A Historical Survey and Study

THE EARLY REFORMERS' ATTEMPTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE EASTERN PATRIARCHS

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The Protestant Reformation and the Orthodox Christian East

On the Occasion of the 500-Year Anniversary of the Reformation

A Historical Survey and Study of the Communications between the Reformers and the Patriarchs Joasaph II and Jeremias II

by Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D.

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I would like to begin my presentation today by pointing out that from the perspective of the Orthodox of that time as well as the modern Orthodox world, the Protestant Reformation is a purely Western Christian issue. Even today, most Orthodox still do not know much about it, both as to why it happened as well as the intricacies of the issues and the theological diversity which subsequently arose out of the movement.

But, in spite of that, I would also proceed to say that the first Protesters[1] against the ecclesiological and theological changes of Rome and the claims of supremacy by the medieval Papacy were the Eastern Christians (the Orthodox), who objected and protested against papal overreaching, ecclesiological meddling and the liturgical and theological innovations, which began officially in the Western Church with Charlemagne in the year 800 AD.

As Charlemagne was struggling to establish his "Holy Roman Empire"

[1] Cf. Steven Ranciman, The Great Church in Captivity, Cambridge university Press, 1985, p. 238. Runciman, the most prominent Byzantine historian of modern times writes that indeed the Eastern Church had made a protest against Roman autocracy from the earliest times.

(after a period of nearly four hundred years of political turmoil, chaos and educational darkness in Western Europe), he set the foundation for what was to become Roman Catholicism. He first elevated and declared the bishop of Rome (who was under his authority) to be the only representative of God on Earth and supreme authority over all Christians everywhere. He also declared that the Eastern Romans were not Christians (they were actually "Greeks"=pagans), unless they submitted to the authority of the Bishop of Rome and to his own authority as the "Holy Roman Emperor".

At the same time, Charlemagne began to bring about more changes in the Western Church. He imposed the filioque addition to the Creed universally on the Western Church in spite the efforts of Pope Leo III - the last Roman pope - to preserve the Creed unchanged by having it inscribed without the filioque on silver plaques and posting it on the walls of the Cathedral of St. Peter in Rome. The plaques were soon removed upon his death and the filioque was enforced everywhere. Charlemagne proceeded also to impose universally in the West the celibate priesthood and the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist.

From the Orthodox perspective, this was the time when the Church of Rome turned away from Orthodoxy and began to develop its own theology and ecclesiology, embarking on a journey which would eventually lead to the Protestant rebellions of subsequent centuries.

Within a few decades from Charlemagne's political moves, these changes precipitated a serious conflict between Rome and the Eastern Churches in

the so-called “Photian Schism”. This dispute was sparked by papal claims of supremacy, and was further aggravated by a new realization by the Eastern bishops that a unilateral change to the Nicene/Constantinopolitan Creed was introduced by the Latin Church through the insertion of the Filioque - the double procession of the Holy Spirit.

The Eastern Churches responded to these two problems by convening a major Council in Constantinople in 879-880 to examine the issues. The bishops of the East proceeded to officially reject the papal claims to Supreme Authority over the whole world and affirmed the restoration of St. Photius the Great to his see. The fathers of the Council also anathematized anyone who altered the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, thus condemning the Filioque addition to the Creed by the Roman Church, stopping short from declaring Rome heretical by name.[2] This council is considered by the Orthodox as the Eighth Ecumenical Council.

This was the first time that the newly redefined and elevated see of Rome by Charlemagne was challenged and also condemned for it’s supremacy claims and it’s theological innovations by the entirely of the rest of the Christian world, but Rome completely ignored them. This was the official beginning of Christian protestation against the redefined Papacy and its claims, which the Reformers of the later centuries were to continue in their own way, for their own reasons and from their own perspective from within.

[2] The bishops of the East were hoping that it would be easier to attain reconciliation with Rome if they did not name it directly in their condemnations. They hoped that the bishops in the West would reject both deviations and return to their earlier Ecclesiology and Faith. They really underestimated what was happening in the Western Church.

This condemnation of papal claims by the Eastern bishops occurred two entire centuries before they themselves were able to even begin to understand the extent to which the West had been changing. It was Cardinal Humbert who opened their eyes in 1054 revealing to them some of the main serious issues. This new realization of the chasm separating them from the Western Church was accompanied by their excommunication by Humbert, who left Constantinople shaking the dust off his shoes. The bishops of the East responded in kind, but still, not much of this high-level conflict was known yet at the level of the ordinary Christians of the East.

What the Eastern bishops did not realize at this time, however, was the serious change in the West in the relationship between the Church and the State. Instead of the Church been seen as the Kingdom of God on Earth, while the Empire remained the Kingdom of the World, as it was understood in the East, now in the West, it was the Empire that was seen as the Kingdom of God on Earth (calling itself the “Holy Roman Empire”) and the Church was just within that Kingdom. This resulted in the continuous mixing of the Church and the political system, with the bishop of Rome and other clergy assuming political power and even owning armies and getting involved in “holy wars”. Furthermore, feudalism, a new form of slavery, had also been introduced into Western Europe and sanctioned by the Western Church, while slavery had been eliminated centuries before in the East.

In addition, the Western Church, began to develop it's own salvation

theology based on a juridical approach, drawing from an obscure Western tradition called the Ransom/Bargain theory. Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033-1109), the founder of Scholasticism, stands out as a major contributor to this process by proposing the Debt or Satisfaction theory of Atonement (based on Augustine's understanding of the total depravity of man). A little later, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) developed the theological methodology, which would come to be known as rationalism, based on the newly re-introduced works of Aristotle into the West, pushing the Western Church further away from its mystical roots and in the direction of a rationalistic philosophical approach to Christian theology.

It was to take centuries for the East to understand these developments and the ramifications which came with them, but these newly developed theologies would be at the heart of the Reformation in its distinction from Eastern Orthodox Christianity when they finally met.

In the meantime, it was not until the end of the eleventh century that the average Christian of the Eastern Church were to find out how they were being viewed by Western Christians - as "Greeks"=pagans. The soldiers of the First Crusade, who came to the East to free the Holy Lands from Moslem domination (thinking that their sins will be forgiven by participating in this holy war), treated the Eastern Christians at times as badly as they treated the Moslems and finally left them at the mercy of the Moslem wrath as they returned back to their homelands. This marks the beginning of the

destruction of Eastern Christianity in the Middle East.[3]

And yet, it was not until 1204 that the Christians of Constantinople truly found out first-hand about what had happened to Christianity in the West. The soldiers of the Fourth Crusade bearing the Cross of Christ on their shields and armor, instead of heading to Jerusalem to free it from the Moslems as they had announced, they entered the unsuspecting city of Constantinople. Their disrespect for Eastern Christians, their way of life and their worship traditions, was exemplified in the shameful sack and looting of the imperial city, its churches and palaces, and the enslavement of Eastern Christians. The next 50 years of Latin domination brought about the destruction of what was still remaining of the Eastern Christian Roman Empire, weakening it further in the face of the advancing Turks, and thus opening the doors for it's final demise.

