

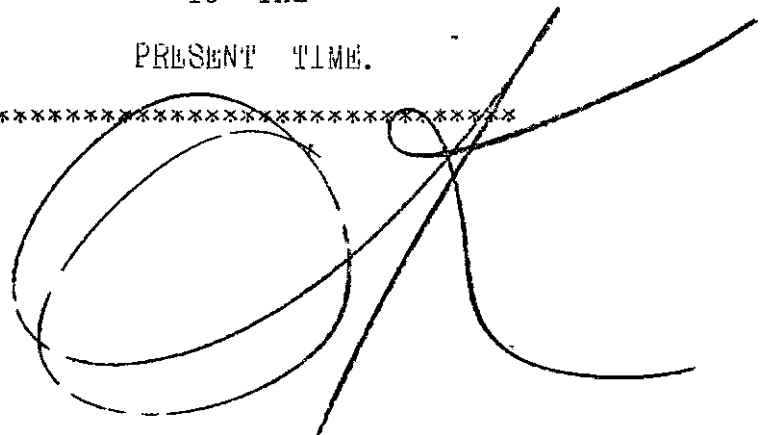
1909

Attempts of reformation in the Greek Orthodox Church to the present time

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ATTEMPTS OF REFORMATION
IN THE
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
TO THE
PRESENT TIME.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

BY

STACHYS MELMARIDES.

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It is unmistakably true that the influence of Hellenism has, now and again, proved to be an invincible factor in transforming nations and societies. Again and again it fell, and almost there was left no relics of its power, and, again and again it vindicated its right of being for a good purpose, by rising from its own ashes, the most abject beginnings, and accomplishing most wonderful service for humanity, directly or indirectly, by blending its power with another, of entirely different nature, according to the circumstances under which it arose. But the wonder of it is, that instead of being absorbed and naturalized by this or that power with which it came in contact, for co-operation, it naturalizes and transforms to itself. This happened especially in its co-operative relations with the declining power of Rome and Christianity, which simultaneously fell and rose, as if the one (Rome) was no more of any use and the other (Christianity) came to feel that use. For indeed, Rome, in the times of the emperors, took in her hands all matters of society, civil, political, as well as religious and moral, forcing her subjects to be faithful

to her in all the laws that she enacted concerning any of the above mentioned matters. But by the year 312 A.D. she lost the grip which she had had on humanity, thus yielding to Christianity, which came to fulfill the expectations of humanity. It was at this moment that a new power was born, at first very abject indeed, and no one suspected that it would prevail so powerfully over all. It was the beginnings of a new period of Hellenism under the Roman emperor Constantine.

The object of this thesis is not to give an account of the rise and development of this movement, the Byzantine Hellenism, nor of its alliance with Christianity and all the accomplishments that ensued from this providential alliance. Therefore, it suffices to say that by the year 697 A.D. so little was left of the ancient Roman influence that it is hardly worth calling that empire "The Eastern Roman Empire", but the Greek Byzantine Empire: and stating this we pass to the main subject, namely, the reformatory attempts in the Greek Orthodox Church, which in all the ages of the Byzantine empire, never lost sight of its great object of preserving the rights of Byzantine Hellenism, as such, against the obnoxious claims of the Roman See and the popes. And in this, it seems to me, lies the striking difference of the two Churches, namely, that the Roman Catholic Church prevailed over the state and forced its will on its members, while the Greek Orthodox Church was always a co-operator with the emperors of Byzantium in propagating all sorts of movements, and never either ~~could~~ ^{was} be willing to let the other prevail. This was a very favorable environment, under which the reformation could flourish much better

than in Rome; and this was the reason why the reformation in the West was so late, while that of the East began considerably earlier.

The first attempts of reformation took place in 481-514 during the reign of Zenon and Anastasius, in connection with the heresies on whose account the Greek Church was divided into two or three different sects, opposing each other. These two kings, together with the Patriarchs, attempted to unite the sects in one, trying to convince them that there is nothing essentially different between the sects, but only formulas and abstract expressions, which ought not to separate them to that extent. The attempts succeeded only partly as the kings always had a large part of the clergy opposing them bitterly and undermining their work. It was about this time also that Philoxenus, the Bishop of Syria, tried to abolish the adoration of images; but he, too, failed.

