

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

Question 1

QUESTION What is the sign of the true and perfect Christian? 5

ANSWER 1. Some say that it is the correct faith and holy deeds [ἔργα εὐσεβείας].^a But Christ did not define the really true Christian by reference to these things, because somebody can have faith and good deeds, and be haughty because of them, and not be a perfect Christian. That is why the Lord said: *The one who loves me will keep my commandments, and I shall love such persons and show them myself, and we shall come, I and my father, and we shall make our dwelling in them* (Jn 14: 21-23).

2. Therefore we learn from these words that by the faith and fine deeds the house of the soul is built up by our intellectual capacities (*nous*); however if the owner of the house, Christ, does not come and live in us, it is clear that he is not pleased by the structure that has been brought into being by us for him.

COMMENTS

(1) The *Answer* was expanded and altered in the version prepared for **Coll. 23**; this was incorporated into **Coll. a** as Qu. ed. 1 (PG 89, 329), and also into **Coll. d** (Qu. 1), and **Coll. b**, where it appears as follows, but numbered as Qu. 5:

^a In the definitions included in his *Hodegos* Anastasios defines a “Christian” as: “a true house of Christ, made of reason, constructed out of good works and holy beliefs” (ἀληθινὸς οἶκος Χριστοῦ λογικὸς δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν καὶ δογμάτων εὐσεβῶν συνιστάμενος), *Viae Dux* II, 6, 20-21 (CCSG 8, p. 60).

Coll. b, Qu. 5 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 1]

QUESTION What is the sign of the perfect Christian?

ANSWER 1. The correct faith and holy deeds, because the true Christian is this: a house of Christ constructed out of good deeds and holy dogmas. Now the true faith is tested by deeds, because *Faith without deeds is dead* (Jas 2: 26 [cf. Heb 11: 6]), just as deeds without faith. Therefore it is necessary to do all in our power to keep ourselves utterly pure of all defiling deeds, so that we may prevent anyone saying of us also, *They profess to recognize God, but they deny him in their deeds* (Titus 1: 16). That is why the Lord says, *If anyone loves me, he will put into practice my word, and my father will love him, and we shall come to him and we shall make our dwelling with him* (Jn 14: 23). So the house of the soul is built up through the correct faith and good deeds, and thus God dwells in us: *I shall dwell and stroll around inside^a them* (2 Cor 6: 16; Lev 26: 12).

2. Of course the devil does not know if Christ, the owner of the house, is within your thinking or not, but if he sees you indulging your anger, or bellowing out, or using foul language, or casting insults, or passing judgement, or fomenting your hate, or committing injustice against people, or being all puffed up, or bragging, or laughing a lot and thinking greatly of yourself, or not constantly praying and reflecting on death, then he realizes that God, who guards you and cares for you, is not within your soul. Then the Evil One slips in like a thief,^b because the divine light is not in your heart, and he plunders the house of the soul, and so indeed does *the final state become worse than the first* (Mt 12: 45; Lk 11: 26).

(2) Note the parallel with the *Hodegos* definition (note a).

Question 2

QUESTION And how does one know if Christ has taken up his abode inside one?

ANSWER 1. This question resembles that of someone asking a pregnant woman, “How do you know if you have conceived in the womb?” Just as that woman does not need to learn this from somebody else, but knows by herself <by what happens> inside

^a The Greek preposition can mean ‘inside’ (the sense implied here), or ‘among’ (the sense usually accepted).

^b Cf. Jn 10: 1.

her – from the stanching of blood emissions, from the stirrings of the babe within her, also indeed from her lack of appetite for many types of food – that she has conceived,^a so also the soul does not need to learn from somebody else when Christ has taken up his abode inside her through the Holy Spirit. The soul sees at once that the impure blood of her customary passions has been stilled, that her appetite for the many different foods of sin has ceased, and especially that she now hates above all else the sweetness of pleasure – for the sweetness of honey has turned hateful to every pregnant woman.

2. When the soul of a Christian can witness in herself these and similar signs and indications, then full of the Spirit, like the prophet <Isaiah>, she says to God, *Because of the fear of you, Lord, we have conceived in the womb, we have borne in labour, and given birth to the spirit of your salvation, which we have brought forth in the land* (Isa 26: 17-18 LXX). That such is the indication of the true Christian, listen to Paul saying: *Have you not learned that Jesus Christ dwells in you, provided that you are not unequal to the test?* (2 Cor 13: 5)

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COMMENTS

(1) This question was omitted in **Coll. 23** probably because of the hints at some personal esoteric knowledge, which is suspect in more traditional circles; however it found its way into **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 75), and **Coll. d** (Qu. 2).

(2) There are links both with the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (see Note a), and with the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 2: “How does someone know at all that he/she has been baptized and received the Holy Spirit, as a person is a child in holy baptism?” and refers in the answer to Isa 26: 17-18 (LXX), then develops the parallel with the pregnant woman emphasising the knowledge that one has been truly baptized; this is an important element to bear in mind when debating the relative priority of each collection.

(3) In the quotation from Isaiah, one branch of the Anastasian textual tradition gives ἐποιήσαμεν (“which we have made”) as in the accepted LXX text, but the earlier tradition has ἐκνήσαμεν (“which we have brought forth”). In place of “spirit of your salvation”, clearly the meaning intended by Anastasios, the NEBT

^a Cf. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Longinus 5 (PG 65, 257B6-10).

translates “a wind of your salvation”, *pneuma* being ambiguous; the Hebrew text seems to omit “of your salvation”.

Question 3

QUESTION Is it possible to explain, *What eye has not seen nor ear heard, and what has not entered the human heart* (1 Cor 2: 9)?

ANSWER 1. Not only is it possible to explain, but some persons have been worthy to enter into possession of these things, those about whom Christ said, *We shall come, I and my Father, and we shall make our dwelling in them* (Jn 14: 23). Wherever God dwells and walks about, there all knowledge is at home.

8 2. One should note that the remark, *what eye has not seen*, refers to those of former times, i.e. to the Just Ones before Christ; Scripture does not say, “Nor shall they see”. In the same way the Lord also says, *Many prophets and just persons desired to see what you saw, and hear what you hear, and they did not hear* (Mt 13: 17), and again he said, *No one has seen God* (Jn 1: 18); he did not say, “Neither will anyone have sight”, for *Blessed*, he said, *are the pure of heart, for they will see God* (Mt 5: 8).

3. Therefore pay careful attention, if you will, and you will see that those, who are like Paul, saw and are now seeing *what the eye of those under the law has not seen, nor ear heard, and what had not entered the human heart* (1 Cor 2: 9) of those of the Old Testament, what *God has prepared for those who love him*. And Paul added at once the phrase, *But to me God has revealed these things through the spirit; for the spirit searches even the depths of God* (1 Cor 2: 10); thus those things are known to those who are worthy, which the eye of the sinner has not seen.

9 4. However they are unspeakable and inexplicable because some are not capable of them. So in the same discourse Paul adds the remark: *Someone who is <only> psychi^a does not accept what is of the spirit* (1 Cor 2: 14); it is folly for such a person. *For things of the spirit are learned and revealed in a spiritual way*

^a The word ψυχικός is translated in the RSV as “unspiritual” [with the note “or natural”]; Paul is contrasting the natural “psyche” with the God-given “pneuma”.

to the spiritual (1 Cor 2: 13). Therefore make an effort to learn these things in action and by experience, not by simple word which is of no help.

COMMENTS

(1) Like the preceding Qu., this one also found its way into **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 76) and **Coll. d** (Qu. 3).

Question 4

QUESTION What are those good things presented to us by Christ as gifts, *which the angels long to gaze upon* (1 Pet 1: 12), as Peter, the spokesman, says?

ANSWER 1. Some say that these are *what no eye has seen* (1 Cor 2: 9), and others that they are the sacrament (*mysterion*) of our communion. But what sense can this reply have? Our bloodless sacrifice is officiated by holy angels, and accompanied by their bodyguard, and accomplished by them. So in our opinion *the angels long* that God the Word, who made them, might dwell in them in reality [κατ' οὐσίαν], just as He does in our flesh.

2. *They* also *long* that their nature may be adored and praised by us, as it sits upon the cherubic throne^a in the bosom of the Father, just as our nature in Christ is adored by them and by all the seen and unseen creation.^b And again, they *long* to hold the keys^c of the Kingdom of the heavens, and to sit “upon twelve thrones passing judgement”^d like Christ on the day of judgement, just as the fishermen are going to pass judgement.

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3. For my part I say that the Cherubim and the Seraphim *long* to have the same familiarity with Christ that he had who rested his head “upon His breast”^e, and that the sinful women had who anointed and poured perfume upon Him.^f Let me tell you what is the most wonderful of all: Christ has said that when he comes on the day of judgement, *the powers of the heavens will*

^a Cf. Rev 3: 21; Ps 79: 2.

^b See Comments (2).

^c Cf. Mt 16: 19.

^d Cf. Mt 19: 28.

^e Cf. Jn 21: 20.

^f Cf. Mt 26: 7; Mk 14: 3; Lk 7: 3.

shake (Mt 24: 29) for fear and terror of him, but as for the just, he who made them *will cause them to lie down at table, and approaching them he will serve them* (Lk 12: 37).^a

4. These and similar things are what are presented to us by Christ as gifts, *which the angels long to gaze upon* (1 Pet 1: 12), that is, to enter.

COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. is found in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 77), and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 4).

(2) Qu. 80 below returns to this theme, and in the first of the *Narrationes about Sinai* there is a reference to the *proskynesis* offered by the angels to human nature, not vice versa (αὐτοὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν προσκυνοῦσιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, οὐχ ἡμεῖς τὴν αὐτῶν).^b

(3) In another set of *Narrationes*, the ψυχωφελεῖς (“helpful to the soul”), Anastasios points out that angels lack the power given to priests to forgive sins.^c

(4) An important testimony to the later tradition of the Anastasian QQ occurs in the Διόπτρα of Philip *Monotropos* (= the Solitary, late-11th cent.), where this Qu. and the following (Qu. 5) are quoted.^d

Question 5

II

QUESTION Why indeed did Christ glorify our nature above that of the angels, and why does he love it still?

ANSWER I. About this some wanted to say that it was, as Scripture says, *so that, where sin abounded, grace super-abounded* (Rom 5: 20). One might object to them saying, “Then it was more necessary for the demons also to be saved, for in them sin has abounded more than in us.”

2. Therefore listen to Paul who teaches the manner of Christ’s becoming man, and his great goodness in our regard; for Paul says that *this mystery*, <it was> *something that God*

^a See Comments (3).

^b Binggeli I 1, 11-12; Nau I.

^c Binggeli, II 27, 42-43.

^d Philippus Solitarius, Η διόπτρα, ed. Spyridon Lauriotis, Ὁ Ἄθως 1, Athens, 1919, pp. 128-129; unfortunately this edition is now very difficult to find, but cf. Munitiz, “In the steps...”, pp. 441-446.

foreordained from before the ages (1 Cor 2: 7), viz. the sojourn among humans and his kindness.

3. Thus God is devoted to what is human rather than to any other created thing in two ways: in the first place, as to something both formed by his own hands and a blue-print [προτύπωμα] of his plan of salvation [οικονομία],^a a living being that is both invisible and visible, mortal and immortal, as is also Christ; secondly, as he is of the same race as we are, and of the same substance, and of the same stock, and of the same form, having become man.

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4. Thus Christ also is devoted to us for a physical reason and in a physical way, because every nature and every race has a natural inclination and affection for what is of similar stock and of the same race and of the same substance to itself.

COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. is also found in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 78), in **Coll. d** (Qu. 5) and is mentioned by Philip *Monotropos*, as noted in the comments on the previous Qu.

Question 6

QUESTION Who are those *true worshippers*, who *will worship the Father* – and God – *neither on the mountain, nor in Jerusalem* (Jn 4: 23, 21)? For it is obvious that in so far as they do not worship in Jerusalem, then neither in any other place on earth, because there is nothing more worthy of respect here <below> than Jerusalem.

ANSWER 1. This problem is really awe-inspiring and foreign to human hearing: this is why it fails to find an answer and a clear solution, as not all are capable of listening to the more divine mysteries. However by quoting from a certain holy

^a In explaining the unity in Christ of the two natures, divine and human, Anastasios compares it to the unity of the human body and soul: “It seems to me that our own conception – both body and soul concurring to attain existence together, since neither does the body exist on its own nor does the soul exist before the body – is a blue-print of the unity of Christ” (ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα σύλληψις – ἀμφουπάρκτως συντρέχει ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα· οὔτε γὰρ σῶμα καθ’ ἑαυτὸ συνίσταται, οὔτε δὲ ψυχὴ προϋπάρχει τοῦ σώματος – προτύπωσις οὕσα τῆς ἐνώσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ), *Viae Dux* II, 6, 20-21 (CCSG 8, p. 60).

conversation that occurred among holy men, who are still surviving in the flesh today, I shall make what is said clear, despite a certain obscurity.

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2. Somebody from here^a came across a man, an anchorite, leading the contemplative^b life. He said to him: “I am astonished, father, that you can support in this way to be separated from the holy church building, and far from communion and the holy community services [συνάξεις].”

3. In answer the man of God said to him,

“Sir, all the services and liturgies and feasts and communions and sacrifices take place for this purpose, that one may be purified from sins, and that God may dwell in that person, in accordance with what Christ said, *We, I and my father, shall come and make our dwelling by him* (Jn 14: 23), and *I shall inhabit and stroll among them* (2 Cor 6: 16).^c

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4. So when someone becomes the vivified, God-made temple of God, and the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit inhabit and stroll within that person, the soul, the God-bearer, loses all desire for constructed churches, or for visible sacrifices, or for material services, and human feasts, and she desires to adore God *neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem* (Jn 4: 21). The reason is that the soul possesses the Father within herself, and the Son, the High Priest, is also within, and the Spirit – the true fire; also within are the true sacrifice to God – *a contrite spirit* (Ps 50: 19); and the altar – a pure conscience; and the propitiation for sins – spiritual tears; and the higher Jerusalem – the exulting soul.^d To sum up, being spiritual, with eyes of the spirit, one offers up “spiritual sacrifices”; *for God is spirit, and those who adore Him should make their adoration in spirit and in truth* (Jn 4: 24).

^a Probably an autobiographical reference to the Monastery of Mt Sinai (later St Catherine’s).

^b Literally “heyschast”, but the word did not have the later connotations associated with Mt Athos.

^c Using Lev 26: 12 as well as Jn 14: 23.

^d Cf. Ps 34: 9.

^e Cf. 1 Cor 2: 13; 1 Pet 2: 5.

5. For all that can be seen is *ephemeral*, as Paul teaches, whether it be sacrifices or offerings, *what is unseen is eternal* (2 Cor 4: 18), i.e. whatever is to be found in the heart, *in spirit and in truth* (Jn 4: 24), *what the eye has not seen, nor ear heard, and what has not risen to the heart of man* (1 Cor 2: 9), before the *parousia* of Christ; things *that God has prepared* and revealed to us through his Spirit that dwells in us. The person judged worthy to possess these things, as one divinized through the indwelling of God within him- or herself, this person can truly adore them within the self, or rather can adore the self that is within oneself, and hold in veneration the self as seeing one's flesh existing as *the tent of God* (Rev 21: 3), the house, the altar and sanctuary of God. Such a person holds in veneration neither heaven, nor the angels, nor any visible sacrifice, nor anything else that is in the world, as being superior to the personal temple of the body, in which that person sees indwelling the fullness of the Trinity."

6. There you are: you have heard of the mysteries granted to us by Christ through his sojourn among us.

COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. was taken over in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 2), with an additional paragraph extolling the exceptional value of quiet contemplation, and accepted as such in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 2) and also in **Coll. d.**(Qu. 60. In the added Florilegia of texts appears a quotation from Nikephoros I (Patriarch of Constantinople 806-815); this helps to date the formation of the later Collections.

(2) This is one of the most characteristic Answers of Anastasios, linking him firmly to the tradition of spiritual writers so strong in Byzantine literature.

PROBLEMS OF SALVATION

Question 7

15 QUESTION If someone is an infidel, or a Jew, or a Samaritan, and performs many good works, does that person enter into the kingdom of heaven?

ANSWER As the Lord said to Nicodemus, *Truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, a person will not enter into the kingdom of heaven* (Jn 3: 5), it is clear that such a one will not enter the kingdom. However that person does not lose his or her reward, but either receives it here <in this life>, with easy living and riches and comfort and all the other deceits of this life (after the fashion of the one who heard, *Remember that you in your life-time received your good things* [Lk 16: 25]), or on the other hand in the future life has a big difference over someone who did no good works. For just as in the case of the just there are *many mansions* (Jn 14: 2) close to God, so in the case of sinners there are many different forms of punishment.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 79) and **Coll. d** (Qu. 7); it is given first place in **Coll. b**.

(2) Again, an interesting parallel in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 101, which repeats the Answer from Anastasios, then adds a quotation from Paul, *Glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek* (Rom 2: 10), with the comment: "The Apostle said this about those who lived before

the coming of Christ” (PG 28, 660B-C), thus conflating part of the following Qu. 8 with this one.

Question 8

QUESTION Then how is it said, *From all races, anyone fearing God and acting justly is acceptable to Him* (Acts 10: 35)? 16

ANSWER 1. When this phrase was spoken by St Peter almost the whole world was infidel and all races were without law. So at that time, *anyone fearing God and acting justly*, like the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10: 1, 22), was *acceptable* to God, whether a Jew or a pagan, as were the Ninevites^a and the friends of Job.

2. But once Christ's gospel had been proclaimed and the Apostles had taught us to be baptised, listen to what Christ says to the Apostles: *In whatever city you enter and they do not receive your word, going out shake even the dust from your feet against them. Amen I say to you: it will be more bearable for the land of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that city* (Mt 10: 11, 14-15).

3. In that case how will someone be *acceptable* to God who does not honour Him and does not believe in the proclamation of his Son? Such a person neither *fears God* nor *acts justly* (Acts 10: 35). Similarly consider as well the remark of Paul that before the Gospel <there was> *glory and honour and peace for anyone performing a good action, for the Jew first and also for the pagan* (Rom 2: 10), but after the Gospel, *Even if an angel, he says, from heaven were to preach a gospel to you at variance with the gospel which we have preached to you, may he be anathema* (Gal 1: 18). 17

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 80), **Coll. b** (Qu. 2), and **Coll. d** (Qu. 8); it was added (in part) to Qu. 7 in the *QQ ad Antiochum* (see Comment 2 on Qu. 7).

^a Cf. Jon 3: 10.

Question 9

QUESTION In the case of children, <who die> without sin at the age of five or four, but are the offspring of Jews or unbaptized, where do we want to say that they go, to condemnation or to Paradise?

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ANSWER As the Lord dissolved his own decision which laid down that, *The sins of the fathers come upon the children* (Deut 5: 9)^a, and said through the Prophets that the children will not be destroyed because of the sins of their fathers,^b my opinion is that they will not enter hell. However it is not good to cross-examine [ψηλαφάω] the judgements of God.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 81), **Coll. b** (Qu. 3), and **Coll. d** (Qu. 9).

(2) In the *QQ ad Antiochum* Qu. 115 a similar question is given a different answer: in the case of children of believers there are quotations from Mt 19: 14 (“*Allow little children to come to me...*”) and 1 Cor 7: 14 (“*your children... they are holy*”), but for children of unbelievers the conclusion is purely negative (such children enter neither heaven nor hell, as they are without sin); the personal note found in the Anastasian reply is missing.

Question 10

19

QUESTION Is it possible to gain the remission of sins through one good work?

ANSWER Yes, because the prostitute, Rahab, was saved because she sheltered the spies,^c and the thief because of his faith,^d and the prostitute <in the New Testament> because of her lamentation.^e

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 82), **Coll. b** (Qu. 11) and **Coll. d** (Qu. 10).

^a Cf. Ex 20: 5.

^b Cf. Deut 24: 16; Ezek 18: 20 (and 4).

^c Cf. Josh 2 and 6: 25.

^d Cf. Lk 23: 40-43.

^e Cf. Lk 7: 37-50.

(2) In the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 77 (PG 28, 645B-C) the theme appears very briefly under the question, “Which of the commandments provides us with forgiveness of all sins?” and gives the answer with Luke 6: 37, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged.” In another question, Qu. 90 (PG 28, 656A), humility is defined in terms of not judging others.

(3) In **Coll. b** the theme of “salvation despite the commission of a sin”, alternatively of “not passing judgement” (*de non iudicando*), is treated at length in two additional QQ numbered 41 and 42 in the complete collection. They are the last of four items that sometimes appear apart under the title, “Demonstration that the episcopal [priestly] dignity is something great and angelical” (Ἀπόδειξις ὅτι μέγα καὶ ἀγγελικὸν τὸ ἀρχιερατικὸν ἀξίωμα);^a the first two are not QQ but simply stories: viz. Qu. 39 *de arca martyris* (BHG 1322u, 1322v); Qu. 40 *de baptismo pueri mortui* (BHG 1444x). The third (Qu. 41), on accepting communion from unworthy priests, contains a couple of stories (§§3-7) also found in the *Narrationes*, and most of the answer (omitting only the first paragraph) is found in the thirteenth-century *Thesaurus* of Theognostos.^b The fourth (Qu. 42) also appears isolated in several manuscripts, and was included by Paul of Evergetis in his *Synagoge* (III 2, 6 [ed. Athens, 1964^c, t. 3, pp. 36-38]); some parts of it have been published separately.^c The numerous stories included in these Answers remind one that Anastasios was also known as the author of collections of *Narrationes*.

Coll. b, Qu. 41 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 17]

QUESTION How should we partake without scandal of communion of the holy mysteries when we happen to hear and see that the priest is falling into sins of the flesh?

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ANSWER I. It is only a bishop, and not a lay person, who can judge and condemn a priest, even if some people nowadays have imagined that they can try to do this. If we were to give leave to condemn in our mind the life of priests, then Satan would set about arranging things so that taking scandal from all of them, we would inflict harm on our souls and remain without communion.

^a This “Demonstration” (ἀπόδειξις) is sometimes found as an annexe to the Anastasian *Homilia de sacra synaxi*; G. Mercati (“Un preteso scritto di san Pietro vescovo d’Alexandria”) has argued that it was probably added there (“è un’aggiunta posteriore alla redazione prima dell’omilia”, p. 441) and his article will be found mentioned again in connection with the Philo referred to in the isolated question given below in connection with Qu. 84, Comment (4), p. 210 note a.

^b Theognostos, *Thesaurus*, XVII, C §§1-4 (CCSG 5, pp. 180-182).

^c Details available in the CCSG edition of the Anastasian QQ, p. 196.

However if a priest requires to be condemned and corrected, then let us bring to the bishop what is against him, but for us, who hold the rank of sheep, it is impossible to condemn the shepherd, unless he is at fault in some matter of faith.

2. Indeed if we are worthy of the divine mysteries, the reception of communion becomes a source of light for us and the unworthy life of the priest cannot do us any harm. On the other hand, if we are unworthy of the gift and communion of the holy mysteries, even if an angel were to distribute them to us we would not profit in any way.^a For even Judas, who received communion from the divine hands of Christ, found no help there. A sinful priest resembles a man who has leprosy in his hands and is distributing coins; the leprosy stays with him, but the gold and those who receive it remain spotless and unharmed from the leprosy.^b

3. But listen once more to a story which is profitable for the soul from the period of Arkadios,^c who became bishop about fifty years ago.

4. There is a place [*chorion*, village or small town] called Trachiades about fifteen signposts from Constantia. There was a priest^d in that place and through the devil's workings he was led astray and became a sorcerer; he was so irreligious that in the company of whores and harlots he would eat and drink from the sacred church plate. Then after some years, word got about, he was denounced, arrested and interrogated. The Governor's adjutant [ὁ σύμποινος τοῦ ἀρχοντος] questioned him under torture, "Tell us, most wicked man, unworthy of any human pity and worthy of every punishment and retribution! Granted that you despised the coming dreadful judgement and had no regard for any present tribunal, but how did you not hold in awe the fearful sanctuary with the altar when you offered up that awesome and bloodless sacrifice, considering that perhaps fire would come down from heaven and burn you up, or the earth would open its mouth and swallow you?"

5. The sorcerer replied to this saying, "By the God who now punishes me through your hands, and who will punish me in the

^a Cf. Anastasios of Sinai, *Homilia de sacra synaxi* (PG 89, 848B).

^b This sentence is found in the works of Anastasios of Antioch, *Capita ad Sergium Grammaticum* (CPG 6957), ed. S.N. Sakkos, p. 139 (ed. I.-B. Pitra, *Iuris ecclesiastici graecorum historia et monumenta*, II, Rome, 1868, p. 276).

^c Arkadios was bishop of Néapolis in Cyprus, c. 625-642; cf. V. Déroche, *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis*, Uppsala, 1995, pp. 26-36.

^d The story of *presbytero mago* (BHG 1444v, CPG 7758, B7) is found in Nau XLIX (*Oriens Christianus* 3, 1903, pp. 69-70), and in Binggeli II, 15.

other place by His own hands, <I swear> that I did not present the holy offering, nor did I distribute communion to the people ever since I abandoned God and became a sorcerer. Instead an angel of the Lord would come and tie me to a pillar of the priestly area [the sanctuary], and then offer and distribute to the people; and when he said, "Let us go in the peace of Christ", then he would untie me and I would go out. However none of the people saw this secret [τὸ μυστήριον], except for me alone, and the people thought that I was the one making the offering and distributing communion to them.

6. No less worthy of being written down^a for future memory is something that the blessed Isidore, the lawyer [lit. *scholastikos*], who died three years ago, recounted to me. He said that he had a certain brother-in-law, while he was still a layman in Alexandria, who had on his forehead a tumour that had formed there, the size of a large apple. He said that this man had the custom, each time that he received the holy mysteries in communion, to anoint the hard swelling of the tumour with the holy blood.^b

7. Now one day he came for his daily midday communion to the church of the holy Mother of God, the church in the Theonas^c district, and moved by some diabolical impulse he peeped through the keyhole of the door and saw the chaplain inside in the sacristy copulating with a woman. Drawing back a short way away, when he saw that the woman had left he did not become critical or shocked but thought to himself, "If the clergyman has just sinned, still tomorrow he can make his repentance and be saved, and it is not my business to judge him until Christ judges him. In any case, my belief is this, that the holy mysteries are given to us not from the hands of human beings but from the hands of holy angels." And so approaching for the communion, no sooner had he opened his mouth and said the "Amen", at once the tumour on his forehead was cured and became invisible.

8. However if those who are really super-critical say that these are mythical tales, let them be put to shame before the holy and ecumenical synod of the three hundred and eighteen holy Fathers

^a The story *de fide sincera, seu de sanatione tuberis* (BHG 1444y) is found in Nau LVI (*Oriens Christianus* 3, 1903, pp. 83-84) and in Binggeli (Appendix 3, p. 277).

^b Cf. Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, *Catech. Myst.* V, 22 (PG 33, 1125 B1-9), from which it is clear that the custom of anointing eyes and forehead with the remnants of consecrated wine on the lips was not uncommon.

^c Unfortunately not identified so far.

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in Nicaea; in connection with this the following story^a is recounted concerning the blessed and saintly Emperor Constantine. After the condemnation of the foul Arius and the definition of the true faith, the devil, who could not bear to see the holy churches in peace, set some bishops against others, and they handed in to the Emperor accusations in writing, one accusing the other and vice versa, about sins of the flesh and other foul and impure causes.

9. Then the Emperor Constantine, that divinely inspired imitator of Christ's kindness, having accepted and read such disgraceful tracts, called together the bishops; then he had the papers brought in and ordered wax to be brought to bind them together and that they should be burned, uttering a dictum that is worthy of God: "If I were to see with these eyes of mine some priest of Christ committing a sin, I would spread out my purple cloak [χλαμύδα] and cover him, so that Christ may also cover my own sins. Anyone who publicly makes mockery of a priest of God makes mockery of the faith of the Christians and of the Church, to the delight of the pagans [Ἑλληνας] and the enemies^b of the cross."^c

Coll. b, Qu. 42 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 18]

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QUESTION How can we not judge someone who is clearly committing a sin?

^a This story, *de episcopis se invicem accusantibus* (BHG 369n), is found in several sources, but this version seems to go back to Theodoret of Cyrrhus (5th c.), cf. F. Halkin, "Constantin se voilant la face?", *Anal. Boll.*, 85, 1967, pp. 440.

^b The expression "the enemies of the cross" is also found in the *Narrationes* (Nau XLVIII, Binggeli II, 14 line 21).

^c One of the manuscripts of **Coll. b** (Athos, *Philotheou* 52), which has added other texts (notably Appendices 20, 21, 22, 23a) here gives the following addition:

Let that person be to you like a gentile; there are some people who are very careless and who criticise in a pharisaic way not only priests but also those who have opted for the monastic life; and when they spot some member of a monastery who has an extra *himation* [garment], they fling out the Lord's command, "Do not own two *chitonas* [tunics]" (cf. Mt 10: 10; Mk 6: 9; Lk 9: 3), while they themselves are grasping at everything and enriching themselves every day. Again, if they observe some religious person eating too much, they become harsh critics though they themselves are getting drunk every day and stuffing themselves and banqueting; if you have presented the monk with what he has, why do you mock him in witless fashion; and if another person has provided the monk with what he has acquired and you then mock him, you will receive a more severe condemnation from the Lord for your envy and meddling. There is no objection to a straight-forward criticism, but the Lord commands, *First take the log out of your own eye, and then draw the speck from your neighbour's eye* (Mt 7: 5; Lk 6: 42).

This text is found largely in a homily of John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Matt.* 23, 2 (PG 57, 309 [36-48]); the same text is included in **Coll. 88** as an addition to the series of Gospel texts that make up Qu. 80 (found as Qu. ed. 70, PG 89, 696C2-23).

ANSWER 1. By bearing in mind the Lord saying, “*Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned*” (Lk 6: 37), and also the Apostle teaching, “*The one who is standing should take care of a fall*” (1 Cor 10: 12) ... “*Keep an eye on yourself, lest you also be put to the test*” (Gal 6: 1) ... “*No human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within*” (1 Cor 2: 11). For frequently many who sinned in the sight of others, afterwards secretly have confessed to God, pleased him and won his pardon, and they received the Holy Spirit; then those who are thought sinners by us are really just before God. We were witnesses of their sin, but we were not aware of the good works that they had performed secretly.^a

2. Such a person was that flute-player in Egypt, Philemon.^b In his regard a divine voice revealed to Saint Makarios in the desert, “You have not yet reached the level of Philemon the Flute-player in such-and-such a city.” So setting off, holy father Makarios found him playing the flute at a wedding and dancing around. Taking him aside privately he questioned him, wanting to find out about his achievements. But he kept on saying that he was a profligate and a sinner, who only recently had passed over from a robber’s life to the flute-players’ troupe. “However,” he said, “I am aware that I did do one good work while I was a robber-chieftain. I found a woman fleeing from her creditors after having sold her own children for fifty *nomismata*; I took her into my cave and gave her fifty *nomismata*, without touching her in any sort of carnal sin.” Thus it was in recompense for this action done on behalf of the woman and her children that he was raised to the level and place of holy father Makarios in God’s sight.

3. It is really necessary never to pass judgement, even when we see a sin with our own eyes; after the sinner has moved just ten steps away from our sight, we do not know what he may have done in relation with God, and what God may have done in relation with him. When dawn broke on a certain Thursday Judas the traitor was in the company of Christ and his disciples, while the thief was in that of evil-doers and murderers; yet as Friday succeeded, Judas had departed into the exterior darkness, while the thief had found his home in Paradise with Christ. Because of these sudden changes it is good not to judge anyone until God

^a Parallel passages are to be found in Qu. 73 below, and in the Anastasian homily *de sacra synaxi* (PG 89, 845C).

^b The story of Philemon the Flute-player is found in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Antonius 24 (PG 65, 84B), Eucharistus 1 (PG 65, 168-169).

has passed judgement on that person. *For the father has given all judgement to Christ* (Jn 5: 22), so that someone who judges his neighbour has snatched away Christ's dignity as a judge, and such a person is an Anti-Christ.

4. On other occasions there are many who receive pardon for their sins through varied trials, in a way that we do not know. Again others are purified through physical illness and chronic sickness: *for the Lord has chastised me with his chastisement, but He has not handed me over to death* (Ps 117: 18). Some of us being judged by the Lord are chastised in this life, so that we may not be condemned with the world in the next. This is what Paul turned upon the incestuous fornicator in Corinth when he said, "*Let such a one be handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved in the day of judgement*" (1 Cor 5: 5). Thus even <for> those possessed by demons,^a if they bear it with gratitude, this chastisement becomes for their good.

5. Again there are some who through others – either some saintly persons or their own parents – gain the forgiveness of their sins: *the Lord carries out the wishes of those who fear him* (Ps 144: 19). Also some people find mercy even while in the midst of some mortal illness, as did Hezekiah who pleaded tearfully with God (4 Kings 20: 5). While others, having made some secret pact and understanding between themselves and God, departed this life a few days later and were saved. Wherever one has reached, whether a good state or an evil one, from there that person departs. That is why God said through Ezekiel the prophet: "Although someone has committed all sorts of injustice, if such a one then converts and does what is just, there will be no memory of his crimes; for where I find someone, there will I judge that person".^b But divine Scripture bears witness that in many cases some receive pardon for their sins through the prayers of holy men: for even Aaron, after making the calf for Israel at Horeb, was forgiven through the prayers of Moses,^c and similarly the sister of Moses, Miriam, was purified of her leprosy because of the prayers of Moses;^d and similarly Nabouchodonosor [= Nebuchadnezzar] was judged worthy of God's kindness because of the prayers of the prophet Daniel.^e

^a Grammatically, the nominative is left hanging here in the Greek, but the sense is clear.

^b Cf. Ezek 3: 19-20; 18: 27-30; 24: 14; 33: 16-20.

^c Cf. Ex 32-34.

^d Cf. Num 12: 10-15.

^e Cf. Dan 4.

6. However if one should also call to mind one of the saintly men of our own generation, there is no cause to be ashamed. Leontios,^a who became bishop of Neapolis, used to tell our fathers that while living in one of the monasteries in the East, he had as superior a saintly man, a genuine servant of God, who happened to be an acquaintance of the Emperor Maurice. Now when that same Emperor Maurice incurred through diabolical intervention that infamous defeat and betrayed his army to the barbarians,^b he sent for that holy man once he had realized what he had done and come to contrition, and he implored him very earnestly to request from God that for his sake the soul of Maurice should be saved, as a favour to the holy man, and be pardoned for what he had done.

7. So when this same emperor came to die, the monk requested God to disclose to him if indeed He had accepted his prayer and forgiven Emperor Maurice his sin. And indeed one night the servant of God goes into ecstasy; he sees a place of extraordinary brightness and glory, like some immensely great temple; within it, in the sanctuary, was seated the God and Emperor, Jesus, and the seven veils set in order, one inside the other, hid him^c from being seen. Then the monk [*geron*, lit. "the old man"], standing in front of the seventh veil, heard the voice of Christ the Emperor, with a voice like thunder ordering and summoning by name those who had been Emperors of the Romans [= Byzantines]; the voice gave permission and said, "Let the Emperor Constantine enter", and with that utterance he saw the saintly and glorious Constantine enter, who along with Saint Helena was carrying the revered and life-giving cross. Then one after the other he heard the heavenly Ruler ordering each pious emperor by name to enter into his presence, just as each made his entry. Now when the Emperor Tiberios entered in, the monk heard Christ the Ruler saying in a reluctant tone, as if under duress from a supplicant, "Well, then, let the Emperor Maurice enter because of the request from the monk." Maurice came up to go in, along with his wife and children. And on seeing the monk standing before the imperial doors he says to his wife and

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^a Leontios of Neapolis, like Anastasios a native of Cyprus, was a well-known hagiographer whose historical credentials are considered unreliable. The story of the monk's vision of the Emperor Maurice is also found in a late Paris manuscript (BHG 1322yb).

^b Maurice reigned from 582 to 602; for an account of this defeat, cf. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, anno 6092 [584 A.D.], vol. 1, pp. 278-280; worth consulting is Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian* (pp. 24-27: The overthrow of Maurice).

^c Probably the monk, but possibly Jesus.

children, “Fall at the feet of this revered father; it is because of him that the sole good and kindly Ruler has opened up for us.” All these things, with the Lord for our witness, we are setting forth without any deception in order to instruct young judges not to condemn anyone without investigation and haphazardly.

8. I have recounted these things not idly nor for verbosity’s sake but because I am aware that the tongue of most people is sharper *than a two-edged sword* (Heb 4: 12), quick to condemn the faults of others. Even though we may see a thousand good things in a person, but happen to see some petty failing (since nobody is sinless, *except for God alone* [Mt 10: 18; Lk 18: 19]) we leave to one side and neglect the person’s thousand good qualities and achievements, and make remarks only about that minor failing, denigrating the person.

9. It is also possible by means of an open declaration to gain not only the remission of sins but also rewards: as the Lord said, “*Whoever declares himself on my behalf before others, I will declare myself on his behalf before my father in heaven* (Mt 10: 32). Everyone should realize this: whoever confesses the Christ despite the menace of fear and threats, to that person all sins that may have been committed in life will be forgiven in that hour. I shall confirm this dictum with a surprising story.

10. In the years of the Emperor Maurice^a there was in Constantinople a most wicked and powerful magician called Mesites.^b This man began to employ under the guise of his *notarios*^c a young servant, who was not aware that this Mesites was a magician. As the latter wanted to lead astray this lad,^d who was a Christian, and to attach him as well to the devil, he took him off one day in the evening; and mounting their horses they went out of the City to a deserted and uninhabited place, a meeting of three ways.

11. And eventually at a late hour they reached a certain place and saw a castle with iron gates. When Mesites had knocked they both entered, Mesites and the Christian lad. And they find an enormous temple, and brilliant golden stands and lights and lamps and couches, with a number of servants sitting to right and left, all of them Ethiopians; there was also one person of enor-

^a See note 22.

^b This story (*de mago Mesita*) about the magician called “Mesites” (a word that normally signifies a “mediator”) is numbered BHG 801b.

^c The term can mean “scribe” or “secretary” (the more obvious sense here), even if it also covers more important officials.

^d The word *παῖς* is ambiguous, meaning both “boy” and “servant”, and here both seem to be intended.

mous size, who was himself also an Ethiopian, seated on a high throne with the appearance of a king. He welcomed and warmly embraced Mesites, and commanded a throne to be placed for him near himself, and had him seated, saying "Welcome, Sir Mesites, our genuine friend and servant!"

12. After Mesites was seated, as the lad was standing behind his throne, the one who was enthroned on high as king of the demons, having looked at the lad, says to Mesites, "Why have you brought this lad here?" Mesites in answer says, "Lord, this one is your slave, along with me." Then the king seated on high says to the lad, "Tell me, youngster, are you my slave?" The lad replied and said, "I am the slave of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." And with that utterance, down fell at once the one on the throne, down fell all the others who were seated, down fell the lights; the place was swallowed up, the castle was swallowed up, they all were swallowed up, and so too Mesites was swallowed up with them; the lad found himself alone and there too were the horses in their place. He hurriedly mounted on his horse and returned to the City [= Constantinople]. When he was asked by some people, "Where is Mesites?" he replied saying, "That man has gone off *into the outer darkness and the unquenchable fire*" (Mt 8: 12; Mk 9: 43), giving an account of all that had happened.

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13. Some time later this same lad was staying with a certain *patrician*,^a a servant of Christ and a virtuous man, generous with the poor. One evening both of them, the *patrician* and the lad, come at an appropriate time to pray before the honoured and most revered ikon of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And while the lad was standing to the left of the *patrician* the ikon of the Master turned away and directed its gaze towards the lad. Then when the *patrician* noticed what had happened, he moved the lad to a place on his right, and once again the ikon turned away and directed its gaze to the lad. Then the *patrician* threw himself prostrate on the ground, weeping and supplicating and declaring his faith and saying, "My Lord, Jesus Christ, why do you turn your face away from me, your servant^b? You know, Master, that to the best of my ability I have not turned my face away from anyone who asked for alms, and why do you, Master, turn away from your unworthy servant?" After he had supplicated like this and confessed his faith for a long time, a voice comes forth from the ikon of the Master saying, "I am pleased with you, because from what I have given you, you have made an offering

^a An ill-defined but high-ranking dignity, not uncommon by this time.

^b Literally, *doulos*, "slave".

to me. But to this one I am under an obligation because, though he found himself in a mighty panic, he did not deny me, but made confession of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

14. However there is another method for salvation, which can be brought to a successful conclusion much more easily than the others: I mean that which has been mentioned above,^a not to pass judgement and not to guard rancour. There is nothing that God hates as much as an embittered person. Even though we may have thousands of achievements to our credit, if we harbour bitterness, it is pointless and futile for us to give a detailed account of them. And listen, if you like, to an extraordinary story of something that happened in our own days – Christ is our witness and there are still eye-witnesses of it alive – something most helpful and deserving to be remembered.

15. There was a man^b who belonged to those who wear the monastic habit; he lived his life with utter negligence and laziness, then fell ill with a sickness that was mortal. When he came to his last breath, he showed no fear of death but prayed to God with great thankfulness and eagerness and so departed from his body. Now one of those who were in attendance on him, one of the most God-favoured of the fathers, asked him saying, “Brother So-and-so, believe me, as we watched you, we thought that you had lived out your life with utter negligence and laziness; how is that you have such lack of worry and such thankfulness in the face of such a fearful and terrifying hour, that of departure from life, one that even the saints hold in dread?”