This is the background which an Orthodox Christian brings along every time he/she engages with the Protestant Reformation, recognizing it as an internal rebellion against the medieval Papacy and its novelties, but also feeling the bitter taste of the same fruits of corruption, which were first experienced in the East, hundreds of years earlier.

As I recently read for the first time the story of the execution of Jan Hus in 1415 by the Papal authorities in Constance Germany, I was reminded of the 13 monks of Kantara in Cyprus who (some two hundred years earlier)

[3] For an extensive study on this see Bat Ye'or, "The decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam," Associated University Presses, 2002.

were burned alive after been subjected to months of tortures by the Frankish Roman Catholic overlords of Nicosia, just because they rejected the Supremacy of the Pope of Rome and refused to use unleavened bread in the Eucharist.

On the Constantinopolitan front, the rise of Islam and especially the rapid advancement of the Ottoman Turks in the East pushed the Emperor of Constantinople and the Eastern bishops to seek the help of the Christians of the West in the hope of stopping the Oriental aggressor. Just a few years after the execution of Jan Hus, the Eastern bishops found themselves begging their Western brothers for military assistance to defend their lands and churches. Instead of brotherly hospitality, however, they received a humiliating and demeaning treatment at the Councils of Ferrara (1438) and Florence (1445), where, after been subjected to psychological and political pressure for months, they surrendered to Rome's claims of papal supremacy hoping that the Eastern Christian Roman Empire will receive military help from the West, as promised. As they returned to their sees, having suffered months of severe hardships, the bishops were confronted by violent demonstrations from the members of their flocks who saw this as a theological and ecclesiological capitulation to a corrupt and heretical Vatican. In addition, the promised military assistance from the West never arrived.[4]

[4] The efforts of the Eastern Christians to get help from the West continued for another four centuries. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics exploited this issue in order to win the Orthodox East to their confessional and doctrinal side. In the end, during the 19th century, it was indeed the intervention of the European nations along with Orthodox Russia that helped the modern Greek state arise out of the ashes of what once used to be the glorious Eastern Roman Christian Empire.

In the meantime, as internal unrest was brewing for Rome, the Hussites, who were going through their own rebellion against the papal authorities, began to make overtures to the Orthodox.[5] A Bohemian, whom the Greeks knew as Constantine Platris and Surnamed him "the Englishman", came to Constantinople in 1451, right before the Fall of the City to the Turks, with letters addressed to the Orthodox authorities. A synod could not be convened at the time because the Patriarchal see was vacant,[6] but a synaxis of bishops, who gathered to discuss this, proved sympathetic with the Reformers and exchanged friendly letters with them full of renunciations of Roman pretentions. The negotiations, however, were interrupted by the Fall of the City, which happened a little more than a year later, on May 29 of 1453.[7]

Hence, most Eastern Christians of the 15th and 16th centuries, even as they languished under the heavy burden of Moslem domination, would not have been surprised to hear of the rebellion against the Papacy and the objections raised by people like John Wyclif in England, Jan Hus in Bohemia and Martin Luther in Germany. If the Christians of the East had been able to watch on the evening news what was happening in Europe, they would have probably said: “It was about time you woke up!" But at that time, communications were scarce and not as immediate as they are today.

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[5] Steven Ranciman, The Great Church in Captivity, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 238.
[6] Runciman, ibid., the Patriarch Gregory Mammas, had resigned a few months earlier and fled to Rome as his bishops would not support his policy of union with Rome.
[7] See M. Pavlova, "L' Empire Byzantin et les Tchéques avant la Chute de Constantinople", *Byzantinoslavica*, xiv (1953), pp. 203-24.

Events were experienced in isolation and it would take decades and even centuries in some cases, before people would learn about what happened even right across their own borders.

The German Reformers

One would wonder what the German reformers thought of the Eastern Christians. I find it quite interesting that Luther, even though when driven by his powerful emotions had expressed negative feelings toward the Greek speaking Christians of the East, when swayed by his powerful mind he expressed himself more kindly for the Greeks. After all, he knew well that the New Testament was written in Greek. He also was a devoted student of the Early Greek Fathers.[8] In his debate with Johann von Eck, who claimed that the Greek Church was heretical because of its repudiation of Roman authority, further trying to justify this by claiming that the Eastern Church had produced many heretics like Nestorius, Eutyches and others, Luther sternly responded that the Greeks were not heretics because they had not changed their position with regard to Rome; in fact, they had never from the earliest days accepted the supremacy of Rome. As for heretics, Luther explained, Rome had also produced its own share of them, like the Pelagians, Manicheans and Jovinians.[9] The Greek Church, he concluded, represents the true tradition of early Christianity in a far better way than did the theologians of Rome.[10]

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[8] Runciman, ibid., p. 239.
[9] Ibid.
[10] M. Luther and J. von Eck, *Der authentische Texte der Leipziger Disputation* (1519). *Aus bisher unbenuntzten Quellen* (ed. O. Seitz), pp. 60ff. See also M. Luther, *Von den Consiliis und Kirchen* (Weimar edition, 1914), pp. 576-9. See also his attitude toward the Turks as the

It is a fact that Luther showed no interest in building a relationship with the Eastern Christians, but his associates and disciples, true children of the Renaissance, had a greater inclination in that direction. Philipp Melanchthon, the most distinguished of his associates and a professor of Greek at Wittenberg, was deeply interested in Hellenism, ancient and contemporary, and saw a significant value in establishing a relationship with the Greek speaking Church.[11] Melanchthon might have also intended to gain the support of the Eastern Church in the Reformers' theological and ideological struggle against Rome.[12]

His efforts, however, did not prove as fruitful as he had hoped. The first person he entrusted in helping him with this endeavor, James Basilicus, proved to be a liability rather than an asset. James Basilicus went on to become the ruler of the principality of Moldavia under the title of John I and there tried to reform the Orthodox Moldavian Church by appointing a Polish Protestant – Jan Lusinsky--as Archbishop of Moldavia. Lusinsky, not only shocked the Moldavian Orthodox by bringing along a wife, but proceeded to reform the Church along Lutheran lines, pushing also for the abolishment

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Antichrist in his *Vom Kriege wider die Türken* (1529). Luther saw the subjugation to the Turks as a punishment from God against Christians for corrupting His teaching.

[11] Runciman, ibid. pp.239-40. Georges Florovsky in Christianity and Culture, Collected Works, Volume II, Nordland Publishing Co., Belmond, Mass, 1974, p. 148, claims that Melanchthon was deeply impressed by the suffering of Christians under the Turkish rule and saw this as an eschatological sign, hoping that Christ Himself would reunite the whole Church in the last days.

[12] Georges Florovsky, ibid., p. 146, suggests that "The witness of the East could have enormous weight in the Western dispute. . ." He further points out that "The witness of the Eastern Church, both ancient and modern, has been extensively exploited for polemical purposes both by Catholics and Protestants." Ibid., p. 147.

of icons from the churches and the dissolution of monasteries.