The next attempt was in the time of Mauricius (582-602). He was alarmed from the immense number of his subjects, who accepted the useless monastic life, and decided to enact an edict by which to suppress the growth of monasteries and monks. But the Byzantine empire was not yet strong enough not to be influenced by Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, who protested against the edict as not evangelical. Thus the king had to mitigate his edict; but even then he could not carry it out. His successor, Phocas, (602-610) endeavored to do something in that line, but he was soon checked down. Heraclius, who came to the throne in 610, had to resort to force to convince his subjects that the nation was almost ruined militarily, on account of the lack

of soldiers, who were closed in monasteries to live a useless life. He stirred the people to see the fact that there was an alarming situation, as the Parsees were coming against them with great forces. The presentation of this practical side of the matter was fruitful for a time, and it put a check on the powerful current toward monasticism and the hierarchy.

The next ruler, who proved to be in behalf of reformation, was king Philippicus, who in 713, it is said, not only abolished the decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Synod (which was too orthodox, and tended to bring great sects in the Greek Church), but also suppressed the adoration of images by the enactment of laws to this end. From this time on to 726 there was done nothing worth mentioning. For the kings were busy with political affairs, fighting against the Arabs, who long ago attacked the Christian countries. But although there was not done anything openly, secretly the spirits of men were getting ready to protest against the abuses, which so freely prevailed after the assassination of Philippicus in 713. There were whole races and societies which protested bitterly against the growing ecclesiasticism and rites and ceremonies, and idolatrous customs, etc. As they were not given attention to they separated from the Church, thus forming separate denominations which were distinguished as to their evangelical simplicity, purity and sincerity of worship. But the kings of Constantinople did not favor at all the separations, as they might procure a good clue to the Pope, to complain against the inability of the Greek Church to govern itself successfully, and so that would

give him a good pretext to force his claims of supremacy over all institutions, which claims were by no means advantageous to the Hellenism of the East.

Thus by 720 the situation was very alarming, and the opposition to the ecclesiasticism reached its climax. King Leo III felt that something ought to be done immediately; and indeed he undertook to carry out a scheme of reformation which would cure the moral, intellectual and material paralysis of the empire. This scheme of reformation, which Leo III and all other kings who endeavored reformation after him, contained the suppression of all monasteries, the abolition of images and relic worship, the restraint of hierarchy and ecclesiasticism, and all greediness on the part of the clergy, and their submission to the political and civil laws, the enactment of laws which would take away from the clergy all privileges of directing the public education, the abolition of suzerainty, serfdom and slavery, the toleration of all religious sects and the equality of men and women.

It is necessary before we give further accounts of the efforts for reformation to state the classes of societies which favored or disfavored all changes whatever. On behalf of the reformation were all the educated classes, the whole army with the political and civil officers, being led by the king, and a large part of the clergy. On the opposite side were all the women, part of the clergy and especially all the monks who aroused the women to opposition and caused to fail the final triumph of the reformation. There was a

mediating party also, which outnumbered both the extreme parties, the common people, who sometimes were on the one and sometimes on the other side, and some other times entirely indifferent. Thus we see that Leo III and all other reformers had to undertake an extremely hazardous achievement, often with the expectation of their being murdered, dethroned by force, exiled, etc. But they could not do otherwise. They came to see that either the reformation ought to be established, or the empire had to be ruined by all sorts of paralysis, which made it impossible to check the surrounding perils and enemies.

After the conquest of the Arabs in their second siege of Constantinople in 718, Leo III had time enough to think over this important matter with his ministers and officers. The first attempts then took place in 726, when he called a special assembly of the Senate and the chief clergy. There he read to them the enactment of a law or an edict by which it was forbidden to worship the images--such worship being idolatrous--and also because of the great dangers to which the common people were liable to fall from such a practice. But he let the images remain in the churches, in high places where the people could not reach them. The enactment was gladly received by the august assembly. But when the pope heard of it he protested, as usual. The king tried to convince him of his mistake, but it was of no use. He caused now a political rupture against him in Italy, thus widening the breach that was existing already between Rome and Constantinople. In the year 727 there was an eruption of a volcano in Thera. This the pope used as a means to arouse Greece proper

