

220. THE CHALCEDONIAN DEFINITION OF THE FAITH

(Text in Bindley-Green, pp. 191-3.)

1 The holy, great and ecumenical council, by the grace of God and the decree of our most pious and Christ-loving Emperors, Marcian and Valentinian, Augusti, assembled in the city of the Chalcedonians, metropolis of the province of Bithynia, in the church of the holy and gloriously triumphant martyr Euphemia, has decreed as follows:

2 Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, confirming his disciples in the knowledge of the faith, said, *My peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you*,¹ to the intent that no one should vary from his neighbour in the doctrines of religion, but that the preaching of the truth should be uniformly set forth to all. But seeing that the evil one does not cease from choking with his own tares the seeds of true religion, and is continually devising some new device against the truth, therefore our Sovereign Lord taking thought for mankind, as is his wont, stirred up the zeal of this pious and most faithful Emperor, i.e. Marcian, and called together to himself the chiefs of the priesthood from all parts, to the intent that he might remove, by the effectual working of the grace of Christ, our common Sovereign, every impurity from the sheep of Christ, and make them fat with the fresh shoots of the truth.

This then we have done, having, by a common sentence, driven away the doctrines of error, and having renewed the unerring faith of the Fathers, proclaiming to all the Creed of the 318 and endorsing as our own the Fathers who received this godly document, namely the 150, who afterwards met together in great Constantinople and set their seal to the same faith.

We decree, therefore (ourselves also adhering to the order and all the formulas of the faith of the holy council formerly held at Ephesus, under the presidency of Coelestine, bishop of Rome, and Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, both of most holy memory), that the exposition of the orthodox and irreproachable faith set forth by the 318 holy and blessed Fathers who met at Nicaea, in the time of the Emperor Constantine of pious memory, retain its place of honour, and also that the definition of the 150 holy Fathers at Constantinople, for the taking away of the heresies then recently sprung up, and for the confirmation of our same Catholic and Apostolic faith, continue still in force.

¹ John 14.27.*The Creed of the 318 at Nicaea*

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, Begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things were made, Who for us men and for our salvation came down (from heaven), and became incarnate (from the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary), and was made man, (And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate), (And) suffered (and was buried) And rose on the third day (according to the Scriptures), And ascended into heaven, (And sits on the right hand of the Father), And is coming (again) with glory to judge living and dead, (Whose kingdom shall have no end), And in the Holy Ghost, (the Lord, the Giver of Life).

But those who say, There was when the Son of God was not, and Before he was begotten he was not, and that he came into being from things that are not, or that he is of another substance or essence, or that he is mutable or alterable—the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

The Creed of the 150 assembled at Constantinople

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, The only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things were made, Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and became incarnate from the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, And rose the third day according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father, And is coming again with glory to judge both living and dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end; And in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is jointly worshipped and jointly glorified, Who spoke through the prophets; In one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church; We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, We look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen.

3 This wise and salutary Creed, therefore, derived from divine grace suffices for the perfect acknowledgment and confirmation

of godliness; for concerning the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, its teaching is complete, and to those who accept it faithfully it sets forth in addition the Incarnation of the Lord.

But since those who, taking in hand to set aside the preaching of the truth by heresies of their own, have uttered vain babblings, some daring to pervert the mystery of the dispensation, which for our sakes the Lord undertook, and denying the propriety of the name *Theotocos*, as applied to the Virgin, and others bringing in a confusion and mixing of natures, and fondly feigning that there is but one nature of the flesh and Godhead, and by this confusion absurdly maintaining that the divine nature of the only-begotten is possible—for this reason, the holy, great, ecumenical council now in session, being desirous of precluding every device of theirs against the truth, teaching in its fullness the doctrine which from the beginning has remained unshaken, has decreed, in the first place that the Creed of the 318 Fathers remain inviolate; and on account of those who impugn the Holy Spirit, it ratifies and confirms the doctrine delivered subsequently, concerning the essence of the Spirit, by the 150 holy Fathers, who were assembled in the imperial city, which they made known to all, not as though they were supplying some omission of their predecessors, but distinctly declaring by written testimony their own understanding concerning the Holy Spirit, against those who were endeavouring to set aside his Sovereignty; and on account of those who attempt to pervert the mystery of the Incarnation, shamelessly and senselessly babbling that he who was born of the holy Mary was a mere man, it has accepted the synodical letters of the blessed Cyril, pastor of the Church of Alexandria, to Nestorius and to the Orientals, in keeping with those Creeds, for the confutation of the folly of Nestorius, and for the explanation of the salutary Creed to those who, in godly zeal, desire the true understanding thereof: to which also it has suitably joined, for the confirmation of the orthodox faith, the letter of the Ruler of the greatest and elder Rome, the most blessed and most holy Archbishop Leo, written to the saintly Archbishop Flavian, for the overthrow of the impiety of Eutyches, since it agrees with the confession of the great Peter, and is a pillar of support to all against the heterodox.

4 For the synod is opposed to those who presume to rend asunder the mystery of the Incarnation into a double Sonship, and it deposes from the priesthood those who dare to say that the Godhead of the Only-begotten is possible; and it withstands those who imagine a mixing or confusion of the two natures of Christ; and it drives away those who erroneously teach that the form of a servant which he took from us was of a heavenly or some other sub-

stance; and it anathematizes those who feign that the Lord had two natures before the union, but that these were fashioned into one after the union.

Wherefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one voice confess our Lord Jesus Christ one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same consisting of a reasonable soul and a body, of one substance with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance with us as touching the manhood, *like us in all things apart from sin*¹; begotten of the Father before the ages as touching the Godhead, the same in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born from the Virgin Mary, the *Theotocos*, as touching the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way abolished because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each nature being preserved, and concurring into one Person and one subsistence (*ὑπόστασις*), not as if Christ were parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ; even as the Prophets from the beginning spoke concerning him, and our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us, and the Creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.

5 These things, therefore, having been formulated by us with all possible exactness and care, the holy ecumenical council decrees, that it is unlawful for anyone to produce another faith, whether by writing, or composing, or holding, or teaching others. And those who presume either to compose another creed or to publish or teach, or deliver another creed to those who desire to turn to the acknowledgement of the truth from heathenism, or Judaism, or from any heresy whatsoever, these—if they are bishops or clergy—the bishops to be deposed from the episcopate, and the clergy from the clerical office: but if they are monks or laymen, to be anathematized. (C. A. Heurtley, *On Faith and the Creed*, altered, principally from Bindley-Green.)

For a commentary on the *Definition* see Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon*, pp. 207–28.

1. *Marcian*: Marcian was husband of Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II; Pulcheria had been Augusta from 414, but on succeeding to the Empire on her brother's death in 450, she took Marcian, an eminent soldier, as her husband.

Valentinian: i.e. Valentinian III, grandson of Theodosius I, Emperor 425–455. "He was managed by his mother (Galla Placidia) till her death in 450. His

¹ Heb. 4.15.

character was weak and vicious, and after her death he plunged from one crime to another, till in 455 he was assassinated by the friends of a lady whom he had outraged." (D.C.B. s.v.)

the church (μαρτύριον) . . . of the martyr Euphemia: cf. p. 327 above. This building is described by Evagrius, *H.E.* II 3.

2. *in great Constantinople:* in 381, see also 101 above.

at Ephesus: in 431, see also 203 above. For the "Ephesine Decree" incorporated in this *Definition* see note on sect. 5 below.

The Creed . . . of Nicaea: the text varies in certain particulars from the original Creed of Nicaea. As here printed, additions to the original creed are placed in parentheses. Note also the following *omission* from the Chalcedonian version: after *were made*, add "the things in heaven and the things on earth".

The Creed of the 150 assembled at Constantinople: this is the creed described as the "Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan", which we call "the Nicene Creed". The *Definition* attributes this creed to the council of Constantinople in 381, but between 381 and 451 we possess no evidence to support this attribution. The origin of this creed has been the subject of a lengthy controversy on which see Kelly, *Creeeds*, Chap. X.

But it is clear that in the *Definition* the essential norm of faith is the Creed of Nicaea, and that the council of Chalcedon regarded the creed of the 150 as added in 381 *for the taking away of the heresies then recently sprung up, and for the confirmation of our same Catholic and Apostolic faith.*

3. *Letters of the blessed Cyril:* see 197, 199 and 201 above.

Letter . . . of Leo: i.e. the *Tome*, 216 above.

4. *The synod is opposed:* to Nestorius, Apollinarius, and Eutyches, whose heresies are briefly characterized.

without confusion . . . separation: ἀσυνχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως.

concurring into one Person and one subsistence: εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν.

the distinction . . . union: from Cyril's *Second Letter to Nestorius* (197 above).

the characteristic property, etc.: cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Praxean* 27, *adeo salva est utriusque proprietatis substantiae.*

5. *it is unlawful, etc.:* this is a revised form of the "Ephesine Decree" of 431. (See Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon*, p. 11 and pp. 227-8.) But cf. Sellers, *op. cit.*, p. 254, "Indeed no sooner had the bishops departed from Chalcedon, than dissentients began to give voice to their indignation", and the whole of the second chapter of Part II, *op. cit.*, "The criticism and defence of the Chalcedonian Faith".

221. LETTER OF THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON TO LEO

(Leo. Ep. XCVIII 1,2,4.)

Controversy about canon 28 began immediately, and various letters were sent to and from the parties involved. The council, the Emperor, and Anatolius of Constantinople were all anxious to secure Leo's adhesion to it.

1 [Leo is the interpreter to all of the voice of Peter, and has been the guide of the council].

And we were all delighted, as at an imperial banquet, revelling in the spiritual food, which Christ supplied to his invited guests through your letter: and we seemed to see the heavenly Bridegroom actually present with us. For if *where two or three are gathered together in his name*, he has said that *there he is in the midst of them*,¹ must he not have been much more particularly present with 520 priests, who preferred the spread of knowledge concerning him to their country and their ease? Of whom you were chief, as the head to the members, showing your goodwill in the person of those who represented you; whilst our religious Emperors presided to the furtherance of due order, inviting us to restore the doctrinal fabric of the Church, even as Zerubbabel invited Joshua to rebuild Jerusalem.²

2 [The conduct of Dioscorus in acquitting Eutyches is like that of a wild beast uprooting a vine. He deposed true bishops and did not scruple to attack Leo himself].

* * *

4 And we further inform you that we have decided on other things also for the good management and stability of Church matters, being persuaded that your Holiness will accept and ratify them, when you are told what they are. The long-prevailing custom, which the holy Church of God at Constantinople had of ordaining metropolitans for the provinces of Asia, Pontus, and Thrace, we have now ratified by the votes of the synod, not so much by way of conferring a privilege on the see of Constantinople as to provide for the good government of those metropolitan sees, because of the frequent disorders that arise on the death of their bishops, both clergy and laity who dwell there being then without a leader and disturbing the order of the Church. And this has not escaped your Holiness, particularly in the case of Ephesus,

¹ Matt. 18.20. ² Ezra 3.2.