

"A Painful Remembrance"

1924-2004: The Eightieth Anniversary of the Calendar Reform

## Œcumenical Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis) (1871-1935)\*

a) Freemason, b) Innovator, c) Ecumenist

*"He opened wide the gates to every innovation,"  
"satisfying the sinful wishes and self-serving desires of  
heterodox churches and secret societies"*

**I**n a previous issue of Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία,<sup>1</sup> we reprinted an important article, in which the blessed Confessor-Hierarch Chrysostomos (Kavourides), former Metropolitan of Florina, observes that, "the inspirers and pioneers" of the reform of the Church Calendar, Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis) of Constantinople (1871-1935) and Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) of Athens, "these two Luthers of the Orthodox Church," "being devoid, unfortunately, of a deeply Orthodox spirit, knowingly or unknowingly became tools of foreign aspirations and designs, the aim of which was to sunder the unity of the Orthodox Churches."<sup>2</sup> Additionally, there are, in the same article and in the commentary on the text, detailed references to the self-proclaimed "Pan-Orthodox Congress" of 1923, in Constantinople (May 10-June 8), and the issues pertaining thereto.<sup>3</sup>

Now, certain of the Faithful may have considered these characterizations harsh and excessive. Hence, the following questions arise,

*which require a clear and properly documented response, lest we give the impression of being artful slanderers:*

- *Was Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis) a tool “of foreign aspirations and designs”?*

- *Was the calendar change carried out in good faith, and was it unrelated to the spirit of innovation and ecumenism that motivated Patriarch Meletios?*

- *Was Patriarch Meletios a great precursor of ecumenism, which is both destructive to, and deadly for, the Church?*

*Unfortunately, the historical evidence is conclusive and overwhelming, since it gives affirmative answers to these three inexorable questions. For the present, we will cite three witnesses only, in due course returning to them; and in the future, God willing, we will also publish a feature article on Archbishop Chrysostomos of Athens.*

\* \* \*

## I

### Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis<sup>4</sup> as a Tool of “Foreign Aspirations and Designs”

**I**n 1967, the editorial committee of the *Τεκτονικὸν Δελτίον* [*The Masonic Bulletin*] assigned the Freemason Alexander J. Zervoudakis the task of compiling a study “that would sketch the life of yet another brilliant star, which shines upon and illumines the firmament of the ‘Greek Orthodox Church.’”<sup>5</sup>

Zervoudakis in fact compiled an extremely detailed biography of Patriarch Meletios, which is very noteworthy from an historical point of view and which runs to twenty-five pages. The small section that we have reproduced certainly speaks for itself and requires no commentary from us.

Still, it is worth observing at the outset that what Zervoudakis writes is beyond contestation—and this for a number of reasons, but most importantly because he had personal knowledge of Meletios Metaxakis in his capacity as a Mason. Zervoudakis met Meletios in Constantinople, during the tragic days of 1922, as a member of

a three-man commission, and conversed with him. “As I departed,” Zervoudakis notes, “*I greeted him as one Mason greets another Mason. He smiled and said to me: ‘I see that you understand me.’*” This recollection inspired me to accept and carry out the request of the editorial committee of the *Bulletin*, by publishing a portrait of our brother.”<sup>6</sup> He concludes his article, many pages long, as follows:

With the spiritual virtues with which Meletios was endowed, with his sound grasp of logic, and with his independent mind, free from pettiness, it is not surprising that he was ready to receive the light of Freemasonry.

The first time that he passed through Constantinople (1906), he became acquainted with the Masons. He met with them, impressing them with his critical and straightforward spirit and with his knowledge and opinions on various encyclopedic, general, ecclesiastical, and religious issues. They were interested in learning what kind of man he was and what he had done up to that point. What they learned prompted them to propose to him, in an adroit manner, during his second stay in Constantinople, the idea of becoming a Mason. It appears that, in this circumstance, the Masons, members of the Greek Political Association of Constantinople, with which Meletios was consulting at the time about the burning question of the Arab-speaking Orthodox (1908), acted in precisely such a way that the intrepid and inquisitive spirit of Meletios—who had hitherto heard much about the Masons in Cyprus and elsewhere—prompted him to ask his colleagues, whom he respected, to give him information about Freemasonry, and, after he had listened to them, *to decide*, with his well-known impetuosity and resolve, *to follow the example of many English and other foreign bishops and seek to learn about, and be initiated into, the mysteries hidden within Freemasonry.*

