloud, “Judge justly;” stand firm as champions of religion, and be ready with unsparing hand to cut away all innovations and new fangled inventions. And, as Peter the Chief of the Apostolic College, struck the mad slave and cut off his Jewish ear with the sword, so in like manner do ye wield the axe of the Spirit, and every tree which bears the fruit of contention, of strife, or newly-imported innovation, either renew by transplanting through the words of sound doctrine, or lay it low with

canonical censure, and send it to the fires of the future Gehenna, so that the peace of the Spirit may evermore protect the whole body of the Church, compacted and united in one, and confirmed by the traditions of the Fathers; and so may all our Roman State enjoy peace as well as the Church.

We have received letters from Hadrian, most Holy Pope of old Rome, by his Legates—namely, Peter, the God-beloved Archpresbyter, and Peter, the God-beloved Presbyter and Abbot—who will be present in council with you; and we command that, according to synodical custom, these be read in the hearing of you all; and that, having heard these with becoming silence, and moreover the Epistles contained in two octavos sent by the Chief Priest and other Priests of the Eastern dioceses by John, most pious Monk and Chancellor of the Patriarchal throne of Antioch, and Thomas, Priest and Abbot, who also are present together with you, ye may by these understand what are the sentiments of the Church Catholic on this point.



Extracts from the Acts.

Session I.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VII., col. 53.)

[Certain bishops who had been led astray by the Iconoclasts came, asking to be received back. The first of these was Basil of Ancyra.]

THE bishop Basil of Ancyra read as follows from a book; Inasmuch as ecclesiastical legislation has canonically been handed down from past time, even from the beginning from the holy Apostles, and from their successors, who were our holy fathers and teachers, and also from the six holy and ecumenical synods, and from the local synods which were gathered in the interests of orthodoxy, that those returning from any heresy whatever to the orthodox faith and to the tradition of the Catholic Church, might deny their own heresy, and confess the orthodox faith,

Wherefore I, Basil, bishop of the city of Ancyra, proposing to be united to the Catholic Church, and to Hadrian the most holy Pope of Old Rome, and to Tarasius the most blessed Patriarch, and to the most holy apostolic sees, to wit, Alexandria, Antioch, and the Holy City, as well as to all orthodox high-priests and priests, make this written confession of my faith, and I offer it to you as to those who have received power by apostolic authority. And in this also I beg pardon from your divinely gathered holiness for my tardiness in this matter. For it was not right that I should have fallen behind in the confession of orthodoxy, but it arose from my entire lack of knowledge, and slothful and negligent mind in the matter. Wherefore the rather I ask your blessedness to grant me indulgence in God's sight.

I believe, therefore, and make my confession in one God, the Father Almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, and in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life. The Trinity, one in essence and one in majesty, must be worshipped and glorified in one godhead, power, and

authority. I confess all things pertaining to the incarnation of one of the Holy Trinity, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, as the Saints and the six Ecumenical Synods have handed down. And I reject and anathematize every heretical babbling, as they also have rejected them. I ask for the intercessions (πρεσβείας) of our spotless Lady the Holy Mother of God, and those of the holy and heavenly powers, and those of all the Saints.⁵¹⁸

And receiving their holy and honourable reliques with all honour (τιμῆς), I salute and venerate these with honour (τιμητικῶς προσκυνέω), hoping to have a share in their holiness. Likewise also the venerable images (εἰκόνας) of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the humanity he assumed for our salvation; and of our spotless Lady, the holy Mother of God; and of the angels like unto God; and of the holy Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, and of all the Saints—the sacred images of all these, I salute and venerate—rejecting and anathematizing with my whole soul and mind the synod which was gathered together out of stubbornness and madness, and which styled itself the Seventh Synod, but which by those who think accurately was called lawfully and canonically a pseudo-synod, as being contrary to all truth and piety, and audaciously and temerarily against the divinely handed down ecclesiastical legislation, yea, even impiously having yelped at and scoffed at the holy and venerable images, and having ordered these to be taken away out of the holy churches of God; over which assembly presided Theodosius with the pseudonym of Ephesius, Sisinnius of Perga, with the surname Pastillas, Basilius of Pisidia, falsely called “tricaccabus;” with whom the wretched Constantine, the then Patriarch, was led (ἐματαιώθη) astray.

These things thus I confess and to these I assent, and therefore in simplicity of heart and in uprightness of mind, in the presence of God, I have made the subjoined anathematisms.

Anathema to the calumniators of the Christians, that is to the image breakers.

Anathema to those who apply the words of Holy Scripture which were spoken against idols, to the venerable images.

Anathema to those who do not salute the holy and venerable images.

534

⁵¹⁸ Thus far there was no expression of opinion from which the Iconoclasts would have dissented, for in all that regarded the Blessed Virgin and the Saints and their invocation and patronage, the heretics agreed with the orthodox. Protestants have been in the habit of treating the Iconoclasts as if they were substantially agreed with them with regard to the cultus of the Blessed Virgin and of the other Saints. What an error this is, is easily proved by citing two of the anathematisms of their Conciliabulum.

“If anyone shall not confess that the Ever-virgin Mary is properly and truly the Mother of God, and more exalted than every creature, whether visible or invisible, and does not seek her intercessions with sincere faith because she has confidence in approaching our God, who was born of her, let him be anathema.” (L. and C., *Conc.*, Tom. VII., col. 524.)

“If anyone does not confess that all the Saints from the beginning down to now, who whether before the Law, or under the Law, or in grace pleased God, should be honoured in his presence both with soul and body, and does not seek their prayers, according to the tradition of the Church as of those having confidence to plead for the world, let him be anathema.” (*Ibid.* col. 528.)

Anathema to those who say that Christians have recourse to the images as to gods.

Anathema to those who call the sacred images idols.

Anathema to those who knowingly communicate with those who revile and dishonour the venerable images.

Anathema to those who say that another than Christ our Lord hath delivered us from idols.

Anathema to those who spurn the teachings of the holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church, taking as a pretext and making their own the arguments of Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and Dioscorus, that unless we were evidently taught by the Old and New Testaments, we should not follow the teachings of the holy Fathers and of the holy Ecumenical Synods, and the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Anathema to those who dare to say that the Catholic Church hath at any time sanctioned idols.

Anathema to those who say that the making of images is a diabolical invention and not a tradition of our holy Fathers.

This is my confession [of faith] and to these propositions I give my assent. And I pronounce this with my whole heart, and soul, and mind.

And if at any time by the fraud of the devil (which may God forbid!) I voluntarily or involuntarily shall be opposed to what I have now professed, may I be anathema from the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and from the Catholic Church and every hierarchical order a stranger.

I will keep myself from every acceptance of a bribe and from filthy lucre in accordance with the divine canons of the holy Apostles and of the approved Fathers.

Tarasius, the most holy Patriarch, said: This whole sacred gathering yields glory and thanks to God for this confession of yours, which you have made to the Catholic Church.

The Holy Synod said: Glory to God which maketh one that which was severed.

[Theodore, bishop of Myra, then read the same confession, and was received. The next bishop who asked to be received read as follows: (col. 60)]

Theodosius, the humble Christian, to the holy and Ecumenical Synod: I confess and I agree to (συντίθεμαι) and I receive and I salute and I venerate in the first place the spotless image of our Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, and the holy image of her who bore him without seed, the holy Mother of God, and her help and protection and intercessions each day and night as a sinner to my aid I call for, since she has confidence with Christ our God, as he was born of her. Likewise also I receive and venerate the images of the holy and most laudable Apostles, prophets, and martyrs and the fathers and cultivators of the desert. Not indeed as gods (God forbid!) do I ask all these with my whole heart to pray for me to God, that he may grant me through their intercessions to

find mercy at his hands at the day of judgment, for in this I am but showing forth more clearly the affection and love of my soul which I have borne them from the first. Likewise also I venerate and honour and salute the reliques of the Saints as of those who fought for Christ and who have received grace from him for the healing of diseases and the curing of sicknesses and the casting out of devils, as the Christian Church has received from the holy Apostles and Fathers even down to us to-day.



Moreover, I am well pleased that there should be images in the churches of the faithful, especially the image of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the holy Mother of God, of every kind of material, both gold and silver and of every colour, so that his incarnation may be set forth to all men. Likewise there may be painted the lives of the Saints and Prophets and Martyrs, so that their struggles and agonies may be set forth in brief, for the stirring up and teaching of the people, especially of the unlearned.

For if the people go forth with lights and incense to meet the “laurata” and images of the Emperors when they are sent to cities or rural districts, they honour surely not the tablet covered over with wax, but the Emperor himself. How much more is it necessary that in the churches of Christ our God, the image of God our Saviour and of his spotless Mother and of all the holy and blessed fathers and ascetics should be painted? Even as also St. Basil says: “Writers and painters set forth the great deeds of war; the one by word, the other by their pencils; and each stirs many to courage.” And again the same author “How much pains have you ever taken that you might find one of the Saints who was willing to be your importunate intercessor to the Lord?”⁵¹⁹ And Chrysostom says, “The charity of the Saints is not diminished by their death, nor does it come to an end with their exit from life, but after their death they are still more powerful than when they were alive,” and many other things without measure. Therefore I ask you, O ye Saints! I call out to you. I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. Receive me as God received the luxurious man, and the harlot, and the thief. Seek me out, as Christ sought out the sheep that was lost, which he carried on his shoulders; so that there may be joy in the presence of God and of his angels over my salvation and repentance, through your intervention, O all-holy lords! Let them who do not venerate the holy and venerable images be anathema! Anathema to those who blaspheme against the honourable and venerable images! To those who dare to attack and blaspheme the venerable images and call them idols, anathema! To the calumniators of Christianity, that is to say the Iconoclasts, anathema! To those who do not diligently teach all the Christ-loving people to venerate and salute the venerable and sacred and honourable images of all the Saints who pleased God in their several generations, anathema! To those who have a doubtful mind and do not confess with their whole hearts that they venerate the sacred images, anathema!

Sabbas, the most reverend hegumenus of the monastery of the Studium, said: According to the Apostolic precepts and the Ecumenical Synods he is worthy to be received back.

519 Mendham seems to have reversed the sense here altogether.

Tarasius, the most holy Patriarch, said: Those who formerly were the calumniators of orthodoxy, now are become the advocates of the truth.

[*Near the end of this session, (col. 77)*]

John, the most reverend bishop and legate of the Eastern high priests said: This heresy is the worst of all heresies. Woe to the iconoclasts! It is the worst of heresies, as it subverts the incarnation (οἰκονομίαν) of our Saviour.⁵²⁰



Extracts from the Acts.

Session II.

[The Papal Letters were presented by the Legates. First was read that to Constantine and Irene, but not in its entirety, if we may trust Anastasius the Librarian, who gives what he says is the original Latin text. Here follows a translation of this and of the Greek, also a translation of the Latin passage altogether omitted, (as we are told) with the consent of the Roman Legates.]

Part of Pope Hadrian's Letter.

[As written by the Pope.]

(Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, Tom. XCVI., col. 1217.)

If you persevere in that orthodox Faith in which you have begun, and the sacred and venerable images be by your means erected again in those parts, as by the lord, the Emperor Constantine of pious memory, and the blessed Helen, who promulgated the orthodox Faith, and exalted the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church your spiritual mother, and with the other orthodox Emperors venerated it as the head of all Churches, so will your Clemency, that is protected of God, receive the name of another Constantine, and another Helen, through whom at the beginning the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church derived strength, and like whom your own imperial fame is spread abroad by triumphs, so as to be brilliant and deeply fixed in the whole world. But the more, if following the traditions of the orthodox Faith, you embrace the judgment of the Church of blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, and, as of old your predecessors the holy Emperors acted, so you, too, venerating it with honour, love with all your heart his Vicar, and if your sacred majesty follow by preference their orthodox Faith, according to our holy Roman Church. May the chief of the Apostles himself, to whom the power was given by our Lord God to bind and remit sins in heaven and earth,

⁵²⁰ In the English Hefele (Vol. V., p. 363) this appears in the following most extraordinary form. "John...declared that the veneration of images was the worst of all heresies 'because it detracted from the Economy (Incarnation) of the Redeemer.'" (!)



be often your protector, and trample all barbarous nations under your feet, and everywhere make you conquerors. For let sacred authority lay open the marks of his dignity, and how great veneration ought to be shewn to his, the highest See, by all the faithful in the world. For the Lord set him who bears the keys of the kingdom of heaven as chief over all, and by Him is he honoured with this privilege, by which the keys of the kingdom of heaven are entrusted to him. He, therefore, that was preferred with so exalted an honour was thought worthy to confess that Faith on which the Church of Christ is founded. A blessed reward followed that blessed confession, by the preaching of which the holy universal Church was illumined, and from it the other Churches of God have derived the proofs of Faith. For the blessed Peter himself, the chief of the Apostles, who first sat in the Apostolic See, left the chiefship of his Apostolate, and pastoral care, to his successors, who are to sit in his most holy seat for ever. And that power of authority, which he received from the Lord God our Saviour, he too bestowed and delivered by divine command to the Pontiffs, his successors, etc.

[*As read in Greek to the Council.*]

(Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, Tom. XCVI., col. 1218.)

If the ancient orthodoxy be perfected and restored by your means in those regions, and the venerable icons be placed in their original state, you will be partakers with the Lord Constantine, Emperor of old, now in the Divine keeping, and the Empress Helena, who made conspicuous and confirmed the orthodox Faith, and exalted still more your holy mother, the Catholic and Roman and spiritual Church, and with the orthodox Emperors who ruled after them, and so your most pious and heaven-protected name likewise will be set forth as that of another Constantine and another Helena, being renowned and praised through the whole world, by whom the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is restored. And especially if you follow the tradition of the orthodox Faith of the Church of the holy Peter and Paul, the chief Apostles, and embrace their Vicar, as the Emperors who reigned before you of old both honoured their Vicar, and loved him with all their heart: and if your sacred majesty honour the most holy Roman Church of the chief Apostles, to whom was given power by God the Word himself to loose and to bind sins in heaven and earth. For they will extend their shield over your power, and all barbarous nations shall be put under your feet: and wherever you go they will make you conquerors. For the holy and chief Apostles themselves, who set up the Catholic and orthodox Faith, have laid it down as a written law that all who after them are to be successors of their seats, should hold their Faith and remain in it to the end.

[*The part which was never read to the Council at all.*]

(Found in L. and C., *Concilia*, Tom. VII., col. 117.)

We greatly wondered that in your imperial commands, directed for the Patriarch of the royal city, Tarasius, we find him there called Universal: but we know not whether this was written

through ignorance or schism, or the heresy of the wicked. But henceforth we advise your most merciful and imperial majesty, that he be by no means called Universal in your writings, because it appears to be contrary to the institutions of the holy Canons and the decrees of the traditions of the holy Fathers. For he never could have ranked second, save for the authority of our holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as is plain to all.⁵²¹ Because if he be named Universal, above the holy Roman Church which has a prior rank, which is the head of all the Churches of God, it is certain that he shews himself as a rebel against the holy Councils, and a heretic. For, if he is Universal, he is recognized to have the Primacy even over the Church of our See, which appears ridiculous to all faithful Christians: because in the whole world the chief rank and power was given to the blessed Apostle Peter by the Redeemer of the world himself; and through the same Apostle, whose place we unworthily hold, the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church holds the first rank, and the authority of power, now and for ever, so that if any one, which we believe not, has called him, or assents to his being called Universal, let him know that he is estranged from the orthodox Faith, and a rebel against our holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

[*After the reading was ended (col. 120)*]

Tarasius the most holy patriarch said: Did you yourselves receive these letters from the most holy Pope, and did you carry them to our pious Emperor?

Peter and Peter the most beloved-of-God presbyters who held the place of Hadrian, the most holy pope of Rome, said: We ourselves received such letters from our apostolic father and delivered them to the pious lords.

John, the most magnificent Logothete, said: That this is the case is also known to the Sicilians, the beloved of God Theodore, the bishop of Catanea, and the most revered deacon Epiphanius who is with him, who holds the place of the archbishop of Sardinia. For both of these at the bidding of our pious Emperors, went to Rome with the most reverend apocrisarius of our most holy patriarch.

Theodore the God-beloved bishop of Catanea, standing in the midst, said: The pious emperor, by his honourable jussio, bid send Leo, the most god-beloved presbyter (who together with myself is a slave of your holiness), with the precious letter of his most sacred majesty; and he who reveres our [*sic* in Greek, “your,” in Latin] holiness, being the governor (στρατηγός) of my province of Sicily, sent me to Rome with the pious jussio of our orthodox Emperors.⁵²²

And when we were gone, we announced the orthodox faith of the pious emperors.

And when the most blessed Pope heard it, he said: Since this has come to pass in the days of their reign, God has magnified their pious rule above all former reigns. And this suggestion

⁵²¹ This statement seems somewhat open to criticism in view of the position taken by St. Leo, and of the assertion of Pope Gelasius that Constantinople was a suffragan see to Heraclea.

⁵²² The meaning of the passage is obscure, but Mendham’s translation seems clearly wrong.

(ἀναφορὰν) which has been read he sent to our most pious kings together with a letter to your holiness and with his vicars who are here present and presiding.

Cosmas, the deacon, notary, and chamberlain (*Cubuclesius*) said: And another letter was sent by the most holy Pope of Old Rome to Tarasius, our most holy and œcumenical Patriarch. Let it be disposed of as your holy assembly shall direct.

The Holy Synod said, Let it be read.

[*Then was read Hadrian's letter to Tarasius of Constantinople, which ends by saying that, "our dearly-loved proto-presbyter of the Holy Church of Rome, and Peter, a monk, a presbyter, and an abbot, who have been sent by us to the most tranquil and pious emperors, we beg you will deem them worthy of all kindness and humane amenity for the sake of St. Peter, coropheus of the Apostles, and for our sakes, so that for this we may be able to offer you our sincere thanks."*⁵²³ *The letter being ended* (col. 128),]

Peter and Peter, the most reverend presbyters and representatives of the most holy Pope of Old Rome said: Let the most holy Tarasius, Patriarch of the royal city, say whether he agrees (στοιχεῖ) with the letters of the most holy Pope of Old Rome or not.

Tarasius the most holy patriarch said: The divine Apostle Paul, who was filled with the light of Christ, and who hath begotten us through the gospel, in writing to the Romans, commending their zeal for the true faith which they had in Christ our true God, thus said: "Your faith is gone forth into all the world." It is necessary to follow out this witness, and he that would contradict it is without good sense. Wherefore Hadrian, the ruler of Old Rome, since he was a sharer of these things, thus borne witness to, wrote expressly and truly to our religious Emperors, and to our humility, confirming admirably and beautifully the ancient tradition of the Catholic Church. And we also ourselves, having examined both in writing,⁵²⁴ and by inquisition, and syllogistically and by demonstration, and having been taught by the teachings of the Fathers, so have confessed, so do confess, and so will confess; and shall be fast, and shall remain, and shall stand firm in the sense of the letters which have just been read, receiving the imaged representations according to the

⁵²³ Compare with this the statement of the famous historian, Gibbon (Chapter XLIX., N. 79), "The pope's legates were casual messengers, two priests without any special commission, and who were disavowed on their return. Some vagabond monks were persuaded by the Catholics to represent the Oriental patriarchs. This curious anecdote is revealed by Theodore Studites, one of the warmest Iconoclasts of the age." And yet to this tissue of false statements Bury, in his just-published edition of Gibbon (1898), has no note of correction to make! And this has passed, and will pass, for history among the overwhelming majority of English readers! Nor does there seem to be any possible excuse for Gibbon in either particular, the first statement is proved to be false by the letters of Hadrian, the second statement is equally disproved by the letters of the "high priests of the East," in which it is quite clear that no claim was set up that they represented the Patriarchs, but the Patriarchates, which they did, as they proved, in a very real sense. This letter Gibbon must have seen, if indeed he ever took the trouble to read the Acts, for it is spread out in full in *Actio Secunda* and was read at length to the Council.

⁵²⁴ Mendham here has translated "The Scriptures," following the Latin, the Greek is γραφικῶς.

ancient tradition of our holy fathers; and these we venerate with firmly-attached⁵²⁵ affection, as made in the name of Christ our God, and of our Spotless Lady the Holy Mother of God, and of the Holy Angels, and of all the Saints, most clearly giving our adoration and faith to the one only true God.

And the holy Synod said: The whole holy Synod thus teaches.