16. In response then to these words the brother said, “Truly, reverend fathers, it is a fact that I lived out my life in utter negligence and laziness. And the angels of God brought to me the hand-written list of my sins in this hour, reading out to me all the sins that I had done since I made my monastic renunciation, and they said to me, “Do you acknowledge these?” “Yes, they are truly mine and I acknowledge them, but nevertheless, my lords, ever since my monastic renunciation I have never passed judgement on anyone nor borne a grudge. Therefore I request that in my case the words of Christ should be respected: for He said, “*Do not judge and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned*” (Mt 7: 1; and Mt 6: 12, 14-15). And as he said

^a At the start of the Answer.

^b This story, “on the death of a monk” (*de morte monachi*), figures in the BHG with the number 1440pb, where there is reference to a twelfth-century Paris manuscript that records it.

this to the angels, they tore up at once the hand-written list of my sins, and behold I am leaving to join Christ with complete joy and no anxiety." And once the brother had explained these things to the fathers, he immediately gave up the spirit, giving great assistance and edification to his listeners so that they would not judge anyone nor bear grudges; he gained the fruit of such a great grace by putting into practice these virtues. May we also be worthy of such a grace and kindness from the Lord and God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power, now and always and for ages upon ages, amen.

Question 11

QUESTION And if someone has performed some sinful deed, and then does some worthy acts in order to have this forgiven him, then once again sins after these worthy deeds, does such a person then wipe out the worthy deeds performed?

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ANSWER There are some sinful deeds that destroy the good, and there are some that do not. Moreover, take into account the gravity of the failing and the greatness of the worthy act. However, if one does not abandon the sin, but dies in it, the affair is not easily forgivable. Nevertheless God alone knows how to judge such cases.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 83), **Coll. b** (Qu. 8), and **Coll. d** (Qu. 11).

(2) In **Coll. b** in addition to Qu. 8 there is another Qu. (Qu. 10) dealing with the same topic and partly indebted to the original Anastasian question;^a the text is as follows:

Coll. b. Qu. 10 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 5]

QUESTION Some persons quite frequently after having broken away from their sin and repented, occasionally trip over once more and suffer a fall; then they despair of themselves, thinking that they have wasted all the effort they had put into their repentance.

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ANSWER I. The effort that someone has put into repentance is not wasted with God, and for that reason one should not despair

^a Found in the later tradition: cf. Theognostos, *Thesaurus*, II, 43 (ed. Munitiz [CCSG 5], p. 224).

of oneself but rather stand up once more and make a stand against the enemy with good works and repentance.

2. For just as in the imperial army, the emperor welcomes the soldier who stands and fights against the enemy, at one moment giving a blow, at another receiving one, rather than the one who flees and throws away his arms, even so God has more affection for the soul that stands and does not give in, but fights against the demons, rather than for the one who puts up no fight, but instead falls into despair for herself, and consequently commits sins recklessly.

3. Someone who sins daily has a different condemnation from the one who sins from time to time, just as someone who gives alms every day has a different reward from someone who does so once a year. Therefore, though you have sinned a thousand times, repent a thousand times, so that when death comes it may find you engaged in repentance.^a

(3) The problem recurs in two of the *QQ ad Antiochum*, 84 (PG 28, 649A-B) and 133 (PG 28, 681A-B), but here the replies are more developed and the wording unrelated.

Question 12

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QUESTION From what age are a person's sins judged by God?

ANSWER There are many variations in this also as far as God is concerned. Each person is judged in accordance with their degree of knowledge and wisdom, some from their twelfth year of age, others when older.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 84), **Coll. b** (Qu. 4) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 11).

(2) Both Qu. and Answer reproduce the text found in Timothy of Alexandria (d. 385), *Responsio*, No. 18 (Joannou, p. 252, PG 33, 1308B10-15); however, the true author of that particular Qu. is doubtful (cf. CPG 2520) and may well have been Anastasios (cf. Qu. 38 below, with Comment [4]).

Question 13

QUESTION Why is it that, although the blasphemy of the heretics has a greater condemnation than a sexual sin, when

^a Cf. Coll. b, Qu. 9, added to Qu. 47 Comment (3).

a sinner of each sort converts to repentance, the Church immediately accepts the heretic to communion [κοινωνία], but bars from communion for a period the one who has committed sexual sins?

ANSWER Because one is a voluntary sin, whereas that of the heretic is due to ignorance; in addition, in order that the Church may make heretics more eager to convert, and sexual sinners more loath to sin.

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COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** (Qu. ed. 85), and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 12), but not in **Coll. b.**

(2) There may be an echo in the Qu. of a passage in John Climacus:

“A certain learned man put a serious question to me, saying: ‘what is the gravest sin, apart from murder and denial of God?’ And when I said: ‘To fall into heresy,’ he asked: ‘Then why does the catholic Church receive heretics who have sincerely anathematized their heresy, and consider them worthy to partake in the mysteries; while on the other hand when a man who has committed fornication is received, even though he confess and forsakes his sin, the *Apostolic Constitutions* order him to be excluded from the immaculate mysteries for a number of years?’ I was struck with bewilderment, and what perplexed me then has remained unresolved.” *Scala Paradisi*, gr. 15 (PG 88, 889B1-13; English translation, §48, pp. 152-153).

This would provide a rare link between Anastasios and someone thought to have been a contemporary or predecessor in the Monastery of Sinai. In a Scholion to this passage (Scholion 26, PG 88, 912) a different “answer” is given: heresy is a deviation of the mind and a sin of the mouth, whereas fornication is a sin of the whole body.

(3) Canonical regulations varied in the number of years of Eucharistic abstinence imposed on fornicators: cf. *Nomocanon*, tit. 13, ch. 5 (RP 1, 301-2); for the proper pastoral attitude towards heretics, cf. Qu. 14.

Question 14

QUESTION Why is it that we do not rebaptize heretics when they convert and enter the catholic Church?

ANSWER If that were to happen, someone would not readily turn away from heresy out of shame of being rebaptized; moreover the Holy Spirit knows how to shed enlightenment among persons by the imposition of the priest's hands, and also by prayer, as the Acts of the Apostles bear witness.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 86), **Coll. b** (Qu. 37), and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 12, the same number given to the previous Qu.)

(2) Anastasios seems to bypass the controversy that bedevilled the early Church in the West (first Cyprian, and then the Donatist controversy); even if canonical regulations were more complicated than suggested here, the overall policy was similar, as shown by a title in the *Nomocanon*, "On those from among the heretics who turn to orthodoxy, and whether it is possible to ordain them, and which ones are to be baptized, and which only anointed, and that it is necessary to employ gentleness with heretics so that they convert", tit. 12, ch. 14 (RP 1, 273).

UNIVERSAL QUESTIONS

Night before day?

Question 15

QUESTION There is a problem that is much discussed nearly all over the world, whether the day precedes the night, or on the contrary it is the night that has been placed before the day.

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ANSWER According to the Mosaic account of creation in the Law it is impossible to say that night precedes the day. For the first utterance of God, the true light, made the *illumination* (Gen 1: 15) of light and later there came evening, when the light set, *and night came, and the dawn came, one full day* (Gen 1: 5). However since *whoever is in Christ is a new creation* (2 Cor 5: 17), as the Apostle says, in this matter the Church of Christ does not follow the Mosaic sequence. As Christ was going to be found rising from the dead on the Sabbath, i.e. on the night following the Sabbath,^a God therefore arranged things [*οικονομέω*] and ordered even the Jews to begin the Sabbath in the evening, i.e. from the sunset of Friday,^b so that they would not have a reasonable ground of complaint against us because we begin the Lord's day (= Sunday) on the evening of the Sabbath [= Saturday]. God has done this so that you may learn that we have come *from darkness into the light* (Acts 26: 18, and cf.

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^a Cf. Mk 16: 2; Jn 20: 1.

^b Cf. Mk 15: 42; Jn 19: 31.

1 Pet 2: 9). Therefore we begin from darkness, but we take our definitive rest [καταπαύομεν] in the light of day.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 87) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 13); omitted in **Coll. b**.

(2) A version of this Qu. appears in *QQ ad Antiochum*, QQ. 53 and 54 (PG 28, 629D-632B), which appear to have been influenced by the Anastasian original – though one could argue that Anastasios has compressed two previous QQ.

A fixed day of death?

Question 16

QUESTION There is another problem after that one, which is universal, viz. whether the life of anyone has a determined limit [ὅρος] or not. Some say it has, others affirm it has not.

ANSWER 1. Our reply^a to this will be that the limit which exists for the life of each person is not a foreordained number of years, but the wish [βουλή] and ordinance [πρόσταξις] of God, who transfers someone out of life when he commands and how he commands.

2. In reply to those who argue by all possible means that a predetermination [προορισμός] of God exists for the years of each person, we shall say this: God would then be found to be himself the one who makes wars, something which is too absurd even to be thought of. Again, supposing that predeterminations for the years of everybody existed, fixed and immutable, nobody who is sick would call on the saints for their support, and indeed nobody would apply to doctors.^b

^a For the first part of his answer Anastasios may have been drawing on the 6th century homilist, Leontios of Constantinople, *Homilia X, In Mesopentecosten* (CPG 7888), 343-370 ed. Datema-Allen, CCSG 17, pp. 329-331, and cf. p. 306; PG 86(2), 1988B-D) (who may be a different person from the theologian, known as Leontios of Byzantium, included in the ODB, p. 1213); see the text given in Comment (4) §7.

^b See the previous note.

For anything that God has predetermined will certainly come about.^a

3. However another evil and Manichean dogma is brought to birth from that supposition. What is it? That as God has foreknowledge and foreknows *everything before it come to be* (Dan/ Sous 35a [LXX], 42 [Theodotion]), if he really *wanted everybody to be saved* (1 Tim 2: 4),^b and nobody to be destroyed, why, if he foresaw the apostasy of Julian the Apostate and the denial of Judas Iscariot, did he not rather predetermine and preordain for them a more truncated life, allowing them to die and be saved before their destruction? Similarly in the case of any monk or upright person, who later falls away and is destroyed, the responsibility falls on God. So then one is obliged to say one of two things: either that God did not foreknow, or if He did foreknow, clearly he did not wish to save them but to destroy them. For had he wanted to save them, it was necessary for Him to have predetermined the limits of their lives prior to their falling away.

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4. Therefore as I said earlier, it is best to say that the limit [ὄρος] for each person's life is the incomprehensible command [κέλευσις] of God. For if an immutable predetermination and limit concerning a person's years had been fixed and established, how does the Apostle say to the Corinthians^c that it is because of their unworthy reception of communion that they fall ill and die? If a limit to life exists, then someone will not die before that for any reason whatsoever. Again, how did God say to Israel: "Guard my commandments *so that you may become long living on the earth* (Ex 20: 12^d)"? And again, Solomon says, "*Do not become hard, and do not practise impiety at length, lest you die in a time that is not yours* (Eccl 7: 17)." Similarly he says that the curses of parents bring death upon the children.^e

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^a This paragraph was quoted in a thirteenth century treatise on this topic: Nikephoros Blemmydes, *De vitae termino*, ed. W. Lackner (Leiden, 1985), p. 16 (19-24).

^b Cf. 2 Pet 3: 9.

^c Cf. 1 Cor 11: 30.

^d Cf. Deut 4: 40; 5: 16.

^e Cf. Sirach 3: 9.

5. However if God so pleases, we shall expound these matters at greater length specifically [ἐν ἰδιᾷ],^a explaining the many causes on account of which just people live short lives, whereas the wicked have long ones, and in what ways children die, and what is death for natural reasons [ἐκ φύσεως], and what is a death brought about by God, and indeed why some persons die suddenly at table, or travelling, or while they happen to be in the bath, without any last will and testament, while others again who propose to build holy churches or perform other spiritually good works, depart to the Lord before their completion. For the time being we have given a short answer to the question.

27 6. In reply to those who quote the great Basil^b as speaking of a predetermination of life, we shall say this: the predetermination of which this father spoke was the divine saying, *You are earth and to the earth you will return* (Gen 3: 19).

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 88) and **Coll. d.** (Qu. 14); omitted as such in **Coll. b** (but see Comments 3 and 4).

(2) This theme also surfaces in Qu. 28, which may be the longer treatise mentioned (see §5). However the following two comments should be borne in mind.^c

(3) A more developed version of this answer has been added to **Coll. b** (Qu. 42):

Coll. b, Qu. 42 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 23a]

213 QUESTION <Here is> a great <question>, much discussed and raised by almost everyone: do we claim that each human life has a fixed term [ὅρος] or not? If it has such a limit, why does David say to God, *Do not take me away in the middle of my days* (Ps 101: 25), and again, *Those who commit deeds of blood and treachery will not fill out half their days* (Ps 54: 24)? But if there is no such limit, why again does the same David say: *Behold, you appoint my days measured out* (Ps 38: 6)? And again if there is a limit, why did Solomon say, *Do not become hard and do not practise impiety at length, that*

^a See Comment (2).

^b See p. 81 note a below.

^c For a fuller treatment, see Joseph A. Munitiz, "The Predetermination of Death: The Contribution of Anastasios of Sinai and Nikephoros Blemmydes to a Perennial Byzantine Problem", *DOP* 55, 2002, pp. 9-20.

you may not die in a time that is not yours (Eccl 7: 17)? Therefore if it is possible to die in a time that is not yours, why did some people think they could teach that, "Deaths are brought on when the limits of life have been fulfilled?"^a And why, when Hezekiah^b and the Ninevites^c asked for more life, did God add it for them?

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ANSWER I. The fount of wisdom, the great receptacle of knowledge, Paul the Apostle, writing to the Corinthians says: *For any one who eats and drinks* (the body and the blood of the Lord) *unworthily, eats and drinks judgement upon himself; that is why many of you are weak and ill, and quite a number are dead* (1 Cor 11: 27-30).^d Pay attention, with great care: because you partake of the sacred mysteries unworthily, many of you are dead, so that had they partaken worthily, they would not have died then, and consequently how can we require a fixed term of life as proposed to us by many? Again, God said to Eliphaz the Themanite, "*You have sinned, you and your two friends* (Job 42: 7-8), and if it were not for my servant Job, I would have destroyed you".^e And the Psalmist says about the Israelites: *God said he would have destroyed them, except for Moses, his chosen one* (Ps 105: 23). Thus it was because of the virtue, in relation to God, of Job and Moses that these did not die, and not because the fixed term of their lives had <not>^f been completed.

2. But if, as some people think, the days of one's life were fixed and defined,^g then nobody, when about to die in misdeeds would rush to saintly men so that they implore God for further life and a conversion for oneself; nobody would request from God for the lives of their children. The term (ῥοος) has been set and according to them it is impossible for any addition to be made. Again, divine Scripture says: *Honour your father and your mother so that it may go well with you and you may be long-lived upon the earth* (Ex 20: 12). To my mind this is also what St Basil was thinking when he uttered his remark, "Deaths are put in place when the terms of lives are completed".^h

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^a The author of this Qu. is referring here to Basil of Caesarea (who is named later) in his treatise, *Quod Deus non est auctor malorum* (CPG 2853), 3 (PG 31, 333B5-9). Note that Anastasios names Basil at the end of Qu. 16.

^b Cf. 4 Kings 20: 6.

^c Cf. Jon 3: 9.

^d Mentioned in Qu. 16, §4.

^e The second part of the sentence is an addition to the text of Job.

^f Although missing in the manuscript this negative seems required by the argument.

^g The following lines resemble those in Qu. 16, §2.

^h See note a above.

3. The term of a person's life is surely the wish of God, and He adds to whomsoever He orders and diminishes wheresoever He thinks right, doing everything for the best: just as the master of a flock removes and adds whatever sheep he wishes, so God acts with respect to humankind, and at that moment death is applied to a person. Therefore, as has been said before, the term of each one's life is the command and wish of God, who said to Man after the Fall, *For you are earth and to earth you will go* (Gen 3: 19).^a He did not say, "I will cause your death," but "*By death you will die, if you disobey my commandment*" (Gen 2: 17). And if they had not disobeyed, they would not have been deprived *of the tree of life* (Gen 2: 9): obedience gives birth to life, while disobedience brings about death. God says to the human being formed by his hand, "It is not I who have set the terms of life, not did I create death,^b but you have dragged in death for yourself by your own evil will, just as Adam by separating himself from God, fabricated death for himself. *For those who distance themselves far from you* (as Scripture says) *are destroyed* (Ps 72: 27), because *The one who loves danger will be destroyed by it* (Sirach 3: 26) as someone reckless."

4. Thus very often in the case of the children of believers, God snatches them away providentially [οικονομικῶς, literally, "by his economy"] before time, so that they may be pure when they go to the other life, perhaps because they were going to lead very wicked lives. And quite simply, God disposes everything for each one's good: so He makes sinners grow old, giving them an opportunity for conversion, while He often cuts short the lives of the just, so that, as divine Scripture says, *Evil may not affect their good sense* (Wisdom 4: 11). Indeed God quickly snatches away many people who are in the early stages of their conversion, acting out of his goodness for their profit, because He foresees that if they were to live many more years, they would fall once more and be destroyed.

5. Let no one then among the faithful, after hearing so many proofs from the divinely inspired Scriptures and the hints of the godly Fathers, be misled by quarrelsome heretics who claim that the days of a person's life are fixed, and are neither diminished nor increased by God. Rather let each one be convinced that everything obeys His wish and command; and that most things come about through His permission. This permission comes from a benign judge because of our own carelessness: so that God makes both just and unjust short-lived and long-lived. To many

^a Also quoted at the end of Qu. 16, §6.

^b Cf. Wisdom 1: 13.

good people God grants length of days, and to many of them shortness of days. Similarly, in the case of sinners: to many He adds years, while others he quickly snatches away. As has been said before,^a His goodness provides for all as will be best for each: as for the fact that some out of madness give themselves to death, with God's permission many come to an end in an unreasonable way, because of our own sins, since God has neither determined nor predetermined this, nor is it His will that somebody should commit suicide, nor that one should kill another unjustly; such things come upon us because of our own choice and foolishness, as God says: *And I have sent them out according to the inclinations of their own hearts* (Ps 80: 13), and so on.

6. For example, one of the saints spoke out boldly to one of the Emperors^b who was leaving for war, "Where are you journeying, O Emperor, not having God as an ally? Call back those true-believing bishops of the churches whom you sent into exile and you will be victorious over the barbarians without any trouble, but if you don't, you will drag to destruction all your force with yourself." Then the Emperor said, "As for you, when I return I shall punish you as a liar." But the saint cried out in reply, "Do execute me if ever you return from there!" And the Emperor, because he disobeyed the good advice, lost his life in a miserable death.

7. Because of this, God says, *If you willingly listen to me, my written words, you will eat the good things of the earth; but if you do not wish to obey me, the sword will eat you up* (Isa 1: 19-20). As for God having foreknowledge of evil happenings, we do not doubt it; but as for his foreordaining them, we true Christians certainly do not believe it. And as far as I know, nobody reasonable questions that He did not foreordain the Fall and death. That He foreknew, certainly this is to be believed and truly happened. The power to change and convert, this lies in the power of all human beings; but the power to give life or end it, this is proper to God.

8. The devout student of the divine Scriptures will find many other things about life and death; but *these judgements are a great abyss* (Ps 35: 7) and they are known to God alone.

(4) A treatise attributed to Anastasios, *De vitae termino* (BHG 7746 [1]), was published by Angelo Mai, *Scriptorum Vet-*

^a At the start of §3.

^b Probably a reference to Julian the Apostate; cf. a similar story in Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3. 18, 23 (ed. L. Parmentier – F. Scheidweiler, Berlin, 1954², p. 202; PG 82, 1116-7).

erum Noua Collectio, I, 1 (Rome, 1825), pp. 369-361 from a single Vatican manuscript (*Vaticanus graecus* 470 [XIV c.], ff. 182-183v; its text has many similarities with the preceding Qu., but their interrelation is not clear. It is added here to complete the evidence of *Anastasiana* dealing with this topic.

Anastasios [?], **De vitae termino** [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 23b]

<TITLE> By our father, now among the saints, Anastasios of Sinai: On <whether there is> a fixed term [ῥπος] for life and death.

1. *It was not God who made death, nor does He take pleasure in the destruction of the living* (Wisdom 1: 13), but *it was because of the devil's jealousy that death entered the world* (Wisdom 2: 24) through the infringement of God's command. That is also why St Basil said, "Deaths are put in place when the terms of life are completed".^a The term of life for each person is the order and wish of God; wheresoever He wishes, He adds years of life, and again where He desires, He cuts them short, as it is He who holds the power over both life and death.

2. Surely then the term (ῥπος) <of life> is not a previously written number of years, but the wish and command of God, who transfers someone out of life when and how He commands and does what is best for each one, whether it be a diminution or an addition of life.

3. For very often even in the case of the children of believers, God snatches them away providentially ("by his economy") so that being pure when they go to the other life, they may find salvation, as He foresaw the future, that they were going to lead wicked lives. Others He snatches away at once in the early stages of their conversion for their profit, knowing beforehand that if they had lived many year, they would have fallen into similar evil deeds and would have come to a worse pass. He grants length of days to many just persons, in order that they may save others along with themselves; while on the other hand he often makes many short-lived in order that, as Solomon says, *Evil may not affect their good sense* (Wisdom 4: 11). Similarly also in the case of sinners, some He makes long-lived, so that they may be converted, while others He snatches quickly away, so that their deeds of wickedness may stop, and they may find some alleviation <of their future punishment>. But in every way, as we have said previously,^b Goodness disposes things to each one's advantage.

^a See p. 81 note a above.

^b See §2 above.

4. Now the majority of unexpected and unlooked for evils come about with the permission of God because of the sins we commit without repenting. However a permission is no longer a positive wish, but only the knowledge of God who knows the future beforehand, and who neither agrees with nor impedes, <that which happens> because we deserve to suffer for our sins.

5. Certainly God has not predetermined death, nor is it his desire that we should slaughter and kill one another out of malice. For it was *the murderer from the beginning* (Jn 8: 44) who made this a law, and our own evil intention set it in place because of our greed. Nor is it appropriate that we should fling ourselves recklessly into danger, saying that we have hope in God's help, even when we are conscious of our guilt. Such action comes out of arrogance and recklessness, and we are responsible for our own destruction, in so far as we have courted danger without taking care.

6. But should it happen that we fall into sudden trial, then even if we are sinners we should implore with contrite heart for God's mercy to support us, and we shall not fail in our hope. God is kind and not vindictive. He does not repay us for our evil deeds.

7. Therefore let none of the faithful be misled by the heretics into thinking that human days, or the days of one's life, are fixed and cannot be reduced or increased by God;

again^a that in the case of each person the manner and the day and the hour of death have been determined, and how each should die. What nonsense! These are all old-wives tales. Because if the manner of each person's death has been determined and it is not possible to escape that, why when we are ill do we seek out medical help and call upon the patronage of God and the saints? Why when sailing do we seek to reach port, and why do we keep clear of places infested by brigands, and why do take precautions in wars against the enemies? If it had been determined for Abel^b to die in that particular way, why is Cain condemned and why do we hold him in abhorrence? Why do we also execute murderers if there was a necessity for those they have murdered to die in that way? Why in our prayers do we ask to live for many years, and not to fall *into the time of trial* (Mt 6: 13; Lk 11: 4)? Is it not because the Lord is truthful when He said, *I will fill him with length of days and show him my salvation* (Ps 90: 16), and again, *You will call on me in the day of your distress and I shall have mercy on you and you will glorify me* (Ps 49: 15).

^a Here begins an unacknowledged quotation from Leontios of Constantinople, *Homilia X, In Mesopentecosten*; see p. 78 note a above.

^b Cf. Gen 4: 8.

8. I know of three sorts of death:^a the first is that brought about individually in the way common to most persons. The second is that sent following a threat by God, and not as the result of some physical order and process but because of God's anger and divine wrath. Such were <the deaths caused by> the Flood,^b and those of the people of Sodom,^c and those of the first-born in Egypt,^d and of the Israelites in the desert,^e and the extermination of the Canaanites^f and of the one hundred and eighty five thousand Assyrians^g in one night, and of many other peoples; similarly the capture and slaughter and burning of Jerusalem, which happened later under the Romans because of the killing of Christ, but also the frequent divine wrath entailing death in many places. The third sort is that of those who in accordance with some unimaginable judgement of God meet death by falling or being swallowed up, both just and unjust, as in the case of the sons of Job,^h and when earthquakes strike cities.

9. Similarly there are two sorts of <extensions of > life:ⁱ the first is that granted by God, as in the case of the fifteen years of Hezekiah,^j and that of Lazarus^k and other similar cases; so also the divine kindness shown to the Ninevites^l because of their repentance. The second sort is that which with God's foreknowledge comes about in a common fashion for natural reasons through the orderly organization of the elements and the harmony of the climate. St Paul the Apostle also writes to the Corinthians that because some people partake *unworthily* of the mysteries, *That is why many of you are weak and ill, and quite a number have died* (1 Cor 11: 27-30). It is obvious that it was because of this that they died before the time, because they communicated unworthily, something that happens to many nowadays: as is said, *Anyone who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgement to oneself, not discerning the body* of the Lord (ditto); and if such a person does not take care and put things right, that person either will fall, with a more

^a Cf. Qu. 28: §7.

^b Cf. Gen 7: 17.

^c Cf. Gen 19: 24-25.

^d Cf. Ex 12: 29.

^e Cf. Ex 32: 28; Num 21: 6.

^f Cf. Num 21: 3.

^g Cf. 4 Kings 19: 35.

^h Job 1: 18-19.

ⁱ Cf. again Qu. 28, §7.

^j Cf. 4 Kings 20: 6.

^k Cf. Jn 11: 43-44.

^l Cf. Jon 4: 11.

moderate punishment, by sudden death, or be consigned to eternal hell.

Question 17

QUESTION Some say that if everybody were to know beforehand the days of their deaths, then everybody would undergo a conversion.

27

ANSWER If they were to know this beforehand, many strange things would be done. For anyone who had an enemy, knowing that the day of death had approached, would go out and kill that personal enemy, thinking, "Whether from God or from men, my own death has already come." Again anyone who foresaw, suppose, that life was going to last for a hundred years would no longer bother about virtue and justice; rather this person having lived a profligate life, wallowing in sin, would make a conversion a few days before the time of death. And what reward [χάρις] would be due to someone who lived as a slave of Satan all through life, and served God for only a few days out of necessity?

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COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. was adapted and included in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 21= Qu. ed. 21), omitted in the other collections.

(2) A very similar text, though with verbal differences, in *QQ ad Antiochum* (PG 28, 617C8-D6).

Depression?

Question 18

QUESTION How many sorts [τρόποι] of desolation [ἐγκατάλειψις *lit.* "abandonment"] are there? <Is it> as a trial, or as weakness, or for sins?

ANSWER 1. There are many different sorts of desolation. However all desolation comes about for two of God's purposes: either to provoke a conversion and self-control, as when He acts like a father with a son, or to signify rejection, when He acts like an emperor towards an enemy, as happened with the

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final desolation inflicted on Judas^a by Christ. Lazarus^b was left in desolation, and so was the paralytic,^c to win them forgiveness of sins; for the words spoken were, *Look, you have become healthy, don't sin again* (Jn 5: 14). Paul was chastised because of the mass of his good deeds, *lest I become proud* (2 Cor 12: 7). Job^d was chastised that he might become more just, as the Lord said to him. Similarly, the Prophets were handed over to be imprisoned to serve as a model and help for the people.^e

2. Thus the person in desolation should investigate interiorly the cause of the desolation, and reform that cause for which one has been handed over to filthy *degrading passions* (Rom 1: 26) or to evil temptations, according to the just judgement of God. For very often because of pride, or for having passed judgement on others, or for hating some people, or for not blaming ourselves, we are handed over to sufferings [πάθη] of soul and body; others however through their indulgence and profligacy drag passions upon themselves, whereas yet others <do this> through their old habits, and consequent indifference and lack of fear of God, those who are constantly devoted to pleasure.

COMMENTS

(1) Again, one of the QQ adapted and used in **Coll. 23** (= Qu. ed. 9); it also appears in **Coll. b** (Qu. 9) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 16).

(2) Another related question is included in **Coll. b** (Qu. 15), which may have influenced QQ *ad Antiochum*, Qu. 74 (PG 28, 645A10-B3), although this is much shorter and only mentions rancour (μνησικακία):

Coll. b, Qu. 15 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 8]

QUESTION What sort of sin renders our prayers unacceptable before God?

ANSWER 1. Pride and also rancour: for it is written, *The Lord resists the arrogant, but he gives grace to the humble* (Prov 3: 34), and again the Lord says: *Amen I tell you, if you do not forgive others their*

^a Cf. Mt 27: 5; Jn 13: 27.

^b Cf. Lk 16: 19-31; Jn 11: 1-44.

^c Cf. Jn 5: 2-16.

^d Cf. Job 40: 8.

^e Cf. Jer 44: 16; 45: 6; Dan 6: 14-23.

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faults, neither will your heavenly father forgive you your faults (Mt 6: 15; cf. 18: 35).

2. Consider that in the case of the debtor owing a thousand talents who made supplication, his master remitted the debt; but on hearing “a thousand talents” you should understand among them all sorts of sins, and murders, and poisonings, and licentiousness, and fornication, and all other evil actions. But when the debtor^a, who had gained remission of his debt of a thousand talents, would not forgive the debt of “fifty pence”, that is to say the minor faults that his neighbour had committed against him, then the master was angry with him and handed him over to the punishment, and it was his rancour alone, going beyond all the other sins of his past life, that prevailed to destroy him.

Nature of the soul?

Question 19

QUESTION All men thirst, as if for a little water, to learn and ascertain exactly what is the human soul, what sort of thing it is, and from what it is made up, and when, and how it is active within the body, and where it proceeds to after the separation from the body.

30

ANSWER I. It is perfectly obvious that one should not pry into things about which divine Scripture is silent.^b Whatever is convenient for us to know has been made clear by the Holy Spirit,^c and what is not convenient the same Spirit has hidden away. However as human beings are obstinate, inquisitive animals, I shall try to make clear to you, even if not very distinctly, anything that I have been able to learn from the holy Fathers.^d

^a Cf. Mt 18: 23-25.

^b Among the preliminary remarks at the start of the *Hodegos*, Anastasios warns in very similar terms against delving into what has been kept silent in Sacred Scripture: cf. *Viae Dux* 1, 1, 15-16 (CCSG 8, p. 7).

^c Cf. Jn 16: 12-13.

^d Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praep. Evang.* III, 16 (ed. E. des Places [SC 228], Paris, 1976, pp. 204-206; PG 21, 133); Basil of Caesarea, *Hom. in illud, Attende tibi ipsi* (ed. S.Y. Rudberg, §6, Stockholm, 1962, pp. 32-34).

2. They say that the reason why humans are said to be *in the image and likeness* (Gen 1: 26) of God is that much that exists essentially [οὐσιωδῶς] in the divine nature is dimly brought to light, as in an image and sketch, in our souls, not by nature but by grace [χάρις].^a

3. What I mean is this: we confess and believe that the nature [φύσις] of God is, by nature [κατὰ φύσιν], incomprehensible, unnameable, invisible, immortal, untouchable and imperishable;^b thus our soul also, in so far as it is *in the image of God*, not by nature but by grace [χάριτι], is incomprehensible in its essence [κατ' οὐσίαν] to us humans, and invisible, inexplicable, untouchable, imperishable and immortal; it is even creative, by grace, as human beings can make and generate other human beings by the grace of God, create houses, cities, agriculture, crafts, education and learning, as they exist *in the image of God* (Gen 1: 26).^c

4. Thus, just as nobody in this life can say what is the nature of God, nor what sort of thing He is, so nobody can explain or conceive what or what sort of thing is the essence/being [οὐσία] of the soul that exists *in the image* of God. However just as God shows forth his own powers and activities by means of the material created things visible to us – I mean by the heavens and stars, the sun and moon, the showers, the earthquakes, the plants, winds and sea – although He himself is invisible, so our soul, which is invisible *in the image* of God, displays its own activities through the visible body which belongs to it (as if it was a sort of “cosmos”/universe^d); the soul has the mind [νοῦς] placed as a commander [ἡγεμῶν] in the brain above what is called the *ouraniskon* [lit. “little heaven” = roof of the mouth], after the pattern of God who is above the heaven, the mind serving to dispose and control the body as if it were some earthly cosmos. That is why, should someone be seen to receive

^a Similar remarks in other works of Anastasios: cf. *Sermo I*, 1, 33-34 (CCSG 12, pp. 7-8); *Hodegos II*, 5, 57-60 (CCSG 8, p. 54).

^b Cf. *Hodegos II*, 2, 4-6 (CCSG 8, pp. 26-27).

^c Again close similarity to passages mentioned in the previous note.

^d Similar parallel in the *Hodegos*, II, 7, 52-53 (l.c., p. 63) and the *Sermo I*, 2, 55- 61 (l.c., p. 16).

some violent blow on the head, the mind suffers at once and the person can no longer decide nor remember as before.^a

5. On the other hand the reasoning part [τὸ λογιστικόν] is activated by the soul through the heart, the concupiscent part [τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν] through the liver, the humorous part [τὸ μεϊδιαστικόν] through the spleen, the breathing [τὸ ἀναπνευστικόν] through the lung, the generative [τὸ γόνιμον] through the kidneys, the passionate [τὸ θυμικόν] through the blood, the knowing [τὸ γνωριστικόν] through the eyes, the speaking [τὸ λαλητόν] through the tongue, so that when the latter is cut out, one can no longer speak.

6. For the same reason when it (I mean the soul) is separated from the whole body, it can no longer perform the acts it sets in motion through the limbs of the body – neither speak, nor remember, nor decide, nor desire, nor reason, nor feel anger, nor gaze. Instead the soul exists by itself deathless in a sort of self-consciousness [συννοία] until it once more regains its own body, made imperishable, and can then set in motion in imperishable fashion the acts in that body.

7. But what has been said by us so far concerns those who die in their sins, whereas those souls that have acquired the Holy Spirit and have become like a body or organ of the Spirit seem to me to enjoy bliss even after their death thanks to the illumination of the Spirit, and they both praise God mentally in word and intercede on behalf of others, as we learn from the Scriptures.^b

8. One should realize that all the visions that take place in church buildings or at the tombs of the saints are brought about through the holy angels^c at God's command [ἐπιτροπήν];

^a Similar remark, *Sermo I*, 4, 4-6 (l.c., p. 21).

^b Cf. 2 Mac. 15: 11-16. Anastasios may be drawing here on Eustratius of Constantinople, a sixth century theologian-priest, whose works have only recently begun to attract the attention they deserve; cf. Λόγος ἀνατρεπτικός (CPG 7522), "On the activity of souls after death", ed. P. Van Deun, *De statu animarum post mortem* (CCSG 60), p. 8 (lines 129-135).

^c In one of the *Narrationes* attributed to Anastasios this same theory – that the saints seen in visions are really angelic powers (δυνάμεις τινές ὑπάρχον ἀγγελικαί, ἐν σχήματι ὁφθῆναι τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων) – also appears: cf. Nau, XLI; Binggeli, II 8, 83-88; and cf. Eustratius of Constantinople, loc. cit., p. 5 (lines 55-60).

for before the resurrection of bodies has taken place, and while the bones and fleshy parts of the saints are scattered, how is it possible for them to be recognized as fully formed men, often seen armoured and on horseback? And if you intend to disagree with me, then you tell me, please, how Paul, or Peter, or any other Apostle or martyr, each being a single person, came to be seen at the same moment very often in different places. Not even an angel can find itself at the same moment in different places or in different countries; the only one who can do that is God, the uncircumscribed.

34 9. But to prevent some people thinking that I am concocting the sort of legends made up by doctors,^a pay attention to the theological teaching of Scriptures concerning souls. To know that the soul is deprived of the power of reasoning when separated from the body, listen to what the Psalm says about those who die: *On that day*, it says, *all their designs* [διαλογισμοί, “reasonings”] *come to an end* (Ps 145: 4). And as for their not remembering anyone, it also says: *In death there is no one that makes mention of you* (Ps 6: 6) – God. But it is obvious that if they do not have memory of God, they do not offer prayers. For it says, *The dead will not praise you, Lord, nor will all those who go down to Hades* (Ps 113: 25). Then concerning the fact that they do not see this cosmos, listen to the Prophet saying about a human being: *A spirit* [πνεῦμα, *breath*] *has passed through this person, who will not exist and will not know any more his or her place* (Ps 102: 16).

10. How indeed can the souls recognize one another in that other life, when they never saw one another in their naked state while in this life? Clearly recognition comes through difference and characteristics that vary, but in that state no soul any longer possesses a difference of shape or form; there is a complete essential similarity and sameness among them.

11. However even after the resurrections we shall not recognize each other by a process of physical recognition: for there is not, there cannot be in that situation, any smallness or great-

^a The reference to doctors may be an autobiographical hint, as Anastasios here and elsewhere shows an interest in medical lore, and perhaps was infirmarian.

ness of bodies, no whiteness or blackness, no infancy or old age. All of us who have fallen asleep in this age, we shall arise in the same form in which Adam came to be. Just as the tiny grains that fall from the ear of corn and are buried in the earth do not rise up small, but fill out and become ears of corn,^a as they were before their falling. Resurrection [ἀνάστασις] is defined by the holy Fathers as an *apokatastasis* [restoration^b] to the primitive state of the first man. So no one will recognize another for physical reasons, but many will recognize many through God's command [ἐπιτροπή]; for it has already been said about the Jews, *They shall gaze on the one they pierced* (Jn 19: 37).

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 89) and **Coll. d.** (Qu. 17); omitted in **Coll. b.**

(2) There are several related QQ in the *QQ ad Antiochum*: 16 (PG 28, 605D5-608B5), 22-26 (609D3-613C2), 32-35 (616C12-617C7).^c

Question 20

QUESTION Where in general would we want to say the souls now exist, and is it that they are all together?

ANSWER I. There is nobody who can pronounce clearly about this, however from the words of Christ we learn that the souls of the just exist, as far as I can see, along with the soul of the good thief in Paradise.^d Moreover the godly Anthony implored God about the place of the souls, and thus he has seen that the saintly souls were in Paradise;^e similarly the God-bearing Pambo^f and certain others of the Fathers. [See Comment (3); Additional Text 1]

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^a Cf. 1 Cor 15: 36-38; 42-44.

^b A favourite term of Gregory of Nyssa, taken over from Origen: cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. ἀποκατάστασις B 1-3.

^c Cf. G. Dagron, "Holy Images and Likeness", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 45, 1991, p. 32.

^d Cf. Lk 23: 43.

^e Cf. Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, §§ 60, 66, ed. G. J. M. Bartelink (SC 400), Paris, 1994, pp. 294-298, 318-320; PG 26, 929A-B, 936-937.

^f The reference should be to Makarios, not Pambo: cf. CPG 2400 and 2417.

2. Then for the souls of the wicked, all the Old and the New Testaments bear witness that they are despatched to what is the prison of Hades, as if in a gaol, as the Lord has also said about that rich man connected with Lazarus.^a Similarly David also said, *You will not abandon my soul to Hades* (Ps 15: 10) and *Lord, you have fetched my soul out of Hades* (Ps 29: 4). On another occasion he said: *Let the sinners return to Hades* (Ps 9: 18); but to say ‘Let them return’ means that their souls are now there, later they come out and receive their own bodies, and then in this way the sentence of the judge is passed on them saying, *Let the sinners return to Hades*. It is quite obvious that if one returns, he goes back to the place from which he came out; Hades is the lowest of the low in the places of the underworld, a place that by nature is painful; this is where Christ descended, by means of His spotless and God-filled soul,^b and *visited those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death* (Ps 106: 10; Lk 1: 78-79).^c [See Comment (3); Additional Text 2]

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 90) and **Coll. d.** (Qu. 18); omitted in **Coll. b.**

(2) A similar Qu., but with a different answer, in the *QQ ad Antiochum*: 19 (PG 28, 609A1-B4).

(3) Another text attributed to Anastasios, but probably spurious, bears the title: *Fragmentum de iis qui vita excedunt* (CPG 7746 [1]); it was edited by Angelo Mai, *Scriptorum Veterum Noua Collectio*, I, 1, (Rome, 1825), p. 371-372. It consists of the Answer to Qu. 20, with two Additional Texts inserted where indicated above:

Text 1 (... certain others of the Fathers;) just as some of the God-bearing fathers; but the souls of those who are complete saints are joined to the angels in the heavens and give praise to God – *For where the body is, there are the eagles* (Lk 17: 37), which means, “Where the Lord of glory is, there are the saints.” The distinction between Paradise and the Kingdom of Heaven is brought about by the distinction in virtue. Those who are excluded from the Kingdom but judged worthy of Paradise had a failing in their

^a Cf. Lk 16: 23.

^b In the *Hodegos* Anastasios tackles the problem of how Christ in his bodiless descent into hell was still “seen”: cf. *Hodegos*, XIII, 6, 43-62 (CCSG 8, p. 233).

^c Cf. 1 Pet 3: 19.

virtue, and did not reach the perfect measure. This is what is meant by the saying that “there are many dwellings” for the chosen (cf. Jn 14: 2). To show that the souls of the saints are already in the heavens, the most divine Paul cries out, *We know that if our earthly dwelling of this tent is dissolved we have our own residence from God, not made by hands, eternal, in the heavens* (2 Cor 5: 1). And he also testifies that he has *a longing to be dissolved and to be with Christ* (Phil 1: 23). *Where Christ is*, the same blessed one calls out, raising us up in a certain way by his words from the earth to the highest citizenship, *keep your minds on the higher things*, he says, *and not on the things of the earth; seek the higher where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father* (Col 3: 1-2). He is not referring to a seat in space; the talk is indicative of bodily shapes, but with the words “right hand” he is making clear the parity in glory.

Now just as we do not doubt that the souls of the saints and just are in heaven and in Paradise, (so also with regard to the souls of the sinners).

Text 2 And the souls of the saints and of the just find themselves in God’s grace and in good spirits and in good hope and expectation, while the souls of the sinners on the other hand are in suffering and in the most painful anguish because of the expected miserable and most appalling judgement.

