

0680-0680 – Concilium Constantinopolitanum III – Documenta

The Sixth Ecumenical Council.

The Third Council Of Constantinople

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THE SIXTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL.

THE THIRD COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

A.D. 680–681.

Emperor.—CONSTANTINE POGONATUS.

Pope.—AGATHO I.

Elenchus.

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Historical Introduction.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council met on November 7, 680, for its first session, and ended its meetings, which are said to have been eighteen in number, on September 16th of the next year. The number of bishops present was under three hundred and the minutes of the last session have only 174 signatures attached to them.

When the Emperor first summoned the council he had no intention that it should be ecumenical. From the *Sacras* it appears that he had summoned all the Metropolitans and bishops of the jurisdiction of Constantinople, and had also informed the Archbishop of Antioch that he might send Metropolitans and bishops. A long time before he had written to Pope Agatho on the subject.

When the synod assembled however, it assumed at its first session the title “Ecumenical,” and all the five patriarchs were represented, Alexandria and Jerusalem having sent deputies although they were at the time in the hands of the infidel.

In this Council the Emperor presided in person surrounded by high court officials. On his right sat the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch and next to them the representative of the Patriarch of Alexandria. On the Emperor’s left were seated the representatives of the Pope. In the midst were placed, as usual, the Holy Gospels. After the eleventh session however the Emperor was no longer able to be present, but returned and presided at the closing meeting.

The sessions of the council were held in the domed hall (or possibly chapel) in the imperial palace; which, the Acts tell us, was called Trullo (ἐν τῷ σεκρέτῳ τοῦ θεοῦ παλατίου, τῷ οὕτῳ λεγομένῳ Τρούλλῳ).

It may be interesting to remark that the *Sacras* sent to the bishops of Rome and Constantinople are addressed, the one to “The Most holy and Blessed Archbishop of Old Rome and Ecumenical Pope,” and the other to “The Most holy and Blessed Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch.” Some of the titles given themselves by the signers of the “Prosphonicus” are interesting—“George, an humble presbyter of the holy Roman Church, and holding the place of the most blessed Agatho, ecumenical Pope of the City of Rome...,” “John, an humble deacon of the holy Roman Church and holding the place of the most blessed Agatho, and ecumenical Pope of the City of Rome...,” “George, by the mercy of God bishop of Constantinople which is New Rome,” “Peter a presbyter and holding the place of the Apostolic See of the great city Alexandria...,” “George, an humble presbyter of the Holy Resurrection of Christ our God, and holding the place of Theodore the presbyter, beloved of God, who holds the place of the Apostolic See of Jerusalem...,” “John, by the mercy of God bishop of the City of Thessalonica, and legate of the Apostolic See of Rome,” “John, the unworthy bishop of Portus, legate of the whole Council of the holy Apostolic See of Rome,” “Stephen, by the mercy of God, bishop of Corinth, and legate of the Apostolic See of Old Rome.”



Extracts from the Acts.

Session I.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VI., col. 609 *et seqq.*)

[*After a history of the assembly of the Council, the Acts begin with the Speech of the Papal Legates, as follows:*]

Most benign lord, in accordance with the Sacra to our most holy Pope³²⁵ from your God-instructed majesty, we have been sent by him to the most holy footsteps of your God-confirmed serenity, bearing with us his suggestion (ἀναφορᾶς, *suggestione*) as well as the other suggestion of his Synod equally addressed to your divinely preserved Piety by the venerable bishops subject to it, which also we offered to your God-crowned Fortitude. Since, then, during the past forty-six years, more or less, certain novelties in expression, contrary to the Orthodox faith, have been introduced by those who were at several times bishops of this, your royal and God-preserved city, to wit: Sergius, Paul, Pyrrhus, and Peter, as also by Cyrus, at one time archbishop of the city of Alexandria, as well also as by Theodore, who was bishop of a city called Pharan, and by certain others their followers, and since these things have in no small degree brought confusion into the Church throughout the whole world, for they taught dogmatically that there was but one will in the dispensation of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Holy Trinity, and one operation; and since many times your servant, our apostolic see, has fought against this, and then prayed against it, and by no means been able, even up to now, to draw away from such a depraved opinion its advocates, we beseech your God-crowned fortitude, that such as share these views of the most holy church of Constantinople may tell us, what is the source of this new-fangled language.

[*Answer of the Monothelites made at the Emperor's bidding:*]

We have brought out no new method of speech, but have taught whatever we have received from the holy Ecumenical Synods, and from the holy approved Fathers, as well as from the archbishops of this imperial city, to wit: Sergius, Paul, Pyrrhus, and Peter, as also from Honorius who was Pope of Old Rome, and from Cyrus who was Pope of Alexandria, that is to say with reference to will and operation, and so we have believed, and so we believe, so we preach; and further we are ready to stand by, and defend this faith.



The Letter of Agatho, Pope of Old Rome, to the Emperor, and the Letter of Agatho and of 125 Bishops of the Roman Synod, Addressed to the Sixth Council.

(*Read at the Fourth Session, November 15, at the request of George, Patriarch of Constantinople and his Suffragans.*)

Introductory Note.

³²⁵ The word "our" omitted in the Latin.

(Bossuet, *Defensio Cler. Gal. Lib. VII.*, cap. xxiv.)

All the fathers spoke one by one, and only after examination were the letters of St. Agatho and the whole Western Council approved. Agatho, indeed, and the Western Bishops put forth their decrees thus [‘We have directed persons from our humility to your valour protected of God, which shall offer to you the report of us all, that is, of all the Bishops in the Northern or Western Regions, in which too we have summed up the confession of our Apostolic Faith, yet³²⁶] not as those who wished to contend about these things as being uncertain, but, being certain and unchangeable to see them forth in a brief definition, [suppliantly beseeching you that, by the favour of your sacred majesty, you would command these same things to be preached to all, and to have force with all.’] Undoubtedly, therefore, so far as in them lay, they defined the matter. The question was, whether the other Churches throughout the world would agree, and a matter so great was only made clear after Episcopal examination. But the high, magnificent, yet true expressions, which St. Agatho had used of his See, namely, that resting on the promise of the Lord it had never turned aside from the path of truth, and that its Pontiffs, the predecessors of Agatho, who were charged in the person of Peter to strengthen their brethren, had ever discharged that office, this the Fathers of the Council hear and receive. But not the less they examine the matter, they inquire into the decrees of Roman Pontiffs, and, after inquiry held, approve Agatho’s decrees, condemn those of Honorius: a certain proof that they did not understand Agatho’s expressions as if it were necessary to receive without discussion every decree of Roman Pontiffs even *de fide*, inasmuch as they are subjected to the supreme and final examination of a General Council: but as if these expressions taken as a whole, in their total, hold good in the full and complete succession of Peter, as we have often said, and in its proper place shall say at greater length.

The Letter of Pope Agatho.

(*Found in Migne, Pat. Lat., Tom. LXXXVII., col. 1161; L. and C., Tom. VI., col. 630.*)

Agatho a bishop and servant of the servants of God to the most devout and serene victors and conquerors, our most beloved sons and lovers of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Emperor Constantine the Great, and to Heraclius and Tiberius, Augustuses.

While contemplating the various anxieties of human life, and while groaning with vehement weeping before the one true God, in prayer that he might impart to my wavering soul the comfort of his divine mercy, and might lift me by his right hand out of the depths of grief and anxiety, I most gratefully recognize, my most illustrious lords and sons, that your purpose [i.e. of holding a

³²⁶ The words in brackets are not quoted by Bossuet.



Council] afforded me deep and wonderful consolation. For it was most pious and emanated from your most meek tranquillity, taught by the divine benignity for the benefit of the Christian commonwealth divinely entrusted to your keeping, that your imperial power and clemency might have a care to enquire diligently concerning the things of God (through whom Kings do reign, who is himself King of Kings and Lord of Lords) and might seek after the truth of his spotless faith as it has been handed down by the Apostles and by the Apostolic Fathers, and be zealously affected to command that in all the churches the pure tradition be held. And that no one may be ignorant of this pious intention of yours, or suspect that we have been compelled by force, and have not freely consented to the carrying into effect of the imperial decrees touching the preaching of our evangelical faith which was addressed to our predecessor Donus, a pontiff of Apostolic memory, they have through our ministry been sent to and entirely approved by all nations and peoples; for these decrees the Holy Spirit by his grace dictated to the tongue of the imperial pen, out of the treasure of a pure heart, as the words of an adviser not of an oppressor, defending himself, not looking with contempt upon others; not afflicting, but exhorting; and inviting to those things which are of God in godly wise, because he, the Maker and Redeemer of all men, who had he come in the majesty of his Godhead into the world, might have terrified mortals, preferred to descend through his inestimable clemency and humility to the estate of us whom he had created and thus to redeem us, who also expects from us a willing confession of the true faith.