Peter and Peter, the God-loved presbyters and legates of the Apostolic See, said: Let the holy Synod say whether it receives the letters of the most holy Pope of Old Rome.

The holy Synod said: We follow, we receive, we admit them.

[*The bishops then give one by one their votes all in the same sense.*]

Extracts from the Acts.

Session III.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VII., col. 188.)

CONSTANTINE, the most holy bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, said: Since I, unworthy that I am, find that the letter which has just been read, which was sent from the East to Tarasius the most holy archbishop and ecumenical patriarch, is in no sense changed from that confession of faith which he himself had before made, to these I consent and become of one mind, receiving and saluting with honour the holy and venerable images. But the worship of adoration I reserve alone to the supersubstantial and life-giving Trinity. And those who are not so minded, and do not so teach I cast out of the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and I smite them with anathema, and I deliver them over to the lot of those who deny the incarnation and the bodily economy of Christ our true God.

Notes.

HEFELE.

(*Hist. Councils*, Vol. V., p. 366.)

By false translation and misunderstanding the Frankish bishops subsequently at the Synod of Frankfort, A.D. 794, and also in the Carolingian books (iii. 17), understood this to mean that a demand

⁵²⁵ Mendham translates σχετικῶς “relative,” which is a quite possible rendering.

had been made at Nicæa that the same devotion should be offered to the images as to the Most Holy Trinity.

Under these circumstances it is clear that the Franks could do nothing but reject the decrees. I have treated of this whole matter elsewhere.

Extracts from the Acts.

Session IV.

[Among numerous passages of the Fathers one was read from a sermon by St. Gregory Nyssen in which he describes a painting representing the sacrifice of Isaac and tells how he could not pass it “without tears.”]

The most glorious princes said: See how our father grieved at the depicted history, even so that he wept.

Basil, the most holy bishop of Ancyra, said: Many times the father had read the story, but perchance he had not wept; but when once he saw it painted, he wept.

John the most reverend monk and presbyter and representative of the Eastern high priests, said: If to such a doctor the picture was helpful and drew forth tears, how much more in the case of the ignorant and simple will it bring compunction and benefit.

The holy Synod said: We have seen in several places the history of Abraham painted as the father says.

Theodore the most holy bishop of Catanea, said: If the holy Gregory, vigilant⁵²⁶ in divine cogitation, was moved to tears at the sight of the story of Abraham, how much more shall a painting of the incarnation of our Lord Christ, who for us was made man, move the beholders to their profit and to tears?

Tarasius the most holy Patriarch said: Shall we not weep when we see an image of our crucified Lord?

The holy Synod said: We shall indeed—for in that shall be found perfectly the profundity of the abasement of the incarnate God for our sakes.

[Post nonnulla a passage is read from St. Athanasius in which he describes the miracles worked at Berytus, after which there is found the following (col. 224),]

Tarasius, the most holy Patriarch, said: But perhaps someone will say, Why do not the images which we have work miracles? To which we answer, that as the Apostle has said, signs are for

⁵²⁶ It is impossible in English to reproduce the play upon the words Γρηγόριος ὁ γρηγορῶν εἰς τὰ θεῖα νοήματα, κ.τ.λ.

those who do not believe, not for believers. For they who approached that image were unbelievers. Therefore God gave them a sign through the image, to draw them to our Christian faith. But “an evil and adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign and no sign shall be given it.”

[After a number of other quotations, was read the Canon of the Council in Trullo as a canon of the Sixth Synod (col. 233).]

Tarasius, the most holy Patriarch said: There are certain affected with the sickness of ignorance who are scandalized by these canons [viz. of the Trullan Synod] and say, And do you really think they were adopted at the Sixth Synod? Now let all such know that the holy great Sixth Synod was assembled at Constantinople concerning those who said that there was but one energy and will in Christ. These anathematized the heretics, and having expounded the orthodox faith, they went to their homes in the fourteenth year of Constantine. But after four or five years the same⁵²⁷ fathers came together under Justinian, the son of Constantine, and set forth the before-mentioned canons. And let no one doubt concerning them. For they who subscribed under Constantine were the same as they who under Justinian signed the present chart, as can manifestly be established from the unchangeable similarity of their own handwriting. For it was right that they who had appeared at an ecumenical synod should also set forth ecclesiastical canons. They said that we should be led as (by the hand) by the venerable images to the recollection of the incarnation of Christ and of his saving death, and if by them we are led to the realization of the incarnation of Christ our God, what sort of an opinion shall we have of them who break down the venerable images?

[At the close of the Session, after a number of anathematizations had been pronounced, the following was read, to which all the bishops subscribed (col. 317).]

Fulfilling the divine precept of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, our holy Fathers did not hide the light of the divine knowledge given by him to them under a bushel, but they set it upon the candlestick of most useful teaching, so that it might give light to all in the house—that is to say, to those who are born in the Catholic Church; lest perchance anyone of those who piously confess the Lord might strike his foot against the stone of heretical evil doctrine. For they expelled every error of heretics and they cut off the rotten member if it was incurably sick. And with a fan they purged the floor. And the good wheat, that is to say the word which nourisheth and which maketh strong the heart of man, they laid up in the granary of the Catholic Church; but throwing outside the chaff of heretical evil opinion they burned it with unquenchable fire. Therefore also this holy and ecumenical Synod, met together for the second time in this illustrious metropolis of Nice, by the will of God and at the bidding of our pious and most faithful Emperors, Irene a new Helena, and a new Constantine, her God-protected offspring, having considered by their perusal the teachings of our approved and blessed Fathers, hath glorified God himself, from whom there was given to

⁵²⁷ We have seen that this is an error. Vide Introduction to Trullan Canons.

541

them wisdom for our instruction, and for the perfecting of the Catholic and Apostolic Church: and against those who do not believe as they did, but have attempted to overshadow the truth through their novelty, they have chanted the words of the psalm:⁵²⁸ “Oh how much evil have thine enemies done in thy sanctuary; and have glorified themselves, saying, There is not a teacher any more, and they shall not know that we treated with guile the word of truth.” But we, in all things holding the doctrines and precepts of the same our God-bearing Fathers, make proclamation with one mouth and one heart, neither adding anything, nor taking anything away from those things which have been delivered to us by them. But in these things we are strengthened, in these things we are confirmed. Thus we confess, thus we teach, just as the holy and ecumenical six Synods have decreed and ratified. We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son and Word, through whom all things were made, and in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, consubstantial and coeternal with the same Father and with his Son who hath had no beginning. The unbuilt-up, indivisible, incomprehensible, and non-circumscribed Trinity; he, wholly and alone, is to be worshipped and revered with adoration; one Godhead, one Lordship, one dominion, one realm and dynasty, which without division is apportioned to the Persons, and is fitted to the essence severally. For we confess that one of the same holy and consubstantial Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ the true God, in these last days was incarnate and made man for our salvation, and having saved our race through his saving incarnation, and passion, and resurrection, and ascension into heaven; and having delivered us from the error of idols; as also the prophet says, Not an ambassador, not an angel, but the Lord himself hath saved us. Him we also follow, and adopt his voice, and cry aloud; No Synod, no power of kings, no God-hated agreement hath delivered the Church from the error of the idols, as the Jewdaizing conciliabulum hath madly dreamed, which raved against the venerable images; but the Lord of glory himself, the incarnate God, hath saved us and hath snatched us from idolatrous deceit. To him therefore be glory, to him be thanks, to him be eucharists, to him be praise, to him be magnificence. For his redemption and his salvation alone can perfectly save, and not that of other men who come of the earth. For he himself hath fulfilled for us, upon whom the ends of the earth are come through the economy of his incarnation, the words spoken beforehand by his prophets, for he dwelt among us, and went in and out among us, and cast out the names of idols from the earth, as it was written. But we salute the voices of the Lord and of his Apostles through which we have been taught to honour in the first place her who is properly and truly the Mother of God and exalted above all the heavenly powers; also the holy and angelic powers; and the blessed and altogether lauded Apostles, and the glorious Prophets and the triumphant Martyrs which fought for Christ, and the holy and God-bearing Doctors, and all holy men; and to seek for their intercessions, as able to render us at home with the all-royal God of all, so long as we keep his commandments, and strive to live virtuously. Moreover we salute the image of the honourable and life-giving Cross,

⁵²⁸ The reference is to Ps. lxxiv. 3, but the text is quite different from ours.

and the holy reliques of the Saints; and we receive the holy and venerable images: and we salute them, and we embrace them, according to the ancient traditions of the holy Catholic Church of God, that is to say of our holy Fathers, who also received these things and established them in all the most holy Churches of God, and in every place of his dominion. These honourable and venerable images, as has been said, we honour and salute and reverently venerate: to wit, the image of the incarnation of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that of our spotless Lady the all-holy Mother of God, from whom he pleased to take flesh, and to save and deliver us from all impious idolatry; also the images of the holy and incorporeal Angels, who as men appeared to the just. Likewise also the figures and effigies of the divine and all-lauded Apostles, also of the God-speaking Prophets, and of the struggling Martyrs and of holy men. So that through their representations we may be able to be led back in memory and recollection to the prototype, and have a share in the holiness of some one of them.

Thus we have learned to think of these things, and we have been strengthened by our holy Fathers, and we have been strengthened by their divinely handed down teaching. And thanks be to God for his ineffable gift, that he hath not deserted us at the end nor hath the rod of the ungodly come into the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put their hands, that is to say their actual deeds,⁵²⁹ unto wickedness. But he doeth well unto those who are good and true of heart, as the psalmist David melodiously has sung; with whom also we sing the rest of the psalm: As for such as turn back unto their own wickedness, the Lord shall lead them forth with the evil doers; and peace shall be upon the Israel of God.

542

[*The subscriptions follow immediately and close the acts of this session (col. 321–346).*]

Extracts from the Acts.

Session VI.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VII., col. 389.)

LEO the most renowned secretary said: The holy and blessed Synod know how at the last session we examined divers sayings of the God-forsaken heretics, who had brought charges against the holy and spotless Church of the Christians for the setting up of the holy images. But to-day we have in our hands the written blasphemy of those calumniators of the Christians, that is to say, the absurd, and easily answered, and self-convicting definition (ὄρον) of the pseudosyllogus, in all respects agreeing with the impious opinion of the God-hated heretics. But not only have we this, but also the artful and most drastic refutation thereof, which the Holy Spirit had supervised. For

⁵²⁹ This obscure phrase Mendham omits altogether.

it was right that this definition should be made a triumph by wise contradictions, and should be torn to pieces with strong refutations. This also we submit so as to know your pleasure with regard to it.

The holy Synod said: Let it be read.

John, the deacon and chancellor [of the most holy great Church of Constantinople, *in Lat. only*] read.

[*John, the deacon, then read the orthodox refutation, and Gregory, the bishop of Neocæsarea, the Definition of the Mock Council, the one reading the heretical statement and the other the orthodox answer.*]



Epitome of the Definition of the Iconoclastic Conciliabulum held in Constantinople, A.D. 754.⁵³⁰

THE DEFINITION OF THE HOLY, GREAT, AND ECUMENICAL SEVENTH SYNOD.

THE holy and Ecumenical synod, which by the grace of God and most pious command of the God-beloved and orthodox Emperors, Constantine and Leo,⁵³¹ now assembled in the imperial residence city, in the temple of the holy and inviolate Mother of God and Virgin Mary, surnamed in Blachernæ, have decreed as follows.

Satan misguided men, so that they worshipped the creature instead of the Creator. The Mosaic law and the prophets cooperated to undo this ruin; but in order to save mankind thoroughly, God sent his own Son, who turned us away from error and the worshipping of idols, and taught us the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth. As messengers of his saving doctrine, he left us his Apostles and disciples, and these adorned the Church, his Bride, with his glorious doctrines. This ornament of the Church the holy Fathers and the six Ecumenical Councils have preserved inviolate. But the before-mentioned demi-urgos of wickedness could not endure the sight of this adornment, and gradually brought back idolatry under the appearance of Christianity. As then Christ armed his Apostles against the ancient idolatry with the power of the Holy Spirit, and sent them out into all the world, so has he awakened against the new idolatry his servants our faithful Emperors, and endowed them with the same wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Impelled by the Holy Spirit they could no longer be witnesses of the Church being laid waste by the deception of demons, and summoned the sanctified assembly of the God-beloved bishops, that they might institute at a synod a scriptural

⁵³⁰ In this epitome of the verbose definition of the council, I have followed for the most part Hefele. (*Hist. of the Councils*, Vol. V., p. 309 *et seqq.*)

⁵³¹ Now four years old.

examination into the deceitful colouring of the pictures (ὁμοιωμάτων) which draws down the spirit of man from the lofty adoration (λατρείας) of God to the low and material adoration (λατρείαν) of the creature, and that they, under divine guidance, might express their view on the subject.

Our holy synod therefore assembled, and we, its 338 members, follow the older synodal decrees, and accept and proclaim joyfully the dogmas handed down, principally those of the six holy Ecumenical Synods. In the first place the holy and ecumenical great synod assembled at Nice, etc.

After we had carefully examined their decrees under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we found that the unlawful art of painting living creatures blasphemed the fundamental doctrine of our salvation—namely, the Incarnation of Christ, and contradicted the six holy synods. These condemned Nestorius because he divided the one Son and Word of God into two sons, and on the other side, Arius, Dioscorus, Eutyches, and Severus, because they maintained a mingling of the two natures of the one Christ.

Wherefore we thought it right, to shew forth with all accuracy, in our present definition the error of such as make and venerate these, for it is the unanimous doctrine of all the holy Fathers and of the six Ecumenical Synods, that no one may imagine any kind of separation or mingling in opposition to the unsearchable, unspeakable, and incomprehensible union of the two natures in the one hypostasis or person. What avails, then, the folly of the painter, who from sinful love of gain depicts that which should not be depicted—that is, with his polluted hands he tries to fashion that which should only be believed in the heart and confessed with the mouth? He makes an image and calls it Christ. The name Christ signifies God and man. Consequently it is an image of God and man, and consequently he has in his foolish mind, in his representation of the created flesh, depicted the Godhead which cannot be represented, and thus mingled what should not be mingled. Thus he is guilty of a double blasphemy—the one in making an image of the Godhead, and the other by mingling the Godhead and manhood. Those fall into the same blasphemy who venerate the image, and the same woe rests upon both, because they err with Arius, Dioscorus, and Eutyches, and with the heresy of the Acephali. When, however, they are blamed for undertaking to depict the divine nature of Christ, which should not be depicted, they take refuge in the excuse: We represent only the flesh of Christ which we have seen and handled. But that is a Nestorian error. For it should be considered that that flesh was also the flesh of God the Word, without any separation, perfectly assumed by the divine nature and made wholly divine. How could it now be separated and represented apart? So is it with the human soul of Christ which mediates between the Godhead of the Son and the dulness of the flesh. As the human flesh is at the same time flesh of God the Word, so is the human soul also soul of God the Word, and both at the same time, the soul being deified as well as the body, and the Godhead remained undivided even in the separation of the soul from the body in his voluntary passion. For where the soul of Christ is, there is also his Godhead; and where the body of Christ is, there too is his Godhead. If then in his passion the divinity remained inseparable from these, how do the fools venture to separate the flesh from the Godhead, and represent it by itself as the image of a mere man? They fall into the abyss of impiety, since they separate the flesh from the Godhead, ascribe to it a subsistence of its own, a personality of its own,

which they depict, and thus introduce a fourth person into the Trinity. Moreover, they represent as not being made divine, that which has been made divine by being assumed by the Godhead. Whoever, then, makes an image of Christ, either depicts the Godhead which cannot be depicted, and mingles it with the manhood (like the Monophysites), or he represents the body of Christ as not made divine and separate and as a person apart, like the Nestorians.

The only admissible figure of the humanity of Christ, however, is bread and wine in the holy Supper. This and no other form, this and no other type, has he chosen to represent his incarnation. Bread he ordered to be brought, but not a representation of the human form, so that idolatry might not arise. And as the body of Christ is made divine, so also this figure of the body of Christ, the bread, is made divine by the descent of the Holy Spirit; it becomes the divine body of Christ by the mediation of the priest who, separating the oblation from that which is common, sanctifies it.

The evil custom of assigning names to the images does not come down from Christ and the Apostles and the holy Fathers; nor have these left behind them any prayer by which an image should be hallowed or made anything else than ordinary matter.

If, however, some say, we might be right in regard to the images of Christ, on account of the mysterious union of the two natures, but it is not right for us to forbid also the images of the altogether spotless and ever-glorious Mother of God, of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs, who were mere men and did not consist of two natures; we may reply, first of all: If those fall away, there is no longer need of these. But we will also consider what may be said against these in particular. Christianity has rejected the *whole* of heathenism, and so not merely heathen sacrifices, but also the heathen worship of images. The Saints live on eternally with God, although they have died. If anyone thinks to call them back again to life by a dead art, discovered by the heathen, he makes himself guilty of blasphemy. Who dares attempt with heathenish art to paint the Mother of God, who is exalted above all heavens and the Saints? It is not permitted to Christians, who have the hope of the resurrection, to imitate the customs of demon-worshippers, and to insult the Saints, who shine in so great glory, by common dead matter.

Moreover, we can prove our view by Holy Scripture and the Fathers. In the former it is said: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;” and: “Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath;” on which account God spoke to the Israelites on the Mount, from the midst of the fire, but showed them no image. Further: “They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,...and served the creature more than the Creator.” [*Several other passages, even less to the point, are cited.*]⁵³²

The same is taught also by the holy Fathers. [*The Synod appeals to a spurious passage from Epiphanius and to one inserted into the writings of Theodotus of Ancyra, a friend of St. Cyril’s; to utterances—in no way striking—of Gregory of Nazianzum, of SS. Chrysostom, Basil, Athanasius*

*of Amphilochius and of Eusebius Pamphili, from his Letter to the Empress Constantia, who had asked him for a picture of Christ.]*⁵³³

Supported by the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, we declare unanimously, in the name of the Holy Trinity, that there shall be rejected and removed and cursed out of the Christian Church every likeness which is made out of any material and colour whatever by the evil art of painters.

Whoever in future dares to make such a thing, or to venerate it, or set it up in a church, or in a private house, or possesses it in secret, shall, if bishop, presbyter, or deacon, be deposed; if monk or layman, be anathematised, and become liable to be tried by the secular laws as an adversary of God and an enemy of the doctrines handed down by the Fathers. At the same time we ordain that no incumbent of a church shall venture, under pretext of destroying the error in regard to images, to lay his hands on the holy vessels in order to have them altered, because they are adorned with figures. The same is provided in regard to the vestments of churches, cloths, and all that is dedicated to divine service. If, however, the incumbent of a church wishes to have such church vessels and vestments altered, he must do this only with the assent of the holy Ecumenical patriarch and at the bidding of our pious Emperors. So also no prince or secular official shall rob the churches, as some have done in former times, under the pretext of destroying images. All this we ordain, believing that we speak as doth the Apostle, for we also believe that we have the spirit of Christ; and as our predecessors who believed the same thing spake what they had synodically defined, so we believe and therefore do we speak, and set forth a definition of what has seemed good to us following and in accordance with the definitions of our Fathers.

(1) If anyone shall not confess, according to the tradition of the Apostles and Fathers, in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost one godhead, nature and substance, will and operation, virtue and dominion, kingdom and power in three subsistences, that is in their most glorious Persons, let him be anathema.

(2) If anyone does not confess that one of the Trinity was made flesh, let him be anathema.

(3) If anyone does not confess that the holy Virgin is truly the Mother of God, etc.

(4) If anyone does not confess one Christ both God and man, etc.

(5) If anyone does not confess that the flesh of the Lord is life-giving because it is the flesh of the Word of God, etc.

(6) If anyone does not confess two natures in Christ, etc.

(7) If anyone does not confess that Christ is seated with God the Father in body and soul, and so will come to judge, and that he will remain God forever without any grossness, etc.

(8) If anyone ventures to represent the divine image (*χαρακτήρ*) of the Word after the Incarnation with material colours, let him be anathema!

(9) If anyone ventures to represent in human figures, by means of material colours, by reason of the incarnation, the substance or person (*ousia* or *hypostasis*) of the Word, which cannot be

⁵³³ These are Hefele's words.

depicted, and does not rather confess that even after the Incarnation he [i.e., the Word] cannot be depicted, let him be anathema!

