60. When upon this I wrote and endeavoured to convince the Emperor, that that anti-Christian heresy had no communion with the Catholic Church, Eusebius forthwith, availing himself of the occasion which he had agreed upon with the Meletians, writes and persuades them to invent some pretext, so that, as they had practised against Peter and Achillas and Alexander, they might devise and spread reports against us also. Accordingly, after seeking for a long time, and finding nothing, they at last agree together, with the advice of Eusebius and his fellows, and fabricate their first accusation by means of Ision, Eudaemon, and Callinicus [671], respecting the linen vestments [672], to the effect that I had imposed a law upon the Egyptians, and had required its observance of them first. But when certain Presbyters of mine were found to be present, and the Emperor took cognizance of the matter, they were condemned (the Presbyters were Apis and Macarius), and the Emperor wrote, condemning Ision, and ordering me to appear before him. His letters were as follows [673].

Eusebius, having intelligence of this, persuades them to wait; and when I arrive, they next accuse Macarius of breaking the cup, and bring against me the most heinous accusation possible, viz. that, being an enemy of the Emperor, I had sent a purse of gold to one Philumenus. The Emperor therefore heard us on this charge also in Psammathia [674], when they, as usual, were condemned, and driven from the presence; and, as I returned, he wrote the following letter to the people.

Constantine, Maximus, Augustus, to the people of the Catholic Church at Alexandria.

61. Beloved brethren, I greet you well, calling upon God, Who is the chief witness of my intention, and on the Only-begotten, the Author of our Law, Who is Sovereign over the lives of all men, and Who hates dissensions. But what shall I say to you? That I am in good health? Nay, but I should be able to enjoy better health and strength, if you were possessed with mutual love one towards another, and had rid yourselves of your enmities, through which, in consequence of the storms excited by contentious men, we have left the haven of brotherly love. Alas! what perverseness is this! What evil consequences are produced every day by the tumult of envy which has been stirred up among you! Hence it is that evil reports have settled upon the people of God. Whither has the faith of righteousness departed? For we are so involved in the mists of darkness, not only through manifold errors, but through the faults of ungrateful men, that we bear with those who favour folly, and though we are aware of them, take no heed of those who set aside goodness and truth. What strange inconsistency is this! We do not convict our enemies, but we follow the example of robbery which they set us, whereby the most pernicious errors, finding no one to oppose them, easily, if I may so speak, make a way for themselves. Is there no understanding among us, for the credit of our common nature, since we are thus neglectful of the injunctions of the law?
But some one will say, that love is a thing brought out by nature. But, I ask, how is it that we who have got the law of God for our guide in addition to our natural advantages, thus tolerate the disturbances and disorders raised by our enemies, who seem inflamed, as it were, with firebrands? How is it, that having eyes, we see not, neither understand, though we are surrounded by the intelligence of the law? What a stupor has seized upon our life, that we are thus neglectful of ourselves, and that although God admonishes us! Is it not an intolerable evil? and ought we not to esteem such men as our enemies, and not the household and people of God? For they are infuriated against us, abandoned as they are: they lay grievous crimes to our charge, and make attacks upon us as enemies.

62. And I would have you yourselves to consider with what exceeding madness they do this. The foolish men carry their maliciousness at their tongues' end. They carry about with them a sort of leaden anger, so that they reciprocally smite one another, and involve us by way of increasing their own punishment. The good teacher is accounted an enemy, while he who clothes himself with the vice of envy, contrary to all justice makes his gain of the gentle temper of the people; he ravages, and consumes, he decks himself out, and recommends himself with false praises; he subverts the truth, and corrupts the faith, until he finds out a hole and hiding-place for his conscience. Thus their very perverseness makes them wretched, while they impudently prefer themselves to places of honour, however unworthy they may be. Ah! what a mischief is this! they say "Such an one is too old; such an one is a mere boy; the office belongs to me; it is due to me, since it is taken away from him. I will gain over all men to my side, and then I will endeavour with my power to ruin him."