against the "impious" king, whose action was punished by God through that eruption. There was now formed a great army and navy under a certain Cosmas and two generals, who marched against the capital. At the same time the Arabs again attacked Nicea and other parts of the empire. But Leo III conquered both of them very easily and carried out his edict with very great severity, not even allowing the keeping of any kind of images and relics anywhere, and he also reduced the power of the monks by taking from them the privilege of directing the educational affairs and institutions. But the Patriarch of Constantinople favoring the monks did not sign the edict of the king, and even publicly assailed it. So the king, after some hesitation, called another meeting in 730 to discuss the matter in the presence of Germanus, the Patriarch, who still did not give his consent but gave his resignation, and Anastasius, the bishop, was made a Patriarch in his stead. But this enraged pope Gregory and all those who did not favor the reformation, and especially a Greek from the Orient, John Damascenus, a man highly educated in the sciences, languages, logic and elocution, but very narrow minded on religious and moral questions. This Damascenus overthrew all the work of Leo in the consciences of the people by his writings which were read voraciously by all classes, who were convinced by his subtle arguments and fiery elocution. However, on to the death of Leo III, in 741, his edict was formally carried out. His son, Constantine V, followed his father's steps in this matter also. He was an ardent adherent to reformatory principles. So he was very uneasy on seeing that the directions of his

father were not carried out strictly as they ought to have been, and he determined to carry them out by his kingly power. In 752 he began to discuss the matter privately and publicly, so that the people might come to see the truth of the matter. In 754 there was called an ecumenical synod in Constantinople, which by no means was acknowledged later by all the bishops, as many of them were not present there. But the 348 bishops who were present confirmed all that Leo III enacted, and furthermore forbade the manufacturing of images under whatever pretext. However, on the other hand, they declared the Virgin Mary a "Theodocos" (bearing God), and allowed intercessions to be made to all the saints and martyrs! At the end of the synod the august assembly, with the king at their head, marched in pomp and glory through the streets of Constantinople to a church, specially prepared and declared all the decisions that the synod meeting had come to. But now was the most difficult part of the whole scheme. For they had to take down and remove all images in all places, while there was an immense party which did not receive these decisions at all, but still kept the images with great piety and prayed to them! The king now had almost to use force to enforce his will. Many medieval historians allot to him various atrocities and barbarious acts, which by no means seem to be true but only imaginary creations of the writers who bitterly hated all kings advocating reformation, to whom they ascribed similar acts, while other historians do not even mention them. However, the king had to use force in some cases, and had to punish publicly monks who dared to insult him often in the church, right in

the midst of the mass or in the palace or on the streets, and he did so for the common good. But it is a pity that, with all his efforts, still idolatrous inclinations prevailed even in Constantinople. Why should they not? Simply by enacting laws and forcing the will and conscience, without educating the people, never can a principle be carried out. This was the great mistake of the Byzantine emperors that often made them seem atrocious before the world and caused their good intentions to fail totally. Thus in 765 new troubles arose from the monks who even organized a conspiracy against the king in his absence. But it was found out, and of course many were punished and executed, among whom was the Patriarch of Constantinople, Constantine, and some daring monks who insulted unsparingly. After the executions the king, with his three main generals, proceeded to strictly carry out his will now and destroyed many monasteries or used them for the army and removed as far as possible all images, being helped now by the new Patriarch, Nicetas. Force now prevailed, and as the army was in behalf of the king and as many of the monasteries were closed, all opposition ceased at least for the present. Constantine V died in 775 and was succeeded by his son, Leo IV, a man of weak and feminine character. His character was a good clue to the enemies of reformation to carry out their desire. Thus not long after his coming to the throne the monasteries were again re-opened, and the monks flocked back to the life of laziness and ease. Then, later, they forced him to declare his son, now ten years old, a king before his own death. This was done through the cooperation of his renowned wife, Irene, who longed to reign instead of

