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The Council of Chalcedon 451 AD

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In order to study the Council of Chalcedon 451 AD in the course of the interpretation of the outcome of the theological dialogue between the two families of Orthodox Churches, we should study the circumstances that happened before that council and lead to it.

I. The Reunion of 433 AD

The condemnation and removal of Nestorius Patriarche of Constantinople at the 3rd Ecumenical Council of Ephesus 431 AD did not solve all the divisions. Communion between the party of Rome and Alexandria and the party of Antioch being now broken, the emperor himself exerted his influence to re-establish peace. His efforts produced the expected results and in 433 John of Antioch sent Paul of Emesa to Alexandria with a profession of faith (i.e. a written document containing a confession of the faith of John), which Cyril accepted and sent back to Antioch his famous letter which brought reunion. This incorporated a passage from John's

confession, stressing the unity of Christ's person and the unconfused continuance of Godhead and manhood in Him.¹

The text contained the following:

*“We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is perfect God and perfect man, of a rational soul and body, begotten before ages from the Father according to his divinity, and that, in recent days, he himself for us and for our salvation was born from the Virgin Mary according to his humanity, consubstantial to the Father himself according to his divinity and consubstantial to us according to his humanity, for a union was made of his two natures. We confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. With this understanding of a union without fusion we confess that the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God, because God the Word was made flesh and was made man, and from his very conception he united to himself a temple taken from her. And we know that theologians regard some of the evangelical and apostolic sayings regarding the Lord as common, that is, as pertaining to one person, and that theologians divide others of the sayings as pertaining to two natures, and refer those proper to God to the Divinity of Christ, but the lowly ones to his humanity”.*²

*II. A State of Tension*³

The reunion of 433 did not really succeed in bringing about perfect unity between the two sides. The Alexandrines (i.e. the group that supported Saint Cyril) felt that Cyril had offered too many concessions to the Antiochenes. As for the Antiochenes, some of them felt aggravated and unsatisfied with the exclusion of Nestorius and his condemnation.

Yet Cyril was powerful and influential enough so as to contain his adherents. He sent many letters to his friends such as Acacius, Bishop of Melitene (present day Malta), and Valerian, Bishop of Iconium, explaining that the reconciliation with John of Antioch is not in contradiction neither with his previous interpretation of the dogma in his letters to Nestorius, nor with the doctrines of the council of Ephesus.

As for the Antiochenes, they were not all in agreement on the question of a rapprochement or a reunion. Although men like John of Antioch and Acacius, Bishop of Beroea (present day Aleppo), accepted the reunion and continued to remain loyal to the terms of the agreement reached in 433, there were others on the

¹ Samuel, V.C., *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*, Senate of Serampore College, Madras, India, 1977, p. 8.

² *The Fathers of the Church, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letters* (1987) CUA Press, Washington, D.C., Vol. 76, Letter to John of Antioch, pp. 148, 149.

³ Cf. Samuel, V. C., *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*, p. 11.

Antiochene side who were unwilling to comply with the Antiochene patriarch. This latter group consisted of persons holding to two positions. On the one hand, there were the Cilicians who were opposed to Cyril and the reunion, and on the other there were persons like Theodoret of Cyrus who would not accept the condemnation of Nestorius.

The Emperor now intervened and many of those bishops and clerics yielded. Yet fifteen recalcitrants had to be deposed. In 435 Theodoret accepted the reunion, without condemning Nestorius. An able controversialist, the Bishop of Cyrus played a significant role in the conflict following the reunion.

*III. The Reunion Interpreted Differently*⁴

The tension between the two sides was aggravated by the fact that the reunion itself was not taken by them in an agreed sense. The Alexandrines, on their part, regarded it as an incident which led the Antiochenes to accept the council of 431 unconditionally. Cyril himself had taken it only in this sense, and he made that point clear to the men on his side who asked him about it.⁵ This Cyrilline view, as we shall see later, was ably asserted by Severus of Antioch in the sixth century.⁶ The Alexandrines could offer sufficient justification for this position. Did not the Antiochenes, for instance, agree to the concordat withdrawing all their three objections to the council of Ephesus? Did they not also communicate with Cyril of Alexandria without making him formally give up the anathemas?

Though the legitimacy of this Alexandrine defense cannot be gainsaid, Theodoret of Cyrus and his supporters were not willing to grant it. Theodoret, on his part, proceeded on the assumption that the reunion of 433 had cancelled all decisions of the council of 431 which they did not positively endorse. Accordingly, they exerted all their abilities to build up a strong [i.e. extremist] Antiochene theology on the foundation of the Formulary of Reunion [according to their own understanding] and to appoint men in key positions to propagate this theology. This they hoped to achieve by admitting the Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius as a document of the faith, in addition to the Formulary itself. In so owning the second letter, the Antiochenes may well have interpreted the phrase *hypostatic union* which it contained as a synonym for *prosopic union* (union between persons) though Cyril had rejected this phrase in that letter. In their effort to

⁴ Ibid. pp. 12-13.