Plain indeed is this proclamation of their madness to all the world; the sight of companies, and gatherings, and rowers under command [675] in their offensive cabals. Alas! what preposterous conduct is ours, if I may say it! Do they make an exhibition of their folly in the Church of God? And are they not yet ashamed of themselves? Do they not yet blame themselves? Are they not smitten in their consciences, so that they now at length shew that they entertain a proper sense of their deceit and contentiousness? Theirs is the mere force of envy, supported by those baneful influences which naturally belong to it. But those wretches have no power against your Bishop. Believe me, brethren, their endeavours will have no other effect than this, after they have worn down our days, to leave to themselves no place of repentance in this life. Wherefore I beseech you, lend help to yourselves; receive kindly our love, and with all your strength drive away those who desire to obliterate from among us the grace of unanimity; and looking unto God, love one another. I received gladly your Bishop Athanasius, and addressed him in such a manner, as being persuaded that he was a man of God. It is for you to understand these things, not for me to judge of them. I thought it becoming that the most reverend Athanasius himself should convey my salutation to you, knowing his kind care of you, which, in a manner worthy of that peaceable faith which I myself profess, is continually engaged in the good work of declaring saving knowledge, and will be able to exhort you as is suitable, May God preserve you, beloved brethren.
Such was the letter of Constantine.

63. After these occurrences the Meletians remained quiet for a little time, but afterwards shewed their hostility again, and contrived the following plot, with the aim of pleasing those who had hired their services. The Mareotis is a country district of Alexandria, in which Meletius was not able to make a schism. Now while the Churches still existed within their appointed limits, and all the Presbyters had congregations in them, and while the people were living in peace, a certain person named Ischyras [676], who was not a clergyman, but of a worthless disposition, endeavoured to lead astray the people of his own village, declaring himself to be a clergyman. Upon learning this, the Presbyter of the place informed me of it when I was going through my visitation of the Churches, and I sent Macarius the Presbyter with him to summon Ischyras. They found him sick and lying in a cell, and charged his father to admonish his son not to continue any such practices as had been reported against him. But when he recovered from his sickness, being prevented by his friends and his father from pursuing the same course, he fled over to the Meletians; and they communicate with Eusebius and his fellows, and at last that calumny is invented by them, that Macarius had broken a cup, and that a certain Bishop named Arsenius had been murdered by me. Arsenius they placed in concealment, in order that he might seem made away with, when he did not make his appearance; and they carried about a hand, pretending that he had been cut to pieces. As for Ischyras, whom they did not even know, they began to spread a report that he was a Presbyter, in order that what he said about the cup might mislead the people. Ischyras, however, being censured by his friends, came to me weeping, and said that no such thing as they had reported had been done by Macarius, and that himself had been suborned by the Meletians to invent this calumny. And he wrote the following letter.

To the Blessed pope [677] Athanasius, Ischyras sends health in the Lord.

64. As when I came to you, my Lord Bishop, desiring to be received into the Church, you reproved me for what I formerly said, as though I had proceeded to such lengths of my own free choice, I therefore submit to you this my apology in writing, in order that you may understand, that violence was used towards me, and blows inflicted on me by Isaac and Heraclides, and Isaac of Letopolis, and those of their party. And I declare, and take God as my witness in this matter, that of none of the things which they have stated, do I know you to be guilty. For no breaking of a cup or overturning of the Holy Table ever took place, but they compelled me by violent usage to assert all this. And this defence I make and submit to you in writing, desiring and claiming for myself to be admitted among the members of your congregation. I pray that you may have health in the Lord.

I submit this my handwriting to you the Bishop Athanasius in the presence of the Presbyters, Ammonas of Dicella, Heraclius of Phascos, Boccon of Chenebri, Achillas
of Myrsine, Didymus of Taphosiris, and Justus from Bomotheus [678]; and of the Deacons, Paul, Peter, and Olympius, of Alexandria, and Ammonius, Pistus, Demetrius, and Gaius, of the Mareotis.

65. Notwithstanding this statement of Ischyras, they again spread abroad the same charges against me everywhere, and also reported them to the Emperor Constantine. He too had heard before of the affair of the cup in Psammathia [679], when I was there, and had detected the falsehood of my enemies. But now he wrote to Antioch to Dalmatius [680] the Censor requiring him to institute a judicial enquiry respecting the murder. Accordingly the Censor sent me notice to prepare for my defence against the charge. Upon receiving his letters, although at first I paid no regard to the thing because I knew that nothing of what they said was true, yet seeing that the Emperor was moved, I wrote to my fellow-ministers into Egypt, and sent a deacon, desiring to learn something of Arsenius, for I had not seen the man for five or six years. Well, not to relate the matter at length, Arsenius was found in concealment, in the first instance in Egypt, and afterwards my friends discovered him again in concealment in Tyre also. And what was most remarkable, even when he was discovered he would not confess that he was Arsenius, until he was convicted in court before Paul, who was then Bishop of Tyre, and at last out of very shame could not deny it.