(10) If anyone ventures to represent the hypostatic union of the two natures in a picture, and calls it Christ, and thus falsely represents a union of the two natures, etc.!

(11) If anyone separates the flesh united with the person of the Word from it, and endeavours to represent it separately in a picture, etc.!

(12) If anyone separates the one Christ into two persons, and endeavours to represent Him who was born of the Virgin separately, and thus accepts only a relative (σχετική) union of the natures, etc.

(13) If anyone represents in a picture the flesh deified by its union with the Word, and thus separates it from the Godhead, etc.

(14) If anyone endeavours to represent by material colours, God the Word as a mere man, who, although bearing the form of God, yet has assumed the form of a servant in his own person, and thus endeavours to separate him from his inseparable Godhead, so that he thereby introduces a quaternity into the Holy Trinity, etc.

546

(15) If anyone shall not confess the holy ever-virgin Mary, truly and properly the Mother of God, to be higher than every creature whether visible or invisible, and does not with sincere faith seek her intercessions as of one having confidence in her access to our God, since she bare him, etc.

(16) If anyone shall endeavour to represent the forms of the Saints in lifeless pictures with material colours which are of no value (for this notion is vain and introduced by the devil), and does not rather represent their virtues as living images in himself, etc.

(17) If anyone denies the profit of the invocation of Saints, etc.

(18) If anyone denies the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment, and the condign retribution to everyone, endless torment and endless bliss, etc.

(19) If anyone does not accept this our Holy and Ecumenical Seventh Synod, let him be anathema from the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and from the seven holy Ecumenical Synods!

[Then follows the prohibition of the making or teaching any other faith, and the penalties for disobedience. After this follow the acclamations.]

The divine Kings Constantine and Leo said: Let the holy and ecumenical synod say, if with the consent of all the most holy bishops the definition just read has been set forth.

The holy synod cried out: Thus we all believe, we all are of the same mind. We have all with one voice and voluntarily subscribed. This is the faith of the Apostles. Many years to the Emperors! They are the light of orthodoxy! Many years to the orthodox Emperors! God preserve your Empire! You have now more firmly proclaimed the inseparability of the two natures of Christ! You have banished all idolatry! You have destroyed the heresies of Germanus [of Constantinople], George and Mansur [μάνσουρ, John Damascene]. Anathema to Germanus, the double-minded, and

worshipper of wood! Anathema to George, his associate, to the falsifier of the doctrine of the Fathers! Anathema to Mansur, who has an evil name and Saracen opinions! To the betrayer of Christ and the enemy of the Empire, to the teacher of impiety, the perverter of Scripture, Mansur, anathema! The Trinity has deposed these three!⁵³⁴

Excursus on the Conciliabulum Styling Itself the Seventh Ecumenical Council, But Commonly Called the Mock Synod of Constantinople.

A.D. 754.

THE reader will find all the information he desires with regard to the great iconoclastic controversy in the ordinary church-histories, and the theological side of the matter in the writings of St. John Damascene. It seems, however, that in order to render the meaning of the action of the last of the Ecumenical Councils clear it is necessary to provide an account of the synod which was held to condemn what it so shortly afterward expressly approved. I quote from Hefele *in loco*, and would only further draw the reader's attention to the fact that the main thing objected to was not (as is commonly supposed) the outward veneration of the sacred icons, but the making and setting up of them, as architectural ornaments; and that it was not only representations of the persons of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the Divine Son in his incarnate form that were denounced, but even pictures of the Blessed Virgin and of the other saints; all this is evident to anyone reading the foregoing abstract of the decree.

(Hefele, *History of the Councils*, Vol. V., p. 308 *et seqq.*)



The Emperor, after the death of the Patriarch Anastasius (A.D. 753), summoned the bishops of his Empire to a great synod in the palace Hieria, which lay opposite to Constantinople on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, between Chrysopolis and Chalcedon, a little to the north of the latter. The vacancy of the patriarchate, facilitated his plans, since the hope of succeeding to this see kept down, in the most ambitious and aspiring of the bishops, any possible thought of opposition. The number of those present amounted to 338 bishops, and the place of president was occupied by Archbishop Theodosius of Ephesus, already known to us as son of a former Emperor—Apsimar, from the beginning an assistant in the iconoclastic movement. Nicephorus names him alone as president of the synod; Theophanes, on the contrary, mentions Bishop Pastillas of Perga as second president, and adds, “The Patriarchates of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were not represented [the last three were then in the hands of the Saracens], the transactions began on February 10th, and lasted until August 8th (in Hieria); on the latter date, however, the synod assembled in St.

⁵³⁴ These are not given in full but are sufficient to give the true gist.

Mary's Church in Blachernæ, the northern suburb of Constantinople, and the Emperor now solemnly nominated Bishop Constantine of Sylæum, a monk, as patriarch of Constantinople. On August 27th, the heretical decree [of the Synod] was published."

We see from this that the last sessions of this Conciliabulum were held no longer in Hieria, but in the Blachernæ of Constantinople. We have no complete Acts of this assembly, but its very verbose ὄρος (decree), together with a short introduction, is preserved among the acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

This decree was by no means suffered to remain inoperative.

(W. M. Sinclair. Smith and Wace, *Dictionary of Chr. Biog.*, *sub voce* Constantinus VI.)

The Emperor singled out the more noted monks, and required them to comply with the decrees of the synod. In A.D. 766 he exacted an oath against images from all the inhabitants of the empire. The monks refused with violent obstinacy, and Copronymus appears to have amused himself by treating them with ruthless harshness. The Emperor, indeed, seems to have contemplated the extirpation of monachism. John the Damascene he persuaded his bishops to excommunicate. Monks were forced to appear in the hippodrome at Constantinople hand in hand with harlots, while the populace spat at them. The new patriarch Constantinus, presented by the emperor to the council the last day of its session, was forced to foreswear images, to attend banquets, to eat and drink freely against his monastic vows, to wear garlands, to witness the coarse spectacles and hear the coarse language which entertained the Emperor. Monasteries were destroyed, made into barracks, or secularized. Lachanodraco, governor of the Thracian Theme, seems to have exceeded Copronymus in his ribaldry and injustice. He collected a number of monks into a plain, clothed them with white, presented them with wives, and forced them to choose between marriage and loss of eyesight. He sold the property of the monasteries, and sent the price to the Emperor. Copronymus publicly thanked him, and commended his example to other governors.

(Harnack. *History of Dogma*, Vol. V., p. 325 [Eng. Tr.])

The clergy obeyed when the decrees were published; but resistance was offered in the ranks of the monks. Many took to flight, some became martyrs. The imperial police stormed the churches, and destroyed those images and pictures that had not been secured. The iconoclastic zeal by no means sprang from enthusiasm for divine service in spirit and in truth. The Emperor now also directly attacked the monks; he meant to extirpate the hated order, and to overthrow the throne of Peter. We see how the idea of an absolute military state rose powerfully in Constantinople; how it strove to establish itself by brute force. The Emperor, according to trustworthy evidence, made the inhabitants of the city swear that they would henceforth worship no image, and give up all intercourse with monks. Cloisters were turned into arsenals and barracks, relics were hurled into the sea, and the monks, as far as possible, secularized. And the politically far-seeing Emperor, at the same time entered into correspondence with France (Synod of Gentilly, A.D. 767), and sought

to win Pepin. History seemed to have suffered a violent rupture, a new era was dawning which should supersede the history of the Church.

But the Church was too powerful, and the Emperor was not even master of Oriental Christendom, but only of part of it. The orthodox Patriarchs of the East (under the rule of Islam) declared against the iconoclastic movement, and a Church without monks or pictures, in schism with the other orthodox Churches, was a nonentity. A spiritual reformer was wanting. Thus the great reaction set in after the death of the Emperor (A.D. 775), the ablest ruler Constantinople had seen for a long time. This is not the place to describe how it was inaugurated and cautiously carried out by the skilful policy of the Empress Irene; cautiously, for a generation had already grown up that was accustomed to the cultus without images. An important part was played by the miracles performed by the re-emerging relics and pictures. But the lower classes had always been really favourable to them; only the army and the not inconsiderable number of bishops who were of the school of Constantine had to be carefully handled. Tarasius, the new Patriarch of Constantinople and a supporter of images, succeeded, after overcoming much difficulty, and especially distrust in Rome and the East, after also removing the excited army, in bringing together a General Council of about 350 bishops at Nicæa, A.D. 787, which reversed the decrees of A.D. 754. The proceedings of the seven sittings are of great value, because very important patristic passages have been preserved in them which otherwise would have perished; for at this synod also the discussions turned chiefly on the Fathers. The decision (ῥοσ) restored orthodoxy and finally settled it.

I cannot do better than to cite in conclusion the words of the profoundly learned Archbishop of Dublin, himself a quasi-Iconoclast.

(Trench. *Lect. Medieval Ch. Hist.*, p. 93.)

It is only fair to state that the most zealous favourers and promoters of this ill-directed homage always disclaimed with indignation the charge of offering to the images any reverence which did not differ in kind, and not merely in degree, from the worship which they offered to Almighty God, designating it as they did by altogether a different name. We shall very probably feel that in these distinctions which they drew between the one and the other, between the “honour” which they gave to these icons and the “worship” which they withheld from these and gave only to God, there lay no slightest justification of that in which they allowed themselves; but these distinctions acquit them of idolatry, and it is the merest justice to remember this.

(Trench. *Ut supra*, p. 99.)

I can close this Lecture with no better or wiser words than those with which Dean Milman reads to us the lesson of this mournful story: “There was this irremediable weakness in the cause of iconoclasm; it was a mere negative doctrine, a proscription of those sentiments which had full possession of the popular mind, without any strong countervailing excitement. The senses were robbed of their habitual and cherished objects of devotion, but there was no awakening of an inner

life of intense and passionate piety. The cold, naked walls from whence the Scriptural histories had been effaced, the despoiled shrines, the mutilated images, could not compel the mind to a more pure and immaterial conception of God and the Saviour. Hatred of images, in the process of the strife, might become, as it did, a fanaticism, it could never become a religion. Iconoclasm might proscribe idolatry; but it had no power of kindling a purer faith.”



The Decree of the Holy, Great, Ecumenical Synod, the Second of Nice.

(Found in Labbe and Cossart, Concilia. Tom. VII., col. 552.)

THE holy, great, and Ecumenical Synod which by the grace of God and the will of the pious and Christ-loving Emperors, Constantine and Irene, his mother, was gathered together for the second time at Nice, the illustrious metropolis of Bithynia, in the holy church of God which is named Sophia, having followed the tradition of the Catholic Church, hath defined as follows:

Christ our Lord, who hath bestowed upon us the light of the knowledge of himself, and hath redeemed us from the darkness of idolatrous madness, having espoused to himself the Holy Catholic Church without spot or defect, promised that he would so preserve her: and gave his word to this effect to his holy disciples when he said: “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” which promise he made, not only to them, but to us also who should believe in his name through their word. But some, not considering of this gift, and having become fickle through the temptation of the wily enemy, have fallen from the right faith; for, withdrawing from the traditions of the Catholic Church, they have erred from the truth and as the proverb saith: “The husbandmen have gone astray in their own husbandry and have gathered in their hands nothingness,” because certain priests, priests in name only, not in fact, had dared to speak against the God-approved ornament of the sacred monuments, of whom God cries aloud through the prophet, “Many pastors have corrupted my vineyard, they have polluted my portion.”

And, forsooth, following profane men, led astray by their carnal sense, they have calumniated the Church of Christ our God, which he hath espoused to himself, and have failed to distinguish between holy and profane, styling the images of our Lord and of his Saints by the same name as the statues of diabolical idols. Seeing which things, our Lord God (not willing to behold his people corrupted by such manner of plague) hath of his good pleasure called us together, the chief of his priests, from every quarter, moved with a divine zeal and brought hither by the will of our princes, Constantine and Irene, to the end that the traditions of the Catholic Church may receive stability by our common decree. Therefore, with all diligence, making a thorough examination and analysis, and following the trend of the truth, we diminish nought, we add nought, but we preserve unchanged all things which pertain to the Catholic Church, and following the Six Ecumenical Synods, especially

that which met in this illustrious metropolis of Nice, as also that which was afterwards gathered together in the God-protected Royal City.

We believe...life of the world to come. Amen.⁵³⁵

We detest and anathematize Arius and all the sharers of his absurd opinion; also Macedonius and those who following him are well styled "Foes of the Spirit" (Pneumatomachi). We confess that our Lady, St. Mary, is properly and truly the Mother of God, because she was the Mother after the flesh of One Person of the Holy Trinity, to wit, Christ our God, as the Council of Ephesus has already defined when it cast out of the Church the impious Nestorius with his colleagues, because he taught that there were two Persons [in Christ]. With the Fathers of this synod we confess that he who was incarnate of the immaculate Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary has two natures, recognizing him as perfect God and perfect man, as also the Council of Chalcedon hath promulgated, expelling from the divine Atrium [αὐλή] as blasphemers, Eutyches and Dioscorus; and placing in the same category Severus, Peter and a number of others, blaspheming in divers fashions. Moreover, with these we anathematize the fables of Origen, Evagrius, and Didymus, in accordance with the decision of the Fifth Council held at Constantinople. We affirm that in Christ there be two wills and two operations according to the reality of each nature, as also the Sixth Synod, held at Constantinople, taught, casting out Sergius, Honorius, Cyrus, Pyrrhus, Macarius, and those who agree with them, and all those who are unwilling to be reverent.

To make our confession short, we keep unchanged all the ecclesiastical traditions handed down to us, whether in writing or verbally, one of which is the making of pictorial representations, agreeable to the history of the preaching of the Gospel, a tradition useful in many respects, but especially in this, that so the incarnation of the Word of God is shown forth as real and not merely phantastic, for these have mutual indications and without doubt have also mutual significations.

We, therefore, following the royal pathway and the divinely inspired authority of our Holy Fathers and the traditions of the Catholic Church (for, as we all know, the Holy Spirit indwells her), define with all certitude and accuracy that just as the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross, so also the venerable and holy images, as well in painting and mosaic as of other fit materials, should be set forth in the holy churches of God, and on the sacred vessels and on the vestments and on hangings and in pictures both in houses and by the wayside, to wit, the figure of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of our spotless Lady, the Mother of God, of the honourable Angels, of all Saints and of all pious people. For by so much more frequently as they are seen in artistic representation, by so much more readily are men lifted up to the memory of their prototypes, and

⁵³⁵ Anastasius in his *Interpretatio* (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, Tom. CXXIX., col. 458), gives the word, "Filioque." Cardinal Julian in the Fifth Session of the Council of Florence gave evidence that there was then extant a very ancient codex containing these words; and this ms., which was in Greek, was actually shown. The Greek scholar Gemistus Pletho remarked that if this were so, then the Latin theologians, like St. Thomas Aquinas would long ago have appealed to the Synod. (Cf. Hefele, *Hist. Councils*, Vol. V., p. 374, Note 2.) This reasoning is not conclusive if Cardinal Bellarmine is to be believed, who says that St. Thomas had never seen the Acts of this synod. (*De Imag. Sanct.*, Lib. ii., cap. xxii.)

to a longing after them; and to these should be given due salutation and honourable reverence (ἀσπασμὸν καὶ τιμητικὴν προσκύνησιν), not indeed that true worship of faith (λατρείαν) which pertains alone to the divine nature; but to these, as to the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross and to the Book of the Gospels and to the other holy objects, incense and lights may be offered according to ancient pious custom. For the honour which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents, and he who reveres the image reveres in it the subject represented. For thus the teaching of our holy Fathers, that is the tradition of the Catholic Church, which from one end of the earth to the other hath received the Gospel, is strengthened. Thus we follow Paul, who spake in Christ, and the whole divine Apostolic company and the holy Fathers, holding fast the traditions which we have received. So we sing prophetically the triumphal hymns of the Church, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Rejoice and be glad with all thy heart. The Lord hath taken away from thee the oppression of thy adversaries; thou art redeemed from the hand of thine enemies. The Lord is a King in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more, and peace be unto thee forever.”

Those, therefore who dare to think or teach otherwise, or as wicked heretics to spurn the traditions of the Church and to invent some novelty, or else to reject some of those things which the Church hath received (*e.g.*, the Book of the Gospels, or the image of the cross, or the pictorial icons, or the holy reliques of a martyr), or evilly and sharply to devise anything subversive of the lawful traditions of the Catholic Church or to turn to common uses the sacred vessels or the venerable monasteries,⁵³⁶ if they be Bishops or Clerics, we command that they be deposed; if religious or laics, that they be cut off from communion.

[After all had signed, the acclamations began (col. 576).]

The holy Synod cried out: So we all believe, we all are so minded, we all give our consent and have signed. This is the faith of the Apostles, this is the faith of the orthodox, this is the faith which hath made firm the whole world. Believing in one God, to be celebrated in Trinity, we salute the honourable images! Those who do not so hold, let them be anathema. Those who do not thus think, let them be driven far away from the Church. For we follow the most ancient legislation of the Catholic Church. We keep the laws of the Fathers. We anathematize those who add anything to or take anything away from the Catholic Church. We anathematize the introduced novelty of the revilers of Christians. We salute the venerable images. We place under anathema those who do not do this. Anathema to them who presume to apply to the venerable images the things said in Holy Scripture about idols. Anathema to those who do not salute the holy and venerable images. Anathema to those who call the sacred images idols. Anathema to those who say that Christians resort to the sacred images as to gods. Anathema to those who say that any other delivered us from

⁵³⁶ Constantine Copronymus turned many monasteries into soldiers' barracks. In this he has been followed by other crowned enemies of Christ.

idols except Christ our God. Anathema to those who dare to say that at any time the Catholic Church received idols.

Many years to the Emperors, etc., etc.

Excursus on the Present Teaching of the Latin and Greek Churches on the Subject.

To set forth the present teaching of the Latin Church upon the subject of images and the cultus which is due them, I cite the decree of the Council of Trent and a passage from the Catechism set forth by the authority of the same synod.

(*Conc. Trid.*, Sess. xxv. December 3d and 4th, 1563. [Buckley's Trans.])

The holy synod enjoins on all bishops, and others sustaining the office and charge of teaching that, according to the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church received from the primitive times of the Christian religion, and according to the consent of the holy Fathers, and to the decrees of sacred councils, they especially instruct the faithful diligently touching the intercession and invocation of saints; the honour paid to relics; and the lawful use of images—teaching them, that the saints, who reign together with Christ, offer up their own prayers to God for men; that it is good and useful suppliantly to invoke them, and to resort to their prayers, aid and help, for obtaining benefits from God, through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who alone is our Redeemer and Saviour; but that they think impiously, who deny that the saints, who enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, are to be invoked; or to assert either that they do not pray for men; or, that the invocation of them to pray for each of us, even in particular, is idolatry; or, that it is repugnant to the word of God, and is opposed to the honour of the *one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus*, or, that it is foolish to supplicate, orally or inwardly, those who reign in heaven. Also, that the holy bodies of holy martyrs and of others now living with Christ, which were the living members of Christ, and *the temples of the Holy Ghost*, and which are by him to be raised unto eternal life, and to be glorified, are to be venerated by the faithful, through which [bodies] many benefits are bestowed by God on men; so that they who affirm that veneration and honour are not due to the relics of saints; or, that these, and other sacred monuments, are uselessly honoured by the faithful; and that the places dedicated to the memories of the Saints are vainly visited for the purpose of obtaining their aid; are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned, and doth now also condemn them.

Moreover, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God and of the other Saints, are to be had and retained particularly in temples, and that due honour and veneration are to be awarded them; not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped; or that anything is to be asked of them; or that confidence is to be reposed in images, as was of old done by Gentiles, who placed their hope in idols; but because the honour which is

shown unto them is referred to the prototypes which they represent; in such wise that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head, and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ, and venerate the Saints, whose similitude they bear. And this, by the decrees of councils, and especially of the second synod of Nicæa, has been ordained against the opponents of images.