Question 21

QUESTION If the departed do not recognize one another in the other world, how did the rich man^a recognize and implore Abraham and Lazarus, and not only that but he also remembered his own five brothers who were in his house?

38

ANSWER 1. From all <the details> about the rich man and Lazarus we learn that Christ composed that story as a parable and symbol, but not as a factual account (πραγματικῶς).

2. It is clear that it is a parable from the following. In the first place, because nobody has ever entered either hell or the kingdom before the time of the resurrection of the bodies. So if the body is in the tomb, what tongue did the rich man have that was burning, and what drop of water^b would have been able to extinguish his fire?

^a Cf. Lk 16: 23-28.

^b Cf. Lk 16: 24.

3. In the second place, because those who are sent into Hades do not see the just as they are snatched up into the clouds and who are now in the kingdom of God above the heavens; however [πλήν], as I said earlier, the full punishment or reward has not yet come, neither for the sinners nor for the just. What sort of justice would that be, if the soul were to be punished or crowned without the body, the body and the soul having sinned or done right together? Listen to Paul teaching you this: talking of the just he says, *Being commended for their faith, they have not yet borne off the promised rewards, because God, he says, has foreseen something better for us, so that apart from us they may not reach perfection* (Heb 11: 39-40). And on another occasion he says, *So that each of us may receive recompense for what has been done through the body, good or bad* (2 Cor 5: 10). When he says “what has been done through the body” he indicates that at present the soul without the body can do nothing, except [πλήν] that the souls of sinners are in a state of partial pain and woeful expectation, and similarly the souls of the just are also participating in some sort of joy and happiness.^a

4. And so that I may call to mind a vision seen by a holy man who is still alive, this person recounted the following:^b “Once, when I was earnestly and sedulously imploring God for information about the situation and state of the soul when separated from the body, I saw one night in a vision that I was in a sort of vineyard, while my body was separated from me and lay dead at a short distance. I realized that I had been separated from the body, and I found that my mind and thought (φρένα) were perfectly clear. However when I woke up from my dream, I was incapable of sketching out or imagining what shape or form I had had outside my body, except for the fact that my soul’s existence was personally mine (ἐνυπόστατος) and not a figment of the imagination (ἀφαντασίαστος).”

^a See Qu. 19, §7, with note b.

^b Unlikely to be a camouflaged autobiographical reminiscence; no source has been found and Anastasios may be recording the teaching of his spiritual father.

5. Let no one then think that the soul after death is dissolved and destroyed, as if it were a puff of smoke or a cloud, as is the case with the soul and breath of irrational beings. Listen to Christ teaching about the personal nature (τὸ ἐνυπόστατον) and immortality of our souls when he says, *Do not fear those who kill the body but are incapable of killing the soul* (Mt 10: 28). Thus the souls have substance (ἐνοῦσιοι μὲν εἰσιν) after the death of the body, but they certainly do not exist before the body as in the myths of Origen.^a The person that a man sows in the womb is not something soul-less or half-human; but a human person with soul sows a perfect person with soul. Neither does the body exist before the soul, nor the soul before the body.

6. But if it was the case, as the heretics^b maintain, that man sows a soul-less body and he does not impart the soul, then irrational beings would be found to be worthy of more respect for they sow and produce complete living beings with souls. Of course the soul of the irrational animal^c is the life-giving movement in the blood which comes about through the blowing [πνεῦμα] of air; this movement draws its existence from the elements and it dissolves into them once more when the living being dies. But the soul of someone human is a substantial being (οὐσία ἐνοῦσιος), gifted with reason, immortal, capable of thought, which draws its existence not from the elements, but from God,^d an existence such that God alone knows its how and its wherefrom, and in a way that the One who put the soul together knows, every soul that is united with a <human> body is a being that does not exist without beginning but will continue without end.

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^a On Origen's theory of the pre-existence of the soul (prior to the body), cf. the letter attributed to Justinian, *Epistula ad synodum de Origene* (PG 86/1, 989A).

^b The main heretic in question is Apollinarius, though others are mentioned in the "Anastasian", *Florilegium adversus monothelitas* [cf. CPG 7771] (CCSG 12, p. 89, 71-76; PG 89, 1184A); they held that in Christ the divinity replaced the soul, so that strictly speaking his body was soul-less.

^c Similar ideas in the *Hodegos*, II, 5, 55-65 (CCSG 8, pp. 53-54).

^d Cf. Gen 2: 7.

7. Indeed even the souls of embryos and aborted fetuses that have taken on a certain shape, these souls do not die and are not destroyed, but they will be gathered together with us near God at the resurrection thanks to the inexplicable and all powerful energy of God.

8. These brief remarks on the soul have been proposed by us not in a dogmatic and definitive manner, but rather out of affection (ἀγαπητικῶς).^a We beg our brothers in Christ and the teachers who will come after us, to correct and complete what is lacking.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 91) and **Coll. d.** (Qu. 19); omitted in **Coll. b.**

(2) Similar QQ in the *QQ ad Antiochum*: 16, 17, 20, 21 (PG 28, 608A9-B5, B6-14, 609B5-C4, C5-D2).

Resurrection of the body?

Question 22

42

QUESTION The hearts of many of the faithful contain a lurking difficulty and doubt about the resurrection [ἀνάστασις] of our bodies: they think to themselves, “How can a body that has been eaten up by lots of animals and birds, or that has been drowned in the sea and destroyed by countless fishes, then excreted into the deep and dissolved, how can such a body be reunited and come to a resurrection?”

ANSWER 1. All that makes up a Christian and the mysteries which a Christian holds, is faith. But true faith is a simple (ἀπεριέργος) assent, since if we start to poke into the words and deeds of Scripture and of God, we are lost and we are drawn into the depths of incredulity.

^a At the start of the *Hodegos* Anastasios emphasises the importance of distinguishing different genres or modes of speech: the dogmatic (τὰ ὀριστικῶς λεγόμενα), the provisional (τὰ μέσως πως), and the exaggerated but well-intentioned (τὰ καταχρηστικῶς καὶ ἀκράκως), I, 1, 18-21 (CCSG 8, pp. 7-8), an example of the last being the statement, “Every person is a liar” (Ps 115: 2).

2. And I am speaking to you now not only about resurrection, but also about the very start of our creation. If we do not accept Scripture with a heart that is simple and with unquestioning faith,^a we are carried away over the precipice of atheism. For example, it is said: *And God took dust from the earth and fashioned man, and He breathed into his face a breath of life* (Gen 2: 7). And Scripture also says: *I heard your voice as you walked in Paradise* (Gen 3: 10). Now seeing that God has no bodily hands, but is incorporeal, how did he *take dust* and *fashion* Adam? If he has neither mouth nor cheeks, how did He *breathe into his face the breath of life*? Having neither feet nor tongue, how did Adam hear his *voice* as He *walked in Paradise*? You see that one must accept the divine Scriptures with simple faith, because once you give space to Satan, allowing him to sow thoughts of inquisitiveness and incredulity within you, he will not refrain from placing there stumbling blocks even about God Himself.^b

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3. Therefore my plea is, let us also accept with faith the assertion about the resurrection [ἀνάστασις] of bodies, confessing that *The hour is coming, and is now present, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall arise* (Jn 5: 25). Indeed, if we believe that He is the all-powerful, it is absolutely certain that He who brought man into being out of nothing^c will be able more easily to reshape and renew the creature that was created by Him and undone through death. If we believe, as David said, that *the ends of the earth are in the hand of God* (Ps 94: 4), then no matter where the body goes, even if it is dissolved, or burnt, or eaten up, still the fire, the water, the beasts,

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^a In his *Hodegos* Anastasios insists that one should accept Scripture, “with simplicity of heart” (ἐν ἀπλότῃ καρδίᾳ), I, 1, 13-14 (CCSG 8, p. 7) and XXII, 3, 1-3 (CCSG 8, p. 297).

^b Despite this remark, it would be misleading to assume that Anastasios is in favour of an interpretation of Scripture restricted to the literal meaning; to gain a complete picture of his approach, his other writings should be taken into account, notably his sermons (*Homiliae*) and probably his *Hexaemeron*. Cf. Qu. 23.

^c Creation *ex nihilo* is taught in the *Hodegos*, II, 5, 76-77, and XIII, 8, 27-30 (CCSG 8, pp. 55 and 243), and by Eusebius of Caesarea, *De ecclesiastica theologia*, I, 12 (GCS 4, p. 71, 5; PG 24, 845D).

and whatever else, are *in the hand of God*, and God brings out of them the body that they have eaten and taken and drowned.

4. The reason is that a dead body does not undergo annihilation. Even if it is destroyed by any number of animals or other causes, it departs into the four elements from which it came:^a viz. the heat to the sun, the cold to the air, the damp to the waters, and the dry to the earth. It is laid up among the elements as if in a sort of warehouse (*παραθήκη*), and kept there until the day of the resurrection, when the power of God will join it together once more out of them, just as in the beginning when He made it.

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5. In order that I may convince you with a parallel from nature that the dead body is dissolved and divided among the elements, listen to this. The element which is alive and provides life, both to men and to irrational animals, and to all that has some sort of soul and moves, is the blood, that is to say the warm and energetic movement of the element of fire; in the case of irrational animals this binds and combines and sets in motion the other three elements; in the case of humans, it binds and combines the soul and the remaining three elements. So is it that when the blood, which serves as a bond, is emptied out excessively, either from a human or from any other animal, at once both the animal and the human die. And even if it is not emptied out, but its warm and living movement and energy do leave, similarly the body dies at once.

6. To convince yourself that it is the warm element that engenders life and sets in motion, it is enough to consider the eggs of a bird, which receive life and soul and movement and fullness, all through being warmed up; similarly a cauldron of water which becomes alive and starts to move, when it is heated up with fire, produces a noise as it boils. Sacred Scriptures and the Lord talking to the Samaritan woman^b call the water *living* when

^a Anastasios mentions his belief in the theory of the body being made up of the four elements in the *Hodegos* II, 5, 86-91 (CCSG 8, p. 55); on the background to the theory of the elements, cf. M. Spanneut, *Le stoïcisme des pères de l'Église*, Paris, 1957², pp. 350-351.

^b Cf. Gen 21: 19; 26: 19; Ioh 4: 10-14.

it is moving and leaping and making a noise. Perhaps that is why David says to God, *With you is the spring of life* (Ps 35: 10), because every spring bears a resemblance to our life and death and resurrection. The water of a spring is born, gushing from the dark precinct of the abyss like a new-born infant, coming out into the light, full of movement and emitting immediately some sound. Then when drawn out in a cauldron, it becomes dead at once without movement and making no sound, like some limb that has been lopped off. But when you put fire under the cauldron, it is as if it receives its soul thanks to the warm element and at once it returns to its original pattern in the spring, full of life, and leaping around, and emitting a sound as it revives.

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7. In the same way, the plants and trees and any seed, if they are not warmed by the sun's heat, cannot put down roots, nor draw life, nor emerge into the light, nor produce fruit and stock. For that reason winter produces fruitlessness in plants and sterility and childlessness among animals because of the cold element, and in these aspects winter resembles the dejection of death. With the cold the turtle-dove departs, the swallow hides,^a the nightingale falls silent, and human beings take refuge in their innermost quarters as if entombed, hurrying to the warmth as if to life itself. So when life is separated from our bodies, because of the chilling and withdrawal of the blood's heat, the separation of the soul takes place.

8. That is why if you quickly cut up a dead body^b you will find bile and humour and phlegm in it, but no blood anywhere. The warm element is the first to leave the body, the second is the damp, the third the cold. In consequence, nothing remains in the tomb and in the earth except the dry element, viz. the dust *that God took from the earth* (Gen 2: 7). The earth takes hold only what is its own, but the other three elements go off to their respective places, the warm to the fire, the cold to the air, the damp to the waters. So when the resurrection takes place,

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^a In the "Prologue" to the collection of stories "good for the soul" (ψυχοφελῆ) attributed to Anastasios there is also mention of the turtle-dove and the swallow: cf. *Narrationes*, ed. Nau XLII; ed. Binggeli, II Prol. 7-10.

^b Perhaps an autobiographical hint to medical studies.

they run together again at God's command, each element to its own. Similarly the soul comes among them and it is the complete human being who resurrects.

9. Therefore whenever a doubt about the resurrection [ἀνάστασις] comes to you, as you see the soul-less dust in the grave and you wonder, "How can this miserable and dead ash become a complete, soul-filled man?", you should cast a glance immediately at yourself and you will see an example of the resurrection (ἀνάστασις) of bodies, which has already occurred. Just try and explain to me from where you have risen (ἀνέστης) to life and appeared as a complete, soul-filled man? Was it not from a little miserable, dirty seed that you rose up (ἀναστὰς) out of the womb, as if from a tomb, thanks to the power of God?

10. But if it is the lack of soul in the dust of bodies which incites you to lack of faith, so that you ask, "How can what lacks soul engender anew the soul-full?", you have at your disposal in this regard, right from the creation itself to our own day, many soul-filled examples of generation of rising-up [ἀναστάσεως] out of the soul-less. The sun lacks a soul, but from it, as I have often said,^a proceeds the soul-full movement of all bodies. The waters lack soul, but out of them has come and still comes even today the generation of soul-filled animals and the upward flight [ἀνάπτησις] and rising-up [ἀνάστασις] of winged animals. The earth lacks soul, but out of it has come the rising-up [ἀνάστασις] of all soul-filled beasts and crawling animals. The air lacks soul, but up to the present time it is the air that brings to birth the upward flight [ἀνάπτησις] of soul-filled, living winged creatures.^b

11. In conclusion, bearing in mind all those cases of the rising-up [ἀνάστασις] of soul-filled creatures from what lacks soul, have trust that the soul-filled resurrection [ἀνάστασις]

^a A puzzling remark, as Anastasios has mentioned that the element of heat/fire give life (see §6) but he does not seem to have referred explicitly to the sun, except incidentally (see §7), either in this answer nor in his other writings.

^b Anastasios is clearly playing on the verbal similarity between the two terms ἀνάστασις and ἀνάπτησις ("upward flight").

of your own soulless dust and flesh is possible by the simple power of God. The One who could establish in being out of nothing by sheer will and word the incorporeal powers of the angels, the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and all the visible and invisible creation,^a will find it much more easy and devoid of trouble to resurrect and re-form by simple word and command even the bodies of the dead, in a way which He will order and in a manner which He alone, as creator of them, comprehends.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 92) and **Coll. d.** (Qu. 20); omitted in **Coll. b.**

(2) Similar QQ in the *QQ ad Antiochum*: 18 and 114 (PG 28, 608C1-D6, 668D7-669D7), and cf. QQ 134-135 (PG 28, 681B-D).

(3) In Greek the term for “resurrection” (ἀνάστασις) can also mean simply “raising up” (from the verb ἀνίστημι) or “rising up” (from ἀνίσταμαι), and to some extent (especially in §10) Anastasios plays on the double meaning.

Paradise: in this world or elsewhere?

Question 23

QUESTION What sort of Paradise should we consider to exist at present? Is it perceptible by the senses (αἰσθητόν) or only by the mind (νοητόν)? Is it corruptible or incorruptible?

49

ANSWER I. We find many different opinions of the exegetes on this subject: some said that it is completely corruptible, and some that it is completely incorruptible, while still others that it has a sort of midway position, neither completely corruptible like the gardens and fruits among us, that perish and become worm-eaten and foul-smelling, nor on the other hand is it now utterly immaterial and spiritual, after the model of future incorruptibility and immortality, but “Similar”, as one exegete says, “to what was the

^a See §3 above.

state of human beings, midway between corruption and incorruptibility, such was, and still is, Paradise".^a

2. Perhaps those who held this last view have spoken well; for if Paradise is completely like other gardens, how could Christ have granted to the thief as if it was something exceptional the sojourn in Paradise which was the beginning of his rich reward? Again how could Paul, astonished at his rapt into Paradise, have said that there he was initiated into *words unspeakable* (2 Cor 12: 4)?^b

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3. However one should be aware that some have also proposed the following theory: just as Scripture is accustomed to speak of two Jerusalems,^c an earthly and a heavenly, and of two worlds,^d a seen and an intellectually grasped, so of two Paradises, one spiritual (πνευματικόν), that befits the thief and Saint Paul, where they say are also the souls of the just, and another Paradise perceptible to the senses (αἰσθητόν),^e from which the perceptible waters of the Nile and the Euphrates come forth upon the earth, and where the snake, the plants, and Eve and Adam were. The reason is that if we talk of the snake and the waters as spiritual things, we undo and turn topsy-turvy Holy Scripture.

^a The exegete quoted seems to be the late-second century bishop and apologist, Theophilus of Antioch; this fragment of his *Ad Autolyicum* II, 24 (ed. R.M. Grant, *Theophilus of Antioch*, Oxford, 1970, p. 66; PG 6, 1089D4-1092A2) was included in the *catena* on Genesis (Gen 2: 8-9), ed. Françoise Petit, *La Chaîne sur la Genèse*, I, no. 227, Leuven, 1991, p. 158, and Anastasios may have found it there.

^b The whole of this paragraph may be indebted to the fourth century bishop of Salamis, Epiphanius; cf. *Ancoratus*, 54, 2 – 55, 3; 58, 1-2; 58, 6 – 59, 1 (ed. K. Holl, *Epiphanius* I [GCS 25], Leipzig, 1915, pp. 63, 67-69 PG 41, 1148-49, and PG 43, 112-113); these fragments are also found in the *catenae*, cf. Françoise Petit, loc. cit., nos. 233-235, pp. 162-166. When the compiler of **Coll. 23** added a florilegium, he chose a passage from Epiphanius containing these extracts (PG 89, 540-541).

^c Cf. Rev 21: 2.

^d Cf. Rev 21: 1; 2 Cor 5: 17.

^e The fourth-century Arian theologian, Acacius of Caesarea, may be the source for this opinion: cf. the fragment attributed to him, *Ad Gen. 2: 14*, (ed. R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque et des Rois*, [Studi e Testi 201], Vatican, 1959, pp. 111-112; this text does not figure in the *Catena in Genesim*).

COMMENTS

(1) One section (§3) was included in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 23 = Qu. ed. 23; cf. PG 89, 540B9-C6).

(2) The Qu. appears in **Coll. d.** (Qu. 21), but was omitted in **Coll. b.**

(3) In the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 48 (PG 28, 628D-629A) has some resemblance with the first two paragraphs.

Can one pray without ceasing?

Question 24

QUESTION What is it *to pray without ceasing* (1 Thess 5: 17)? For it is not possible for a person who is preoccupied with house and children, and living in the world, to pray without ceasing.

ANSWER It is certainly not with reference to oral prayer that the Apostle made that remark, just as Christ said, *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of the heavens, but the person who does the will of the one who sent me* (Mt 7: 21).^a Thus the person who continuously performs good deeds, either dedicated to works of kindness or engaged in other services, in accordance with God, this is the one who prays *without ceasing*. Indeed it is possible to pray in one's heart both in bed, and out on the road, at table, in the marketplace, and in any other place.

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COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 93), but omitted (surprisingly) in the other collections.

(2) This Qu. shows that Anastasios was dealing with questions from a lay audience.

^a Cf. Jn 6: 38-40.

Why do sexual improprieties occur?

Question 25

QUESTION What are the ways in which sexual impurity^a [πορνεία] and nocturnal ejaculations [ἐνυπνιασμοί] come about?

ANSWER According to the Fathers^b there are four: in the first place, physical inflammation increases because of much eating, and much drinking, and because of much sleeping and idleness. However if a man does not happen to be in any of these states, he may with God's permission be assailed to commit impurity because of his pride, or because he judges others to be sinners, or out of the envy of the devils when they see that he is making progress according to God; it is also possible to suffer from a nocturnal ejaculation because of laxness or weakness [ἀσθένεια],^c and further it is possible to accustom oneself to impurity from bad habit of the flesh.

COMMENTS

(1) Adapted as part of much longer Qu. in **Coll. 23** (= Qu. ed. 8).

(2) This Qu. appears in **Coll. d.** (Qu. 25), and also in **Coll. b** (Qu. 17),

(3) In the *QQ ad Antiochum*, the first part of Qu. 107 (PG 28, 664A-C) has a strong resemblance with this Qu.

Why is sickness so common among Christians?

Question 26

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QUESTION Why is it that among us Christians, rather than among some other unbelieving nations, there are often far more maimed people, and lepers, and those crippled with gout, and epileptics, and those in the grip of other complaints?

^a Usually translated "fornication", the term refers to any sexual impurity.

^b One obvious source could be John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi*, gr. 15 (PG 88, 889A7-B1).

^c The word ἀσθένεια can mean "weakness" or "illness".

ANSWER 1. On this topic some were of the opinion that it is because God loves us that He has allowed such illnesses among us, but this defence (ἀπολογία) is not acceptable for all. So, in my opinion, such things are due to race and climate, and to a very rich and liquid diet, and to excessive wine-drinking and eating.

2. As proof for the existence of such climates there are the inhabitants of Ailas,^a who never suffer from gout; and as proof that there are diets of food and drink that cause illness, there is the race (γένος) of the Jews. These latter, who enjoy a rich diet, with much meat and wine and sauces, have just as many, if not more, maimed and crippled and possessed people among them as we do. But the Arabs, who keep to a much drier diet, and are moreover a race (γένος) from a desert and dry climate, do not have so many invalids, sufferers from gout, or lame people, or lepers or possessed. And there are many other races (ἔθνη), who are idolaters, who do not happen to have such maladies, because of the dryness of their diet and the purity of their temperate climates.

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3. But perhaps you will say, "What then? Is it possible to become epileptic or possessed by demons because of luxury and wantonness and varied dishes?" On that subject listen to what Christ had to say about some possessed people: *That sort <of demon> does not come out except by prayer and fasting* (Mk 9: 29). Therefore, if it comes out by fasting, very often it goes in, with God's permission, because of wantonness and luxury and other bodily causes.

4. Moreover a short time before the capture of Cyprus^b a learned and wise medical practitioner visited the martyr's shrine

^a The adjective formed from the place-name, Ailas, viz. "Ailisiōs" (Αἰλίσσιος), is found in an inscription in the Monastery Church on Mount Sinai (cf. I. Ševčenko, "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery", DOP 20, 1966, pp. 257 and 262) and also in a London manuscript (*Londin. Burney* 50/2, f. 144v) dated 1362; there is a mention in John Moschos (*Pratum Spirituale*, 62-66 [PG 87/3, 2913-2917]) of a monastery that belonged to the "Ailiotoi" (Αἰλιωτῶν) on Mount Sinai, who seem to have come from the town of Ailas; in the *Narrationes* this town is mentioned (Nau XII, Binggeli I, 20) as in Procopius (*Bell. Pers.*, I, 19), but the spelling probably varied (Αἰλάς, Αἰλά, Αἰλώς).

^b This capture of Cyprus by the Turks took place in 649-650, cf. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, anno 6140 [647/8 A.D.], ed. de Boor, Leipzig, 1883, vol.

of St Epiphaneios; when he saw the crowd of sick people, he said that with God's help he would be able to cure some of them by using a certain diet, and by cleaning their nostrils^a and by bleedings. And indeed, under orders from the archbishop, he made his trials and cured most of them.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 94) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 22); omitted in **Coll. b**.

(2) Among the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 103 has a similar answer ((PG 28, 661A-C).

(3) The particular problem of death through plague is dealt with in Qu. 66.

Causes of character differences?

Question 27

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QUESTION A problem that is much discussed among everybody is why some people from their very birth and infancy are found to be by nature gentle, others choleric, others attached to good living and lecherous, yet others misogynist and temperate, whereas some again are by nature generous, and others savage and niggardly; and not only that, but there are people who are found to be naturally very bright and gifted with intelligence, whereas others are dull and stupid, and so on.

ANSWER 1. This subject has already been discussed by us in a specific work [ἐν ἰδικῷ πονήματι]:^b there, beginning from this land of the sun's rising, and then as far as the West, and again round in a circle from here to the North, and subsequently as

1, pp. 343-344 (transl. C. Mango and R. Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes*, Oxford, 1997, pp. 478-479 n. 1); one of the *Narrationes* also mentions this capture (Nau XLIX; Binggeli, II, 15, 3). These references, along with the mention of Cyprus in Qu. 28, §16, indicating familiarity with the island, justify the supposition that Anastasios was a Cypriot.

^a Cf. Qu. 81, §9.

^b Unfortunately it is not clear if this separate treatise has survived: see S.N. Sakkos, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 155.

far as here in the East, we showed that it is not God who makes one person restrained from birth, and another in contrast lecherous, nor one choleric and another patient, but that there are certain races and regions, and there are combinations of places, elements and climates, and turning points and alterations of seasons, finally, that there are also physical causes consequent on the body's elements by all of which causes and situations and combinations and seasons, if there happens to be a preponderance of the warm element at the moment of conception of the child, the newly-born acquires the character of a warm combination and is attached to generosity and good-living; on the other hand if conception occurs with the surge of the cold element, the engendered person is of a more temperate and cool character. So in the same way for the other two elements: the dry produces a person that is wrathful and harsh and sober and resourceful; whereas the wet, one who is dull and material and gluttonous and sordid.

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2. The reason is that were we to say that it is God's command that such a person is conceived and becomes restrained, whereas another a fornicator and sharp and wrathful, then God would be found to be the cause of the passions, and at the same time a respecter of persons,^a in that He created this person good and the other wicked. And further, not even the restrained person would be found to be worthy of reward, seeing that it is God who made him restrained by nature, nor would the fornicator and choleric person be worthy of punishment, having become so because of God.

3. Therefore, these things that come by nature, I mean gentleness, prudence, restraint, are not termed "virtues" by the holy Fathers, but are physical advantages and gains, which the stupidly-wise astrologers among the Hellenes [= "pagans"] explained as occurring among different persons because of the mythical influence of the movement of the stars^b.

4. But as I said at the beginning, we have spoken of these things in greater detail in another place.

^a Something explicitly denied by St Peter, cf. Acts 10: 34.

^b Philippus Solitarius, *Ἡ διόπτρα*, ed. Spyridon Lauriotis, *Ο Ἄθως 1*, Athens, 1919, pp. 169-170.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 95) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 23); omitted in **Coll. b**.

(2) In the *QQ ad Antiochum*, the question of personal character appears in Qu. 119 (PG 28, 673B-D) but receives a very different response.

(3) As with Qu. 4 above this Qu. is reported in the Διόπτρα of Philip *Monotropos*.

QUESTIONS CONNECTED WITH DEATH

Question 28

QUESTION 1. The whole human race is alarmed when it sees the many dreadful and astounding things that happen in connection with the deaths of human beings. So we entreat, if it is possible, to have at least a partial explanation, as to why it is that many persons, even rulers and emperors, who are wicked and very often teachers of wicked doctrines and heresies and unholy policies, who do harm to practically the whole inhabited world, these regularly live to an advanced old age, being granted a long life which is to the detriment of many individuals and nations, whereas other persons who are pious and proclaim to the world every virtue and devotion, people responsible for leading many souls to salvation, these are short-lived and pass away in their youth. And some among the pagans [Ελλήνων], who intended to be baptized, come to their end still in their sins and depart for hell, frequently only one or two days before they were baptized and brought to salvation, while yet others, who shone by their signs and wonders during fifty or eighty years of holiness, then fell into some heresy or another, or a sin of the flesh, and at once died, snatched away in their evil deeds.

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2. Similarly one powerful and impious man, who fell ill or left for war, made a resolution with himself that if he were to return victorious, or rise from his sick-bed, he would close

the churches and open the temples of the idols; then the one who had adopted such a resolution recovered and he opened the idols' temples. But another absolute ruler [τύραννος] made exactly the contrary resolution, saying that if he rose from his sick-bed and escaped his illness, he would open the churches, and close the temples, and grant largess, and free those in prison. He even set in writing a rescript [διατύποισις] of all these good intentions and had it witnessed. Well, this second person did not recover, but came to his end in his sins, and none of these good things came to pass.

3. It is possible to see daily a thousand and one similar occurrences, and that is why the pagans [Ἕλληγες], bewildered, thought that the world was not governed by providence, and also why very often the faithful feel some doubts in their hearts about God's just judgement; they dare not express them to anyone, but only know that in their heart of hearts they are scandalized and consumed with doubt.

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ANSWER 1. It is quite clear that a rule of Scripture [νόμος γραφικός] lays down, *Do not seek what is too difficult for you, and do not examine what is too deep for you* (Sirach 3: 21). However we know, even if it is written that *The judgements of the Lord are a great abyss* (Ps 35: 7), that another text affirms that *God makes known his judgements and decisions to Israel* (Ps 147: 8). By "Israel" I mean the spiritual one, that according to Christ; indeed "Israel" is interpreted to mean "the mind that sees God".^a So anyone who sees God has the power, if illumined by God through the Holy Spirit, to learn something of His judgements and mysteries: *The Spirit investigates even the depths of God* (1 Cor 2: 10), Scripture says. Although it has been said, *Who has known the mind of the Lord?* (Isa 40: 13),^b still Paul and those like Paul say, *We possess the mind of Christ* (1 Cor 2: 16), just as Jer-

^a S.N. Sakkos has drawn attention to the liking for etymological explanations drawn from the Hebrew that surfaces in some of the Anastasiana (S.N. Sakkos, *Περί Αναστασιῶν Συναγῶν*, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 155 note 5, and p. 197); on this particular example, cf. F. Wutz, *Onomastica Sacra*, [TU 41, 1, 2], Leipzig, 1914-1915, vol. I, p. XXII and see the Indices, s.v. Israel.

^b Cf. Rom 11: 34; 1 Cor 2: 16.

emiah says, *God will not do a thing that he will not reveal to his slaves the prophets.*^a

2. Now if, as David says, God revealed to those under the Law *the unclear and secret aspects of His wisdom* (Ps 50: 8), how much more <will He do so> to those in a state of grace, who have learned *what eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not emerged in the human mind* (1 Cor 2: 9), that is to say, those who have entered and taken their rest amid the divine and incomprehensible mysteries of God, *which the angels long to gaze upon* (1 Pet 1: 12), as Scripture testifies, those who have both the Father and the Son indwelling within them along with the Spirit, in accordance with Christ's promise which says, *We, the Father and I, will come and make our dwelling with them* (Jn 14: 23). And who said on another occasion, *Nobody knows the Father, except for the Son and the one to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him* (Mt 11: 27).

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3. Therefore, if God Himself, the All-mighty, reveals Himself in a certain spiritual fashion without speech to those worthy of Him, how much more are the reasons and mysteries of His creation to be revealed? For if to the pagans [Ἑλλῆσι], whom one might say were not really worthy of conversion and the knowledge of God, He partly disclosed and made known the mysteries of heaven, and of earth and stars, those of the sun and moon, and of the sea and the abyss, of the elements and bodies and spirits, how much more <will He do this> to those who possess Him dwelling within them?

4. Thus many such questions and queries about these and similar problems and about God's judgements have been raised for ages past; and not only concerning the points raised, but also, why did such and such a saintly man suddenly come to his end in the road while taking a walk, and why did another equally suddenly give up his soul in the bath, and why did a third while at table receive the cup and along with it drink from the cup of death? Why did one woman die in child-birth, and another in her bridal chamber, while still intact and virginal,

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^a This quotation seems to be taken from Amos 3: 7, and not from Jeremiah.

just when her hour of marriage and joy had come? Why did one man die without any previous sickness, on the third day of his being properly ordained as a priest and while capable of saving many souls? Concerning all these questions, *let anyone who advances in faith go forward* (Mt 19: 12) and listen without hesitation to the solution that comes from the teaching of the Fathers.

[cf. Additional §§ (given below) found only in Coll. d.]

5. In the beginning, when God made^a heaven and earth and the sea and all the visible creation, He put it all together in an extraordinary fashion out of four elements, as I have already mentioned earlier:^b fire, water, air and earth; and the body, both of ourselves and of the animals, is made up out of these. God thus appointed these four elements, as if they were generals or charioteers, to follow his wishes and take charge, driving and directing the nature [φύσιν] of the bodies that were composed out of them, as if that nature had been engendered and established by them as if they were a sort of parents. So one can observe that continuously all the bodies on the earth, and the plants and animals, all that is animate and inanimate, is conducted and set up and altered and worked upon, or is animated and vivified, or dissolved in corruption, in accordance with the mixture of the climates [ἀέρων] and of the elements.^c

6. However if some doubts cross your mind about what has been said, tell me why is it that very often plagues also strike animals and birds and fish in the sea, all of which are not sinful in God's eyes? Therefore, our human body also, taken up from the earth – and in so far as it is of the same nature [όμοούσιον] as they – is liable to death and corruption and suffering, and

^a Cf. Gen 1: 1-31.

^b Probably a reference to Qu. 22, §§4, 8.

^c S.N. Sakkos (loc. cit., pp. 154-155) uses this passage as evidence that Anastasios "does not follow exactly in the footsteps of orthodox tradition" (δὲν στοιχεῖ ἀκριβῶς εἰς τὰ ἔχνη τῆς ὀρθοδόξου παραδόσεως, p. 154), and uses this as proof that the Qu. is not authentic, but written by another "Anastasios". He refers here to the earlier opinion of Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur*, Munich, 1959, p. 444, also against the authenticity – an opinion formed while only the Pseudo-Anastasian *erotapokriseis* (Collection a) had been published.

is made up of matter. This body of ours, having its constitution out of the same elements as those of which the animals are composed, is also, so it seems to me, by God's primeval ordinance under the charge and direction, in accordance with God's plan, of the elements, which are like parents to it, and it is thus that it grows and lives and falls ill and comes to an end: when I speak about "life" and "ending" I mean that which comes, with God's power, by the physical union and separation of the elements.

7. I know of three sorts of death that may be mentioned. One is that brought about individually in the way common to most persons. A second is, for example, the death that was sent on one occasion upon the Corinthians who communicated *unworthily*,^a in accordance with a sentence on them by God; this is similar to that of the first-born in Egypt,^b instead of being the physical result of the airs or of the elements it is brought about by God's anger. A third sort is that of people who, through some unimaginable judgement of God, fall off precipices or are drowned, or overwhelmed, all of whom may be bad or good (like the children of Job^c). Similarly we know that there are two sorts of life. One is that common to most people, which as I have often said has a physical explanation, as it results from the orderly and powerful arrangement of the elements with God's foreknowledge. Another is "God-given", by which I mean that it is a special concession of God, e.g. the fifteen years of life given to Hezekiah after his illness,^d the life of Lazarus after his resurrection,^e and that of other such people.

8. In addition we should take note that as God is the lord of all living things and deaths, of all natures and elements, and of all other things, He adds life when He wishes to do so. But He brings death even upon good men, whenever He decides to order this. Thus He said to Moses, *Let Aaron be added to*

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^a Cf. 1 Cor 11: 27, 30.

^b Cf. Ex 12: 29.

^c Cf. Job 1: 18-19.

^d Cf. 4 Kings 20: 6.

^e Cf. Jn 11: 33-34; 12: 2, 9-10.

his ancestors (Num 20: 24),^a and again to Moses himself, *Go up upon the mountain* and end your days (Num 27: 12). It seems to me that Nabouchodonosor^b and David, and very often certain other persons among the peoples and certain great kings [βασιλεῖς] of nations, receive from God either a prolongation or a diminution of their years in accordance with the desserts of a particular people. Quite often to some just men, who will benefit by greater progress if they receive a prolongation of their time, God grants an additional period to the normal physical life of their bodies.

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9. However our present discussion does not concern these rare prolongations and diminutions of life and death by God in certain cases, but rather about the bodily life and death which is common to the whole race endowed with human nature. Why is it that in certain countries bodies are healthy and long-living, and in others sickly and short-lived? Again why is it that some places frequently suffer plagues, while other regions belonging to unholy people never experience such plagues? Similarly how does it happen that in one and the same race of pagans [ἐλληνικῷ γένει] or barbarians or unbelievers, some persons, though wicked, are prolific, while other persons, who are good, are sterile, again some devout persons are short-lived and other wicked persons die in ripe old age? What is the reason for being snatched away suddenly speechless and dying without having drawn up a testament, whereas others only finish their days after having been ill for a long time?

10. In order that by God's grace the investigation and explanation of the proposed problems may be clearer and more credible, let us suppose a certain city or country which is unholy and not law-abiding, completely devoted to worshipping the devil, and utterly ignorant of what God is, but rather worshipping and adoring stones and foul wooden things, flies and monkeys. Now, you who say that God has programmed a

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^a However, Anastasios gives πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας αὐτοῦ, "to his fathers/ancestors" instead of the LXX text, πρὸς τὸν λαόν, "to his people".

^b Cf. Dan 4: 24: the LXX spelling, "Nabouchodonosor", differs from that given in the Hebrew, "Nebuchadnezzar".

foreordained limit^a to the life of each particular person as best suits that person, explain to me why and for what reason some persons of that unholy city finish their days aged one hundred, and others when fifty, some childless and others with numerous progeny, some breathe their last as they are taking a stroll and others after protracted sickness? Why are some persons separated from their bodies after five or even ten days of distraught death agony, whereas others give up their souls peacefully and gently? Would you please tell me then, if they are all unholy and wicked, why do some of them live out all the time in good health, whereas others in sickness and with much suffering? Why do some die very prolific and others sterile? And why have some died walking around, and others after chronic sickness? Why have some departed this life aged one hundred or even two hundred, and others as children or even as suckling babes?

11. Clearly anyone who proposes the theory that in these cases there is a foreordained limit to the years of life is attacking God. For if He has knowledge of the future, as He certainly has, why did He foreordain, as you say, that such and such an idolater should live for fifty years, and such and such another for one hundred years, while He removed from life such and such an infant, pure and quite free from the guilt of the father's idolatry? If these things happened with foreordination, God will be found to be a respecter of persons,^b because He removes one from life while still pure, but foreordains fifty years of life to another, foreknowing that that person will spend all these years in idolatry.

12. But these things are not so (God forbid!) and God will never be the cause of evil,^c in accordance with the Manichean myths. Those do indeed say that a good and just god foreordained life for those who are good and just, while an evil god provides birth and death for those who are unholy and evil. However the sacred apostolic teacher, Clement, says something

^a See Qu. 16 above.

^b Cf. Acts 10: 34, and Qu. 27, §2 and Qu. 99, §7.

^c The impossibility of God creating *ματαιότητα* ("folly") in a person is affirmed in the *Hodegos*, II, 3, 34 (CCSG 8, p. 33).

like this in Book 1 of his *On the Foreknowledge and Just Judgment of God*, namely, that while God has the power even now to shape and form human beings as happened at the first formation of Adam, He no longer works in that fashion because He has, once and for all, given to humans the power to generate other humans, when He said to our nature, *Increase and multiply and fill the earth* (Gen 1: 28).

In this way (says Clement^a) in His all-powerful and foreknowing power God arranged that the disintegration and end of bodies should come about by a certain physical sequence and order, by the mixture and change of the elements; God acting thus according to His essential divine wisdom and understanding.

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13. You have heard the voice of this father of the Fathers teaching that God in His completely good and foreknowing power has implanted in an essential way [οὐσιωδῶς] in our nature the power to generate by the flesh, which consists of the elements acting by divine power, and also the dissolution and departure from life. In consequence of this, whenever you see some persons living to advanced old age though they are impious, and some others dying young though they are devout, do not let thoughts disrespectful of God cross your mind, but realize that God's foreknowledge [πρόνοια] has arranged [οἰκονόμησεν] that all the visible nature, the birth and dissolution and death of bodies, of animals and birds and fish and humans, should be ordered and ruled by the nature and mixture of elements and climates, acting according to the decisive influence [ῥοπή] of Him.^b So it is that we may observe, when corruption comes to the damp element, automatically many fish die, and when it affects the dryness of the earth, the animals collapse. On the other

^a This passage is included among the fragments attributed to Clement of Alexandria (cf. *Fragmenta*, Nr. 42 [GCS 17², p. 220]), but it is known only through this text of Anastasios; in the *Hodegos* Anastasios mentions a "Clement" (probably of Rome), cf. I, 3, 73-79, and II, 1, 3 (CCSG 8, pp. 21-22, 23); worth noting is the mention by Nikephoros Blemmydes in his *De vitae termino* (ed. W. Lackner, Leiden, 1985, p. 16, lines 14-18) of this same passage, which he attributes explicitly to Clement of Rome.

^b The Greek phrase κατὰ τὴν ῥοπὴν αὐτοῦ here seems to refer to God, and the same word ῥοπή is used later in §17 also referring to God.

hand, if the cold of the air increases, it is the birds that perish, and if the element of fire becomes (with permission of its creator) over-hot, it is human beings who die of the plague.

14. It is because of these movements and increases and diminutions and mixtures and qualities of the elements that some countries (with God's foreknowledge) never experience plagues, often because they enjoy climates and waters that are dryer and pure and unpolluted and healthy. As proof there are the waters of Jericho, that at the time of Elisha made people sterile and brought death;^a that is why the prophet to cure them said, *Thus says the Lord: I have healed these waters, and death will not be in them, nor the childless woman* (4 Kings 2: 21).^b You can hear, you who would have us believe in foreordained periods, this prophetic and divine voice bearing witness that also out of the waters come deaths and sterility upon people, just as the waters of Egypt also bear witness to the same, as they are producers of fertility and child-bearing. But if the deaths of bodies come from the waters (with God's permission) it is obvious that they will also come from the other elements, in accordance with their increases and diminutions.^c

15. However, if this were not so, please tell me why it is that God instructed human beings in the wisdom of the medical profession,^d and why He took care to provide plants and all other sorts of remedies in such a way that, in my opinion, with God's foreknowledge, doctors often save people from death? Indeed the experts among the established slave-traders inquired among the wise and the professionals among the doctors, asking them to inform them precisely about the qualities of the climates and elements in different lands, and in what land one

^a Cf. 4 Kings 22: 19-20.

^b There are some variants on the LXX text which reads, "I have healed these waters; no longer shall there be death nor a lack of children from there" (NETS).