And this it is that the blessed Peter, the prince of the Apostles, teaches: "Feed the flock of Christ which is among you, not by constraint, but willingly, exhorting it according to God." Therefore, encouraged by these imperial decrees, O most meek lords of all things, and relieved from the depths of affliction and raised to the hope of consolation, I have begun, refreshed somewhat by a better confidence, to comply with promptness with the things which were sometime ago bidden by the Sacra of your gentlest fortitude, and am endeavouring in obedience therewith to find persons, such as our deficient times and the quality of this obedient province permit, and taking advice with my fellow-servant bishops, as well concerning the approaching synod of this Apostolic See, as concerning our own clergy, the lovers of the Christian Empire, and, afterwards concerning the religious servants of God, that I might exhort them to follow in haste the footsteps of your most pious Tranquillity. And, were it not that the great compass of the provinces, in which our humility's council is situated had caused so great a loss of time, our servitude a while ago could have fulfilled with studious obedience what even now has scarcely been done. For while from the various provinces a council has been gathering about us, and while we have been able to select some persons of those from this very Roman city immediately subject to your most serene power, or from those near by, others again we have been obliged to wait for from far distant provinces, in which the word of Christian faith was preached by those sent by the predecessors of my littleness; and thus quite a space of time has elapsed: and I pass over my bodily pains in consequence of which life to a perpetually suffering person is neither possible nor pleasant. Therefore, most Christian lords and sons, in accordance with the most pious jussio of your God-protected clemency, we have had a care to send, with the devotion of a prayerful heart (from the obedience we owe you, not because

we relied on the [superabundant] knowledge of those whom we send to you), our fellow-servants here present, Abundantius, John, and John, our most reverend brother bishops, Theodore and George our most beloved sons and presbyters, with our most beloved son John, a deacon, and with Constantine, a subdeacon of this holy spiritual mother, the Apostolic See, as well as Theodore, the presbyter legate of the holy Church of Ravenna and the religious servants of God the monks. For, among men placed amid the Gentiles, and earning their daily bread by bodily labour with considerable distraction, how could a knowledge of the Scriptures, in its fulness, be found unless what has been canonically defined by our holy and apostolic predecessors, and by the venerable five councils, we preserve in simplicity of heart, and without any distorting keep the faith come to us from the Fathers, always desirous and endeavouring to possess that one and chiefest good, viz.: that nothing be diminished from the things canonically defined, and that nothing be changed nor added thereto, but that those same things, both in words and sense, be guarded untouched? To these same commissioners we also have given the witness of some of the holy Fathers, whom this Apostolic Church of Christ receives, together with their books, so that, having obtained from the power of your most benign Christianity the privilege of suggesting, they might out of these endeavour to give satisfaction, (when your imperial Meekness shall have so commanded) as to what this Apostolic Church of Christ, their spiritual mother and the mother of your God-sprung empire, believes and preaches, not in words of worldly eloquence, which are not at the command of ordinary men, but in the integrity of the apostolic faith, in which having been taught from the cradle, we pray that we may serve and obey the Lord of heaven, the Propagator of your Christian empire, even unto the end. Consequently, we have granted them faculty or authority with your most tranquil mightiness, to afford satisfaction with simplicity whenever your clemency shall command, it being enjoined on them as a limitation that they presume not to add to, take away, or to change anything; but that they set forth this tradition of the Apostolic See in all sincerity as it has been taught by the apostolic pontiffs, who were our predecessors. For these delegates we most humbly implore with bent knees of the mind your clemency ever full of condescension, that agreeably to the most benign and most august promise of the imperial Sacra, your Christlike Tranquillity may deem them worthy of acceptance and may deign to give a favourable hearing to their most humble suggestions. Thus may your meekest Piety find the ears of Almighty God open to your prayers, and may you order that they return to their own unharmed in their rectitude of our Apostolic faith, as well as in the integrity of their bodies. And thus may the supernal Majesty restore to the benign rule of your government through the most heroic and unconquerable labours of your God-strengthened clemency, the whole Christian commonwealth, and may he subdue hostile nations to your mighty sceptre, that there may be satisfaction from this time forth to every soul and to all nations, because what you deigned to promise solemnly by your most august letters about the immunity and safety of those who came to the Council, you have fulfilled in all respects. It is not their wisdom that gave us confidence to make bold to send them to your pious presence; but our littleness obediently complied with what your imperial benignity, with a gracious order, exhorted to. And briefly we shall intimate to your divinely instructed Piety, what the strength of our Apostolic faith contains,

which we have received through Apostolic tradition and through the tradition of the Apostolical pontiffs, and that of the five holy general synods, through which the foundations of Christ's Catholic Church have been strengthened and established; this then is the status [and the regular tradition³²⁷] of our Evangelical and Apostolic faith, to wit, that as we confess the holy and inseparable Trinity, that is, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, to be of one deity, of one nature and substance or essence, so we will profess also that it has one natural will, power, operation, domination, majesty, potency, and glory. And whatever is said of the same Holy Trinity essentially in singular number we understand to refer to the one nature of the three consubstantial Persons, having been so taught by canonical logic. But when we make a confession concerning one of the same three Persons of that Holy Trinity, of the Son of God, or God the Word, and of the mystery of his adorable dispensation according to the flesh, we assert that all things are double in the one and the same our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Evangelical tradition, that is to say, we confess his two natures, to wit the divine and the human, of which and in which he, even after the wonderful and inseparable union, subsists. And we confess that each of his natures has its own natural propriety, and that the divine, has all things that are divine, without any sin. And we recognize that each one (of the two natures) of the one and the same incarnated, that is, humanated (*humanati*) Word of God is in him unconfusedly, inseparably and unchangeably, intelligence alone discerning a unity, to avoid the error of confusion. For we equally detest the blasphemy of division and of commixture. For when we confess two natures and two natural wills, and two natural operations in our one Lord Jesus Christ, we do not assert that they are contrary or opposed one to the other (as those who err from the path of truth and accuse the apostolic tradition of doing. Far be this impiety from the hearts of the faithful!), nor as though separated (*per se* separated) in two persons or subsistences, but we say that as the same our Lord Jesus Christ has two natures so also he has two natural wills and operations, to wit, the divine and the human: the divine will and operation he has in common with the coessential Father from all eternity: the human, he has received from us, taken with our nature in time. This is the apostolic and evangelic tradition, which the spiritual mother of your most felicitous empire, the Apostolic Church of Christ, holds.

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This is the pure expression of piety. This is the true and immaculate profession of the Christian religion, not invented by human cunning, but which was taught by the Holy Ghost through the princes of the Apostles. This is the firm and irreprehensible doctrine of the holy Apostles, the integrity of the sincere piety of which, so long as it is preached freely, defends the empire of your Tranquillity in the Christian commonwealth, and exults [will defend it, will render it stable; and exulting], and (as we firmly trust) will demonstrate it full of happiness. Believe your most humble [servant], my most Christian lords and sons, that I am pouring forth these prayers with my tears, or its stability and exultation [*in Greek* exaltation]. And these things I (although unworthy and insignificant) dare advise through my sincere love, because your God-granted victory is our salvation, the happiness of your Tranquillity is our joy, the harmlessness of your kindness is the security of

³²⁷ Only in the Latin.

our littleness. And therefore I beseech you with a contrite heart and rivers of tears, with prostrated mind, deign to stretch forth your most clement right hand to the Apostolic doctrine which the co-worker of your pious labours, the blessed apostle Peter, has delivered, that it be not hidden under a bushel, but that it be preached in the whole earth more shrilly than a bugle: because the true confession thereof for which Peter was pronounced blessed by the Lord of all things, was revealed by the Father of heaven, for he received from the Redeemer of all himself, by three commendations, the duty of feeding the spiritual sheep of the Church; under whose protecting shield, this Apostolic Church of his has never turned away from the path of truth in any direction of error, whose authority, as that of the Prince of all the Apostles, the whole Catholic Church, and the Ecumenical Synods have faithfully embraced, and followed in all things; and all the venerable Fathers have embraced its Apostolic doctrine, through which they as the most approved luminaries of the Church of Christ have shone; and the holy orthodox doctors have venerated and followed it, while the heretics have pursued it with false criminations and with derogatory hatred. This is the living tradition of the Apostles of Christ, which his Church holds everywhere, which is chiefly to be loved and fostered, and is to be preached with confidence, which conciliates with God through its truthful confession, which also renders one commendable to Christ the Lord, which keeps the Christian empire of your Clemency, which gives far-reaching victories to your most pious Fortitude from the Lord of heaven, which accompanies you in battle, and defeats your foes; which protects on every side as an impregnable wall your God-sprung empire, which throws terror into opposing nations, and smites them with the divine wrath, which also in wars celestially gives triumphal palms over the downfall and subjection of the enemy, and ever guards your most faithful sovereignty secure and joyful in peace. For this is the rule of the true faith, which this spiritual mother of your most tranquil empire, the Apostolic Church of Christ, has both in prosperity and in adversity always held and defended with energy; which, it will be proved, by the grace of Almighty God, has never erred from the path of the apostolic tradition, nor has she been depraved by yielding to heretical innovations, but from the beginning she has received the Christian faith from her founders, the princes of the Apostles of Christ, and remains undefiled unto the end, according to the divine promise of the Lord and Saviour himself, which he uttered in the holy Gospels to the prince of his disciples: saying, "Peter, Peter, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that (thy) faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Let your tranquil Clemency therefore consider, since it is the Lord and Saviour of all, whose faith it is, that promised that Peter's faith should not fail and exhorted him to strengthen his brethren, how it is known to all that the Apostolic pontiffs, the predecessors of my littleness, have always confidently done this very thing: of whom also our littleness, since I have received this ministry by divine designation, wishes to be the follower, although unequal to them and the least of all. For woe is me, if I neglect to preach the truth of my Lord, which they have sincerely preached. Woe is me, if I cover over with silence the truth which I am bidden to give to the exchangers, i.e., to teach to the Christian people and imbue it therewith. What shall I say in the future examination by Christ himself, if I blush (which God forbid!) to preach here the truth of his words? What satisfaction