552

And the bishops shall carefully teach this; that, by means of the histories of the mysteries of our Redemption, depicted by paintings or other representations, the people are instructed, and strengthened in remembering, and continually reflecting on the articles of faith; as also that great profit is derived from all sacred images, not only because the people are thereby admonished of the benefits and gifts which have been bestowed upon them by Christ, but also because the miracles of God through the means of the Saints, and their salutary examples, are set before the eyes of the faithful; that so, for those things they may give God thanks; may order their own life and manners in imitation of the Saints; and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety. But if any one shall teach or think contrary to these decrees, let him be anathema. And if any abuses have crept in amongst these holy and salutary observances, the holy synod earnestly desires that they be utterly abolished; in such wise that no images conducive to false doctrine, and furnishing occasion of dangerous error to the uneducated, be set up. And if at times, when it shall be expedient for the unlearned people, it happen that the histories and narratives of Holy Scripture are portrayed and represented; the people shall be taught, that not thereby is the Divinity represented, as though it could be perceived by the eyes of the body, or be depicted by colours or figures. Moreover, in the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, and the sacred use of images, every superstition shall be removed, all filthy lucre be abolished, finally, all lasciviousness be avoided; in such wise that figures shall not be painted or adorned with a wantonness of beauty: nor shall men also pervert the celebration of the saints, and the visitation of relics, into revellings and drunkenness; as if festivals are celebrated to the honour of the saints by luxury and wantonness. Finally, let so great care and diligence be used by bishops touching these matters, as that there appear nothing disorderly, or unbecomingly or confusedly arranged, nothing profane, nothing indecorous; *since holiness becometh the house of God.*

And that these things may be the more faithfully observed, the holy synod ordains, that it be lawful for no one to place, or cause to be placed, any unusual image in any place, or church, howsoever exempted, except it shall have been approved of by the bishop: also, that no new miracles are to be admitted, or new relics received, unless the said bishop has taken cognizance and approved thereof; who, as soon as he has obtained some certain information in regard of these matters shall, after having taken advice with theologians, and other pious men, act therein as he shall judge to be agreeable to truth and piety. But if any doubtful, or difficult abuse is to be extirpated, or, in fine, if any more serious question shall arise touching these matters, the bishop, before he decides the controversy, shall await the sentence of the metropolitan and of the bishops of the same province, in a provincial council; yet so, that nothing new, or that has not previously been usual in the Church, shall be decreed, without the most holy Roman Pontiff having been first consulted.

(Catechism of the Council of Trent.⁵³⁷ Pt. IV., Chap. VI. [Buckley's Trans.]

Question III.

God and the Saints addressed differently.

From God and from the Saints we implore assistance not after the same manner: for we implore God to grant us the blessing which we want, or to deliver us from evils; but the Saints, because favourites with God, we solicit to undertake our advocacy with God, to obtain of him for us those things of which we stand in need. Hence we employ two different forms of prayer: for to God, we properly say, *Have mercy on us, hear us*; to the saints, *Pray for us*.

Question IV.

In what Manner we may beseech the Saints to have mercy on us.

We may, however, also ask the saints themselves to have mercy on us, for they are most merciful; but we do so on a different principle, for we may beseech them that, touched with the misery of our condition, they would interpose, in our behalf, their favour and intercession with God. In the performance of this duty, it is most strictly incumbent on all, to beware lest they transfer to any creature the right which belongs exclusively to the Deity; and when we repeat before the image of any Saint the Lord's Prayer, our idea must then be to beg of the Saint to pray with us, and ask for us those favours that are contained in the form of the Lord's Prayer, to become, in fine, our interpreter and intercessor with God; for that this is an office which the saints discharge, St. John the apostle has taught in the Revelation.

The doctrine of the Eastern Church may be seen from the following from *The Orthodox Confession of the faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East*.

(*Confes. Orthodox.* P. III. Q. LII. [apud Kimmel, *Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Orientalis*⁵³⁸].)

Rightly therefore do we honour the Saints of God, as it is written (Ps. cxxxix. 17) "How dear are thy friends unto me, O God." And divine assistance we ask for through them, just as God ordered the friends of Job to go to his faithful servant, and that he should offer sacrifice and pray for them that they might obtain remission of sin through their patronage. And in the second place

⁵³⁷ The reader will remember that while of great weight the Catechism was not set forth by the Council, nor are its statements *de fide* in the Latin Church.

⁵³⁸ This is not found in Schaff's, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II., although part of the *Orthodox Confession* (viz. Pt. I.) is reprinted. The editor explains (p. 275) that he has printed "the doctrinal part in full," and has omitted the rest because it "belongs to Ethics rather than Symbolics." A somewhat extraordinary opinion to be held by anyone who has read the omitted parts.

this [First] commandment forbids men to adore any creature with the veneration of adoration (λατρείας). For we do not honour the Saints as though adoring them, but we call upon them as our brothers, and as friends of God, and therefore we seek the divine assistance through these, our brethren. For they go between the Lord and us for our advantage. And this in no respect is opposed to this commandment of the decalogue.

Wherefore just as the Israelites did not sin when they called upon Moses to mediate between them and God, so neither do we sin, when we call for the aid and intercession of the Saints.

(*Ibid.* Quæstio LIV.)

This [Second] Commandment is separate from the first. For that treated of the Unity of the true God, forbidding and taking away the multitude of gods. But the present treats of external religious ceremonies. For besides the not honouring of false gods, we ought to dedicate no carved likeness in their honour, nor to venerate with adoration such things, nor to offer the sacrifices of adoration to them. Therefore they sin against this commandment who venerate idols as gods, and offer sacrifices to them, and place their whole confidence and hope in them; as also the Psalmist says (Ps. cxxxv. 15), “The images of the heathen are silver and gold, etc.” They also transgress this precept who are given up to covetousness, etc.

(*Ibid.* Quæstio LV.)

There is a great distinction between idols and images (τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῶν εἰκόνων). For idols are the figments and inventions of men, as the Apostle testifies when he says (1 Cor. viii. 4), “We know that an idol is nothing in the world.” But an image is a representation of a true thing having a real existence in the world. Thus, for example, the image of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the holy Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints. Moreover, the Pagans venerated their idols as gods, and offered to them sacrifices, esteeming the gold and silver to be God, as did Nebuchadnezzar.

But when we honour and venerate the images, we in no way venerate the colours or the wood of which they are made; but we glorify with the veneration of *dulia* (δουλείας), those holy beings of which these are the images, making them by this means present to our minds as if we could see them with our eyes. For this reason we venerate the image of the crucifixion, and place before our minds Christ hung upon the cross for our salvation, and to such like we bow the head, and bend the knee with thanksgiving. Likewise we venerate the image of the Virgin Mary, we lift up our mind to her the most holy Mother of God, bowing both head and knees before her; calling her blessed above all men and women, with the Archangel Gabriel. The veneration, moreover, of the holy images as received in the orthodox Church, in no respect transgresses this commandment.

But this is not one and the same with that we offer to God; nor do the orthodox give it to the art of the painting, but to those very Saints whom the images represent. The Cherubim which overshadowed the mercy-seat, representing the true Cherubim which stand before God in heaven, the Israelites revered and honoured without any violation of the commandment of God, and likewise

the children of Israel revered the tabernacle of witness with a suitable honour (II Sam. vi. 13), and yet in no respect sinned nor set at naught this precept, but rather the more glorified God. From these considerations it is evident that when we honour the holy images, we do not transgress the commandment of the decalogue, but we most especially praise God, who is “to be admired in his Saints” (Ps. lxxviii. 35). But this only we should be careful of, that every image has a label, telling of what Saint it is, that thus the intention of him who venerates it may be the more easily fulfilled.

And for the greater establishment of the veneration of the holy images, the Church of God at the Seventh Ecumenical Synod anathematized all those who made war against the images, and set forth the veneration of the august images, and established it forever, as is evident from the ninth canon of that synod.

(*Ibid.* Quæstio LVI.)

Why was he praised in the Old Testament who broke down the brazen serpent (II Kgs. xviii. 4) which long before Moses had set up on high? Answer: Because the Jews were beginning an apostasy from the veneration of the true God, venerating that serpent as the true God; and offering to it incense as the Scripture saith. Therefore wishing to cut off this evil, lest it might spread further, he broke up that serpent in order that the Israelites might have no longer that incentive to idolatry. But before they honoured the serpent with the veneration of adoration, no one was condemned in that respect nor was the serpent broken.

But Christians in no respect honour images as gods, neither in their veneration do they take anything from the true adoration due to God. Nay, rather they are led by the hand, as it were, by the image to God, while under their visible representations they honour the Saints with the veneration of *dulia* (δουλικῶς) as the friends of God; asking for their mediation (μεσιτεύουσιν) to the Lord. And if perchance some have strayed, from their lack of knowledge, in their veneration, it were better to teach such an one, rather than that the veneration of the august images should be banished from the Church.



The Canons of the Holy and Ecumenical Seventh Council.⁵³⁹

Canon I.

That the sacred Canons are in all things to be observed.

THE pattern for those who have received the sacerdotal dignity is found in the testimonies and instructions laid down in the canonical constitutions, which we receiving with a glad mind, sing unto the Lord God in the words of the God-inspired David, saying: “I have had as great delight in

⁵³⁹ This is the caption as given in the Greek of Beveridge’s *Synod*.

the way of thy testimonies as in all manner of riches.” “Thou hast commanded righteousness as thy testimonies for ever.” “Grant me understanding and I shall live.” Now if the word of prophesy bids us keep the testimonies of God forever and to live by them, it is evident that they must abide unshaken and without change. Therefore Moses, the prophet of God, speaketh after this manner: “To them nothing is to be added, and from them nothing is to be taken away.” And the divine Apostle glorying in them cries out, “which things the angels desire to look into,” and, “if an angel preach to you anything besides that which ye have received, let him be anathema.” Seeing these things are so, being thus well-testified unto us, we rejoice over them as he that hath found great spoil, and press to our bosom with gladness the divine canons, holding fast all the precepts of the same, complete and without change, whether they have been set forth by the holy trumpets of the Spirit, the renowned Apostles, or by the Six Ecumenical Councils, or by Councils locally assembled for promulgating the decrees of the said Ecumenical Councils, or by our holy Fathers. For all these, being illumined by the same Spirit, defined such things as were expedient. Accordingly those whom they placed under anathema, we likewise anathematize; those whom they deposed, we also depose; those whom they excommunicated, we also excommunicate; and those whom they delivered over to punishment, we subject to the same penalty. And now “let your conversation be without covetousness,” crieth out Paul the divine Apostle, who was caught up into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON I.

We gladly embrace the Divine Canons, viz.: those of the Holy Apostles, of the Six Ecumenical Synods, as also of the local synods and of our Holy Fathers, as inspired by one and the same Holy Spirit. Whom they anathematize we also anathematize; whom they depose, we depose; whom they cut off, we cut off; and whom they subject to penalties, we also so subject.

HARNACK.

(Hist. of Dogma [Eng. Trans.], Vol. V., p. 327).

Just as at Trent, in addition to the restoration of mediæval doctrine, a series of reforming decrees was published, so this Synod promulgated twenty-two canons which can be similarly described. The attack on monachism and the constitution of the Church had been of some use. They are the best canons drawn up by an Ecumenical Synod. The bishops were enjoined to study, to live simply, and be unselfish, and to attend to the cure of souls; the monks to observe order, decorum, and also to be unselfish. With the State and the Emperor no compromise was made; on the contrary, the demands of Maximus Confessor and John of Damascus are heard, though in muffled tones, from the canons.

VAN ESPEN.

From the wording of this canon it is clearly seen that by the Fathers of this Council the canons commonly called “Apostolical” are attributed to the Apostles themselves as to their true authors, conformably to the Trullan Synod⁵⁴⁰ and to the opinion then prevalent among the Greeks.

For since the Fathers were well persuaded that the discipline and doctrine contained in these canons could be received and confirmed, they cared but little to enquire anxiously who were their true authors, being content in this question to follow and embrace the then commonly received opinion, and to ascribe these canons to them, just as, the other day, the Tridentine Synod (Sess. XXV., cap. j., De Reform) calls these, without any explanation, the “Canons of the Apostles,” because then as now they were commonly called by that name.



BEVERIDGE.

(*Annotat.*, p. 166, at end of Vol. II.).

Here are recognized and confirmed the canons set forth by the Six Ecumenical Councils. And although all agree that the fifth and sixth Synods adopted no canons, unless that those of the Council in Trullo be attributed to them, yet when Tarasius the Patriarch of Constantinople claimed Canon 82 of the Trullan Canons as having been set forth by the sixth synod (as is evident from the annotations on that canon), all the canons of Trullo seem to be confirmed as having issued from the Sixth Synod. Or else, perchance, as is supposed by Balsamon and Zonaras, as also by this present synod, the Trullan was held to be Quinisext (πενθέκτη), and the canons decreed by it to belong to both the fifth and the sixth council. Otherwise I do not see what meaning these words [“of the Six Ecumenical Synods”] can have, for it will be remembered that the reference is to the ecclesiastical canons of the Six Ecumenical Synods, and not to their dogmatic decrees.

Canon II.

That he who is to be ordained a Bishop must be steadfastly resolved to observe the canons, otherwise he shall not be ordained.

WHEN we recite the psalter, we promise God: “I will meditate upon thy statutes, and will not forget thy words.” It is a salutary thing for all Christians to observe this, but it is especially incumbent upon those who have received the sacerdotal dignity. Therefore we decree, that every one who is raised to the rank of the episcopate shall know the psalter by heart, so that from it he may admonish and instruct all the clergy who are subject to him. And diligent examination shall be made by the metropolitan whether he be zealously inclined to read diligently, and not merely

⁵⁴⁰ But see notes to canon of that synod.

now and then, the sacred canons, the holy Gospel, and the book of the divine Apostle, and all other divine Scripture; and whether he lives according to God's commandments, and also teaches the same to his people. For the special treasure (οὐσία) of our high priesthood is the oracles which have been divinely delivered to us, that is the true science of the Divine Scriptures, as says Dionysius the Great. And if his mind be not set, and even glad, so to do and teach, let him not be ordained. For says God by the prophet, "Thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me."

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON II.

Whoever is to be a bishop must know the Psalter by heart: he must thoroughly understand what he reads, and not merely superficially, but with diligent care, that is to say the Sacred Canons, the Holy Gospel, the book of the Apostle, and the whole of the Divine Scripture. And should he not have such knowledge, he is not to be ordained.

ARISTENUS.

Whoso is to be elevated to the grade of the episcopate should know...the book of the Apostle Paul, and the whole divine scripture and search out its meaning and understand the things that are written. For the very foundation and essence of the high priesthood is the true knowledge of holy Scripture, according to Dionysius the Great. And if he has this knowledge let him be ordained, but if not, not. For God hath said by the prophet: "Thou hast put away from thee knowledge, therefore I have also put thee away from me, that thou mayest not be my priest."

FLEURY.

The persecution of the Iconoclasts had driven all the best Christians into hiding, or into far distant exile; this had made them rustic, and had taken from them their taste for study. The council therefore is forced to be content with a knowledge of only what is absolutely necessary, provided it was united with a willingness to learn. The examination with which the ceremony of the ordination of bishops begins seems to be a remains of this discipline.



VAN ESPEN.

The Synod teaches in this canon that "all Christians" will find it most profitable to meditate upon God's justifying and to keep his words in remembrance, and especially is this the case with bishops.

And it should be noted that formerly not only the clergy, but also the lay people, learned the Psalms, that is the whole Psalter, by heart, and made a most sweet sound by chanting them while about their work.

But as time went on, little by little this pious custom of reciting the Psalter and of imposing its recitation and a meditation thereon at certain intervals, slipped away to the clergy only and to monks and nuns, as to those specially consecrated to the service of God and to meditation upon the divine words, as Lupus points out. And from this discipline and practice the appointment of the Ecclesiastical or Canonical Office had its rise, which imposes the necessity of reciting the Psalms at certain intervals of time.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars I., Dist. xxxviii., C. vj., in Anastasius's translation.

Canon III.

That it does not pertain to princes to choose a Bishop.

LET every election of a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, made by princes stand null, according to the canon which says: If any bishop making use of the secular powers shall by their means obtain jurisdiction over any church, he shall be deposed, and also excommunicated, together with all who remain in communion with him. For he who is raised to the episcopate must be chosen by bishops, as was decreed by the holy fathers of Nice in the canon which says: It is most fitting that a bishop be ordained by all the bishops in the province; but if this is difficult to arrange, either on account of urgent necessity, or because of the length of the journey, three bishops at least having met together and given their votes, those also who are absent having signified their assent by letters, the ordination shall take place. The confirmation of what is thus done, shall in each province be given by the metropolitan thereof.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON III.

Every election made by a secular magistrate is null.

This is a canon of a synod recognized by East and West as ecumenical! The reader can hardly resist the reflection that in this case there have been and are a great many intruding clergymen in the world, whose appointment to their several offices is "null." Van Espen, however, suggests an ingenious way out of the difficulty, which is followed with great approval by Hefele.

VAN ESPEN.

Canon xxix. of those commonly called Apostolic, and canon iv. of Nice are renewed in this canon.

From the words of this canon it is sufficiently clear that in this canon the synod is treating of the choice and intrusion of persons into ecclesiastical offices which the magistrates and Princes had arrogated to themselves under the title of Domination (*Dominatio*); and by no means of that choice or rather nomination which Catholic princes and kings have everywhere and always used.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars I., Dist. xciii., C. vij.

Canon IV.

That Bishops are to abstain from all receiving of gifts.

THE Church's herald, Paul the divine Apostle, laying down a rule (κανόνα) not only for the presbyters of Ephesus but for the whole company of the priesthood, speaks thus explicitly, saying, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak;" for he accounted it more blessed to give. Therefore we being taught by him do decree, that under no circumstances, shall a Bishop for the sake of filthy lucre invent feigned excuses for sins, and exact gold or silver or other gifts from the bishops, clergy, or monks who are subject to him. For says the Apostle, "The unrighteous shall not possess the kingdom of God," and, "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." If then any is found, who for the sake of exacting gold or any other gift, or who from personal feeling, has suspended from the ministry, or even excommunicated, any of the clergy subject to his jurisdiction, or who has closed any of the venerable temples, so that the service of God may not be celebrated in it, pouring out his madness even upon things insensible, and thus shewing himself to be without understanding, he shall be subjected to the same punishment he devised for others, and his trouble shall return on his own head, as a transgressor of God's commandment and of the apostolic precepts. For Peter the supreme head (ἡ κερυφαία ἀκρότης) of the Apostles commands, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over the clergy (τῶν κλήρων [A.V. God's heritage]); but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON IV.

We decree that no bishop shall extort gold or silver, or anything else from bishops, clerics, or monks subject to his jurisdiction. And if anyone through the power of gold or of any other thing or through his own whims, shall be found to have prevented any one of the clergy who are subject

to him, from the celebration of the holy offices, or shall have shut up a venerable temple so that the sacred worship of God could not be performed in it, he shall be subject to the lex talionis. For Peter the Apostle says: Feed the flock of God, not of necessity but willingly, and according to God; not for filthy lucre's sake, but with a prompt mind; not exercising lordship over the clergy, but being an example to the flock.

BALSAMON.

Note the present canon, which punishes those bishops by the *lex talionis*, who for filthy lucre's sake, or out of private affection, separate any from themselves, or close temples. Wherefore he who cuts off others thus, let him be cut off. But he who shuts off a temple shall be punished even more than by cutting off. But lest any one should say, by the argument *á contrario*, that a bishop should not be punished who neither for the sake of filthy lucre nor out of private spite, but lawfully cuts some off, or closes temples, I answer that this argument only holds good of the cutting off. For a bishop who for any reason, whether just or unjust, shuts up a temple, should be punished, so it seems to me, as I have said above.

VAN ESPEN.

It would seem that at that time among the Greeks the use of local interdict (*interdicti localis*) was not known. But very many theologians wish to find a vestige of this interdict in the IVth century, in St. Basil's epistle cclxx. (otherwise ccxlv.), where the holy doctor teaches that the person who carries off by force a virgin, and those who are cognizant of this wickedness ought to be smitten with excommunication, and that the village or its inhabitants, to which the ravisher shall escape and where he shall be kept in safety, shall be shut out from the prayers.

This canon, or rather the first part of it, is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars II., Causa XVI., Q. I., Canon lxiv.; all the latter part is represented by the words "et infra."

Canon V.

That they who cast contumely upon clerics because they have been ordained in the church without bringing a gift with them, are to be punished with a fine.

