

The Anathemas of the Second Council of Constantinople (553 AD)

The Second Council of Constantinople was called to resolve certain questions that were raised by the Definition of Chalcedon, the most important of which had to do with the unity of the two natures, God and man, in Jesus Christ. The Second Council of Constantinople confirmed the Definition of Chalcedon, while emphasizing that Jesus Christ does not just embody God the Son, He is God the Son.

I.

If anyone does not confess that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one nature or essence, one power or authority, worshipped as a trinity of the same essence, one deity in three hypostases or persons, let him be anathema. For there is one God and Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and one Holy Spirit, in whom are all things.

II.

If anyone does not confess that God the Word was twice begotten, the first before all time from the Father, non-temporal and bodiless, the other in the last days when he came down from the heavens and was incarnate by the holy, glorious, God-bearer, ever-virgin Mary, and born of her, let him be anathema.

III.

If anyone says that God the Word who performed miracles is one and Christ who suffered is another, or says that God the Word was together with Christ who came from woman, or that the Word was in him as one person is in another, but is not one and the same, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, incarnate and become human, and that the wonders and the suffering which he voluntarily endured in flesh were not of the same person, let him be anathema.

IV.

If anyone says that the union of the Word of God with man was only according to grace or function or dignity or equality of honor or authority or relation or effect or power or according to his good pleasure, as though God the Word was pleased with man, or approved of him, as the raving Theodosius says; or that the union exists according to similarity of name, by which the Nestorians call God the Word Jesus and Christ, designating the man separately as Christ and as Son, speaking thus clearly of two persons, but when it comes to his honor, dignity, and worship, pretend to say that there is one person, one Son and one Christ, by a single designation; and if he does not acknowledge, as the holy Fathers have taught, that the union of God is made with the flesh animated by a reasonable and intelligent soul, and that such union is according to synthesis or hypostasis, and that therefore there is only one person, the Lord Jesus Christ one of the holy Trinity—let him be anathema. As the word “union” has many meanings, the followers of the impiety of Apollinaris

and Eutyches, assuming the disappearance of the natures, affirm a union by confusion. On the other hand the followers of Theodore and of Nestorius rejoicing in the division of the natures, introduce only a union of relation. But the holy Church of God, rejecting equally the impiety of both heresies, recognizes the union of God the Word with the flesh according to synthesis, that is according to hypostasis. For in the mystery of Christ the union according to synthesis preserves the two natures which have combined without confusion and without separation.

V.

If anyone understands the expression—one hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ—so that it means the union of many hypostases, and if he attempts thus to introduce into the mystery of Christ two hypostases, or two persons, and, after having introduced two persons, speaks of one person according to dignity, honor or worship, as Theodore and Nestorius insanely have written; and if anyone slanders the holy synod of Chalcedon, as though it had used this expression in this impious sense, and does not confess that the Word of God is united with the flesh hypostatically, and that therefore there is but one hypostasis or one person, and that the holy synod of Chalcedon has professed in this sense the one hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ; let him be anathema. For the Holy Trinity, when God the Word was incarnate, was not increased by the addition of a person or hypostasis.

VI.

If anyone says that the holy, glorious, and ever-virgin Mary [Note: The claim that Mary is “ever-virgin” is Roman Catholic folklore. (Jonathan Barlow)] is called God-bearer by misuse of language and not truly, or by analogy, believing that only a mere man was born of her and that God the Word was not incarnate of her, but that the incarnation of God the Word resulted only from the fact that he united himself to that man who was born of her; if anyone slanders the Holy Synod of Chalcedon as though it had asserted the Virgin to be God-bearer according to the impious sense of Theodore; or if anyone shall call her manbearer or Christbearer, as if Christ were not God, and shall not confess that she is truly God-bearer, because God the Word who before all time was begotten of the Father was in these last days incarnate of her, and if anyone shall not confess that in this pious sense the holy Synod of Chalcedon confessed her to be God-bearer: let him be anathema.

VII.

If anyone using the expression, “in two natures,” does not confess that our one Lord Jesus Christ is made known in the deity and in the manhood, in order to indicate by that expression a difference of the natures of which the ineffable union took place without confusion, a union in which neither the nature of the Word has changed into that of the flesh, nor that of the flesh into that of the Word (for each remained what it was by nature, even when

the union by hypostasis had taken place); but shall take the expression with regard to the mystery of Christ in a sense so as to divide the parties, let him be anathema. Or if anyone recognizing the number of natures in the same our one Lord Jesus Christ, God the Word incarnate, does not take in contemplation only the difference of the natures which compose him, which difference is not destroyed by the union between them—for one is composed of the two and the two are in one—but shall make use of the number two to divide the natures or to make of them persons properly so called, let him be anathema.

VIII.

If anyone confesses that the union took place out of two natures or speaks of the one incarnate nature of God the Word and does not understand those expressions as the holy Fathers have taught, that out of the divine and human natures, when union by hypostasis took place, one Christ was formed; but from these expressions tries to introduce one nature or essence of the Godhead and manhood of Christ; let him be anathema. For in saying that the only-begotten Word was united by hypostasis personally we do not mean that there was a mutual confusion of natures, but rather we understand that the Word was united to the flesh, each nature remaining what it was. Therefore there is one Christ, God and man, of the same essence with the Father as touching his Godhead, and of the same essence with us as touching his manhood. Therefore the Church of God equally rejects and anathematizes those who divide or cut apart or who introduce confusion into the mystery of the divine dispensation of Christ.

IX.

If anyone says that Christ ought to be worshipped in his two natures, in the sense that he introduces two adorations, the one peculiar to God the Word and the other peculiar to the man; or if anyone by destroying the flesh, or by confusing the Godhead and the humanity, or by contriving one nature or essence of those which were united and so worships Christ, and does not with one adoration worship God the Word incarnate with his own flesh, as the Church of God has received from the beginning; let him be anathema.

X.

If anyone does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified in the flesh is true God and the Lord of Glory and one of the Holy Trinity; let him be anathema.

XI.

If anyone does not anathematize Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Apollinaris, Nestorius, Eutyches and Origen, together with their impious, godless writings, and all the other heretics already condemned and anathematized by the holy catholic and apostolic Church, and by the aforementioned four Holy Synods and all those who have held and hold or who in their godlessness persist in holding to the end the same opinion as those heretics just mentioned; let him be anathema.