There is abundant evidence that the proselytizing activities of both Protestants as well as Roman Catholics in the Eastern European Principalities populated by Orthodox Christians worried the Patriarchate of Constantinople at that time.[13] This might have actually undermined Melanchthon's efforts to gain the trust of Eastern Christian leadership, especially the then Patriarch Joasaph II, who according to James Basilicus was his own "cousin". If Joasaph knew of Basilicus' activities (which he probably did), he would have been very hesitant to trust the Lutherans.

In the end, Melanchthon managed to at least have his communication delivered to Constantinople. An elderly deacon from Montenegro by the name of Demetrius Mysos (a Lutheran sympathizer) came to him with an introduction from James Basilicus. A later version of the Augsburg Confession[14] was then translated[15] (or rather interpreted) into Greek and given to Demetrius to deliver to the Patriarch along with a cover letter from Melanchthon suggesting that the Lutheran and Orthodox Churches had much in common.[16] This Greek version is of a peculiar character, however,

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[13] Runciman, ibid., pp. 244-245.
[14] Georges Florovsky, ibid., p. 148, points out that the Latin text used was from a special version of the Variata 1531 and not from the official version of the Augustana of 1530.
[15] The authorship of the Greek translation is uncertain, but it is prefaced by Paul Dolscius. Yet, there are strong reasons to believe that the initiative and bulk of the work belonged to Philipp Melanchthon (see Florovsky, pp. 158-159). For a more recent Study see the paper by Eve Tibbs, "Patriarch Jeremias II, the Tübingen Lutherans and the Greek Version of the Augsburg Confession," Fuller Theological Seminary, 2000: http://web.archive.org/web/20130128052302/http://www.stpaulsirvine.org/html/sixteenthcentury.htm.
[16] See, Benz, *Wittenberg und Byzanz*, pp. 94ff, which gives the text of Melanchthon's letter.

as it used an Eastern Orthodox theological idiom which the Reformers could not have possessed.[17] Melanchthon's scholarly work is apparent in this text, but he must have received help from Demetrius to whom this Greek Eastern idiom came naturally.[18]

As Fr. Georges Florovsky points out, "Prof. Ernst Benz suggested that the translators deliberately toned down the forensic or judicial tenor of the Augustana doctrine of redemption. Indeed, at many points the translators could not easily find in current Greek theological vocabulary exact equivalents of Latin terms . . . . But there was much more than that. There was an obvious desire to adjust the exposition to the traditional convictions of the Greek Church. As Benz further suggested, the whole exposition is transposed from the dimension of *Rechtfertigungsreligion* into the dimension of *Erlösungsreligion*. Instead of the concept of justification, the dominant idea of the Greek version is that of healing."[19]

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[17] Prof. Ernst Benz of Marburg was the first to call attention to the peculiar character of this document. See Notes 2 and 3 in Florovsky, ibid., p. 241. See also the Appendix of the Dissertation of Wayne James Jorgenson, "The Augustana Graeca and the correspondence between the Tübingen Lutherans and Patriarch Jeremias: Scripture and tradition in theological methodology," Boston University, 1979, where the variations from the original Augustana are pointed out in red and blue: http://www.angelfire.com/ny4/djw/GreekAugsburgConfessionEnglish.htm.

[18] Georges Florovsky, ibid., pp. 148-149, makes the point that the Greek version of the text was "a skillful transposition, as it were, of the Augsburg Confession into the traditional theological idiom of the East. It betrays the interpreter's intimate acquaintance with Greek patristic and liturgical phraseology . . . There can be little doubt that Melanchthon himself was responsible for that piece of work . . .," but most possibly with the help of Demetrius the deacon of the Greek Church who was staying with him at that time and to whom this Eastern idiom came naturally. It seems that the peculiar character of the Greek version reveals that it was intended primarily for the Greeks, hence there was very limited circulation of it in the West. (See Florovsky, ibid., p. 157-160). Cf. Georges Florovsky, "The Greek version of the Augsburg Confession," *Lutheran World*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1959), pp. 153-155.

[19] Florovsky, ibid., p. 159.

Fr. Georges Florovsky further explains:
"The main tendency of the Greek version of the Augustana was to avoid the use of scholastic phraseology, which was alien to the East, and to tone down the Western emphasis on the forensic aspect of the doctrine of Salvation. Emphasis was shifted from Justification and Forgiveness to Life Eternal, New Birth or Regeneration, and Resurrection. It was a substitution, as it were of the Johannine idiom for the Pauline. Again, the dogma itself was treated rather from the point of view of worship, than simply as a piece of scholastic doctrine."[20]

But the question arises: If indeed Melanchthon was the mastermind behind the Greek text, was he acting based on the desire to please the Eastern Patriarch or to deceive him and he thus misrepresented the Reformers' faith, or was he genuinely close to the Orthodox doctrines?[21]

It seems to me that this transposing of the Augustana to a Greek idiom, which would make better sense to the Eastern bishops and theologians, was a great achievement for Melanchthon both linguistically as well as theologically. Through this, he himself managed to transcend his scholastic, juridical and legalistic training and adopt a more patristic mystical approach to the critical theological issues at hand. He was an avid student of the

[20] Florovsky, ibid., p. 150.
[21] For more discussion on this see Florovsky, ibid., pp. 149-150. See also Richard Stuckwisch, "Justification and Deification in Dialogue between the Tübingen Theologians and Patriarch Jeremias II," Logia, pp. 17-27, who suggests that there was a level of duplicity in Dulscius' claim in the Preface of the Augustana Greaca about "the strict accuracy of his translation", which was neither his translation nor an accurate rendering of the original.

Greek Fathers and especially of St. John Chrysostom and was very familiar with the Eastern approach to salvation, including the concept of Synergia and Sanctification (or theosis). It was perhaps, this personal affiliation and comfort with Eastern Patristic doctrine that gave Melanchthon the confidence to attempt to re-assure Patriarch Joasaph II in his cover letter that the Reformers where very close to the Orthodox.[22]

With the special Greek version of the Augsburg Confession and Melanchthon's Letter to the Patriarch in hand, Demetrius embarked on his journey to Constantinople in late 1559. Melanchthon died on April 19, 1560 before an answer could have been brought back. His associates waited for months for the reply. When none was received, they all assumed that the letter was never delivered.