her little son, Constantine VI. Again, they persuaded him to nominate as Patriarch Paul of Cyprus, an enemy of reformation. This Paul, on the one hand, promised to be on the side of reformation, while secretly, on the other, he supported the other party. Leo IV died in the same year, and his ten year old son, Constantine VI, came to the throne with his mother, the terrible Irene, who, one by one, annulled all reformatory measures. Soon, all the monasteries were thronged with lazy buffoons, and images were erected everywhere, and the relics of the saints were brought in and worshipped. With the abolition of the reformation, the power of the empire began to wane, for the army was dispersed and the great generals checked or exiled, while those who came to the front were unable to accomplish anything worthy of their position. But while the empire was being ruined all the time the ignorant and stupid queen was still trying to do all she could to destroy all that remained of the reformation. In 784 there was a new Patriarch, Tarasius, who, in 786, called an ecumenical synod to decide finally on this matter. But this synod failed in its first meeting, for the armies, which now were irritated and excited, opposed the Patriarch and queen Irene and threatened that, if they did not respect the decisions of the former synods and kings, they would rebel and bring great calamities. The queen now decided to play on the army an infamous trick. She caused all the soldiers and generals, that opposed her will, to be summoned and then sent out to Asia Minor, where (she caused it to be rumored that) the Arabs were attacking the empire. The army was formed and sent to Asia Minor without weapons. As

soon as they left Constantinople the queen's minister entered the capital and took possession of it with a new set of soldiers that he had gathered for this end. On the other hand, through an edict of the queen, the old army was dispersed and sent away to their homes. Thus she made possible her triumph over the reformation. In 787 she called the Seventh Synod, in Bithynia, in which were present only those bishops who did not favor the reformation, and a host of monks to constitute a majority. Now they carried out their scheme very easily. The last meeting of the synod was held in Constantinople, where were gathered many who were caused to hear the decisions of this unlawful synod and to accept them as lawful. Thus all the attempts of the former kings failed utterly through this fanatic and wicked queen. This same year (797) she plotted against her own son, Constantine VI, and put out his eyes in the most atrocious way, thus rendering him unfit for the throne, which she seized for herself, only to be, in turn, dethroned in 802, when Nicephorus succeeded her. With this king begins the second period of attempts at reformation, which I now proceed to consider.

In 806 Tararius the Patriarch died, and Nicephorus was elected and ordained in his stead. About this time lived the renowned monks Plato and Theodore the Stoudites, who constituted the leadership of those who did not want the restoration of reformation. Thus the king and the Patriarch were on the one side and these two extremely fanatic monks on the other. Soon, then, a warfare began between these two parties, the one trying to re-establish the fallen reformation and

the other trying to prevent them. The struggle between them was very sharp, and often the monks did not hesitate to insult the king and the Patriarch with all sorts of calumnies, allotting to them the so-called "illegal ecclesiastical proceedings" in ordaining patriarchs, priests, etc.

In 809 the king called a special synod, which determined to break up the convent of the said monks and to send them into exile where they would be strictly guarded. No other reformatory steps were taken as yet. The paralysis was too strong to be easily healed. But this was a decisive step toward that end. However, although there were no ecclesiastical reforms possible just now the king prepared the way for them by his reformatory steps in the financial, political, civil and military affairs. He formed strong armies and paid the debts of the empire; filled the treasury which Irene had emptied, and put wise and prudent men in all kinds of offices and positions, -men who could prove very useful to him in supporting him and his sane religious tenets. This king, after a brilliant course of life, died in 811 while fighting against the barbarian Bulgarians whose invasions were very destructive to the empire.

Michael I was the next king, a man of weak character and a coward. As soon as he came to the throne all that the previous king had accomplished came to nought. Political as well as ecclesiastical abuses filled the empire, and the enemies of the reformation began to peep out and gradually triumph. The exiled fanatic monks came back and, by their influence, soon abolished all previous reformatory steps

against which they were furious. With the monasteries wide open, all the taxes abolished, and with all their treasures regained, they now began to apply capital punishment to all who did not follow their steps. Even the Patriarch was carried away by their degrading influence. Many were killed or mutilated alive, and still more exiled destitute of all means of living! But soon the fruit of their degeneration was gathered, for the Bulgarians began again to invade the country, while king Michael proved to be entirely unable to check them. Many cities were destroyed, riches plundered, and men killed. The king reigned shamefully, so far as accomplishing anything of permanent value for the nation is concerned, and was succeeded by Leo V in 813.