shall I be able to give for myself, what for the souls committed to me, when he demands a strict account of the office I have received? Who, then, my most clement and most pious lords and sons, (I speak trembling and prostrate in spirit) would not be stirred by that admirable promise, which is made to the faithful: "Whoever shall confess me before men, him also will I confess before my Father, who is in heaven"? And which one even of the infidels shall not be terrified by that most severe threat, in which he protests that he will be full of wrath, and declares that "Whoever shall deny me before men, him also will I deny before my Father, who is in heaven"? Whence also blessed Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, gives warning and says: "But though we, or an angel from the heaven should preach to you any other Gospel from what we have evangelized to you, let him be anathema." Since, therefore, such an extremity of punishment overhangs the corruptors, or suppressors of truth by silence, would not any one flee from an attempt at curtailing the truth of the Lord's faith? Wherefore the predecessors of Apostolic memory of my littleness, learned in the doctrine of the Lord, ever since the prelates of the Church of Constantinople have been trying to introduce into the immaculate Church of Christ an heretical innovation, have never ceased to exhort and warn them with many prayers, that they should, at least by silence, desist from the heretical error of the depraved dogma, lest from this they make the beginning of a split in the unity of the Church, by asserting one will, and one operation of the two natures in the one Jesus Christ our Lord: a thing which the Arians and the Apollinarists, the Eutychians, the Timotheans, the Acephali, the Theodosians and the Gaianitæ taught, and every heretical madness, whether of those who confound, or of those who divide the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ. Those that confound the mystery of the holy Incarnation, inasmuch as they say that there is one nature of the deity and humanity of Christ, contend that he has one will, as of one, and (one) personal operation. But they who divide, on the other hand, the inseparable union, unite the two natures which they acknowledge that the Saviour possesses, not however in an union which is recognized to be hypostatic; but blasphemously join them by concord, through the affection of the will, like two subsistences, i.e., two somebodies. Moreover, the Apostolic Church of Christ, the spiritual mother of your God-founded empire, confesses one Jesus Christ our Lord existing of and in two natures, and she maintains that his two natures, to wit, the divine and the human, exist in him unconfused even after their inseparable union, and she acknowledges that each of these natures of Christ is perfect in the proprieties of its nature, and she confesses that all things belonging to the proprieties of the natures are double, because the same our Lord Jesus Christ himself is both perfect God and perfect man, of two and in two natures: and after his wonderful Incarnation, his deity cannot be thought of without his humanity, nor his humanity without his deity. Consequently, therefore, according to the rule of the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, she also confesses and preaches that there are in him two natural wills and two natural operations. For if anybody should mean a personal will, when in the holy Trinity there are said to be three Persons, it would be necessary that there should be asserted three personal wills, and three personal operations (which is absurd and truly profane). Since, as the truth of the Christian faith holds, the will is natural, where the one nature of the holy and inseparable Trinity is spoken of, it must be consistently understood that there is one

natural will, and one natural operation. But when in truth we confess that in the one person of our Lord Jesus Christ the mediator between God and men, there are two natures (that is to say the divine and the human), even after his admirable union, just as we canonically confess the two natures of one and the same person, so too we confess his two natural wills and two natural operations. But that the understanding of this truthful confession may become clear to your Piety's mind from the God-inspired doctrine of the Old and the New Testament, (for your Clemency is incomparably more able to penetrate the meaning of the sacred Scriptures, than our littleness to set it forth in flowing words), our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is true and perfect God, and true and perfect man, in his holy Gospels shews forth in some instances human things, in others, divine, and still in others both together, making a manifestation concerning himself in order that he might instruct his faithful to believe and preach that he is both true God and true man. Thus as man he prays to the Father to take away the cup of suffering, because in him our human nature was complete, sin only excepted, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." And in another passage: "Not my will, but thine be done." If we wish to know the meaning of which testimony as explained by the holy and approved Fathers, and truly to understand what "my will," what "thine" signify, the blessed Ambrose in his second book to the Emperor Gratian, of blessed memory, teaches us the meaning of this passage in these words, saying: "He then, receives my will, he takes my sorrow, I confidently call it sorrow as I am speaking of the cross, mine is the will, which he calls his, because he bears my sorrow as man, he spoke as a man, and therefore he says: 'Not as I will but as thou wilt.'" Mine is the sadness which he has received according to my affection.³²⁸ See, most pious of princes, how clearly here this holy Father sets forth that the words our Lord used in his prayer, "Not my will," pertain to his humanity; through which also he is said, according to the teaching of Blessed Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, to have "become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Wherefore also it is taught us that he was obedient to his parents, which must piously be understood to refer to his voluntary obedience, not according to his divinity (by which he governs all things), but according to his humanity, by which he spontaneously submitted himself to his parents. St. Luke the Evangelist likewise bears witness to the same thing, telling how the same our Lord Jesus Christ prayed according to his humanity to his Father, and said, "Father, if it be possible let the cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done," — which passage Athanasius, the Confessor of Christ, and Archbishop of the Church of Alexandria, in his book against Apollinaris the heretic, concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation, also understanding the wills to be two, thus explains: And when he says, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done," and again, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" he shews that there are two wills, the one human which is the will of the flesh, but the other divine. For his human will, out of the weakness of the flesh was fleeing away from the passion, but his divine will was ready for it. What truer explanation could be found? For how is it possible not to acknowledge in him two wills, to wit, a human and

³²⁸ Meo affectu: κατ' ἐμὴν διάθεσιν.

a divine, when in him, even after the inseparable union, there are two natures according to the definitions of the synods? For John also, who leaned upon the Lord's breast, his beloved disciple, shews forth the same self-restraint in these words: "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of the Father that sent me." And again: "This is the will of him that sent me, that of all that he gave me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Again he introduces the Lord as disputing with the Jews, and saying among other things: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." On the meaning of which divine words blessed Augustine, a most illustrious doctor, thus writes in his book against Maximinus the Arian. He says, "When the Son says to the Father 'Not what I will, but what thou wilt,' what doth it profit thee, that thou broughtest thy words into subjection and sayest, It shews truly that his will was subject to his Father, as though we would deny that the will of man should be subject to the will of God? For that the Lord said this in his human nature, anyone will quickly see who studies attentively this place of the Gospel. For therein he says, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.' Can this possibly be said of the nature of the One Word? But, O man, who thinkest to make the nature of the Holy Ghost to groan, why do you say that the nature of the Only-begotten Word of God cannot be sad? But to prevent anyone arguing in this way, he does not say 'I am sad;' (and even if he had so said, it could properly only have been understood of his human nature) but he says 'My soul is sad,' which soul he has as man; however in this also which he said, 'Not what I will' he shewed that he willed something different from what the Father did, which he could not have done except in his human nature, since he did not introduce our infirmity into his divine nature, but would transfigure human affection. For had he not been made man, the Only Word could in no way have said to the Father, 'Not what I will.' For it could never be possible for that immutable nature to will anything different from what the Father willed. If you would but make this distinction, O ye Arians, ye would not be heretics."

In this disputation this venerable Father shews that when the Lord says "his own" he means the will of his humanity, and when he says not to do "his own will," he teaches us not chiefly to seek our own wills but that through obedience we should submit our wills to the Divine Will. From all which it is evident that he had a human will by which he obeyed his Father, and that he had in himself this same human will immaculate from all sin, as true God and man. Which thing St. Ambrose also thus treats of in his explanation of St. Luke the Evangelist.

[After this follows a catena of Patristic quotations which I have not thought worth while to produce in full. After St. Ambrose he cites St. Leo, then St. Gregory Nazianzen, then St. Augustine. (L. & C., col. 647.)]

From which testimonies it is clear that each of those natures which the spiritual Doctor has here enumerated has its own natural property, and that to each one a will ought to be assigned. For an angelic nature cannot have a divine or a human will, neither can a human nature have a divine or an angelic will. For no nature can have anything or any motion which pertains to another nature but only that which is naturally given by creation. And as this is the truth of the matter it is most

certainly clear that we must needs confess that in our Lord Jesus Christ there are two natures and substances, to wit, the Divine and human, united in his one subsistence or person, and that we further confess that there are in him two natural wills, viz.: the divine and the human, for his divinity so far as its nature is concerned could not be said to possess a human will, nor should his humanity be believed to have naturally a divine will: And again, neither of these two substances of Christ must be confessed as being without a natural will; but his human will was lifted up by the omnipotency of his divinity, and his divine will was revealed to men through his humanity. Therefore it is necessary to refer to him as God such things as are divine, and as man such things as are human; and each must be truly recognized through the hypostatic union of the one and the same our Lord Jesus Christ, which the most true decree of the Council of Chalcedon sets forth—[*Here follows citation.*] This same thing also the holy synod which was gathered together in Constantinople in the time of the Emperor Justinian of august memory, teaches in the viith. chapter of its definitions. [*Here follows the citation.*] Moreover it is necessary that we should faithfully keep what those Venerable Synods taught, so that we never take away the difference of natures as a result of the union, but confess one Christ, true and perfect God and also true and perfect man, the propriety of each nature being kept intact. Wherefore, if in no respect the difference of the natures of our Lord Jesus Christ has been taken away, it is necessary that we preserve this same difference in all its proprieties. For whoso teaches that the difference is in no respect to be taken away, declares that it must be preserved in all things. But when the heretics and the followers of heretics say that there is but one will and one operation, how is this difference recognized? Or where is the difference which has been defined by this holy Synod preserved? While if it is asserted that there is but one will in him (which is absurd), those who make this assertion must needs say that that will is either human or divine, or else composite from both, mixed and confused, or (according to the teaching of all heretics) that Christ has one will and one operation, proceeding from his one composite nature (as they hold). And thus, without any doubt, the difference of nature is destroyed, which the holy synods declared to be preserved in all respects even after the admirable union. Because, though they taught that Christ was one, his person and substance one, yet on account of the union of the natures which was made hypostatically, they likewise decreed that we should clearly acknowledge and teach the difference of those natures which were united in him, after the admirable union. Therefore if the proprieties of the natures in the same our one Lord Jesus Christ were preserved on account of the difference [of the natures], it is congruous that we should with full faith confess also the difference of his natural wills and operations, in order that we may be shown to have followed in all respects their doctrine, and may admit into the Church of Christ no heretical novelty.

And although there exist numerous works of the other holy Fathers, nevertheless we subjoin to this our humble exposition a few testimonies out of the books which are in Greek, for the sake of fastidiousness.³²⁹

[Here follows a catena of passages from the Greek fathers, viz.: St. Gregory Theologus, St. Gregory Nyssen, St. John bishop of Constantinople, St. Cyril, bishop of Alexandria. (L. & C., col. 654.)]

From these truthful testimonies it is also demonstrated that these venerable fathers predicated in the one and the same Lord Jesus Christ two natural wills, viz.: a divine and a human, for when St. Gregory Nazianzen says, "The willing of that man who is understood to be the Saviour," he shows that the human will of the Saviour was deified through its union with the Word, and therefore it is not contrary to God. So likewise he proves that he had a human, although deified will, and this same he had (as he teaches in what follows) as well as his divine will, which was one and the same with that of the Father. If therefore he had a divine and a deified will, he had also two wills. For what is divine by nature has no need of being deified; and what is deified is not truly divine by nature. And when St. Gregory Nyssen, a great bishop, says that the true confession of the mystery is, that there should be understood one human will and another a divine will in Christ, what does he bid us understand when he says one and another will, except that there are manifestly two wills?