In reality, however, Demetrius arrived in Constantinople at the end of 1559 and was received by the Patriarch. But, as the Byzantine historian, Stephen Runciman suggests, the documents which Demetrius had brought:

". . . embarrassed Joasaph and the Holy Synod. A brief glance at the Confession of Augsburg showed that much of its doctrine was frankly heretical. But it would be undesirable to spoil relations with a potential friend. The Patriarch and his advisers took refuge in the favorite device of

[22] Interestingly enough, however, the committee of the Tübingen divines headed by Martin Crusius and Jacob Andreae fifteen years later also felt comfortable enough to use the same Greek text in their communication with Jeremias II. It is possible that they felt that they would not have been able to re-translate the text in a timely manner even if they disagreed with certain expressions, but perhaps they also understood that this would have been a better Greek text than anything they would themselves be able to produce, knowing that it came from the hands of the venerable Melanchthon.

oriental diplomacy. They behaved as if they had never received the communication, which they carefully mislaid."[23]

Demetrius waited for two to three months and when he could not receive a reply to bring back to Wittenberg, he left Constantinople, but instead of venturing to return to Germany with empty hands, he headed for Transylvania, where encouraged by his friend James Basilicus, he spent the next three years trying to introduce Lutheranism into the Orthodox Transylvanian villages. After James' fall from power, Demetrius continued his propaganda efforts in the Slav dominions of the Habsburg Emperor, where he finally died.[24]

Melanchthon's efforts of rapprochement with the Orthodox failed. But his spirit remained in the next generation of Lutheran scholars in Germany who seized the opportunity when it was offered to them, and tried again. In 1570 the Imperial Ambassador of the Habsburg Emperors to Constantinople, David von Ungnad (a Lutheran) brought with him to the City an eminent Lutheran scholar by the name of Stephen Gerlach who had a close relationship with the University of Tübingen. Through a personal friendship with the Protonotarios of the Great Church Theodosios Zygomalas, Gerlach managed to be introduced to the new Patriarch, Jeremias II. In return, Gerlach introduced Zygomalas to the leading scholar of Greek in Germany at the time Martin Kraus or Crusius of Tübingen. Through Zygomalas, Crusius entered into correspondence with Patriarch Jeremias, whom he

[23] Runciman, ibid., p. 246. For more information see Benz, *Wittenberg und Byzanz*, pp. 71-2: J. N. Karmiris, Ὀρθοδοξία καὶ Προτεσταντισμός, p. 36.
[24] Benz, *Wittenberg und Byzanz*, pp. 73ff.

greatly admired.[25]

In 1574, at the urging of Gerlach, the Ambassador Ungnad, wrote to Germany asking for fresh copies of the Greek Augsburg Confession. This time, the Germans took no chances. Martin Crucius working with Jacob Andreae, the Chancellor of the University of Tübingen, prepared and sent out six copies to be distributed to the Patriarch and five other personalities of the Greek speaking Church. A seventh copy, translated into Georgian, was sent to the Church of Georgia in the Caucasus.

The Patriarch's copy was prefaced by a letter from the German divines claiming that the reformers had introduced no innovations into the principal things necessary for salvation and were true to the faith as taught by the Apostles, the Prophets and the Holy Fathers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the Holy Scriptures. The Reformers were requesting union with the Eastern Churches, claiming that they themselves were holding on to the Orthodox Faith.

Again, however, the letter had the same effect on the Orthodox recipients. The Confession of Augsburg, even in its special transposition in the Greek version, was as embarrassing now as it was 15 years earlier. The problem, however, for Jeremias was that he could not ignore it as Joasaph had done before. He tried to stall as much as possible in answering, but von Ungnad and Gerlach were right there putting pressure on him. He finally wrote a short and polite letter to Tübingen thanking the divines and promising to

[25] Runciman, ibid., p. 247.

answer in full in the near future. When his delaying tactics could not work much longer, he finally, after consulting with the Holy Synod, summoned the help of Theodosios Zygomalas and his father John and composed a full answer to the various points raised in the Confession. The letter was dated May 15, 1576.[26]

The Greek Augsburg Confession contains twenty-one articles.[27] Jeremias addressed each one and then added eight additional chapters enumerating again his main objections and offering clarifications:[28] (See the Appendix for a short synopsis of the articles followed by a short summary of the Patriarch's responses.)

Basically, Jeremias rejects some of the assertions of the Reformers, including the idea of justification by faith alone and warns against anything that may lead to the doctrine of predestined election. He also points to the various changes that the West had introduced into the Christian faith, like the addition of the Filioque to the Creed and baptism without triple immersion. He insists that the number of the sacraments is seven (even though there had not yet been an official decision in the East about that) and focuses on the importance of the sacraments and the celebration of feasts as sources of sanctification of the faithful and aids to salvation. He focuses especially on the Eucharist both as a sacrament for sanctification

[26] Runciman, ibid., p. 248.
[27] For the original texts see *Acta et Scripta Theologorum Wirtembergensium et Patriarchae Constantinopolitani D. Hieremiae* (Wittenberg, 1584).
[28] George Mastrantonis, Augsburg and Constantinople. Holy Cross Press, 1982, pp. 91-103. This book contains an English translation of the full exchange between the Reformers and the Patriarch.

and also as a sacrifice, and criticizes the Latin omission of the Epiklesis (the invocation of the Holy Spirit) during the consecration of the Gifts. In response to the idea of Sola Scriptura, the Patriarch continually, throughout his response, invokes the Fathers of the Church as authorities for the interpretation of the Scriptures and for the expounding of theology and praxis. He explains that he is not giving personal opinions, nor can he accept anyone's opinion if it contradicts the Fathers. This is essential to the Orthodox, since even heretics have appealed to the Holy Scriptures in support of their errors. The Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils provide the assurance of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church in interpreting the Scriptures accurately.

The final closing paragraph of Jeremias' response is an invitation of the Patriarch to the German reformers in love and affection, if they wish to enter the Orthodox Church with their whole heart, to follow the Apostolic and Synodal decrees in harmony with the Orthodox and submit to them. And he concludes: "For then you will indeed be in communion with us, and having openly submitted to our holy and catholic church of Christ, you will be praised by all prudent men. In this way the two churches will become one by the Grace of God, we shall live together in a God-pleasing way until we attain the heavenly kingdom."[29]

Georges Florovsky points out that Jeremias' document was meant to not disturb the peace, and possibly for that very reason was also not convincing. He goes on to suggest that a modern reader might even find it

[29] Mastrantonis, ibid., p. 103.

evasive and non-committal.[30] Jeremias' purpose was clearly not to criticize, but rather expound a sound doctrine, hence he avoided addressing seriously the most important points of divergence, namely, Church, Ministry and the doctrine of Justification.[31] We do have to bear in mind, however, that in the East, very little was known of the Reformation and the theology of the West as it had developed by this time. Hence, Jeremias might have underestimated the extend of the seriousness of the issues at hand from a doctrinal point of view.[32]

The reply reached Germany in the summer of 1576. One can imagine the disappointment of the German divines. Crusius summoned Lucius Osiander and together they composed a new response in which they were attempting to elucidate the main points in the Augsburg Confession that the Patriarch was objecting to, but avoided the issues raised by him regarding leavened bread, the Liturgy and monasticism. Their letter was written in 1577 but probably did not reach Constantinople until the following year.