^c S.N. Sakkos refers to this passage as proof of departure from orthodox tradition, with nature replacing the divine will: τὰ ὁποῖα προδίδουν ὑπολανθάνουσιν ὑποκατάστασιν τοῦ θείου θελήματος διὰ τῆς φύσεως (loc. cit., p. 154); but presumably Anastasios would defend himself by appealing to the notion of secondary causality (that of natural causes).

^d A very similar passage occurs in Qu. 16, §2.

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should buy slaves [σώματα] that were due to be re-sold in the East if they are not to die too quickly, and from what land those for the North. And so on, one after the other, they made investigations about all the lands, as they had learned by experience that there were climates and regions and waters that would more quickly destroy the slaves [σώματα] brought there from other lands.

16. A few years ago I happened to visit the Dead Sea, the regions near Zoar and Tetrapurgia, where the climate is particularly difficult and pestilential and hot and destructive, similar to that of Cyprus.^a I found that all the convict labour belonging to the state farms came from Cyprus, and when I expressed astonishment at this and asked the reason, those in charge there gave me the following answer: "The climate here will not tolerate slaves [σώματα] of other constitution except that of Cyprus; and," they added, "very often, after prisoners have been sent here from other different lands, in a short time they have perished and died."

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17. From this example, then, one can see clearly that God, the creator and maker of all, who from the beginning has granted to each nature among created things the power to act according to its own particular energy, He has also given to the elements the task of arranging, in accordance with His foreknowledge and awareness and decisive influence [ρόπή], the birth and increase, the life and death of our bodies. Thus it is through their movement and decrease and increase and separation, I mean those of the four elements, that the death of the body comes about. At the hour and critical moment [ρόπην] that the warm, life-giving energy of the blood happens, for whatever reason, to abandon the body, the person dies at once, in so far as the body is composed of the elements and is kept alive and dissolved by a divine power acting through them.

18. So because of this some die as children, because of this some perish while still at the foetal stage owing to some physical

^a Clearly an important autobiographical hint that Anastasios was a Cypriot by birth (see also Qu. 26, §4), and that he had travelled in Palestine; from the *Hodegos* it is clear that he had visited Alexandria (cf. X. 1, 12 [CCSG 8, p. 143]).

cause and antipathy of an element: when the vital warm energy of the blood grows weak and fades, it is not able to maintain the body for long in life. As I mentioned earlier, whenever the warm, kinetic energy of the blood disappears, life departs at once from the body. And so because of this some die instantly; because of this some breathed their last suddenly while on the road; because of this some end their days sitting at table; because of this some unholy men live to a ripe old age; because of this some devout men die young; because of this some who intended to do good deeds were not able to anticipate but were themselves anticipated; because of this even some saintly persons collapsed and died. In my view all the lands that can preserve their food-stocks and seeds for a long time can certainly do the same for the human bodies there, and vice versa.

19. Again because of this some devout persons bury their children so prematurely, while the children of some unholy persons live such long lives. Because of this when plague^a strikes one city the infants die, but in another city, it is the adults, and again in yet another the women and the old. So it is that sometimes because of a wasting sickness, at other times because of fevers, sometimes because of a parching heat, and at yet other times because of a lung infection, people die when plagues arrive, depending on the movement of the climate and of the elements, and on the increase and decrease within specific places and lands, all this not without the awareness of God – far from it! – but due to the movement and disposition and energy of the elements, which have been granted by Him from the beginning.

20. This is also the reason, so it seems to me, why very often some devout women are found to be sterile, like Sarah and Rebekah and Hannah, whereas on the other hand some impious ones are prolific. I dare to say that because of some such physical connection and bodily causality, implanted by God, very often one woman may have married successively [κατὰ πρόσβασιν]^b

^a See Qu. 66 for another answer dealing with the problem of plagues.

^b The Greek expression recurs in Qu. 81, §6. Official legislation against successive marriages appeared only in 920 with the rulings of the *Tomos of Union* (see ODB [Alexander Kazhdan], p. 2093).

ten husbands and buried them all one after the other, because she was of a certain very fierce and energetic humour and seed. And similarly for the same reason it has often been possible for a man to marry various women and progressively bury them all.

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21. Some people suggest that it is in this same way, viz. because of the mixture and disposition and causality and incompatibility of the elements that some people, though saintly, only after many hours or even days of death-agony tear away the soul from the body, while others who are wicked are separated from their bodies quite peacefully and harmlessly. A proof of this is the case of death from lung infection: such invalids, no matter if they are devout or the contrary, finish their days without pain, eating and drinking and talking. The reason is that lung diseases are due to the cold element, and they quickly suppress the warm life-giving work of the blood, thus producing for such patients a separation of the soul with less suffering.

22. In order to show you that in general many cases of deadly illness are due to an increase of the blood, let me give you three or four instances. In the first place, children often end quickly because they are too hot. Secondly, when spring starts at Easter-time, the period when the blood increases and when bleedings occur, then there is a special tendency for deadly pestilence to break out. In the third place, many of those who end their days die as the sun is sinking, because the coldness of the hour expels the life-giving energy from the blood and makes a person grow cold. That is why if you divide up someone who has just died, you will find three of the elements in the body, viz. those of the phlegm, the humour and bile, but you will not find any blood.

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23. However the carping listener^a should not seize on what has been said, supposing that we are advocating belief in randomness and fate by our remarks. There stands the word of the Lord: *Not one sparrow will fall upon the earth without the knowledge of your father who is in heaven* (Mt 10: 29). For, the

^a S.N. Sakkos (loc. cit., p. 153) points out that the “carping listener” recurs in the Preface to the *Hexaemeron*, Praef. III, 2 (ed. Kuehn-Baggaly [OCA 278], Rome, 2007, p. 10, lines 177-180; PG 89, 856C8-12 [Latin version]), thus providing additional proof of the identity of authorship.

life [ψυχῇ] *of all living things are in his hand* (Job 12: 10), as Job said, and *In his hand are the ends of the earth* (Ps 94: 4). And again there is the Scripture quotation: *His judgements are in all the earth* (Ps 104: 7), and *He bears* (and alters) *all things by the word* (and the will) *of His power* (Heb 1: 3).^a

24. But this very same God, provident creator of all, He who bears and governs all things by the will of His power, has formed the human being from the beginning as a dual animal [διττὸν ζῶον]. I mean one made up of an eternal, intellectual soul and of a composite, material body. He has placed in this being's essential constitution two governing bodies [διοικήσεις, *lit.* "dioceses"], granting to the soul control by means of an autonomous free choice, so that she can incline the soul as she wishes, either to virtue or to vice, without God being responsible for this, and granting to the body, in what concerns life, the power to rule and govern with the assent of God by means of the elements. In the same way that from above and from the beginning God has granted to the sun the energy to heat and burn, and to the moon the power to illumine the night, and to the earth the ability to increase through the production of seeds, and to the plants the full bloom which brings forth fruit, and to animals the support [συστασις] produced through copulation, and in a word the appropriate energy to each nature, so He has granted to the elements what seems to me to be the power to dispose and rule over bodies in what concerns their life and death, acting in accordance with His own knowledge.

25. It is absolutely necessary that we realize this, so that when you observe how unholy people live to a ripe old age, whereas devout ones die young, or again that one person comes to an end suddenly, while all at once another is unable to speak, one saintly person's children all end their days young, while the sons of another irreligious person all live to a great old age, one devout person has to endure many days in the agony of dying, while a pagan [Ἑλληγν] passes away peacefully and quietly, one

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^a The additions of Anastasios are in brackets.

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holy woman is sterile, while another, who is a pagan [Ἑλληνίς] bears many children, then that in such and such a God-fearing country there are constant plagues, while in another pagan [ἑλληνικῇ] region no pestilence ever shows itself. To sum up, whenever you see these and similar dreadful and strange things happening, do not be troubled, nor let unseemly and blasphemous thoughts about God arise in your mind, learning from what has been explained that all these and similar events are not brought about without the all-seeing and fore-knowing awareness of the creator. But they all happen by no other method than the well-ordered control and sequence and natural government granted from the first by God to the elements which He created.

26. However, we have not said these things in an assertive and polemical way, but in a scientific spirit and as seems reasonable, requesting those wiser than we are to forgive us and to make good our inadequacies.^a

Additional paragraphs (see §4) found only in Coll. d

1. So one has to recognize that everything that happens, no matter how it comes about, is due either to God having disposed this, or to matter [ὑλῇ] showing its own true nature, or to an autonomous choice selecting what is wanted, or to nature [φύσις], which is a principle of movement and rest, arranging things according to her own principles, or to a craftsman's skill, as he alters material things according to his own power, or to other people's powers, perhaps those of a general or an arms manufacturer or the overall constructed disposition [ἀρχιτεκτονία], all of which may influence what is subject to them so that they adopt one position or another.

2. However even if each of these is said to act of itself, nevertheless all the others have a reference [ἀναφορὰν] to God: both nature [φύσις] is linked to him, and also any natural skill [τέχνη τῆς φύσεως]; choice itself depends on free-will, but to incline one way or another is not isolated from what is peculiar to nature.

^a Similar sentiments are expressed at the end of Qu. 21, §8.

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Indeed any construction [ἀρχιτεκτονία] is something of a mid-point between choice [προαίρεσις] and nature [φύσις]. Matter [ὕλη] also, which seems up to now to flow and to be capable of all sorts of transformations of itself, has acquired this polymorphous adaptability from God; if it had possessed that flow already in potency, how could it ever have been altered? But what it possessed, it had received, and from whom did it receive this except from God? Only God, when He acts, does not have a reference to anything else.

3. Such then is the distinction among the things that come about in this world, some are primarily due to an action of God, who may act perhaps in accordance with what is natural [παρὰ τὴν φύσιν], others are due to matter [ὕλη] which is in motion and giving itself to the flow.

4. But it is necessary to clarify what we have said from an example. King Hezekiah fell ill, not primarily, Scripture says, due to matter, or due to nature, but because God was chastising the king with this sickness: for when King Senachireim [Sennacherib] was on the point of overwhelming him, Hezekiah had God on his side and that King was destroyed with all his army;^a then Hezekiah's heart swelled up with pride and he thought that he had become someone else. To prevent his imagining himself as a sort of superman [ὑπὲρ τὴν φύσιν] and becoming sick with pretensions of divinity, God whipped him with a sickness.^b It was not that he was on the point of undergoing a change of health because of some material cause; so his illness came not from matter, but because of God, even if matter was involved to some extent – in so far as it was the matter that underwent the change, adapting itself with regard to some purely natural things. However since at that moment it was not the matter that held the explanation for the change, but this was imposed on the matter from above by God, that is why we say that it was not because of the matter, but because of God that Hezekiah had his sickness.

5. Moses suffered the same thing and after the crossing of the Red Sea his right hand developed leprosy marks,^c lest he be thought to be God, dividing that sea *into divisions* (Ps 135: 13),

^a Cf. 4 Kings 19: 35-36.

^b Cf. 4 Kings 20: 1; 2: 2 Chr 32: 24-25.

^c Cf. Ex 4: 6.

as the divine David says, then once again restoring and rejoining the ocean. On that occasion also it was not Moses himself who held the movement of the currents in his hand, but quite certainly of itself the sea would have stayed undivided; however God moved the sea for the salvation of the leader of the people.

6. Jacob's eye-pupils grew dim,^a but this was due to matter [had a material cause]. Since he had come to the end of this life, and was spent with old age, his head was full of phlegm, and it was this that brought on his eye-illness.

7. Similarly the prophet David, when he grew old, felt cold in his body, and thus his flesh needed women to warm him.^b This again was due to matter: with the increase of the cold element, the implanted warm element grew weak, so the whole body was shivering with the cold and therefore needed warm contact. Matter underlies everyone in common and with the same respect [= from the material point of view, all humans are common and equal].

8. The fact that matter is what causes such changes is also clear from the case of genetic influences: we notice that persons born from defective parents who suffer from the liver or from gout, soon display illness in the liver or in the foot, and on the other hand those people are fit and strong whose parents are such. According to whether the seed has a defect, or again is pure and without alloy, this appears in the off-shoots; similarly the off-spring display in their bodies or in their souls the defects or advantages of their forbears. As Scripture says: Adam *begot* Seth *according to his form and his likeness* (Gen 5: 3). If there are frequent changes in natures over the generations, this also is due to material causes: matter is not by nature stable. So those affairs that have a more divine causation are more stable and unchangeable, whereas those that are further removed from the divine are both more subject to matter and subject to all sorts of mutability. For example, spring, summer, autumn and winter; they never turn around or alter; but showers, hail, drizzle, thunder-storms and freezing cold, sometimes they come in abundance and sometimes at rare intervals, because they are all subject to matter and this is malleable and changeable.

^a Cf. Gen 48: 10.

^b Cf. 3 Kings 1: 1-4.

9. The reason is that God from the beginning has given certain tendencies [ῥοπὰς], of one sort or another, to bodily things, so that some of these things have precise sequences, others disturbance and disorder. For example, to the heaven <God gave> to be moved with an even motion and to be whirled around in a circle; to fire, a movement upwards, as indeed to the air along with it; to earth and to water, a movement downwards. To formless matter, a capacity to take all forms, a capacity for adaptability and change; to the bodies that are sublunary, the ability to change into all things. Thus whenever fire moves up, and any lump moves down, they would appear to have the movement appropriate to their nature, just as when the heaven is seen to be unchangeable; but our bodies are swept along with the flow proper to matter, such movement or rest of whatever sort it is, is not due in the first place to God, but to themselves and to the nature of each.

10. However we are not saying by talking in this way that matter does anything of itself against God's will, but rather that it is not in the first place because of His will, nor because He is innovating matter, but that it is changing and altering because of its own nature and so introducing changes in us, who are composite animals.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 96); also in **Coll. d.** (Qu. 14), but without the long question at the beginning.

(2) Omitted as such in **Coll. b**, but see the additional Qu. to that collection, given above in Qu. 16. This Qu. has to be read with Qu. 16 and its additional texts (Comments [3] and [4]).

(3) The authenticity of this exceptionally long Qu. has been called in doubt (cf. S. N. Sakkos, *Περὶ Ἀναστάσεων Συναϊτῶν*, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 155), and the suggestion made that it should be attributed to the same author who wrote the *Hexaemeron*. However, at that time critical editions of the works of Anastasios were lacking. At present, both internal evidence (style and vocabulary) and external testimony (the manuscript tradition) are strongly in favour of its authenticity.

(4) A number of *QQ ad Antiochum* have parallel passages: cf. QQ 69, 103, 105 (PG 28, 636-637, 661-663).

Question 29

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QUESTION What should we say also about those who die violent deaths, either falling off cliffs, or overwhelmed, or drowned at sea?

ANSWER I. It is clear that, in the words of Scripture, *The judgements of God are not to be searched out, and His paths are not to be tracked down* (Rom 11: 33).^a However we should realize that not all those who die violent deaths suffer thus because of sins. As proof there are the sons of the just Job, who were all just and yet were smothered together under their house;^b and Christ teaches us this when he says that the eighteen men *on whom fell the tower of Siloam* (Lk 13: 4) were no more wicked than all the other inhabitants of Jerusalem, nor again were those *whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices* (Lk 13: 1).

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2. So we learn from this that even just people often die violent deaths because of some unclear and hidden judgements of God, which come about in three ways. Quite frequently God allows some holy men to be killed by wild beasts, or earthquakes, or floods, or precipices, so that the rest of us, who are so careless, may take fright and come to our senses, saying, "If such a person as this has undergone that, what will we have to suffer, who are sinners?" Again other holy men come to a painful end, perhaps because they have committed small faults and when these are wiped out through such a sentence, they will be found perfect in the presence of God. However, perhaps some men of authority [δυνατοί] take upon themselves the sins of the people; frequently they are condemned to trials and even to the sword and to death because of what they have taken on themselves, and thus win greater salvation for themselves and the people. Indeed Christ himself accepted death on our behalf. Consequently, when we bear in mind all this, we should not be

^a The Hellenistic form ἀνεξεραύνητα, in place of the more usual ἀνεξερεύννητα (both meaning "not to be searched out"), is used here by Anastasios.

^b Cf. Job 1: 18-19.

astounded on seeing John decapitated,^a Peter crucified,^b Isaiah sawn in half^c and Stephen stoned to death,^d and so many other thousands of holy men undergoing painful sicknesses and dangers and violent deaths.

3. In a similar way the blessed Fathers say that violent deaths are brought about in the case of wicked men also in three ways. Either it is so that when they undergo such a threat, others may be brought to their senses; or it is so that they themselves who die may gain some remittance in the other life; or again, because of some divine displeasure and threat, as happened in the case of Pharaoh^e and at the time of the Flood.^f The reason is that some persons are punished only in this life, like Lazarus;^g others both here in part, and there also in part, like the Sodomites^h who were bunt up; but yet others only in the other life, like the rich man in the case of Lazarus.

4. However it is important to grasp clearly that those separated from their bodies by painful deaths find a greater salvation or partial remittance in the next life; it was to make that plain that the Lord said about certain cities, which refused to accept his preaching, *It will be more bearable for the land of Sodom and the land of Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that city* (Mt 10: 15).

5. Therefore you must not assert nor question when you see somebody who has died a painful death through falling or drowning, "Why did he die in this way? Was it that his hour had come, or did he die at the wrong time?" Just have faith that God fashions everything for the best.

^a Cf. Mt 14: 10; Mk 6: 27.

^b On the death of Peter, cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. Eccl.*, 3, 1, 2.

^c On the death of Isaiah, cf. R.H. Charles *The Apocrypha* ..., vol. 2, Oxford, 1913, pp. 115-116.

^d Cf. Act. 7: 59.

^e Cf. Ex 14-15.

^f Cf. Gen 7-8.

^g Lk 16: 19-31.

^h Cf. Gen 19: 24-25.

COMMENTS

(1) The Qu. appears in **Coll. b.**(Qu. 33). This and the following Qu. were joined, adapted and included as one in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 18 = Qu. ed. 18), which then appears in **Coll. d** (Qu. 15).

(2) Various parallels appear in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 69, 71, and 105 (PG 28, 636B-637A, 637D-640B, 661D-664).

Question 30

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QUESTION Is it the case that all those who fall off cliffs, or are drowned or overwhelmed, suffer in this way because of a divine will and ordinance, or is it also because of the activity [ἐνέργεια] of the Hater of the good?

ANSWER 1. It is perfectly clear from Christ's statement, *In your case, even the hairs of your heads have all been numbered* (Mt 10: 30), that Satan has no power – not only over no humans, but not even over the beasts and swine, as the Gospel bears witness.^a Therefore some of these deaths occur by sentence of God, as in the case of the Flood,^b others by His permission, as in the case of the sons of Job crushed to death,^c and yet others only with God's knowledge, without His either agreeing to nor preventing them.

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2. However it is probably quite frequent that because of God's will, some come to a painful end for their own salvation. Thus when the Emperor Maurice prayed to God that he might pay the penalty in this life for the sins he had committed, he saw in a dream an Emperor of exceeding splendour, who ordered him to be handed over to Phokas, the soldier, and that was what happened.^d

^a Cf. Mt 8: 31-32 and parallels.

^b Cf. Gen 7-8.

^c Cf. Job 1: 18-19.

^d One version of this story of Maurice has been given above (Qu. 10, Comment 3, pp. 69-71); there are parallels in the *Narrationes* (Nau XXIX; Binggeli I, 39, 12-19, and II, 24, with the additional "Note complémentaire sur le traitement de la légende de Maurice dans l'oeuvre d'Anastase", loc. cit. pp. 524-525); the story may derive from a lost *Chronicle* of John of Antioch, used by Theophanes, *Chronographia*, anno 6092 [584 A.D.], ed. de Boor, Leipzig, 1883, pp. 284-285 (cf. C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, Oxford, 1997, p. 406 [n. 19] and p. 415 [n. 14]). Maurice (582-602) figures in a very positive light in the works of Anastasios: cf. P. Schreiner, "Der brennende Kaiser. Zur Schaffung eines positiven und eines negativen Kaiserbildes in den Legenden

3. There was also an anchorite, who was famous for his miracles and wonders;^a he had a disciple with him in the desert. It happened that on a certain day this disciple visited a city, which had a wicked and godless governor. The disciple found that the governor had just passed away, and was being conducted in funeral procession with a great crowd, and honour, and candles, and incense. But when the disciple returned to the desert, he found that his own godly superior had been mauled to death by a hyena. He began to feel great dismay and was on the point of accusing God, saying, "How is it that such a wicked and godless man as that governor has come to an honourable end, while this holy and spiritual person has undergone death savaged by beasts?" However as he was turning over these and similar thoughts, an angel of the Lord stood by him and said: "That governor, even if he was utterly wicked, had performed one good deed, and because

um Maurikios", ed. T. Olajos, *Byzance et ses voisins. Mélanges à la mémoire de Gyula Moravcsik*, [Acta Universitatis, Opuscula Byzantina, 9], Szeged, 1994, pp. 25-31.

^a Cf. *Apophthegmata Patrum, Collectio anonyma*, Nau 368 (*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 18, 1913, pp. 139-140); a latin version can be found in PL 73, 995 A7-B12. In a 13th century Vatican manuscript (*Palatinus gr.* 210, ff. 122v-123v) a slightly shorter version of this story is given in a collection of accounts of death:

"One of the fathers gave an account saying, "There was a hermit in the desert of Neiloupolis, and a faithful layman was in his service; there was also in that city a rich and irreligious man. The latter happened to die, and the city including the bishop processed with lights for his burial. The hermit's helper went off as usual to bring him some loaves, and he found the hermit eaten by a hyena, and he fell on his face before the Lord saying, "I won't get up until you give me some explanation: how can it be that on the one hand that unholy man should have had an honourable death with such ostentation, while on the other hand someone who slaved for you night and day had to undergo such an end." And an angel came and said to him: "That unholy man had <to his credit> one minor good work, and he was rewarded for it here on earth so that he may be given no relief in the next world; and this hermit, while being a man adorned with every virtue, also, as he was human, had some small fault; he has received what was due here so that he may be found pure before God in the other place." And having been informed, he went off, praising God for His judgements, as they are true."

The mention of a place-name, and the assumption that the hermit's helper was not living with him, but bringing him food – a more likely situation – suggest that this version is either the original, or reflects the original, which has been worked up into the Anastasian text.

of the honour and glory he received in the funeral procession at his death he has been rewarded with the recompense for that good deed, and has departed to the next life condemned to the maximum penalty. But your superior, despite all the actions he performed pleasing to God, and despite the countless virtues with which he was adorned, being human he himself had committed some small fault, and because of his painful death he has requited for it and departed this life completely purified.”

4. So it is, brethren,^a that we may learn from these examples that nothing happens in the world in a purposeless or improvident way. Rather the judgements of God and His providence are present all over earth and heaven, reaching to all His works. Some persons are ignorant of His providence and are afflicted with godlessness: they mythologize about the universe being governed by the movements, the settings and rising of the stars, claiming that astrology is responsible for births and movements, for life and death, for famine and wealth, for the success, the power and the failure of everyone.

COMMENTS

(1) The Qu. appears in **Coll. b.**(Qu. 34).

(2) As mentioned above (Comment [1] on Qu. 29), this Qu. and Qu. 29 were joined, adapted and included as one in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 18 = Qu. ed. 18); this then appears in **Coll. d** (Qu. 15).

(3) Various parallels appear in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 13 (two lines), 69, and 105 (PG 28, 605 A12-13, 636B-637A, 661D-664A).

^a This address suggests that the Qu. was written for the benefit of a group; however, cf. Qu. 65, §4, where a single individual is addressed.

MORAL AND PASTORAL QUESTIONS

Question 31

QUESTION What is arrogance?

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ANSWER <It is> for somebody to be completely convinced that he or she is doing something good, not paying attention to the words <of Scripture>, *All our righteousness is like the rag of a menstruating woman* (Isa 64: 6)^a in the sight of God.

COMMENTS

(1) Found in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 97), but omitted in **Coll. b** and **Coll. d**.

(2) This is the first of the QQ to be included in the short **Coll. c**.

Question 32

QUESTION If someone commits a great sin against somebody else, and then afterwards goes off and as a sinner comes to repentance with the other and receives pardon from that person, has such a sinner been forgiven also by God?

ANSWER 1. If the one forgiving is a spiritual person [πνευματικός] or a worthy priest [ιερεὺς ἄξιος],^b perhaps forgiveness is given to such a person also by God; but if not, the one forgiving will have gained great merit, but the one forgiven

^a Isa 64: 6: Liddell & Scott point out that the word ἀποκαθήμενης (“sitting apart”) here has to be interpreted in the light of Lev 20: 18 (see NETS on Isa 64: 6).

^b Anastasios feels the need to distinguish a “spiritual person”, who is not ordained, and a “worthy priest”, a cleric.

is under obligation to repent before God. For Moses himself forgave his own sister, Maria, when she had mocked him, and yet she was struck with leprosy by God and sent into quarantine, and only then received forgiveness.^a Similarly, when the whole people sinned against him, Moses for his part forgave them, but when they failed to repent, God destroyed them.^b However, as I mentioned earlier,^c <account must be taken> of the sin and of the repentance of the sinner, because unless there is repentance, which is proper and made before God, pardon will not be given to such a person. Suppose the case of somebody who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife and receives pardon from him, does it follow that he has also been forgiven by God? Certainly not, unless he repents.

2. Indeed I know of somebody^d who helped a whole people, and gave instructions to many persons, and because of this received funds from many and used them for the poor and for the ransom of prisoners. Then certain persons, moved by some diabolical energy, began to spread calumnies about him, preventing the people from receiving further aid, cutting off his funds, and causing harm to the poor. Afterwards they came to repentance with him, and received pardon from him, but some time later they became possessed by devils because of the people's judgement, due to the scandal they had given.

3. It is necessary to know these things: in that way when we forgive we shall do so willingly, convinced that those who have offended against us continue to be subject to God, so they should not be careless again, but after obtaining forgiveness from us they should make their repentance before God.

COMMENTS

(1) Not accepted for **Coll. 23**, but adapted and rewritten for **Coll. 88** as Qu. 73; this version passed into **Coll. d**, as Qu. 24, and also appears in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 63.

^a Cf. Num 12: 1-15.

^b Cf. Num 14: 13-25.

^c Probably a reference to Qu. 11, but the following Qu. 33, also deals with this subject.

^d Possibly an autobiographical hint.

Question 33

QUESTION If somebody falls into sin and then repents, and once more falls into the same sin and repents, and so having on many occasions stopped and then fallen again, such a person is suddenly met by death, what is one to think of such a person?

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ANSWER 1. It all depends on the sin: if it is not very serious and the person who commits it is someone who is generous with alms and not spiteful, nor ready to judge others, we can trust in God that forgiveness has been granted to such a person. But if the fault of the wrong-doer is very serious and the person does not repent, then where death finds that person, from there will be the departure, either into sinfulness or into repentance.

2. However it is a bad business to build up a habit of frequently washing the garment – that is the body – and then defiling it again; anything that is frequently washed and re-washed becomes rotten and weak, and then aged and antiquated, and cannot be washed any more. I myself^a have seen men, one hundred years old, who were powerless and shaking all over, but they could not desist from their carnal sin because of long habit.

3. On that occasion when some experienced professional doctors were asked about them, they have given the following reply: “The conduits and arteries by which the semen is excreted become relaxed and porous after many years of sexual intercourse and habit; as a result the physique [φύσις] no longer has the strength to restrain and impede or to control itself, but a seminal flux [γονορρῶη] is brought on through the laxness of old age and of habit, and thus it is dragged even involuntarily towards the sin to which it has grown accustomed.”

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COMMENTS

(1) In **Coll. 23** the question of Qu. 3 (= Qu. ed. 3) is similar to the question here, although the answer (consisting of a string of Scripture quotations) is very different; but in the same **Coll. 23** Qu. 8 (a very long text dealing with *πορνεία*) contains lines from

^a Note the personal reminiscence of Anastasios, suggesting medical knowledge.

the present Qu. (cf. Qu. ed. 8 [PG 89, 392B4-9]); this Qu. 8 also appears in **Coll. d** (Qu. 25).

(2) Related to this Qu. is **Coll. b** (Qu. 16), even if the teaching given differs from that of the authentic QQ 33 and 47;

Coll. b, Qu. 16 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 9]

QUESTION Which of the passions stands out as the strongest and most difficult to shake off in comparison with the others?

ANSWER 1. The evil habit of long date: when someone has grown accustomed to self-abuse over a number of years, then as a consequence even against one's will and not wanting it, one is dragged into sin, being pulled and forced by long habit.

2. It is because of this that the blessed holy men [μακάριοι ἄνδρες] envisaged and selected withdrawal from the world, and a flight into desert places far from foolish distractions; some of them had tried very often while they were in the world and in the midst of distractions to cut short that evil habit, and had not had the strength, but frequently, although they forced themselves for a short time and even managed to gain self-control, once again like dogs they returned to the vomit^a of their sin, undoing again what they had achieved.

3. It is only God who has the power to guard unscorched someone who walks among fiery coals, and to preserve unscratched a person who enters among thorns and brambles, and to save unbesmirched someone who comes near to muddy swine. So in the same way, only the power of God's right hand can keep without any fall, or spot, or blemish someone who dwells within and frequents the context of deceit and fame and the luxury of life's vanity, witnessing lewd shows and listening to unseemly talk, touched with the fire of deadly customs that incite to impurity. And <this is true> not only in the case of those who are weak, but also of those who seem to be just, and self-controlled, and chaste.

(3) In the QQ *ad Antiochum*, Qu. 94 (PG2 28, 656A14-C4) has a similar question but a different answer.

Question 34

QUESTION Is it true that the devil is the cause of all sin and sexual misconduct [πορνεία], and is it he whom one should blame?

ANSWER The devil does not force anyone, but only suggests; but bad habit can force someone, so that this is something more wicked and stronger than the devil himself. Consequently it is we ourselves that we should blame.

^a Cf. Prov 26: 11.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 98), in **Coll. b** (Qu. 18), and in **Coll. c** (Qu. 2).

(2) Omitted in **Coll. d**, and no obvious parallels in the *QQ ad Antiochum*.

Question 35

QUESTION Is there a difference in favour of someone who sins each month or each week over someone who sins more frequently?

ANSWER 1. Yes, just as there is a different reward for someone who distributes alms frequently over someone who distributes them from time to time.

2. However one should know that *for the Just Judge* (2 Tim 4: 8) there are many different sorts of condemnations, as there are of the retributions that He will require of those who commit carnal sins. The reason is that there are lands which produce warmth in the body because of the heat of the climate or of the waters or of pestilence, like Egypt, Ethiopia and Jericho (the region round Gomorrah); again there are races which are fouler and more licentious, either because of habit or because of some other make-up [οὐσία] or cause, like the Persians and the Assyrians.

3. Therefore, just as the Fathers^a say that the crime of someone who does not believe and is a pagan [ἑθνικός], someone who does not have the Holy Ghost, nor the cross, nor baptism, nor the body and blood of Christ to save him, is different from that of someone like you, who believe and have all these things that help for salvation (as Scripture says: *He who knows the will of the Lord and does not do it will receive more stripes* (Lk 12: 47), and so there is a different judgement for the believer and for the unbeliever, thus also the crime of someone who commits fornication in his youth is different from that of someone in his old age, and that of the unmarried man is different from that of the man who has a wife, and that of the man who has a respectable marriage partner is different from that of the man who lives with a wicked woman. Moreover the man who sins with

^a Cf. for example, John Chrysostom, *De virginitate*, 44, 1 (ed. H. Musurillo, [SC 125], Paris, 1966, p. 252; PG 48, 566).

only one woman is judged differently from him who becomes defiled with many; the crime of the teacher is one thing, and that of the unlearned another; that of the priest is one thing, and that of someone entrusted to him another.

4. Yet again, the pardon of somebody who falls, but regrets it and is sorry over it, is different from that of the person who sins and remains indifferent. And the punishment of the one who uses his nature [φύσις] in accordance with nature is one thing, whereas quite different and much more painful than for any other sin is the punishment of someone who abandons what is in accordance with nature [κατὰ φύσιν] and turns to the destruction against nature [παρὰ φύσιν] of the Sodomites, something that even the brute beasts never do. After all, a brigand separates the soul from the body, but he who sins against nature kills the soul along with the body.^a Those should pay attention who are married with wives, and because of their own wantonness and debauchery forsake those wives and destroy themselves with impure acts against nature: these will have no possible defence on the day of judgement. What justification for their deeds will they be able to present when they see that there are others alongside them who have preserved their virginity?

COMMENTS

(1) Accepted and expanded in **Coll. 23**, Qu. 8 (= Qu. ed. 8 [cf. PG 89, 393CII-D2]), which also appears in **Coll. d** (Qu. 25); omitted in **Coll. b**.

(2) Similarities with *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 97 (PG 28, 656D-657B).

Question 36

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QUESTION Some people want to say that repentance^b for sin is this, to break off and to stop from it?

ANSWER As Holy Scripture says, *Turn away from evil and do good* (Ps 33: 15), it is quite clear that to stop doing evil is only the beginning of repentance; however that is not enough for salvation. For tell me: supposing that somebody stops murder-

^a Cf. Mt 10: 28.

^b See Comment (3).

ing or stealing or robbing graves, is such a person already saved? Certainly not! Consequently, in the case of any sin, we must, once we have stopped sinning, also offer to God the fruits of our repentance in amendment for that sin.

COMMENTS

(1) For **Coll. 23** (Qu. 4, also Qu. ed. 4 [PG 89, 357D3-6]) the opening lines of the answer were used, but extra Scripture quotations added; both versions appear to some extent in **Coll. d** (Qu. 26).

(2) In **Coll. b** a different version (Qu. 11), which is worth quoting:

Coll. b, Qu. 11 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 6]

QUESTION Some people say that repentance is this, to give up and stop from sin.

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ANSWER 1. Those who say this do not think rightly. For neither if someone commits ten murders and stops from murdering are those sins of murder already forgiven to that person, nor if somebody has fornicated for many years and then when grown old, stops from fornication, has that person already been welcomed as somebody who repents. The reason is that if forgiveness for sins came in that way from stopping to sin there is no need for prayer, no need for fasting, no need for alms, no need for tears, no need for separation from the world and for undergoing pain and for vigils.

2. Therefore the repentance which is acceptable is that taught by the Holy Spirit through the blessed David, who says: *Turn away from evil, and do good* (Ps 33: 15). The phrase “turn away from evil” means to stop from sin; but the phrase “do good” means that if yesterday you were drunk, today you will become abstemious, if yesterday you copulated with other wives, today you will be continent even with your own. Yesterday you plundered the property of others, today give away what is yours.^a

(3) The different versions may be indebted to a Scholion added to John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi*, gr. 5: Μετάνοιά ἐστὶ τὸ ἀποστρέψαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας. Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ μία ἁμαρτία· ἀλλ’ ὅλος ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτία καλεῖται (PG 88, 781B9-10): “Repentance is the turning away from sin, because there is not one sin, but the entire old self is called sin”.^b This definition of “repentance” is not one of John’s own (given at the start of gr. 5), but is the second of the anonymous scholia grouped as Scholia 1 to this chapter. Unfortunately, “en dépit de tout ce qui a été édité [cf. CPG III, pp. 477-478], le monde des scholies de la *Scala Paradisi* est encore

^a Cf. Lk 18: 22.

^b Cf. Rom 6: 6; Eph 4: 22; Col 3: 9.

mal connu. Il reste à y découvrir à la fois d'authentiques notes rédigées pour expliquer l'oeuvre de Jean Climaque et des sentences plus ou moins éclairantes empruntées à d'autres auteurs", J. Noret, "Le dernier binion du manuscrit Pantéléimon 548: du Jean Climaque avec des scholies, partiellement inédites", eds A. Schoors & P. Van Deun, *Philohistôr. Miscellanea in honorem Caroli Laga septuagenarii*, OLA 60, 1994, p. 256. The author of this sentence remains to be identified.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO SEXUAL MORALITY

Question 37

QUESTION As those under the Law often had two wives at the same time and were not condemned for it, is the same also possible for Christians?

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ANSWER 1. The Apostle says, *A wife does not have power to dispose of her body, but her husband has; similarly, neither does the man, he says, have power to dispose of his body, but his wife has* (1 Cor 7: 4). Thus it is quite clear that if the husband were able to take another wife along with the first, similarly so would the wife be able to take another husband along with him and then no longer would they be *two in the one flesh* (Gen 2: 24),^a but rather three or four.

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2. But those who want to live like those under the Law fall from the grace of Christ. The reason is that they were impious in the extreme, sacrificing their own sons and daughters to demons;^b therefore God was asking nothing more of them than piety and justice,^c as one can see from all the books of the Law. But we who have been *bought by the blood of Christ* (Rev 5: 9) are obliged to demonstrate our self-control [σωφροσύνη] and respect for wisdom [φίλοσοφία]. Indeed the pattern and the norm set

^a Cf. Mt 19: 5; 1 Cor 6: 16.

^b Cf. Ps 105: 37.

^c Cf. Jer 7: 22-23; Mic 6: 8.

up for all humankind were Adam and Eve; the lust for several women comes to us because of our wantonness and lack of fear of God.

COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. is found in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 99), and also in **Coll. d** (Qu. 27); missing in **Coll. b**.

(2) A similar Qu. in *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 37 (PG 28, 657B-660A).

Question 38

QUESTION Is it a good thing for somebody who has been in bed with his own wife or who has had a nocturnal emission of seed, to wash himself with water and then go straight to church?

ANSWER 1. For a Christian the true way of washing is with his own tears. For there are two personally owned [ἐνυπόστατοι] liquids that flow from the body, one of which can sanctify and the other frequently defiles, viz. the semen and tears. Now, every sin *that a man may commit remains outside his body* (1 Cor 6: 18), but when he fornicates it is as if he were offering his seed from his own flesh in sacrifice to the wicked one. In a similar way, whatever good one does, remains outside one's body, but tears are something that one offers to God in sacrifice [θυσία] from our very own substance [οὐσία],^a just like the blood of the martyrs. That is why, as I have just said, the spiritual way of washing is with tears.

2. However waters have also come into being to help purify bodies. So those who lack the spiritual bath, which purifies the soul, should at least wash their flesh with water, lest they incur any sort of contempt, and then certainly partake of the holy mysteries.

COMMENTS

(1) A very similar question is asked and answered below: Qu. 67.

(2) The text of this Qu. was used by the compiler of **Coll. 23** for his long question on πορνεία, Qu. 8 (= Qu. ed. 8, cf. PG 89, 392A7-B1).

^a The similarity in Greek between the two words allows some word-play.

(3) Included in **Coll. c** as Qu. 3, which is also found in **Coll. d** (Qu. 28).

(4) In **Coll. b** three questions (QQ 21, 22, 23) deal with the same theme; all three have links with the canonical work attributed to Timothy of Alexandria:

Coll. b, Qu. 21 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 11]

[= Timothy of Alexandria, *Responsio canonica*, 5 (CPG 2520; PG 33, 1300B9-C7; ed. P.-P. Joannou, *Fonti*, II, Rome, 1963, pp. 242-243)]

QUESTION If a woman sleeps with her husband at night, or a husband with his own wife, and copulation takes place, should they partake of the undefiled mysteries or not?

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ANSWER They should not do so at once, as the Apostle cries out: *Do not deprive one another, except to some extent perhaps by mutual agreement for a short period, so that you can apply yourselves to abstinence and prayer, and then come together again as before, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control* (1 Cor 7: 5).

Coll. b, Qu. 22 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 12]

[§1 = Timothy of Alexandria, *Responsio canonica*, 12 (CPG 2520; PG 33, 1304C7-D2; ed. P.-P. Joannou, *Fonti*, II, Rome, 1963, pp. 247-248); §2 = Dionysius of Alexandria, *Epistula ad Basilidem* (CPG 1569; PG 10, 1288B11-C3; ed. C. L. Feltoe, *The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria* [Cambridge Patristic Texts], Cambridge, 1904, p. 104, lines 4-9)]

QUESTION If a layman has a 'wet dream', should he partake of the divine mysteries or not?

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ANSWER 1. If he is obsessed with a passion for a woman [OR for his wife], he should not, but if Satan is tempting him, so that with this excuse he may be kept away from the divine mysteries, he should receive communion, because the one tempting him does not stop from pestering him at the time when he ought to be receiving communion.

2. As for those who happen to have an unexpected nocturnal emission, these should examine their own consciences, and they should consider their particular cases, to see if they are guilty in this matter or not, as in the case of what is to be eaten: *Those who have doubts are condemned if they eat* (Rom 14: 23). However, in these matters anyone who is on the way to God should follow his individual option [τὸ ἴδιον ἐνθύμιον], with a good conscience and full confidence.

Coll. b, Qu. 23 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 13]

[§1 = Timothy of Alexandria, *Responsio canonica*, 13 (CPG 2520; PG 33, 1305A4-B2; ed. P.-P. Joannou, *Fonti*, II, Rome, 1963, pp. 248-249)]

QUESTION In the case of couples yoked for marital intercourse, on which days in the week should they be required to refrain from intercourse with one another, and on which days should they be authorized?

ANSWER I. I say again now what I have already said:^a the Apostle says, *Do not deprive one another, except to some extent perhaps by mutual agreement for a set period*, and so on (1 Cor 7: 5); however of necessity one should refrain on Saturday and for Sunday, because on those days the spiritual sacrifice is offered to God.