This he did in order to fulfil his contract with Eusebius and his fellows, lest, if he were discovered, the game they were playing should at length be broken up; which in fact came to pass. For when I wrote the Emperor word, that Arsenius was discovered, and reminded him of what he had heard in Psammathia concerning Macarius the Presbyter, he stopped the proceedings of the Censor's court, and wrote condemning the proceedings against me as calumnious, and commanded Eusebius and his fellows, who were coming into the East to appear against me, to return. Now in order to shew that they accused me of having murdered Arsenius (not to bring forward the letters of many persons on the subject), it shall be sufficient only to produce one from Alexander the Bishop of Thessalonica, from which the tenor of the rest may be inferred. He then being acquainted with the reports which Archaph, who is also called John, circulated against me on the subject of the murder, and having heard that Arsenius was alive, wrote as follows.

Letter of Alexander.

To his dearly beloved son and fellow-minister like-minded, the lord Athanasius, Alexander the Bishop sends health in the Lord.

66. I congratulate the most excellent Sarapion, that he is striving so earnestly to adorn himself with holy habits, and is thus advancing to higher praise the memory of his father. For, as the Holy Scripture somewhere says, though his father die, yet he is as though he were not dead [681]: 'for he has left behind him a memorial of his life. What my feelings were towards the ever memorable Sozon, you yourself, my lord
[682], are not ignorant, for you know the sacredness of his memory, as well as the
goodness of the young man. I have received only one letter from your reverence,
which I had by the hands of this youth. I mention this to you, my lord, in order that
you may know. Our dearly beloved brother and deacon Macarius, afforded me great
pleasure by writing to me from Constantinople, that the false accuser Archaph had
met with disgrace, for having given out before all men that a live man had been
murdered. That he will receive from the righteous Judge, together with all the tribe of
his associates, that punishment, which his crimes deserve, the unerring Scriptures
assure us. May the Lord of all preserve you for very many years, my lord, in every way
most kind.

67. And they who lived with Arsenius bear witness, that he was kept in concealment
for this purpose, that they might pretend his death; for in searching after him we
found the person [who had done so], and he in consequence wrote the following
letter to John, who played the chief part in this false accusation.

To his dearly beloved brother John, Pinnes, Presbyter of the Monastery [683] of
Ptemencycris, in the home of Anteopolis, sends greeting.

I wish you to know, that Athanasi
us sent his deacon into the Thebais, to search
everywhere for Arsenius; and Pecysius the Presbyter, and Silvanus the brother of
Helias, and Tapenacerameus, and Paul monk of Hypsele, whom he first fell in with,
confessed that Arsenius was with us. Upon learning this we caused him to be put on
board a vessel, and to sail to the lower countries with Helias the monk. Afterwards
the deacon returned again suddenly with certain others, and entered our monastery,
in search of the same Arsenius, and him they found not, because, as I said before, we
had sent him away to the lower countries; but they conveyed me together with Helias
the monk, who took him out of the way, to Alexandria, and brought us before the
Duke [684]; when I was unable to deny, but confessed that he was alive, and had not
been murdered: the monk also who took him out of the way confessed the same.
Wherefore I acquaint you with these things, Father, lest you should determine to
accuse Athanasius; for I said that he was alive, and had been concealed with us, and
all this is become known in Egypt, and it cannot any longer be kept secret.

I, Paphnutius, monk of the same monastery, who wrote this letter, heartily salute
you. I pray for your health.

The following also is the letter which the Emperor wrote when he learnt that Arsenius
was found to be alive. Constantine, Victor, Maximus, Augustus, to the pope
Athanasius.

68. Having read the letters of your wisdom, I felt the inclination to write in return to
your fortitude, and to exhort you that you would endeavour to restore the people of
God to tranquillity, and to merciful feelings. For in my own mind I hold these things
to be of the greatest importance, that we should cultivate truth, and ever keep righteousness in our thoughts, and have pleasure especially in those who walk in the right way of life. But as concerning those who are deserving of all execration, I mean the most perverse and ungodly Meletians, who have at last stultified themselves by their folly, and are now raising unreasonable commotions by envy, uproar, and tumult, thus making manifest their own ungodly dispositions, I will say thus much. You see that those who they pretended had been slain with the sword, are still amongst us, and in the enjoyment of life. Now what could be a stronger presumption against them, and one so manifestly and clearly tending to their condemnation, as that those whom they declared to have been murdered, are yet in the enjoyment of life, and accordingly will be able to speak for themselves?