Once again Jeremias stalled and avoided to write a response, but under pressure from Gerlach he finally did. His tone this time was less conciliatory. He pointed out the doctrines which the Orthodox could not accept; the dual procession of the Holy Spirit and their views on free will and justification by faith alone. He repeated that there are seven sacraments not just two and reaffirmed his understanding that it is good to

[30] Florovsky, ibid., p. 152.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Florovsky, ibid., p. 150-151, points out that Jeremias's text is "the last doctrinal statement in the East in which no influence of Western tradition can be detected, even in terminology. It was, in a sense, an epilogue to Byzantine theology."

invoke the saints for intercession and give veneration to holy icons and holy relics.

The letter was sent in May 1579. Upon receipt, the Lutheran divines composed a further reply which was dispatched in June of 1580. Their tone was very conciliatory. Without yielding on any points, however, the authors tried to convince Jeremias that the doctrinal differences on the issues he was raising were only matters of terminology.

The Patriarch responded for the last time in the Summer of 1581. This time he recapitulated the points of disagreement and begged for the correspondence to cease: "Go your own way", he wrote, "and do not send us further letters on doctrine but only letters written for the sake of friendship."[33]

In spite of Jeremias' plea, the Lutheran committee sent one more letter almost identical with the last. The Patriarch did not reply. Yet, the friendly relations and correspondence between Jeremias, Zygomalas and Crusius continued, but only with respect to topics like Greek linguistic usages and the present condition of the ancient Greek cities.

The Byzantine historian Steven Runciman judges the exchange in the following way:
"It is difficult to see how any real union between the Orthodox and Lutheran Churches could have been achieved. The Lutherans had not rid

[33] Runciman, ibid., p. 256.

themselves of the superstitions of Rome in order to unite with a Church whose devotion to saints and images and monastic vows must have seemed quite as idolatrous. To the Orthodox the Lutherans seemed to combine certain Roman errors with an unsound evangelism and a regrettable taste for iconoclasm. Their chief common-ground was a mutual dislike of the Papacy; and that was hardly a sufficient bond."[34]

I have no doubt that both Patriarchs of Constantinople Joasaph II and Jeremias II were sympathetic to the Reformers' cause when they received their letters because they themselves had some of the same objections about the Papacy and its modifications of theology and praxis; but having themselves been steeped in the mystical and apophatic theology and worship of the East, they probably also realized that the Reformers were children of a fundamentally different way of thinking with deep roots in a rather legalistic and rationalistic approach to the Christian mystery of salvation, as it had been cultivated for the last four centuries in the West, so they hesitated to respond, perhaps sensing also the difficulty of communicating their own very different perspective, but also not wanting to insult by disagreeing with them. Most probably, both Patriarchs from the beginning did not see any possibility of union of the two sides. Joasaph never responded for these reasons. Jeremias stalled as much as he could, but was forced to do it in the end for the sake of friendship.

The case of the Calvinist Patriarch Cyril Lucaris – The Western Conflict is brought to the East - a classic example of the political intrigues of

[34] Ibid., p. 257.

western diplomats as they meddled with the Christian East.

While the proselytization of Orthodox Christians in Eastern Europe was underway by both Protestants and Roman Catholics, in Constantinople, which was now under the rule of the Ottoman Turks, a different game was being played with political intrigues of Western diplomats of both sides in order to influence the Greek speaking Orthodox Christians and win them over to their camp.[35] The Jesuits, had unleashed a campaign to proselytize the Orthodox through the establishment of schools. Education was not easily available to the poor and oppressed Christians under Ottoman rule and the Jesuits had both the money and other resources to offer it. In addition, their presence in the East and especially in the Imperial city, gave the Jesuits access to power and opportunities for affecting Ottoman policies, as well.

In the autumn of 1620 a new Patriarch by the name of Cyril Lucaris, who was educated in the West and had Protestant leanings, ascended the throne of Constantinople when the pro-Vatican Patriarch Timothy died suddenly after a dinner-party given by Cornelius van Haag the Dutch Ambassador (a Protestant) who was also Cyril's friend.[36] The Jesuits, aiming at swaying the Greek bishops from choosing Cyril, immediately circulated the rumor that van Haag had poisoned Timothy in order to open

[35] Georges Florovsky, ibid. p. 148, claims that "As a matter of fact, all European contacts with the Patriarchate in the XVIth century were intermingled with political intrigues."
[36] Cyril probably first met Cornelius van Haag when Cornelius was travelling in the Levant in 1598. Van Haag was appointed first ambassador from the States-General to the Sublime Porte in 1602 and Cyril begun to visit him during his trips to Constantinople (See Runciman, ibid., pp. 266-267).

up the throne for Cyril, but they failed to prevent Cyril's election and elevation.[37]

The new Patriarch had received his education in Italy and had full knowledge of the Western debates on theology.[38] His preference turned to the Protestant approach, which appealed to his active and inquisitive mind and which also seemed refreshing and forward looking. His reputation had been a very positive one among the European Protestants for a number of years because of his communications with key Protestant theologians in Europe to whom he had revealed his Protestant leanings.[39] This side of Cyril, however, was still unknown to the Eastern bishops.

The Jesuits on the other hand, with their connections all over Europe knew very well of the reputation of Cyril as "a pure Calvinist"[40] and declared war against him. They first sought to embarrass him by feeding this information to the more conservative bishops of the Greek Church in order to cause him trouble. The Patriarch, however, had the support of Sir Thomas Roe, the English Ambassador and Cornelius van Haag, the Dutch Ambassador, two very influential personalities of this time in Constantinople. The Jesuits, nevertheless, with the help of Comte de Cési, the French Ambassador, contrived a series of intrigues involving both the pro-Vatican Greek bishops as well as the Grand Vizier and managed to depose Cyril. The plan did not

[37] Ranciman, ibid., p. 269
[38] While he was still a young priest visiting Vilna, Lithuania, Cyril had met various Lutheran divines and they had discussed the possibility of uniting their Churches (See Runciman, ibid., pp. 264-265).
[39] For the names of his various Protestant friends to whom he reveals his growing sympathy for Protestant doctrine see Runciman, ibid., p. 267.
[40] See Ranciman, ibid., note 4.

go as well as they hoped, however, so Cyril returned back to his see in October 1623.[41]

The war against Cyril Loucaris by the Roman Catholics took now a new phase. *The Congregatio de Progaganda Fide* was now summoned by Pope Urban VIII to discuss the problem. A Greek Catholic by the name of Canachio Rossi was dispatched to Constantinople. He, in turn, devised new intrigues with the help of the Jesuits, again involving the Grand Vizier. The plan, however, completely backfired and the Grand Vizier ordered that all the Jesuits be expelled from the Sultan's dominions.[42]

Cyril Loucaris, feeling now more at ease, published a book with the title "Confession of Faith" where he laid out his theology in eighteen articles. The positions were more in line with Calvinistic theology rather than with anything appearing in Jeremias's response to the Augsburg Confession. Loucaris' Confession created an immediate storm among the Orthodox, which brought about a new series of intrigues involving the pro-Latin Greek bishops, the European embassies, the Sultan and the Vatican. This series of events would end in multiple depositions and re-installments of Cyril as Patriarch, pronouncements of anathemas against his theology and his person and finally his strangling by the Turkish soldiers on the way to his final exile on June 25, 1638.