2. As far as those outside are concerned, they consider that purity and being pure consists of a man keeping apart from a woman not his partner, and a woman from a man not her husband. But for ecclesiastical chastity, it means refraining even from one's own wife during the prayer period, so that one may approach God with purity, and so that the Scripture quotations may be fulfilled in our case: *Let even those who have a wife be as if they did not have one...* (1 Cor 7: 29), *for this is the wish of God, your sanctity...* (1 Thess 4: 3). *And do not deprive one another, except to some extent perhaps by mutual agreement for a set period* (1 Cor 7: 5), as it is written. By "for a set period" [πρὸς καιρὸν] I think that nothing else is more appropriate for prayer than the period of the holy Lenten fast and the Paschal feast. But for those who desire to receive communion every Sunday I consider that the set period would be the preparatory sanctification from the previous Friday. As the old and proper Law says, *For three days do not go near your wife* (Ex 19: 15), and again, *Yesterday and the third day we have kept away from a wife* (1 Kings 21: 5-6).^b

3. However if somebody is seething with the desire for God, and is capable by *pummelling and subduing his body to take up his cross* (1 Cor 9: 27; Mt 16: 24; Mk 8: 34; Lk 9: 23) and to receive communion every day, this is truly pleasing to Christ and *worthy of all approbation* (1 Tim 1: 15; 4: 9). *For as often you eat this bread and drink from this chalice*, Scripture says, *you announce the death of the Lord* (1 Cor 11: 26). However if someone because of the body of our lowliness is caught out with some corporal delectation or psychic passion, or again if he is not able to practice continence by

^a Cf. **Coll. b**, Qu. 21, above.

^b In both quotations the word translated "wife" could signify simply "woman".

mutual agreement (1 Cor 7: 5), as the Apostle says, because *the flesh has desires against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for they are opposed to each other* (Gal 5: 17), it is absolutely necessary that such a person should not receive communion before he has cleaned away to the best of his ability any stain that may have affected him, by means of assiduous prayer and a three-day sexual abstinence, so that we may not fall into hypocrisy, neglecting the divine commands: for *Accursed are those* Scripture says *who deviate from your commandments* (Ps 118: 21) and *the one who performs negligently the works of the Lord* (Jer 31: 10).

4. You can see, beloved, that it is not only the gluttonous and the boastful and the envious, but also the person subject to quick temper or importuned into compliance with dirty thoughts. If it is not possible for a person to approach the divine mysteries, when out of inquisitive looking he has entertained a wet dream, how much more justly should a person who has taken part in copulation be prevented on that day? For “The holy things” are not for the unhallowed and unworthy, but “for the holy” and the worthy [cf. Liturgy of John Chrysostom, Prayer before communion (ed. F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, vol. 1 [*Eastern Liturgies*], Oxford, 1896, p. 393)].

Question 39

QUESTION Is it also proper for somebody who has had a nocturnal emission of seed to receive communion?

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ANSWER It is my supposition that those who live in the world are not to be condemned for this, provided that in other respects they are careful.

COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. is Qu. 4 in **Coll. c**; it figures in **Coll. d** (part of Qu. 28), but was omitted by the compiler of **Coll. a**, although it was added to this collection by Jacob Gretser along with the other QQ from **Coll. c** (cf. Qu. ed. 98 ter).

(2) In **Coll. b** a similar question, Qu. 22, appears; this is given above, Qu. 38, Comment (4), and, as noted there, is linked to the canons of Timothy of Alexandria.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO COMMUNION

Question 40

QUESTION If somebody involuntarily drinks water when washing out one's mouth or when in the bath, should such a person go to communion or not?

ANSWER Yes. Otherwise Satan would do the same frequently, once he had found the occasion for preventing such a person from taking communion. In exactly the same way the Fathers do not exclude even the man who has had a wet dream from receiving communion. However on approaching the mysteries we should approach with awe, just as the woman^a with the flux of blood approached Christ.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 100), and also in **Coll. d** (part of Qu. 28)

(2) Included in **Coll. c** as Qu. 5.

(3) The first part of the Answer reproduces the text found in Timothy of Alexandria, *Responsio*, No. 16 (Joannou, p. 251, PG 33, 1308A11-B2); however, as with Qu. 12 (see there Comment [2]) the true author of this Qu. is doubtful (cf. CPG 2520) and may well have been Anastasios.

^a Cf. Mt 9: 20.

Question 41

QUESTION Is it a good thing to receive communion every day or at certain intervals, or only every Sunday?

ANSWER 1. This question does not have a single, overall reply. There are some for whom daily reception is appropriate, and others for whom this is not convenient, and yet others for whom perhaps the most appropriate is not to receive communion at all. Again there are some who stay away from the mysteries and in consequence commit sin without scruple, like the Armenian race, whereas others receive communion as a safeguard, and yet others who communicate with contempt allowing more room in their souls to Satan, as happened with Judas, for along with the bread, *Satan entered into him* (Jn 13: 27), while others, because they are in expectation of receiving communion, take precautions against sin. Further there are some who out of compunction and sorrow withdraw themselves from the mysteries for some time, and in my opinion these also act rightly and do not allow so much room in themselves for the devil.

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2. Quite simply, to sum up what I mean, each person's conscience is the norm for reception of the holy mysteries, and in this respect I know of somebody (τινὰ μοι) who said to me recently,

"I would have liked, if it were possible, to receive communion three times a day because of my great affection for Christ, especially", he said, "when the soul has been rubbed clean with alms-giving."^b

3. For somebody (τις) recounted to me:^c

On a certain occasion a *philochristos* (devout Christian) came to the monastery at Raïthou; he commissioned prayers at one nomisma for each of the brethren, and similarly donated

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^a See Comment (4): at this point a different version has been added.

^b On the cleansing effect of alms-giving, cf. Tobit 4: 10; Sirach 3: 30; Dan. 4: 24, and see Comment (3): here begins the version found in **Coll. b** (Qu. 20).

^c Cf. *Apophthegmata Patrum, Collectio anonyma*, [CPG 5561], Nau 571 (cf. J.-C. Guy, *Recherches*, p. 69). The narrator of the story seems to have been speaking to the "somebody" mentioned earlier.

a nomisma to a hermit [ἐγκλειστός] of the community. The following night, the hermit saw a field full of thistles and the monks weeding them; somebody said to him as well, “Out you go! You also have to weed in the field the thistles belonging to the one who gave you a nomisma, because you have accepted your wage.” Next morning the hermit sent for the man, giving him back his nomisma with the words, “Take back, brother, what you have given me. It is not my business to weed the thistles of other men’s sins; I would that I could clear out my own!”

4. From another source we also learn that very often our sins are forgiven because of alms-giving. The Emperor Zeno^a had deflowered some young maiden and then abandoned her. The mother of the girl was praying in supplication against the Emperor to the holy Theotokos; then the holy Virgin appeared to her saying, “Believe me, woman, I have frequently desired to pay back that Zeno, but his hand stops me by the alms it gives.”

COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. (also found as an isolated Qu., e.g. *Paris. Gr.* 1335) seems to have inspired Qu. 7 (= Qu. ed. 7) in the **Coll. 23** as it has taken over some lines (cf. PG 89, 385C-388B); this version was included in **Coll. d** (Qu. 29).

(2) It is included in **Coll. c** (Qu. 6).

(3) Another version appears in **Coll. b** as Qu. 20, and this is given here (Greek text, CCSG 59, Appendix 10a). The alternative tradition for this text, though varied, is hardly proof of authenticity; it is found e.g. in *Vaticanus graecus* 1600, ff.159-161, from which it was published by G. Hofmann (cf. CCSG 59, p. 180), and also in the tradition of the *Narrationes* (cf. Binggeli, pp. 284-8); parts of it are to be found in the 13th century compilation, the *Thesaurus* attributed to Theognostos, XVII, B8, B4, B7 (ed. J. A. Munitiz, CCSG 5, pp. 176-180). However, the construction of the authentic answer, a eulogy of communion that diverts into considerations on almsgiving, is not very satisfactory.

Coll. b, Qu. 20 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 10a]

QUESTION Is it a good thing to receive communion every day or at certain intervals, or only every Sunday?

^a Cf. John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale*, 175 (PG 87/3, 3044B1-11).

ANSWER (inc. Qu. 41, §§ 1-2

1. This question does not have a single, overall reply. There are some for whom daily reception is appropriate, and others for whom this is not convenient, and yet others for whom perhaps the most appropriate is not to receive communion at all. Again there are some who stay away from the mysteries and in consequence commit sin without scruple, like the Armenian race, whereas others receive communion as a safeguard, and yet others who communicate with contempt allowing more room in their souls to Satan, as happened with Judas, for along with the bread, *Satan entered into him*, while others, because they are in expectation of receiving communion, take precautions against sin. Further there are some who out of compunction and sorrow withdraw themselves from the mysteries for some time, and in my opinion these also act rightly and do not allow so much room in themselves for the devil.

2. Quite simply, to sum up what I mean, each person's conscience is the norm for reception of the holy mysteries, and in this respect I know of somebody who said to me recently, "I would have liked, if it were possible, to receive communion three times a day because of my great affection for Christ, especially", he said, "when the soul has been rubbed clean with alms-giving).

1. But we should not approach the sacred and undefiled mysteries unprepared and unworthily; as the blessed Paul exhorts saying, *One should examine oneself, and then eat of the bread and drink of the cup; anyone who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgement for oneself, for failing to distinguish the body and blood of the Lord* (1 Cor 11: 28).^a

2. However if we fail in minor human matters, that are easily forgiven, such as being inveigled by the tongue, or the hearing, or the eyes, or because of vanity, pique, annoyance, or something of that sort, after having blamed ourselves and confessed before God let us partake of the holy mysteries, having trust that the reception of the divine mysteries takes place for the absolution of such faults.

3. But if we have committed some serious faults, matters concerned with fornication, sins of the flesh and impurity, and if we guard rancour against our neighbours, then by no means should we approach the divine mysteries until we have made proper repentance. This is something that even the Law in Scripture teaches us: when David along with his bodyguard ate of the loaves of

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^a Cf. Qu. ed. 7 (PG 89, 385C-D).

offering in Bethlehem, Abiathar the High Priest^a would not give them a share until he had first asked them if they were pure of any sin with a woman.^b

4. Since, as weak carnal human beings, we are riddled with many sins, not keeping ourselves clear of sins of the flesh, God has given us different types of sacrifices for the forgiveness of our sins; if we offer them up to Him, they purify us prior to approaching the divine mysteries. For almsgiving is a sacrifice that cleans away sin: *By giving alms and credit*, Scripture says, *sins are cleaned away* (Prov 15: 27a). And another Scripture text says, *A person's almsgiving wins forgiveness for great sins* (Tobit 4: 10; 12: 9; Sirach 3: 30; Dan 4: 24).

5. There is another sacrifice of our salvation that serves to remove sins. David the Prophet says, *Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a broken and humbled heart God will not despise* (Ps 50: 19). So if we offer these sacrifices to God, even if we have some human failings we will be able to approach the holy mysteries with fear and trembling and contrition and confession, just as the woman who suffered from haemorrhages approached Christ, weeping and fearful because of her own impurity of blood.^c

6. *There is a sin which is mortal* (1 Jn 5: 16), and there is a sin which can be forgiven; there is a sin for which a remedy can be found, and there is another which is incurable. But true repentance can cure everything. There is a different sort of pardon for the person who with fear and trembling and confession and contrition approaches the divine mysteries; and another punishment for the person who approaches without scruple and with contempt. Therefore, brethren, let us approach the divine and unblemished mysteries with full humility and confession and fear and trembling. In the case of those who approach contemptuously and unworthily, not only will pardon for their sins not be given, but the devil will leap all the more into them.^d On the other hand those who approach the divine mysteries with fear are not only made holy and gain forgiveness for their sins, but they also expel the devil from within them. And now, listen to a surprising story about this.

^a Abimelech or Aminelech is the name found in the LXX; there he is the 'priest', not the High Priest, and Abiathar is his son; cf. 1 Kings 22: 20.

^b Cf. 1 Kings 21: 4-5; Qu. ed. 7 (PG 89, 388A14-B5), and also Qu. 67 below.

^c Cf. Mt 9: 20.

^d Jn 13: 27; also Anastasios of Sinai, *Homilia de sacra synaxi* (PG 89, 832B12-C3).

7. In our generation there was a certain Jewish sorcerer, Daniel.^a While he was undergoing examination prior to being executed by burning he called out, “What terrible force! Behold an angel of God is torturing me to make me say to Christians what I would not want to say. I swear by the hour of this my extreme necessity that my poisons never had any force against someone who had received communion of the holy mysteries every day in a proper and whole-hearted fashion.”

8. But I shall confirm what has been said by another true story.^b I once knew another servant of Christ who had gained the ability to speak face-to-face with devils; he would ask them about many secret things, that tend to be advantageous for humans, and among them there were the following two. This man of God asked them if they were afraid of the *Our Father* (Mt 6: 9) prayer, of the 90th Psalm, and of the prayer, *God is with us! Know this, you peoples, and be submissive.*^c The devils replied saying, “These prayers do us no harm.” But when he wanted to ask them about the beginning of Psalm 67 which says, *Let God rise up, and let his enemies be scattered* (Ps 67: 1), he had hardly begun the Psalm when the devils yelled out saying, “Do not say those words! Otherwise we will not give you any more answers. You humans have no other prayer so strong at dissolving our power like that one.”

9. Then afterwards this man of God asked them saying, “Of all the things that have been entrusted to the Christians by God, which are those which you fear?” They then said to him: “In reality you Christians have three things which are very powerful against us. The first of these you eat, the second you hang around your necks, and with the third you bathe yourselves.” The wicked devils indicated by these ‘three’: holy communion, the revered cross, and holy baptism. Then the man of God asked them, “And which of the these three do you fear by far the most?” They replied saying, “If you were to take care of the power of that which you eat, we would be completely unable to come near or harm that person.”

(4) As an example of how texts were borrowed and re-used by other authors, cf. the Qu. composed by Markianos [CPG 3885-3900] and added by Nikon of the Black Mountain to his *Pandektes*, cf. J. Kirchmeyer, “Le moine Marcien (de Bethléhem ?)”,

^a Cf. *Narrationes* (Nau L; Binggeli, II, 16), i.e. BHG 1444vd; CPG 7758, B8.

^b Cf. *Narrationes* (Nau LIII, Binggeli, II, 20 and Appendix 4, lines 82-90), i.e. BHG 1444w, CPG 7758, C11.

^c Words found in the *Mega Apodeipnon* (compline), cf. *Ὡρολόγιον τὸ Μέγα*, Athens, 1977⁶, p. 164.

Studia Patristica, V (TU 80), Berlin, 1962, pp. 341-359 [especially p. 353, note]:

Example of re-used text [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 10b]

QUESTION Is it a good thing to receive communion every day or at certain intervals, or only every Sunday?

ANSWER (inc. Qu. 41, §§1-2)

1. This question does not have a single, overall reply. There are some for whom daily reception is appropriate, and others for whom this is not convenient, and yet others for whom perhaps the most appropriate is not to receive communion at all. Again there are some who stay away from the mysteries and in consequence commit sin without scruple, like the Armenian race, whereas others receive communion as a safeguard, and yet others who communicate with contempt allowing more room in their souls to Satan, as happened with Judas, for along with the bread, *Satan entered into him*, while others, because they are in expectation of receiving communion, take precautions against sin. Further there are some who out of compunction and sorrow withdraw themselves from the mysteries for some time, and in my opinion these also act rightly and do not allow so much room in themselves for the devil.

2. Quite simply, to sum up what I mean, each person's conscience is the norm for reception of the holy mysteries, and in this respect...)

1. ... just as Judas, after he had taken the morsel from the Lord was then seized and mastered by Satan (cf. Jn 13: 27), so those who put the Lord to the test and approach unworthily communion with Him, after they have taken the bread, then they are abandoned, not so that they can be mastered by Satan, like Judas,^a but so that being chastised with mercy they may not be judged and condemned with Judas.

2. But for those who approach worthily, the Spirit of the Lord *rested* upon them and *encamps* among them,^b and they rejoice in Him; as it is written, *Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood remain in me and I in them* (Jn 6: 56).

3. So in my opinion it is advantageous for those who have some sins that they look out for the sudden Judgement and abstain from communion and profit from this bitter lesson in order that they may not be brought to their senses more sharply and taught not to disregard Holy Scripture, if they approach contemptuously, but rather learn to be patient. As the blessed Apostle

^a Cf. Mt 27: 5, and also Qu. 18, §1.

^b Cf. Num 11: 25; Ps 5: 12.

rightly teaches, *One should examine oneself, and then eat of the bread and drink of the cup; anyone who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgement for oneself, for failing to distinguish the body and blood of the Lord* (1 Cor II: 28-29).

4. But those whose conscience is clear of anything wrong should receive communion more frequently without hindrance, so that grace being multiplied in them may equip them as more ready for the fruit of justification.

5. However supposing that they seek out communion without being worthy but to gain help for themselves and not for any other human motive, we would not criticise them given that they are trying to get help; nor is it through dislike for them that we would oppose their desire, but rather pretending their own good. So let them give up *their evil ways* (Acts 3: 26), and let them no longer walk in those paths; let them show *fruit worthy of their reform* (Mt 3: 8), so that being shown worthy they may be worthy of it [= communion].

6. On the other hand those who have become worthy of it [= communion], let them not be careless; rather let them take thought to lead ever more prudent lives, and let them devote themselves to prayer with ever greater assiduity. So envy will not darken their gaze, nor guile deceive their hearts, so that being tripped up they fall short of its chastity. As Scripture says, "*The fascination of wickedness obscures the things that are good, and roving desire undermines an innocent mind*" (Wisdom 4: 12).

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MASSES FOR THE DEAD

Question 42

96

QUESTION Some people raise doubts saying, “The dead are not helped at all by the liturgies celebrated on their behalf.”

ANSWER On this subject my reply to you will be not of my own invention but taken from the apostolic father, Dionysius the Areopagite: in his work *On the mystery of those who have died* this father says: “If the sins of the person who has died are minor and unimportant, such a one receives some assistance from the liturgies offered on behalf of that person; but if they were serious and grave, *God shut him in*”.^a However, we should preoccupy ourselves about our own souls and not pin our hopes on winning forgiveness through the offerings made by others after death.

COMMENTS

(1) Included almost without change in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 22) and hence in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 22; cf. PG 89, 536C-D); it figures in **Coll. d** as Qu. 30.

(2) Included in **Coll. c** (Qu. 7), and then added by Gretser to **Coll. a** as an extra, Qu. ed. 100 ter (PG 89, 753C-756A), so that a similar text appears there twice.

(3) A similar question in *QQ ad Antiochum* (Qu. 34 [PG 28, 617A-B]), but a different answer.

^a Cf. Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita, *Eccles. Hier.*, 7, 7 (ed. G. Heil & A.M. Ritter [PTS 36], Berlin-New York, 1991, pp. 127-129; PG 3, 561C-564B); cf. Job 3: 23.

Question 43

97

QUESTION If somebody has killed two or even more men, and is then arrested and dies, is such a person forgiven or not?

ANSWER As God says in the Law, *An eye for an eye*, and a life for a life (Ex 21: 23-24),^a I cannot say one life <can repay> for many lives. There are some persons who are different from ten thousand others, either as teachers or as feeders of the poor; if a murderer kills one of these, he kills not a single person, but a people, and therefore is responsible for ten thousand deaths, as happened with Herod when he killed the Forerunner,^b and with the other criminals who executed the Apostles. It would have been better for Nero to have killed all the city of Rome, which was unbelieving, than to have killed off the breath of the world, the blessed Paul.^c

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 101), and in **Coll. b** (Qu. 30).

(2) In **Coll. d** there is a paraphrastic version (Qu. 31).

(3) A similar question and answer in *QQ ad Antiochum* (Qu. 129 [PG 28, 677D-680A]), but with many differences from the Anastasian text.

^a Cf. Lev 24: 20-21; Mt 5: 38; the last words are not explicit in the sources.

^b Cf. Mt 14: 1-12; Mk 6: 17-29.

^c Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. Eccl.*, 2, 25, 5-6 (ed. E. Schwartz [GCS 9, 1], Leipzig, 1903, p. 176).

QUESTIONS INVOLVING MONEY

Question 44

QUESTION Is money derived from thefts and injustice, and offered to God, acceptable to Him?

98

ANSWER 1. There are thefts and there is injustice. It is one thing to misappropriate sacred funds, and another in the case of revenue which comes from the land and the sea of unbelievers; it is one thing to treat unjustly peasants and poor folk, and another to snatch from well-off wicked and avaricious people.

2. However, God does not inquire about the number (τὰ πολλὰ) but only about the intention; and if it is completely impossible for you not to practise some injustice, it is better that the profits made from unjust dealings be expended for good purposes,^a and not that what derives from what is bad be used for what is bad. Very clearly, the money derived from injustice to the peasants and the poor is quite unacceptable to God and bears a curse.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 102) and also in **Coll. d** (Qu. 32).

(2) Omitted in **Coll. b**, however cf. Qu. 83 below, Comment (2);

(3) A similar question in *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 87 [PG 28, 649D-652A], but a different answer.

(4) The problem raised in this question re-appears in Qu. 83 below.

^a Cf. Lk 16: 9.

Question 45

QUESTION God says, “*Gold and silver are mine*, and I give them to whom I wish”;^a so, is it true that anyone who is rich has been enriched by God?

ANSWER Nobody who has amassed riches from wars, and bloodshed, and thefts, and perjuries, and robberies, and taking bribes, and other unjust acts, can say “I have been enriched by God”, but by the Evil One. Only those who amass wealth from honest and sinless sources can say with Job, *The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away* (Job 1: 21). So it is obvious that it is useless for those to offer thanks to God who heap up wealth unjustly.

99

COMMENTS

(1) A similar version of this Qu. was included in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 11) and hence appears in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 11) and is also found as such in **Coll. d** (Qu. 33).

(2) The original Qu. figures in **Coll. b** (Qu. 25).

^a Cf. Hag 2: 8.

MORAL PROBLEMS

Question 46

QUESTION Given that we often hear the word of God, but do not put it into practice,^a is it possible that we shall not be condemned?

ANSWER Even if we do not put it into practice, still it is not possible not to blame ourselves, because we hear and fail to listen. And self-blame is part of the business of saving ourselves.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 103), but omitted in **Coll. d**. Numbered Qu. 19 in **Coll. b**.

(2) Found as Timothy of Alexandria, *Responsio*, No. 17 (Joannou, p. 251; the version in PG 33, 1308B3-9 differs); see Qu. 18 (Comment [2]).

Question 47

100

QUESTION If somebody has built up a habit of carnal sin and has grown old in it, and he realizes in himself that he is now incapable of fasting, or of undertaking penance or sleeping on the floor, or of giving up everything and entering a monastery, how can such a person reach salvation when he is now old, and how can he win forgiveness for his sins?

ANSWER From the Lord's words, *My yoke is gentle, and my burden is light* (Mt 11: 30), it is clear that even someone who is

^a Cf. Mt 7: 26; Lk 6: 49.

old and weak is capable of keeping the law of the Lord. And indeed He did not stipulate virginity for us, nor withdrawal from all the things of the world, and not even abstinence from meat and wine, but to love God, to love one's neighbour,^a not to be spiteful, nor to judge others, to be humble and as compassionate as possible, to pray within our hearts, to support misfortunes, to be mild and peace-loving. Now all these are things that a sickly man and an old man, somebody confined to his bed or married to a wife in the world, is able to do. If he does these things, he will certainly be saved, no matter if he has committed all the sins of that famous Manasses,^b the king.

COMMENTS

(1) Used in a longer version in **Coll. 23** (Qu. ed. 5), and this is also found in **Coll. d** (Qu. 34).

(2) Included in **Coll. c** (Qu. 8), and thus added by Gretser to **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 100⁴).

(3) In **Coll. b** there are two different, but related questions (QQ 6, 9):

Coll. b, Qu. 6 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 2]

QUESTION Supposing that an old man is weak and timid, and that he is not able to enter a monastery or perform monastic duties, how can such a man repent and be saved?

ANSWER 1. From the Lord's words, *My yoke is gentle and my burden is light* (Mt 11: 30), it is quite clear that even someone who is old and weak is capable of keeping the Lord's commandment. For it is written, *The ways of the Lord are straight, and the just make progress along them, but the impious* [ἀσεβείς] (or rather, the sickly [ἀσθενεῖς]) *will be weak along them* (Hos 14: 10).

2. Indeed he did not stipulate celibacy for us, nor withdrawal from all the things of the world, but that we should love God and the neighbour, be humble and compassionate, pray, support misfortunes, be mild and peace-loving, not to be spiteful nor to judge others, not to lie. As the divine Apostle says, *Let us put off the deeds of darkness and let us put on the armour of light* (Rom 13: 12). So nobody should *concoct pretexts for sins* (Ps 140: 4); the kind God *wishes all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim 2: 4).

Coll. b, Qu. 9 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 4]

^a Cf. Mk 12: 30-31.

^b Cf. 2 Chr 33: 1-20; Anastasios of Sinai, *Homilia in sextum Psalmum* (rec. 1) (CPG 7751 [1]; PG 89, 1104-1105), and see Qu. 88 below.

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QUESTION If someone has grown old in sins, but while at prayer proposes a covenant between oneself and God saying, "Forgive me, Lord, any sins I have committed up to now, and in future I shall not continue my former sins, nor return in any way to them, but confess to your name." If someone makes this sort of covenant with God and dies a few days later, what should one think of such a person?

ANSWER The proposal was accepted by God and for that person "where one reaches, there one will be ranked",^a i.e. among those saved by repentance. It depends indeed on the individual if one repents and abandons one's sin, but it depends on God if that person lives for many years. In this case, one offered this undertaking expecting to live a long life in repentance, but God, foreseeing how corrupt and fallible and fickle we are with respect to sin, has often acted in this way, and when He has seen someone turn to repentance, God has quickly removed that person from life and saved the person. As God He foresaw that with a longer life in the world, the person would have returned perhaps once more to sin.

(4) Among the *QQ ad Antiochum* there is a similar question, Qu. 92 (PG 28, 653C-D) but a very different answer.

Question 48

101

QUESTION How many ways are there of being saved and receiving pardon from God for sins?

ANSWER Three: the first is by never committing sin, the second is by a proper repentance, and there is a third way of being saved for those who have sinned, by supporting trials and tribulations and by patience, in accordance with the Scripture saying, *With a muzzle and bridle you squeeze the jaws of those who do not come near to you* (Ps 31: 9), as happened with King Nabouchodonosor [Nebuchadnezzar].^b Occasionally indeed God engulfs in trials the sinner who will not repent, and such a person reaches humility through these trials, and through humility and confession is saved without having practised asceticism, as did the tax-gatherer and the thief.^c

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 104, and in all the other collections: **Coll. b** (Qu. 13); **Coll. c** (Qu. 9); **Coll. d** (Qu. 35); known al-

^a Cf. Eccl 11: 3.

^b Cf. Dan 4: 28.

^c Cf. Lk 18: 13; 23: 43.

so to the compiler of **Coll. 23** (Qu. 9 = Qu. ed. 89), who borrowed a few lines and the quotation from Psalm 31 (cf. PG 89, 412A-B).^a

(2) A related *erotapokrisis*, ascribed to Anastasios in an unusual collection of QQ, has been found by a French scholar, Joseph Paramelle, in a fourteenth-century Roman manuscript, *Vallicellanus* C 72 (gr. 42), ff. 238-269;^b there it is the first Qu. but the answer seems unrelated to the first QQ in the Authentic collection (the other QQ follow rather the order of **Coll. a**, although the second seems to be the same as Qu. 18 above, also found in **Coll. 23**).

Quaestio isolata [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 26]

QUESTION Tell us, father, how ought we to be saved?

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ANSWER I. The Lord our God teaches us saying, *Search the scriptures, and you will find in them eternal life* (Jn 5: 39). And He says truly, *for all scripture is inspired by God and helpful* (2 Tim 3: 16), and for that reason in everything that we say and do we should have evidence from the holy scriptures, lest misled by human ways of thought we fall away from the straight path and fall into the pit of destruction. Therefore we should always study the sacred scriptures with fear and longing, and arouse ourselves and others in remembrance of God's commands: *For the commandment of the Lord is radiant, enlightening the eyes* (Ps 18: 9).

2. Let us do this everywhere, while in church, and on the road, and on board ship, and at table, so that we may not recklessly sate ourselves and be led astray from the Lord and talk nonsense, like the people of old: for eating and drinking *they rose up to play* (1 Cor 10: 7; Ex 32: 6) and were destroyed. May God not say also of us, *"This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me"* (Mt 15: 8; Mk 7: 6; Isa 29: 13). The table that lacks the word of God is like a manger of brute beasts, while the just man who eats His word fills the soul with the words of God: *For not by bread alone does one live, but by every word of God* (Mt 4: 4; Deut 8: 3).

3. Therefore, brethren, knowing what glory and unspeakable joy will come to the just on the day of judgement, and (alas!) what severe and painful affliction and unending punishment to sinners, let us strive while we are still alive to please God with confession and pure repentance, for after death there is no repentance. That is why while there is time we ought to implore God with tears, night and day, that He may have mercy and save us from our failings, because He is good and kind.

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^a D.T. Sieswerda, *Pseudo-Anastasios*, p. 130.

^b Cf. E. Martini, *Catalogo di manoscritti greci esistenti nelle biblioteche italiane*, t. II, Milan, 1902, pp. 72-76; two dates are mentioned in the manuscript, 1386 and 1397, cf. P. G. Nikolopoulos, Αἱ εἰς τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν Χρυσόστομον ἐσφαλμένως ἀποδιδόμεναι ἐπιστολαί, Athens, 1973, pp. 51-52, with Photo. 38.

DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES

Question 49

102 QUESTION What are we to do when frequently, while we are in church, we want to shed tears for our sins and we are unable to do so?

ANSWER 1. Tears because of God are a gift of God given by the Holy Spirit to a person, a second baptism^a which I may dare to describe as more necessary than the baptism at the font. The reason is that we nearly all defile our first baptism as we grow up, but through tears, as if *by water and the spirit* (Jn 3: 5) we are purified once more. Indeed that is one more way in which we disprove that the Jews and the Arabs have the Holy Spirit, because none of them ever sheds tears in prayer because of sins.

103 2. However there are among us some hearts which by natural character [φυσικῶς] are more hard-hearted and dry; this is especially true of those who are choleric, bitter and spiteful. And again there are other hearts more gentle by natural disposition, and more easily moved to contrition. Therefore the person who is by nature [ἐκ φύσεως] hard of heart and not easily contrite, someone who cannot shed a tear even for the dead, not even for his/her own children, nor for any other misfortune, and cannot look gloomy before God, should beat the breast, cut out

^a Among the Fathers “second baptism” is a standard description of tears: cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. δάκρυον.

laughter, lower the eyes – and then God will concede to that person also the ability to weep.

3. However please note that the prayer which takes place in your own private room^a is much more beneficial than that performed in church before everyone.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 105, and also in **Coll. c** (Qu. 10) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 36).

(2) In the *QQ ad Antiochum* Qu. 80 (PG 28, 648B-C) deals with a similar topic incorporating some similar phrases.

Question 50

QUESTION How does someone know that God has forgiven one's sins, and that one will find complete mercy on the day of judgement?

ANSWER 1. From one's own conscience, and from the confidence that the soul feels in prayer to God.

2. When a person deserves punishment, that person is like a condemned criminal standing before a governor and having no confidence at all; that is how the soul presents herself before God in prayer, with her conscience belabouring her, for she knows that she is worthy of punishment.

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3. But when someone begins to repent before God, then there is a feeling of some slight relief, and that person can be present before God in prayer no longer as a condemned criminal, but more like someone who is a debtor and asking to be let off; then again leaving this level, if one takes thought for oneself, one can present oneself as a master's loving slave; and then going even further from there one can converse with God as if one were a paid servant who has no debts outstanding.

4. Gradually then as the soul advances, becoming lightened of all her burdens, she can converse with God and stand in His presence like one friend with another,^b and like a bride with her bridegroom, and like a true son with his own father.

^a Cf. Mt 6: 6.

^b Cf. Jn 15: 15.

Then there are no fears, no obligation, no sentiment of any sort of punishment, but only full love and continuous joy and unfailing confidence, a happiness for the soul, with transports [σκιρτήματα] and an endless exultation – as those recount to us who, by the grace of Christ, have reached such stages.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 106, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 37), but not in **Coll. c**.

(2) In **Coll. b** (Qu. 24) there is a longer answer, worth quoting; it was published in a Russian journal by N. Suvorov (1903) from a Viennese manuscript (*Vindob. Theol. Gr.* 33), and appears referred to in a 12th century hagiographic text, the *vita* of Cyril Philéotes, ed. E. Sargologos, *La vie de Saint Cyrille le Philéote moine byzantin* (†1110), [SH 39], Brussels, 1964, pp. 73-74:

Coll. b, qu. 24 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 14]

QUESTION How does someone know that God has forgiven his or her sins?

ANSWER 1. In our prayer, when on our own, with no one watching or listening, we present ourselves to God, then the soul knows what is God's relationship with her and her relationship with God. For there are seven kinds [τρόποι] and varieties [διαφοραί] of prayer, and of these three exist under the influence of fear and hell, while the other four are proper to those who are saved and have a share in the kingdom of God.

2. When one is sunk deep in pleasures, one presents oneself in prayer like a condemned person, with no confidence at all, as if expecting the death penalty. Again the second kind occurs when a person presents oneself and addresses God like a debtor. The third kind is different from the other two; it is as when a slave approaches the master, however slaves also are subject to fear and lashes. The fourth kind occurs when one deals with God like a paid servant, free from slavery and expecting to receive a salary because of God's human kindness. The fifth kind is higher than the other four; it is when a person comes before God as a friend and chats with Him. The sixth kind is higher than this, when one has confidence with God like a son: *For I said, 'You are gods and sons of the Most High'* (Ps 81: 6), all who so desire. The seventh kind and progress [προκοπή], the highest of all, is adopting brotherhood with Christ, who became *first-born among many brothers* (Rom 8: 29), believers, so that they were *heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ* (Rom 8: 17), as Paul cries out.

3. Therefore, when someone speaks with God in prayer like a criminal, or like a debtor, or like a slave under the fear of the lash, such a person has not become free from personal sins; but where the Holy Spirit is a frequent visitor, there is freedom from sins. Our Lord himself has commanded us in this way saying, *Anyone who loves me will keep my commandments, and I will love that person and show myself to such a one* (Jn 14: 15, 21). Thus the true sign of a Christian's forgiveness of sins is this: the revelation of Christ that happens in the soul. *Blessed*, says Scripture, *are the pure of heart, for they shall see God* (Mt 5: 8).

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(3) In the QQ *ad Antiochum*, QQ 78 and 122 (PG 28, 645C-D, 676B1-6) give similar answers with different words.

Question 51

QUESTION Christ said, *It is not what enters through the mouth that defiles a person* (Mt 15: 11), <so> why did the Fathers^a stipulate that we should not eat meat on the holy fast days?

104

ANSWER 1. In the case of all fasting, sleeping on the ground, abstaining from wine and refraining from certain foods, piety [εὐσεβεία] has two aims: the one is that by not enjoying the pleasures of this world, we may eventually enjoy in place of them the good things that are to come. That is why withdrawal from the world and virginity have come into being, so that we may gain eternal goods instead of passing advantages. However a second aim of fasting and of abstaining from meat was intended, viz. that the soul and logical thinking [λογισμός] should be humbled along with the body being humbled; once the soul is humbled, one implores God sincerely and with true repentance, and thus one receives forgiveness.

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2. However one should take note that if someone refrains from meat, but pampers and fattens the body with other foods and drinks, that person is not helped by fasting.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. b** (Qu. 38).

^a A useful summary of the Patristic teaching on fasting in G. W. H. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. νηστεία.

(2) This is one of the QQ taken over and incorporated in **Coll. 88**, Qu. 74 (cf. Qu. ed. 64, PG 89, 660D1-4, 661B4-C1); omitted in **Coll. c**, and in **Coll. d**.

(3) A question [CPG 7746 (2)] attributed to Anastasios, but not found in the Collections, concerns fasting; it appears in several manuscripts and was published by I.-B. Pitra, *Iuris ecclesiastici graecorum historia et monumenta*, t. 2, Rome, 1868, pp. 274-275.

Quaestio isolata [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 27]

<QUESTION> With the most honoured father presiding a question was put by some: "Why, most honoured father, do we observe any Wednesday, as well as any Friday, without fail?"

<ANSWER> 1. In reply to them he gave a spoken answer as follows. "How would it have been possible for us not to observe Wednesdays as well as Fridays? Because on one of these days our Lord and master poured out his revered blood on the life-giving wood of the revered cross (cf. Jn 19: 31-34), so that he might give new life to our corrupted nature. And on the other the Jews held their empty council concerning the cross,^a and the four-part cross of the Lord was made on the fourth of days so that the one fixed to it might bring salvation through it to the four-part complex of creation.

2. The wonders worked by Christ are wondrous, varied, divine and grandiose, but the most wonderful of them all that exists is the revered and life-giving cross of the Lord.

Through no other is death made of no account, except through it;

through it the sin of our first ancestor is absolved;

through it Hades is harrowed;

through it resurrection is granted;

through it the gates of Paradise are opened;

through it the mystery of God's plan [*oikonomia*] is established and proclaimed; because it is

through it that we the believers are set apart from the unbelievers and are recognized.^b

3. This is our shield and weapon and trophy against the devil, and it rightly deserves our prostrate homage because it was made holy being touched by the revered body and blood. Moreover by honouring this very day we are also kept unsullied, not because we honour some matter (God forbid!), but as honouring the

^a Cf. Mk 14: 1-2.

^b For these lines, cf. John of Damascus, *Expos. Fidei* 84, 21-24 (ed. Kotter, IV 11: PG 94, 1128-1129).

image, as a symbol of Christ, of his tomb and glory and rising from the dead.^a

4. How can that day be other than honoured because of the cross, given that on that day it <the cross> was made, on that day the Lord displayed it in heaven by means of the stars to Emperor Constantine^b and said to him, “In this conquer your enemies!”? And also on this day, as we shall discover, the discovery of the honoured and life-giving cross by the most revered Helen took place.^c Again on this day the life-giving cross, just like the one who was fixed to it, was borne by the divine angels into the heavens, as the most insightful of men have recounted,^d so that the foundation for this day might be ratified. From these and similar things, how can it be other than firmly established that we should honour the most pure and wonderful day of the honoured and life-giving cross? Indeed, anyone who has faith and has been baptized in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and who does not keep the most pure Wednesdays and Fridays^e in every way – except when another feast of Christ happens to coincide (for then we wipe them [Wednesday and Friday observances] out completely, as the Fathers have said,^f because all of them have come into being on behalf of the cross), anyone such would be an alien to the true faith of Christians.”

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^a Cf. John of Damascus, *Expos. Fidei* 84, 41-42 (ed. Kotter, IV 11: PG 94, 1128-1129).

^b Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *De vita Constantini*, I 28-30 (ed. F. Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke* I, 1, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* [GCS], Berlin, 1975, pp. 29-30; PG 20, 944A-C).

^c On the finding of the True Cross, cf. A. Frolow, *La relique de la vraie croix Recherches sur le développement d'un culte* [Archives de l'Orient Chrétien, 7], Paris, 1961, pp. 55-56.

^d Cf. John Chrysostom, *De cruce et latrone homilia* 1 [CPG 4338], (PG 49, 403, 413).

^e Cf. *Canones Apostolorum*, Canones 64 (vel 66), 69 (ed. P.-P. Joannou, *Canons*, FONTI, vol. I, 2, Rome, 1962, pp. 41, 43; ed. G.A. Rhalles – M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα* ..., vol. 2, Athens, 1852, pp. 84, 88).

^f Cf. e.g. Peter of Alex., *Canon* 15 [*Sermo de Pascha*] (ed. P.-P. Joannou, *Canons*, FONTI, vol. II, Rome, 1963, pp. 57-58; Theophilus of Alex.), *Canon* 1 (ed. P.-P. Joannou, *Canons*, FONTI, vol. II, Rome, 1963, pp. 262-263; Ps.-Athanasius, *Syntagma ad monachos* [CPG 2264] (ed. P. Batiffol, Paris, 1890, pp. 123-124; PG 28, 837C8-840).

Question 52

105 QUESTION Is it a good thing to confess one's own sins or the
evil thoughts in the soul?

106 ANSWER It is good and very helpful, but not to be done to
anyone, since you yourself will get no help at all, and you will
defile and scandalize those who listen to you. So if you find a
spiritual man [ἄνδρα πνευματικόν],^a who is able to cure you and
pray on your behalf, make your confession only to that person.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. c** (Qu. 11), and then added by Gretser to
Coll. a, Qu. ed. 105bis).

(2) A fuller version was elaborated for **Coll. 23** (Qu. 6), and
also included in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 6) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 38).

Question 53

QUESTION If I do not find such a man, in whom I have
confidence, what am I to do?

ANSWER Confess yourself inwardly [κατ' ἰδίαν] to God, con-
demning yourself and saying, "Oh God, you alone know what a
sinner I am, and how unworthy of all forgiveness. Nevertheless
save me simply because of your mercy!"

COMMENTS

(1) This and the following Qu. are brought together in **Coll. d**
(Qu. 39), but omitted from the version of Qu. 52 that was elabo-
rated for **Coll. 23** (Qu. 6), and from **Coll. b** and **Coll. c**. Thus
they are not found in **Coll. a** and are among the rare QQ missing
from the edited QQ.

Question 54

QUESTION When someone is making one's confession to
God, should one call to mind and count up each sin committed?

107 ANSWER Certainly not, especially if the sins are carnal sins of
fornication [πορνεία], because as soon as one tries to recall one

^a Earlier (Qu. 32) Anastasios has distinguished between a "spiritual person"
and a priest [ιερεὺς], and it is not clear here if he considers that only priests can
forgive or also non-ordained monks.

and then another, the soul takes pleasure and is defiled. So it is better, following the example of the tax-collector, to say, “*Oh God, have mercy on me a sinner* (Lk 18: 13), as your goodness commands.”

COMMENTS

(1) See Comment (1) on the previous question.

Question 55

QUESTION What proportion of one's personal financial resources should one offer in alms?