⁵ Cyril's letters to Acacius, Valerian and Succesnus bear ample testimony to this fact. The one written to Acacius, for instance, makes it clear that the reunion was an attempt to bring about peace in the Church (P.G. LXXVII, 184 A-B). As for the expression 'two natures' in the reunion formula, Cyril says that the natures of which the one Christ is composed are two, and that in the union there was no absorption, confusion or mixture. However, the phrase does not imply separation, as Nestorius is understood to affirm. And yet, writes Cyril, he did not use the expression; it was used by John (P.G. LXXVII 200 C.)

⁶ Ibid. p. 194.

develop their theology it was felt that they should admit and declare Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia as their theological masters. The works of these two were published and even a defense of the men was brought out by Theodoret himself. As soon as this was produced, it was **refuted by Pope Cyril**. The Antiochene extremists did also raise men in important Sees from among their supporters. Ibas of Edessa was one of such persons, and he was made bishop of Edessa in 435. The Antiochene side also could offer a justification for their activities. They could argue, for instance, that they were unable to make sense of the Alexandrine phrases like *hypostatic union, one hypostasis, and one incarnate nature of God the Word*, except to see in them an Apollinarian meaning, and that they had not accepted the anathemas of Cyril.⁷

IV. Meaning of the Phrase ‘Hypostatic Union’ (e[nwsij kaqV u`po,stasin%

To Saint Cyril, the word *hypostasis* (u`po,stasij/hypostasis) means the person (pro,swpon/prosopon) together with the nature (fu,sij/physis) that he carries. The phrase *hypostatic union* (e[nwsij kaqV u`po,stasin/enosis kat hypostasin), to him, does not at all mean a union of persons, but a union of natures in one single person, a natural union or a union according to nature (e[nwsij kata, fu,sin/enosis kata physin). In other words the phrase *hypostatic union* to Saint Cyril very clearly means the union of two natures naturally in one simple person (i.e. single person).

V. The Standpoint of Saint Cyril

In this period Pope Saint Cyril sensed that there was an attempt by the bishops who were impressed by, or adhered to, Nestorius and his teachings, to bring back Nestorianism to the East, in the areas surrounding the Antiochene See. He thus wrote to John of Antioch, the Antiochene Synod, Acacius Bishop of Melitene, the clerics and Lampon the Priest, and Emperor Theodosius II, warning them against the Nestorian tidal-wave which was trying to creep behind the teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus, the theological masters of Nestorius. He then wrote to Bishop Proclus of Constantinople, and to Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa, in reply to a letter which the latter had sent to him, praising him for his stand against the teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Nestorian undercurrent in the East.

From the Letter of Saint Cyril to Emperor Theodosius we quote the following:

⁷ Ibid. pp. 11-13.

“There was a certain Theodore and before him Diodore the bishop, the latter of Tarsus, the former of Mopsuestia. These were the fathers of the blasphemy of Nestorius. In books which they composed they made use of a crude madness against Christ, the Saviour of us all, because they did not understand his mystery. Therefore, Nestorius desired to introduce their teachings into our midst and he was deposed by God.

However, while some bishops of the East anathematised his teachings, in another way they now introduce these very teachings again when they admire the teachings which are Theodore's and say that he thought correctly and in agreement with our Fathers, I mean, Athanasius, Gregory and Basil. But they are lying against holy men. Whatever they (these holy men) wrote, they are the opposite to the wicked opinions of Theodore and Nestorius.”⁸

See Appendices 1, 2, 3 containing the full text of the letters of Saint Cyril to Acacius of Melitene, the clerics and Lampon the priest, and to the Emperor Theodosius.

VI. Change of Leadership

So long as Pope Cyril of Alexandria and Patriarch John of Antioch were alive there was peace between the two sides. But Patriarch John died in 442, and Pope Cyril followed him in 444.

Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, began to attempt spreading the Nestorian teachings in the East and, in 447, he published his book *Eranistes*, a book intended to distort and ridicule the teaching of the Alexandrine fathers, and especially the great Saint Cyril. This aroused so much opposition, that on 18 April 448, an imperial edict was published, proscribing Nestorius, his writings, and his supporters, and Theodoret himself was ordered to remain confined to his See of Cyrus. Also Ibas, Bishop of Edessa, aroused a great deal of reaction because of his letter to Maris, Bishop of Ardaschir in Persia, against the teachings of Saint Cyril the great.

VII. The Heresy of Eutyches

In reaction to the Nestorian activity in the East, an extreme teaching emerged through Eutyches, the abbot of the Monastery of Job in Constantinople, in defense of the belief in the ‘one incarnate nature of God the Word’, which Saint Cyril the great had professed and taught.

⁸ *The Fathers of the Church, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letters* (1987) CUA Press, Washington, D.C., Vol. 77, pp. 70, 71.