But this further accusation was advanced by these same Meletians. They positively affirmed that you, rushing in with lawless violence, had seized upon and broken a cup, which was deposited in the most Holy Place; than which there certainly could not be a more serious charge, nor a more grievous offence, had such a crime actually been perpetrated. But what manner of accusation is this? What is the meaning of this change and variation and difference in the circumstances of it, insomuch that they now transfer this same accusation to another person [685], a fact which makes it clearer, so to speak, than the light itself, that they designed to lay a plot for your wisdom? After this, who can be willing to follow them, men that have fabricated such charges to the injury of another, seeing too that they are hurrying themselves on to ruin, and are conscious that they are accusing you of false and feigned crimes? Who then, as I said, will follow after them, and thus go headlong in the way of destruction; in that way in which it seems they alone suppose that they have hope of safety and of help? But if they were willing to walk according to a pure conscience, and to be directed by the best wisdom, and to go in the way of a sound mind, they would easily perceive that no help can come to them from Divine Providence, while they are given up to such doings, and tempt their own destruction. I should not call this a harsh judgment of them, but the simple truth.

And finally, I will add, that I wish this letter to be read frequently by your wisdom in public, that it may thereby come to the knowledge of all men, and especially reach the ears of those who thus act, and thus raise disturbances; for the judgment which is expressed by me according to the dictates of equity is confirmed also by real facts. Wherefore, seeing that in such conduct there is so great an offence, let them understand that I have thus judged; and that I have come to this determination, that if they excite any further commotion of this kind, I will myself in person take cognizance of the matter, and that not according to the ecclesiastical, but according to the civil laws, and so I will in future find them out, because they clearly are robbers, so to speak, not only against human kind, but against the divine doctrine itself. May God ever preserve you, beloved brother!
69. But that the wickedness of the calumniators might be more fully displayed, behold Arsenius also wrote to me after he was discovered in his place of concealment; and as the letter which Ischyras had written confessed the falsehood of their accusation, so that of Arsenius proved their maliciousness still more completely.

To the blessed Pope Athanasius, Arsenius, Bishop of those who were heretofore under Meletius in the city of the Hypselites, together with the Presbyters and Deacons, wishes much health in the Lord. Being earnestly desirous of peace and union with the Catholic Church, over which by the grace of God you preside, and wishing to submit ourselves to the Canon of the Church, according to the ancient rule [686], we write unto you, dearly beloved Pope, and declare in the name of the Lord, that we will not for the future hold communion with those who continue in schism, and are not yet at peace with the Catholic Church, whether Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons. Neither will we take part with them if they wish to establish anything in a Council; neither will we send letters of peace [687] unto them nor receive such from them; neither yet without the consent of you, the bishop of the metropolis, will we publish any determination concerning Bishops, or on any other general ecclesiastical question; but we will yield obedience to all the canons that have heretofore been ordained, after the example of the Bishops [688] Ammonian, Tyrannus, Plusian, and the rest. Wherefore we beseech your goodness to write to us speedily in answer, and likewise to our fellow-ministers concerning us, informing them that we will henceforth abide by the fore-mentioned resolution and will be at peace with the Catholic Church, and at unity with our fellow-ministers in the [various] districts. And we are persuaded that your prayers, being acceptable unto God, will so prevail with Him, that this peace shall be firm and indissoluble unto the end, according to the will of God the Lord of all, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The sacred Ministry that is under you, we and those that are with us salute. Very shortly, if God permit, we will come to visit your goodness. I, Arsenius, pray for your health in the Lord for many years, most blessed Pope.

70. But a stronger and clearer proof of the calumny against us is the recantation of John, of which the most God-beloved Emperor Constantine of blessed memory is a witness, for knowing how John had accused himself, and having received letters from him expressing his repentance, he wrote to him as follows.

Constantine, Maximus, Augustus to John. The letters which I have received from your prudence were extremely pleasing to me, because I learned from them what I very much longed to hear, that you had laid aside every petty feeling, had joined the Communion of the Church as became you, and were now in perfect concord with the most reverend Bishop Athanasius. Be assured therefore that so far I entirely approve of your conduct; because, giving up all skirmishing, you have done that which is pleasing to God, and have embraced the unity of His Church. In order therefore that you may obtain the accomplishment of your wishes, I have thought it right to grant
you permission to enter the public conveyance [689], and to come to the court [690]
of my clemency. Let it then be your care to make no delay; but as this letter gives you
authority to use the public conveyance, come to me immediately, that you may have
your desires fulfilled, and by appearing in my presence may enjoy that pleasure
which it is fit for you to receive. May God preserve you continually, dearly beloved
brother.

[664] Cf. Orat. i. 2 and notes.


[666] [Prolegg. ch. ii. S:3 (1) ad fin.] Athan. speaks more openly against this
arrangement. infr. S:71.