[He next proceeds to comment upon the passage cited from St. John, then upon that from St. Cyril of Alexandria. After this follow quotations from St. Hilary, St. Athanasius, St. Denys the Areopagite, St. Ambrose, St. Leo, St. Gregory Nyssen, St. Cyril of Alexandria, which are next commented on in their order. He then proceeds: (L. & C., col. 662.)]

There are not lacking most telling passages in other of the venerable fathers, who speak clearly of the two natural operations in Christ, not to mention St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John of Constantinople, or those who afterwards conducted the laborious conflicts in defence of the venerable council of Chalcedon and of the Tome of St. Leo against the heretics from whose error the assertion of this new dogma has arisen: that is to say, John, bishop of Scythopolis, Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria, Euphræmius and Anastasius the elder, most worthy rulers of the church of Theopolis, and above all that emulator of the true and apostolic faith, the Emperor Justinian of pious memory, whose uprightness of faith exalted the Christian State as much as his sincere confession pleased God. And his pious memory is esteemed worthy of veneration by all nations, whose uprightness of faith was disseminated with praise throughout the whole world by his most august edicts: one of these, to wit, that addressed to Zoilus, the patriarch of Alexandria, against the heresy of the Acephali to satisfy them of the rectitude of the apostolic faith, we offer to your most tranquil Christianity, sending it together with this paper of our lowliness through the same carriers. But

³²⁹ Propter fastidium, what this may mean I have no idea; the Greek is still more extraordinary: ῥαθυμίας (vel. βαρυθυμίας) χάριν.

lest this declaration should be thought burdensome on account of its length, we have inserted in this declaration of our humility only a few of the testimonies of the Holy Fathers, especially [when writing to those] on whom the care and arrangement of the whole world as on a firm foundation are recognized to rest; since this is altogether incomparable and great, that the care of the whole Christian State being laid aside for a little out of love and zeal for true religion, your august and most religious clemency should desire to understand more clearly the doctrine of apostolical preaching. For from the different approved fathers the truth of the Orthodox faith has become clear although the treatment is short. For the approved fathers thought it to be superfluous to discourse at length upon what was evident and clear to all; for who, even if he be dull of wit, does not perceive what is evident to all? For it is impossible and contrary to the order of nature that there should be a nature without a natural operation: and even the heretics did not dare to say this, although they were, all of them, hunting for human craftiness and cunning questions against the orthodoxy of the faith, and arguments agreeable to their depravities.

How then can that now be asserted which never was said by the holy orthodox fathers, nor even was presumptuously invented by the profane heretics, viz.: that of the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human, the proprieties of each of which are recognized as being preserved in Christ, that anyone in sound mind should declare there was but one operation? Since if there is one, let them say whether it be temporal or eternal, divine or human, uncreated or created: the same as that of the Father or different from that of the Father. If therefore it is one, that one and the same must be common to the divinity and to the humanity (which is absurd), therefore while the Son of God, who is both God and man, wrought human things on earth, likewise also the Father worked with him according to his nature (naturaliter, φυσικῶς); for what things the Father doeth these the Son also doeth likewise. But if (as is the truth) the human acts which Christ did are to be referred to his person alone as the Son, which is not the same as that of the Father; in one nature Christ worked one set of works, and in the other another, so that according to his divinity the Son does the same things that the Father does; and likewise according to his humanity, what things are proper to the manhood, those same, he as man, did because he is truly both God and man. For which reason we rightly believe that that same person, since he is one, has two natural operations, to wit, the divine and the human, one uncreated, and the other created, as true and perfect God and as true and perfect man, the one and the same, the mediator between God and men, the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore from the quality of the operations there is recognized a difference void of offence (ἀπρόσκοπος) of the natures which are joined in Christ through the hypostatic union. We now proceed to cite some passages from the execrable writings of the heretics hated of God,³³⁰ whose words and sayings we equally abominate, for the demonstration of those things which our inventors of new dogma have followed teaching that in Christ there is but one will and one operation.

³³⁰ The meaning of this passage is clear enough but the text is slightly corrupt.

[*Then follow quotations from Apollinaris, Severus, Theodosius of Alexandria. (L. & C., col. 667.)*]

Behold, most pious lords and sons, by the testimonies of the holy Fathers, as by spiritual rays, the doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church has been illustrated and the darkness of heretical blindness, which is offering error to men for imitation, has been revealed. Now it is necessary that the new doctrine should follow somebody, and by whose authority it is supported, we shall note.

[*Here follow quotations from Cyrus of Alexandria, Theodore of Pharon, Sergius of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, Paulus his successor, Peter his successor. (L. & C., col. 670.)*]

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Let then your God-founded clemency with the internal eye of discrimination, which for the guidance of the Christian people you have been deemed worthy to receive by the Grace of God, take heed which one of such doctors you think the Christian people should follow, the doctrine of which one of these they should embrace so as to be saved; for they condemn all, and each one of them the other, according as the various and unstable definitions in their writings assert sometimes that there is one will and one operation, sometimes that there is neither one nor two operations, sometimes one will and operation, and again two wills and two operations, likewise one will and one operation, and again neither one, nor two, and somebody else one and two.

Who does not hate, and rage against, and avoid such blind errors, if he have any desire to be saved and seek to offer to the Lord at his coming a right faith? Therefore the Holy Church of God, the mother of your most Christian power, should be delivered and liberated with all your might (through the help of God) from the errors of such teachers, and the evangelical and apostolic uprightness of the orthodox faith, which has been established upon the firm rock of this Church of blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, which by his grace and guardianship remains free from all error, [that faith I say] the whole number of rulers and priests, of the clergy and of the people, unanimously should confess and preach with us as the true declaration of the Apostolic tradition, in order to please God and to save their own souls.

And these things we have taken pains to insert in the tractate of our humility, for we have been afflicted and have groaned without ceasing that such grievous errors should be entertained by bishops of the Church, who are zealous to establish their own peculiar views rather than the truth of the faith, and think that our sincere fraternal admonition has its spring in a contempt for them. And indeed the apostolic predecessors of my humility admonished, begged, upbraided, besought, reproved, and exercised every kind of exhortation that the recent wound might receive a remedy, moved thereto not by a mind filled with hatred (God is my witness) nor through the elation of boasting, nor through the opposition of contention, nor through an inane desire to find some fault with their teachings, nor through anything akin to the love of arrogance, but out of zeal for the uprightness of the truth, and for the rule of the confession of the pure Gospel, and for the salvation of souls, and for the stability of the Christian state, and for the safety of those who rule the Roman Empire. Nor did they cease from their admonitions after the long duration of this domesticated

error, but always exhorted and bore record, and that with fraternal charity, not through malice or pertinacious hatred (far be it from the Christian heart to rejoice at another's fall, when the Lord of all teaches, "I desire not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live;" and who rejoiceth over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-and-nine just persons: who came down from heaven to earth to deliver the lost sheep, inclining the power of his majesty), but desiring them with outstretched spiritual arms, and exhorting to embrace them returning to the unity of the orthodox faith, and awaiting their conversion to the full rectitude of the orthodox faith: that they might not make themselves aliens from our communion, that is from the communion of blessed Peter the Apostle, whose ministry, we (though unworthy) exercise, and preach the faith he has handed down, but that they should together with us pray Christ the Lord, the spotless sacrifice, for the stability of your most strong and serene Empire.

We believe, most pious lords [singular in the Latin] of all things, that there has been left no possible ambiguity which can prevent the recognizing of those who have followed the inventors of new dogma. For the sweetness of spiritual understanding with which the sayings of the Fathers are full has become evident to the eyes of all; and the stench of the heretics, to be avoided by all the faithful, has been made notorious. Nor has it remained unknown that the inventors of new dogma have been shewn to be the followers of heretics, and not the walkers in the footsteps of the holy Fathers: therefore whoever wishes to colour any error of his whatever, is condemned by the light of truth, as the Apostle of the Gentiles says, "For everything that doth make manifest is light," for the truth ever remains constant and the same, but falsehood is ever varying, and in its wanderings adopting things mutually contradictory. On this account the inventors of the new dogma have been shewn to have taught things mutually contradictory, because they were not willing to be followers of the Evangelical and Apostolic faith. Wherefore since the truth has shone forth by the observations of your God-inspired piety, and falsity which has been exposed has attained the contempt which it deserved, it remains that the crowned truth may shine forth victoriously through the pious favours of your God-crowned clemency; and that the error of novelty with its inventors and with those who follow their doctrine, may receive the punishment due their presumption, and be cast forth from the midst of the orthodox prelates for the heretical pravity of their innovation, which into the holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ they have endeavoured to introduce, and to stain with the contagion of heretical pravity the indivisible and unspotted body of the Church [of Christ]. For it is not just that the injurious should injure the innocent, nor that the offences of some should be visited upon the inoffensive, for even if in this world to the condemned mercy is extended, yet they who are thus spared reap for that sparing no benefit in the judgment of God, and by those thus sparing them there is incurred no little danger for their unlawful compassion.

But we believe that Almighty God has reserved for the happy days of your gentleness the amending of these things, that filling on earth the place and zeal of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who has vouchsafed to crown your rule, ye may judge just judgment for his Evangelical and Apostolic truth: for although he be the Redeemer and Saviour of the human race yet he suffered injury, and bore it even until now, and inspired the empire of your fortitude, so that you should be

worthy to follow the cause of his faith (as equity demanded, and as the determination of the Holy Fathers and of the Five General Synods decreed), and that you should avenge, through his guardianship, on the spurners of his faith, the injury done your Redeemer and Colleague in reigning, thus fulfilling magnanimously with imperial clemency that prophetic utterance with which David the King and Prophet, spake to God, saying, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Wherefore having been extolled for so God-pleasing a zeal, he was deemed fit to hear that blessed word spoken by the Creator of all men, "I have found David, a man after my heart, who will do all my will." And to him also it was promised in the Psalms, "I have found David, my servant, with my holy oil have I anointed him: My hand shall aid him and my arm shall comfort him," so that the most pious majesty of your Christian clemency may work to further the cause of Christ with burning zeal for the sake of remuneration, and may he make all the acts of your most powerful empire both happy and prosperous, who hath stored up his promise in the Holy Gospels, saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you." For all, to whom has come the knowledge of the sacred heads,³³¹ have been offering innumerable thanksgivings and unceasing praises to the defender of your most powerful dominion, being filled with admiration for the greatness of your clemency, in that you have so benignly set forth the kind intention of your august magnanimity; for in truth, as most pious and most just princes, you have deigned to treat divine things with the fear of God, having promised every immunity to those persons sent to you from our littleness.