These Masons then brought him to the ‘Harmony’ Lodge, No. 44,<sup>7</sup> in Constantinople, which had gathered in its ranks the cream of Greek society in that city—all the best that the Greek population in Constantinople had at its disposal in terms of literature, science, and power—and which, in one way or another, by virtue of its members, who belonged to every social organization, ethnic or otherwise, exerted a substantial influence on Greek life. They asked the then-Grand Master of Greece for permission to initiate Meletios, and when this was granted, *he received the light of Freemasonry, at the beginning of 1909.* He remained in Constantinople for one more year and fervently studied Masonic teaching, which allowed him to give all of his deeds and words a truly Masonic

# ΤΕΚΤΟΝΙΚΟΝ ΔΕΛΤΙΟΝ

ΟΡΓΑΝΟΝ  
ΤΗΣ  
ΜΕΓ. ΣΤ. . .  
ΤΗΣ  
ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

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Issue No. 71 (January-February 1967) of the periodical Τεκτονικὸν Δελτίον, the “Journal of the Grand Lodge of Greece,” in which the article by Alexander J. Zervoudakis, “Διάσημοι Τεκτ.: Μελέτιος Μεταξάκης” [“Famous Freemasons: Meletios Metaxakis”], was published (pp. 25-50).

stamp, as we saw in our brief account of his activity. In every instance, righteousness and the true Masonic virtues, one might say, naturally and spontaneously guided him in what he should say and how he should act. A clear sign of the influence that Freemasonry has on the formation of a man’s character is when he is spiritually prepared to accept its teachings, when, that is, he is a born Mason—as Meletios was.

After his initiation, Brother Meletios kept up his Masonic activities wherever he went during his tumultuous life, as circumstances and surroundings permitted it.<sup>8</sup>

When I, the author, had the honor of seeing the light of Freemasonry in my turn at the aforementioned ‘Harmony’ Lodge, *I remember with what pride and joy all of the brothers spoke about Meletios’ initiation, when he was elected into our lodge.* And I shall always remember the explanation that my esteemed Brother, Demetrios Xanthos, gave when I asked why it was necessary for us brothers to keep this initiation a secret; he guided me to a correct understanding of this and to a furthering of my true inner initiation.

*Few are those who, like Brother Meletios, accept Freemasonry and make it the experience of their life. It was a genuine loss for us that he was so quickly called from the Grand Harmony Masonic Lodge into eternal repose, before completing the tasks with which he crowned his passing from our world.*<sup>9</sup>

## II

### Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis as an Innovator and Modernist.

**I**n 1929, Metropolitan Irenæus of Cassandreia submitted a very important *Memorandum* to the “Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of Greece, convened on 14 June 1929,”<sup>10</sup> which, among many other topics, deals with Meletios Metaxakis in astonishingly severe terms. What the ever-memorable Metropolitan Irenæus says is indisputable, since it is corroborated by a host of other testimonies. Paragraphs four and five of this historic *Memorandum* serve as a veritable catapult against the truly “pernicious Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis.” Let us, then, examine some extracts from the *Memorandum* by this Hierarchy, which are indeed revealing.

The spirit of innovationism and rebellion against the good and sound canonical order of the Eastern Orthodox Church was incarnate in the person of the *pernicious Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis*, who, *adopting* ideas that are preached sporadically, according to the whim of each individual, in periodicals and the daily press and are given wide diffusion, opportunely and inopportunately, *satisfying the sinful wishes and self-serving desires of heterodox churches and secret societies*,<sup>11</sup> *to which, blinded by vainglory and sacrificing everything for the enhancement of his own ego, he owed his successive accession to the highest positions in the local Orthodox Churches*,<sup>12</sup> convened a *Pan-Orthodox Congress*—unusual nomenclature

ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΟΥ ΚΑΣΣΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ

κ. ΕΙΡΗΝΑΙΟΥ

# ΥΠΟΜΝΗΜΑ

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΙΕΡΑΝ ΣΥΝΟΔΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

ΣΥΓΚΛΗΘΕΙΣΑΝ ΤΗ, 14 ΙΟΥΝΙΟΥ 1929

ΠΡΟΣ

Συζητήσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ Καταστατικοῦ Χάρτου τῆς Ἐκ-  
κλησίας καὶ λύσιν τοῦ οικονομικοῦ αὐτῆς ζητήματος.

