

Archbishop Theophan On The New Calendar.

In 1926, Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava and Pereyaslavl, wrote the following in his work, "Short canonical judgements on chronology":

"Question. Have the pastors of the Orthodox Church not made special judgements concerning the calendar?

"Answer. They have, many times - with regard to the introduction of the new Roman calendar - both in private assemblies and in councils.

"A proof of this is the following. First of all, the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II, who lived at the same time as the Roman calendar reform, immediately, in 1582, together with his Synod condemned the new Roman system of chronology as being not in agreement with the Tradition of the Church. In the next year (1583), with the participation of Patriarchs Sylvester of Alexandria and Sophronius VI of Jerusalem, he convened a Church Council. This Council recognised the Gregorian calendar to be not in agreement with the canons of the Universal Church and with the decree of the First Ecumenical Council on the method of calculating the day of Holy Pascha.

Through the labours of this Council there appeared: a Conciliar tome, which denounced the wrongness and unacceptability for the Orthodox Church of the Roman calendar, and a canonical conciliar Decree - the Sigillion of November 20, 1583. In this Sigillion all three of the above-mentioned Patriarchs with their Synods called on the Orthodox firmly and unbendingly, even to the shedding of their blood, to hold the Orthodox Menaion and Julian Paschalion, threatening the transgressors of this with anathema, cutting them off from the Church of Christ and the gathering of the faithful...

In the course of the following three centuries: the 17th, 18th and 19th, a whole series of Ecumenical Patriarchs decisively expressed themselves against the Gregorian calendar and, evaluating it in the spirit of the conciliar decree of Patriarch Jeremiah II, counselled the Orthodox to avoid it..."

"Question. Is the introduction of the new calendar important or of little importance?

"Answer. Very important, especially in connection with the Paschalion and it is an extreme disorder and ecclesiastical schism, which draws people away from communion and unity with the whole Church of Christ, deprives them of the grace of the Holy Spirit, shakes the dogma of the unity of the Church and, like Arius, tears the seamless robe of Christ, that is, everywhere divides the Orthodox, depriving them of oneness of mind; breaks the bond with Ecclesiastical Holy Tradition, and makes them fall under conciliar condemnation for despising Tradition...

"Question. How must the Orthodox relate to the new calendarist schismatics, according to the canons?

"Answer. They must have no communion in prayer with them, even before their conciliar condemnation...

"Question. What punishment is fitting, according to the Church canons, for those who pray with the new calendarist schismatics?"

"Answer. The same condemnation with them..."