And we are confident that what your pious clemency has promised, you are powerful to carry out, in order that what has been vowed and promised to God by the religious philanthropy beyond your Christian power, may nevertheless be fulfilled by the aid of his omnipotency.

Wherefore let praise by all Christian nations, and eternal memory, and frequent prayer be poured forth before the Lord Christ, whose is the cause, for your safety, and your triumphs, and your complete victory, that the nations of the Gentiles, being impressed by the terror of the supernal majesty, may lay down most humbly their necks beneath the sceptre of your most powerful rule, that the power of your most pious kingdom may continue until the ceaseless joy of the eternal kingdom succeeds to this temporal reign. Nor could anything be found more likely to commend the clemency of your unconquerable fortitude to the divine majesty, than that those who err from the rule of truth should be repelled and the integrity of our Evangelical and Apostolic faith should be everywhere set forth and preached.

Moreover, most pious and God-instructed sons and lords, if the Archbishop of the Church of Constantinople shall choose to hold and to preach with us this most unblameable rule of Apostolic doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures, of the venerable synods, of the spiritual Fathers, according to their evangelical understanding, through which the form of the truth has been set forth by us through the assistance of the Spirit, there will ensue great peace to them that love the name of God, and there will remain no scandal of dissension, and that will come to pass which is recorded in the Acts

³³¹ *I.e.*, the imperial edicts.

of the Apostles, when through the grace of the Holy Spirit the people had come to the acknowledging of Christianity, all of us will be of one heart and of one mind. But if (which God forbid!) he shall prefer to embrace the novelty but lately introduced by others; and shall ensnare himself with doctrines which are alien to the rule of orthodox truth and of our Apostolic faith, to decline which as injurious to souls these have put off, despite the exhortation and admonitions of our predecessors in the Apostolic See, down to this day, he himself should know what kind of an answer he will have to give for such contempt in the divine examination of Christ before the judge of all, who is in heaven, to whom when he cometh to judgment also we ourselves are about to give an account of the ministry of preaching the truth which has been committed to us, or for the toleration of things contrary to the Christian religion: and may we (as I humbly pray) preserve unconfusedly and freely, with simplicity and purity, whole and undefiled, the Apostolic and Evangelical rule of the right faith as we have received it from the beginning. And may your most august serenity, for the affection and reverence which you bear to the Catholic and Apostolic right faith, receive the perfect reward of your pious labours from our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the ruler with you of your Christian empire, whose true confession you desire to preserve undefiled, because nothing in any respect has been neglected or omitted by your God-crowned clemency, which could minister to the peace of the churches, provided always that the integrity of the true faith was maintained: since God, the Judge of all, who disposes the ending of all matters as he deems most expedient, seeks out the intent of the heart, and will accept a zeal for piety. Therefore I exhort you, O most pious and clement Emperor, and together with my littleness every Christian man exhorts you on bended knee with all humility, that to all the God-pleasing goodnesses and admirable imperial benefits which the heavenly condescension has vouchsafed to grant to the human race through your God-accepted care, this also you would order, for the redintegration of perfect piety, to offer an acceptable sacrifice to Christ the Lord your fellow-ruler, granting entire impunity, and free faculty of speech to each one wishing to speak, and to urge a word in defence of the faith which he believes and holds, so that it may most manifestly be recognized by all that by no terror, by no force, by no threat or aversion any one wishing to speak for the truth of the Catholic and Apostolic faith, has been prohibited or repulsed, and that all unanimously may glorify your imperial (*divinam*) majesty, throughout the whole space of their lives for so great and so inestimable a good, and may pour forth unceasing prayers to Christ the Lord that your most strong empire may be preserved untouched and exalted. The Subscription. May the grace from above keep your empire, most pious lords, and place beneath its feet the neck of all the nations.



The Letter of Agatho and of the Roman Synod of 125 Bishops which was to Serve as an Instruction to the Legates Sent to Attend the Sixth Synod.

(Found in Labbe and Cossart, Concilia, Tom. VI., col. 677 et seqq., and in Migne, Pat. Lat. Tom. LXXXVII., col. 1215 et seqq. [This last text, which is Mansi's, I have followed].)

To the most pious Lords and most serene victors and conquerors, our own sons beloved of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, Constantine, the great Emperor, and Heraclius and Tiberius, Augustuses, Agatho, the bishop and servant of the servants of God, together with all the synods subject to the council of the Apostolic See.

[The Letter opens with a number of compliments to the Emperor, much in style and matter like the introduction of the preceding letter. I have not thought it worth while to translate this, but have begun at the doctrinal part, which is given to the reader in full. (Labbe and Cossart, col. 682.)]

We believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in his only-begotten Son, who was begotten of him before all worlds; very God of Very God, Light of Light, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, that is of the same substance as the Father; by him were all things made which are in heaven and which are in earth; and in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, and with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; the Trinity in unity and Unity in trinity; a unity so far as essence is concerned, but a trinity of persons or subsistences; and so we confess God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; not three gods, but one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: not a subsistency of three names, but one substance of three subsistences; and of these persons one is the essence, or substance or nature, that is to say one is the godhead, one the eternity, one the power, one the kingdom, one the glory, one the adoration, one the essential will and operation of the same Holy and inseparable Trinity, which hath created all things, hath made disposition of them, and still contains them.

Moreover we confess that one of the same holy consubstantial Trinity, God the Word, who was begotten of the Father before the worlds, in the last days of the world for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost, and of our Lady, the holy, immaculate, ever-virgin and glorious Mary, truly and properly the Mother of God, that is to say according to the flesh which was born of her; and was truly made man, the same being very God and very man. God of God his Father, but man of his Virgin Mother, incarnate of her flesh with a reasonable and intelligent soul: of one substance with God the Father, as touching his godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching his manhood, and in all points like unto us, but without sin. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, he suffered, was buried and rose again; ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

And this same one Lord of ours, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, we acknowledge to subsist of and in two substances unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the difference of the natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the proprieties of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not scattered or

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divided into two Persons, nor confused into one composite nature; but we confess one and the same only-begotten Son, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, not one in another, nor one added to another, but himself the same in two natures—that is to say in the Godhead and in the manhood even after the hypostatic union: for neither was the Word changed into the nature of flesh, nor was the flesh transformed into the nature of the Word, for each remained what it was by nature. We discern by contemplation alone the distinction between the natures united in him of which inconfusedly, inseparably and unchangeably he is composed; for one is of both, and through one both, because there are together both the height of the deity and the humility of the flesh, each nature preserving after the union its own proper character without any defect; and each form acting in communion with the other what is proper to itself. The Word working what is proper to the Word, and the flesh what is proper to the flesh; of which the one shines with miracles, the other bows down beneath injuries. Wherefore, as we confess that he truly has two natures or substances, viz.: the Godhead and the manhood, inconfusedly, indivisibly and unchangeably [united], so also the rule of piety instructs us that he has two natural wills and two natural operations, as perfect God and perfect man, one and the same our Lord Jesus Christ. And this the apostolic and evangelical tradition and the authority of the Holy Fathers (whom the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church and the venerable Synods receive), has plainly taught us.

[The letter goes on to say that this is the traditional faith, and is that which was set forth in a council over which Pope Martin presided, and that those opposed to this faith have erred from the truth, some in one way, and some in another. It next apologizes for the delay in sending the persons ordered by the imperial Sacra, and proceeds thus: (Labbe and Cossart, col. 686; Migne, col. 1224).]

In the first place, a great number of us are spread over a vast extent of country even to the sea coast, and the length of their journey necessarily took much time. Moreover we were in hopes of being able to join to our humility our fellow-servant and brother bishop, Theodore, the archbishop and philosopher of the island of Great Britain, with others who have been kept there even till to-day; and to add to these divers bishops of this council who have their sees in different parts, that our humble suggestion [i.e., the doctrinal definition contained in the letters] might proceed from a council of wide-spread influence, lest if only a part were cognizant of what was being done, it might escape the notice of a part; and especially because among the Gentiles, as the Longobards, and the Sclavi, as also the Franks, the French, the Goths, and the Britains, there are known to be very many of our fellow-servants who do not cease curiously to enquire on the subject, that they may know what is being done in the cause of the Apostolic faith: who as they can be of advantage so long as they hold the true faith with us, and think in unison with us, so are they found troublesome and contrary, if (which may God forbid!) they stumble at any article of the faith. But we, although most humble, yet strive with all our might that the commonwealth of your Christian empire may be shown to be more sublime than all the nations, for in it has been founded the See of Blessed Peter, the prince of the Apostles, by the authority of which, all Christian nations venerate and worship with us, through the reverence of the blessed Apostle Peter himself. (*This is the Latin,*

which appears to me to be corrupt, the Greek reads as follows: “The authority of which for the truth, all the Christian nations together with us worship and revere, according to the honour of the blessed Peter the Apostle himself.”)

[The letter ends with prayers for constancy, and blessings on the State and Emperor, and hopes for the universal diffusion and acceptance of the truth.]



Extracts from the Acts.

Session VIII.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VI., col. 730.)

[The Emperor said]

Let George, the most holy archbishop of this our God-preserved city, and let Macarius, the venerable archbishop of Antioch, and let the synod subject to them [i.e., their suffragans] say, if they submit to the force (εἰ στοιχοῦσι τῇ δυνάμει) of the suggestions sent by the most holy Agatho Pope of Old³³² Rome and by his Synod.

[The answer of George, with which all his bishops, many of them, speaking one by one, agreed except Theodore of Metilene (who handed in his assent at the end of the Tenth Session).]