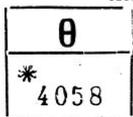


ΕΝ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΣ

ΤΥΠΟΣ "ΑΥΓΗΣ", ΑΘΑΝ. Α. ΠΑΠΑΣΠΥΡΟΥ

ΟΔΟΣ ΔΕΚΑ-ΙΣΤΙΑ ΣΙΜΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

1929



*The cover of the pamphlet containing the historic Memorandum of Metropolitan Irenæus of Cassandria.*

in ecclesiastical parlance—which was, in truth, an anti-Orthodox one, in May of 1923 in Constantinople, at which...he replaced the ecclesiastical Julian Calendar with the Gregorian, in spite of every prohibition relating to this; and he decided to replace the eternal Paschalion, which was drawn up for the Orthodox Church by a decision of the First Œcumenical Synod, entrusting the creation of an astronomically more perfect one to the observatories of Bucharest, Belgrade, and Athens; he allowed Priests to cut their hair and to replace their venerable clerical attire with that of Anglican pastors; in violation of the Canons, he introduced the marriage [after ordination—*Trans.*] and second marriage of clergymen; and he entrusted the determination of the days of fasting and the manner of their observance to the judgment of the local Churches, thereby destroying the

*uniformity and order that have prevailed in the local autocephalous Orthodox Churches of the East.*<sup>13</sup>

Acting in this way, *he opened wide the gates to every innovation*, abolishing the *distinctive ethos* of the Eastern Orthodox Church, according to which she preserves, genuinely and without innovation, everything that she has received from the Lord, the Apostles, the Fathers, and the Œcumenical and local Synods....

What right did *this outsider*<sup>14</sup> have to convene a *Pan-Orthodox Congress* without consulting the local Metropolitans of the Œcumenical Throne? And according to what law or Canon did the leader of a single local Church *decide to annul a decree made by all of the Patriarchs of the East*—indeed, by those Patriarchs who were so distinguished in the history of the Church after the fall of Constantinople, to wit, Jeremiah II of Constantinople, Meletios (Pegas) of Alexandria, Joachim of Antioch, and Sophronios of Jerusalem—on the question of the *calendar* and the *Paschalion*?<sup>15</sup> Is it permitted, in civil matters, for a lower court to reverse the decision of a higher court? Does a court of the first instance, for example, have the right to overturn the decision of a court of appeal? Neither the rulers nor the people have any respect for Bishops who show disrespect for the established order of their own Church. The people have contempt and disdain for Priests of the Most High who try to make themselves popular and who, through various innovations, divert the Church from the sacred and holy royal path, which the Godly-Minded Fathers and the Divinely-Assembled Synods have marked out for her.

The innovations of Meletios Metaxakis have not only alienated from the sacred Churches those faithful children of Orthodoxy who believe correctly and with simple hearts, and who do not reckon the established order of the Church to be susceptible to additions or innovations, bringing about the depopulation of such Churches in rural areas..., but have also *divided into three groups* the ancient autocephalous Eastern Orthodox daughter Churches, who were formerly renowned for their enviable sisterly love, concord, unity of faith, *and simultaneous worship and praise of God, Who is holy; into two groups, with regard to the calendar, and into a third, with regard to the Paschalion.*<sup>16</sup>

And we have become witnesses of a grievous event: the fact that the *Romanian Orthodox Church* celebrated Holy Pascha this year *five Sundays earlier* than the rest of the Orthodox Churches,<sup>17</sup> in flagrant violation of, and contempt for, the decisions and wishes of the First Œcumenical Synod....

It is a known fact that the Romanian Church paid for this violation of unity in the celebration of the light-bearing Resurrection of the Lord

with the secession of the Orthodox of Bessarabia and other Romanian Orthodox, about eight million people in all, who celebrated the Holy Pascha along with those who observe the ancient order of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

No one wishes to be a prophet of doom, but....

### III

#### Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis as a Great Precursor of the Ecumenists.

**A**s is well known, at the fourth session (May 21) of the self-proclaimed “Pan-Orthodox Congress” (so proclaimed at the third session, May 18), which met in 1923 (May 10-June 8) in Constantinople, Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis introduced to the Congress a “*wise hierarch of the Anglican Church, His Grace, Charles Gore, the former Bishop of Oxford*”; subsequently, at the fifth session (May 23), “His Grace, Bishop Gore, the former Bishop of Oxford, approached, accompanied by his companion, the Rev. Mr. Buxton, and occupied a seat *to the right* of the Patriarch.” Next, there was a *very illuminating* discussion between the Patriarch and Bishop Gore regarding the calendar question, the joint celebration of feasts, the movement for union, and the conditions for union, etc.<sup>18</sup>

Now, the Anglican Bishop Gore was certainly not in Constantinople by chance. The fact that he delivered two documents to Meletios Metaxakis is proof of some “groundwork,” since “the one bears the signatures of *five thousand Anglican priests*, who state that *they find no difficulty* in full union,” while “the second document is a proposal concerning the terms of union; *it represents the ideas of the entire Anglican Church*, because there is a spirit of good will throughout.”<sup>19</sup>

These events took place on Wednesday (May 23). But something occurred the previous Saturday (May 19) which in no way falls short of the carryings-on of the ecumenists today. Let us allow the journal of the Œcumenical Patriarchate to speak for itself:

## Anglican Hierarch in Constantinople

Last Saturday, *His Grace, Charles Gore, the former Bishop of Oxford* and President of the Permanent Committee for Inter-Church Relations of the Archdiocese of Canterbury, arrived in Constantinople.