Leo completely conquered the barbarian Slav hordes, and saved the empire by putting a powerful check upon their progress. He now began to restore and set up all that the preceding king had overthrown. And first of all the question of images was brought forth. About this time lived two men who proved to be a great help to the king in this matter. These were Theodotos Melissinus, of royal family and John Grammaticus, a highly educated gentleman. These two men, together with others, persuaded the king to re-establish the edicts of Leo III and Constantine V. The king was ready to do it but for fear of the monks and part of the clergy, together with the Patriarch. Thus soon, began again a warfare of the parties; on the one side the king with the armies and officers and the educated leaders, and on the other side the Patriarch Nicephorus with the terrible monk, Theodore the Stondite, and others. Both parties tried first to come to a deci-

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sion by peaceable means, but this was impossible. Soon, therefore, the king gave a command that all those who wanted to remove the images might do so. But this was very undecisive, and his assailants did not stop from insulting him as impious, sacriligious, etc. On the other hand the army openly spoke against the king as undecided urging him to come to a final determination.

At Christmas in the same year, while the king was in the Church, there was read a passage from Isaiah 40:18ff, where the prophet openly condemns all kinds of likenesses and images, wooden or golden. In the midst of the reading a certain priest called out to the king and said: "O king dost thou listen to what the prophet of God says? Wherefore dost thou not accept the true worship of God, and still permittest the worship of graven images, which the monks manufacture to make money?" The king now immediately came to a final decision, and in 815 called a meeting. But the Patriarch refused to come. This obliged the army to invade his palace and break down all images there and there was danger to his life also. The king sent a detachment of soldiers to guard him. The Patriarch, now broken-hearted and despondent, abdicated his office, and willingly went into exile into a certain monastery. This was in March, 815. In April Theodote Melissinus was ordained Patriarch, who immediately called a synod where, together with many bishops and monks, he re-established and confirmed the Seventh Ecumenical Synod of 754 and also abolished image worship. Theodore the monk now protested bitterly and insulted the synod and king as usual. This caused his exile into Asia Minor, where he did

not stop writing and exciting both monks and people. This obliged the king to remove him far enough away to render him harmless. But even there the stubborn monk did not stop his correspondence with the bishops, the pope, monks and even with women, trying to arouse them, against the reformation and its adherents. But this did not prevent the king from accomplishing perfectly all the decisions of the synod. All images were removed, the Church songs re-written in accordance with the new ideas, the monasteries were closed and new schools were established, where the youth were educated in sane doctrines and profitable sciences.

Leo V was murdered in the Church, while singing, in 820, on Christmas day, and was succeeded by his atrocious enemy, Michael II, who was an unbeliever and mocker of all religious tenets. His god was personal interest, and accordingly he regulated and directed his steps. Thus he showed a wavering character for the reformation. He allowed the worship of images, provided it was done as a private affair. But publicly he did not denounce the reformation for fear of troubles.

But this policy caused the enemies of the reformation to protect themselves again and again against his wavering character, and caused him much trouble. Among them was the well-known Theodore the monk, who came back from his exile. The king, however, never cared for them, and so left matters undecided till his death in 829, when he was succeeded by his son Theophilus. Theophilus let things go as they were for two years; but in 832 he immediately took a daring step.

Not only did he forbid the adoration of images and the offering to them of incense or light, but he also strictly forbade calling the images "holy", "as only God is holy", said he, "and the human soul cannot become holy unless it is elevated Godward, being free from all earthly pollution and material forms of worship". He was indeed a "theophilus" (friend of God) to think so highly of His worship. Then, in 833, when Antony the Patriarch died, he nominated in his stead the well-known John Grammaticus, an ardent follower of the reformation and the man who instructed Theophilus from childhood. He now called a synod, which decided the following strict measures. (1) Anathematized all "Iconolaters". (2) Tore down all images without a single exception. (3) Abolished all monasteries, and dispersed the monks of all the convents in cities and towns and even villages, allowing to stand only those convents which were away from human society, on mountains and plains, etc., but strictly forbade the monks to come into the cities under the penalty of capital punishment in case they should disobey. The king was a man of strong, ironlike character and determined not to yield an inch. But this did not prevent the fanatic monks from rising against the king, who now punished them by all means and that unsparingly.

It is a pity that the king could not govern his temper in such instances; but he made up his mind to use all means until he could stop the monks and carry out the reformation to the end. Well, on account of his strong will and through the assistance of his powerful friends nothing was done publicly against the reformation up to

the time of his death. But privately and secretly even his wife and mother-in-law used to worship their images.