Eutyches, a friend of Pope Cyril, claimed to have received from the great Alexandrine theologian a copy of the decisions of the Council of Ephesus 431 and to have cherished it ever since.⁹ He was an indefatigable supporter of the Alexandrine cause at the capital. As the abbot of the monastery of Job in the seventh quarter of the city, he had directed more than three hundred monks for over thirty years. Through his godson and nephew Chrysaphius, the grand chamberlain of the emperor, he had direct access to the court. At a time when the ecclesiastical atmosphere in the East had been viciated by the rivalry between the Alexandrine and the Antiochene sides, Eutyches' undue zeal for the former may well have elicited opposition from the latter, and thus added to further tension.¹⁰

Eutyches started defending the faith of the one nature but then fell into the heresy attributed to him, i.e. the humanity (of Christ) dissolved in the divinity as a drop of vinegar would dissolve in the ocean; or, in other words, that the two natures had been intermixed into one nature. From here came the appellation 'monophysites' (monofusi,thj) because the phrase 'moni physis' (monh, fu,sij) means 'only nature' and not 'one nature', which is 'mia physis' (mi,a fu,sij). Eusebius Bishop of Dorylaeum, visited Eutyches¹¹ in his monastery at Constantinople many times and found out that the faith he maintains was unorthodox, for he believed that the two natures were intermixed into one.

VIII. The Home Synod of Constantinople in 448 AD

In this Synod (8-22 November 448) which was presided over by Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, and attended by 32 bishops, Eutyches was condemned, deposed and excommunicated upon a libel that Eusebius, Bishop of Dorylaeum, presented against him, and also the testimonies of Presbyter John and Deacon Andrew, whom the Synod had sent to summon Eutyches, because he insisted that the flesh which our Lord Jesus Christ took from the Virgin Mary was not 'consubstantial with us' and he hesitated in clarifying his point of view when he attended the Synod, and submitted a written confession of faith which he refused to read himself.¹² The condemnation against Eutyches was signed by 30 bishops and 23 archimandrites. For the first time, the following statement was, affirmed: that Christ the Lord 'was *in* two natures after the union'. Many troubles and a very tense situation prevailed in Constantinople. Eutyches raised an appeal against the Home Synod to the emperor, who then wrote to Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria summoning him to preside over a council to be held on the first of August at

⁹ Cf. Samuel, V. C., p. 14, quoting *Acta Conciliorum Oeumenicorum*, Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1933, II, i, p. 91.

¹⁰ Cf. Samuel, V.C., pp. 14-15.

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 15-16

¹² Ibid. pp. 17-19.

Ephesus, and required of Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Thalassius, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, to be co-presidents with him. An imperial mandate was sent to Dioscorus asking him to permit Barsumas, an archimandrite from Syria on the Alexandrine side, to participate in the council.

IX. The Standpoint of the Alexandrine Church

Pope Dioscorus sensed the danger of the spread of the ideas of Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa, in the East; those ideas that attack the doctrines of Pope Cyril of Alexandria. He also feared the spread of the teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Nestorius, in many areas in the East. He knew that Eutyches complained that he had presented a profession of faith along with a writ of appeal to the Home Synod of Constantinople in 448 AD, and it had not been received from him.¹³ Pope Dioscorus feared that Eutyches might have been condemned for his adherence to the teachings of the great Saint Cyril about the one incarnate nature of God the Word. The Home Synod of Constantinople (448) had demanded from Eutyches to anathematize all who do not say ‘in two natures after the union’, but he refused and said, “*if I anathematize, woe unto me that I condemn my fathers (as Saint Cyril the great).*”¹⁴

Having Eutyches’ (deceptive) written confession, that he rejected those who say ‘*that the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ had come down from heaven*’... ‘*For he who is the Word of God came down from heaven without flesh and was made flesh from the very flesh of the Virgin unchangeably and inconvertibly, in a way he himself knew and willed. And he who is always perfect God before the ages was also made perfect man in the end of days for us and for our salvation.*’¹⁵ Pope Dioscorus sensed that Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Eusebius of Dorylaeum, had joined the Nestorian trend present in the East when Eutyches was demanded by the Home Synod of Constantinople (448) to anathematize all who do not confess two natures after the union. The truth was that Pope Dioscorus sought to fight Nestorianism by rejecting the phrase “two natures after the union”, and Bishop Eusebius was urging Patriarch Flavian to fight Eutychianism by asserting the phrase “two natures after the union”. Hence the misunderstanding occurred between the two sides, and had later developed into the Chalcedonian dispute. Accurate research proves that Pope Dioscorus was not Eutychian, this is why the Council of Chalcedon did not condemn him for any erroneous belief on his part, as Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople and president of the Council at its meeting

¹³ Ibid. pp. 19, 20, 24.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 22.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 30, 31, see Mansi VI, p. 744, quoted in Bettenson, Documents, pp. 48-49.

of the 22 October 451 had stated.¹⁶ Also, Patriarch Flavian and Bishop Eusebius were not Nestorian.