His Grace is making a tour of the different centers of the Church in the East, in order to study the ecclesiastical issues that concern them. He first visited Prague, then Bucharest, and, after that, Belgrade and Sofia, and is leaving for Athens today. *On the same day that he arrived, he went to the Patriarchate shortly before Vespers*, accompanied by the Anglican priest in Constantinople, the Rev. Mr. Borrow, and the Rev. Mr. Buxton, his companion throughout the trip and the secretary of the committee

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗ

ΕΤΟΣ ΜΓ' ΑΡΙΘ. 19

Ἐν Κ(π)όλει τῆ 26 Μαΐου 1923

ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ

ΕΚΔΙΔΟΜΕΝΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ

Η ΕΝ ΡΩΣΣΙΑ, ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ

Ἐν Ρωσσίᾳ ἡ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ κατὰστασις, Κυβέρνησις τὸν περὶ χωρισμοῦ ἐκκλησίας  
ἐξακολουθεῖ χαώδης. Ἡ πολιτικὴ καὶ κοινωνικὴ καὶ πολιτείας νόμον. Ἐν Γαλλίᾳ κατὰ τὴν  
ἐπανάστασις ἀνέτρεψε καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ Τσαρῶν ἰσχύον ἐναρξεν τῆς ἐπαναστάσεως εἶχε θεοπισθῆ ἡ  
ἐκκλησιαστικὸν καθεστῶς. Κατὰ Μάϊον τοῦ λεγομένη πολιτικὴ συστάσις ἡ πολιτικὸν σύν-

*Issue No. 19 (26 May 1923) of Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια (Constantinople), in which the article, "Ἀγγλικανὸς Ἱεράρχης ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει" ["Anglican Hierarch in Constantinople"], was published (pp. 166-167).*

over which he presides.

His All-Holiness received the *distinguished hierarch*, who visited him in his office *wearing his Episcopal robes*. Shortly thereafter, as the

bells rang for Vespers, *His Grace went on ahead and occupied a seat in the Church with his retinue, opposite the Patriarch's throne.* After a short while, the Patriarch entered in the customary manner, and *Vespers for the Feast of the Holy Fathers of the Synod in Nicæa* was celebrated, with His All-Holiness and the Synodal Hierarchs presiding together. After the dismissal, *His All-Holiness addressed the Anglican hierarch from his throne,* expressing his joy over the latter's presence and praying for the success of his continuing journey. *His Grace, the former Bishop of Oxford, said in reply* that he felt particular emotion over being at the center of Orthodoxy, and he concluded by praying for the union of the Churches. *After taking from the hands of the Great Archdeacon the blessing Cross that was offered to him, he blessed the congregation with it, as the choirs chanted "Εἰς πολλὰ ἔτη, Δέσποτα"* ["Many years, Master"].

After Vespers, His All-Holiness introduced the members of the Holy Synod to the honored visitor in the Patriarchal reception hall. On the following day, His All-Holiness paid a return visit to His Grace in the Hotel Tokatlian, where he was staying, and discussed various ecclesiastical matters with him for some time. When he learned about the Pan-Orthodox Congress, His Grace *expressed a desire to go to one of its sessions* and address the representatives of the Orthodox Churches. *He did, indeed, attend the Wednesday session, and remained at the meeting for about half an hour;* after the exchange of addresses, which were delivered in a spirit of complete cordiality and firm hopes for the sure progress of the *God-pleasing work of union between the Churches, Orthodox and Anglican,* through the prevalence on both sides of a yearning for union, there was a dialogue about the goal and proceedings of the Congress.

His Grace was *escorted with honor* as he departed from the Patriarchate.<sup>20</sup>

\* \* \*

**In view** of the evidence set forth above, and *in a compelling way at that,* we think that the Confessor-Hierarch Chrysostomos (Kavourides), former Metropolitan of Florina, was absolutely right to characterize the inspirers and pioneers of innovation of the New Calendar as he did in the prologue of the aforementioned article.<sup>21</sup>

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\* **Source:** Ἐορθόδοξος Ἐνοστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία, Vol. II, Nos. 18-21 (January-December 1990), pp. 148-160.