I have diligently examined the whole force of the suggestions sent to your most pious Fortitude, as well by Agatho, the most holy Pope of Old³³³ Rome, as by his synod, and I have scrutinized the works of the holy and approved Fathers, which are laid up in my venerable patriarchate, and I have found that all the testimonies of the holy and accepted Fathers, which are contained in those suggestions agree with, and in no particular differ from, the holy and accepted Fathers. Therefore I give my submission to them and thus I profess and believe.

[The answer of all the rest of the Bishops subject to the See of Constantinople. (Col. 735.)]

And we, most pious Lord, accepting the teaching of the suggestion sent to your most gentle Fortitude by the most holy and blessed Agatho, Pope of Old Rome, and of that other suggestion which was adopted by the council subject to him, and following the sense therein contained, so we are minded, so we profess, and so we believe that in our one Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, there are two natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, undividedly, and two natural wills and two natural

332 “Old” omitted in Latin.

333 “Old” omitted in Latin.

operations; and all who have taught, and who now say, that there is but one will and one operation in the two natures of our one Lord Jesus Christ our true God, we anathematize.

[*The Emperor's demand to Macarius.* (Col. 739.)]

Let Macarius, the Venerable Archbishop of Antioch, who has now heard what has been said by this holy and Ecumenical Synod [demanding the expression of his faith], answer what seemeth him good.

[*The answer of Macarius.*]

I do not say that there are two wills or two operations in the dispensation of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, but one will and one theandric operation.

The Sentence Against the Monothelites.

Session XIII.

(L. and C., *Concilia*, Tom. VI., col. 943.)

The holy council said: After we had reconsidered, according to our promise which we had made to your highness, the doctrinal letters of Sergius, at one time patriarch of this royal god-protected city to Cyrus, who was then bishop of Phasis and to Honorius some time Pope of Old Rome, as well as the letter of the latter to the same Sergius, we find that these documents are quite foreign to the apostolic dogmas, to the declarations of the holy Councils, and to all the accepted Fathers, and that they follow the false teachings of the heretics; therefore we entirely reject them, and execrate them as hurtful to the soul. But the names of those men whose doctrines we execrate must also be thrust forth from the holy Church of God, namely, that of Sergius some time bishop of this God-preserved royal city who was the first to write on this impious doctrine; also that of Cyrus of Alexandria, of Pyrrhus, Paul, and Peter, who died bishops of this God-preserved city, and were like-minded with them; and that of Theodore sometime bishop of Pharan, all of whom the most holy and thrice blessed Agatho, Pope of Old Rome, in his suggestion to our most pious and God-preserved lord and mighty Emperor, rejected, because they were minded contrary to our orthodox faith, all of whom we define are to be subjected to anathema. And with these we define that there shall be expelled from the holy Church of God and anathematized Honorius who was some time Pope of Old Rome, because of what we found written by him to Sergius, that in all respects he followed his view and confirmed his impious doctrines. We have also examined the synodal letter of Sophronius of holy memory, some time Patriarch of the Holy City of Christ our God, Jerusalem, and have found it in accordance with the true faith and with the Apostolic teachings, and with those of the holy approved Fathers. Therefore we have received it as orthodox and as

salutary to the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and have decreed that it is right that his name be inserted in the diptychs of the Holy Churches.

Session XVI.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VI., col. 1010.)

[*The Acclamations of the Fathers.*]

Many years to the Emperor! Many years to Constantine, our great Emperor! Many years to the Orthodox King! Many years to our Emperor that maketh peace! Many years to Constantine, a second Martian! Many years to Constantine, a new Theodosius! Many years to Constantine, a new Justinian! Many years to the keeper of the orthodox faith! O Lord preserve the foundation of the Churches! O Lord preserve the keeper of the faith!

Many years to Agatho, Pope of Rome! Many years to George, Patriarch of Constantinople! Many years to Theophanus, Patriarch of Antioch! Many years to the orthodox council! Many years to the orthodox Senate!

To Theodore of Pharan, the heretic, anathema! To Sergius, the heretic, anathema! To Cyrus, the heretic, anathema! To Honorius, the heretic, anathema! To Pyrrhus, the heretic, anathema!

To Paul the heretic, anathema!

To Peter the heretic, anathema!

To Macarius the heretic, anathema!

To Stephen the heretic, anathema!

To Polychronius the heretic, anathema!

To Apergius of Perga the heretic, anathema!

To all heretics, anathema! To all who side with heretics, anathema!

May the faith of the Christians increase, and long years to the orthodox and Ecumenical Council!



The Definition of Faith.

(*Found in the Acts, Session XVIII., L. and C., Concilia*, Tom. VI., col. 1019.)

The holy, great, and Ecumenical Synod which has been assembled by the grace of God, and the religious decree of the most religious and faithful and mighty Sovereign Constantine, in this God-protected and royal city of Constantinople, New Rome, in the Hall of the imperial Palace, called Trullus, has decreed as follows.

The only-begotten Son, and Word of God the Father, who was made man in all things like unto us without sin, Christ our true God, has declared expressly in the words of the Gospel, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And again, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Our most gentle Sovereign, the champion of orthodoxy, and opponent of evil doctrine, being reverentially led by this divinely uttered doctrine of peace, and having convened this our holy and Ecumenical assembly, has united the judgment of the whole Church. Wherefore this our holy and Ecumenical Synod having driven away the impious error which had prevailed for a certain time until now, and following closely the straight path of the holy and approved Fathers, has piously given its full assent to the five holy and Ecumenical Synods (that is to say, to that of the 318 holy Fathers who assembled in Nice against the raging Arius; and the next in Constantinople of the 150 God-inspired men against Macedonius the adversary of the Spirit, and the impious Apollinaris; and also the first in Ephesus of 200 venerable men convened against Nestorius the Judaizer; and that in Chalcedon of 630 God-inspired Fathers against Eutyches and Dioscorus hated of God; and in addition to these, to the last, that is the Fifth holy Synod assembled in this place, against Theodore of Mopsuestia, Origen, Didymus, and Evagrius, and the writings of Theodoret against the Twelve Chapters of the celebrated Cyril, and the Epistle which was said to be written by Ibas to Maris the Persian), renewing in all things the ancient decrees of religion, and chasing away the impious doctrines of irreligion. And this our holy and Ecumenical Synod inspired of God has set its seal to the Creed which was put forth by the 318 Fathers, and again religiously confirmed by the 150, which also the other holy synods cordially received and ratified for the taking away of every soul-destroying heresy.

The Nicene Creed of the 318 holy Fathers.

We believe, etc.

The Creed of the 150 holy Fathers assembled at Constantinople. We believe, etc.

The holy and Ecumenical Synod further says, this pious and orthodox Creed of the Divine grace would be sufficient for the full knowledge and confirmation of the orthodox faith. But as the author of evil, who, in the beginning, availed himself of the aid of the serpent, and by it brought the poison of death upon the human race, has not desisted, but in like manner now, having found suitable instruments for working out his will (we mean Theodorus, who was Bishop of Pharan, Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul and Peter, who were Archbishops of this royal city, and moreover, Honorius who was Pope of the elder Rome, Cyrus Bishop of Alexandria, Macarius who was lately bishop of Antioch, and Stephen his disciple), has actively employed them in raising up for the whole Church the stumbling-blocks of one will and one operation in the two natures of Christ our true God, one of the Holy Trinity; thus disseminating, in novel terms, amongst the orthodox people, an heresy similar to the mad and wicked doctrine of the impious Apollinaris, Severus, and Themistius, and endeavouring craftily to destroy the perfection of the incarnation of the same our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, by blasphemously representing his flesh endowed with a rational soul as devoid of will or operation. Christ, therefore, our God, has raised up our faithful Sovereign, a new David, having found him a man after his own heart, who as it is written, "has not suffered his eyes to sleep nor



his eyelids to slumber,” until he has found a perfect declaration of orthodoxy by this our God-collected and holy Synod; for, according to the sentence spoken of God, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” the present holy and Ecumenical Synod faithfully receiving and saluting with uplifted hands as well the suggestion which by the most holy and blessed Agatho, Pope of ancient Rome, was sent to our most pious and faithful Emperor Constantine, which rejected by name those who taught or preached one will and one operation in the dispensation of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ who is our very God, has likewise adopted that other synodal suggestion which was sent by the Council holden under the same most holy Pope, composed of 125 Bishops, beloved of God, to his God-instructed tranquillity, as consonant to the holy Council of Chalcedon and to the Tome of the most holy and blessed Leo, Pope of the same old Rome, which was directed to St. Flavian, which also this Council called the Pillar of the right faith; and also agrees with the Synodal Epistles which were written by Blessed Cyril against the impious Nestorius and addressed to the Oriental Bishops. Following the five holy Ecumenical Councils and the holy and approved Fathers, with one voice defining that our Lord Jesus Christ must be confessed to be very God and very man, one of the holy and consubstantial and life-giving Trinity, perfect in Deity and perfect in humanity, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and human body subsisting; consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead and consubstantial with us as touching his manhood; in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of his Father before all ages according to his Godhead, but in these last days for us men and for our salvation made man of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, strictly and properly the Mother of God according to the flesh; one and the same Christ our Lord the only-begotten Son of two natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, inseparably indivisibly to be recognized, the peculiarities of neither nature being lost by the union but rather the proprieties of each nature being preserved, concurring in one Person and in one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons but one and the same only-begotten Son of God, the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, according as the Prophets of old have taught us and as our Lord Jesus Christ himself hath instructed us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers hath delivered to us; defining all this we likewise declare that in him are two natural wills and two natural operations indivisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably, unconfusedly, according to the teaching of the holy Fathers. And these two natural wills are not contrary the one to the other (God forbid!) as the impious heretics assert, but his human will follows and that not as resisting and reluctant, but rather as subject to his divine and omnipotent will. For it was right that the flesh should be moved but subject to the divine will, according to the most wise Athanasius. For as his flesh is called and is the flesh of God the Word, so also the natural will of his flesh is called and is the proper will of God the Word, as he himself says: “I came down from heaven, not that I might do mine own will but the will of the Father which sent me!” where he calls his own will the will of his flesh, inasmuch as his flesh was also his own. For as his most holy and immaculate animated flesh was not destroyed because it was deified but continued in its own state and nature (ὁρῶ τε καὶ λόγῳ), so also his human will, although deified, was not suppressed, but was rather preserved

according to the saying of Gregory Theologus: “His will [i.e., the Saviour’s] is not contrary to God but altogether deified.”