The conflict among the European Christians was finally brought to the East.

[41] Ranciman, ibid., p. 271.
[42] For a an extensive list of sources for these events see Runciman, ibid., Note 1, p. 271.

Loucaris saw himself as a reformer. He wanted to bring the Orthodox Church more in line with the livelier Protestant Churches of Europe. The hard, logical intellectualism of Calvinism attracted the realistic and cerebral side of Cyril's Greek character. But Cyril misunderstood his own Church. This misunderstanding is summed up in Steven Runciman's conclusion: "But the Greek character has its other side, its taste for the Mysteries. The Greek is a mystic as well as an intellectual; and the Orthodox Church derived much of its strength from its old mystical tradition. Its power of survival through worldly disasters lay largely in its acceptance of the transcendental mystery of the divine. This Cyril never understood. To him and his followers, the apophatic approach led merely to ignorance and stagnation. He could not appreciate the sustaining force of tradition. The logic of Geneva was no better answer to the problems of the Orthodox than was the disciplined legalism of Rome."[43]

In reaction to Lucaris, the Patriarch of Jerusalem Dositheos in his “Confession”, adopted by the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, affirms the sacredness and divine authorship of the Bible as the Orthodox Church has interpreted and delivered it, pointing out that "every heresy has received the Divine Scriptures, but perversely interpreted them . . . ." Hence, if the Church were to bow to the views of people like Lucaris and Calvin, "the Catholic [Orthodox] Church would not as it has done by the Grace of Christ continue to be the Church until this day, holding the same doctrine of faith . . . . but would have been rent into innumerable parties, and be subject to heresies; neither would the Church be holy, the pillar and ground of the

[43] Runciman, ibid., p. 288.

truth, without spot and wrinkle; but would be the Church of the malignant."[44]

Discussion and Conclusions

Even if the Reformers were driven by political motives in their approach to the East, it is clear from the examination of the communications of Melanchthon and the Tubingen theologians to the two Orthodox Patriarchs that there was a sincere attempt on their part to discover common ground as well as a linguistic theological idiom, which would express their positions more clearly with the ultimate purpose of bringing the two sides together. Yet the effort failed. Where exactly was the problem? What can we modern Christians of both East and West learn from this dialogue that could help us achieve a better result? The Reformers thought that they had much in common with the Orthodox and yet the Patriarchs felt insulted by what they received on paper. The Reformers kept repeating their positions, which they were unwittingly drawing from a theological system completely foreign to the East as it had developed mostly after the alienation initiated with Charlemagne. Their perspective was coming from a rationalistic and juridical theological approach with its roots in Augustine, Aquinas and Anselm. They were completely ignoring the spiritual authority of the early Christian Fathers of the Church both in the interpretation of the Scriptures,

[44] The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem held under Dositheos Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1672 (New York: AMS, 1969) 185-215. Randall H. Balmer of Princeton Univerity, in his article *Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Reformation and the Eastern Orthodox Church*, TrinJ 3 NS (1982) 51-56, note 26 points out that "Had Dositheus and his ink lived to see, for example, the rise of millennial sects and the concomitant splintering of American religion a couple of centuries later, they might have taken grim satisfaction that their judgment had been prudent. Conversely, illustrating the divergence of the two cultures since the Reformation era, modern Protestants (and, in recent years, many Catholics) have difficulty understanding what appears to them a slavish obedience to ecclesiastical authority in churches which do not claim the Reformation legacy."

with respect to the establishment of theological doctrine, as well as the mystical approach with regard to the relationship with God and human salvation. Jeremias felt that the Reformers were disregarding the importance of the role of the Fathers in theology even as Melanchthon was able to use theological language which imitated the Greek Patristic idiom.

Yes, the Reformers were genuinely trying to approach the East, but could not escape from the *de facto* establishment in which their thought was formed. They knew that there was a Church before Charlemagne, which had no medieval Papacy, no indulgences and no purgatory. They began to look toward it, but could not escape from the “Bermuda triangle” of Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas.

My question is: Doesn't the Christian West have it's roots also in the East, where all the theological debates of the first millennium took place? Aren't the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and Gregory of Nyssa part of the Western spiritual heritage? Aren't Athanasius and Chrysostom revered in the West as heroes, saints and doctors of the Church?

If the answer is Yes, then the question arises: Why do Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians alike, even until today, always go back to more recent Roman Catholic Fathers and doctors to draw wisdom for their theology? Why is Augustine more important than his predecessors of the East? Why is Thomas Aquinas a better source for theology and theological methodology than Basil and the two Gregorys whose Greek philosophical

learning was far deeper and more natural to them than to most others after them? Why is Anselm of Canterbury or Peter Abelard better sources of Salvation theology than Irenaeus of Lyons, Origen and Athanasius? Why weren't the ancient Fathers consulted before the Reformers began to build their new theories of Salvation, like the Penal Substitutionary and the Moral exemplar theories of Atonement? *Why are Western theologians still ignoring their roots in the East?*

And yet, there is one example of a Reformer from the 18th century that can perhaps help us in this quest. This was John Wesley, an Anglican priest, who managed to transcend the bonds of Western neo-theologisms and return to the common Christian heritage of the Greek Fathers. Going back to what he calls "Primitive Christianity",[45] he took from the early Christians the concept of salvation as the healing of humanity. The "Christ Event" ceased for him to be a legal transaction between God and the devil, or a punishment of the Son by the Father for the satisfaction of honor or for the appeasement of an angry God. Following Irenaeus, Origen and Athanasius, he saw Christ's Incarnation as the loving condescension of God in order to lift up humanity and bring it closer to divinity, for "God became man so that man may be deified". Following the thought of Gregory the Theologian, he saw the Incarnation as God assuming humanity to heal it, "for what is not assumed cannot be healed". The idea of Judgment and juridical Justification gave way in his understanding to

[45] See in Geordan Hammond, John Wesley in America, Restoring Primitive Christianity, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014.

allow for God's Love and transforming power for the perfecting and sanctification of fallen humanity.

Wesley recognized in the early Fathers that in the process of salvation man's free will participates with the free-flowing Grace of God, because the *imago dei* in man has not been completely destroyed by the Fall (as Augustine had thought), but was only distorted and disfigured and can still exercise its free will to choose the good; it can still respond to the Love of God so that man may be transformed and reach sanctification or "theosis".