## Notes

1. See Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία, Vol. II, No. 17 (October-December 1989), pp. 67-78.

2. This article was a section of a marvellous work by the Confessor-Hierarch entitled, *Τὸ Ἐκκλησιαστικὸν Ἡμερολόγιον ὡς κριτήριον τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας* [*The Church Calendar as a Criterion of Orthodoxy*], consisting of eighty-seven densely-typed pages and completed on July 1/14, 1935, at the Holy Monastery of St. Dionysios, in Olympos, to which he had been exiled.

3. There were references to the Congress in footnotes 5 (p. 68), 6 (pp. 69-70, in detail), 7 (p. 70), 8 (p. 70), 14 (p. 73), 15 (p. 73), and 17 (p. 74) of the article in question (also see footnotes 1 and 2 in the present article).

4. Meletios Metaxakis (1871-1935). From the village of Parsas, Lasitheon, Crete, he was meddlesome, a troublemaker, a great innovator, and beyond doubt a Freemason. He served as Metropolitan of Kition, in Cyprus (1910-1918), Metropolitan of Athens (1918-1920), Patriarch of Constantinople (1921-1923), and Patriarch of Alexandria (1926-1935). In 1908, together with the then Archimandrite Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos), he was expelled from the Holy Land by Patriarch Damianos of Jerusalem for activity against [the Brotherhood of] the Holy Sepulchre. Metropolitan Methodios (Kontostanos) of Kerkyra (1942-1967) wrote about him: "But Meletios Metaxakis, this outcast from the Holy Land, from Kition, from Athens, from Constantinople, and subsequently from Alexandria, *an unstable, restless, power-hungry spirit, an evil demon*, did not balk at attempting to impose himself on the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, even all the way from Alexandria" (see Dionysios M. Batistatos [ed.], *Πρακτικά καὶ Ἀποφάσεις τοῦ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Πανορθοδόξου Συνεδρίου, 10.5-8.6.1923* [*Proceedings and Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Congress in Constantinople, 10 May-8 June 1923*] [Athens: 1982], pp. iv and v. See also Monk Paul of Cyprus, *Νεοημερολογιτισμὸς-Οἰκουμενισμὸς* [*New Calendarism and Ecumenism*] [Athens: 1982], pp. 48-59).

5. See Alexander J. Zervoudakis, «Διάσημοι Τεκτ.: Μελέτιος Μεταξάκης» ["Famous Freemasons: Meletios Metaxakis"], *Τεκτονικὸν Δέλιον: Ὁργανὸν τῆς Μεγάλης Στάας τῆς Ἑλλάδος* [*The Masonic Bulletin: Journal of the Grand Lodge of Greece*], Vol. XVII, No. 71 (January-February 1967), p. 25.

6. *Ibid.*

7. "Permission for his initiation was requested (No. 130, 12 March 1910), Marios Polatos says in *Διακόσια Χρόνια Ἑλληνικοῦ Τεκτονισμοῦ* [*Two Hundred Years of Greek Freemasonry*] (Athens: 1962), p. 373, which is a mistake, according to what the author has since ascertained," *ibid.*, p. 49, n. 83.

8. "In this regard, the esteemed Brother Evangelos Asteris, a 33rd degree Mason, the Worshipful Master of the 'Zeno' and 'Hermes' Lodges in the jurisdiction of Egypt, related to me that *Archimandrite Brother Nicanor Kanellopoulos*, Worshipful Master of the 'Beïcha' Lodge, told him that Patriarch Meletios of Alexandria *was present with him at two or three functions* of the 'Alexander the Great' Lodge, No. 35, in Alexandria, in 1930 or 1931. The same information was given to the Worshipful Master of the 'Society of Friends' Lodge, the esteemed Brother Panagiotis G. Kretikos, uncle of the ever-memorable Brother Emmanuel P. Ladikos, a 33rd degree Mason in Egypt, who, off the record, recounted to Brother Kretikos that 'they had notified Patriarch Meletios, when he was preparing to leave Athens for Alexandria, that all of the Freemasons in Egypt would organize a general Masonic reception for him. Meletios then sent them a telegram, asking them to refrain from this undertaking, in order to avoid creating problems from the side of those opposed to Freemasonry,'" *ibid.*, p. 50, n. 84.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50 (*emphasis ours*).

10. Metropolitan Irenæus of Cassandrea, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὴν Ἱερὰν Σύνοδον τῆς*

Ἱεραρχίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, συγκληθεῖσαν τῇ 14.6.1929 [Memorandum to the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of Greece, convened on 14 June 1929] (Athens: 1929) (40 pages).

11. Freemasonry constitutes a “secret society.” Secret societies are “associations and orders that keep their purposes and customs secret” (Μεγάλη Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία, Vol. XVII, p. 903).