It is a sin unto death when men incorrigibly continue in their sin, but they sin more deeply, who proudly lifting themselves up oppose piety and sincerity, accounting mammon of more worth



than obedience to God, and caring nothing for his canonical precepts. The Lord God is not found among such, unless, perchance, having been humbled by their own fall, they return to a sober mind. It behoves them the rather to turn to God with a contrite heart and to pray for forgiveness and pardon of so grave a sin, and no longer to boast in an unholy gift. For the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart. With regard, therefore, to those who pride themselves that because of their benefactions of gold they were ordained in the Church, and resting confidently in this evil custom (so alien from God and inconsistent with the whole priesthood), with a proud look and open mouth vilify with abusive words those who on account of the strictness of their life were chosen by the Holy Ghost and have been ordained without any gift of money, we decree in the first place that they take the lowest place in their order; but if they do not amend let them be subjected to a fine. But if it appear that any one has done this [i.e., given money], at any time as a price for ordination, let him be dealt with according to the Apostolic Canon which says: “If a bishop has obtained possession of his dignity by means of money (the same rule applies also to a presbyter or deacon) let him be deposed and also the one who ordained him, and let him also be altogether cut off from communion, even as Simon Magus was by me Peter.” To the same effect is the second canon of our holy fathers of Chalcedon, which says: If any bishop gives ordination in return for money, and puts up for sale that which cannot be sold, and ordains for money a bishop or chorepiscopus, or presbyter, or deacon, or any other of those who are reckoned among the clergy; or who for money shall appoint anyone to the office of œconomus, advocate, or paramonarius; or, in a word, who hath done anything else contrary to the canon, for the sake of filthy lucre—he who hath undertaken to do anything of this sort, having been convicted, shall be in danger of losing his degree. And he who has been ordained shall derive no advantage from the ordination or promotion thus negotiated; but let him remain a stranger to the dignity and responsibility which he attained by means of money. And if any one shall appear to have acted as a go-between in so shameful and godless a traffic, he also, if he be a cleric, shall be removed from his degree; if he be a layman or a monk, let him be excommunicated.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON V.

It seems that such as glory in the fact that they owe their position to their liberality in gold to the Church, and who contemn those who were chosen because of their virtue and were appointed without any largess, should receive the lowest place in their order. And should they continue in their ways, let them be punished. But those who made such gifts so as to get ordinations, let such be cast forth from communion, as Simon Magus was by Peter.

HEFELE.

Zonaras and Balsamon in earlier times, and later Christian Lupus and Van Espen, remarked that the second part of this canon treats of simony, but not the first. This has in view rather those

who, on account of their large expenditure on churches and the poor, have been raised, without simony, to the clerical estate as a reward and recognition of their beneficence; and being proud of this, now depreciate other clergymen who were unable or unwilling to make such foundations and the like.

Canon VI.

Concerning the holding of a local Synod at the time appointed.

SINCE there is a canon which says, twice a year in each province, the canonical enquiries shall be made in the gatherings of the bishops; but because of the inconveniences which those who thus came together had to undergo in travelling, the holy fathers of the Sixth Council decreed that once each year, without regard to place or excuse which might be urged, a council should be held and the things which are amiss corrected. This canon we now renew. And if any prince be found hindering this being carried out, let him be excommunicated. But if any of the metropolitans shall take no care that this be done, he being free from constraint or fear or other reasonable excuse, let him be subjected to the canonical penalties. While the council is engaged in considering the canons or matters which have regard to the Gospel, it behoves the assembled Bishops, with all attention and grave thought to guard the divine and life-giving commandments of God, for in keeping of them there is great reward; because our lamp is the commandment, and our light is the law, and trial and discipline are the way of life, and the commandment of the Lord shining afar giveth light to the eyes. It is not permitted to a metropolitan to demand any of those things which the bishops bring with them, whether it be a horse or any other gift. If he be convicted of doing anything of this sort, he shall restore fourfold.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON VI.

Whenever it is not possible for a synod to meet according to the decree formulated long ago, twice in each year, at least let it be held once, as seemed good to the Sixth Synod. Should any magistrate forbid such meeting, let him be cast out: and a bishop who shall take no pains to assemble it, shall be subject to punishment. And when the synod is held, should it appear that the Metropolitan has taken anything away from any bishop, let him restore four-fold.

HEFELE.

Anastasius remarks on this, that this ordinance (whether the whole canon or only its last passage must remain undecided) was not accepted by the Latins. That this canon did not forbid the so-called

Synodicum, which the metropolitans had lawfully to receive from the bishops, and the bishops from the priests, is remarked by Van Espen, l. c. p. 464.

Compare with this (as Balsamon advises) the eighth canon of the Council in Trullo.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars I., Dist. XVIII., C. vij.

Canon VII.

That to churches consecrated without any deposit of the reliques of the Saints, the defect should be made good.

PAUL the divine Apostle says: "The sins of some are open beforehand, and some they follow after." These are their primary sins, and other sins follow these. Accordingly upon the heels of the heresy of the traducers of the Christians, there followed close other ungodliness. For as they took out of the churches the presence of the venerable images, so likewise they cast aside other customs which we must now revive and maintain in accordance with the written and unwritten law. We decree therefore that relics shall be placed with the accustomed service in as many of the sacred temples as have been consecrated without the relics of the Martyrs. And if any bishop from this time forward is found consecrating a temple without holy relics, he shall be deposed, as a transgressor of the ecclesiastical traditions.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON VII.

Let reliques of the Holy Martyrs be placed in such churches as have been consecrated without them, and this with the accustomed prayers. But whoever shall consecrate a church without these shall be deposed as a transgressor of the traditions of the Church.

BALSAMON.

But someone may be surprised that oratories to-day are consecrated without any deposition of reliques. And they may ask why the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in them by bishops and not by priests only. The answer is that the superaltars (ἀντιμένσια) which are made by the bishops when a church is consecrated, suffice oratories in lieu of consecration or enthronement when they are sent to them, on the occasion of their dedication or opening. They are called ἀντιμένσια because they are in place of, and are antitypes of those many like tables which furnish thoroughly the holy Lord's table.



On the rite of consecrating churches with reliques see Cardinal Bona. (*De Rebus Lit.*, Lib. I., cap. xix.)

The Antimensia are consecrated at the same time as the church; a full account of the ceremony is found in the Euchologion (Goar's ed., p. 648). A piece of cloth is placed on the altar and blessed, and then subsequently, as need requires, pieces are cut off from it and sent to the various oratories, etc. The main outline of the ceremony of consecration is as follows.

J. M. NEALE.

(*Int. Hist. East. Ch.*, p. 187.)

Relics being pounded up with fragrant gum, oil is poured over them by the bishop, and, distilling out to the corporals, is supposed to convey to them the mysterious virtues of the relics themselves. The holy Eucharist must then be celebrated on them for seven days, after which they are sent forth as they are wanted.

Canon VIII.

That Hebrews ought not to be received unless they have been converted in sincerity of heart.

SINCE certain, erring in the superstitions of the Hebrews, have thought to mock at Christ our God, and feigning to be converted to the religion of Christ do deny him, and in private and secretly keep the Sabbath and observe other Jewish customs, we decree that such persons be not received to communion, nor to prayers, nor into the Church; but let them be openly Hebrews according to their religion, and let them not bring their children to baptism, nor purchase or possess a slave. But if any of them, out of a sincere heart and in faith, is converted and makes profession with his whole heart, setting at naught their customs and observances, and so that others may be convinced and converted, such an one is to be received and baptized, and his children likewise; and let them be taught to take care to hold aloof from the ordinances of the Hebrews. But if they will not do this, let them in no wise be received.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON VIII.

Hebrews must not be received unless they are manifestly converted with sincerity of heart.

HEFELE.

The Greek commentators Balsamon and Zonaras understood the words “nor to baptize their children” to mean, “these seeming Christians may not ‘baptize their own children,’” because they only seem to be Christians. But parents were never allowed to baptize their own children, and the true sense of the words in question comes out clearly from the second half of the canon.

Canon IX.

That none of the books containing the heresy of the traducers of the Christians are to be hid.

ALL the childish devices and mad ravings which have been falsely written against the venerable images, must be delivered up to the Episcopium of Constantinople, that they may be locked away with other heretical books. And if anyone is found hiding such books, if he be a bishop or presbyter or deacon, let him be deposed; but if he be a monk or layman, let him be anathema.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON IX.

If any one is found to have concealed a book written against the venerable images, if he is on the clergy list let him be deposed; if a layman or monk let him be cut off.

VAN ESPEN.

What here is styled Episcopium was the palace of the Patriarch. In this palace were the archives, and this was called the “Chartophylacium,” in which the charts and episcopal laws were laid up. To this there was a prefect, the grand Chartophylax, one of the principal officials and of most exalted dignity of the Church of Constantinople, whose office Codinus explains as follows: “The Chartophylax has in his keeping all the charts which pertain to ecclesiastical law (that is to say the letters in which privileges and other rights of the Church are contained) and is the judge of all ecclesiastical causes, and presides over marriage controversies which are taken cognizance of, and proceedings for dissolution of the marriage bond; moreover, he is judge in other clerical strifes, as the right hand of the Patriarch.”

In this Cartophylaceum or Archives, therefore, under the faithful guardianship of the Chartophylax, the fathers willed that the writings of the Iconoclasts should be laid up, lest in their perusal simple Catholics might be led astray.

Canon X.

That no cleric ought to leave his diocese and go into another without the knowledge of the Bishop.

SINCE certain of the clergy, misinterpreting the canonical constitutions, leave their own diocese and run into other dioceses, especially into this God-protected royal city, and take up their abode with princes, celebrating liturgies in their oratories, it is not permitted to receive such persons into any house or church without the license of their own Bishop and also that of the Bishop of Constantinople. And if any clerk shall do this without such license, and shall so continue, let him be deposed. With regard to those who have done this with the knowledge of the aforesaid Bishops, it is not lawful for them to undertake mundane and secular responsibilities, since this is forbidden by the sacred canons. And if anyone is discovered holding the office of those who are called Meizoteroi; let him either lay it down, or be deposed from the priesthood. Let him rather be the instructor of the children and others of the household, reading to them the Divine Scriptures, for to this end he received the priesthood.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON X.

A clergyman who after leaving his own parish has settled in another far off from his own bishop and from the bishop of Constantinople, shall be received neither into house nor church. And if he shall persevere in his course, he shall be deposed. But if they shall do this with a knowledge of what we have said, they shall not receive a secular position; or should they have received them, they shall cease from them. And if they refuse they shall be deposed.

HEFELE.

On the office of the μείζότεροι, the Greek commentators Zonaras and Balsamon give us more exact information. We give the substance of it, viz.: they were *majores domus* stewards of the estates of high personages.

BALSAMON.

On account of this canon it seems to me that the most holy Patriarch at the time and his Chartophylax allow alien clergymen to celebrate the liturgy in this royal city, even without letters dimissory of the local bishop of each one.

Canon XI.

That Œconomi ought to be in the Episcopal palaces and in the Monasteries.

SINCE we are under obligation to guard all the divine canons, we ought by all means to maintain in its integrity that one which says œconomi are to be in each church. If the metropolitan appoints in his Church an œconomus, he does well; but if he does not, it is permitted to the Bishop of Constantinople by his own (ιδίᾱς) authority to choose an œconomus for the Church of the Metropolitan. A like authority belongs to the metropolitans, if the Bishops who are subject to them do not wish to appoint œconomi in their churches. The same rule is also to be observed with respect to monasteries.



Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XI.

If the Metropolitan does not elect an œconomus of the metropolis, the patriarch shall do so. If the bishop shall not do so, the Metropolitan shall; for so it seemed good to the fathers assembled at Chalcedon. The same law shall hold in monasteries.

HEFELE.

The Synod of Chalcedon required the appointment of special œconomi only for all bishops' churches; but our synod extended this prescription also to monasteries.

VAN ESPEN.

Bishops at their ordination among other things promise that they will observe the canons, and the bishops of the Synod say that among these canons they are bound to keep the one that orders them to appoint an Œconomus.

Among the officials of the Constantinopolitan Church, Codinus names first The Grand Œconomus, "who" (he says) "holds in his own power all the faculties of the Church, and all their returns; and is the dispenser in this matter as well to the Patriarch as to the Church."

Balsamon and Aristenus refer to Canon xxvj. of Chalcedon; and point out how here the power of Constantinople was added to.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars. II., Causa IX., Quæst. III., Canon iij.

Canon XII.

That a Bishop or Hegumenos ought not to alienate any part of the suburban estate of the church.

If bishop or hegumenos is found alienating any part of the farm lands of the bishoprick or monastery into the hands of secular princes, or surrendering them to any other person, such act is null according to the canon of the holy Apostles, which says: "Let the bishop take care of all the Church's goods, and let him administer the same according as in the sight of God." It is not lawful for him to appropriate any part himself, or to confer upon his relations the things which belong to God. If they are poor let them be helped among the poor; but let them not be used as a pretext for smuggling away the Church's property. And if it be urged that the land is only a loss and yields no profit, the place is not on that account to be given to the secular rulers, who are in the neighbourhood; but let it be given to clergymen or husbandmen. And if they have resorted to dishonest craft, so that the ruler has bought the land from the husbandman or cleric, such transaction shall likewise be null, and the land shall be restored to the bishoprick or monastery. And the bishop or hegumenos doing this shall be turned out, the bishop from his bishoprick and the hegumenos from his monastery, as those who wasted what they did not gather.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XII.

According to what seemed good to the Holy Apostles, any act of alienation of the goods of a diocese or of a monastery made by the bishop, or by the superior of the monastery, shall be null. And the Bishop or Superior who shall have done this shall be expelled.

VAN ESPEN.

As at the time of this Synod by the favour of kings and princes the way was frequently open to ecclesiastical dignities, clergymen might easily be induced through ambition to make over to princes some part of the Church's possessions, if only by so doing they might arrive at the coveted preferment through their patronage, and then desiring to make good this simoniacal promise, they studied to transfer the church's goods to their patrons; with regard to these the present decree of the synod was made.

But because human ambition is cunning, and solicitously seeks a way of attaining its ends, ambitious clerics tried by various colouring to give a tone to and to palliate these translations of church-goods to princes and magistrates, so that they might attain to that they aimed at by the favour of said princes and magistrates.

Two such pretexts the synod exposes and rejects in the present canon.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Pars II., Causa XII., Quæst. II., canon xix.

Canon XIII.

That they are worthy of special condemnation who turn the monasteries into public houses.

DURING the calamity which was brought to pass in the Churches, because of our sins, some of the sacred houses, for example, bishops' palaces and monasteries, were seized by certain men and became public inns. If those who now hold them choose to give them back, so that they may be restored to their original use, well and good; but if not, and these persons are on the sacerdotal list, we command that they be deposed; if they be monks or laymen, that they be excommunicated, as those who have been condemned from the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and assigned their place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, because they set themselves against the voice of the Lord, which says: "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XIII.

Those who make common diocesan or monastic goods, unless they restore to the bishop or superior the things belonging to the diocese or monastery, the whole proceeding shall be null. If they are persons in Holy Orders they shall be deposed, but if laymen or monks they shall be cast out.

VAN ESPEN.

No doubt by "the calamity" here is intended a reference to the troubles occasioned by the Iconoclasts, during whose time of domination many nefarious things were perpetrated against the orthodox, and most bitter of all was the persecution of the monks and priests by Leo the Isaurian and by his son Constantine Copronymus, both of them supporters of the Iconoclasts.

And so it came to pass that by this persecution and through the nefarious vexations of the Iconoclasts, many monks and clerics fled from their monasteries and left vacant the *Episcopia* or holy houses, and so it became easy for people to come in and occupy the empty monasteries and religious houses, and to turn them to common and profane uses, especially when the anger of the Emperors and of the Iconoclasts was known to be fierce against the monks, and such bishops and priests as were worshippers of images.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Pars. II., Causa xix., Quæst. III., canon v., in Anastasius's version but lacking the opening words which are supplied by the Roman Correctors.

Canon XIV.

That no one without ordination ought to read in the ambo during the synaxis.

THAT there is a certain order established in the priesthood is very evident to all, and to guard diligently the promotions of the priesthood is well pleasing to God. Since therefore we see certain youths who have received the clerical tonsure, but who have not yet received ordination from the bishop, reading in the ambo during the Synaxis, and in doing this violating the canons, we forbid this to be done (from henceforth,) and let this prohibition be observed also amongst the monks. It is permitted to each hegumenos in his own monastery to ordain a reader, if he himself had received the laying on of hands by a bishop to the dignity of hegumenos, and is known to be a presbyter. Chorepiscopi may likewise, according to ancient custom and with the bishop's authorization, appoint readers.⁵⁴¹



Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XIV.

No one shall read from the ambon unless he has been ordained by the bishop. And this shall be in force also among monks. The superior of a monastery, if he has been ordained by the bishop, may ordain a lector but only in his own monastery. A chorepiscopus also can make a lector.

BALSAMON.

I say therefore from this present canon and from canon xix. that they may properly be made superiors, who have never received holy orders; since women may be placed in such positions in our monasteries. And as these women do not hear confessions, nor make readers, so neither do superiors do this who are neither monks nor priests, nor could they

HEFELE.

Van Espen (l. c. p. 469 sqq., and *Jus Canon.*, t. i. pt. xxxi. tit. 31, c. 6), professes to show (a) that at that time there was no special benediction of abbots (different from their ordination as priests), and that therefore the words, "if he (the superior of the monastery) himself is consecrated by the bishop to the office of hegumenus," and "evidently is a priest," mean the same; (b) that at the time of our Synod every superior of a monastery, a prior as well as an abbot, had the power of conferring upon the monks of his monastery the order of lector; but (c) that the way in which Anastasius translated the canon (*si dumtaxat Abbati manus impositio facta noscatur ab episcopo secundum morem præficiendorum abbatum*), and the reception of this translation into the *Corpus juris canonici*, c.l., Dist. lxix., gave occasion to concede the right in question, of ordaining lectors, only to the solemnly consecrated (and insulated) abbots.

⁵⁴¹ Bev. adds in the Latin "by imposition of hands."

This canon is found (as just noted) in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Pars I., Dist. LXIX, c.j.

Canon XV.

That a clerk ought not to be set over two churches.

FROM henceforth no clergyman shall be appointed over two churches, for this savours of merchandise and filthy lucre, and is altogether alien from ecclesiastical custom. We have heard by the very voice of the Lord that, “No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.” Each one, therefore, as says the Apostle, in the calling wherein he was called, in the same he ought to abide, and in one only church to give attendance. For in the affairs of the Church, what is gained through filthy lucre is altogether separate from God. To meet the necessities of this life, there are various occupations, by means of which, if one so desire, let him procure the things needful for the body. For says the Apostle, “These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.” Occupations of this sort may be obtained in the God-protected city. But in the country places outside, because of the small number of people, let a dispensation be granted.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XV.

Hereafter at Constantinople a cleric may not serve two churches. But in the outskirts this may be permitted on account of the scarcity of men.

VAN ESPEN.

This means that in the country or where men are so scarce that each parish cannot have its own presbyter, one presbyter should be allowed to serve two churches, not that so he may supply his own need, (as to-day is allowed by the combination of benefices), but that so the necessities of the parishioners may be provided for.

It should be noted that the synod deems it “filthy lucre” and “separate from God” if ecclesiastical ministries are performed “for the necessities of life,” and is of opinion that the clergy should seek their support from some honest employment or work by the example of Paul, rather than to turn ecclesiastical ministrations to the attaining of temporal things, and to use these as an art by which to gain bread.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Pars. II., Causa XXI., Quæst. I, canon j. where the gloss is “because there the clergy are few.”



Canon XVI.

That it does not become one in holy orders to be clad in costly apparel.

ALL buffoonery and decking of the body ill becomes the priestly rank. Therefore those bishops and clerics who array themselves in gay and showy clothing ought to correct themselves, and if they do not amend they ought to be subjected to punishment. So likewise they who anoint themselves with perfumes. When the root of bitterness sprang up, there was poured into the Catholic Church the pollution of the heresy of the traducers of the Christians. And such as were defiled by it, not only detested the pictured images, but also set at naught all decorum, being exceedingly mad against those who lived gravely and religiously; so that in them was fulfilled that which is written, "The service of God is abominable to the sinner." If therefore, any are found deriding those who are clad in poor and grave raiment, let them be corrected by punishment. For from early times every man in holy orders wore modest and grave clothing; and verily whatever is worn, not so much because of necessity, as for the sake of outward show, savours of dandyism, as says Basil the Great. Nor did anyone array himself in raiment embroidered with silk, nor put many coloured ornaments on the border of his garments; for they had heard from the lips of God that "They that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses."