X. The Second Council of Ephesus in 449 AD

The first session was held on 8 August 449, attended by 150 bishops, presided by Pope Dioscorus, in the presence of Bishop Julius, the representative of the Pope of Rome, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Domnus of Antioch, and Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople.

After examining the proceedings of the First Council of Ephesus in 431 and the Home Synod of Constantinople in 448, and reading a written confession of the Orthodox faith which Eutyches had (deceitfully) submitted to this Council, and after hearing deliberations from those who were present, the Council decreed its condemnation and deposition of Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Eusebius, Bishop of Dorylaeum, acquitted Eutyches and restored him to his clerical post. The Council also condemned and deposed Ibas, Bishop of Edessa, Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, and others.¹⁷ It proclaimed that Diodorus of Tarsus was a Nestorian.¹⁸ The letter of Pope Leo I to that Council, which is known as *the Tome of Leo*, was not read.

XI. The Council of Chalcedon

Pope Leo I did not accept the results of the Second Council of Ephesus 449 and absolved Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus and restored him back into communion.¹⁹ But then Emperor Theodosius fell off the back of his horse and this led to his death on 28 July 450. His sister Pulcheria stepped forth, assumed authority, married Marcian, an officer in the army, and declared him Emperor on the 28th of August of that same year. Then, on 15 May 451, an imperial edict was issued summoning for a general council to be held at Nicea. By the 1st of September, the bishops had arrived in Nicea, but then they were ordered to proceed to Chalcedon, which was near to Constantinople. About five hundred delegates assembled in the great church of Saint Euphemia, and the first session of the council was held on 8 October 451 AD.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 69.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 29-35.

¹⁸ Cf. Kelly, J. N. D., *Early Christian Doctrines* -chapter xi- Fourth Century Christology, A & C Black-London 1977, 5th revised edition, p. 302.

¹⁹ Cf. Samuel, V. C., p. 69.

In that session Pope Dioscorus was questioned about the teaching of Eutyches whom the Second Council of Ephesus in 449 AD had exonerated. He said: *‘If Eutyches holds notions disallowed by the doctrines of the Church, he deserves not only punishment but even fire (eiv Euvtuchj para. ta. do,gmata th/j ekkhhsia,j fronei/(ouv mo,non timwri,aj avxio,j evstin(avlla. kai. puro,j). But my concern is for the catholic and apostolic faith, not for any man whomsoever.’*²⁰ He also accepted the phrase *“from two natures’ after the union.”*²¹ Thus in his affirmation of the one incarnate nature of God the Word he wanted to prove the indivisibility of the two natures after the union, and in his acceptance of the phrase ‘from two natures after the union’ he wanted to confirm what Saint Cyril had affirmed. i.e. the continuity of the existence of two natures in the union, without intermixture or confusion.

R.V. Sellers, expressed the idea that the Alexandrian Patriarch *‘declared his was the orthodox belief, that he did not teach any ‘mixture’ of Godhead and manhood in Christ’*.²² V.C. Samuel mentioned the same fact that St. Dioscorus said, *‘We do not speak of confusion, neither of division, nor of change, Let him who says confusion change or mixture, be anathema’* (ou;te su,gcusin le,gomen ou;te tomh,n ou;te troph,n\ avna,qema tw/| le,gonti su,gcusin h' troph.n h' avna,krasin).²³

It is clear that Saint Dioscorus had declared anathema against the Eutychian heresy in the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon, and if he was allowed to continue his apostolic service as a defender of faith and if his formulas of faith were considered and included, no division would have happened in the church after the Council of Chalcedon, which would have been a great collaborate defense against the Eutychian heresy and could have stand beside the third ecumenical council at Ephesus 431 AD. The Council would have the opportunity to reconcile the two Pontifs of Rome and Alexandria on account of solving the problem of Theodoret of Cyrus and his teaching against Saint Cyril of Alexandria. But sadly Pope Dioscorus was deposed and put into exile.

Anatolius of Constantinople declared in the fifth session of the Council that *‘Dioscorus had not been deposed on account of his doctrine, but because he has excommunicated Leo.’*²⁴

²⁰ Ibid. p. 51 quoting Edward Schwarz,, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* op. cit., ACO. II, i. p. 92: 168, (Mansi, vi, 636; vii, 53)..

²¹ Ibid. p. 55.

²² Sellers, R.V., *The Council of Chalcedon, A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*, S.P.C.K. London, 1961, p. 106 (quoting Mansi, vi. 676f).

²³ Cf. Samuel, V.C., p. 53 (quoting ACO II, i. p. 263).

²⁴ Cf. Sellers, R.V., p. 119.