12. Regarding his election to successive Sees, see the summary in A.D. Delembasis, Πάσχα Κυρίου (Athens: 1985): pp. 648-649 (as Metropolitan of Athens), and pp. 660-664 (as Patriarch of Constantinople).

13. See the “Resolutions of the Pan-Orthodox Congress” in Batistatou, Πρακτικὰ καὶ Ἀποφάσεις, pp. 211-222. Resolutions: 1. concerning the correction of the Julian Calendar and the determination of the date of Pascha “on the basis of astronomical calculations,” 2. concerning conditions for participation [by the Orthodox Church] in a consultation regarding the creation of a more correct calendar that would be acceptable to all Christians and concerning the reduction of the number of days in the week and a fixed date for the celebration of Pascha. 3. concerning the marriage of Priests and Deacons after Ordination. 4. concerning the second marriage of widowed Priests and Deacons. 5. concerning various matters: the age at which clergy should be Ordained, the criteria for the competence of pastors to serve the Church, the cutting of the hair and the outer clothing of clergy, the keeping of monastic vows, impediments to marriage, the celebration on non-working days [weekends] of Saints’ Days that fall in the middle of the week, the Fasts, 6. concerning the celebration of the sixteen-hundredth anniversary of the First Œcumenical Synod at Nicæa and the convocation of a Pan-Orthodox Synod, and 7. concerning sympathy for Patriarch Tikhon of Russia, who was in prison. *These innovations* of Meletios Metaxakis were not received in silence. Even the Masons write of this: “But he met with *strong resistance* when he wanted to implement *certain American ways* in Constantinople, as well as *his innovative ideas* regarding the calendar and the *Paschalion*, the marriage of clergy, and other ideas that he promoted at the Pan-Orthodox Congress, *which created problems and an outcry*” (see Zervoudakis, “Μελέτιος Μεταξάκης,” p. 43 [*emphasis ours*]).

- Archbishop Chrysostomos (Papadopoulos) of Athens also does not conceal the reaction that resulted: “Unfortunately, the Eastern Patriarchs who refused to take part in the Congress *rejected all of its resolutions* in toto *from the very outset*. If the Congress had restricted itself only to the issue of the calendar, perhaps it would not have encountered the kind of reaction that it did” (see Archbishop Chrysostomos of Athens, Ἡ Διόρθωσις τοῦ Ἰουλιανοῦ Ἡμερολογίου ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ τῆς Ἑλλάδος [The Revision of the Julian Calendar in the Church of Greece] [Athens: 1933], pp. 31-32 [*emphasis ours*]).
- Specifically, with regard to the “Congress’s” resolution on the calendar, “it was rejected by almost all of the Orthodox world” (see [Metropolitan] Germanos of Sardis and Psideia, «Τὸ Ἡμερολογιακὸν Ζήτημα» [“The Calendar Question”], Ὁρθοδοξία, No. 3 (30 June 1926), pp. 59-70; see also Delembasis, Πάσχα Κυρίου, pp. 671-674). Very telling are the words of Patriarch Photios of Alexandria, who, writing to Archbishop Chrysostomos of Athens (Protocol No. 2664, 1/14 August 1923), speaks “about all of the other issues, *both the decrees that are being hurled from Constantinople with a zeal not according to knowledge, to the detriment of the whole Church, and the machinations and threats that are being made, with the rapacious ferocity of our eternal enemies, against the most holy Mother of the Churches...*” (see Archimandrite Theokletos A. Strangas, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἑλλάδος Ἱστορία [History of the Church of Greece] [Athens: 1970], Vol. II, pp. 1161-1162 [*emphasis ours*]).

14. The Greek word that we have rendered as “outsider” is ἔπιηλυς, -υδος (ἐπί+ἦλυθ<ῖλυθον<ἦλθον). (The literal meaning of this word is “one who has come to a country from elsewhere,” an “alien,” or a “foreigner,” as opposed to a “native.” The point that Metropolitan Irenæus seems to be making is that Patriarch Meletios, as a modernist and ecumenist, was really a stranger to the traditions and mores of the Orthodox Church—*Trans.*)