[667] [According to the tenses in the original the five months mark the date not of
Alexander's death (April 17, 328), but of the renewed Meletian troubles. The
settlement did not keep them quiet for five months. The terminus a quo of the five
months is somewhat doubtful; but it certainly is not the Council of Nicaea, see S:71,
&c. Montf. Monit. in Vit. S. Athanasii, also Prolegg. ch. ii. S:3 (1) and ch. v. S:3 a.]


[672] sticharia, ecclesiastical. [See D.C.A. p. 1933.]

[673] They are lost.


[675] archieresian


[677] Cf. de Syn. 16, [and Fest Ind. passim].

[678] [Cf. the list of Mareotic clergy supr., p. 72. The three deacons of Alexandria are
in the list, p. 71].

Dalmatius was the name of father and son, the brother and nephew of Constantine. Socrates, Hist. i. 27. gives the title of Censor to the son; but the Chron. Pasch. p. 531 (Dind.) gives it to the father. Valesius, and apparently Tillemont (Empereurs, vol. 4. p. 657) think Socrates mistaken. The younger Dalmatius was created Caesar by Constantine a few years before his death; and as well as his brother Hannibalian, and a number of other relatives, was put to death by the soldiery, on the death of Constantine. vid. Hist. Ar. 69. [Gwatkin, p. 108 note].

Ecclus. 30. 4.

despota. Theod. H. E. i. 5. init.

[The monasteries here are not a monastery in the later sense, but a village or cluster of cells. This intercepted letter demonstrates the existence of Meletian monks, of which there is other evidence also: (see below, Introd. to Vit. Ant. The objection of Weingarten to the genuineness of this letter is purely arbitrary)].

According to the system of government introduced by Diocletian and Constantine, there were thirty-five military commanders of the troops, under the Magistri militum, and all of these bore the name of duces or dukes; the comites, or counts, were ten out of the number, who were distinguished as companions of the Emperor. vid. Gibbon, ch. 17. Three of these dukes were stationed in Egypt [i.e. in the whole prefecture; one only in the province of Egypt in the narrower sense].


Vid. supr. p. 92, note 3; the (so-called) Apostolical Canon apparently referred to here, is Can. 27. according to Beveridge.

Cf. p. 95, note 4.

i.e. Meletian Bishops who had conformed; or, since they are not in the list, Catholic Bishops with whom the conforming party were familiar; or Meletians after the return of Meletius. vid. Tillemont, Mem. vol. 8. p. 658.

On the "cursus publicus," vid. Gothofred. in Cod. Theod. viii. tit. 5. It was provided for the journeys of the Emperor, for persons whom he summoned, for magistrates, ambassadors, and for such private persons as the Emperor indulged in the use of it, which was gratis. The use was granted by Constantine to the Bishops who were summoned to Nicaea, as far as it went, in addition (though aliter Valesius in loc.) to other means of travelling. Euseb. v. Const. iii. 6. The cursus publicus brought the Bishops to the Council of Tyre. ibid. iv. 43. In the conference between Liberius and Constantius, Theod. Hist. ii. 13. it is objected that the cursus publicus is not sufficient to convey Bishops to the Council which Liberius proposes; he answers
that the Churches are rich enough to convey their Bishops as far as the sea. Thus S. Hilary was compelled (data evectionis copia, Sulp. Sev. Hist. ii. 57.) to attend at Seleucia, as Athan. at Tyre. Julian complains of the abuse of the cursus publicus, perhaps with an allusion to these Councils of Constantius. vid. Cod. Theod. viii. tit. 5. l. 12. where Gothofred quotes Liban. Epitaph. in Julian. vol. i. p. 569. ed. Reiske.) Vid. the well-known passage of Ammianus, who speaks of the Councils being the ruin of the res vehicularia Hist. xxi. 16. The Eusebians at Philippopolis say the same thing. Hilar. Frag. iii. 25. The Emperor provided board and perhaps lodging for the Bishops at Ariminum; which the Bishops of Aquitaine, Gaul, and Britain, declined, except three British from poverty. Sulp. Hist. ii. 56. Hunneric in Africa, after assembling 466 Bishops at Carthage, dismissed them without modes of conveyance, provision, or baggage. Victor Utic. Hist. iii. init. In the Emperor’s letter previous to the assembling of the sixth Ecumenical Council, a.d. 678, (Harduin, Conc. t. 3. p. 1048 fin.) he says he has given orders for the conveyance and maintenance of its members. Pope John VIII. reminds Ursus, Duke of Venice (a.d. 876.), of the same duty of providing for the members of a Council, "secundum pios principes, qui in talibus munifice semper erant intenti." Colet. Concil. (Ven. 1730,) t. xi. p. 14.