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XVI.

Bishops and clergymen arraying themselves in splendid clothes and anointed with perfumes must be corrected. Should they persist, they must be punished.

Balsamon and Zonaras tell of the magnificence in dress assumed by some of the superior clergy among the Iconoclasts, wearing stuffs woven with threads of gold, and their loins girt with golden girdles, and sentences embroidered in gold on the edge of their raiment. It is curious to note how often heretics fall into extremes. We have seen how Eustathius wore a conspicuous garb and was not willing to appear in the ordinary dress of a clergyman of his day. His was the one extreme of ultra clerical or, I should say, ascetic clothing. These Iconoclasts went to the other extreme and dressed themselves like men of the world, giving themselves the dandy airs of the fops of the day, thus, as always, making themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the wise, and their office contemptible in the eyes of the common people.

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars. II., Causa XXI., Quæst. IV., canon j.

Canon XVII.

That he shall not be allowed to begin the building of an oratory, who has not the means wherewith to finish it.

CERTAIN monks having left their monasteries because they desired to rule, and, unwilling to obey, are undertaking to build oratories, but have not the means to finish them. Now whoever shall undertake to do anything of this sort, let him be forbidden by the bishop of the place. But if he have the means wherewith to finish, let what he has designed be carried on to completion. The same rule is to be observed with regard to laymen and clerics.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XVII.

Whoever wishes to build a monastery, if he has the wherewithal to finish it, let him begin the work, and let him bring it to a conclusion. But if not, let him be prohibited by the bishop of the place. The same law shall apply to laymen and monks.

Van Espen refers to Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars. III., De Consecrat., Dist. I., canon ix., *et seqq.*

Balsamon also refers his readers to the Fourth Book of the Basilica, title I., chapter I., which is part of Justinian's cxxij. Novel, also to the first canon of the so-called First-and-Second Council held at Constantinople in the Church of the Holy Apostles.



Canon XVIII.

That women ought not to live in bishops' houses, nor in monasteries of men.

“BE ye without offence to those who are without,” says the divine Apostle. Now for women to live in Bishops' houses or in monasteries is ground for grave offence. Whoever therefore is known to have a female slave or freewoman in the episcopal palace or in a monastery for the discharge of some service, let him be rebuked. And if he still continue to retain her, let him be deposed. If it happens that women are on the suburban estates, and the bishop or hegumenos desires to go thither, so long as the bishop or hegumenos is present, let no woman at that time continue her work, but let her betake herself to some other place until the bishop [or hegumenos⁵⁴²] has departed, so that there be no occasion of complaint.

⁵⁴² Not found in Bev.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XVIII.

It is not fitting that women should be kept in episcopal houses or in monasteries. If anyone shall dare to do so, he shall be reprov'd; but if he persists, he shall be deposed. No woman is allowed to serve or even to appear where a bishop or a superior of a monastery is present, but let her keep herself apart until he be gone.

VAN ESPEN.

Every woman the present canon expels from the *Episcopium* or bishop's house, agreeably to Novel CXXIII, chapter 29, of the Emperor Justinian, which, (although the Nicene canon on the subject makes a mother, sister, daughter and other persons free from all suspicions, exceptions), admits no exceptions in the case of a bishop, but says, "We allow no bishop to have any woman or to live with one."

For as bishops are set in a higher grade above the rest of the clergy, and ought to be like lights set on a candlestick to give light, rightly they are ordered more than others to take care to avoid all appearance of evil, and to remove all from them that might cause suspicion.

With regard to monks and their houses see Justinian's Novel CXXXIII., Cap. IV.

Canon XIX.

That the vows of those in holy orders and of monks, and of nuns are to be made without the exaction of gifts.

THE abomination of filthy lucre has made such inroads among the rulers of the churches, that certain of those who call themselves religious men and women, forgetting the commandments of the Lord have been altogether led astray, and for the sake of money have received those presenting themselves for the sacerdotal order and the monastic life. And hence the first step of those so received being unlawful, the whole proceeding is rendered null, as says Basil the Great. For it is not possible that God should be served by means of mammon.⁵⁴³ If therefore, anyone is found doing anything of this kind, if he be a bishop or hegumenos, or one of the priesthood, either let him cease to do so any longer or else let him be deposed, according to the second canon of the Holy Council of Chalcedon. If the offender be an abbess, let her be sent away from her monastery, and placed in another in a subordinate position. In like manner is a hegumenos to be dealt with, who

⁵⁴³ Bev. "To serve God and mammon."

has not the ordination of a presbyter. With regard to what has been given by parents as a dowry for their children, or which persons themselves have contributed out of their own property, with the declaration that such gifts were made to God, we have decreed, that whether the persons in whose behalf the gifts were made, continue to live in the monastery or not, the gifts are to remain with the monastery in accordance with their first determination; unless indeed there be ground for complaint against the superior.



Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XIX.

Whoever for money admits those coming to Holy Orders or to the monastic life, if he be bishop, or superior of a monastery or any other in sacred orders, shall either cease or be deposed. And the Superior of a monastery of women shall be expelled [if she have done so] and shall be given over to subjection. The same shall be the case with a superior of monks, if he be not a priest. But the possessions brought by those who come in, let them remain, whether the persons remain or not, provided the superior be not to blame.

BALSAMON.

But someone may ask how it is that canon V., orders that he that performs an ordination for money is *eo ipso* to be deposed, whereas this canon provides that he who receives a cleric or monk on account of a pecuniary gift is to cease or else to be deposed. The answer is, that whenever anyone performs an ordination for money, according to canon V., he is to be deposed; but when it was only a reception of a person which took place, whether into the list of the clergy or into a monastery by reason of money, who did this is only to be deposed, if after being denounced he persists in this evil. The canons therefore are diverse in their scope. The fifth treats of unlawful ordination, but this one of improper receptions.

Canon XX.

That from henceforth, no double monastery shall be erected; and concerning the double monasteries already in existence.

WE decree that from henceforth, no double monastery shall be erected; because this has become an offence and cause of complaint to many. In the case of those persons who with the members of their family propose to leave the world and follow the monastic life, let the men go into a monastery for men, and the women into a monastery for women; for this is well-pleasing to God. The double monasteries which are already in existence, shall observe the rule of our holy Father

Basil, and shall be ordered by his precepts, monks and nuns shall not dwell together in the same monastery, for in thus living together adultery finds its occasion. No monk shall have access to a nunnery; nor shall a nun be permitted to enter a monastery for the sake of conversing with anyone therein. No monk shall sleep in a monastery for women, nor eat alone with a nun.⁵⁴⁴ When food is brought by men to the canonesses, let the abbess accompanied by some one of the aged nuns, receive it outside the gates of the women's monastery. When a monk desires to see one of his kinswomen, who may be in the nunnery, let him converse with her in the presence of the abbess, and that in a very few words, and then let him speedily take his departure.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XX.

Monasteries shall not be double, neither shall monks and nuns live in the same building, nor shall they talk together apart. Moreover if a man takes anything to a canoness, let him wait without and hand it to her, and let him see his relative in the presence of her superior.

VAN ESPEN.

It is evident, as Zonaras remarks, that the double monasteries here referred to are not those in which men and women live together, in one house, which in this canon is not tolerated at all, but those which were situated so close together that it was evident there could easily be an entrance from one to the other, these are allowed under certain cautions by this canon.

But not only the Greeks but the Latins also often disapproved of such monasteries. See decree in Gratian, Pars. II., Causa XVIII., Q. II., canon xxviiij., and Pope Paschal's letter (*Epis. X*) to Didacus, Abp. of Compostella.

Despite all this St. Bridget of Sweden again instituted double monasteries in the XVth century, concerning which Thomas Walsingham, a monk of St. Alban's Abbey, in England, writes that in 1414, King Henry founded three monasteries, of which the third was a Brigittine, professing the rule of St. Augustine, with the additions called by them the Rule of the Saviour. "These two convents had one church in common, the nuns lived in the upper part under the roof, the brothers on the ground-floor, and each convent had a separate inclosure; and after profession no one went forth, except by special licence of the Lord Pope."

With regard to the chaplains of nuns, provision is found in Justinian's Code. (Lib. xlv., *De Epis. et clericis.*)

This canon is found in the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Pars. II., Causa XVIII., Q. II., canon xxj.

⁵⁴⁴ Bev. Neither shall a nun eat alone.

Canon XXI.

That monks are not to leave their monasteries and go into others.

A MONK or nun ought not to leave the monastery to which he or she is attached, and betake themselves to others. But if one do this, he ought to be received as a guest. It is not however proper that he be made a member of the monastery, without the consent of his hegumenos.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XXI.

It is not allowed to a monk or a nun to leave her own house and enter another; but if he (or she) enters let (him or her) be received as a guest; but let him (or her) not be admitted at all nor given hospitality contrary to the will of the superior.

ARISTENUS.

The present canon does not allow a monk or a nun who goes to another house to be received into, nor even to be admitted as a guest, lest by force of necessity he be led astray to worldly things and so remain. Moreover it does not permit a woman to be admitted and received and reckoned in the number of the sisters without the consent of the superior.

It seems to me that in Aristenus an οὐκ must have crept into the text and that the first sentence should read as now but omitting the “not.” This makes him agree with Zonaras who says “the man must be received as a guest lest he go to a profane tavern and be forced to associate with those who have never learned how to live decently.” It is clear that the “superior” referred to is that of the house whence the monk or nun went forth.

Canon XXII.

That when it happens that monks have to eat with women they ought to observe giving of thanks, and abstemiousness, and discretion.

To surrender all things to God, and not to serve our own wills, is great gain. For says the divine Apostle, “whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.” And Christ our God has bidden us in his Gospels, to cut off the beginning of sins; for not only is adultery rebuked by him, but even the movement of the mind towards the act of adultery when he says, “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” We who have been thus taught ought therefore to purify our minds. Now although all things are lawful, all things are

not expedient, as we have been taught by the mouth of the Apostle. It is needful that all men should eat in order that they may live. And for those to whom life consists of marrying, and bringing forth children, and of the condition of the lay state, there is nothing unbecoming in men and women eating together, only let them give thanks to the giver of the food; but if there be the entertainments of the theatre, that is, Satanic songs accompanied with the meretricious inflections of harps, there come upon them, through these things, the curse of the prophet, who thus speaks: "Woe to them who drink wine with harp and psaltery, but they regard not the works of the Lord, and consider not the works of his hands." Whenever persons of this sort are found among Christians, let them amend their ways; but if they will not do so, let there overtake them the penalties which have been enacted in the canons by our predecessors. With regard to those whose life is free from care and apart from men, that is, those who have resolved before the Lord God to carry the solitary yoke, they should sit down alone and in silence. Moreover it is also altogether unlawful for those who have chosen the priestly life to eat in private with women, unless it be with God-fearing and discreet men and women, so that even their feast may be turned to spiritual edification. The same rule is to be observed with relatives. Again, if it happen that a monk or priest while on a journey does not have with him what is absolutely necessary for him, and, because of his pressing needs, thinks well to turn aside into an inn or into someone's house, this he is permitted to do, seeing that need compels.

Notes.

ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON XXII.

There is no objection to laywomen eating with men: it is not right however for men who have chosen the lonely life, to eat privately with women; unless perchance together with them that fear God and with religious men and women. But when travelling, a monk or anyone in sacred orders, not carrying necessary provisions with him, may enter a public house.

Balsamon refers in connexion with this canon to Apostolic Canons xlij. and xliij.; lx. of the Synod of Carthage, and lxij. of the Synod in Trullo.

The Letter of the Synod to the Emperor and Empress.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VII., col. 577.)

To our most religious and most serene princes, Constantine and Irene his mother. Tarasius, the unworthy bishop of your God-protected royal city, new Rome, and all the holy Council which met at the good pleasure of God and upon the command of your Christ-loving majesty in the renowned metropolis of Nice, the second council to assemble in this city.

Christ our God (who is the head of the Church) was glorified, most noble princes, when your heart, which he holds in his hands, gave forth that good word bidding us to assemble in his name, in order that we might strengthen our hold on the sure, immovable, and God-given truth contained in the Church's dogmas. As your heads were crowned with gold and most brilliant stones, so likewise were your minds adorned with the precepts of the Gospel and the teachings of the Fathers. And being the disciples and companions, as it were, of those whose sounds went forth into all the earth, ye became the leaders in the way of piety of all who bore the name of Christ, setting forth clearly the word of truth, and giving a brilliant example of orthodoxy and piety; so that ye were to the faithful as so many burning lamps. The Church which was ready to fall, ye upheld with your hands, strengthening it with sound doctrine, and bringing into the unity of a right judgment those who were at variance. We may therefore well say with boldness that it was through you that the good pleasure of God brought about the triumph of godliness, and filled our mouth with joy and our tongue with gladness. And these things our lips utter with a formal decree. For what is more glorious than to maintain the Church's interests; and what else is more calculated to provoke our gladness?

Certain men rose up, having the form of godliness, inasmuch as they were clothed with the dignity of the priesthood, but denying the power thereof; and thus deserving for themselves the charge of being but priests of Babylon. Of such the word of prophecy had before declared that "lawlessness went forth from the priests⁵⁴⁵ of Babylon." Nay more, they banded themselves together in a sanhedrim, like to that which Caiaphas held, and became the propagators of ungodly doctrines. And having a mouth full of cursing and bitterness, they thought to win the mastery by means of abusive words. With a slanderous tongue and a pen of a like character, and objecting to the very terms used by God himself, they devised marvellous tales, and then proceeded to stigmatise as idolaters the royal priesthood and the holy nation, even those who had put on Christ, and by his grace had been kept safe from the folly of idols. And having a mind set upon evil, they took in hand unlawful deeds, thinking to suppress altogether the depicting of the venerable images. Accordingly, as many icons as were set in mosaic work they dug out, and those which were in painted waxwork, they scraped away; thus turning the comely beauty of the sacred temples into complete disorder. Among doings of this sort, it is to be specially noted that the pictures set up on tablets in memory of Christ our God and of his Saints, they gave over to the flames. Finally, in a word, having desecrated our churches, they reduced them to utter confusion. Then some bishops became the leaders of this heresy and where before was peace, they fomented strife among the people; and instead of wheat sowed tares in the Church's fields. They mingled wine with water, and gave the foul draught to those about them. Although but Arabian wolves, they hid themselves under sheeps' clothing, and by specious reasoning against the truth sought to commend their lie. But all the while "they hatched asps' eggs and wove a spider's web," as says the prophet; and "he

545 "Presbyters" in LXX.

that would eat of their eggs, having crushed one, found it to be addled, with a basilisk within it,” and giving forth a deadly stench.

In such a state of affairs, with a lie busy destroying the truth, ye, most gracious and most noble princes, did not idly allow so grave a plague, and such soul-destroying error long to continue in your day. But moved by the divine Spirit which abideth in you, ye set yourselves with all your strength utterly to exterminate it, and thus preserve the stability of the Church’s government, and likewise concord among your subjects; so that your whole empire might be established in peace agreeably with the name [Irene] you bear. Ye rightly reasoned, that it was not to be patiently endured, that while in other matters we could be of one mind and live in concord, yet in what ought to be the chief concern of our life, the peace of the Churches, there was amongst us strife and division. And that too, when Christ being our head, we ought to be members one of another, and one body, by our mutual agreement and faith. Accordingly, ye commanded our holy and numerous-attended council to assemble in the metropolis of Nice, in order that after having rid the Church of division, we might restore to unity the separated members, and might be careful to rend and utterly destroy the coarse cloak of false doctrine, which they had woven of thorn fibre, and unfold again the fair robe of orthodoxy.

And now having carefully traced the traditions of the Apostles and Fathers, we are bold to speak. Having but one mind by the inbreathing of the most Holy Spirit, and being all knit together in one, and understanding the harmonious tradition of the Catholic Church, we are in perfect harmony with the symphonies set forth by the six, holy and ecumenical councils; and accordingly we have anathematised the madness of Arius, the frenzy of Macedonius, the senseless understanding of Appolinarius, the man-worship of Nestorius, the irreverent mingling of the natures devised by Eutyches and Dioscorus, and the many-headed hydra which is their companion. We have also anathematised the idle tales of Origen, Didymus, and Evagrius; and the doctrine of one will held by Sergius, Honorius, Cyrus, and Pyrrhus, or rather, we have anathematised their own evil will. Finally, taught by the Spirit, from whom we have drawn pure water, we have with one accord and one soul, altogether wiped out with the sponge of the divine dogmas the newly devised heresy, well-worthy to be classed with those just mentioned, which springing up after them, uttered such empty nonsense about the sacred icons. And the contrivers of this vain, but revolutionary babbling we have cast forth far from the Church’s precincts.

And as the hands and feet are moved in accordance with the directions of the mind, so likewise, we, having received the grace and strength of the Spirit, and having also the assistance and co-operation of your royal authority, have with one voice declared as piety and proclaimed as truth: that the sacred icons of our Lord Jesus Christ are to be had and retained, inasmuch as he was very man; also those which set forth what is historically narrated in the Gospels; and those which represent our undefiled Lady, the holy Mother of God; and likewise those of the Holy Angels (for they have manifested themselves in human form to those who were counted worthy of the vision of them), or of any of the Saints. [We have also decreed] that the brave deeds of the Saints be portrayed on tablets and on the walls, and upon the sacred vessels and vestments, as hath been the custom of

the holy Catholic Church of God from ancient times; which custom was regarded as having the force of law in the teaching both of those holy leaders who lived in the first ages of the Church, and also of their successors our reverend Fathers. [We have likewise decreed] that these images are to be revered (προσκυνεῖν), that is, salutations are to be offered to them. The reason for using the word is, that it has a two-fold signification. For κυνεῖν in the old Greek tongue signifies both “to salute” and “to kiss.” And the preposition προς gives to it the additional idea of strong desire towards the subject; as for example, we have φέρω and προσφέρω, κυρῶ and προσκυρῶ, and so also we have κυνέω and προσκυνέω. Which last word implies salutation and strong love; for that which one loves he also reverences (προσκυνεῖ) and what he reverences that he greatly loves, as the everyday custom, which we observe towards those we love, bears witness, and in which both ideas are practically illustrated when two friends meet together. The word is not only made use of by us, but we also find it set down in the Divine Scriptures by the ancients. For it is written in the histories of the Kings, “And David rose up and fell upon his face and did reverence to (προσεκυνήσε) Jonathan three times and kissed him” (1 Kings xx. 41). And what is it that the Lord in the Gospel says concerning the Pharisees? “They love the uppermost rooms at feasts and greetings (ἄσπασμους) in the markets.” It is evident that by “greetings” here, he means reverence (προσκύνησιν) for the Pharisees being very high-minded and thinking themselves to be righteous were eager to be revered by all, but not [merely] to be kissed. For to receive salutations of this latter sort savoured too much of lowly humility, and this was not to the Pharisees’ liking. We have also the example of Paul the divine Apostle, as Luke in the Acts of the Apostles relates: “When we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly, and the day following Paul went in with us unto James, and all the presbyters were present. And when he had saluted (ἄσπασάμενος) them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry” (Acts xxi. 17, 18, 19). By the salutation here mentioned, the Apostle evidently intended to render that reverence of honour (τιμητικὴν προσκύνησιν) which we shew to one another, and of which he speaks when he says concerning Jacob, that “he revered (προσεκύνησεν) the top of his staff” (Heb. xi. 21). With these examples agrees what Gregory surnamed Theologus says: “Honour Bethlehem, and reverence (προσκυνήσον) the manger.”

Now who of those rightly and sincerely understanding the Divine Scriptures, has ever supposed that these examples which we have cited speak of the worship in spirit (τῆς ἐν πνεύματι λατρείας)? [Certainly no one has ever thought so] except perhaps some persons utterly bereft of sense and ignorant of all knowledge of the Scriptures and of the teaching of the Fathers. Surely Jacob did not adore (ἐλάτρευσεν) the top of his staff; and surely Gregory Theologus does not bid us to adore (λατρεύειν) the manger? By no means.