King Theophilus died in 842, and was succeeded by his wife, queen Theodora, who was fanatically opposed to reformation and who had scarcely come to the throne before she abolished all that her husband had established. Monasteries were opened, images were erected, a fanatic monk, Methodius, was made Patriarch, while John Grammaticus was forced to resign and go into exile. The memory of this triumph of the antireformists is still celebrated by the Greek Church on the 19th of February and is called "Orthodoxia".

This triumph of the monks and women was the final and fatal blow, and after that no king could ever succeed in doing anything in the line of reformation. Now, the monks began to go to all kinds of extremes, killing, mutilating, putting out eyes, sending into exile, etc. those who did not worship the idols which they themselves manufactured and sold to the people. This they continued until all consciences were bruised, all minds darkened, and the whole nation plunged into idolatry and adoration of relics, and what not. There was a big sect of extreme reformationists, the Paulinites, in Asia Minor, and it is said that the queen caused to be killed 100,000 of them by crucifying them, by massacring them, or by drowning them in the sea. The remaining 5,000 found a temporary refuge with the Arabs. Things continued like this on to 857, when the most desperate political as well as moral and religious degeneration ensued in the empire. Vardas, the successor of Theodora, his sister saw that it was absolutely necessary

to check the monks and monasteries and their shameful abuses. Hence, he caused Photius, a very educated man, to be elected and ordained as Patriarch instead of Ignatius, a monk full of monkish ideals. This Photius now in 861 called a synod in which, to be sure, nothing else could be accomplished but the prevention of the thousands of laymen who were ready to endure "image manufacturing orders of the monks". Things did not change a bit. Crimes and murders of all sorts filled the capital. In 867 Basileus of Macedonia murdered both Vardas and (later) Michael III and seized the throne.

The struggles of the previous kings and the results of those struggles taught Basileus not to venture anything on reformatory matters in such an uneducated and unenlightened Church. He thought that it would be of no use to force reformation, and that it would be better to wait till the people come to see its need and willingly accept it. Thus he dethroned Photius and enthroned his rival, Ignatius the monk, in the highest affairs of the Church. By this step he stopped all ecclesiastical troubles in the empire, and went on to complete his political and civil plans for the strengthening of the empire.

We see then that from that time on all hopes of reformation in the Greek Orthodox Church had passed away. All the kings that followed Basileus the Macedonian plainly saw the harm which ensued from the abuses of the monks and clergy, and tried to enact laws by which at least to check them for the time being; but it proved to be impossible. Later on the kings and the patriarchs had to fight on another very vital matter for the empire, which absorbed them wholly so that

they never thought of any reformatory measures. The matter that worried them was a long fight between the Pope and the Patriarch; the Pope trying to compel the Patriarch and the Greek Church to submit to his obnoxious and unjust claims, and the Patriarch trying to protect his inalienable rights of equality. This struggle lasted till 1057. By that time it was clearly seen that the union of these two Churches, with such wide apart motives and interests, would be impossible as long as they kept and did not give up those claims to hierarchical supremacy and Church government. Not long after this year (1057) troubles of a different nature arose in the empire. The Turks, the Bulgarians, the Russians, the barbarous Germanic races, etc., began to attack the empire, wave after wave coming from all sides. Everybody was too busy and absorbed to save the country and to bring peace to the people. Soon after another plague was added to these; the barbarous, fanatic, -men full of hatred to the Greeks, -mobs of the ferocious crusaders began to invade the empire and to commit all sorts of crimes, unchecked and furious, until twice they took and ruined Constantinople regardless of art, education or religion, and all this under the pretext of fighting the Mohammedan in order to save Christianity from his dreadful yoke! Of course, under such pressing circumstances the kings could not care for reformations, and much less could the Patriarchs.

In 1453 the most fatal blow that could be struck on a nation was the fruit that the Greeks gathered as a result of the degeneration and abuses in which they indulged unsuspectingly. From 1453 to

1829 the darkest slavery that ever occurred was the share of the nation that taught the world in all ages how to fight for liberty and freedom. But I suppose no one is to be blamed for it, and we may trace the causes of this unspeakable calamity back to their carelessness. If they would be wise enough not to indulge in useless disputes with the Latins, if they would train the people rather to fight for the common good than to lock themselves up in the abhorrent monasteries and so render themselves useless to the country when in danger, if they would support the religious principles which always have been proved to be beneficial to them, very probably this calamity might have been prevented. But they did not and so they reaped the results of their acts.