15. See Athanasios Comnenos Ypsilantis, *Τὰ μετὰ τὴν Ἄλωσιν* [*The Aftermath of the Fall of Constantinople*] (Constantinople: 1870), pp. 111, 113, and 114; Patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem, *Τόμος Ἀγάπης κατὰ Λατίνων* [Tomos Agapes Against the Latins] (Iasi: 1689), pp. 538-540; *idem*, *Περὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις Πατριαρχευσάντων-Δωδεκάβιβλος* [*Twelve Books Concerning the Patriarchs of Jerusalem*], Book X, Chapter 8, §6 (Bucharest: 1715), p. 1167 ([Thessaloniki: B. Regopoulos, 1983], p. 57); Meletios of Athens, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία* [*Church History*] (Vienna: 1784), Vol. III, pp. 402, 408; Philaret (Bapheides), Metropolitan of Didymoteichos, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία* [*Church History*] (Constantinople: 1912), Vol. III, Part 1, pp. 124-125; Constantine N. Sathas, *Βιογραφικὸν σχεδιάσμα περὶ τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἱερεμίου Β'* [*A Biographical Sketch of Patriarch Jeremiah II*] (Athens: 1870), pp. 91-92; Archimandrite Gerasimos Karavangelis, *Ἐπιστημονικὴ διατριβὴ περὶ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ Πάσχα* [*A Scientific Treatise Concerning the Feast of Pascha*] (Constantinople: 1894), pp. 121-122; Nicholas Voulgaris, «Ἡ μεταρρύθμισις τοῦ Ἰουλιανοῦ Ἡμερολογίου» [“The Reform of the Julian Calendar”], a three-part article in the Trieste newspaper, *Νέα Ἡμέρα*, Vol. XXII, Nos. 1120-1122 (1896); John N. Karmiris, «Ἱερεμίας Β' Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως» [“Jeremiah II, Patriarch of Constantinople”], in the *Θρησκευτικὴ καὶ Ἠθικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια*, Vol. VI (Athens: 1965), col. 781.

16. “The previous unity and coöperation were sundered and shattered *as a result of evil, or rather, sinful, actions...*; the change [of the calendar] was not accomplished after study and preparation, but *primarily under the influence of outside factors...* Between those who follow the Old Calendar and those who follow the New, there is a permanent difference of thirteen days with regard to the celebration of all of the so-called fixed Feasts, without exception. This is an *unprecedented situation in the annals of the Church*, because *in spite of the diversity of calendars in the early centuries* and the unsettled state of the festal calendar, *there was never any difference in time* between celebrations of one and the same event (e.g., the repose of a Saint), as happens today. The discord becomes more *pronounced* on the great Feasts of the Nativity, Theophany, and the Dormition of the *Theotokos*. *Some are fasting, while others are celebrating*. This discord leads to the question: Who is celebrating—we or the Church? The answer ‘we’ destroys the sanctity of the Feasts, making them an individual affair for each person. *The answer the Church postulates one celebration, for the Church is one....* The sole exception is the Orthodox Archdiocese of Finland, which, with the consent of the Œcumenical Patriarchate, *always celebrates Pascha with the Catholics and Lutherans in Finland, according to the Gregorian Calendar.*” (See The Church of Greece, *Τὸ Ἡμερολογιακὸν Ζήτημα: Εἰσήγησις τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος πρὸς τὴν Πανορθόδοξον Μεγάλην Σύνοδον* [*The Calendar Question: A Proposal by the Church of Greece to the Great Pan-Orthodox Synod*] [Athens: 1971], pp. 5, 8, 10-11.)

17. “In October of 1924, the New (or Gregorian) Calendar was uncanonically introduced into the Romanian Church by her ‘Primate,’ Metropolitan Miron Cristea (1886-1939), a former Uniate hierarch in Transylvania, very well-educated and energetic, in the mold of Meletios (Metaxakis), and was received by all with virtually no reaction. Only the Skete of Pocrov, under the leadership of its Abbot, Hieromonk (later Metropolitan) Glicherie, refused to recognize the calendar change. The Romanian Patriarchate, both in 1926 and in 1929, celebrated Pascha with the Latins, constituting an infringement of the Orthodox tradition of centuries. The common celebration of Pascha with the Latins was sinful, because this was *intentional* on the part of Patriarch Miron Cristea; he fully implemented the New (or Gregorian) Calendar even when it came to the reckoning of Pascha, ignoring the other local Orthodox Churches, which—even after the calendar change—(with the exception of Finland) celebrate Pascha according to the decree of the Synod in Nicæa, calculating its date on the basis of the Julian Calendar and accepting March 21, *for the sake of convention*, as the vernal equinox.’ Moreover, the action of Patriarch Miron was wholly ill-advised, because he failed to take into account the bitter experience of the Romanian people, who, on the one hand, had been so beleaguered by