We glorify two natural operations indivisibly, immutably, inconfusedly, inseparably in the same our Lord Jesus Christ our true God, that is to say a divine operation and a human operation, according to the divine preacher Leo, who most distinctly asserts as follows: “For each form (μορφή) does in communion with the other what pertains properly to it, the Word, namely, doing that which pertains to the Word, and the flesh that which pertains to the flesh.”

For we will not admit one natural operation in God and in the creature, as we will not exalt into the divine essence what is created, nor will we bring down the glory of the divine nature to the place suited to the creature.

We recognize the miracles and the sufferings as of one and the same [Person], but of one or of the other nature of which he is and in which he exists, as Cyril admirably says. Preserving therefore the inconfusedness and indivisibility, we make briefly this whole confession, believing our Lord Jesus Christ to be one of the Trinity and after the incarnation our true God, we say that his two natures shone forth in his one subsistence in which he both performed the miracles and endured the sufferings through the whole of his economic conversation (δι’ ὅλης αὐτοῦ τῆς οἰκονομικῆς ἀναστροφῆς), and that not in appearance only but in very deed, and this by reason of the difference of nature which must be recognized in the same Person, for although joined together yet each nature wills and does the things proper to it and that indivisibly and inconfusedly. Wherefore we confess two wills and two operations, concurring most fitly in him for the salvation of the human race.

These things, therefore, with all diligence and care having been formulated by us, we define that it be permitted to no one to bring forward, or to write, or to compose, or to think, or to teach a different faith. Whosoever shall presume to compose a different faith, or to propose, or teach, or hand to those wishing to be converted to the knowledge of the truth, from the Gentiles or Jews, or from any heresy, any different Creed; or to introduce a new voice or invention of speech to subvert these things which now have been determined by us, all these, if they be Bishops or clerics let them be deposed, the Bishops from the Episcopate, the clerics from the clergy; but if they be monks or laymen: let them be anathematized.



The Prosphonicus to the Emperor.

(Labbe and Cossart, *Concilia*, Tom. VI., col. 1047 *et seqq.*)

[*This address begins with many compliments to the Emperor, especially for his zeal for the true faith.*]

But because the adversary Satan allows no rest, he has raised up the very ministers of Christ against him, as if armed and carrying weapons, etc.



[The various heretics are then named and how they were condemned by the preceding five councils is set forth.]

Things being so, it was necessary that your beloved of Christ majesty should gather together this all holy, and numerous assembly.

• • • • •

Thereafter being inspired by the Holy Ghost, and all agreeing and consenting together, and giving our approval to the doctrinal letter of our most blessed and exalted pope, Agatho, which he sent to your mightiness, as also agreeing to the suggestion of the holy synod of one hundred and twenty-five fathers held under him, we teach that one of the Holy Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, was incarnate, and must be celebrated in two perfect natures without division and without confusion. For as the Word, he is consubstantial and eternal with God his father; but as taking flesh of the immaculate Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, he is perfect man, consubstantial with us and made in time. We declare therefore that he is perfect in Godhead and that the same is perfect likewise in manhood, according to the pristine tradition of the fathers and the divine definition of Chalcedon.

And as we recognize two natures, so also we recognize two natural wills and two natural operations. For we dare not say that either of the natures which are in Christ in his incarnation is without a will and operation: lest in taking away the proprieties of those natures, we likewise take away the natures of which they are the proprieties. For we neither deny the natural will of his humanity, or its natural operation: lest we also deny what is the chief thing of the dispensation for our salvation, and lest we attribute passions to the Godhead. For this they were attempting who have recently introduced the detestable novelty that in him there is but one will and one operation, renewing the malignancy of Arius, Apollinaris, Eutyches and Severus. For should we say that the human nature of our Lord is without will and operation, how could we affirm in safety the perfect humanity? For nothing else constitutes the integrity of human nature except the essential will, through which the strength of free-will is marked in us; and this is also the case with the substantial operation. For how shall we call him perfect in humanity if he in no wise suffered and acted as a man? For like as the union of two natures preserves for us one subsistence without confusion and without division; so this one subsistence, shewing itself in two natures, demonstrates as its own what things belong to each.

Therefore we declare that in him there are two natural wills and two natural operations, proceeding commonly and without division: but we cast out of the Church and rightly subject to anathema all superfluous novelties as well as their inventors: to wit, Theodore of Pharan, Sergius and Paul, Pyrrhus, and Peter (who were archbishops of Constantinople), moreover Cyrus, who bore the priesthood of Alexandria, and with them Honorius, who was the ruler (πρόεδρος) of Rome, as he followed them in these things. Besides these, with the best of cause we anathematize and depose Macarius, who was bishop of Antioch, and his disciple Stephen (or rather we should say master), who tried to defend the impiety of their predecessors, and in short stirred up the whole world, and



by their pestilential letters and by their fraudulent institutions devastated multitudes in every direction. Likewise also that old man Polychronius, with an infantile intelligence, who promised he would raise the dead and who when they did not rise, was laughed at; and all who have taught, or do teach, or shall presume to teach one will and one operation in the incarnate Christ... But the highest prince of the Apostles fought with us: for we had on our side his imitator and the successor in his see, who also had set forth in his letter the mystery of the divine word (θεολογίας). For the ancient city of Rome handed thee a confession of divine character, and a chart from the sunsetting raised up the day of dogmas, and made the darkness manifest, and Peter spoke through Agatho, and thou, O autocratic King, according to the divine decree, with the Omnipotent Sharer of thy throne, didst judge.

• • • • •

But, O benign and justice-loving Lord, do thou in return do this favour to him who hath bestowed thy power upon thee; and give, as a seal to what has been defined by us, thy imperial ratification in writing, and so confirm them with the customary pious edicts and constitutions, that no one may contradict the things which have been done, nor raise any fresh question. For rest assured, O serene majesty, that we have not falsified anything defined by the Ecumenical Councils and by the approved fathers, but we have confirmed them. And now we all cry out with one mind and one voice, “O God, save the King! etc., etc.”

[Then follow numerous compliments to the Emperor and prayers for his preservation.]



Letter of the Council to St. Agatho.

(Found in Migne, Pat. Lat., Tom. LXXXVII., col. 1247 et seqq.; and Labbe and Cossart, Concilia, Tom. VI., col. 1071 et seqq.)

A copy of the letter sent by the holy and Ecumenical Sixth Council to Agatho, the most blessed and most holy pope of Old Rome.

The holy and ecumenical council which by the grace of God and the pious sanction of the most pious and faithful Constantine, the great Emperor, has been gathered together in this God-preserved and royal city, Constantinople, the new Rome, in the *Secretum* of the imperial (θείου, sacri) palace called Trullus, to the most holy and most blessed pope of Old Rome, Agatho, health in the Lord.

Serious illnesses call for greater helps, as you know, most blessed [father]; and therefore Christ our true God, who is the creator and governing power of all things, gave a wise physician, namely your God-honoured sanctity, to drive away by force the contagion of heretical pestilence by the remedies of orthodoxy, and to give the strength of health to the members of the church. Therefore

to thee, as to the bishop of the first see of the Universal Church, we leave what must be done, since you willingly take for your standing ground the firm rock of the faith, as we know from having read your true confession in the letter sent by your fatherly beatitude to the most pious emperor: and we acknowledge that this letter was divinely written (*perscriptas*) as by the Chief of the Apostles, and through it we have cast out the heretical sect of many errors which had recently sprung up, having been urged to making a decree by Constantine who divinely reigns, and wields a most clement sceptre. And by his help we have overthrown the error of impiety, having as it were laid siege to the nefarious doctrine of the heretics. And then tearing to pieces the foundations of their execrable heresy, and attacking them with spiritual and paternal arms, and confounding their tongues that they might not speak consistently with each other, we overturned the tower built up by these followers of this most impious heresy; and we slew them with anathema, as lapsed concerning the faith and as sinners, in the morning outside the camp of the tabernacle of God, that we may express ourselves after the manner of David,³³⁴ in accordance with the sentence already given concerning them in your letter, and their names are these: Theodore, bishop of Pharan, Sergius, Honorius, Cyrus, Paul, Pyrrhus and Peter. Moreover, in addition to these, we justly subjected to the anathema of heretics those also who live in their impiety which they have received, or, to speak more accurately, in the impiety of these God-hated persons, Apollinaris, Severus and Themestius, to wit, Macarius, who was the bishop of the great city of Antioch (and him we also stripped deservedly of his pastor's robes on account of his impenitence concerning the orthodox faith and his obstinate stubbornness), and Stephen, his disciple in craziness and his teacher in impiety, also Polychronius, who was inveterate in his heretical doctrines, thus answering to his name; and finally all those who impenitently have taught or do teach, or now hold or have held similar doctrines.

Up to now grief, sorrow, and many tears have been our portion. For we cannot laugh at the fall of our neighbours, nor exult with joy at their unbridled madness, nor have we been elated that we might fall all the more grievously because of this thing; not thus, O venerable and sacred head, have we been taught, we who hold Christ, the Lord of the universe, to be both benign and man-loving in the highest degree; for he exhorts us to be imitators of him in his priesthood so far as is possible, as becometh the good, and to obtain the pattern of his pastoral and conciliatory government. But also to true repentance the most Serene Emperor and ourselves have exhorted them in various ways, and we have conducted the whole matter with great religiousness and care. Nor have we been moved to do so for the sake of gain, nor by hatred, as you can easily see from what things have been done in each session, and related in the minutes, which are herewith sent to your blessedness: and you will understand from your holiness's vicars, Theodore and George, presbyters beloved of God, and from John, the most religious deacon, and from Constantine, the most venerable sub-deacon, all of them your spiritual children and our well-loved brethren. So too you will hear

334 Psalm C., verse 8 (Heb. ci., *ult.*) neither LXX. nor Vulgate version.

the same things from those sent by your holy synod, the holy bishops who rightly and uprightly, in accordance with your discipline, decreed with us in the first chapter of the faith.