On the second session held on 10 October “there were men to raise objection to three passages of the Tome, and one delegate (Atticus of Nicopolis, a town in Illyricum) asked for time to compare it with the third letter of Cyril to Nestorius and the anathemas”... A five day recess was announced by the commissioners.²⁵

The Council of Chalcedon approved the synodical letters of the great Saint Cyril of Alexandria and *the Tome of Leo* after revising it on the twelve anathematisms of Saint Cyril.²⁶ The sentences resulting were: to excommunicate, condemn and depose Eutyches, to annul most of the decisions of the Second Council of Ephesus 449, to depose Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria for administrative and legal reasons, and to restore Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, and Ibas, Bishop of Edessa, after they both agreed to anathematize Nestorius and his teachings. However, the Council did not judge the writings of Theodoret and Ibas which are against the teaching of the great Saint Cyril, neither did it judge Theodore of Mopsuestia, the theological master of Nestorius, or his teachings.

In spite of the fact that the letter of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa, to Maris, Bishop of Ardaschir in Persia, in which he attacked the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus 431, the teachings of the great Saint Cyril and his twelve anathematisms, was read out in the Council, the Council did not decree its condemnation.²⁷ This led the group who rejected the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon to feel that there had been a kind of sympathy at the Council for the Nestorian side. However, the council affirmed the holiness of Saint Cyril and did not accept Theodoret and Ibas till they subscribed anathemas against Nestorius.

The Chalcedonian side had later clarified its standpoint on this issue, showing the rejection of the Chalcedonians to Nestorianism in a definite manner, in the following Council held at Constantinople in 553, known to them as the Fifth Council. This Fifth Council took the decision to anathematize the person and the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the teacher of Nestorius, and to anathematize the writings of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, also the writings of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa, against the teachings of the great Saint Cyril.

The Council of Chalcedon set a definition for the faith, although its members had refused to do so in the beginning but under pressure from the legates of the Emperor they finally gave up. The first draft stated that Christ was “of two natures”, but the legates of the Emperor insisted that the text should include “in two natures”. After much resistance, on the basis that this phrase was included in

²⁵ Cf. Samuel, V.C., p. 58.

²⁶ Hefele, C. J., *A History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol. III, reprinted from the edition of 1883 Edinburgh, AMS Press 1972, p. 345.

²⁷ Cf. Samuel, V. C., p. 84-85.

the *Tome of Leo*, which the Council had already accepted and therefore there is no need to include it in the *definition of the faith*, at the end the Council accepted this last phrase as both the legates of the Pope of Rome and the Emperor's commissioners insisted on it.

The definition that was accepted by the Council was not Nestorian; the Council had, in fact, stressed in all its decisions the anathematisation of both Nestorianism and Eutychism. However, the *definition* neither included the phrase “*hypostatic union*”, nor the phrase “*there can be no distinction between the two natures except in thought only*”, which are the important phrases in the teaching of the great Saint Cyril. Also, there was a statement that anathematized “whoever believed in two natures before the union, and one nature after the union”, by this they meant Eutyches and the doctrine of confusion between the two natures. It is well known that the Non-Chalcedonian side anathematizes whoever believes in “two natures before the union”, because this expression suggests the existence of the *humanity* before its union with the *divinity*. This party accepts the phrase “of two natures in the union” and also “of two natures after the union”. However, anathematising whoever says “one nature after the union” needed clarification, if what was meant was the doctrine of intermixture or confusion? because this anathematism could be interpreted as against the teaching of Saint Cyril the great “*one incarnate nature of the Word of God*”, which is the teaching that the Non-Chalcedonian side held, and still holds and adheres to until today, along with its utter and full rejection to the idea of the intermixing and its affirmation of the continuance of the existence of the two natures in the union.

These issues of faith led Pope Dioscorus to reject the Council of Chalcedon, and led many groups in the East -including the Egyptian people- to denounce this Council. The Council of Constantinople in 553 AD, tried to treat the matter by using the phrases of Saint Cyril the great: “*hypostatic union*” and “*it is impossible to distinguish the two natures except by thought only*”, and by explaining the implication of rejecting those who believe in one nature on the basis of *intermixing*.²⁸ Yet the dispute between the Chalcedonians and the

²⁸ See the Canons of the Council of Constantinople 553 (Hefele, C J: *A History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol. IV, pp. 331, 334-335) out of which we quote the following: (see also appendix 4)

Canon IV: “... The Holy Church of God, on the contrary, rejecting the impiety of both heresies (Nestorius & Eutyches), confesses the union of God the Word with the flesh by a combination, i.e. personally. For the

union according to hypostasis or according to combination (synthesis) kaq u`po,stasin h` ga.r kata. su,nqesin not only preserves, in regard to the mystery of Christ, that which has come together (the two natures) unconfused, but allows of no separation (of the persons).”

Canon VII: “If anyone, speaking of the two natures does not confess that he acknowledges in the Godhead and manhood the one Lord Jesus Christ, so that by this he signifies the difference of natures, of which the unspeakable **union** takes place **without confusion**... let him be anathema”.