Again, when offering salutations to the life-giving Cross, we together sing: “We reverence (προσκυνῶμεν), thy cross, O Lord, and we also reverence (προσκυνῶμεν) the spear which opened the life-giving side of thy goodness.” This is clearly but a salutation, and is so called, and its character is evinced by our touching the things mentioned with our lips. We grant that the word

προσκύνησις is frequently found in the Divine Scriptures and in the writings of our learned and holy Fathers for the worship in spirit (ἐπὶ τῆς ἐν πνεύματι λατρείας), since, being a word of many significations, it may be used to express that kind of reverence which is service. As there is also the veneration of honour, love and fear. In this sense it is, that we venerate your glorious and most noble majesty. So also there is another veneration which comes of fear alone, thus Jacob venerated Esau. Then there is the veneration of gratitude, as Abraham revered the sons of Heth, for the field which he received from them for a burying place for Sarah his wife. And finally, those looking to obtain some gift, venerate those who are above them, as Jacob venerated Pharaoh. Therefore because this term has these many significations, the Divine Scriptures teaching us, “Thou shalt venerate the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,” says simply that veneration is to be given to God, but does not add the word “only;” for veneration being a word of wide meaning is an ambiguous term; but it goes on to say “thou shalt serve (λατρεύσεις) him only,” for to God alone do we render latria.

The things which we have decreed, being thus well supported, it is confessedly and beyond all question acceptable and well-pleasing before God, that the images of our Lord Jesus Christ as man, and those of the undefiled Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, and of the honourable Angels and of all Saints, should be venerated and saluted. And if anyone does not so believe, but undertakes to debate the matter further and is evil affected with regard to the veneration due the sacred images, such an one our holy ecumenical council (fortified by the inward working of the Spirit of God, and by the traditions of the Fathers and of the Church) anathematises. Now anathema is nothing less than complete separation from God. For if any are quarrelsome and will not obediently accept what has now been decreed, they but kick against the pricks, and injure their own souls in their fighting against Christ. And in taking pleasure at the insults which are offered to the Church, they clearly shew themselves to be of those who madly make war upon piety, and are therefore to be regarded as in the same category with the heretics of old times, and their companions and brethren in ungodliness.

574

We have sent our brethren and fellow priests, God-beloved Bishops, together with certain of the Hegumenoi and clergy, that they may give a full report of our proceedings to your godly-hearing ears. In proof and confirmation of what we have decreed, and also for the assurance of your most religious majesty, we have submitted proofs from the Fathers, a few of the many we have gathered together in illustration of the brightly shining truth.

And now may the Saviour of us all, who reigns with you (συμβασιλεύων ὑμῖν) and who was pleased to vouchsafe his peace to the Churches through you, preserve your kingdom for many years, and also your council, princes, and faithful army, and the whole estate of the empire; and may he also give you victory over all your enemies. For he it is, who says: “As I live, saith the Lord, they that glorify me, I will glorify.” He it is also who hath girded you with strength, and will smite all your enemies, and make your people to rejoice.

And do thou, O city, the new Sion, rejoice and be glad; thou that art the wonder of the whole world. For although David hath not reigned in thee, nevertheless thy pious princes here preside

over thy affairs as David would have done. The Lord is in the midst of thee; may his name be blessed forever and ever. Amen.



Excursus on the Two Letters of Gregory II. To the Emperor Leo.

(J. B. Bury, Appendix 14 to Vol. V. of his edition of Gibbon's *Rome*. 1898.)

It is incorrect to say that “the two epistles of Gregory II. have been preserved in the Acts of the Nicene Council” [as Gibbon does]. In modern collections of the Acts of Ecclesiastical Councils, they have been printed at the end of the Acts of the Second Nicene Council. But they first came to light at the end of the XVIth. century and were printed for the first time in the *Annales Ecclesiastici* of Baronius, who had obtained them from Fronton le Duc. This scholar had copied the text from a Greek ms. at Rheims. Since then other MSS. have been found, the earliest belonging to the XIth., if not the Xth century.

In another case we should say that the external evidence for the genuineness of the epistles was good. We know on the authority of Theophanes that Gregory wrote one or more letters to Leo (ἐπιστολὴν δογματικὴν, *sub* A. M. 6172, οἱ ἐπιστολῶν, *sub* A. M. 6221); and we should have no external reasons to suspect copies dating from about 300 years later. But the omission of these letters in the Acts of the Nicene Council, though they are stated to have been read at the council, introduces a shadow of suspicion. If they were preserved, how comes it that they were not preserved in the Acts of the Council, like the letter of Gregory to the Patriarch Germanus? There is no trace anywhere of the Latin originals.

Turning to the contents, we find enough to convert suspicion into a practical certainty that the documents are forgeries. This is the opinion of M. l'abbé Duchesne (the editor of the *Liber Pontificalis*), M. L. Guérard (*Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, p. 44 *sqq.*, 1890); Mr. Hodgkin (*Italy and her Invaders*, Vol. vi., p. 501 *sqq.*). A false date (the beginning of Leo's reign is placed in the XIVth. instead of the XVth. indiction), and the false implication that the Imperial territory of the “Ducatus Romæ” terminated at twenty-four stadia, or three miles, from Rome, point to an author who was neither a contemporary of Leo nor a resident in Rome. But the insolent tone of the letters is enough to condemn them. Gregory II. would never have addressed to his sovereign the crude abuse with which these documents teem. Another objection (which I have never seen noticed) is that in the First Letter the famous image of Christ which was pulled down by Leo, is stated to have been in the “Chalkopræteia” (bronzesmith's quarter), whereas, according to the trustworthy sources, it was above the Chalkâ gate of the Palace.

Rejecting the letters on these grounds—which are supported by a number of smaller points—we get rid of the difficulty about a Lombard siege of Ravenna before A.D. 727: a siege which is not mentioned elsewhere and was doubtless created by the confused knowledge of the fabricator.

Excursus on the Reception of the Seventh Council.

The reception of the Seventh Council in the East was practically universal. No historian pretends that the iconoclastic opinions had any hold over the masses of the people. It was strictly speaking a court movement, backed by the army, and whenever the images were laid low and their veneration condemned it was by the power of the State, enforcing its will upon a yielding and (as we would call them to-day) Erastian clergy. (Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Eng. tr. Vol. iv., p. 326.)

The struggle indeed was not quite put an end to by the conciliar decree. After the death of the Empress in A.D. 803, several iconoclastic rulers sat on the throne of the East, among them Michael the Stammerer, who (as Michaud wittily says) “fought the images and married the nuns.”⁵⁴⁶ He sent a letter, which is still extant, to Louis le Débonnaire of France, setting forth the superstitions of the orthodox, which is most curious and interesting reading. (*Vide Mansi.*)

His successor was Theophilus, who reigned from 829 until 842, and was a fanatical iconoclast. The Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem wrote to him officially, several years after his accession, begging him not to imitate the bad example of the iconoclasts. At that time the only Patriarch who sided with the heretics was John the Grammarian, the Patriarch of Constantinople, the very same who in 814 had repudiated the iconoclast doctrine! With the death of this Emperor, the power of the Iconoclasts likewise died; and at the accession of Michael III with his mother Theodora and his sister Thecla came the final triumph of the images. I shall quote here the words of Harnack: “Then came an Empress, Theodora, who finally restored the worship. This took place at the Synod held at Constantinople A.D. 842. This Synod decreed that a Feast of Orthodoxy (ἡ κυριακὴ τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας) should be celebrated annually, at which the victory over the iconoclasts should be regularly remembered. Thus the whole of orthodoxy was united in image-worship. In this way the Eastern Church reached the position which suited its nature. We have here the conclusion of a development, consistent in the main points. The divine and sacred, as that had descended into the sensuous world by the incarnation, had created for itself in the Church a system of material, supernatural things, which offered themselves for man’s use.” (*Hist. Dogma.* Vol. iv., p. 328.)

⁵⁴⁶ It was during this period that St. Theodore, writing in 826 to Arsenius, observes:

“Rome has not received it as an Ecumenical Council, but only as a provincial Synod, assembled to remedy a particular evil; Legates of the other Patriarchs were not there; those of Rome had come on different business: Legates, indeed, there were from the East, but they were brought by our deputies, not sent by their Patriarchs, who knew nothing of the matter till afterwards. Our countrymen acted thus for the purpose of more easily bringing back the heretics by persuading them that it was an Ecumenical Council.” “Theodore, however, it is fair to add, afterwards changed his opinion.” Such is Dr. Neale’s candid admission. *Hist. of the East. Ch.*, Vol. II., p. 135. How often, alas! has this passage been quoted by controversialists, and the word of warning to the reader been wholly omitted.

Much has been written, and truly written, of the superiority of the iconoclastic rulers; but when all has been said that can be, the fact still remains, that they were most of them but sorry Christians, and the justice of the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin's summing up of the matter will not be disputed by any impartial student. He says, "No one will deny that with rarest exceptions, all the religious earnestness, all which constituted the quickening power of a church, was ranged upon the other [i.e. the orthodox] side. Had the Iconoclasts triumphed, when their work showed itself at last in its true colours, it would have proved to be the triumph, not of faith in an invisible God, but of frivolous unbelief in an incarnate Saviour." (Trench. *Mediæval History*, Chap. vii.)

We come now to consider what reception the Seventh of the General Councils met with in the West. And first we find that it was accepted, so far at least as its dogmatic decrees went, by the Pope, the whole Roman Church and, so far as we know, by all the West except the realm of Charlemagne and, as would naturally be expected, the English Church.

It is true that this was a large and very important exception; so large and so important that it becomes necessary to examine in detail the causes which led to this rejection.

Some persons have supposed that the English council held at Calcuth in 787 rejected the ecumenical character of II. Nice, because in two of its canons (the 1st and the 4th) it only speaks of "the faith of the Six General Councils." But it is evident that the reason for this was that it had not yet heard of the Nicene synod; moreover such action would have been clearly impossible, since the council was presided over by the Bishop of Ostia, the legate of Pope Hadrian.

The first opposition to the council in the West was made apparently by Charlemagne himself. Pope Hadrian sent him a translation of the acts into Latin and signified his acceptance of the council. But this translation was so badly done that not only was a large part of the acts utterly unintelligible, but also, in at least one place, a bishop of the council was made to say that the sacred images were to be adored with the same supreme worship as is paid to the Holy Trinity.

It may not be wholly charitable to suggest the possibility of such a thing having any influence in the matter. On the other hand it would be unfair to the reader not to state that Charlemagne had, or thought that he had, serious grievances against the Empress Irene, and that he might not have been sorry to have discovered some reason for which to reject her council. It should, moreover, be remembered how much the Pope in his struggle for independence of the Eastern Empire trusted to Charlemagne, and therefore how reluctant he might readily have been to break with so important an ally; and so might be induced to tolerate the rejection by the Frankish Emperor of what had been received by him, the Vicar of Christ and the successor of Peter, as the Seventh Ecumenical Synod of the Catholic Church.

As a result of this feeling of Charlemagne's, there were written what we call the "Caroline Books," and these exercised so mighty an influence on this whole question, and so completely misled even the learned, that I shall give a careful examination of their authorship, authority, and contents; for there can be no doubt that it was the influence of these books (which appeared in 790) that induced the unfortunate action of the Council of Frankfort four years later (in 794); and that of the Convention of Paris in 825.



Examination of the Caroline Books.

I. *Authorship of the Caroline Books.*

I find that many writers on the subject of what they call “image worship,” speak frequently of these “Caroline Books,” and refer to them with great admiration. It is also absolutely certain that many of these writers have never read, possibly never seen, the books of which they write so eloquently. I have used the reprint of Melchior Goldast’s edition (Frankfort, 1608) in Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*, Tom. xcviij., in this article.

The work begins thus. “In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ beginneth the work of the most illustrious and glorious man Charles, by the will of God, king of the Franks, Gauls, Germany, etc., against the Synod which in Greek parts firmly and proudly decreed in favour of adoring (*adorandis*) images,” then follows immediately what is called “Charlemagne’s Preface.”

Now of course nobody supposes for a moment that Charlemagne wrote these books himself. But Sir William Palmer (*Treatise on the Church*, Vol. II., p. 204) says that the prelates of the realm of France “composed a reply to this Synod,” he further says that “This work was published by the authority and in the name of the Emperor Charlemagne and with the consent of his bishops, in 790” (p. 205). I am entirely at a loss to know on what authority these statements rest. The authorship of the work has not without great show of reason, been attributed to Alcuin. Besides the English tradition that he had written such a book, there has been pointed out the remarkable similarity of his commentary on St. John (4, 5, *et seqq.*) to a passage in Liber IV., cap. vj., of these Caroline Books. (On this point see Forster, *General Preface to the Works of Alcuin* n. 10.) But after all whether Alcuin was the author or no, matters little, the statement that the “bishops of France” were in any sense responsible for it is entirely gratuitous, unless indeed some should think it may be gathered from the statement of the Preface;

“We have undertaken this work with the priests who are prelates of the Catholic flocks in the kingdom which has been granted to us of God.”⁵⁴⁷ But this would not be the only book written at the command of, and set forth by, a secular prince and yet claiming the authority of the Church. I need only give as examples “The Institution of a Christian Man” and the Second Prayer Book of Edward the VIth.

II. *Authority of the Caroline Books.*

But be their authorship what it may, we come next to consider their authority; and here we are met with the greatest difficulty, for it is certain that despite the statements to the contrary, these

⁵⁴⁷ It is curious that Michaud (*Sept. Conciles Œcuméniques*, p. 294) should say “the title priest given to those who composed the book proves that no one of them was a bishop.” The Latin is “Sacerdotum Prælatorum”!

books were not those sent to Pope Hadrian by Charlemagne, those of which the Pope deigned to write a refutation. This Hefele has clearly proved, by pointing out that those sent to the Pope treated the matter in an entirely different order; that there were in those sent only 85 chapters, while these books have 120 (or 121 if the authenticity of the last chapter is granted). Moreover the quotations made by Hadrian do not occur *verbatim* in the Caroline books, but are in some cases enlarged, in others abbreviated. (Cf. Hefele's treatment of the whole subject in the original German.) Petavius thinks that what Hadrian received were extracts from the Caroline Books, made by the Council of Frankfort.

579

Hefele arrives at a directly opposite conclusion, viz., that the Caroline Books are an expansion of the *Capitula* sent to the Pope, and that this expansion was made at the bidding of Charlemagne.

It should be noted here that Baronius, Bellarmine, Binius, and Surius all question the authenticity of the Caroline Books altogether. (*Vide* Baron, *Annal.*, A.D., 794.) But this extreme position seems to be refuted by the fact that certain quotations made by Hincmar are found in the books as we have them. (*Cf.* Sirmond in Mansi, Tom. XIII., 905, Labbe, Tom. VII., col. 1054.)

III. *Contents of the Caroline Books.*

If the authorship and authority of these books are difficult subjects, the contents of the books are still more extraordinary, for it seems to be certain, past all possibility of doubt, that the authors of these books had never read the acts nor decrees of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, of which they were writing; and further that he or they were also completely ignorant of what took place at the Conciliabulum of 754.

One example will be sufficient to prove this point. In Book IV., Chapter XIV., and also in chapter XX., (Migne's ed., col. 1213 and col. 1226), the charge is made that the Seventh Council, especially Gregory, the bishop of Neocæsarea, unduly flattered the Empress. Now as a matter of fact the remarks referred to were made at the Conciliabulum of 754, and not at the Second Council of Nice; they were not made by Gregory of Neocæsarea at all, and the reason they are attributed to him is because he read them in the proceedings of that pseudo-council to the true council of 787.

Other examples could easily be given, but this is sufficient. *Ab uno disce omnes*. The most famous however of all the ignorant blunders found in these books must not here be omitted. It occurs in Book III., chapter xvij., and is no less serious than to attribute to Constantius, the bishop of Cyprus, the monstrous statement that the sacred images were to be given the supreme adoration due to the Holy Trinity. What a complete mistake this was, we have already pointed out, and will have been evident to anyone who has read the extracts of the acts given in the foregoing pages. I have said "mistake;" and I have said so deliberately, because I am convinced that the Caroline books, the decree of Frankfort, and the decision of the Convention of Paris, all sprung from ignorance and blundering; and largely through the force of this particular false statement on which I am

writing. But I must not omit the statement of Sir William Palmer, a champion of these books, that “the acts of the synod of Nice having been sent to Rome in the year 787, Pope Hadrian himself, according to Hincmar, transmitted them into France to Charlemagne, to be confirmed by the bishops of his kingdom; and the Emperor [i.e. Charlemagne] also received the acts directly from Constantinople according to Roger Hovedon. These prelates, thus furnished with an authentic copy and not a mere translation, composed a reply to the synod” (*Treatise on the Church*, Vol. II., p. 203).

If Sir William is right, then the author of the Caroline books is thrown into a dark shade indeed, for either he was too ignorant or too careless to read the original Greek, or else, knowing the real state of the case, deliberately misrepresented the synod. Sir William feels this difficulty, and, a few lines below the sentence I have quoted, attributes the misstatements to a “mistranslation,” viz. the false statement—upon which alone all the rest hung—attributed to the bishop of Cyprus. But the two claims are *contraria inter se*. If they were using an authentic copy of the original sent from Constantinople then they could not have been misled by a “mistranslation;” if they used a mistranslation and took no pains to read the decrees, their opinion and their writings—as well as the decrees which followed from them—were evidently entirely without theological value, and this is the estimation in which they have been held by all unprejudiced scholars without exception, whether agreeing with their conclusions or no.

580

It will be well to set plainly before the reader the foundation upon which rests the dogmatic teaching of the Caroline Books. This is, in short, the authority of the Roman See. That there may be no possible doubt upon this point, I proceed to quote somewhat at length chapter vi., of Book I.; the heading of which reads as follows: “That the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church is placed above all other Churches, and is to be consulted at every turn when any controversy arises with regard to the faith.”

“Before entering upon a discussion of the witnesses which the Easterns have absurdly brought forward in their Synod, we think well to set forth how greatly the holy Roman Church has been exalted by the Lord above the other Churches, and how she is to be consulted by the faithful: and this is especially the case since only such books as she receives as canonical and only such Fathers as she has recognized by Gelasius and the other Pontiffs, his successors, are to be accepted and followed; nor are they to be interpreted by the private will of anyone, but wisely and soberly... For as the Apostolic Sees in general are to be preferred to all the other dioceses of the world, much more is that see to be preferred which is placed over all the other apostolic sees. For just as the Apostles were exalted above the other disciples, and Peter was exalted above the other Apostles, so the apostolic sees are exalted above the other sees, and the Roman See is eminent over the other apostolic sees. And this exaltation arises from no synodical action of the other Churches, but she holds the primacy (*primatum*) by the authority of the Lord himself, when he said, ‘Thou art Peter, etc.’...”

“This church, therefore, fortified with the spiritual arms of the holy faith, and satiated with the health-giving fountains which flow from the well of light and from the source of goodness, resists

the horrible and atrocious monsters of heresies, and ministers the honey-sweet cups of teaching to the Catholic Churches of the whole world...Whence [i.e. from St. Jerome consulting the Pope] we can understand how Saints and learned men who were shining lights in different parts of the world, not only did not depart in faith from the holy Roman Church, but also asked aid of her in time of necessity for the strengthening of the faith. And this all Catholic Churches should regularly observe, so that they may seek help from her, after Christ, for protecting the faith: which (*quæ*) having neither spot nor wrinkle, smites the portentous heads of heresies, and strengthens the minds of the faithful in the faith. And although many have separated from this holy and venerable communion, nevertheless never have the Churches of our part done so, but instructed by that apostolical erudition, and by his assistance from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, have always received the venerable charismata...; and are careful to follow the see of blessed Peter in all things, as they desire thither to arrive where he sits as keeper of the keys. To which blessedness may he who deigned to found his Church upon Peter bring us, and make us to persevere in the unity of the holy Church; and may we merit a place in that kingdom of heaven through the intervention of him whose See we follow and to whom have been given the keys.”

Such is the doctrinal foundation of the Caroline books, viz.: the absolute authority of the Roman See in matters pertaining to the faith of the Church. It is certainly very difficult to understand how the author of these books could have known that the doctrinal decree of the Synod of Nice had received the approbation of this supreme power which it was so necessary to consult and defer to; and that the Synod which he denounces and rejects had been received by that chief of all the Apostolic Sees as the Seventh of the Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church.



