

THE CREED

of Nicaea and Constantinople

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; being of one essence with the Father; by Whom all things were made;

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from the Heavens, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man;

And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; And arose again on the third day according to the Scriptures;

And ascended into the Heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father;

And shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end;

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life; Who proceedeth from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets;

In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead,

And the life of the age to come. Amen.

Summary of the Articles

ARTICLE 1. There is a difference in "to believe" and "to believe in." We "believe" Saint Paul, but we do not "believe in" him in the sense that he is God by nature. The English word 'Almighty' stands for a Greek word which means 'All-sovereign.' Reference to God the Father anticipates reference to God the Son and to God the Holy Spirit. God is One, in three Persons (Hypostases). God the Father is neither begotten nor proceeds from another Person; God the Son is from all eternity begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit from all eternity proceeds from the Father. The Three Hypostases are of absolutely equal Divine majesty. God the Father is Creator through God the Son, His Word. Man was created in God's image and likeness. The Apostle describes this image as a creation "in righteousness

and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4:24).

ARTICLES 2-7. In the Second Article we declare that we believe in One Lord Jesus Christ exactly as we believe in God the Father. We confess Him to be Son of God by Generation from the Father, and Generation implies possession of the same Divine Essence. The Son of God is not created, but generated ("begotten"); the Arians, on the other hand, taught that He was created. He is "the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, True God of True God; begotten, not made." Because He is begotten and not made, He is "of one essence with the Father." The phrase "Light of Light" is figurative, appealing to our own experience that light and its source are simultaneous. The idea comes from Hebrews 1:3: "God has spoken to us by His Son ... through Whom also He created the ages. And He, the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of God's Hypostasis, sustains the universe by the word of His power." The language passes from figure to direct statement in the phrase, "True God of True God." Through Him all created things came into existence. Creation is the expression, under finite conditions, of God's thought through His Word (see the beginning of Saint John's Gospel). For us human beings, and for our salvation, "He came down from the Heavens, and was incarnate (enfleshed) of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man." The reference to His descent corresponds to the later mention of His Ascension. By His descent He voluntarily submitted in His Incarnation to laying aside all the outward manifestations of Divine Glory, and placed Himself under the conditions and limitations, which belong to human nature even in its perfection before the Fall. He took on Himself a nature the same as our own in capacity for suffering, but He was sinless. His Body was a real Body taken from His Mother's body, and she bore Him without losing her virginity. He suffered, and was buried. The fact of His Crucifixion is connected with human annals by mention of Pontius Pilate, for the purpose of affirming that the Narrative of the Passion and Resurrection is actual history and not a myth or allegory of the kind familiar to the heathen of that day. His Burial is mentioned because of its importance in leading to the Resurrection. He rose again on the third day. Saint Athanasius says He did not rise on the first day, lest the reality of His Death should be denied; nor on the second day, lest His Incorruption should not be clearly manifested; nor later than the third day, lest the identification of His Body should be questioned, and the events fade from memory. At His Ascension, His Humanity having been glorified, He reassumed all that He had laid aside in His Incarnation. His Session at the Father's Right Hand teaches

that the Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, in His Two Natures, Human and Divine, assumed by His Ascension that Divine power and glory which had ever been His in His Divine Nature. He is coming again, but in glory, to judge the living and the dead; and His Kingdom shall never end.

However, heretical ingenuity sought cover under the very clauses of the Nicene Creed, and developed further inventions. The Church therefore was brought together to state the doctrine about Christ in still greater detail in the Formula (or Definition) of Chalcedon, at the Fourth Ecumenical Council, which convened in Chalcedon in 451. After affirming the Nicene Creed ("The Symbol of the One Hundred and Fifty"), the Formula declares:

Following, therefore, the holy Fathers, we all teach with one voice that the Son [of God], our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be confessed as being Himself the one Son, being Himself perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, made of a reasonable soul and body, consubstantial with the Father according to His Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to His manhood; made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of His Father before the ages according to His Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation the Same was born of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos according to His manhood; He is unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, and inseparably known to be the one and same Christ the Lord and Only-begotten Son from two natures, without the distinction of natures being taken away by the union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and hypostasis, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Only-begotten Son, God the Word, our Lord. Jesus Christ, as the Prophets of old time have spoken concerning Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself hath taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers hath delivered to us. These things, therefore, having been expressed by us with the greatest accuracy and attention, the holy Ecumenical Council hath decreed that no one shall be suffered to bring forward, to write, to compose, to believe a different faith, nor to teach it to others. But such as dare either to put together another faith, or to bring forward or to teach or to deliver a different Creed to such as wish to be converted to the knowledge of the truth from the Gentiles, or the Jews, or any heresy whatsoever, if they be Bishops or clerics let them be deposed,

the Bishops from the Episcopate, and the clerics from the clergy;
but if they be monks or laics: let them be anathematized.