Canon VIII: “If anyone does not take the expressions, **of two natures**, the Godhead and the manhood, the union took place, or, the **one incarnate nature of the Word**, as the holy Fathers taught, that from the

non-Chalcedonians continued concerning the phrases “*in two natures*” and “*of two natures*”.

Thirteen Egyptian bishops attending the Council of Chalcedon agreed with the anathematisation of Eutyches but they refused to put their signatures to the decisions of the Council or to the *Tome of Leo* or the deposition of Pope Dioscorus. “*They pointed out that they could not subscribe to it without the concurrence of their archbishop... They could not do that unless they had with them their archbishop*”.²⁹ Big troubles took place in the East due to the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, and by the change of emperors, the situation changed.

On 16 March 457, Pope Timothy II (Aelurus) was elected in Alexandria as a successor to Pope Dioscorus after his decease. In the days of Emperor Basiliscus, he was able to convene another general Council at Ephesus (some call this the Third Council of Ephesus) in 475, attended by 500 bishops. This Council anathematized the teachings of Eutyches and the teachings of Nestorius and abrogated the Council of Chalcedon. Seven hundred Eastern bishops signed the decisions of this Council.³⁰ The standpoint of Pope Timothy showed, through this Council, that the Non-Chalcedonian side was not, essentially, Eutychian in faith, as the Chalcedonian side had frequently accused it.

Then, in the days of the Emperor Zeno, another attempt to restore the union took place on the basis of the *Henotikon*, a document issued by Emperor Zeno on 28 July 482. This was subscribed first by each of Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople, Peter Mongus, Patriarch of Alexandria, in 484 by Peter the Fuller, who had then become Patriarch of Antioch, and Martyrius, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Yet Rome did not join in signing the document, and Pope Felix III held a council and excommunicated Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Also, strong opposition took place in Egypt and a group called the *Acephilists* (without head) was formed. Thus the *Henotikon* or the union document was not able to maintain the union which began with the Patriarchs of the four Eastern Sees who accepted and signed it.³¹

divine nature and the human, **hypostatic union e`nw,sewj kaq u`po,stasin** having taken place, one Christ was constituted, but endeavors, by such expressions, to bring in one nature or essence of the Godhead and manhood of Christ, let him be anathema. For, when we say that the only-begotten Word was hypostatically **kaq u`po,stasin** united, we do not say that a confusion of the natures with each other has taken place; but rather we think that, whilst each nature remains what it is, the Word has been united with the flesh..”

²⁹ Cf. Samuel, V. C., p. 75, see also Cf. Sellers, R.V., p. 114, and Cf. Hefele, C.J., p. 333, 334.

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 101-105.

³¹ Ibid. pp. 108-114.

XII. Contemporary View of the Situation

Following the teaching of our common father Saint Cyril of Alexandria we can confess together that in the one incarnate nature of the Word of God, two different natures continue to exist without separation, without division, without change, and without confusion.

On this basis agreements were reached between the Chalcedonian and the Non-Chalcedonian sides in the Orthodox dialogue at Saint Bishoy's Monastery in Egypt in June 1989, and at Chambezy in Switzerland, September 1990. Official representatives of both sides agreed that the Word of God, Himself, who became perfect man, through incarnation, is consubstantial to the Father according to His divinity, and consubstantial to us according to His humanity - without sin. Also, that the union of natures in Christ is a natural, hypostatic, real and perfect union without fusion or intermixing or change or separation, and that it is not possible to distinguish between the natures except in thought alone. That the Virgin Mary is 'Theotokos' (qeoto,koj) with anathematising the teachings of both Nestorius and Eutyches and also the crypto-Nestorianism of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus.

The two sides agreed on mutually lifting all condemnations and anathemas of the past against all Fathers and Councils of both families.

The difficulty of numbering Seven Ecumenical Councils by the Oriental Orthodox Churches is due to the condemnations and anathemas against their Saintly Fathers (such as Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria, Patriarch Severus of Antioch and St. Philoxenus of Mabbough) in the Fourth and Sixth and Seventh Councils of the Chalcedonians.

The meaning of the 8th paragraph in the theological agreed statement of Chambezy, September 1990, is that the Oriental Orthodox Churches would consider the teachings of all the Orthodox Councils as interpreted by the Orthodox side in coincidence with the preceding seven paragraphs of the agreed statement as correct. Without this interpretation how can the Oriental Orthodox see the teaching of the Fourth Council as correct?!!

No body can deny that the Fifth Council has presented a new interpretation to the teaching of the Fourth Council as we have explained before.

For that reason some Orthodox theologians are named "New-Chalcedonians", since they interpret Chalcedon only in view of the Fifth Council. To such an interpretation which was correctly formulated in the seven paragraphs of the agreed statement on Christology of Chambezy 1990 A.D. the Oriental Orthodox could respond positively.