ANSWER The pagans [Ἑλλήνες] and those outside the Law used to slaughter their own sons and daughters in offering to their gods,^a so what excuse can we have? Even if we were to offer our own flesh to God, we would have done nothing commensurate with the gifts He has given us.

COMMENTS

(1) This Qu. is taken over almost literally in **Coll. 23**, Qu. 13, and included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 13, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 40). It is missing in **Coll. b** and in **Coll. c**.

(2) In the *QQ ad Antiochum* one finds a similar question (Qu. 90 [PG 28, 653A-B]), but the answer is quite different.

^a In the Gretser edition (also found in Migne) one finds a scribe's addition at this point: “or rather to their demons”, missing in most manuscripts.

VARIED DEVOTIONAL- ECCLESIASTICAL QUESTIONS

Question 56

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QUESTION If I were to want to do something that I consider good, how should I learn if it is to God's liking or not?

ANSWER It is proper to the perfect and spiritual, as the Apostle says,^a to discern all things without error; for *solid food belongs to the mature ... those who by practice have trained their faculties to discriminate between good and evil* (Heb 5: 14). Consequently whatever one does for God's sake in simplicity of heart and with good intention, such a person will not be condemned because of that.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 107, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 41); but omitted in **Coll. b** and in **Coll. c**.

(2) In *QQ ad Antiochum* a similar question (Qu. 132 [PG 28, 680D-681A]) is given a different answer.

Question 57

QUESTION Is it right for a Christian to open <the Bible> for *lachmeterion*^b [in search of an omen text]?

^a Cf. 1 Cor. 2: 15.

^b The spelling *λαχμητήριον* seems preferable to the alternative *λαχνιστήριον* found in some manuscripts; the term refers to the practice of opening the Bible at random and taking the first words one sees as an omen for future action; it is also found in astrological texts, cf. Trapp, *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, s.v. *λαχμητήριον*.

ANSWER I. We find no encouragement anywhere to do this, but the Fathers,^a to prevent the faithful going to sorcerers and soothsayers, thought up *lachmeterion*.

2. Therefore anyone who wishes to open <the Bible> should first supplicate God with prayer and then, after the prayer, open <the Bible>, asking God if He really orders one to open <the Bible> about the subject in question. Then if He persuades you, open, but if He dissuades you, do not open.

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COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 108, and also in **Coll. d** (Qu. 42); but omitted in **Coll. b** and in **Coll. c**.

(2) See Qu. 97 for a recommended use of the *lachmeterion*.

Question 58

QUESTION Where is it expedient to offer money: to a church or to the poor and needy?

ANSWER I. When the Lord praised those on the right-hand side saying, *Come you blessed of my father* (Mt 25: 34), the only thing he mentioned was the almsgiving, that given to the poor, to strangers, to the naked and to those in prison.^b

2. However, there are differences of place, and sometimes we should also give to churches that are poor, whereas anyone who gives to wealthy churches can never be sure what will happen to what is stored up there. The reason is that many of the churches which insatiably collected funds, and failed to administer them well, were later plundered by the barbarians.

COMMENTS

(1) This question was adopted with minor alterations in **Coll. 23**, Qu. 14, and appears in **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 14) and also in **Coll. d** (Qu. 43); omitted in **Coll. b** and **Coll. c**.

(2) A very similar question and answer, though with different words, are found in *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 86 (PG 28, 649C-D).

^a None are mentioned in G. W. H. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. λαχμιστήριον.

^b Cf. Mt 25: 35-40.

Question 59

110

QUESTION Supposing that a fellow Christian has caused me trouble and I cannot talk with him or greet him whole-heartedly, but only with my lips,^a what am I to do? Shall I continue relations with him at least for appearance's sake, or shall I break off relations with him?

ANSWER Continue to have relations with him, at least verbally; for very often from such beginnings a real affection progressively develops. *It is better for you to be half, and not fully, "barren".*^b

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 109, and also in **Coll. c** (Qu. 12) and **Coll. d** (Qu. 44).

(2) Omitted as such in **Coll. b**, but related perhaps to its Qu. 27, which is related in turn to *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 83 (PG 28, 649A), and later found its way into the thirteenth-century *Thesaurus* of Theognostos, XX §39 (CCPG 5, p. 221).

Coll. b, qu. 27 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 16]

QUESTION If someone undertakes a good deed not willingly but forcing oneself, does one have a reward or not?

ANSWER 1. The perfect sacrifice is one that somebody offers without sorrow or compulsion, *for God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor 9: 7; Prov 22: 8a). However, since we hear the Lord saying, "The violent are those *to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens, and the violent snatch it away*" (Mt 11: 12), we trust in His goodness that even in those things where we force ourselves, we shall receive a reward.

2. Indeed those who practise virginity bring force to bear on their nature and on themselves; similarly those who undertake ascetic practices for many years, abstaining from wine and meat and other things, and those who shut themselves up and practise solitude, and sleep on the ground, and renounce the world, these force themselves. Surely all of them will receive a reward from God for the force expended.

^a Literally, "with my tongue".

^b Cf. Mt 5: 29-30; Mk 11: 13-14; Mt 21: 19; Sirach 6: 3.

Question 60

QUESTION If our rulers are Jews or unbelievers or heretics, should we pray for them in the church or not?

ANSWER Yes. The reason is that when the Apostle wrote to pray *for kings and all those in power* (1 Tim 2: 2), all the kings and rulers in the world were pagans [Ἑλληγες]; in any case <it is clear> that in the holy liturgical offering [προσκομιδῇ] the priest implores God thus when he says, “Remember, Lord, every living person, both those we remember and those we do not remember. Have mercy on them all and grant them all forgiveness”.^a

III

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 110, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 45); omitted in **Coll. c** and **Coll. b**.

Question 61

QUESTION Well, then, should one also pray for the pagans [Ἑλληγες], who finished their lives before Christ's appearance, and not anathematize them?

ANSWER 1. You should certainly not anathematize anyone who died before Christ's dwelling among us. The reason is that even in Hades the announcement of Christ was made once, though only once. It was John the Baptist who took the lead and proclaimed Christ there as well. And listen to what Saint Peter says about Christ: *He went and made a proclamation even to the spirits in Hades who in former times did not obey* (1 Pet 3: 19).

2. Indeed there is an ancient tradition^b that a certain lawyer [σχολαστικός] had been cursing Plato the philosopher very much; then Plato appears to him in a dream saying to him, “Sir, stop your cursing of me, because you are only doing harm

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^a This prayer is found in the litanies of various oriental liturgies, e.g. that of St James, used by the Jacobites (Syrian Monophysites), and that of St Basil; cf. F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, vol. 1, *Eastern Liturgies*, Oxford, 1896, pp. 57 (13-14), 91 (36-37), 170 (5-6); B.-C. Mercier, *La Liturgie de saint Jacques* [Patr. Orient., XXV(2), no. 126], Turnhout, 1974, p. 220 (9-10).

^b The legend of Plato's “conversion” is found in several mediaeval manuscripts, cf. CCSG 59, p. 111 (note on this passage).

to yourself. I do not deny that I was indeed a sinful man; nevertheless when Christ descended into Hades, truly there was no one who believed in him sooner than I.”

3. Do not think, when you hear this, that conversion is always possible in Hades. This is something that happened on one unique occasion, when Christ descended into the underworld in order to visit those who had fallen asleep from ages before.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed.III; and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 46), but omitted in **Coll. b** and in **Coll. c**.

Question 62

QUESTION What is meant by the Lord's having said, *Many will say to me on that day* (of judgement), *'Lord, did we not cast out devils in your name, and did we not prophesy in your name, and did we not perform many works of power?'* And then I shall confess to them, *'Verily I say to you, I have never known you'* (Mt 7: 22-23)?

ANSWER I. Signs [σημεῖα] and wonderful works and predictions often come about by means of unworthy persons in accordance with some need or providence [κατὰ ... οἰκονομίαν], for example in the case of Barlaam,^a and that of the ventriloquist woman^b who raised Samuel out of the earth; again the Apostles discovered a non-believer casting out devils in the name of Christ, they stopped him and told Christ, and he said, *Do not stop these; anyone who is not against us*, he said, *is for us* (Mk 9: 38-40; Lk 9: 49-50); and on another occasion he said, *Do not rejoice because the demons obey you* (Lk 10: 20).

2. It is necessary to realize this, so that when you see that some sign has been performed, by some decision of God, through heretics or unbelievers, you be not shaken in the right-

^a Cf. Num 22: 28.

^b Cf. 1 Kings 28: 11-12.

thinking [ὁρθοδοξου] faith because of signs and wonders. It is possible that God may have performed such a sign and wonder to test you. Sometimes it is the faith of the one who approaches that works the sign and not the worth of the one who performs it. Indeed John, *the greatest of all those born of women* (Mt 11: 11; Lk 7: 28), was never seen working a sign, whereas Judas certainly did work some when he was with the Apostles.^a

3. Therefore do not think that it is very important if you happen to see some unworthy person or someone of erroneous faith [κακόπιστον] working a sign.

COMMENTS

(1) Adapted, but expanded greatly, for **Coll. 23** (Qu. 20 = Qu. ed. 20; cf. PG 89, 517C1-D11), the version used in **Coll. d** (Qu. 47); omitted in **Coll. b** and in **Coll. c**.

(2) A similar theme appears in two of the *QQ ad Antiochum*, QQ 89 and 111 (PG 28, 652-2, 665)

Question 63

QUESTION Did the ventriloquist woman^b really bring Samuel up <from the dead> on the occasion of Saul?

ANSWER Yes, because all the souls, both those of the holy and those of the sinful, were under the Devil's hand until Christ descended into Hades^c and said *to those who are in bonds, Come out!* (Isa 49: 9) and to those imprisoned, "Be free!" Listen moreover to Paul saying, *Death* (that is to say the Devil) *held sway from Adam until the time of Moses* (or until the fullness of the Law) *even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the disobedience* (Rom 5: 14), (that is, even over the souls of holy men).

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COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 112 and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 48).

(2) In **Coll. 88** a question appears about the ventriloquist woman (Qu. 39, PG 89, 581-584) but the answer is taken (like several other QQ in this collection) from Theodoret, *In 1 Reg.*, 63,

^a Cf. Mt 10: 1.

^b Cf. 1 Kings 28: 11-12; also Qu. 62, §1, above.

^c Cf. 1 Pet 3: 19.

eds N. Fernández Marcos and J. R. Busto Saiz, Madrid, 1984, pp. 56-61 (PG 80, 589-596).

Question 64

QUESTION When one goes away to a foreign country, is it a good thing to carry along holy communion in a *skevophorion*,^a or should we receive communion in any church we may happen to find?

ANSWER 1. The most holy body of Christ receives no affront from being moved or carried about; it is the same Christ who journeyed everywhere and, as I have said, he receives no affront because of any place, except from an impure heart.^b

2. But the Apostle teaches us that nobody has the right [ἐξουσίαν] to receive communion anywhere outside the holy catholic Church saying, *There is one Lord*, i.e. the true one, *there is one faith* (Rom 5: 14) i.e. the right-minded one, for all the others are not faiths, but fatalities.^c So just as for those who have a spell away from their wives, if we were to copulate with another woman, there is no marriage but fornication [πορνεία], much more let us guard our continence also for our holy Church, the spotless wife of Christ.^d

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 113 and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 49), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) A slightly extended version of this question appears in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 112 (PG 28, 665C4-668A).

(3) An example of a monk who keeps portions of the consecrated host in a *skevophorion* (so that he can distribute communion to prisoners) occurs in the *Narrationes* (Nau XXX: Binggeli I, 33 [p. 208]).

^a The σκευοφόριον ("pyx") is any receptacle destined to contain the reserved-consecrated Host.

^b Cf. Mt 15: 17-20.

^c Anastasios plays on the two similar-ending words πίστεις and θνήσκεις, hence the attempt to reproduce a word-play in English.

^d The same title σύζυγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("yoke-mate", i.e. "wife" of Christ) is to be found used frequently of the Church in the *Hexaemeron* (cf. S.N. Sakkos, Περὶ Ἀναστασιῶν Συναΐτων, p. 154).

Question 65

QUESTION The Apostle says that *the powers* that are in the world *are instituted by God* (Rom 13: 1). Does it follow that every governor [ἄρχων] and emperor is appointed by God?

ANSWER I. God says in the Law [ἐν τῷ Νόμῳ], *I will give you rulers after your own hearts* (Jer 3: 15),^a and so we say that some governors and emperors are appointed by God as worthy of such an honour, while others who are unworthy are appointed by God's permission or will with a view to the people who are worthy of such unworthiness. And listen to some stories about these.^b

2. When the tyrant Phokas became emperor^c and began to perpetrate those bloody massacres through Bonosos^d the executioner [τοῦ δημίου], a certain anchorite in Constantinople, a holy and very simple man who had great confidence with God, as if God were like his father or an intimate friend, used to complain to God in all simplicity, "Lord, why have you made such a man emperor?" After several days had gone by and he repeated the same thing to God, "Why have you made such a man emperor?", a voice came to him from God saying, "Because I have not found anybody worse!"

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3. There was another city, one in the Thebaid,^e that was very wicked and where all sorts of evil and irregular deeds were performed. One of the most abominable of the faction members [*demotes*, δημότης] in that city suddenly underwent a pseudo-conversion and went off, received the tonsure, and donned the

^a Anastasios adapts the quotation which should read: "And I will give you shepherds after my own heart" (see LXX, NETS).

^b Neither of the two stories that follow (about Bonosos and about the evil bishop) have been found elsewhere.

^c Phokas ruled from 602 to 610; he had his predecessor, Maurice (582-602), executed (see Qu. 30, §2) and was himself executed by his successor, Heraclius (610-641).

^d Bonosos (spelt Βώνσοος, Βόνωσος, Βονῶσος) was "Comes Orientis" under Phokas, cf. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, anno 6101 [608/9 A.D.], ed. de Boor, Leipzig, 1883, vol. 1, p. 296 (21-25), transl. C. Mango & R. Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes*, Oxford, 1997, pp. 425-427; cf. *Vita Theodori Syceotae*, ed. A.-J. Festugière [SH 48], Brussels, 1970, vol. 1, cap. 142 (line 1 Βουνοῦσος), vol. 2, p. 256.

^e The capital of the southern Egyptian province of Upper and Lower Thebaid was Antinoöpolis, but several other important civic centres are to be found in this heartland of Egyptian monasticism.

monastic habit. However he did not cease to practise the same wicked acts as before. The bishop of the city happened to meet his end, and an angel of the Lord appeared to a certain holy man saying, "Go and prepare that city so that so-and-so of the faction members may be elected bishop." So the man went and did what he had been ordered. And when one of the faction members, or rather that particular faction member, had been elected, he began to conjure up images of himself and became very conceited. Then an angel of the Lord came to stand by him and said, "Why are you so proud and conceited? It is certain that you have not become bishop because you were worthy of the priesthood, but because this particular city deserves to have this sort of bishop!"

4. So, dear friend,^a when you see that some unworthy and wicked person is either emperor or governor or bishop, do not be surprised, but learn and believe with complete certainty that it is because of our crimes that we are handed over to such tyrants, and not even then do we desist from evil things, but although we are in the middle of such hardships, we continue to practise wicked deeds.^b Believe me when I tell you that if the race of the Saracens were to depart from us today, at once tomorrow the Green and Blue factions^c would rise up once more and begin killing one another, and <the same with^d> the Eastern Administrative Area [ἡ Ἀνατολή], Arabia, Palestine and many other countries.

^a Here an individual questioner seems to be addressed: but cf. Qu. 30, §4.

^b The idea that the Arab invasions were a punishment is found elsewhere in the works of Anastasios, e.g. *Homilia III de creatione hominis* (CPG 7749), III, 1, 84-112, ed. K.-H. Uthemann [CCSG 12], pp. 59-61, and cf. J. L. van Dieten, *Geschichte der Patriarchen von Sergios I. bis Johannes VI. (610-715)*, [Enzyklopädie der Byzantinistik 24], Amsterdam, 1972, p. 181.

^c The circus faction system (distinguished by colours) inherited from Rome, was not limited in its activity to the hippodrome or theatre, nor to Constantinople; the Green and Blue factions had immense political impact and were particularly strong in Alexandria and Egypt (see M. McCormack, "Factions", ODB, pp. 773-774, with relevant bibliography).

^d The following nominatives are not clearly linked with the preceding verbs; the meaning seems to be that these countries are also examples of internecine slaughter.

COMMENTS

(1) A slightly adapted version of this question appears in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 16) and was incorporated into **Coll. a** (Qu. ed. 16), and also into **Coll. d** (Qu. 50). It is missing in **Coll. b** and **Coll. c**.

(2) A very brief treatment of the problem occurs in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 121 (PG 28, 676A7-15), using the same quotation from Jeremiah (see §1).

(3) This answer contains two *Narrationes* not found elsewhere in the Anastasian writings.

Question 66

QUESTION Some people are of the opinion that it is impossible for somebody who flees from the plague [θανατικόν] from one place to another to be saved from death.

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ANSWER 1. The subject of plagues and the mystery that surrounds them is deep and difficult to grasp, and few people are able to grasp it. It is quite clear that not all that can be grasped by the intellect of a teacher can also be grasped by the intellect of the public being taught. However I have heard from persons who had been taught by God about many of His mysteries that there are two ways in which diseases occur. The first is related to God's warning and chastising [παιδεία] of a people, the second to a badness in the climate and currents of air, or to exhalations from the earth or from waters, or from carcasses, or due to dust clouds, and stench and dirt.

2. Now the plague that comes as a warning from God, nobody can understand at what time it may come, whereas the epidemic [θνησις] that is caused by the climate, with the permission of God, usually comes at the beginning of spring in many cases, and more especially in those lands that are over-populated, damp and marshy. That is why it is a well known fact that many lands, <though> inhabited by unbelievers and false believers, being more deserted and dry, never experience the trial of a plague. Well now, is one to suppose that this is due to their virtue? Certainly not, but

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the reason is to be found in the combination of a dry and healthy climate.

3. So in my opinion it is often possible, with God's good pleasure, to flee from the epidemic due to the badness of the climate by going from one place to other regions and climates that are healthy. But as for the epidemic brought about as a warning from God, if the person fleeing has been counted among those who are to die, it is impossible for that person not to die, no matter where one may flee, and on the other hand if death has not been declared for that person on this occasion, then that person will not die.

4. However no one who hears that we have said that an epidemic comes from the climate, should conclude that we have said that it comes about without God. We too have listened to the one who said, *Two sparrows are sold for a small coin, and not one of them will fall to earth without my father who is in heaven* (Mt 10: 29). Therefore everything that the climate and the created world produce according to nature [φυσικῶς] also takes place through the command [νεύμα] of God.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 114, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 51), but not in **Coll. b**, nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) Among the *QQ ad Antiochum* (PG 28, 661 A-D), Qu. 104 has the same question, but a very brief and different answer, while Qu. 103, with a different question, may be indebted to this text for its answer.

(3) This question has been partly answered above, QQ 26 and 28.

(4) In the thirteenth century Nikephoros Blemmydes in his treatise *De vitae termino* (p. 14, lines 13-23) quotes a long passage from this question.

Question 67

QUESTION Is it required of a Christian on the day that he proposes to receive communion to take precautions with his own wife, and keep apart from her?

ANSWER I. When David and his companions were preparing to eat the loaves of offering, which were a prototype of the

body of Christ, the High Priest Abiathar^a asked David at once, "Are they pure of a woman's bed?" And when he learned the reply, "Yes", he then gave them the loaves.

2. However since our own affairs have reached such a terribly low state, if somebody returns from some journey and from a foreign land, perhaps he will be deemed worthy of some forgiveness, provided he reproves himself for his copulation and tries to improve himself on other occasions.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 115, and also in **Coll. d** (Qu. 52); omitted as such in **Coll. b** and in **Coll. c**, but see further Comments.

(2) Partly used in **Coll. 23**, Qu. 7 (= Qu. ed. 7).

(3) Qu. 38 deals with this topic, as do the additional questions found in **Coll. b** (see Qu. 38, Comment [4], especially **Coll. b**, Qu. 23, §3, pp. 144-145).

^a Cf. 1 Kings 21: 2-7. As pointed out in connection with Qu. 41 (see Comment [3] giving **Coll. b**, Qu. 20, §3, p. 150), Abimelech, or Amimelech is the name found in the LXX, and Abiathar is his son.

OTHER FAITHS

Question 68

QUESTION If I am questioned about the faith by heretics, and I do not know how to explain dogma, what shall I do?

ANSWER Not only for you, who do not know, but also for those who think they do know, it is a danger to talk about the faith. So say to the person questioning you, "I am an unlearned person [ιδιώτης], but if you really and truly seek to know the truth, go to the Church and there you will learn what is the right-minded religion."

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 116, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 53, which adds the following Qu. 69); omitted in **Coll. c**.

(2) In **Coll. b** one manuscript from Mt Athos (*Philotheou* 52, ff. 33v-38) adds to the collection a similar question (numbered 39), which unifies this and the following Qu. 69:

Coll. b, Qu. 39 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 20]

QUESTION If an uneducated person [ιδιώτης], who has no experience of public speaking [λόγος] and of Sacred Scripture is questioned by a heretic about the correct [ὀρθόδοξος] faith of the catholic and holy Church, how should such a person answer?

ANSWER I. The divine Apostle bears witness that to dialogue about God is a dangerous affair, that few can undertake, when he says, "I speak of things *in a partial way*, and *I understand in a partial way*" (cf. 1 Cor 13: 9-12). Therefore if he who went up to the third heaven and learned in Paradise *utterances that are unutterable, which it is not possible for a human to speak* (2 Cor 12:

2-4), if this person says that he speaks “in a partial way” and understands “in a partial way”, he who had Christ dwelling within himself (cf. Gal 2: 20), who is there then capable of saying that, “I speak in a perfect way and I know in a perfect way”? To speak about God is not without danger, as the blessed Gregory says, “Those who are not aware of what is within them,” he says, “and do not even know what is the form [εἶδος] and being [οὐσία] of their own souls – what sort of thing and how they are, where they come from or how they come or where they go – how much more so are they not capable of grasping anything of the God who is not to be grasped, not to be uttered, not to be investigated?” [cf. Greg. Nyssenus, *Contra Eunomium*, II, 1, §§105-107 (ed. W. Jaeger, Leiden, 1960², vol. 1, pp. 257-258)] Indeed all the perverted heresies went astray and met destruction because they were too meddlesome and inquisitive about the incomprehensible depth of the godhead.

2. In relation with the Jews, and pagans [Ἕλληνες] and Arabs, the Church has a different argument, and defense [ἀπολογία] concerning Christ and the faith. But in relation to the two heresies [prob. Nestorianism and Monophysitism] that hold sway at present in Syria and Mesopotamia and Egypt, viz. for those led astray by Nestorius and by Severus and Jakobos, those who are not skilled in the finer points of dogma and Scripture can present the following speech: “Every emperor and sovereign and lord entrusts his essential dwellings and treasuries to those who are by all means the most trustworthy and wisest of his people and of all his ministers. But the most honourable dwellings and most holy treasuries of the mysteries of Christ are, among all the holy places on earth, holy Nazareth, holy Bethlehem, the holy city of God, Jerusalem, honoured Golgotha, the holy Mount Tabor, Jordan, the holiest of rivers, holy Sion, sacred Gethsemane, the holy Mount of Olives, and honourable Mount Sinai. Now we can see that all these holy and famous places, God has entrusted and graciously granted them to our catholic Church for His glorification and adoration. If the faith of Nestorius or Severus or Jakobos or Gaïanos or Theodosios or anyone else among the heretics was more to be revered than that of our holy catholic Church, it was necessary that these Holy Places of God should have been entrusted rather to that faith.”

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3. But if, as is likely, the heretic says that the catholic Church owns these Holy Places because of imperial force and tyranny, he is telling a lie which rebounds on himself. At one time the Arians seized those places by imperial force, while the Romans [Ῥωμαῖοι =

citizens of New Rome, i.e. Constantinople] were in control; but immediately, after a few years, God returned them once more to his holy, catholic and orthodox Church. At this moment while foreign nations, viz. the Arabs, control all of the Eastern Administrative Area [τῆς Ανατολῆς] and Palestine and the Holy Places, it is obvious that it is not by imperial force, but by divine providence, as being orthodox, that the catholic Church possesses the Holy Places. As evidence for all to learn that it is by God's providence that we possess them, there is the fact that although the Arab leaders prefer you the heretics rather than us, who side with the Romans, the Son of God has not permitted the Holy Places to be snatched from us, clearly because we are the true believers [ὀρθόδοξοι], rather than all the other faiths.

4. And daring to be courageous say to the heretic, "If there is another faith on the face of the earth that is more orthodox than that of our holy catholic Church, God did not act properly in entrusting to us the holy and venerable places, behold for what is now seven hundred years!"

5. Very often when we have said these thing to the heretics they have been put to shame and no longer opened their mouths.

Question 69

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QUESTION But is there not some method or other by which an uneducated person [ιδιώτης] may confute the heretic?

ANSWER I. On this subject listen to a short discussion that took place not very long ago in Alexandria.^a Representatives had gathered from the followers of Severus and Gaïanos and Barsanouphios against somebody who was uneducated as far as public speaking [λόγος] was concerned, but *wise* in the Lord,^b a preacher of the faith of the catholic Church, and they were fighting against him.

2. He then put the following question: "If the Emperor owns certain treasuries and honoured dwellings where his essential secret business [lit. "mysteries"] is despatched, to whom

^a In the *Hodegos* (cf. ch. X [CCSG 8, pp. 143-198]) Anastasios describes disputations in Alexandria with the monophysites in which he accumulated quotations from the Fathers to establish the Chalcedonian teaching; there is no mention there of this particular argument (re. control of the Holy Places), but he does expound another 'knock-down' argument (XII, 3) based on an image of the Cross (l.c., pp. 204-208).

^b Cf. Mt 10: 16.

will he confide these places, to those who are faithful to him or to those who are unfaithful?" The others said to him, "It is quite obvious that the Emperor will confide such dwellings to those who are the most faithful of all his subjects."

3. Then in reply the right-thinking [ὀρθόδοξος] person said to them, "Consequently learn that there is no faith on earth which is right-thinking [ὀρθόδοξος] except for that of the catholic Church, and for that reason God has confided to us all the holy and most essential of his dwellings, in which when He dwelt here He worked his mysteries, viz. Nazareth, Tabor, Bethlehem, the Jordan, Sion, Golgotha and <the church^a of> the Resurrection. And not only these, but there is also Sinai and, to sum up, for all the holy places of the New and the Old Testament it is we of the catholic Church who are in possession.^b

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4. So that if we are in error in our beliefs, and you constitute the right-thinkers [ὀρθόδοξοι], God has not acted properly in confiding to us all his Holy Places. And if you say that we hold these places because of imperial force and tyranny, you can be convicted of lying. Behold how the barbarians now control the land of the Holy Places and God has not taken them away from us. But if, as is quite likely, you will want to say that once upon a time the Arians^c gained control of the Holy Places for a short while, consider that it is quite true that they snatched the Holy Places away by imperial force and tyranny, but they were not strong enough. At once God restored them once more to us the orthodox, and behold now for seven

^a Although no word for "church" appears, this seems to be the meaning here.

^b The same argument, claiming that all the places they hold in honour, are now in Christian hands, is used against the Jews in the *Disputatio adversus Iudaeos* (cf. PG 89, 1221B-C); this work is attributed doubtfully to Anastasios (CPG 7772), but André Binggeli (*Récits*, p. 337, n. 24) points out that strong arguments exist in favour of its authenticity; he refers to W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 221-226, and H.-G. Thümmel, *Die Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Zeit vor dem Bilderstreit* [TU 139], Berlin, 1992, pp. 259-268.

^c Arianism, despite the Council of Nicaea in 325, was in control of several Eastern sees until the Council of Constantinople, 381, under Theodosios I. Anastasios seems to use the term in its religious sense, whereas **Coll. b** uses it as a synonym for "Arab": cf. Appendix 21, given in Comment (3) on Qu. 101.

hundred^a years!” On hearing these things the heretics retired put to shame.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 117 and also in **Coll. d** (Qu. 53, which combines the previous Qu. and this one); omitted in **Coll. c**.

(2) For **Coll. b**, cf. previous Qu. with Comment (2).

(3) In the *QQ ad Antiochum*, the text of Qu. 44 (PG 28, 625A-C) clearly bears some relationship to the Anastasian text.

Question 70

QUESTION Why is it that Satan has not created so many heresies and schisms in any other faith, but only in that of the Christians?

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ANSWER I. The reason is that the faiths of the unfaithful are all dear to the devil, and there is no reason for him to wage war on them, but only on the faith of Christ, as it is opposed to him, frequently makes war against him, and makes him ineffective.^b

2. It is possible to learn that this is true as follows. Before Christ's dwelling here, there was no other nation on earth that was truly God-worshipping except for that of Israel, and Satan never divided any other nation except that one; so the tribes were divided, and their kingdom, and they often made war against one another, and they acquired many faiths and heresies. And would that they had quarrelled only about God in

^a According to the Alexandrian era (probably that used by Anastasios) Christ was born in 5500, so the year 6200 is being referred to, viz. 708 A.D. To judge by his other writings Anastasios was born about 630 A.D., and composed *Homilia III de creatione hominis* around the year 700 A.D. (Binggeli, *Récits*, pp. 349, 362).

^b In the *Narrationes* one finds this same notion (that all other religions are dear to Satan) in the story about the conversation with demons mentioned above (Qu. 41, Comment [3], **Coll. b**, Qu. 20, §8, p. 151), cf. Nau LIII, Binggeli, II, 20 lines 35-39; there is also a strong affirmation along these lines in the *Hexaemeron* XI, §11: "I say that only Christ's Church, the Church of Christians, is an enemy and is fighting against the serpent. All the rest in the world – the other religions and faiths of Gentiles, Jews, and heathens – are friends, comrades, spouses, and family of the diabolical serpent" (quoted by S.N. Sakkos, p. 153; Latin version PG 89, 1033B-C).

their heresies and schisms! But they also did so about idols, as one may read in the Books of the Kings^a and in the Prophets. That is why Jeremiah said that, *according to the number of their cities were their gods* (Jer 2: 28; 11: 13), and so also the heresies of their foolish religion and their schisms.

3. So in the same way as now, then also while each irreligious nation had one faith, as for the God-worshipping nation of Israel, Satan split it into thousands of faiths.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 118, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 54, which includes the following question, Qu. 71), but not in **Coll. c**.

(2) Although this question is not in **Coll. b**, another question on church history does figure there and is worth including here:

Coll. b, Qu. 42 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 22]

QUESTION For what reason do many signs and wonders not occur among us today, as used to occur among earlier generations?

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ANSWER 1. It is very obvious that *because wickedness is multiplied* (as the Lord says) *the love of many has grown cold* (Mt 24: 12), and with it all good things. Nevertheless, as we learn from the divine Scriptures, signs occur for the sake of the unbelievers, and not for the sake of the believers; so when the Jews wanted to see signs from Christ, listen to what he says to them: *O evil and adulterous generation, unless you see signs and wonders, you do not believe!* (Mt 12: 39; 16: 4; Lk 11: 29; Jn 4: 48). Along with them, when Thomas sought to see this, I mean the imprint of the nails and of the side (cf. Jn 20: 25), the Lord rebuked him saying, *Is it because you have seen me that you have believed? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed* (Jn 20: 29), that is to say ourselves, who have not seen Christ in the flesh, nor witness now signs and wonders.

2. Further, very often some are condemned more severely because of those very signs that have come about: seeing them, they neither believed nor were baptized, but carried on in their evil. Tell me, how was Pharaoh helped by so varied and so numerous signs by Moses? What did Israel gain, though it saw the signs in Egypt, and in the sea, and in the desert, and on Sinai, and in the pillar of fire, and in the gloom and fire and storm-wind and trumpet blasts? After all these, did Israel not construct at once the

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^a 3 Kings 12: 26-30.

calf and worship it? Similarly, what did that foolish people gain, having seen Christ raising the dead to life, cleansing lepers, and performing all kinds of healing? Did it not call him a sorcerer [φάρμακόν], *one who casts out demons through Beelzebul* (Mt 9: 34; 12: 24; Mk 3: 22; Lk 11: 15)? Therefore they condemned him to death, crucifying him with thieves as an evil-doer.

3. And to draw everything together in a final remark, let me say, what good did it do and what conversion did it bring to this Arian^a nation to have been the witness of cures and signs and wonders that have taken place in many different churches belonging to us? They were not helped but rather they were condemned more severely. And making this perfectly plain the Lord said about the Jews, *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin* (Jn 15: 22), so that signs come about for the greater condemnation of many.

(3) Among the *QQ ad Antiochum* a similar question appears (Qu. 43 [PG 28, 625A]), but with many textual differences.

Question 71

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QUESTION Why did God permit Satan to wage any war at all against humans, and did not annihilate him?

ANSWER If there were no enemy to be seen, neither would the tried soldiers and friends of the Emperor appear; and if there were no battles and struggles, neither would there be victories, nor would crowns and rewards be granted.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 119, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 54, which includes both this and the previous Qu.), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) Similar question and answer in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 11 (PG 28, 604C-D).

Question 72

QUESTION From where do dreams come, and why do they often turn out true?

ANSWER I. Solomon has said, *Dreams excite fools* (Sirach 34 [31]: 1), and that is why we urge no one to believe or accept them

^a Clearly a reference to the Arabs: cf. Qu. 101, Comment (3).

lest demons take the opportunity from there to deceive and lead us astray, as has happened to some. However dreams are often due to the actions and preoccupations we have during the day. Again they are brought on by the demons, or are made up of the fantasies caused by one's digestion, or may come from God – for quite often the holy angels guide us or frighten us with dreams.

2. Again, as the soul is rational and gifted with intellect, it often foresees and forewarns a person of certain things, especially that soul that possesses the Holy Spirit. As God says, *I pour out my spirit upon all flesh* (that is faithful), *and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream with dreams* (Acts 2: 17 [Joel 2: 28]).

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3. So any dreams you see that lead you to compunction, and improvement, and conversion, and fear of God, these and only these you should cherish.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 120, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 55), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) Shorter version in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 99 (PG 28, 660A4-9).

Question 73

QUESTION How is it that we see some of the faithful who commit sins of the flesh and yet are beloved of God and blessed and saved from dangers?

ANSWER God's judgements are beyond our understanding and impossible to unravel,^a and because of this no one should judge a person before the day of the resurrection. It may happen that some people are thought to have committed some faults, but in secret they have been making great achievements before God: by us they are considered to be sinners, but they are just before God; again there are others who are judged worthy of kindness because of the prayers of their parents, as happened with Solomon thanks to David.^b And there are yet others who

^a Cf. Rom 11: 33.

^b Cf. 3 Kings 11: 13.

at present are wicked, but who are due to repent thoroughly at a later date, so they are already dear to God as if they were just, and they are foreknown by Him, as was Paul.

COMMENTS

(1) Adapted to form Qu. 10 in **Coll. 23** (= Qu. ed. 10, PG 89, 432A4-C3), and then included in **Coll. d** (Qu. 56); omitted in **Coll. c**.

(2) In **Coll. b** an additional Qu. (Qu. 42) deals with the theme of not passing judgement and has been given above: see Qu. 10, Comment (3), pp. 66-73.

Question 74

126

QUESTION As the Apostle says, *The unbelieving husband has been made holy*, if his wife is a believer, just like *the unbelieving wife* (I Cor 7: 14) if her husband is a believer; is it possible for a Christian to take to wife an unbeliever or a pagan?

ANSWER The divine Apostle was not talking of unmarried persons, but of those who were already linked in wedlock, and perhaps even of those who already had children, before one of the two received the faith. The rule he lays down is that when one of the pair is baptized, but the other wishes neither baptism nor separation, that partner should not be obliged, nor should the one who has received the faith expel the other. For after baptism, just as *he who sets up relations with a prostitute becomes one body with her* (I Cor 6: 16), so also he who sets up relations with a woman who does not have the faith.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**. Qu. ed. 121, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 57), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

Question 75

QUESTION Does someone who runs away at a time of persecution commit a sin or not?

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ANSWER The Lord said, *When they drive you from this city, run away to another* (Mt 10: 23). Thus if the persecution threat-

ens to destroy one's life [lit. the destruction of the soul], each has the right to do what one tests oneself capable of doing; but if the persecution is just about bodily penalties, we ought to support them for Christ's sake.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 122, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 59), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

Question 76

QUESTION As we see some women who go astray while they are also slaves in captivity, what is one to say about them?

ANSWER 1. The women who go astray for the sake of pleasure and wantonness fall under a greater condemnation, whereas those who do so because of want and necessity under a lesser, just as in the case of thieves, where the one who steals food out of hunger commits a more venial sin than does one who is not in want and robs.

2. But in the case of each sin, many differences are to be borne in mind; the women who adorn and paint themselves in their own lands would deserve a different pardon from those who deck themselves in gold and show no shame while living in the middle of the slavery and in the presence of their own sisters loaded with chains.

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3. Similarly any other sin and profligacy and luxury that we commit while living in the midst of captivity is more grievous than the irregularities of those who fall into sin while living at ease.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 123, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 58), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) On the subject of Christian women subjected to the Arabs, cf. *Narrationes*, Binggeli II 21 [CPG 7758, C 12], and more in general on the Arab domination Nau XLI, Binggeli II 8 (lines 8-12), II 9; moreover cf. QQ 87, 101, 102.

(3) The Arab presence is notably less important in the *QQ ad Antiochum*.

VARIED PROBLEMS

Question 77

QUESTION How many sorts of corporeal [σωματικοί = physical, as distinct from spiritual] adultery [μοιχεῖται] are there?

ANSWER TWO: on the one hand, if an unmarried person sins with one who is married, there is an adultery, and again a married man is an adulterer, no matter with whom he fornicates, because he has adulterated the bed of his own wife; but if a single man sins with a woman that has no husband, there is fornication [πορνεία] but not adultery [μοιχεία]. On the other hand, the man who bears the marriage yoke, if he sins with a married woman, commits two adulteries.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 124, but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**, nor (exceptionally) in **Coll. d.**

(2) A shorter version of this question in *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 95 (PG 28, 656C5-9).

Question 78

QUESTION What is the meaning of Paul's statement, *The sins of some people are conspicuous and precede them to judgement, while the sins of others follow them there* (1 Tim 5: 24)?

ANSWER 1. This is to be understood in the first place of the heresiarchs. The sins they committed while still in this life

have overtaken them in the next life; and as they have sown among others and taught a blasphemous faith, they have following in their train after death the sins and blasphemies of the souls that have been harmed and destroyed by their wicked teaching.

2. However not only in the case of heresiarchs, but in that of all other sins the one who teaches them to others has the guilt following behind him. As can also be said indeed of good deeds; those who teach sound doctrines, those who establish hospitals and churches and orphanages, those who bequeath their possessions and incomes to such foundations, all these possess after death good <liturgical> commemorations (*mne-mosyna*) and their rewards following after them. Surely it would not be just of God that evil deeds should follow behind an evil person and good deeds not equally follow behind a good one. However, glory to the One who alone can grasp His own judgements.

COMMENTS

(1) Although this Qu. appears in **Coll. d** (Qu. 60), it is the only authentic Qu. missing, as such, in all the other collections, and does not appear in the *QQ ad Antiochum*.

(2) However, as D. Sieswerda has pointed out,^a the author of **Coll. 23** used the opening quotation from this question (cf. PG 89, 372C11-14) and some of the thoughts in the answer, along with Qu. 52 to formulate his Qu. 6 (= Qu. ed. 6).

Question 79

QUESTION As God said to the snake, *Somebody human will observe* [τηρήσει] *your head* (i.e. the origin of every evil temptation), *but you* (i.e. the wicked one) *will observe the heel of that person* (Gen 3: 15)^b (meaning, in my opinion, the final moments of that person's life), how does Satan know what are the final moments of somebody? For we have seen many persons who passed almost the whole of their lives in a befitting way, but

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^a D.T. Sieswerda, *Pseudo-Anastasios*, p. 110.

^b In the *Hexaemeron* a very different interpretation is given of this passage: cf. XI, §12 (Kuehn & Baggarly, pp. 420-421).

who fell away at the very end of their lives, one of whom was indeed that famous Julian,^a the wretched apostate.

ANSWER 1. Some people tell old wives' tales and say that the devil, because he dwells in the air, can overhear God's decisions about human beings. But that is impossible because God does not use a voice that resounds, but does everything with His voiceless and unspeakable will.

2. So my opinion is that Satan, being a light incorporeal spirit, can understand and gauge much more accurately than with any human medical science what are the powers and energies, the increases and diminutions of the life-giving force of the body through the condition of the blood. From that he is able by guess work [στοχαστικῶς], but not with full accuracy, to estimate a person's end.^b

3. The same may be said about soothsayers and ventriloquists. The devils are light spirits; they can see who has robbed whom,^c and where the thief has put the stolen goods; they can announce all this, just as quite often, having seen heavy rainfall in the area of the Upper Nile [τῇ Ἰνδικῇ χώρᾳ, *lit.* the Indian land], they tell some Egyptian people in advance that the Nile's rising will be high.^d But if somebody questions these people about the exact number of cubits and inches of the rise, they have problems about giving an answer, and are convicted of being completely ignorant.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 125, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 61), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) Some lines (§§2-3) are used in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 20 = Qu. ed. 20, cf. PG 89B2-C5).^e

^a Emperor Julian, 361-363 A.D., but the suggestion that it was only at the end of his life that he fell away is unusual.

^b Cf. Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, cc. 31-32 (ed. G. J. M. Bartelink [SC 400], pp. 220-224).

^c Cf. Athanasius, loc. cit., c. 31. 4 (p. 222), with a different interpretation.

^d Cf. Athanasius, loc. cit., c. 32. 1 (p. 222).

^e D. T. Sieswerda, *Pseudo-Anastasios*, pp. 209, 214.