Wesley incorporates the practical ascetic teachings of the Fathers, fasting, confession, prayer and the Eucharist into a specific "method" for the modern man, to assist him in his willful transformation by God's Grace and Love into a new renewed and healed man. Hence, the terms "Methodism" and "Methodist Church" were adopted.[46]

It is my estimation, that this is the place where East and West need to meet. Not at the Reformation, nor at the Roman post-Charlemagne rationalistic and humanistic neo-theological production-line of ideas. We cannot meet at the unchecked juridical Augustinian river of thought that did not take into account carefully the theological tradition before him, but we can only meet in the Golden Era of the common Eastern Christian heritage

[46] Unfortunately, not everyone followed John Wesley's example, but he was persecuted instead, in the beginning. Then, by the end of the 18th century we have the development of the Enlightenment with its strictly humanistic rationalistic perspective, which led to the rejection of God. The reaction to the enlightenment gave us the Romantic period and the focus on human feelings and emotions from which the modern Pentecostal and other theologies were developed. "Primitive Christianity" was brushed aside, once more.

of the second, to the fifth centuries which offers both the ascetic disciplined intellectual approach, as well as the rich mystical symposium of spiritual offerings drawn from the centuries of Christian suffering and sacrifice. The lessons to be learned will be many. Salvation, then, will be seen not as a juridical transaction, but in the light of the Resurrection and the transformation of humanity in the "theantropos", the Incarnate Logos who defeated sin in the flesh, abolished death by death and raised human nature, deified it and glorified it as He ascended to Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

The true unity of Christianity can only be achieved in the One Church, which will be in continuity and concord with this Primitive Christianity; it will only be within this same Primitive Christianity, where Christology was debated and clarified, that the great chasm between the numerous modern conflicting salvation theories will be bridged.[47]

I feel today that I have come here, in the motherland of Luther and Melanchthon, Ground Zero of the Reformation, to the Church of Wittenberg and it's modern offspring, as an ambassador of the Ancient Orthodox Patriarchs Joasaph and Jeremias to suggest the return to the ancient roots and the common Christian heritage which precedes Augustine, Charlemagne and the medieval Papacy of supremacy and infallibility; I

[47] See Richard Stuckwisch, Justification and Deification, p. 26, especially note 52: "Consider for example, that the classic Lutheran treatment of Chrietstology by Martin Chemnitz, The *Two Natures of Christ*, draws extensively from the eastern church fathers, especially from St. Cyril Alexandria and St. John of Damascus. Yet, it is certain that for these ancient authors, their Christology could not possibly be separated from their soteriology—which had to be described in terms of deification."

come to suggest the return to the time before the invention of the odd neo-theologies of Atonement and far before the introduction of indulgences and purgatory and the burning of heretics. Having experienced some of the consequences of the divisions wrought by the Reformation, I propose the return to the Ancient Church; its life and practices; it's teaching and worship. This, I believe, will be the only effective way to help jump-start the process of attaining the union and communion of all Christians, which Melanchthon and his friends desired so much but failed to accomplish. In other words, we need to first humbly come into communion with the Primitive Church, learn how to speak the same theological idiom, as well as understand it in the same way. Then, we will be able to initiate a sensible and comprehensible dialogue with each other, beginning always with the same theological presuppositions, and remaining always on the same page. As the foundation gets established, then we will be able to address all other new ideas developed in the subsequent centuries and decide what fits and what does not. Until then, we will continue to be broken and divided, unable to communicate clearly with one another.

APPENDIX

A short summary of Patriarch Jeremias II's responses to the twenty-one articles of the Augsburg Confession and the eight further chapters of his communication to the German divines:

Responding to **the first three articles**, Jeremias points out that the Creed of Faith should only be used in its original form omitting the dual procession of the Holy Spirit - the filioque. The addition of the filioque, he explains, is canonically illegal and doctrinally unsound.

Strangely enough, the Patriarch agrees with the Reformers' assertion in the second article that every man is guilty of Original Sin. This may actually be a misunderstanding on his part of the terminology used in the Confession since in Greek the term is "ancestral sin" or "the sin of the forefathers – Προπατορικόν Ἁμάρτημα - which does not imply that every man is born with Adams' guilt. The Greek Fathers understood that we only inherit the fallen condition, with death as the main consequence, and not the guilt of Adam.[48] Jeremias does not seem to be aware of the details of the doctrine of Original Sin as developed by St. Augustine and propagated through the centuries in the Western Church, which the Reformers are subscribing to.

He then addresses Baptism and points out that it should be done by triple immersion and should be followed by Chrismation and Holy Communion. The baptismal practice of the Latins, he points out, is not correct.

In response to **the fourth article** on justification by faith alone, Jeremias, has serious objections. He asserts that a living faith is evident by good

[48] See Panayiotis Papageorgiou, "Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam and its Consequences," St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 39, no. 4 (1995): 361-378

works. Quoting St, Basil the Great, he further points out that Grace will not be given to those who do not live virtuous lives.

In the following articles dealing with salvation by faith alone, he points out again that faith with no works is not true faith and makes it clear that he strongly disapproves of anything that might suggest predestined election.

In **the seventh article** on the sacraments, Jeremias seems to suspect that the Lutherans might not be following all the sacraments, so he enumerates seven[49] and calls them the seven gifts of the Lord as spoken by Isaiah.

The Patriarch concurred with **the eighth and ninth articles** of the Augsburg Confession, which point out that the sacraments do not lose their validity if administered by evil priests and that infant baptism is recommended so that the child may receive grace.

With regard to **the tenth article** dealing with the Eucharist, he points out that it is not only a sacrament but also a sacrifice. He also offers three criticisms: The first of the Lutherans who do not believe that the bread and the wine change to become the body and blood of Christ and the other two of the Latins who use unleavened bread in the Eucharist and also do not use the Epiklesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, during the consecration of the Eucharistic Gifts.

On the question of the change of the elements into the body and blood of Christ, Jeremias, applying the apophatic approach, points out that this change is a mystery and cannot be described by words. He uses the terms μεταβολή and μεταποίησις instead of μετουσίωσις which would be the

[49] The Patriarch's claim of seven sacraments is rather surprising because at this time the Orthodox Church had not decided on seven sacraments. See also the comment on this by Georges Florovsky, Christianity and Culture, Collected Works, Volume II, Nordland Publishing Co., Belmond, Mass, 1974, p. 151.

exact translation of "transubstantiation". For him change is essential to assure that the Gifts are the real Body and Blood of the Lord, even though they are still essentially bread and wine, but he does not see the need to scientifically or philosophically define this change, since it is a spiritual change.

The eleventh article advocates private confession, though not as absolutely necessary. The Patriarch agrees but goes on to point out the value of confession as spiritual medicine leading to true acts of repentance.

The twelfth article teaches that sinners who have lapsed can receive grace again if they repent. The Patriarch concurs, but adds that repentance must be shown by good works.

The thirteenth article declares the Sacraments not just as symbols, but proofs of God's love for men, which should be used to stimulate and confirm faith. Jeremias agrees again, but spends a considerable time explaining the value of the prayers and hymns used in the sacraments and services both for the edification of faith in the faithful and for their understanding of the events of salvation, but also for the sanctification which comes to the faithful as they immerse themselves in the Divine Services. Most especially, he points out, the Eucharistic experience can be a transformative one for the faithful. Here his emphasis is on the mystical aspect of prayers, services and celebration of feasts in connecting men with the divine.