ARTICLE 8. In the Eighth Article we declare that we believe in the Holy Spirit exactly as we believe in God the Father and God the Son. By calling Him the Lord, we call Him God: the Greek word for "Lord" here, as always, is the same one used to translate the Old Testament name "Yahweh." He is the "Giver of life," not only giving but also sustaining life and order. He imparts spiritual life, and at need renews and strengthens it. He proceeds from the Father: as the relation of the Son to the Father is described as Generation, so the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father is described as Procession. The clause "Who spake by the Prophets" unites the Old Testament with the New Dispensation, teaching that the same Holy Spirit Who spoke in the past now also speaks through the Church.

ARTICLE 9. The clause "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church" comes next after the Article on the Holy Spirit because the Church lives under His Dispensation, and draws from Him Her life and powers. The greater number of the members of the Church have already gone from this world, and are no longer visible to us; but this Article affirms that in this world the Church is a single visible establishment, concerning the Unity of which the Lord said (John 17:9, 20-23): "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me ... and also for them which shall believe in Me through their word: That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us ... that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me." This Unity is irreconcilably different from the Protestant conception of union through the invention of formulas broad enough to cover mutually contradictory doctrines. The Unity of the One Church is not the product of such arrangements to make the word "Christ" as empty of meaning as the word "heresy" has come to be among Protestants, but is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit fulfilling as Giver of Life our Lord's own promise.

ARTICLE 10. The Tenth Article declares belief in One Baptism for the remission of sins. Baptism is a Sacrament, a Mystery of the Church — that is, a holy act through which the saving power of God works upon a believer. The person baptized dies to the life of sin, and is born again of the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. ...Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is

flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:3, 5, 6); and, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Saint Peter (Acts 2:38) said to his hearers on Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." The Apostle Paul says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." One Baptism, because birth, whether physical or spiritual, can happen only once. For Christians, Baptism takes the place of Circumcision (see Col. 2:11, 12) which infants eight days old received in the time of the Old Testament. Accordingly, infants are baptized, presented by Sponsors whose duty it is to ensure that the infants will be brought up and trained in the Orthodox Faith. In the Liturgy in the Litany for Catechumens, we pray for the spiritual training and prospering of these children, as well as for the adults converted to the Orthodox Faith and preparing for Baptism.

Baptism is followed immediately by the Mystery of Chrismation, anointing with Chrism (Myron) accompanied by the formula, "The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit." This Mystery conveys the Gift of the Holy Spirit for growth and strength in spiritual life. Anglicans (Episcopalians) and other Protestants claim that what they call "Confirmation" is the same as our Mystery of Chrismation, but they are ready and willing to "confirm" submissive Orthodox people. Orthodox persons who receive "confirmation" from them, or permit their children to receive it, are guilty of rejecting the Gift of the Holy Spirit with which they were sealed at their Orthodox Chrismation.

ARTICLE 11. The Eleventh Article declares that there is to be "the resurrection of the dead." There is no immortality of the soul apart from the body. The Apostle (1 Cor. 15:35-58) explains the relation of the earthly body in the life after death. The body is a seed, which is sown. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

ARTICLE 12. The Creed concludes with the declaration that there is to be "the life of the age to come." After accomplishing the purpose for which this world was created, God will bring the history of this world to an end, and a new world will begin. Even those who love God and work for Him catch only faint glimpses of the glory that is to be, for that other life as compared to this is as far beyond our imagining as the Fatherly love of God is beyond anything that our experience with earthly fatherhood can

help us to imagine. The Apostle (I Cor. 13:12) says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." And our Lord said (Matt. 13:43), "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Amen

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