During this the darkest of all ages to our nation the barbarous yoke of the greatest impostor that ever came on this earth of ours made it impossible to think of any sort of reformation. Indeed, the ignorant Greeks, comparing their religious tenets with those of their horrible conquerors, thought that they had nothing to complain of in their own. The degrading influence of slavery of these years (1453-1829) had the most dreadful results on the minds and consciences of the nation as a whole. They became dull and almost stupified to all sorts of distinctions, religious, moral, or intellectual, and only one thing filled their mind, namely, how to deliver themselves from the hell that surrounded them. They felt that they were dead alive, or being killed all the time without being able to die. So they consecrated their whole power to shake off this eternal death, until 1821,

when the revolution broke out. This lasted till 1829, and was the most desperate struggle that the world had ever seen. Even women and children were engaged in fighting. But it was of no use. For the fury of the Turks surpassed their power, and the struggle of seven years almost resulted in nothing, if it was not for some Christian European Powers who were at last moved to pity! Oh pity!! And who during all those ages were absolutely indifferent lookers on the unspeakable sufferings of their brethren, to whom they owe so much! I am sure I do not know who have proved to be the better in this matter, the ferocious followers of the great Impostor, the dreary Mohammedans, or the disciples of the Prince of Peace!! But anyhow three of the European Powers woke up at last, oh miracle!, and the fleet of England, France, and Russia gave a good, and in fact the only good, prescription to the ferocious Mohammedans in the war of Navarino in 1829, and Greece proper was liberated and left alone in her ignorance, fanaticism and hatred to the world, which resulted from the long slavery; while the greatest part of our nation remained doomed under the most horrid wrath of an enraged tyrant. This condition made it impossible of course for the Greek Church, so scattered and under such circumstances, to make any progress in any line.

During the last century there have been many educated Greeks among the clergy, but on the whole they are still uneducated. And so is it with the people; while greedy men govern the affairs of the Church, both in Greece and Turkey, not caring to have the eyes of the poor people opened.

When the present Patriarch of Constantinople Joachim I, came to the throne he proposed to the "Holy Synod" in Constantinople to reform and stop some of the abuses which abounded in the Church; to educate all priests and not to allow any uneducated man to have that imposing office (for there are thousands of priests who do not know even how to read); then to check the monasteries, to have sermons in the churches, etc., but the "Holy Synod" rose up against him for proposing such measures and told him explicitly never again to dare to suggest anything to that end, so unnecessary and even injurious to the peace of the nation, or he must resign. And so it is! He never proposes anything, nor does anybody else care for reforms.

The Greeks of today blend two different conceptions into one, nationality and religion, and never separate them in their minds. Thus the one who dares to differ a little on any religious matter from others is not a Greek but a renegade and a traitor. Thus their motto is "Everyone that is not Orthodox, is not a Greek either". This of course has tremendous influence on the common people, and they never care for any change in ideas or religious practices, and they suspect very much that all Greek Protestants are working against the interests of the nation, and hence they try to keep away from them. They have the conviction, then, that they possess the most correct Church and religion, and that all the other denominations are astray. Of course the poor common people and the women are not to be blamed, for they do not understand and they have absolute faith in their teachers. Their leaders are so blinfolded by their material interests that

they never care to teach them the truth. When they are in the company of educated people they make fun of their unsuspecting victims, of their tenets and beliefs, which they themselves ^{do not} accept a little bit. They are hypocrites.

The last attempt at reformation in the Greek Church was on December 27, 1908. I read in the Herald: "December 27, 1908. The Greek Synod has dethroned Damianus, the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem, who declined to resign. The patriarch favored reforms for his native flock, which were denied under the old Turkish regime, and were opposed by the Synod, because they would have reduced considerably the Church revenues, over which the Synod has complete control".

This event is a good sample of the way the Church affairs are governed today in the Greek Orthodox Church, and of the motives that make them work so, and not otherwise. They regulate everything in accordance with material interest, and exclusively for it.

Let us hope that the coming generation will be in a position to see the dark moral and religious ecclesiastical slavery under which they are condemned, and bravely to shake off the yoke, accepting the Truth, the Light and the Life.

(6,550 words).