The fourteenth article states that only ordained priests should preach or administer the Sacraments. The Patriarch agrees, as long as the ordination is performed correctly and the hierarchy is canonically organized. He clearly doubted that this was the case with the Lutheran Church.

The fifteenth article approves rituals and festivals as conducive to peace and order in the Church, but denies that they provide any grace or that they are necessary for salvation. The Patriarch was not very pleased with these statements and quoting the early Fathers and also pointing to the Old Testament rituals, he explains how these feasts and celebrations enable the participants to enter into the events of the life of Christ and also connect with the saints who offer their witness of faith to the faithful. Again, here he attempts to convey the mystical understanding of the Orthodox Church.

To **the sixteenth article** which states that it is not contrary to the Gospel for Christians to govern others, Jeremias concurs and adds that one should obey civil rulers even if they are unjust, but should also remember that obedience to the laws of God and to His ministers is an even higher duty and that no Christian should desire to have worldly power. In addition, he attacks the Reformers' view which condemns those who sell everything they have and forsake the world for the sake of their salvation (i.e. the monastics).

The Patriarch concurs also with **the seventeenth article** which proclaims the coming again of the Lord to judge the living and the dead, but he strongly condemns those who believe that the saints and pious people will rule on the earth before the final resurrection.[50] He makes no reference to the implied denial of purgatory by this article, perhaps because he is not fully aware of the centrality of this controversy in the Western Church and its connection with indulgences, a major concern of the Reformers. Jeremias seems to also know nothing of the doctrine of atonement as developed by this time in the West, especially the theory of

[50] Apparently something taught by Jews and heretics at the time.

Dept/Satisfaction, which requires a payment by man for his salvation. He also seems to know nothing about the idea of substitutionary atonement. The Greek version of the Augustana clearly does not inform him.

The eighteenth article deals with free will. Here again Jeremias lacks a full understanding of the development of Western theology based on Augustine's idea of total depravity of man after the Fall. For him, the human will is still active and capable to make decisions and accept God's Grace. Hence, he recognizes the Lutheran position as too close to a complete predestination and rejects it. Again, he invokes the Greek Fathers to support his position.

The nineteenth article asserts that human sin is the source of evil in the world and not God. The Patriarch fully agrees and quotes the Fathers again to support this further.

The twentieth article speaks of the need for both faith and works. Jeremias agrees, but sees a contradiction in the Confession and is puzzled by it. He does not know the background of indulgences and purgatory, which the reformers are objecting to, so he asks: Why do the Lutherans object to feasts and fasts and the monastic life if they value works? Aren't these things showing an effort and desire to attain self-discipline and obey God's Commandments? He then spends a significant amount of time explaining the benefit of acts of discipline, liturgical celebrations and prayers which aim at transforming the human person to a temple of the Holy Spirit and ultimately Sanctifying him.

The twenty first and last article must have been particularly shocking for the Patriarch. It claims that the faithful should be told of the lives of the saints as examples to be followed, but it is contrary to the Scriptures to

invoke the saints as mediators. Jeremias quickly explains the difference between the Epiklesis or invocation of God as the source of all grace and the intercession of the saints who have no grace of themselves. He then goes on to explain the difference between veneration (προσκύνησις) and worship (λατρεία), the two core terms of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which settled the Iconoclastic Controversy. Worship, he explains, is only given to God, while veneration can also be given to the Mother of God, the Theotokos, and also the saints. The same veneration is also offered to the saints through holy icons, he explains, but worship is only given to God alone.

Once he responds to each article of the Augsburg Confession, the Patriarch goes on to recapitulate certain points and expand on his previous statements in a series of eight more chapters.

The last eight chapters:

In the First one, Jeremias agrees that both kinds of Holy Communion (Body and Blood) should be given to everyone (against the Roman practice of the time where the lay people received only the Body), but insists again that only leavened bread should be used in the Eucharist.

In the Second, he agrees that priests should be allowed to marry before ordination, but clarifies that the Orthodox also allow someone to commit himself to a celibate life, if he so chooses, except that this decision is final after ordination. Marriage of a priest after he has committed to a celibate life is not appropriate and not allowed.

In the Third, he agrees that priests should not be celebrating the Divine

Liturgy or multiple Divine Liturgies for the gain of money (as the practice seemed to be in the West)[51] and adds: "A person who celebrates the Liturgy for gain acts wickedly." He then addresses the comment that the passion and death of Christ has liberated us from all sin. He explains that he agrees with that, but then adds: "But if we sin without repenting, the passion of Christ and His death will not benefit us at all."[52]

In the Fourth, he raises the issue of Confession and quoting St. Basil points out that the one who confesses should not confess to just anyone, but to those who can heal him, and only to those who are entrusted with the dispensation of the sacraments of God. Quoting St. Basil again he goes on to say that the authority to forgive is not given in an absolute sense, but on the agreement between the penitent who is obedient and sincere and the one who cares for his soul. Indeed, he explains, to repent means not to do the same deeds again.

In the Fifth, he addresses the issue of fasting, quoting heavily from St. Paul and St. Basil the Great, explaining the need for reigning in our desires and cultivating our virtues, and concludes: "Thus on the one hand, one must through ascetic practices cut off the covetous and lustful desires of the flesh, and, on the other hand, one must take care to preserve that which promotes the good."

In the Sixth, defending the monastic life he again quotes Sts. Basil and Chrysostom explaining that there are two states of life, marriage and virginity. Both states lead to salvation, but each has a special responsibility

[51] In fact, in the East, even until today, a priest is not allowed to celebrate more than one Eucharistic Liturgy in one day. Furthermore, no more than one Eucharistic Liturgies are allowed to be celebrated on the same Altar in one Liturgical Day.

[52] He is anticipating here the further development in Protestantism that "once you are saved you are always saved".

and a special grace. Neither state should be forced on anyone, but people should be free to choose the one they desire. Both ways of life should be leading to the perfect love of God. He then points out that no one should disparage those who want to strive for the perfect love of God as monastics.

In the Seventh, he agrees that we need to discern if a man-made commandment is leading us to God or away from Him and refuse to obey the one which would lead us away from God. He goes on, however, to say that we should also obey the man-made commandment which is not contrary to God's Law, but which rather strengthens the Commandment of God.

In the Eighth paragraph, he affirms the need to follow the teachings of the Apostles, the Holy Fathers and the Holy Synods, which have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, lest our minds begin to wonder here and there deviating from the evangelical teachings, true wisdom and prudence. This is a rather prophetic statement on the part of Jeremias, because of what eventually happened with the Reformation as anyone could begin to consider their own personal interpretation of the Scriptures as God-given without considering the previous tradition; the consequence of that being the continuous fragmentation of Western Christianity to the extend we have it today.