Whether the author [or authors] had ever seen the Pope’s letter or no, one thing is certain, he never read with any care even the imperfect translation with which he had been furnished, and of that translation Anastasius Bibliothetius says: “The translator both misunderstood the genius of the Greek language as well as that of the Latin, and has merely translated word for word; and in such a fashion that it is scarcely ever possible to know (*aut vix aut nunquam*) what it means; moreover nobody ever reads this translation and no copies of it are made.”⁵⁴⁸

This being the case, when we come to examine the Caroline Books, we are not astonished to find them full of false statements.

In the Preface we are told that the Conciliabulum was “held in Bithynia;” of course as a matter of fact it met in Constantinople.

In Bk. I., chapter j., we find certain words said to occur in the letters of the Empress and her son. On this Hefele remarks: “One cannot find the words in either of the two letters of these sovereigns, which are preserved in the acts of the Council of Nice, it is the synod that uses them.”⁵⁴⁹

In the Second Book, chapter xxvij., the council is charged with saying “Just as the Lord’s body and blood pass over from fruits of the earth to a notable mystery, so also the images, made by the

548 Mansi, Tom. xii., 981.

549 Hefele. *Hist. of Councils*, Bk. xx., chap. ij., § 400.

skill of the artificers, pass over to the veneration of those persons whose images they bear.” Now this was never said nor taught by the Nicene Synod, but something like it was taught by the Constantinopolitan conciliabulum of 754; but the very words cited occur neither in the one set of acts nor in the other! The underlying thought however was, as we have said, clearly exposed by the iconoclastic synod of 754 and as clearly refuted by the orthodox synod of 787.

In Book III., chapter V., we are told that “Tarasius said in his confession of faith that the Holy Spirit was the companion (*contribulum* in the Caroline Books) of the Father and of the Son.” It was not Tarasius who said so at all, but Theodore of Jerusalem, and in using the word ὁμόφυλος he was but copying Sophronius of Jerusalem.

Chapter XVII. begins thus: “How rashly and (so to speak) like a fool, Constantine, bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, spoke when he said, with the approval of the rest of the bishops, that he would receive and honourably embrace the images; and babbled that the service of adoration which is due to the consubstantial and life-giving Trinity, should be given images, we need not here discuss, since to all who either read or hear this it will be clear that he was swamped in no small error, to wit to confess that he exhibited to creatures the service due to the Creator alone, and through his desire to favour the pictures overturned all the Holy Scriptures. For what sane man ever either said or thought of saying such an absurdity, as that different pictures should be held in the same honour as the holy, victorious Trinity, the creator of all things, etc.” But as will be seen by a glance at the acts this is exactly the opposite of what Constantine did say. Now if, as Sir William Palmer asserts, the author had before him the genuine acts in the original, I do not see how his honesty can be defended, or if his honesty is kept intact, it must be at the expense of his learning or carefulness. Bower felt this so keenly that he thinks the Caroline Books attribute the words to Constantine the bishop alone and not to the council. But the subterfuge is vain, for, as we have just seen, the author affirms that Constantine’s speech received “the assent of the rest of the bishops (*cæteris consentientibus*),” and further not obscurely suggests that Constantine had the courage to say what the others were content to think, but did not dare to say.

In Book IV., the third chapter distinctly states that while lights and incense were used by them in their churches, yet that neither the one nor the other was placed before images. If this can be relied upon it would seem to fix the Frankish custom of that date.

Chapters XIV. and XX. are distinguished by the most glaring blunders, for they attribute to the Council of Nice the teachings of the Conciliabulum, and in particular they lay them to the door of Gregory of Neocæsarea because he it was who read them.

Finally, in chapter the twenty-eighth, the ecumenical character of II. Nice is denied, on the ground that it has not preserved the faith of the Fathers, and that it was not universal in its constitution. I beg the reader, who has fresh in his memory the Papal claims set forth in a previous chapter, to consider whether it is possible that the author of that chapter should have seen and known of the Papal acceptance of the Seventh Synod and yet have written as follows: “Among all the inanities said and done by this synod, this does not seem by any means to be the least, that they styled it ecumenical, for it neither held the purity of the ecumenical faith, nor did it obtain authority

through the ecumenical action of the Churches....If this synod had kept clear of novelties and had rested satisfied with the teachings of the ancient Fathers, it might have been styled ecumenical. But since it was not contented with the teachings of the ancient Fathers it cannot be styled ecumenical," etc., etc.

Such are in brief the contents and spirit of the Caroline Books. Binius indeed says that he found a twenty-ninth chapter in a French ms. of Hadrian's Epistle. It is lacking in the ordinary codices. Petavius thinks it was added by the Council of Frankfort. It is found in Migne (col. 1218) and the main point is that St. Gregory's advice is to be followed, viz.: "We permit images of the Saints to be made by whoever is so disposed, as well in churches as out of them, for the love of God and of his Saints; but never compel anyone who does not wish to do so to bow to them (*adorare eas*); nor do we permit anyone to destroy them, even if he should so desire." I cannot but think that this would be a very lame conclusion to all the denunciation of the preceding chapters.

IV. *The Chief Cause of Trouble a Logomachy.*

Now from all this one thing is abundantly clear, that the great point set forth with such learning and perspicuity by the Seventh Synod, to wit, the distinction between *λατρεία* and *προσκύνεσις* was wholly lost upon these Frankish writers; and that their translation of both words by "*adoro*" gave rise to nine-tenths of the trouble that followed. The student of ecclesiastical history will remember how a similar logomachy followed nearly every one of the Ecumenical Synods, and will not therefore be astonished to find it likewise here. The "homousion," the "theotocos," the "two natures," "the two wills," each one gave rise to heated discussion in different sections of the Church, even after it had been accepted and approved by a Synod which no one now for an instant disputes to have been ecumenical.

Moreover, that after this serious error and bungling on the part of the Caroline divines and of the French and Allemanic Churches, the Pope did not proceed to enforce the acceptance of the council will not cause astonishment to any who are familiar with what St. Athanasius said with regard to the Semi-Arians, who even after I. Nice refused to use the word "*homousios*;" or with the extreme gentleness and moderation of St. Cyril of Alexandria in his treatment of John of Antioch.

Perhaps before leaving the subject I should give here the chief strictures which Hefele makes upon these books (§ 400).

(1) The Caroline Books condemn passages which they quote (without saying so) from Pope Hadrian's own letter to the Empress.

(2) They blame St. Basil for teaching that the reverence done to the image passes on to the prototype.

(3) They treat St. Gregory Nyssen with contempt, and refuse to listen to him (Lib. II., c. xvij.).

(4) They are full of most careless and inexcusable blunders.

- (a) They attribute to the Emperors a phrase which belongs to the Synod (I. j.).
- (b) They confound Leontius with John (I. xxj.).
- (c) They confound Tarasius with Theodore of Jerusalem (III. v.).
- (d) They impute to the Council the opinions of the Iconoclastic Conciliabulum (IV., xiv. and xx.).
- (e) They attribute to Epiphanius the deacon the propositions of others when he merely read (IV., xv.)

It had usually been supposed that these Four Books were the “quædam capitula” which Charlemagne had sent by Angelbert to Pope Hadrian “to be corrected by his judgment (*ut illius judicio corrigerentur*). Considering the nature of the contents of the Caroline Books as we now have them, such would seem *à priori* highly improbable, but this matter has been practically settled, as we have already pointed out, by Bishop Hefele, who has shown from Pope Hadrian’s answer “correcting” those “capitula,” that they must have been entirely different in order though no doubt their contents were similar. The differing views of Petavius and Walch will be found in full in Hefele (§ 401).

In concluding his masterly treatment of this whole matter, Hefele makes (§ 402) a remark well worthy of repetition in this place:

“The great friendship which Charles shewed to Pope Hadrian down to the hour of his death proves that their way of thinking with regard to the cultus of images was not so opposite as many suppose, and—above all—as many have tried to make out.”

I shall close this matter with the admirably learned and judicious words of Michaud.

“No doubt there had been abuses in connexion with the worship of images; but the Council of Nice never approved of these. No doubt, too, certain marks of veneration used in the East were not practised in Gaul; but the Council of Nice did not go into these particulars. It merely determined the principle, to wit, the lawfulness and moral necessity of honouring the holy images; and in doing this it did not in any degree innovate. Charlemagne ought to have known this, for, already in the sixth century Fortunatus, in his Poem on St. Martin, tells how in Gaul they lighted lamps before the images.⁵⁵⁰ The great point that Charlemagne made was that what was called in the West ‘adoration,’ in the strict sense (that is to say the worship of Latria) should be rendered to none other than God; now this is exactly the doctrine of the Council of Nice. Charlemagne himself admits that the learned may venerate images, meaning thereby that the veneration is really addressed to the prototypes, but that such veneration is a source of scandal to the ignorant who in the image venerate⁵⁵¹ nothing but the material image itself (Lib. III., cap. xvj.).”⁵⁵²

⁵⁵⁰ “Here on the wall is an image of the Saint and under its feet a little window, and a lamp, in the glass bowl of which the fire burns.” Fortun. (*Migne., Pat. Lat., Tom. LXXXVIII.*) *De Vita S. Martin*, Lib. iv., 690 (col. 426).

⁵⁵¹ “And adore” in the Latin.

⁵⁵² Michaud. *Discussion sur les Sept Conciles Œcuméniques*, p. 300.

Excursus on the Council of Frankfort, A.D. 794.

It has been commonly represented that the Council of Frankfort, which was a large Synod of the West, with legates of the Pope present and composed of the bishops of Gaul, Germany, and Aquitaine, devoted its attention to a consideration of the question of the veneration due to images and of the claims of the Second Council of Nice to being an Ecumenical Synod. I do not know upon what grounds such statements have rested, but certainly not upon anything revealed by any remains of the council we possess, for among these we find but one brief paragraph upon the subject, to wit, the Second Canon, which reads as follows (Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. vii, col. 1057):

“II. The question was brought forward concerning the recent synod which the Greeks had held at Constantinople concerning the adoration of images, that all should be judged as worthy of anathema who did not pay to the images of the Saints service and adoration as to the Divine Trinity. Our most holy fathers rejected with scorn and in every way such adoration and service, and unanimously condemned it.”

Now in the first place I call the reader’s attention to the fact that the Conciliabulum of 754 was held at Constantinople but that the Seventh Council was held at Nice. It would seem as if the two had got mixed in the mind of the writer.⁵⁵³

In the second place neither of these synods, nor any other synod, decreed that the “service” (λατρεία) and “adoration” (προσκύνησις) due to the holy Trinity was under pain of anathema to be given to “the images of the Saints.”

On this second canon Hefele writes as follows:

(Hefele. *Concil.*, § 398).

The second of these canons deserves our full attention; in it, as we have seen, the Synod of Frankfort expresses its feeling against the Second Ecumenical Council of Nice, and against the veneration of images; Eginhard also gives us the information that it took this action, viz.: “for it was decided by all [i.e. at Frankfort] that the synod, which a few years before was gathered together in Constantinople (*sic*) under Irene and her son Constantine, and is called by them not only the Seventh but also Ecumenical, should neither be held nor declared to be the Seventh nor ecumenical but wholly without authority.”

Hefele rejects the views of Baronius, Bellarmine, Surius, and Binius. I have no intention of defending the position of any one of these writers but I translate Binius’s note, merely remarking that it is easier to reject his conclusion than to answer the arguments upon which it rests.

(Severinus Binius, Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VII., col. 1070.)

⁵⁵³ This has been explained by saying that the last meeting was in the palace at Constantinople.

Baronius was of opinion that the Second Council of Nice was condemned by this council; and before him Bellarmine had taught the same thing. But two things make me dissent from their conclusion:

First. That as the history and acts of this council inform us that the legates of Pope Hadrian (whom Ado in his chronology names Theophylact and Stephen) were present at this council, it was not possible that the whole council was ignorant by what authority the true Seventh Council was assembled at Nice, and what its decrees had been. For as this Synod at Nice was assembled under the same Pontiff, the legates of that same Pontiff could not have been ignorant of its authority and teaching. Therefore even if false rumours concerning the Seventh Synod had been scattered about, as Genebrardus affirms (on what foundation I know not), the Fathers of the Council of Frankfort could have been instructed by the papal legates, and been given information and taught what were the writings of that Seventh Council. Moreover since the celebration of that Nicene Council was an event most celebrated and most widely published throughout the whole Church, it is not credible that among the bishops of all France and Germany, assembled in this place, no single one was found who had accurate information concerning the manner in which the Council of Nice was assembled, or of how it had received the approval of the Supreme Pontiff. For as a matter of fact, that error of adoring images as gods is rather an error of the Gentiles than of any heretics or of any who profess the faith of Christ. Therefore in no way is it credible that the fathers of the Council of Frankfort should have thought this, or rashly on account of certain rumours have believed this; especially since at that time in no Church was there the suspicion of any such error; and the bishops of the council were too pious and Catholic to allow the suspicion that out of base enmity to the Orientals they were led to attribute error to the fathers of the most sacred Council of Nice, or that they would have attached an heretical sense to their decision.

585

Another reason is this; that the fathers of this council often made profession of acting under the obedience of the Roman Pontiffs; and in the book *Sacrosyllabus* at the end, when they gave sentence against the heretics, they subjoin these words: “The privilege of our lord and father the Supreme Pontiff, Hadrian I. Pope of the most blessed See, being in all respects maintained.” And this same principle the same fathers often professed in this council, that they followed the tradition of their predecessors, and did not depart from their footsteps; and that Charlemagne, who was present, at this council, in his letter to the Spanish bishops, said that in the first place he had consulted the pontiff of the Apostolic See, what he thought concerning the matter treated of in that council: and that a little further on he adds these words: “I am united to the Apostolic see, and to the ancient Catholic traditions which have come down from the beginnings of the new-born Church, with my whole mind, and with complete alacrity of heart.”

Now the fathers of this council could not make such a profession if they had condemned the Sacrosanct Synod of Nice, which had been confirmed by the Apostolic See. For as I have shown above they could not have been misled by false information upon this point. If therefore knowingly and through heretical pravity they did these things, so too they did them out of pertinacity and heresy; and so concerning the authority of the Apostolic See one way they had thought and another

way spoken. But in my judgment such things are not to be imputed to so great and to such an assembly of bishops, for it is not likely that the fathers of this council, in the presence of the legates of the Supreme Pontiff and of a Catholic Prince, would have condemned the Seventh Synod, confirmed as it was by the authority of the Pontiff and have referred the matter to Hadrian the Supreme Pontiff.

Moreover it would have surely come to pass that if the Nicene Council had been condemned by the authority of this synod, and so the error of the Iconoclasts had been approved through erroneous information, before our days some follower of that error would have tried to back up himself and his opinion by its authority: but no one did this, and this is all the more noteworthy since, only shortly after the time of Charlemagne, Claudius of Turin sprang up in that very Gaul, and wished to introduce that error into the Western Church, and he could have confirmed his teaching in the highest manner if he could have shewn that that plenary council of the West had confirmed his error. But as a matter of fact Claudius did not quote it in his favour; nor did Jonas of Orleans, who wrote against him at that time, and overthrew his foundations, make any mention in this respect of the Council of Frankfort in his response.

Lastly I add that the Roman Church never gave its approbation and received any provincial synod, so far as one part of its action was concerned while in another part it was persistently heretical. But this provincial council so far as it defined concerning the servitude and filiation of Christ was received and approved by the Church, it is not then credible that in the same council the Nicene Synod would have been condemned.

I need only add that every proposed theory is so full of difficulties as to seem to involve more absurdities and improbabilities than it explains. The reader is referred especially to Vasquez (*De adorat. imag.*, Lib. II., Dispt. VII., cap. vij.) and to Suarez (Tom. I, Disp. LIV., Sec. iij.), for learned and instructive discussions of the whole matter.



Excursus on the Convention said to have been held in Paris, A.D. 825.

It is curious that besides the Caroline Books and the second canon of Frankfort, another matter of great difficulty springs up with regard to the subject of the authority of the Seventh Synod. In 1596 there appeared what claims to be an ancient account of a convention of bishops in Paris in the year 824.⁵⁵⁴ The point in which this interests us is that the bishops at this meeting are supposed to have condemned the Seventh Council, and to have approved the Caroline books. The whole story was rejected by Cardinal Bellarmine and he promptly wrote a refutation. Sismondi accepted

⁵⁵⁴ This is reprinted in full in Mansi, and from him in Migne's *Pat. Lat.*, Tom. XCVIII., col. 1299, *et seqq.* Cardinal Bellarmine's refutation is also found in Migne's Charlemagne, and in Labbe and Cossart, Tom. VII., of the *Concilia*.

this view of the matter, and Labbe has excluded the pretended proceedings from his “Concilia” altogether.

But while scholars are agreed that the assigned date is impossible and that it must be 825, they have usually accepted the facts as true, I need not mention others than such widely differing authors as Fleury (*Hist. Eccles.*, Lib. xlvij. iv.), Roisselet de Sauclières (*Hist. Chronol.*, Tome III., No. 792, p. 385), and Hefele (*Concilien*, § 425).

It would be the height of presumption were I to express any opinion upon this most disputed point, the reader will find the whole matter at length in Walch (Bd. XI., S. 135, 139). I only here note that if the account be genuine, then it is an established fact that as late as 825, an assembly of bishops rejected an Ecumenical Council accepted by the pope, and further charged the Supreme Pontiff with having “commanded men to adore superstitiously images (*quod superstitiose eas adorare jussit*),” and asked the reigning Pontiff to correct the errors of his predecessors, and all this without any reproof from the Holy See!

Hefele points out also that they not only entirely misrepresent the teaching of Hadrian and the Seventh Council, but that they also cite a passage from St. Augustine, “which teaches exactly the opposite of that which this synod would make out, for the passage says that the word *colere* can be applied to men.”

Historical Note on the So-Called “Eighth General Council” and Subsequent Councils.

Whatever may be the final verdict of history with regard to the Caroline books, to the action of this Synod of Frankfort, and to the genuineness of the account of the Convention of Paris, there can be no doubt with regard to the position held by the Seventh of the Ecumenical Synods in all subsequent conciliar action.

In 869⁵⁵⁵ was held at Constantinople what both the Easterns and Westerns then considered to be the Eighth of the Ecumenical Synods. Its chief concern was to restore peace and it thought to accomplish this by taking the strongest position against Photius. At this Synod the Second Council of Nice was accepted in the most explicit manner, not only its teaching but also its rank and number.⁵⁵⁶

But not many years afterwards Photius again got the upper hand and another synod was held, also at Constantinople, in A.D. 879, which restored Photius and which was afterwards accepted by



555 Hefele. *Concilien*, § 487, also Fleury.

556 The definition of faith says: “also we confess that the Seventh Holy and Ecumenical synod, which met in Nice for the second time, taught in accordance with orthodoxy, etc.” (Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VIII., col. 1147.)

many Easterns as the Eighth of the Ecumenical Synods. But at this synod, as well as in that of 869, the position of Second Nice was fully acknowledged. So that after that date, roughly speaking one century after the meeting of the Seventh Synod, despite all opposition it was universally recognized and revered, even by those who were so rapidly drifting further and further apart as were the East and West in the time of Photius and his successors.

At the Council of Lyons in A.D. 1274 there was consent on all hands that all were united in accepting the Seven Synods as a basis of union.

And finally when the acts and agreements of the Council of Florence (1438) appeared in the first edition issued under papal authority, that synod was styled the "Eighth," and in this there was no accident, for during the debate the Cardinal Julian Cæsarini had asked the Greeks for the proceedings of the Eighth Synod and Mark answered: "We cannot be forced to count that synod as ecumenical, since we do not at all recognize it but in fact reject it...." "A few years afterwards was held a second synod which restored Photius and annulled the acts of the preceding assembly, and this synod also bears the title of the Eighth Ecumenical. But Cardinal Julian did not enter on any defence of the Ecumenical character of this so-called "Eighth Synod."⁵⁵⁷

For the purposes of this discussion, the matter is perfectly clear, and even if some later writers speak still of the "Six Ecumenical Councils" in doing so they are rejecting the Eighth as much as the Seventh; in fact they are rejecting neither, but speaking as did St. Gregory, who still mentioned the Four General Councils and compared them to the Four Gospels, although the fifth had been already held. Those few Frankish writers who continued to speak of II. Nice as a *pseudo council* did so out of ignorance or else in contrariety to the teaching of the Roman Church to whose obedience they professed subjection. It is no place of mine to offer moral reflections upon their doings.

⁵⁵⁷ For which Baronius condemns him in his *Annales*, A.D. 869.