(3) The question of the devil's foreknowledge of deaths appears in the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 100 (PG 28, 660A10-B12) but in a different form.

(4) The debt to the *vita Antonii* (cf. notes) may only be slight as such knowledge was commonplace.

Question 80

QUESTION Some people want to say that Satan fell away because of his not paying homage to Adam.^a

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ANSWER 1. Such silly [μᾶταιοι] myths belong to the pagans [Ελλήνων] and Arabs,^b because from the Prophets, and especially from the great Ezekiel,^c one can learn that it was because of pride that Satan was cast away from God, before Adam had come into being.

2. When God was bringing into being this visible creation the devil thought that God would place him to be its emperor. So when he saw that God had made Adam and *set him over the works of His hands*, and *subjected all things under his feet* (Ps 8: 7), then indeed he took up arms against Adam and deceived him.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**. Qu. ed. 126, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 62), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) Although a similar Qu. appears in *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 10 (PG 28, 604C1-9), in place of the mention of pagans and Arabs one finds simply "the foolish" [ἄφρόνων].

(3) The answer is remarkable, partly because of its apparent reference to the *Koran*, and partly because in the *Hodegos* Anastasios seems to refer to himself (ὡς φησί τις τῶν διδασκάλων) and quotes the words. "the devil thought that God would place him to be its emperor": cf. *Viae Dux* IV, 23-27, 37-38 (CCSG 8, p. 83); in the first of the *Narrationes* (Nau I; Binggeli I 1 lines 11-12 [p. 171]) there is mention of the adoration by the angels offered to human nature (in Christ), as also appears in Qu. 4 §2 above.

^a The same idea is found in the hymns of Romanos, cf. *Hymnus* XLIII 23 (ed. J. Grosdidier de Matons [SC 128], Paris, 1967, p. 528, note 1).

^b Cf. *Koran* Sourate (al-Baqarah) 2, 34; also Sidney H. Griffith, "Anastasios of Sinai, the *Hodegos* and the Muslims", *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 32, 1987, pp. 346-347; Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology*, Amsterdam, 1988, pp. 11-13.

^c Cf. Ezek 28: 2-10, 12-19; Isa 14: 12-14.

Question 81

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QUESTION You said in previous <answers>, in your physiological explanation of the elements, that frequently it is because of some physical interconnection and due to the humours of the body that some women come to be childless, others are fertile with many children and yet others with few, but you did not specify the manner of this causality.

ANSWER I. Anybody who wishes to explain these and similar problems in detail is obliged to have recourse to physiological material concerning medical matters and copulation, subjects which are not at all suitable for public hearing in church.^a However I shall try to clarify the point in question if in a somewhat veiled fashion [ἀμυδρῶς].

2. In many places of Holy Scripture we find the human flesh referred to with the word “earth”.^b Now as earth which has been moderately watered is fruitful, and earth which is <much> watered is barren, the same often happens with the female womb and the male seed. Women who have been debauched by licentiousness and much copulation reject the seed, as tends to happen among professional prostitutes; it is very difficult for them to conceive.

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3. On account of that in different areas some people, who are rich and live in plenty, desire to have children, but do not, whereas the poor people are often very fertile. The physical part [ἡ φύσις], which because of want has grown thirsty and dry, like parched earth, at once absorbs the moisture of the seed that falls on it, as happens also to those destitute and impoverished people among us, the desert-wandering Arabs, who barely have enough bread, but who have a superabundance of children. In addition, as those who are particularly well trained in medical matters tell us,^c when the mother’s milk is of a bad humoured composition it can often destroy the child.

^a A significant indication that at least some of the *erotapokriseis* were read out in church.

^b Cf. Gen 2: 7; Sirach 17: 1, 32.

^c The source for this opinion has not been identified.

4. However if you take the opponent's role and say to me,^a "What is this? Can human fertility and sterility, or life or death, occur outside God?", I will say to you in my turn that all that happens physically because of created things, and the elements, and the climate, and the humours, and certain combinations, and the waters, and the milk, are not being said to occur without God. It is from Him and because of His wish and foreknowledge that from the beginning all His creatures have their essential, physical powers [ἐνεργείας]. Indeed tell me, how is it that the basilisk [= Egyptian cobra] has the power to destroy, and the viper its deadly poison, or another little animal its power to cure what is deadly? How is it that some plants are deadly, while others serve as cathartics, harmless and able to cure?

5. As a result some persons, who had researched these and similar cases with care and guidance from God, when on one occasion they saw that one of the women consulting them had suckled one, two, and even three children, and had buried them all young, counselled her not to nurture any more that might be born to her. However, no matter what happens, it is best to say, *How magnified were your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all* (Ps 103: 24).

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6. Nevertheless I shall present another substantial and reliable account, in addition to what has been said so far, capable of convincing the most critical listener that it is by means of the elements (that are His very own) that God arranged to manage and bring to life, and even to bring to perfection our body; indeed, not only the body, but all that we are with the movements and activities of the incorporeal soul. Consider that at the start of the day, as it is the bile that comes into action at once very early, we humans are bad-humoured and more quick-tempered in the mornings. Then after we have eaten and partaken of a moderate quantity of wine, we find ourselves better disposed and more kindly of soul. Or again, if we have done a lot of work or made a long journey, we at once find ourselves spiritually

^a A very similar turn of phrase ("If my opponent [ὁ δὲ ἐναντίας] says to me ...") occurs in the *Homiliae* (*Capita adversus monotheletas* VI, 3 line 86, ed. K.-H. Uthemann [CCSG 12], p. 112).

tired out and exhausted. Again, at times, during the night, quiet [ἡσυχία] from noises restores the mind to peace and equilibrium; but at other times, if there are noises or burning heat overtakes the body, our incorporeal mind is also perturbed and agitated. And surely, while the body is childish and immature, our minds also are childish, immature and foolish, almost as incapable of solid judgement as the brute beasts. But with the limbs making progress and growing in successive stages [κατὰ πρόσβασιν],^a the mind gradually grows with them and is enlightened.

7. Clearly if this incorporeal and invisible power [δύναμις] of our souls and minds is ruled and influenced by the combination between the elements and the body, and if at God's bidding it depends upon that, and is dominated by it, then believe me without any further hesitation when you hear that both the birth and growth of the material body, its formation and dissolution, are brought about, with God's foreknowledge, under the governing rule of the elements. Without any doubt the plants which lack souls and sense organs regularly correspond to the sequence of elements and climate. That is why one country never propagates palm trees, while another produces no olive groves, yet a third is barren as far as vines are concerned, and a fourth has no acorn crop.

8. That is why the most accurate of the world's geographers insist that Paradise lies in the easternmost part of the world's surface, serving as its altar of sacrifice, for as Scripture says: *God planted a paradise [= an orchard] in Eden towards the east* (Gen 2: 8). So it is that in the land of the Indians, which is the nearest to it, nearly all the fruits have the most fragrant aromas, because with the air current of the winds the sweet scent of the most fragrant plants in paradise are carried and communicated to them, after the fashion of palm trees which are close to one another; they communicate between themselves by the winds seed producing flowers from the male plants.

9. Now any sweet scent, and especially that which comes from Indian perfumes, even when prepared without any liquid

^a This expression is also found in Qu. 28, §20.

base, like oil or something similar, is healthy and invigorating for the human body, just as a bad smell on the other hand is noxious. That is why one of the learned experts^a was wont to say that if he could reach a dying man before he had lost consciousness, he would be able to keep him clear in mind for at least half an hour, with a certain confection of scents, so that he would be able to put his affairs in order.

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COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 127, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 63), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c.**

(2) Among the *QQ ad Antiochum* a short question (Qu. 47) deals with the position of Paradise (see §8) in similar terms (PG 28, 628B-C).

(3) This Qu. takes up themes that have appeared in other QQ: cf. 22 §§6-7; 27 §1; 28 §§8, 9, 13, 17, however there may have been a separate treatise, now lost, dealing with anthropology (cf. Qu. 27 §1).

Question 82

QUESTION What is the *talent* which the Lord says He will take from the wicked servant at the final day [ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ] and give to him who had worked well with the five^b talents?

ANSWER I. Some say that it is the Holy Spirit, which he had received in baptism;^c to whom I object that the one who received five talents already had himself received the Holy Spirit, and he had no need of a second Holy Spirit.

2. Therefore we learn from this that very often God provides charismata of healing, and even some of the teachings from the divinely inspired Scriptures, to those unworthy of them, or even to those of another faith, in order that they may come to <a life of> virtue, out of respect for the one who made the gift. However some persons, not realizing this

^a Not identified so far, but cf. Qu. 26, §4.

^b Cf. Mt 25: 14-30, especially v. 28, where account should be taken of the variant reading ("five talents" instead of "ten talents") given by the fifth-century Codex Bezae (Cambridge University Library, Nn. II 41).

^c Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Ioannem* X, 2 (ed. P.E. Pusey, vol. 2, p. 549, lines 7-12; PG 74, 349C-D).

because they were wicked, considered themselves to be saints and to have received the charisma for that reason. So being both bloated and blinded^a they are deprived of it in the next life and depart into hell.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 128, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 64), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(2) The same question appears in **Coll. 88** as Qu. 81, but there consists only of the two quotations that make up the florilegium added to Qu. ed. 128 (cf. PG 89, 781A-C); in this case **Coll. d** (Qu. 64) does not give the version found in **Coll. 88** but instead copies the authentic answer.

Question 83

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QUESTION What is the *mammon of iniquity* (Lk 16: 9) about which the Lord speaks?

ANSWER It is not true, as some people think, that it is with wealth gathered by unjust means^b that the Lord encourages us to *make friends* (of the poor), *so that they may receive us* – there – *into the eternal dwellings* (Lk 16: 9). Instead He used the term *mammon of iniquity* to designate all the wealth we may have over and above our strict needs. So if someone possesses enough to be able to feed and save a person who is being destroyed by hunger, or debt, or imprisonment, and chooses not to save that person, it is quite certain that such a one will be justly condemned as a swindler and a murderer.^c

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 129, but not in **Coll. c**.

(2) In **Coll. b** a different version appears:

Coll. b, Qu. 26 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 15]

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QUESTION How are we to understand the statement of the Lord which says, *Make friends for yourselves from the mammon of iniquity, so that when you go missing, they will receive you into the eternal tabernacles* (Lk 16: 9)?

^a There is a word-play in the Greek: τυφωθέντες – τυφλωθέντες.

^b Cf. Qu. 44.

^c Cf. Mt 25: 31-46.

ANSWER 1. The Lord did not say these things giving permission nor giving orders for you to accumulate money from injustice and to give alms out of it; but aware that the whole world is involved in injustice and that almost all the wealth of those who are rich and in positions of government comes from injustice – usury, confiscations, enforced gifts, robberies. That is why he gave utterance to such a saying, so that one might choose the lesser evil by comparison.

2. It is a beautiful act and pleasing to God that one should give alms from one's just and sinless labours and pains; it was from these that those around Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Job did so, viz. from tillage, vineyards, cattle, just commerce, hired labour, skilled farming and similar devices. However if it appears that a certain wealth has come to us through some injustice, it is better that what has been accumulated from evil sources be distributed for good purposes, and not that what has come from evil sources should go once more into evil practices, and luxury, and fornication, and drunkenness, and profligacy, and houses with golden ceilings and silken hangings, and all the other deceit of life.

(3) This question was taken over and expanded (with both more text and a florilegia of fourteen quotations) in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 12 = Qu. ed. 12); this passed into **Coll. d** (Qu. 65).

(4) Cf. Qu. 44 above, and also *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 87 (PG 28, 649D-652A).

Question 84

QUESTION Which are the sins committed consciously [ἐν γνώσει], and which are those committed unconsciously [ἐν ἄγνοια], and which, when one commits them, are the more grievous?

ANSWER 1. The sins committed consciously are those where your very own conscience is condemning you for doing something evil, whereas those committed unconsciously are those where you think you are acting well, but your acts are wicked.

2. It is advisable to be aware that many of the sins committed unconsciously deserve an immeasurably greater condemnation than others committed consciously. All the heresies are

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convinced that they are the true faith, and the pagans [Ἕλληνες] in punishing the martyrs thought that they were acting well, and those who now burn churches think that this is a sacrifice to God, and those who crucified Christ *did not know what they were doing* (Lk 23: 34) and Herod because of his oath thought he was doing good in assassinating John, and the sister of Moses who became a leper, she thought she was acting according to the Law, when she upbraided Moses.^a

3. It is necessary to be informed of this so that we will not think that we will not be called to account for the sins committed unconsciously.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 130, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 66), but not in **Coll. c.**

(2) Although this question is not included in most copies of **Coll. b** another, somewhat related, question has been added there (Qu. 38) by the Athos manuscript, *Philotheou* 52, and the same question is also found in at least one manuscript of **Coll. d** (*Parisinus Coislin* 116) as an additional question.^b A paraphrase of this question comes in *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 72 (PG 28, 640C1-644C7), and there is a very similar text in Ps.-Athanasius, *De communi essentia* 49 (PG 28, 73-77). However, note should be taken of a further treatment of this question in **Coll. 88** where Qu. 65 asks “How is it that every blasphemy is forgiven to humans, but that of the Spirit is not forgiven?” and the question is answered by a quotation from Chrysostom, *Hom. in Matth.* 41, 3 (PG 57, 449[13]-450[5]) and another quotation from Basil: this question appears in **Coll. a** as Qu. ed. 147 (PG 89, 801 A10-C6).

Coll. b. Qu. 38 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 19]

QUESTION How are we to understand the saying of the Lord, *Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven to men...and whoever says anything against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever says anything against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in the present time nor in the future age* (Mt 12: 31-32, but cf. Mk 3: 28; Lk 12: 10) ?

^a Cf. Num 12: 1-4, 11.

^b In fact this manuscript of **Coll. d** gives two versions: that made for **Coll. 88** (but with a longer quotation from Chrysostom and an acknowledgement of him as the author) and, following it (but with Anastasios as the author), the version made for **Coll. b.**

ANSWER 1. In these sayings the Lord is not expounding a general teaching but is responding to the two opinions that the Jews expressed about him: for when he cured the blind and dumb demoniac (cf. Mt 12: 22), the crowd was split into two. Some said, *This is the anointed one (the 'christ'), the son of David* (Mt 12: 23), i.e. a prophet; but the Pharisees were saying, *This man expels demons only by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons* (Mt 12: 24), honouring, and attributing to, Satan the activity of the Spirit.

2. Therefore to those who thought of him as a prophet and who held him to be truly *the Son of Man*, the Lord gave pardon saying, *Whoever says anything against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him* (Mt 12: 31-32). Seeing him as a man they were not yet able to think of him as true God. Do not be surprised at this: for also in the case of the disciples around Cleophas (cf. Lk 24: 18-19), they said he was a prophet; similarly that blessed Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4: 19), and others who in the beginning believed in him. But to those of the Pharisees who attributed the grace of the Holy Spirit to Satan, to them he said, *it will not be forgiven, neither in the present time nor in the future age* (Mt 12: 31-32). He recognized that they had not repented, since many others who uttered blasphemies under persecution and denied the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and who offered sacrifices to idols, and out of fear of torture trampled on the revered cross and holy baptism and the undefiled body and blood of Christ, and anathematized the faith, these reverted and lamented and made a worthy repentance, and were judged worthy of the kingdom of heaven, like Peter who having made his denial and wept over it (cf. Mt 26: 75; Lk 22: 62), was shown forth as the holder of the keys to heaven (cf. Jn 21: 17; Mt 16: 19).

3. Those who do not interpret the above-mentioned sayings of Christ in this way fall into many strange theories and contradictions. Now listen intelligently: if *every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven to men*, then the one who says to his brother, "*You fool!*" is not *liable to the hell of fire*, as you, O Christ, have said (Mt 5: 22). If *every sin is forgiven*, then those who do not give any alms will not depart into *the fire prepared for the devil* (Mt 25: 41); if *every sin will be forgiven to men*, then consequently Paul is lying when he says, *Do not be led astray! Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor masturbators, nor sodomites, nor the covetous, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor mockers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Cor 6: 9-10).

4. Again, if anyone who says anything against you, the Son, O Lord, *it will be forgiven him*, how did you say, *The person who*

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denies me, I will deny him (Mt 10: 33)? How did you exhort saying, *The person who does not honour the son does not honour the father* (Jn 5: 23)? All the heresies from the beginning of time, those from your arrival on earth, were insulting to you and they blasphemed against you the Son: and do you tell me, *Whoever says anything against the Son, it will be forgiven him*? Will it be forgiven to Simon Magus, who said, “The one who was born from Mary is not the Christ [the anointed one], but I am the Christ” (cf. Acts 8: 9-24)? Will it be forgiven to Arius, who said, “The Son of God is something created, like the rest of created things, and he was not engendered from God”? Will it be forgiven to accursed Nestorius, who blasphemed against the Son and said, “Do not boast, Mary, for you did not give birth to God, but to a man”?

5. If all of these are to be forgiven, O Master, people who blasphemed against you, then why did the holy Councils of the Fathers condemn them with such terrifying excommunications and anathemas? If we are to understand the words of the Lord in a cut and dried way, without any examination, then all the heresies are irreproachable, with the sole exception of that of Macedonius, the Spirit-fighter, who blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, using the names “creature” and “artefact” for Him.

6. Indeed many silly people who did not understand the purpose of the Lord with regard to the aforementioned sayings, fell into godless heresies, in this fashion: *Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven to men*. When the demented Origen heard this, and then Eusebius from Palestine, they began to spread the accursed teaching that there would be a winding-up (*apokatastasis*) of hell and that everyone, and Satan himself, after <the end of> hell would be judged worthy of the kingdom of heaven.^a

7. Next let us consider the consequences of the Lord's saying, *Whoever says anything against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him* (Mt 12: 31-32). Again when the cursed Arius heard this, he split the Son away from the Father, arguing that the Son was lesser, and not only lesser than the Father, but also than the Holy Spirit. Other fellow lunatics when they heard, *Whoever says anything against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him*, they went astray saying, “All those who blaspheme against the flesh of the Lord, will find forgiveness; only those who criticize his divinity will be condemned.” Again when Navatos [Novatian] heard, *Whoever says anything against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in the present time nor in the future*, he went out of his

^a Cf. Qu. 94 below.

mind saying, "Those who denied the faith during a persecution can as a consequence have no forgiveness or repentance, neither in the present time nor in the future."

8. Therefore, as was said at the beginning of this reply, the Lord pronounced these sayings in answer to the two opinions held by the Jews: *every sin and blasphemy* would be forgiven to the Jews, if they had faith in him; but should they persist in their sin, attributing to Beelzebul the working of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 12: 24), *it would not be forgiven them, neither in the present time nor in the future* (Mt 12: 31-32)

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9. Because if it were in relation to the heretics who blaspheme against the flesh of the Lord that it was said, *Whoever says anything against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him*, then the arch-heretics are irreproachable, I mean Apollinarius, and Eunomius, and Sabellius, and Dioscorus, and Theodorus, and Eutyches and Gaianos; some of them said that the all-holy body of Christ was soul-less, others that it was mind-less, others that it was will-less, and others that it was power-less, and yet others that it had descended from heaven, others that it existed only in appearance and imagination. To sum up, thousands of heresies blasphemed against the flesh and the soul of the Lord, and it will not be forgiven them, neither in the present time nor in the future age, because they were irreligious and accursed, and they never repented.

(4) For the sake of completeness, an isolated question, *de blasphemia*, frequently attributed to Anastasios (CPG 7746 [5]) is worth including here, even if it does not appear in the Collections (although the *QQ ad Antiochum* does have in Qu. 15 [PG 28, 605B14-D2] a short answer on this subject); details about earlier editions (complete or partial) and of the manuscript evidence is given in the edition of the Greek text.

Isolated question [CCSG 59, Appendix 25]

QUESTION Whence comes it that the soul of a person frequently utters internally some evil thoughts and certain foul, impure and filthy words, unwillingly and not deliberately, and frequently even ungodly and blasphemous expressions against God Himself and the saints and the life-giving and awesome mysteries at the time of the liturgical celebration [συνάξεων] and of prayers and at the reception of the divine and life-giving sacrament, with the result that frequently persons out of discouragement and despair over such godless and ill-spoken expressions, thought of themselves that they were no longer Christians, as they were conceiving such things about God, while others frequently

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absented themselves from the reception of the holy sacraments, and yet others considered doing away with themselves or throwing themselves from cliffs because they were blaspheming against God and therefore had no hope of salvation, pondering on those words of the Lord, *To the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, forgiveness will not be given, neither in the present age nor in the future one* (Mt 12: 32; cf. Mk 3: 29; Lk 12: 10)? Whence does such a wicked thought frequently come, and in what way can one be liberated from it?

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ANSWER 1. Such an evil thought process occurs with many because of their pride, as God permits Satan to try them, so that being humiliated they may come to repentance, casting off their inflated self-esteem. But again to other pious and God-loving persons such an evil line of thought occurs out of diabolical envy. So it is that some holy and virtuous persons, and even experienced ascetics living their lives in the desert, occasionally fall into this evil thinking.

2. But the worst aspect of this warfare is that no one who is being tempted by it dares to explain anything about it to human ears, because one thinks that no one else in the world has ever had such foul and blasphemous thoughts, whereas even if someone had committed a murder or any other evil act, that person would have the courage to confess such an evil temptation to a neighbour. But when someone begins to turn this over in the mind, he or she at once believes that the earth will open its mouth or that fire will descend from heaven and destroy them. Indeed that is why some who are being tempted by such evil thinking, waste away under the mass of unspeakable and unutterable sorrow and discouragement, and they are altered wilting in flesh and appearance; and though they often imagine all possible ways and means, and every ascetic practice, like fasting and sleeping on the ground, they are not capable of getting free from such evil thinking, being all unaware that everyone who believes and is a thorough Christian is guiltless and not culpable because of such a temptation.

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3. How could it be possible for us both to reverence and to blaspheme the same God? For it is obvious that we do reverence Him, we praise Him, we call on Him, we speculate about Him theologically, we attend on Him, we recognize Him alone, we support suffering for His sake, we accept chastisement from our enemies^a out of

^a A IXth-cent. manuscript from St Sabbas monastery (*Hieros. S. Sabbas* 408) adds a marginal note here: "he calls 'enemies' the Ismaelites and Hagarenes [= Muslim Arabs] who oppress the Christians even up to the present time in Syria

love for Him, and for our faith in Him we suffer persecution, for His sake we deny ourselves homes, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and children (cf. Mt 19: 29; Mk 10: 29; Lk 18: 29), and we gladly give even our own flesh in martyrdom and torture on His behalf. How then is it possible for us to blaspheme and mock our God for whom *we die every day* (cf. 1 Cor 15: 31)? But this evil thinking is nothing but jealousy and spite of the devil who wants to raise obstacles and separate us from our God. Yet no one, as I said earlier, can reverence and blaspheme the self-same God. Neither the pagans [ἑλληγες] nor the devils who insinuate such blasphemy into the soul dare to blaspheme against Him.^a

4. If such a blasphemy were truly the product of a human being, surely we would have uttered the words with the mouth. But at present we prefer to be burned with fire rather than to utter any sort of blasphemy with our mouths. So understanding this properly and bearing in mind the cunning of the devil, let us by no means hold such an evil thinking as a definite choice [ψῆφον].^b

5. Also from the following one should be certain that such a temptation is an alien thing: with regard to our own evil passions and our own evil thoughts, those that we breed within us, such as adultery, fornication, gluttony, envy, hate, jealousy, avariciousness, back-biting, quarrelling, anger, and other similar things, it depends on us whether we practice these or not, and whether we turn them over in our minds or not. But in the case of this evil

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and Palestine and Phoenicia and Persia and Egypt and in the Holy Mountain of Sinai.”

^a The Paris manuscript, *Coislin*. 116, which is one of the main witnesses for **Coll. d** and which also happens to contain this question, adds at this point a reference to the acknowledgement by the demons, mentioned in the Gospels (Mk 1: 24; Lk 4: 34), of Christ’s divinity.

^b Here also *Coislin*. 116 makes an addition:

“But if the demon starts again to pronounce within us those hateful words, let us say to him, ‘May affliction come down on your head, and your blasphemy fall on your skull, wicked and unclean demon! For my part, *I reverence the Lord my God, and him alone I adore* (cf. Mt 4: 10; Lk 4: 8), and I shall never blaspheme against him. How is it possible for me to blaspheme and also pronounce the praise of the Lord my God? How can I insult him whom I praise and reverence night and day with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind? But that praise-giving is mine; while the blasphemy, you will see to be a shadow. You will be punished for your evil speaking. You are the one who speaks as an apostate against God.’ In this way, and not in any other, a person will be able to be freed from this trial, as one recognizes the trickery of the Evil One and despises it and eliminates it as belonging to the demon and not to the human person.”

There are similarities in this passage with Qu. 15 in the *QQ ad Antiochum* mentioned above.

process of blasphemous thought which tries us, as it is something alien and demonic, for that reason we are unable to prevent it. However in whatever is beyond our power, we are not culpable and guilty before God; we are asked to give account before God only of those evil passions and thoughts over which we have power and control, but certainly not of those we do not control, and which we have no power to prevent.

6. So for this evil and demonic thinking, no person who is made of flesh and blood can control and prevent it. Because the demon exists as a spiritual being without a body it communicates such utterances without being seen into the ears of our bodiless souls, though the latter do not want it. Then a person, not recognizing such a thought process and its character, but thinking that such ungodly utterances come from one's own soul, is disturbed and loses courage and is split asunder and feels alarm and becomes confused with the din and feverish, finding that personal conscience is as if it were burned out, and one despairs of one's own life and salvation.^a

7. And let no one think that we are writing and saying all this in order to mislead, or in jest, or by rote, or to console those under attack from this temptation; rather we have spoken as persons who will have to answer to God Himself for the exhortation given, and because we have been informed by holy men that this is the truth of the matter. Among them a story is also recounted-

^a A further addition is found here in *Coislin* 116:

For this reason some people have also very often taken up arms against such an evil thought with fasts, night vigils, sleeping on the floor, sack-cloth, and tears, and by consigning themselves to the desert, yet received no help but even come to a worse pass because this is not a thought process proper to themselves but a product of the demon. Frequently in the middle of these <practices>, while a person is fighting against such an evil thought and with bitter tears turning to God in prayer and confessing Him and kneeling to Him and groaning, the hateful demon is uttering within us those ungodly sayings against God at the very moment when we were praying to God against him. If such a way of thinking belonged to us, it would have been impossible for something so violently hated by us to persist, and for it to last so long in our soul, since everything that is thoroughly hated from the heart is certainly shortlived and obliterated. For that which the soul hates, it surely does not wish to consider and remember. Therefore, it is clear from all that has been said, whether anyone who is a convinced believer is free and detached and innocent of such a wicked line of thought. And it is necessary to establish to our full knowledge and satisfaction, that such a thought process is not ours but belongs to the demon; also that the devil suggests this, out of envy against us believers alone, because no pagan [Ἕλλην] is ever preoccupied with such a thought process. For Satan is not preoccupied in waging war against those unbelievers whom he has once overcome with ungodliness.

which comes from the early historians.^a One of the fathers of the Skete,^b being gravely troubled by this thought-process [λογισμός], gave an account of it to the most blessed Peter, the Archbishop of Alexandria who was also a martyr.^c The most blessed Peter replied to him in the following words:

Go away, my child! Pay attention to your other sins, but leave the responsibility for this thought-process and any guilt upon me; it is obvious that all those who believe whole-heartedly and reverence God are not responsible for such a thought-process; it is <due to> jealousy of the devil, his creation and his suggestion, because he wants to impede and distract us from the struggle against him and from the service to and attendance on God. To convince you by means of a story from one of the great fathers that such a mental figment [ἐπίνοια] is not due to human agency but to the wicked demon, listen to this saying-story [ἀπόθεγμα] which does much good to the soul.

8. Once when such an evil thought process was also afflicting me^d I gave an account of it to the servant of God and confessor of the faith, Paphnoutios. He encouraged me saying, 'When I was in the prison itself, and while with fire and tortures my body was being burnt and cut away for Christ's sake, the demon within was uttering blasphemies against God. Then rebuking him with anger I said,

"Oh most wicked one, creator of all evil, I have given my blood and my soul on behalf of Christ even unto death so that I may not deny and blaspheme Him, and are you uttering

^a This historian, identified in §9 as Philo, is unknown except for the references that Anastasios makes to him here and in the "Demonstration" (ἀπόδειξις) (on which see Qu. 10, Comment [3]) while introducing the story *de arca martyris*; G. Mercati has shown that this Philo is not the fourth-century Bishop of Carpasia (Cyprus), probably known to Anastasios of Sinai, nor of course Philo, the first-century Jewish philosopher and exegete (though Anastasios of Sinai does refer to him elsewhere, e.g. *Hodegos* XIII, 10, 19 and 85 [CCSG 8, pp. 252, 255]); cf. G. Mercati, "Un preteso scritto di san Pietro vescovo d'Alexandria", p. 435; also *Patrology*, pp. 336-7.

^b The famous Egyptian monastic settlement in the Wadi Natrun (cf. ODB, sv. *Skete*); in §9 the monk is identified as Pambo.

^c Peter I of Alexandria died in 311 as a martyr, and was venerated as a saint; however, at his death Pambo was still a child and could not have asked him for advice as recounted here; as Mercati remarks the whole story is "senza valore per la biografia di lui" (loc. cit., p. 430).

^d The best manuscript, *Hieros. S. Sabbas* 408, adds the scholion: "The saintly Peter also recounted these things to the monk from Skete to encourage him to have confidence", clearly to avoid the misapprehension that Anastasios might be speaking of himself.

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thoughts of blasphemy? If I am to blaspheme my God and Lord, how am I giving a martyr's witness and reverence to Him now by the shedding of blood? It is quite obvious that the beautiful confession and martyr's witness is mine, but that the blasphemy against God is yours, and will turn back against you!"

9. This is the story [διήγησις], which we have found recounted in the compilation of Philo^a the historian, told by the most blessed Peter to that ascetic, teaching us that it is not possible to be liberated from such an evil thought-process except by despising it and thinking nothing of it, as being something foreign and alien to the soul of anyone who is truly a Christian.^b

10. However the blessed Pambo also described to me^c that when he was being troubled once by such a demon and prayed to God, he heard a voice from above saying to him, 'Pambo, Pambo, do not get discouraged by anyone else's sin, but take care about your own actions and leave the blasphemies of the Evil One to him.'

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11. These are the things that I have briefly noted in reply to your requests, as for my children, so that you may know in what

^a Cf. note a (p. 209); however, both *Hieros. S. Sabbas* 408 and the eleventh-century Vatican *Angelicus gr.* 52 add this marginal scholion: "This Philo, who was mentioned above, was bishop of Carpathios [lege, Carpasia], the name of a cape in love-filled [a wordplay on κυπρίῳ] Cyprus towards the East, since that to the West is called Paphos, as the *Acts of the Apostles* makes plain: *Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia* (Acts 13: 13); that was an appointment by the most blessed Epiphanius, as he [Philo] was dearly beloved by him, and Epiphanius left him behind, when he went off to Rome to the Emperor Honorius, to represent him and take charge of any ecclesiastical matters that might occur." Mercati (loc. cit., p. 433 n. 1) notes that this scholion is drawing on chapter 49 of the legendary *vita* of St Epiphanius (PG 41, 85A-B).

^b Both the Coislin manuscript and a Vatican manuscript, *Barberinianus gr.* 522 (dated to the eleventh or twelfth century) add here: "the other passions and human sins frequently need time and a set moment [and day adds C], and some material things, and it is possible for someone to fight against them and prevent them; but this sort of thought-process invades the soul as swiftly as a lightning-flash or falling thunder-bolt or a blink of the eye before one can say a word, and it is not in our power to prevent it or close the mouth of the bodiless demon." However, in view of the scholion mentioned in the next note, this whole paragraph seems to have been misplaced, and should follow §10, or at least be read in parentheses; Mercati suggested placing the words "which we have found recounted in the compilation of Philo the historian" between brackets. Another possibility is that the words, "And he also said" [Καὶ εἶπε] have been omitted.

^c *Hieros. S. Sabbas* 408, adds in the margin the scholion: "This story is also due to the most holy Pope and Archbishop Peter, because Anastasios, who says and writes these things, was much more recent than they, being the hegoumenos of the Holy Mountain of Sinai."

way you can free yourselves from the Evil One. I greet you in the Lord, amen.

Question 85

QUESTION What is “chance”, and should a Christian talk about chance? 138

ANSWER Originally “chance” was an expression used by the pagans [Ἐλληνισιν], and “chance” means the government of the world without providence. However a Christian professes that it is God who rules and foresees everything; if he were to talk about chance, he would have fallen away from a Christian way of thinking, like the pagans [Ἐλλήγνες] with their foolish ways of thought.

COMMENTS

(1) Not included in most of the collections (**Coll. a**, **Coll. b**, **Coll. c**), and no parallel in the *QQ ad Antiocum*.

(2) **Coll. 23** (Qu. 19 = Qu. ed. 19) took over this text and expanded it, adding two quotations from the Cappadocians (PG 89. 513-517), and this was included in **Coll. d** (Qu. 67).

(3) The definition given here is also found in the so-called *Souda*, dated to around 1000 A.D. (cf. *Suidae Lexicon* nr. 1234 s.v. τύχη [ed. A. Adler, Leipzig, 1935, vol. 4, p. 613]), but its source is not known.

Question 86

QUESTION As God says in Scripture, *Rescue them who are led to death* (Prov 24: 11), what then? Is it good to save even thieves and murderers? 139

ANSWER No, I would not say that. Nobody is more kindly than God, and He says that blood should be shed in exchange for blood.^a However, if somebody is about to be led off to death because of faith, or debts, or because of a despot's fit of rage, or some other such cause, it is good to save that person. Indeed there are those who have liberated even those condemned to death, and arranged for them to repent in some monasteries, and they did well.

^a Cf. Gen 9: 6; Ex 21: 23-24; Num 35: 33.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 131, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 68), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

Question 87

QUESTION If I am subjected to slavery or prison, and I am not able, as and when I would wish, to take time in church or to fast and practise night-vigils, how can I be saved and gain the remission of sins?

ANSWER 1. Any slavery, imprisonment and state of wretchedness clearly has been brought into the world for the remission of your sins. Thus if you guard your faith, and give thanks to God for your slavery, and if you repeat to yourself in humility the reflection, "*Righteous you are, O Lord* (Ps 118: 137), in all that you have done to me, and I have suffered nothing appropriate to my sins," this humility and thankfulness will be counted for you as fasting and attending the liturgy. However, if someone loves God, one is able in any circumstances, wherever one may be, to remember God in one's heart.

2. Because it was revealed on one occasion by God to the abbot Anthony^a as he was in the desert, "There is a doctor in the town who is up to your level; he gives all his surplus money to the poor, and during the whole day he is chanting in his heart along with the angels the *Holy, holy, holy*."

COMMENTS

(1) Although the question is included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 132, the answer given is in fact the answer to the following question, Qu. 88, §§1-2; this error clearly distinguishes one branch of the manuscript tradition.

(2) In **Coll. d** (Qu. 69), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(3) One of several QQ dealing with life under Arab domination: cf. QQ 76, 101, 102.

^a Cf. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Antonius 24 (PG 65, 84B).

Question 88

QUESTION Suppose there is someone in a position of authority, who has many blessings from God and is engaged in business affairs [πράγμασι], someone who is unable to retire from life, who enjoys a wealthy table, a variety of foods, and bathing facilities: how is it possible for such a person to maintain a life without reproach in the middle of such things and to obtain the forgiveness of sins?

ANSWER 1. If it were the case that people such as this had not found favour with God in each generation, I mean persons who were in the world in the midst of wealth, marriage, power and enjoyment, then perhaps those who *concoct pretexts for sins* (Ps 140: 4) might be said to have some cause. But as it is, we see in Holy Scripture that nearly all those who gained God's friendship, I mean people like Abraham and those of his generation, and Joseph, and Job, and Moses, and David, and innumerable others, were all persons who pleased God while surrounded by wealth, worldly things and children.

2. In fact this is yet another of the Devil's ploys: he suggests to someone, "It is impossible for you to be saved if you do not withdraw from the world, practise solitude and retire to the desert." He has beguiled and misled many with similar considerations, so that they lived in the hope of retiring from the world in the distant future and with this thought took recklessly to sin, and as they were not able to retire he packed them off to eternal fire.

3. Tell me, was there ever someone more wicked than Manasses,^a who during fifty-five years forced all Israel to worship idols? And yet when he repented, he was welcomed by God on making his confession, since being then a prisoner he was incapable of winning God's favour with donations and almsgiving. In the case of that other notorious sinner, I mean Nabouchodonosor, as he was in possession of great wealth Daniel counselled him to save himself by almsgiving and said to him, *O King, let my counsel be*

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^a Cf. 2 Chr 33: 1-20.

acceptable to you; atone for your sins with alms and for your iniquities with compassionate deeds to the needy (Dan 4: 24 [27]).

4. What excuse will we have on the day of judgement, especially the present generation which has to see so many of our own brothers and co-religionists and off-spring in such necessity and straitened circumstances, living in deserted trackless wastes, amid hardships and hunger and thirst and nakedness and exhaustion and toil? It is true that Israel was once an enslaved population, but they were not condemned to the desert, but in cities and among other people.

5. However supposing that you lack money for them, I mean for these brothers of yours, and cannot share their sufferings financially, I have a word of advice for you which is valid for everyone and which can bring salvation to both rich and poor. What advice is this? Simply that when you sit down at your table and see the abundance of different dishes laid out before you, you sigh to yourself and criticize yourself, saying, "My God, make me, sinner that I am, blameless in respect of these your numerous blessings! How many of our brothers are longing even at this moment for a small morsel of bread! How many are there at this very moment in the desert who do not even have enough water to satisfy them! How many do not even dispose of shade, but are being scorched by the sun!" Similarly on the point of getting into bed, when you are going to sleep, turn over in your mind similar thoughts, and so also when you are in the bath-house, and in church, and in the market-place, constantly bewailing and criticizing yourself. I can assure you that anyone who uses these reflections to confess before God and to belittle oneself, will find a measure of grace with God.

6. As for those who say to themselves, "The reason why God has given me all this is so that I may eat and drink and enjoy myself, and had God wanted He would surely have given the same both to me and to the poor person, so that such a one might eat and drink, and find enjoyment," people who say such things have closed the gate of the Kingdom on themselves.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** partly (§§1-2) as the answer to the previous question, Qu. ed. 132, and partly as a separate question-and-answer, Qu. ed. 133 (§§3-6).

(2) Included in **Coll. d** (Qu. 70) as one question, but omitting §1; not included in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

(3) In **Coll. 23** (Qu. 15 = Qu. ed. 15) the compiler took §1 and expanded it with more quotations from Paul, but omitted the rest, adding instead a florilegium with long quotations from St Basil, John Climacus and the *Apostolic Constitutions* (PG 89, 468-476).

(4) In the *QQ ad Antiochum* a passage similar to §3 occurs in a question on alms-giving, Qu. 88 (PG 28, 65B-C).

(5) A similar theme in Qu. 47 above.

Question 89

QUESTION How is that in our own day we see many who are willing to gladly give themselves up to death for the sake of the orthodox faith, but when they come to the moment of death, the tyrannical rulers, either because of the intercession of certain persons or simply because they change their minds, decide to set them free? What is one to think of the cause of such a liberation? Is it due to God or to human intervention?

ANSWER The ways and judgements of God are multiple and varied, thanks to which some persons are liberated from such deaths. There are often some whom God redeems, perhaps because they happen to be teachers or in charge of the poor; in these cases He welcomed their good intention but set them free for the salvation of others. Again, there are others He redeems perhaps because the cause for which they offer their lives no longer deserves what they think it does. But it is also frequent for the devil to raise an obstacle, to prevent someone from gaining the crown. And so on, there are numerous other explanations, which it is not necessary to mention because some cannot understand them.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 134, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 71), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

Question 90

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QUESTION How can we discern the correction [παιδείαν] or the trial [πειρασμόν] that comes to us from God, and one that occurs because of the devil?

ANSWER 1. Very often it is not only because of God or the devil that we fall into dangers, trials and infirmities, but because of our own lack of judgement and carelessness, as happens to those who can see a stormy change of weather coming and nevertheless take their ship out of the harbour, or those others who fling themselves into danger.

2. However the trial from God that comes upon someone for that person's good never eradicates good hope from the soul, such for example as in the case of Job; so he could say to God. *I wait for you, until I come into being once more, and you set me a time when you will remember me* (Job 14: 14, 13).

3. On the other hand, the trials that (with God's permission) come on from the devil fill the soul with despondency, anger and hopelessness.

COMMENTS

(1) Omitted from **Coll. a**, **Coll. b** and **Coll. c**, but present in **Coll. d** (Qu. 72).

(2) A few words are borrowed from the question for the question of **Coll. 23** (Qu. 9 = Qu. ed. 9: cf. PG 89, 409C4-5);^a and a sentence from the answer is in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 18 = Qu. ed. 18: cf. PG 89, 501B5-10).^b

Question 91

QUESTION What is true humility, and how can we, with <the help of> God, achieve it?

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ANSWER 1. Humility is not, as some people think, to commit sins and consider oneself a sinner and worthy of hell; that is a consideration that any sinful person has, and perhaps even the demons – that is why they said to Christ, *You have come*

^a D.T. Sieswerda, *Pseudo-Anastasios*, p. 130.

^b D.T. Sieswerda, *Pseudo-Anastasios*, pp. 195-196.

here before time to destroy us (Mt 8: 29). By using the phrase “before time” they indicated that they are aware and are expecting that they will be condemned there to Gehenna. That is why Scripture says: *Do you believe that there is only one God? You do right, for even the demons believe and shudder* (Jas 2: 19).