The Four later Councils of the Orthodox can be considered as local Councils concerning their Family of Churches.

The same applies to the Second Council at Ephesus 449 AD which the Oriental Orthodox did not oblige any Church to accept as an Ecumenical Council although it was a great defence against the propagation of Nestorianism and was defended by St. Severus of Antioch.

Similarly, the Oriental Orthodox did not oblige any Church to accept the Third Council of Ephesus 475 AD as an Ecumenical Council, which was attended by 500 bishops and presided over by Pope Timothy II of Alexandria. Its encyclical of Emperor Basiliscus, encouraged to be written by Pope Timothy II and drafted by Paul, a learned monk, was signed by Timothy II, Peter Fuller, Anastasius of Jerusalem, Paul of Ephesus and by about seven hundred of the bishops of the East. Moreover, the Eastern bishops addressed a reply to Basiliscus affirming the faith of Nicea as it had been upheld by the later councils of 381, 431 and 449, condemning Macedonianism and Nestorianism as well as those who maintain that our Lord Jesus Christ had his body only as an appearance, and that it had come from heaven.³² The Encyclical states: "Since the *Tome of Leo* and the council of Chalcedon introduced an innovation in the faith, both should be anathematized everywhere. In the same way the 'heresy of those not confessing that the Only Begotten Son of God in truth was made into flesh and assumed man's nature from the holy Sprit and from Mary, the Holy and Ever-virgin and mother of God, but talking marvels-that he was either from heaven or according to fantasy and appearance, should be condemned.'"³³

It is clear that the Eutychian heresy was condemned in the Encyclical signed by the third council At Ephesus 475.

³² Cf. Samuel, V.C., p. 105, quoting Zacharia, *Ecclesiastical History*, op. cit. 1, pp. 213,215.

³³ For the encyclical of Basiliscus, see Evagrius III, 4 in PG. LXXXVI 2600A-2604B. Zacharia gives only part of it (*ibid.* I, pp. 211-213). Coleman-Norton includes it as document 542.

Appendix 1

LETTER 69³⁴

Of the same Cyril, to Acacius of Melitene.³⁵

(1) The most pious and most God-loving deacon and archimandrite, Maximus, came to me. I gazed upon him, the sort of man as one would likely wait for a long time to meet. I marvelled at his zeal and rectitude, and the urge he has toward piety in Christ. He was so distressed and had a mind so full of anxieties that he was gladly willing to endure any toil for the sake of tearing out by the roots the evil teaching of Nestorius from the districts of the East. He read to me the letter of your holiness written to John, the most God-loving Bishop of Antioch, a letter full of much confidence and love of God.

(2) I have written also such a letter to him, but, as it seems, the worse is winning. While feigning to hate the teachings of Nestorius they weld them together again in a different way by admiring the teachings of Theodore although they are tainted with an equal, or rather a far worse, impiety. For Theodore was not the pupil of Nestorius, but Nestorius was his, and they speak as if from one mouth spitting up one poison of heterodoxy from their hearts. The bishops of the East, accordingly, wrote to me that it was not necessary to discredit the teachings of Theodore, in order that, they say, those of the blessed Athanasius, Theophilus, Basil, and Gregory might not also be discredited. For they, too, said what Theodore said.

(3) I did not endure them writing these things, but I said with frankness that Theodore had both a blasphemous tongue and a pen that served it, while they have been teachers of complete orthodoxy and were eminent for this. But they so convinced those in the East that outcries occurred in the churches on the part of the people, "Let the faith of Theodore increase. As Theodore believed, so we believe," although they once hit him with stones when he ventured to say something brief before them in the church. But as the teacher desires, so the flock thinks. I, therefore, neither ceased reproving what he had written nor shall I cease.

(4) Since it was necessary that written opposing arguments be present before them, after looking into the books of Theodore and Diodore³⁶ in which they had

³⁴ *The Fathers of the Church – St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letters*, Vol. 76, translated by J. McEnerney, the Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 1987, pp. 66-67.

³⁵ *For the critical text of this letter see Schwartz, Codex valicanus gr. 1431 pp. 15-16. Geerard numbers this letter 5369 in CPG.*

³⁶ *Cf. Letter 67 note 9.*

written, not about the Incarnation of the only begotten, but rather against his Incarnation, I selected certain of the chapters and in the approved manner I set myself against them revealing that their teaching was in every way full of abomination. And when the most pious deacon and archimandrite, Maximus, mentioned before, urged me to interpret the profession of the faith set forth by the holy Fathers assembled at Nicaea, I set myself to this task. He strongly maintained that some villainously pretended both to say and to follow it, but do not any longer have correct thoughts. Rather they distorted what was correctly and consistently said into what seemed good to them.

(5) In, order that this might not escape the notice of your holiness, I have sent the book and the document. After you have read it, deign to offer the customary prayers for me.