Thus, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and instructed by your doctrine, we have cast forth the vile doctrines of impiety, making smooth the right path of orthodoxy, being in every way encouraged and helped in so doing by the wisdom and power of our most pious and serene Emperor Constantine. And then one of our number, the most holy præsul of this reigning Constantinople, in the first place assenting to the orthodox compositions sent by you to the most pious emperor as in all respects agreeable to the teaching of the approved Fathers and of the God-instructed Fathers, and of the holy five universal councils, we all, by the help of Christ our God, easily accomplished what we were striving after. For as God was the mover, so God also he crowned our council.

Thereupon, therefore, the grace of the Holy Spirit shone upon us, displaying his power, through your assiduous prayers, for the uprooting of all weeds and every tree which brought not forth good fruit, and giving command that they should be consumed by fire. And we all agree both in heart and tongue, and hand, and have put forth, by the assistance of the life-giving Spirit, a definition, clean from all error, certain, and infallible; not 'removing the ancient landmarks,' as it is written (God forbid!), but remaining steadfast in the testimonies and authority of the holy and approved fathers, and defining that, as of two and in two natures (to wit, the divinity and the humanity) of which he is composed and in which he exists, Christ our true God is preached by us, and is glorified inseparably, unchangeably, unconfusedly, and undividedly; just so also we predicate of him two natural operations, undividedly, incontrovertibly, unconfusedly, inseparably, as has been declared in our synodal definition. These decrees the majesty of our God-copying Emperor assented to, and subscribed them with his own hand. And, as has been said, we rejected and condemned that most impious and unsubstantial heresy which affirmed but one will and one operation in the incarnate Christ our true God, and by so doing we have pressed sore upon the crowd who confound and who divide, and have extinguished the inflamed storm of other heresies, but we have set forth clearly with you the shining light of the orthodox faith, and we pray your paternal sanctity to confirm our decree by your honourable rescript; through which we confide in good hope in Christ that his merciful kindness will grant freely to the Roman State, committed to the care of our most clement Emperor, stability; and will adorn with daily yokes and victories his most serene clemency; and that in addition to the good things he has here bestowed upon us, he will set your God-honoured holiness before his tremendous tribunal as one who has sincerely confessed the true faith, preserving it unsullied and keeping good ward over the orthodox flocks committed to him by God.

We and all who are with us salute all the brethren in Christ who are with your blessedness.

Excursus on the Condemnation of Pope Honorius.



To this decree attaches not only the necessary importance and interest which belongs to any ecumenical decision upon a disputed doctrinal question with regard to the incarnation of the Son

of God, but an altogether accidental interest, arising from the fact that by this decree a Pope of Rome is stricken with anathema in the person of Honorius. I need hardly remind the reader how many interesting and difficult questions in theology such an action on the part of an Ecumenical Council raises, and how all important, not to say vital, to such as accept the ruling of the recent Vatican Council, it is that some explanation of this fact should be arrived at which will be satisfactory. It would be highly improper for me in these pages to discuss the matter theologically. Volumes on each side have been written on this subject, and to these I must refer the reader, but in doing so I hope I may be pardoned if I add a word of counsel—to read both sides. If one's knowledge is derived only from modern Eastern, Anglican or Protestant writers, such as "Janus and the Council," the Père Gratry's "Letters," or Littledale's controversial books against Rome, one is apt to be as much one-sided as if he took his information from Cardinal Baronius, Cardinal Bellarmine, Rohrbacher's *History*, or from the recent work on the subject by Pennacchi.³³⁵ Perhaps the average reader will hardly find a more satisfactory treatment than that by Bossuet in the *Defensio*. (*Liber VII.*, cap. xxi., etc.)

It will be sufficient for the purposes of this volume to state that Roman Catholic Curialist writers are not at one as to how the matter is to be treated. Pennacchi, in his work referred to above, is of opinion that Honorius's letters were strictly speaking Papal decrees, set forth *auctoritate apostolica*, and therefore irreformable, but he declares, contrary to the opinion of almost all theologians and to the decree of this Council, that they are orthodox, and that the Council erred in condemning them; as he expresses it, the decree rests upon an *error in facto dogmatico*. To save an Ecumenical Synod from error, he thinks the synod ceased to be ecumenical before it took this action, and was at that time only a synod of a number of Orientals! Cardinal Baronius has another way out of the difficulty. He says that the name of Honorius was forged and put in the decree by an erasure in the place of the name of Theodore, the quondam Patriarch, who soon after the Council got himself restored to the Patriarchal position. Baronius moreover holds that Honorius's letters have been corrupted, that the Acts of the Council have been corrupted, and, in short, that everything which declares or proves that Honorius was a heretic or was condemned by an Ecumenical Council as such, is untrustworthy and false. The groundlessness, not to say absurdity, of Baronius's view has been often exposed by those of his own communion, a brief but sufficient summary of the refutation will be found in Hefele, who while taking a very halting and unsatisfactory position himself, yet is perfectly clear that Baronius's contention is utterly indefensible.³³⁶

Most Roman controversialists of recent years have admitted both the fact of Pope Honorius's condemnation (which Baronius denies), and the monothelite (and therefore heretical) character of his epistles, but they are of opinion that these letters were not his *ex cathedrâ* utterances as Doctor

³³⁵ Pennacchi. *De Honorii I., Romani Pontificis, causa in Concilio VI.*

³³⁶ Hefele. *History of the Councils*. Vol. V., p. 190 *et seqq.*

Universalis, but mere expressions of the private opinion of the Pontiff as a theologian. With this matter we have no concern in this connexion.

I shall therefore say nothing further on this point but shall simply supply the leading proofs that Honorius was as a matter of fact condemned by the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

1. His condemnation is found in the Acts in the xiiith Session, near the beginning.

2. His two letters were ordered to be burned at the same session.

3. In the xvith Session the bishops exclaimed “Anathema to the heretic Sergius, to the heretic Cyrus, to the heretic Honorius, etc.”

4. In the decree of faith published at the xviith Session it is stated that “the originator of all evil...found a fit tool for his will in...Honorius, Pope of Old Rome, etc.”

5. The report of the Council to the Emperor says that “Honorius, formerly bishop of Rome” they had “punished with exclusion and anathema” because he followed the monothelites.

6. In its letter to Pope Agatho the Council says it “has slain with anathema Honorius.”

7. The imperial decree speaks of the “unholy priests who infected the Church and falsely governed” and mentions among them “Honorius, the Pope of Old Rome, the confirmer of heresy who contradicted himself.” The Emperor goes on to anathematize “Honorius who was Pope of Old Rome, who in everything agreed with them, went with them, and strengthened the heresy.”

8. Pope Leo II. confirmed the decrees of the Council and expressly says that he too anathematized Honorius.³³⁷

9. That Honorius was anathematized by the Sixth Council is mentioned in the Trullan Canons (No. j.).

10. So too the Seventh Council declares its adhesion to the anathema in its decree of faith, and in several places in the acts the same is said.

11. Honorius’s name was found in the Roman copy of the Acts. This is evident from Anastasius’s life of Leo II. (*Vita Leonis II.*)

12. The Papal Oath as found in the *Liber Diurnus*³³⁸ taken by each new Pope from the fifth to the eleventh century, in the form probably prescribed by Gregory II., “smites with eternal anathema the originators of the new heresy, Sergius, etc., together with Honorius, because he assisted the base assertion of the heretics.”

13. In the lesson for the feast of St. Leo II. in the Roman Breviary the name of Pope Honorius occurs among those excommunicated by the Sixth Synod. Upon this we may well hear Bossuet: “They suppress as far as they can, the *Liber Diurnus*: they have erased this from the Roman Breviary. Have they therefore hidden it? Truth breaks out from all sides, and these things become so much the more evident, as they are the more studiously put out of sight.”³³⁹

³³⁷ “Also Honorius, qui hanc apostolicam sedem non apostolicæ traditionis doctrina lustravit, sed profana proditione immaculatam fidem subvertere conatus est, et omnes, qui in suo errore defuncti sunt.”

³³⁸ Ed. Eugène de Rozière. Paris, 1869, No. 84.

³³⁹ Bossuet. *Def. Cleri Gal.*, Lib. vij., cap. xxvj.

With such an array of proof no conservative historian, it would seem, can question the fact that Honorius, the Pope of Rome, was condemned and anathematized as a heretic by the Sixth Ecumenical Council.



The Imperial Edict Posted in the Third Atrium of the Great Church Near What is Called Dicymbala.

In the name of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, the most pious Emperor, the peaceful and Christ-loving Constantine, an Emperor faithful to God in Jesus Christ, to all our Christ-loving people living in this God-preserved and royal city.

[The document is very long, Hefele gives the following epitome, which is all sufficient for the ordinary reader, who will remember that it is an Edict of the Emperor and not anything proceeding from the council.]

Hefele's Epitome (Hist. of the Councils, Vol. v., p. 178).

“The heresy of Apollinaris, etc., has been renewed by Theodore of Pharan and confirmed by Honorius, sometime Pope of Old Rome, who also contradicted himself. Also Cyrus, Pyrrhus, Paul, Peter; more recently. Macarius, Stephen, and Polychronius had diffused Monothelitism. He, the Emperor, had therefore convoked this holy and Ecumenical Synod, and published the present edict with the confession of faith, in order to confirm and establish its decrees. (There follows here an extended confession of faith, with proofs for the doctrine of two wills and operations.) As he recognized the five earlier Ecumenical Synods, so he anathematized all heretics from Simon Magus, but especially the originator and patrons of the new heresy, Theodore and Sergius; also Pope Honorius, who was their adherent and patron in everything, and confirmed the heresy (τὸν κατὰ πάντα τούτοις συναίρετην καὶ σύνδρομον καὶ βεβαιωτὴν τῆς αἰρέσεως, further, Cyrus, etc., and ordained that no one henceforth should hold a different faith, or venture to teach one will and one energy. In no other than the orthodox faith could men be saved. Whoever did not obey the imperial edict should, if he were a bishop or cleric be deposed; if an official, punished with confiscation of property and loss of the girdle (ζώνη); if a private person, banished from the residence and all other cities.”