Uniate propaganda, and, on the other hand, had a former Uniate for their Patriarch. From a pastoral point of view, this was a totally reckless act! Indeed, on the second occasion that this was done, Patriarch Miron Cristea, having the undivided support of the Uniate (Greek-Catholic) Prime Minister, Julius Maniu, and several others among the clergy, compelled all of the Romanian Metropolises to proceed with the common celebration of Pascha with the Papists, a fact which evoked great commotion in the ranks of the Romanian Church. Metropolitan Gurias of Bessarabia (a region of Romania between the Rivers Prut and Dniester, north of the Black Sea, 44,420 sq. km. in area, now annexed to the Soviet Union [at the time of writing, in 1981—*Trans.*]) openly criticized Miron and, ignoring the Patriarchal decree, ordered his churches to celebrate with the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches. Patriarch Miron's action also scandalized these other Orthodox Churches, many of which reacted in protest. As well, the White Russian clergy of Bucharest (also known as the Russian Church Abroad, under the Karlovtsy Synod) took a particularly strong position during those trying days, ignoring the Patriarchal order and celebrating Pascha according to the traditional canonical decrees. Even in the Parliament there were stormy discussions regarding this issue, and both the Patriarch and the Prime Minister were harshly censured by Representatives Trifu (Nationalist Party) and N. Lupu (Agrarian Party). The uncanonical and un-Orthodox celebration of Pascha with the Latins deeply scandalized the pious Romanians, many of whom returned to the Old Calendar. Among them were three Hieromonks, as well as two Romanian Hieromonks who had returned to Romania from the Holy Mountain. Hieromonk Glicherie, who had taken a leading position in the Old Calendar movement from the beginning, began to build churches in the vicinity of the Neamț Monastery. The first was established in the village of Vânători. By 1936 he had built about forty large churches, the majority of them in Moldavia” (Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, *Ἡ μαρτυρική Ἐκκλησία τῶν Γ.Ο.Χ. Ρουμανίας* [*The Martyric Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania*] [Fili, Attica: 1981], pp. 11-13). [The foregoing translation, by Archimandrite (now Archbishop) Chrysostomos, to which we have made some slight modifications, originally appeared in *The Orthodox Word*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1 [102] [January-February 1982], pp. 6-7—*Trans.*]

18. See Batistatou, *Πρακτικά καὶ Ἀποφάσεις*, pp. 66, 84-88 (*emphasis ours*).

19. *Ibid.*

20. See the periodical *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἀλήθεια*, published in Constantinople, No. 19 (26 May 1923), pp. 166-167 (*emphasis ours*). It should, of course, be noted that the ecumenist activities of Meletios Metaxakis had begun much earlier. Concerning these activities, see Delembasis, *Πάσχα Κυρίου*, pp. 625, 661. “At that time, he (Meletios Metaxakis) was in America, where he engaged in schismatic activities and communed uncanonically with heretical Protestants there. On 17 December 1921, ‘vested, he took part in a service in an Anglican church, knelt in prayer with the Anglicans before the holy table, which he venerated, gave a sermon, and blessed those present in the church’ of the heretics” (Strangas, *Ἐκκλησίας Ἐλάδος Ἱστορία*, Vol. II, p. 118).

21. The judgments of other writers regarding Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis are also of interest, since they reveal what kind of man he was: • The aforementioned Freemason, Alexander J. Zervoudakis, wrote this about the “pernicious Patriarch”: “*The struggle that he had in overcoming the reactions that he constantly encountered in his endeavor to impose radical, but beneficial, changes suddenly brought about an unexpected collapse,*” that is, his death on July 27-28, 1935 (“Μελέτιος Μεταξάκης,” p. 48 [*emphasis ours*]). • Metropolitan Nicholas of Nubia, Meletios Metaxakis’ successor in Alexandria, said about him: “*Optimism frequently impelled him to undertake bold and hazardous schemes, from which he had to be forcibly restrained by the Holy Synod*” (*ibid.* [*emphasis ours*]). • The Athenian periodical *Ζωή* wrote, among other things, on the occasion of the death of Meletios Metaxakis: “He made himself a singular figure in the Church, in which his political *persona* was absorbed in and subjugated to his ecclesiastical one.

*Frustrated by conservatism, he manifested liberal tendencies, which oftentimes proved uncontrollable, although—to use his own phrase—‘many hitches forced him to moderate’ these tendencies. Nevertheless, he had no trouble in adapting, or at least attempting to adapt, the Church and ecclesiastical affairs to expediency, regarding even the institutions of the Church as easily adaptable to expediency and the demands of the age. ...He turned his passion, whenever he had no other arena for his laborious efforts, to the institutions of the Church, seeking to provide an outlet for his restless initiatives through changes in the external life of the Church, before beginning the necessary work for its internal renewal” (Ζωή, No. 1195 [10 August 1935] [emphasis ours]).*