2. Therefore, true humility is to do what is good, but to think of oneself as impure and unworthy of God, having as sole hope of salvation His kindness. As for the good we may do, we cannot justify ourselves before God, not even for this very air we breathe. Were we to offer Him all that we have, He would not be indebted to us for any repayments. For all things are His, and nobody who takes what is his own is obliged to repay those who have offered it to him. In consequence, *what shall we give in return to the Lord* (Ps 115: 3) for our birth itself, and then for all the other good things that He has granted us, who are unworthy of it: for children, for wealth, for frequent salvation from many dangers, for the blood He poured out on the earth^a on our behalf and also because of the sins we were later to commit once more, and for the kingdom of heaven in the next life, which He has promised us?

3. Therefore we who are so indebted and who have repaid nothing, how great is the humility and contrition of heart^b in which we should constantly live, feeling no haughtiness over anything, allowing ourselves to pass no judgements on others, reviling no one, being spiteful over nothing, loving all, having compassion for all, longing for the Christ! Let us long for our master even as some people long for the company of loose women! Very often a man, out of desire for a woman, will squander all his fortune just to get that foulness.

4. Our fear for God should be at least as great as the fear we have for wild animals or for dogs. Very often when some persons have been on their way to steal something, they heard the barking of the dogs around the place and at once they retreated, not out of fear of God but of the dogs. Therefore our fear should be of Him. Let us become inwardly like those who have been condemned and are being kept in gaol, they are al-

^a Cf. Mt 23: 35.

^b Cf. Dan 3: 39.

ways anxious, in an agony of mind, lamenting and asking when the interrogator will come, and *repay to each according to each one's deeds* (Rom 2: 6).^a The person who lives with this sort of preoccupation is on the way to true humility.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 135, but not in the other collections, except that a comparable version is found in **Coll. b**.

Coll. b, Qu. 14 [Greek text: CCSG 59, Appendix 7]

QUESTION What sort is true humility, the one by which a person is forgiven for sins?

ANSWER I. Some say that humility is this, to consider oneself a sinner. But I think that anyone who commits a sin considers himself a sinner, and one does not have pardon at once just from thinking that one is a sinner, since even the demons and the devil himself know that they are wicked and sinful; that is why, as they knew that on the day of judgement they would be destroyed in Gehenna, they called out to Christ, *What is there between us and you, Jesus, Son of God? You have come here before time to destroy us* (Mt 8: 29). By saying "before time" they indicated that at the time of the judgement Christ will destroy them.

2. Therefore true humility, which forgives sin, is when someone, who lives in accordance with God and does good works, considers oneself to be a sinner and *earth and ashes* (cf. Gen 18: 27) to quote Abraham, or *a worm and not human* (cf. Ps 21: 7), to quote what the prophet David said about himself, David who was *after God's heart* and who *performed the wishes of God* (cf. 1 Kings 13: 14; Ps 142: 10); and true humility is for someone, in all the good things that one does, never to think that one is doing good but to make confession to God, saying how much one is in His debt and that one has nothing to offer that will be in any way equivalent for all the good things that God has done for oneself. That is the true humility, the one that God loves above all human do-goodism, the humility about which David spoke: *a sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, a broken and humbled heart God will not bring to naught* (Ps 50: 19).

(2) In the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 93, there is a similar question, but the answer concentrates on not judging others (PG 28, 656A).

^a Cf. Ps 61: 13; Prov 24: 12.

Question 92

QUESTION What is meant by the phrase in Scripture, *Even if I bestow as food all my possessions, and give up my body for it to be burnt, but have no love, I gain nothing* (1 Cor 13: 3)? How can someone bestow all one's possessions for food without love? 146 147

ANSWER 1. There are some persons who appear to give many alms, but they are haters of their fellow men, calumniators, proud, unjust, resentful and envious. Thus, because of all these vices, their alms-giving becomes worthless.

2. Indeed in my opinion it was because of such vices that the lamps of the five foolish virgins were extinguished, as they lacked spiritual oil.^a

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 136, in **Coll. b**, (Qu. 28), and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 75), but not in **Coll. c**.

Question 93

QUESTION How are we to understand the apostolic [= Pauline] dictum that affirms, *If someone's work is burned, that one will suffer loss, but the person will be saved, even if only as through fire* (1 Cor 3: 15)? Some people have fantasized on the basis of this statement that hell will have an end.

ANSWER 1. If we were to say that hell has an end, we would be saying that all the New and Old Testaments are mendacious, and not only that, but also that the blessed Paul is tripping himself up and is at variance with himself. For if indeed he says that hell will have an end, how could he say, *Do not be misled! Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor those guilty of sexual self-abuse, nor slanderers, nor drunkards, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Cor 6: 9-10)? The Lord also says that sinners will proceed *into eternal hell* (Mt 25: 46). Now if the eternal fire has an end, it clearly follows that eternal life will also have an end. The force 148

^a Cf. Mt 25: 8.

of the “eternal” is the same for the just and for sinners, as the former are *for eternal life* and the latter *for eternal hell* (Mt 25: 46).

2. Again in a similar way the Lord says about those condemned to Gehenna, *Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched* (Mk 9: 48). Moreover both the parable about the rich man and Lazarus,^a and that about the ten virgins,^b make plain the never-ending nature of hell. So also the words spoken about Judas: *It were good for him had he not been born* (Mt 26: 24), suggest an eternal hell, because if he were to be punished for several years in hell and then later enter the kingdom of the heavens for all ages, it would not be better for him had he not been born. Again, how could Scripture say, *In death there is no one who makes mention of you* (God), *and in Hades who will acknowledge you* (Ps 6: 6)? The mention of God does not exist there, nor does his proclamation; it is obvious then that there will also never be its abolition.

3. As for the Apostle’s saying, *If someone’s work is burned, that one will suffer loss, but the person will be saved, even if only as through fire* (1 Cor 3: 15), this means that sin is destroyed there and will no longer exist, but the person who committed it will not be wiped out like the sin, but being indestructible is saved in the fire, i.e. persists and endures and is not destroyed in it.

4. However even if hell lasted a thousand years, as the heretics claim,^c what need is there to make trial of such horror when we cannot now stand our bodies being burnt even for a moment [πρὸς ῥοπήν]?

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. d** (Qu. 76).

(2) In **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 137 (PG 89, 789 C1-7) includes a fragment (§3) from this question, even if most of it draws on the following question (Qu. 94).

(3) In **Coll. 88** one question (Qu. 56) raises the same problem, but the answer is drawn from John Chrysostom.

(4) In the *QQ ad Antiochum*, Qu. 102 (PG 28, 666D-661A) has points in common with this Qu.

^a Cf. Lk 16: 19-31.

^b Cf. Mt 25: 1-13.

^c Cf. John of Damascus, *Expos. Fidei* 17, 35-36 (ed. Kotter, p. 44).

Question 94

QUESTION Is there a time-limit for the consummation of the world or not?

ANSWER God foreknows *all things before their beginning*.^a However the holy Fathers do say that when the number of the just fully equals the number of angels who fell, so that the upper world is full, then will the consummation come about; as Gregory^b cries out, "The upper world must be filled!"

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COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 137, in **Coll. b** (Qu. 35) and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 77), but not in **Coll. c.**

Question 95

QUESTION Some people have difficulty on hearing the apostolic [= Pauline] phrase which says with reference to the resurrection: *Then the Son Himself will also be subjected to the Father, who has put all things in subjection under Him* (1 Cor 15: 28).

ANSWER 1. A problem of this sort is typical of the Arians and Nestorians, who want to prove that God the Word is secondary and a slave and a created thing. So one should put them the question, "How will the Son be subjected to the Father at the resurrection, will it be as one who at present is not subjected, or as one already subjected?" And if they answer, "As one not subjected", the Apostle himself puts them to shame when he says that the Christ is *obedient*, and subjected to His own father, *to the point of death, even death on a cross* (Phil 2: 8).

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2. Now someone who is obedient to his own father unto death, how can he be still further subjected to Him at the resurrection? Surely *the body of Christ, which is the church* of those

^a Cf. Dan, Susanna 35a (Theodotion 42).

^b Cf. Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Orationes*, 38, 2 (ed. Cl. Moreschini & P. Galay [SC 358], p. 106). However, the idea that saved humankind will fill up the spaces in heaven left by the fallen angels is most clearly found in Augustine, *Enchiridion* 9: 29 (CCSL 48, 805-7).

saved, as Paul also bears witness,^a will be subjected to Him, worshipping the Father through the Christ and with the Christ at the resurrection. Then the Son will say to God his Father, “*Behold, here I am and the children that you have given me, my God* (Isa 8: 18).^b You said to me, to your son, ‘*Ask from me* (like a true son and one who shares my being [lit. is homoousios]) *and I will give you nations as your heritage and as your possession the ends of the earth, and you shall shepherd them* (Ps 2: 8-9) – in great power’.”

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 138, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 78), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c.**

Question 96

QUESTION What is meant by Christ’s saying, *If your right eye or your hand causes you scandal, cut them off and throw them away from you* (Mt 5: 29)?

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ANSWER 1. Our master and Lord himself said that all evil acts – murders, adulteries, fornication, and the other passions^c – all come out from the soul. What then, should we destroy ourselves and throw away from us our souls, as being the cause of scandal for us? God forbid!

2. Thus some people say that Christ is talking of friends and relatives: for we, the faithful, *we are members of one another* (Eph 4: 25). So then He says that if you have a friend or relative who is as close to you as your right eye or your hand, and if you realize that you are being harmed in your soul by that person, then cut such a one off from you.

3. However it seems to me that the Lord was saying that it is the passions of our limbs that we should cut off and throw away from us.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. b** (Qu. 29), but not in **Coll. c.**

^a Cf. Eph 1: 22-23; Col. 1: 24.

^b Cf. Jn 17: 6, 9, 24 (and cf. 6: 39).

^c Cf. Mt 15: 18-19; Mk 7: 20-23.

(2) In **Coll. 88** a question (Qu. 70) appears made up of a long collection of Biblical texts (plus a florilegium of four texts) aimed at showing that Christ is not referring here to members of the body, but metaphorically to friends and relatives (as in §2 above); this was included in **Coll. a** as Qu. 60 (PG 89, 637-645), and also in **Coll. d** as Qu. 79.

Question 97

QUESTION In what way are we to understand that, *If two or three of you agree about any request that you ask, it will be done for them* (Mt 18: 19)?

ANSWER 1. The Lord, who is well aware that people are very prone to illusions and conceit, wishes to guard us from ourselves, even if we have attained a virtuous life and holiness. So in order that we consider ourselves unworthy when we make our requests to Him, He wants us to associate other like-minded persons with us, to join us in our prayers and strivings: someone who makes prayers in isolation, and gains what is asked for, often falls into arrogance, but if several persons are making the same prayer, all remain in a state of humility.

2. Now this is something that I have often experienced myself in the company of others, and I recommend it to you in your requests to God, especially when we do not know if what we want to do is God's will or not. Very often, if two or three pray whole-heartedly for something, and even fast about it, then certainly after two or three days, either in a vision, or the heart of the one wishing to act will be instructed; perhaps also after their prayer and on opening for *lachmeterion* [opening the Bible for an omen text^a] they will merit a true answer.

3. So the Christian should possess a spiritual "*ephoud*,"^b i.e. the Holy Spirit which illumines the person and displays what is advantageous. Those who have this tell us that when they ask God about a particular subject, if their request is truly to God's liking, the grace of the Holy Spirit overshadows them at once.

^a See Qu. 57.

^b See the following question, Qu. 98.

COMMENTS

(1) This question is included (though omitting §3) in **Coll. c** (Qu. 13), and was then added to the Gretser edition of **Coll. a** as Qu. 109bis (PG 89, 761C-764A).

(2) Although the question was taken over in **Coll. 88** (as Qu. 71) the original answer was omitted and in place of it texts from Basil and John Chrysostom added; it appears in **Coll. a** as Qu. 61 (PG 89, 645C-648A), the question thus appearing twice in the Gretser edition, but with very different answers.

Question 98

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QUESTION What sort of thing was the object called in the Law the *ephoud*?

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ANSWER I. The name itself on its own signifies “revelation” or “ransoming”. As for its form, Scripture testifies that it was a piece of cloth, about a hand-span across, shaped as a square panel of silken material woven with gold-thread and fashioned very skilfully. In the middle it had a sort of solid gold plaque with two perfect emeralds set on either side, each having engraved on it six of the twelve tribes of Israel, while in the middle, between the emeralds was an adamant stone.

2. The shoulder garment of the High Priest had the form of a cape, which was short and came down only as far as the thighs; the high priests wore this when they offered incense and performed religious ceremonies.

3. Whenever the need arose to question God on some subject, the High Priest attached one edge of the *ephoud* to his shoulder garment at the level of his heart and put both his hands under it, so that it was positioned spread out on the palms of his hand like a tablet; then he put the question to God, while gazing at the *ephoud*.

4. If the affair was to God’s liking the adamant stone at once began to shine and sparkle, emitting beams of light; however if what was asked for was not to God’s liking, the stone stayed in the same state. On the other hand, if God intended handing over the people for slaughter, the diamond took on a bloodshot,

fiery colour; if a plague was about to attack, it became black, like an aquamarine hyacinth stone.

5. We have put together these remarks relying not on ourselves but on the holy Fathers.

COMMENTS

(1) The compiler of **Coll. 88** took over this question (Qu. 40; PG 89, 585A6-B14) and added three texts to form a florilegium; this version is included in **Coll. a** as Qu. 40, and is also found in **Coll. d** (Qu. 81); Anastasios calls it “*ephoud*”, but “*ephod*” is more usual.

(2) The object discussed here is mentioned (though not named as such) in Exodus 28: 6-13, 26 (30); the name appears in Judges 8: 27; 17: 5 and 1 Kings 14: 3, 18-20.

(3) In the *Catena* on Exodus^a one finds references to the prophetic use made of changing colours of stones, and the text given by Anastasios appears there attributed to him or to the *Souda*.^b However, there seems to be no other exact parallel to the use of the adamant stone, even if changes of colour in other stones is mentioned: cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *QQ in Exod.* 60 (eds Fernández Marcos & Sáenz Badillos, *QQ in Octateuchum*, pp. 139-144; PG 80, 285C); Epiphanius, *De XII gemmis* (CPG 3748; PG 43, 293-301, 301-304, 371-372); in general, cf. Frederick H. Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and its Near Eastern Environment. A socio-Historical Investigation* [Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 142], Sheffield, 1994, pp. 277-282 (“The Ephod and the Ark”).

Question 99

QUESTION Some people, turning away from God and the holy Church along with this race <of the Arabs>, affirm, “Whom God wishes to save, he is saved, and whom God destroys, is destroyed,” and they quote to support them the saying of the apostle Paul, *I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion* (Rom 9: 15 [= Ex 33: 19]), and *He has mercy on whom He wishes, and he hardens the heart of whom He wishes* (Rom 9: 18), and

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^a Nikephoros, Σειρά ... εἰς τὴν Ὀκτάτευχον, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1772, col. 875; Fr. Petit, *La Chaîne sur l'Exode* [Traditio Exegetica Graeca II], Num. 871 *Ad Ex.* 28, 26 (30), Louvain, 2000, p. 223.

^b On the *Souda*, cf. Qu. 85, Comment (3).

Those whom he foreknew he also predestined (Rom 8: 29), and *Some vessels were made by God for an honourable purpose, and some others to be dishonoured* (Rom 9: 21), by “vessels” meaning “human beings”.

ANSWER 1. My opinion here, and I think it is God’s opinion as well, is that not even Satan will dare to say that, “Whom God wishes to save, He saves, and whom God wishes, He destroys,” but just as in matters concerning Christ the demons are more religious than the Arabs, confessing him to be the Son of God,^a so also with regard to this dogma.

2. If indeed whom God wishes, He saves, and again whom God wishes, He destroys, neither the person saved would be worthy of the reward, nor would the person destroyed be worthy of hell. And if that were the case, it is obvious that not even the demons enter Gehenna, and that if they do go in, they enter unjustly. It would be God, as the Arabs say, who had made them evil and wicked, whereas the demons themselves have borne witness that they do go into destruction, crying out to Christ, *Come now, what is there between us and you, Jesus, Son of God? You have come here before time to destroy us* (Lk 4: 34; Mk 1: 24). By referring to “before time” they were pointing to the hour of their coming destruction in Gehenna.^b

3. It is necessary therefore for anyone who wishes to interpret Scripture in a religious way to distinguish with great care the circumstances of time, the persons, and the purpose of the speaker; whoever does not distinguish these falls into many silly errors. However when the divine Apostle spoke the words, *Those whom He – God – foreknew*, (these) *He also predestined* (Rom 8: 29), he solved all the preceding problems. For example, He foreknew that Pharaoh would not repent, and *He hardened his heart* (Ex 14: 8), so that he might persecute Israel and be drowned; He foreknew the rectitude of Jeremiah and He predestined him, sanctifying him *from his mother’s womb to be a prophet* (Jer 1: 5); He foreknew the godlessness of the Sodomites and He made them into vessels

^a Cf. Lk 4: 34; 8: 28; Mk 1: 24; 5: 7; Mt 8: 29.

^b Cf. Qu. 91, §1.

to be dishonoured^a and burned out; He foreknew the conversion of Paul, and He predestined him to be *a vessel of predilection* (Acts 9: 15).

4. However if *God has mercy on whomever he wishes, and whomever He wishes, God destroys*,^b how can Scripture say, *He wants all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth* (1 Tim 2: 4), just as Christ says, *It is not the wish of my father that any hair be destroyed* (of anyone on the face of the earth)?^c Otherwise how could He be called *the true light that illumines all those who come into the world* (Jn 1: 9), giving us *power to become the children of God* (Jn 1: 12), just as He said by the Prophet: *I said, 'Gods you are, and all sons of the Most High'* (Ps 81: 6)? If indeed "all", how can *He have mercy on whom He wishes, and harden the heart of whom He wishes* (Rom 9: 18)?

5. It is important to realize that among those in Rome, to whom Paul has written these words, there were some who had come to the faith after having been pagans [ἐξ Ἑλλήνων], and others Hebrews [= Jews]. So as he was writing to both groups, occasionally he refers especially to the former Gentiles [ἐξ ἐθνῶν], who perhaps had to put up with insults from the Jews [Ἰουδαίων] because of their earlier idolatry; that is the reason why he wrote these words, wanting to silence the Judaeans [Jews], "Who are you to raise objections to God? *Does the potter not have the right to make from the same mixture some vessels for an honourable purpose and some others to be dishonoured* (Rom 9: 21)?" And also, *I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion* (Rom 9: 15). All these and similar phrases are in support of those converted from among the Gentiles; and on their behalf also there was the remark, *Glory, honour and peace to all who do good, to the Judaeans [Jew] first, but also to the pagan* [Ἑλλήνι] (Rom 2: 10).

6. Again when Paul was taking the part of the those converted from among the Judaeans [Jews] he says to the Gen-

^a Cf. Rom 9: 21.

^b Cf. Rom 9: 18 (slightly altered).

^c Cf. Mt 18: 14; Lk 21: 18.

tiles, *It is not you who bear the root; it is the root that bears you* (Rom 11: 18), meaning by “root” the Law. Similarly when he says, *He who is weak eats vegetables* (Rom 14: 2), he is talking of the former Jews; when they adopted the faith and were baptized, to avoid all suspicion of eating any sort of meat derived from pig, which they abhorred,^a they abstained completely from all meat, consuming only vegetarian food in future. It is on their behalf that Paul said, *He who is weak*, meaning in the faith, someone who is not yet completely reformed, *eats vegetables* (Rom 14: 2).

7. Consequently let no one among you say, along with these ungodly people, “Whom God wishes, He saves, and whom God wishes, He destroys”, because he would be making God unjust; if God Himself destroyed the sinner, why does He send that person to hell? Moreover God will be presented as having favourites,^b in so far as He saves some and destroys others. But that is not so, God forbid! God has given humans the power of free-will, and He has set before them *the way of life* (Jer 21: 8), just as the devil has set before them the way of sin, and each will proceed along whichever each chooses. That is why God gives to the just the kingdom of heaven as a reward for their good intention, and similarly to the wicked He gives hell for their wicked intention.

COMMENTS

(1) Found in **Coll. b** (Qu. 32).

(2) In **Coll. 88** (Qu. 55) this topic is brought up, but an answer attributed to John Chrysostom replaces the Anastasian answer, and this is the version, also included in **Coll. d** (Qu. 55), that can be read in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 55 (PG 89, 617-620).

Question 100

QUESTION Very many people, not only among non-believers but even among believers, because of their leaning towards the polygamy <permitted> in the Law, quote at us the saying

^a Cf. Deut 14: 7-8.

^b Cf. Acts 10: 34.

of the Lord which states, *I have not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfil it* (Mt 5: 17). What reply ought we to make about this?

ANSWER I. On many different occasions in the Gospel the Lord can be seen to be teaching us the cancellation of the Law; for example, when He says, *The Law and the prophets, up to the time of John* (Lk 16: 16; Mt 11: 13), and again to the Jews, *The vineyard* – meaning the cultivation sanctioned by the Law and the worship – *will be taken away from you and will be given to a people that produces its fruit* (Mt 21: 43, 41). And also, “*The Romans will come and they will destroy the city and the kingdom*”,^a and, *Behold, your house is left to you desolate* (Mt 23: 38; Lk 13: 35), and yet again when He says to the disciples, *This is my blood of the new covenant* (Mt 26: 28),^b it is obvious that He rejected the former sacrifice.

2. Therefore, when the Lord says to the Jews, *I have not come to abolish the Law* (Mt 5: 17), He is speaking in an excellent way that respects religious decorum and yet suggesting to them something like, “I for my part *have not come to abolish the Law*, provided that you had accepted me and believed in me as the one proclaimed in advance by the Law and the prophets; but when you condemned me the lawgiver to death, it is you, therefore, who dissolved the Law and the prophets.”

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3. However, even before Christ's sojourn one can see that God was revealing the cancellation of the worship sanctioned by the Law; He did this through all the prophets, but more especially He spoke under oath through Jeremiah, saying, *Behold, I swore by my great name, says the Lord almighty, if indeed my name shall be in the future in the mouth of all Judah* (Jer 51: 26 [44: 26]). But if God said that He would take away His name

^a Jn 11: 48, but replacing “the city and the kingdom” by “our holy place [OR our temple] and our nation”.

^b Cf. Mk 14: 24; Lk 22: 20; the words are used in the liturgy at the moment of the consecration.

from the Judaeans [Jews], it is obvious surely that <he would take away> the Law as well.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a.** Qu. ed. 139, and in one manuscript of **Coll. d** (Qu. 68?), but not in **Coll. b** nor in **Coll. c**.

Question 101

QUESTION Is it true of all the evil things done by the Arabs against the lands and nations of the Christians, that they have done them against us completely at God's command and with his approval?

ANSWER 1. Certainly not! God forbid that we should say that God urged them to throw down and trample upon his holy body and blood, or on the relics of his holy Apostles and martyrs. There are thousands of other things that they are doing to us which are not pleasing to God: they unjustly maltreat many, they persecute others for their faith, they shed the just and innocent blood of others, they defile God's altars and venerated places, they force religious women [ἄσκητάς] with a long practice of virginity to enter unwillingly into marriage. For these deeds they will certainly pay with an eternal hell.

2. However since what has been happening must seem strange to many and perhaps even difficult to accept with faith, listen to an example taken from Scripture itself connected with this subject.

3. On one occasion Israel was handed over to the Assyrians that they might be chastised by them, but in a mild and kindly way. However the Assyrians took this as carte-blanche, and judged that God had handed the Jews [τοὺς Ἰουδαίους] over to them to be destroyed, so they dealt with them savagely and remorselessly. Now listen to what God said of the Assyrians through his prophet Zechariah: *I have been jealous with great jealousy for Jerusalem, he said, and for Sion, and I am angry with great anger against those who joined together against you. Because for my part I was only slightly angry with you, but they joined together against you for evil* (Zech 1: 14-15, and cf. 8: 2).

4. You have heard that God handed them over mildly, but those lawless men treated them mercilessly. That is why He wiped out the Assyrians, because they had treated Israel wickedly, just as in the case of Pharaoh, because he also treated the Jews [τοὺς Ἰουδαίους] cruelly and harshly, God drowned him in the sea, which is what we hope will also happen to these in a short time.

5. It is necessary for us to be aware of these things, so that when you see these lawless men closing the churches, shedding blood, persecuting some people unjustly and mercilessly, and committing other crimes, you will not be angry with God, but realize clearly that they are acting thus because of their own godlessness, and that they await the worst possible hell.

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COMMENTS

(1) Used in **Coll. 23** (Qu. 17 = Qu. ed. 17) for the first paragraph (cf. PG 89, 484A4-B14), but greatly expanded and answering the question if all assaults by foreign foes occur at God's orders, without specific reference to the Arabs.

(2) Not included in **Coll. c**.

(3) There is a different, but related, version in **Coll. b**, the Arabs referred to as "Arians" (probably not a scribal error; cf. Appendix 22, §3, p. 188).

Coll. b, Qu. 40 [Greek text found only in one manuscript: CCSG 59, Appendix 21]

QUESTION When some people hear the Gospel words, *All things came into being through the word of God, and without him came into being not one thing that came into being* (Jn 1: 3), they say that all the things that happen in the world and every hardship that the race [τὸ γένος] of the Arians^a inflicts upon us believers, it inflicts with the permission of God.

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ANSWER 1. Those who say and think these things are far from the word of truth, because the murders and adulteries and fornications and thefts and other sins that happen in the world do not come about through God, but from the Evil One [ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ]. Therefore it was about created things that the evangelist said, *All things came into being through the word of God, and without him came into being not one thing that came into being* (Jn 1: 3).

^a In this question the term "Arian" is clearly an opprobrious term for "Arab" (as in Appendix 22 [given in Comment (2) on Qu. 70, §3]), whereas elsewhere in **Coll. b** the term can also be used to indicate the heretical group (see Appendix 20 [given in Comment (2, §3) on Qu. 68]). Anastasios keeps to the latter use (cf. QQ 69 and 95).

2. So one should clearly realize that all the dreadful things that the Arians do against the people of Christ are certainly not done with the permission of God. For God does not order them to force or persecute the believer, so that he denies the worship of Christ as God and Son of God, nor again so that he denies the cross or baptism or the communion of God's holy mysteries. Nor again is it by God's command that they slaughter just men who have done nothing wrong, nor is God served when they trample on His most holy body and blood, and commit fornication in the Holy of Holies. But for all these wicked deeds they will receive an eternal punishment on the day of judgement.

3. And lest some foolish person have the idea of saying that we are speaking simply off the top of our heads and by guesswork, let us listen to God speaking through a couple of the prophets. One of them is Isaiah, who says about Israel and the Chaldeans who imprisoned Israel: "I handed over my people for something minor, that is that you might chastise them sparingly^a and kindly, but you have inflicted on them something major; *you have weighed down the yoke of the elder* and had no pity on the widow and the orphan".^b In saying these things to the Chaldeans through the prophets, God was warning that he would bring His anger to bear upon them because of the mercilessness that they had shown to Israel.

4. If some example should be given: just as a farmer setting fire to his own field has burnt down with the thorns the vines as well, so we are to think in the case of the Arians, that what they do to the people of God is certainly not pleasing to God.

5. We had to compose the above lest those who are punished unsparingly by these people curse God, judging that the senseless punishment coming from them is at His command.

Question 102

QUESTION If somebody is living in the desert or in captivity and, because of the hardship and hunger, tastes the meat of camel, or wild ass, or something of that sort, is it to be counted as a fault on that person's part or not?

ANSWER For my part I think that if somebody guards properly the faith of Christ and observes His other commandments, he will not be judged adversely for that sort of thing on the day

^a The manuscript gives "un-sparingly" [ἀφειδομένως], but the alpha privative is probably added from the previous word by scribal error.

^b Cf. Isa 47: 6-8; Zech 1: 14-15.

of judgement. And if anybody objects to my view, such a one is refuted by Him who said, *Not the things that enter through the mouth defile a person* (Mt 15: 11), and especially someone under necessity, living in the desert, in hunger and straightened circumstances, someone whose anguish and weeping, whose calamity and darkness only the unsleeping eye of God can see and appreciate. It is God who formed, chastises, and handed that person over; soon such a one (along with us) *will be visited by the dawn from on high, the dawn that shines on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death* (Lk 1: 78-79), thanks to the mercy and loving kindness of our Lord, Jesus Christ.^a

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COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 140, and in one manuscript of **Coll. d** (Qu. 86).

(2) This and the following question (Qu. 103) are included in the small **Coll. c** (QQ 14 and 15).

(3) The theme of hardships under the Arabs is dealt with also in QQ 76, 87 and 101.

Question 103

QUESTION If somebody imposes on oneself the performance of something judged to be good, e.g. to abstain from wine or meat, or from his own wife for some time, or something else of that sort, and then does not have the strength to fulfil this self-imposed obligation but falls short of it, what should that person do?

ANSWER 1. In the first place, recognize one's own weakness and wretchedness, as undertaking something and then not fulfilling it. But in the next place, there is a prayer for such a case in the *Euchologion*, which is said by the priest to set free anyone who has bound oneself, for priests have received from God the power both to bind and to loose in heaven and on earth.^b

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2. Similarly there is the other case: supposing someone has sworn to do something evil which is against the law of God, that person is set free by repentance and by the prayer of a

^a Here **Coll. a** adds an extra line from the quotation from Luke, and also, "to whom be glory for ages upon ages, Amen", or simply, "Amen".

^b Cf. Mt 18: 18.

priest. Thus even Peter,^a when he had sworn, as he thought properly, that Christ should not wash his feet, released himself at once from his oath, when he recognized that he had imposed something wrong on himself. But when Herod^b obliged himself to do something evil, and swore to do it in the case of Herodias, he advanced to perdition by maintaining his own oath.

3. For all these reasons it is better not to bind oneself to do either good or bad, for where there is a bond, there also can there be a transgression,^c as happened in the case of Adam.

COMMENTS

(1) Included in **Coll. a**, Qu. ed. 141, and in **Coll. d** (Qu. 87); also one of the questions taken over in **Coll. c** (Qu. 15).

(2) In **Coll. b** appears the following:

Coll. b, Qu. 7 [CCSG 59, Appendix 3]

QUESTION If somebody binds oneself by oath to perform a good act, e.g. not to taste wine during a certain period, or to fast, or to refrain from his own wife, and then because of lack of will is incapable of fulfilling the undertaking, what should that person do?

ANSWER 1. The blessed Fathers, who composed the priestly prayers for us, also made a prayer for such a case, one that frees someone through the priest [see reference to the *Euchologion* below]. As has been said to God's true priests in the Scriptures, *Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven* Mt 18: 18].

2. However, the person should also reproach himself for weakness and lack of will-power, and confess to God as a weak-kneed wretch. If anybody had bound himself in relation to a mortal emperor, he would not dare to appear alive before him once he had done wrong. How much less then before God? However repentance has the power to heal all.

(3) The *Euchologion*, book of ritual prayers, mentioned by Anastasios predates of course that now in use in the Orthodox Church, where prayers for releasing those who have bound themselves with vows are to be found (cf. J. Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale graecorum*, Venice 1730, Graz 1960, pp. 223-224). The earliest of the surviving exemplars, the *Vaticanus Barberinus gr.* 336 (c. 775 A.D.), dates from shortly after Anastasios;^d there is ample manuscript evidence for the existence of similar prayers; e.g. *Sinaiticus gr.* 1795 [prob. 14th cent.], ff. 312v-313, which gives the text of this question (as preserved in

^a Cf. Jn 13: 8.

^b Cf. Mt 14: 3-10; Mk 6: 17-28.

^c Cf. Rom 4: 15; 5: 13-14.

^d R.F.T. Taft, s.v. "Euchologion", ODB, p. 738.

Coll. b) and adds two examples of a “Prayer for those who rashly swears to do something” Εὐχὴ ἐπὶ τῶν προπετώσ ὀμνυόντων].^a

(4) Paul of Evergetis in the 12th century includes this question, but uses the version found in **Coll. b**: cf. *Synagoge* II 24, 4 (ed. Athens, 1964⁶, t. 2, p. 283).

(5) An isolated question dealing in general with religious scepticism and iconoclasm has been added to the authentic questions in one important late (xvth cent.) manuscript, *Scorialensis gr.* 470 (Ω.IV.18); it precedes the short Qu. 65 from the *QQ ad Antiochum* (PG 28, 633B14-C5), which is followed in turn by the rest of the *QQ ad Antiochum* but they are given a different title.

Isolated question [CCSG 59, Appendix 24]

QUESTION What ought one to say about those who hold in contempt the divine in general [τὸ θεῖον], and also the revered images [εἰκονίσματα] in churches and the sacred offerings [ἀναθήματα]?

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ANSWER 1. Concerning this subject I shall propose examples enough to convince anyone: that well-known Baltasar (= Belshazzar) (cf. Dan 5: 1-3), the Chaldaean, although he had committed many and very serious other sins, does not appear to have had to pay any penalty whatsoever before the God of all; but when he brought forth for that accursed banquet the vessels that had been consecrated from of old for the house of God and which his father, Nabouchodonosor [= Nebuchadnezzar] had transferred from Jerusalem, and when he and his invitees drank from them, then he heard from the great prophet, Daniel, “*God has measured your kingdom and fulfilled it*” (Dan 5: 26). And on that very night, Baltasar was murdered (cf. Dan 5: 30).

2. Therefore, if disrespect shown to the vessels of the Jews and under the Old Law, and insult against God brought about such destruction to the perpetrator, an affront against the grace and the Church of Christ, which He redeemed by his own blood, and sacrilege against those sacred images [ἀπεικονίσματα], surely all the more will these bring the greatest and worst of all punishments to the one who dares to commit them? With such a clear demonstration, who will dare to say that the Baltasar^b among us has undergone such a great destruction because of any other crime rather than the insult to Christ?

^a Cf. V. Benešević, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Graecorum qui in Monasterio Sanctae Catharinae in Monte Sina asservantur*, vol. III (1), St Petersburg, 1917, p. 203.

^b Perhaps a reference to Chosroes II, decisively defeated by Heraclius in 627 and murdered in the following year: cf. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. Joan Hussey, Oxford, 1968, p. 103.

APPENDICES INCORPORATED INTO MAIN COLLECTION

[Appendix 1] What is the sign of the perfect Christian?

[**Coll. b**, Qu. 5] cf. Qu. 1, Comment (1).

[Appendix 2] Supposing that an old man is weak and timid, and that he is not able to enter a monastery or perform monastic duties, how can such a man repent and be saved?

[**Coll. b**, Qu. 6] cf. Qu. 47, Comment (3).

[Appendix 3] If somebody binds oneself by oath to perform a good act, e.g. not to taste wine during a certain period, or to fast, or to refrain from his own wife, and then because of lack of will is incapable of fulfilling the undertaking, what should that person do?

[**Coll. b**, Qu. 7] cf. Qu. 103, Comment (2).

[Appendix 4] If someone has grown old in sins, but while at prayer proposes a covenant between oneself and God saying, "Forgive me, Lord, any sins I have committed up to now, and in future I shall not continue my former sins, nor return in any way to them, but confess to your name." If someone makes this sort of covenant with God and dies a few days later, what should one think of such a person?

[**Coll. b**, Qu. 9] cf. Qu. 47, Comment (3).

[Appendix 5] Some persons quite frequently after having broken away from their sin and repented, occasionally trip over once more and suffer a fall; then they despair of themselves, thinking that they have wasted all the effort they had put into their repentance.

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 10] cf. Qu. 11, Comment (2).

[Appendix 6] Some people say that repentance is this, to give up and stop from sin.

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 11] cf. Qu. 36, Comment (2)

[Appendix 7] What sort is true humility, the one by which a person is forgiven for sins?

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 14] cf. Qu. 91, Comment (1).

[Appendix 8] What sort of sin renders our prayers unacceptable before God?

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 15] cf. Qu. 18, Comment (2).

[Appendix 9] Which of the passions stands out as the strongest and most difficult to shake off in comparison with the others?

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 16] cf. Qu. 33, Comment (2)

[Appendix 10a] Is it a good thing to receive communion every day or at certain intervals, or only every Sunday?

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 20] cf. Qu. 41, Comment (3).

[Appendix 10b] Is it a good thing to receive communion every day or at certain intervals, or only every Sunday?

[**Example of re-used text: Markianos**] cf. Qu. 41, Comment (4).

[Appendix 11] If a woman sleeps with her husband at night, or a husband with his own wife, and copulation takes place, should they partake of the undefiled mysteries or not?

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 21 = Timothy of Alexandria] cf. Qu. 38, Comment (4).

[Appendix 12] If a layman has a 'wet dream', should he partake of the divine mysteries or not?

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 22 = Timothy of Alexandria] cf. Qu. 38, Comment (4).

[Appendix 13] In the case of couples yoked for marital intercourse, on which days in the week should they be required to refrain from intercourse with one another, and on which days should they be authorized?

[**Coll. b.** Qu. 23 = Timothy of Alexandria] cf. Qu. 38, Comment (4).

[Appendix 14] How does someone know that God has forgiven his or her sins?

[**Coll. b**, qu. 24] cf. Qu. 50, Comment (2).

[Appendix 15] How are we to understand the statement of the Lord which says, *Make friends for yourselves from the mammon of iniquity, so that when you go missing, they will receive you into the eternal tabernacles* (Lk 16: 9)?

[**Coll. b**, Qu. 26] cf. Qu. 83, Comment (2).

[Appendix 16] If someone undertakes a good deed not willingly but forcing oneself, does one have a reward or not?

[**Coll. b**, qu. 27] cf. Qu. 59, comment (2).

[Appendix 17] How should we partake without scandal of communion of the holy mysteries when we happen to hear and see that the priest is falling into sins of the flesh?

[**Coll. b**, Qu. 41] cf. Qu. 10, Comment (3).

[Appendix 18] How can we not judge someone who is clearly committing a sin?

[**Coll. b**, Qu. 42] cf. Qu. 10, Comment (3).

[Appendix 19] How are we to understand the saying of the Lord, *Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven to men... and whoever says anything against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever says anything against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in the present time nor in the future age* (Mt 12: 31-32, but cf. Mk 3: 28; Lk 12: 10)?

[**Isolated question** added to **Coll. b**] cf. Qu. 84, Comment (2).

[Appendix 20] If an uneducated person [ἰδιώτης], who has no experience of public speaking [λόγος] and of Sacred Scripture is questioned by a heretic about the correct [ὀρθόδοξος] faith of the catholic and holy Church, how should such a person answer?

[**Isolated question** added to **Coll. b**] cf. Qu. 68, Comment (2).

[Appendix 21] When some people hear the Gospel words, *All things came into being through the word of God, and without him came into being not one thing that came into being* (Jn 1: 3), they say that all the things that happen in the world and every hardship that the race [τὸ γένος] of the Arians inflicts upon us believers, it inflicts with the permission of God.

[**Isolated question** added to **Coll. b**] cf. Qu. 101, Comment (3).
 [Appendix 22] For what reason do many signs and wonders not occur among us today, as used to occur among earlier generations?

[**Isolated question** added to **Coll. b**] cf. Qu. 70, Comment (2).
 [Appendix 23a] <Here is> a great <question>, much discussed and raised by almost everyone: do we claim that each human life has a fixed term [ὄρος] or not? If it has such a limit, why does David say to God, *Do not take me away in the middle of my days* (Ps 101: 25), and again, *Those who commit deeds of blood and treachery will not fill out half their days* (Ps 54: 24)? But if there is no such limit, why again does the same David say: *Behold, you appoint my days measured out* (Ps 38: 6)? And again if there is a limit, why did Solomon say, *Do not become hard and do not practise impiety at length, that you may not die in a time that is not yours* (Eccl 7: 17)? Therefore if it is possible to die *in a time that is not yours*, why did some people think they could teach that, “Deaths are brought on when the limits of life have been fulfilled”? And why, when Hezekiah (cf. 2 Kings 20: 6) and the Ninevites (cf. Jon 3: 9) asked for more life, did God add it for them?

[**Isolated question** added to **Coll. b**] cf. Qu. 16, Comment (3).
 [Appendix 23b] <TITLE > By our father, now among the saints, Anastasios of Sinai: On <whether there is> a fixed term [ὄρος] for life and death.

[**Anastasios?, De vitae termino**] cf. Qu. 16, Comment (4).
 [Appendix 24] What ought one to say about those who hold in contempt the divine in general [τὸ θεῖον], and also the revered images [εἰκονίσματα] in churches and the sacred offerings [ἀναθήματα]?

[**Isolated question** added to **Coll. b**] cf. Qu. 103, Comment (5).
 [Appendix 25] Whence comes it that the soul of a person frequently utters internally some evil thoughts and certain foul, impure and filthy words, unwillingly and not deliberately, and frequently even ungodly and blasphemous expressions against God Himself and the saints and the life-giving and awesome mysteries at the time of the liturgical celebration [συνάξεων]

and of prayers and at the reception of the divine and life-giving sacrament, with the result that frequently persons out of discouragement and despair over such godless and ill-spoken expressions, thought of themselves that they were no longer Christians, as they were conceiving such things about God, while others frequently absented themselves from the reception of the holy sacraments, and yet others considered doing away with themselves or throwing themselves from cliffs because they were blaspheming against God and therefore had no hope of salvation, pondering on those words of the Lord, *To the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, forgiveness will not be given, neither in the present age nor in the future one* (Mt 12: 32; cf. Mk 3: 29; Lk 12: 10)? Whence does such a wicked thought frequently come, and in what way can one be liberated from it?

[**Isolated question, *De blasphemia***] cf. Qu. 84, Comment (4).
[Appendix 26] Tell us, father, how ought we to be saved?

[**Isolated question (Vallicellanus C 72)**] cf. Qu. 48, Comment (2).

[Appendix 27] With the most honoured father presiding a question was put by some: “Why, most honoured father, do we observe any Wednesday, as well as any Friday, without fail?”

[**Isolated question (Pitra)**] cf. Qu. 51, Comment (3).