

CONFESSION OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH

COMMONLY CALLED THE CREED OF ST. ATHANASIUS

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Quicumque vult.

Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

I.

And the Catholick Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost.

But the God-head of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father un-create, the Son un-create: and the Holy Ghost un-create. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternal: but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensible, nor three un-created: but one un-created, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord: and the Holy Ghost is Lord. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord; So we are forbidden by the Catholick Religion: to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son:(1) neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other: none is greater, or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together: and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity.

II.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess; that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance of His Mother, born in the world; Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; Equal to the Father,

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as touching His God-head' and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood. Who although He be God and Man: yet He is not two, but one Christ; One; not by conversion of the God-head into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our Salvation: descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty: from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies: and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

II.

It is with regret that I am forced to take exception to the most useful Ecclesiastical History of the learned Professor Schaff, in this connection. I quote from that work(2) as follows:

"He, Dionysius, maintained distinctly, in (a) controversy with Dionysius of Alexandria, at once the unity of essence and the real personal distinction, etc., . . . and avoided tritheism, Sabellianism, and (b) subordination, with the instinct of orthodoxy, and also with the art of anathematizing, (c) already familiar to (d) the popes."

Such a paragraph must convey to the youthful student a great confusion of ideas; all the greater, because the same valuable work elsewhere invites him to conclusions quite the reverse. Thus, (a) there was no controversy whatever between the two Dionysii; with a holy jealousy they entered into fraternal explanations of the same truth, held by each, but by neither very technically elucidated. The mere reader would probably infer that the greater of the two was guilty of tritheism or Sabellianism, although that is not the meaning of these unguarded expressions. But (b) the "subordinationism" which he repudiated was the doctrine of the subjection of the Son, not of the subordination, which orthodoxy has always maintained. Again, (c) I see no such "anathe- matizing" in the letter of Dionysius as is here charged; indeed, it contains no anathema(1) whatever, much less the artificial cursing of the Papacy which is thus assumed. And last, (d) what can be meant by the expression, "already familiar to the popes?" The learned pages of the same author sufficiently prove that there were no such things(2) as "popes" till a much later period of history; and, as to the "art of anathematizing," if it existed at all in those days, we find it much more freely exemplified by the Greek Fathers than by bishops of Rome. I say, if it existed at because the primitive anathema was a purely scriptural enforcement of St. Paul's great canon (Gal. i. 8, 9); while the "art of anathematizing," so justly credited to "the popes," was a vindictive and monstrous assertion, at a later date, of prerogatives which they impiously arrogated to themselves, against other churches.