Appendix 2

³⁷ LETTER 70

Cyril, to the clerics and to Lampon, the priest.³⁸

(1) When I was staying in [the city] of Aelia³⁹ a certain one of the noble men serving as a soldier in the palace brought to me a large letter of many lines, sealed, saying that he received it from the orthodox in Antioch. The signatures on it were of many clerics, monks and lay persons. They accused the bishops of the East that, although they kept silent about the name of Nestorius, of course, and were pretending to abhor him, they were leaping over to the books of Theodore concerning the Incarnation, in which are lying ready far more dangerous blasphemies than those of Nestorius. He was the father of the evil teaching of Nestorius, and because he voiced the teachings of Nestorius, the impious man is in the company in which he now is. I wrote to the most pious Bishop of Antioch that no one should preach in church the impious teachings of Theodore.

(2) When the most pious deacon and archimandrite, Maximus, arrived in Alexandria, he cried out much against them saying that the orthodox have no place there, nor freedom to speak the dogmas of the true faith. He said that they pretend to confess the creed formulated at Nicaea by the Fathers, but they misinterpret it. He urged me to interpret clearly the entire exposition of the Fathers at Nicaea, in order that they might not carry off some people by explaining things one way instead of another. I have done this. Accordingly, he is bringing the rolls, so that he may present them to the most pious empresses⁴⁰ and to the most Christ-loving and most pious emperor,⁴¹ for I had the book written on parchment. With the help of his consideration, as you⁴² may see fit to obtain, may you introduce it at the proper moment.

(3) It is necessary for us to fight everywhere for the true faith and to try as much as is possible to remove from our midst the impiety against Christ which has arisen.

³⁷ *The Fathers of the Church – St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letters*, Vol. 76, translated by J. McEnerney, the Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 1987, pp. 68-69.

³⁸ *For the critical text of this letter see Schwartz, Codex vaticanus gr. 1431, pp. 16-17. Geerard numbers this letter 5370 in CPG.*

³⁹ *Aelia Capitolina, the Roman name for Jerusalem. The letter has two parts. The first deals with a letter Cyril received at Jerusalem accusing the bishops of the East of favoring Theodore of Mopsuestia. Cyril comments that he wrote to John of Antioch about this. The second part deals with the arrival of Maximus at Alexandria, evidently from Constantinople. Hence at the end Cyril says, “we must fight everywhere” against error.*

⁴⁰ *The emperor’s wife, Eudoxia, and his sister, Pulcheria.*

⁴¹ *Theodosius II, emperor from 408 to 450.*

⁴² *Lampon, the priest, was associated with Constantinople. See Letter 3.*

Appendix 3

LETTER 71⁴³

Cyril, to the Emperor Theodosius.⁴⁴

(1) It is blameless before God the Father who is in heaven for me to look forward from earth to everlasting life when I say, “Now this alone is everlasting life, that they may know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.”⁴⁵ But I do not know how some indeed pretend in this regard to walk uprightly, while they are limping and, by deserting the way of truth, turn to another one which leads to extermination and perdition. They cling to the forbidden writing of certain men and, to state the nature of the matter clearly, since it is written, “I spoke of your decrees before kings without being ashamed,”⁴⁶ there was a certain Theodore and before him Diodore, the bishop, the latter of Tarsus, the former of Mopsuestia. These were the fathers of the blasphemy of Nestorius. In books which they composed, they made use of a crude madness against Christ, the Savior of us all, because they did not understand his mystery. Therefore, Nestorius desired to introduce their teachings into our midst and he was deposed by God.

(2) However, while some bishops of the East anathematized his teachings, in another way they now introduce these very teachings again when they admire the teachings which are Theodore's and say that he thought correctly and in agreement with our Fathers, I mean, Athanasius, Gregory and Basil. But they are lying against holy men. Whatever they wrote, they are the opposite to the wicked opinions of Theodore and Nestorius. Therefore, since I have learned that they may bring certain matters concerning these men even to your pious ears, I ask that you preserve your souls entirely intact and clean of the impieties of Theodore and Diodore. As I said above just now, Nestorius stated the teachings which are those of these men, and for this he was condemned as impious by the general council assembled at Ephesus according to the will of God. Since they pretend that they confess the creed which was set forth in the great and ancient synod at Nicaea, but distort its meaning by a false interpretation, the orthodox archimandrites of the East have asked that I explain the meaning of the creed and it has been interpreted.⁴⁷

⁴³ *The Fathers of the Church – St. Cyril of Alexandria, Letters*, Vol. 76, translated by J. McEnerney, the Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 1987. pp. 70-71.

⁴⁴ *For the critical text (only the Latin is extant) on which this letter is based see Schwartz, ACO 1.4 pp. 210-211. For another critical text see Schwartz, ACO 4.1 p. 108. Geerard numbers this letter 5371 in CPG.*

⁴⁵ *Jn 17.3.*

⁴⁶ *Ps 118 (119).46.*

⁴⁷ *In Letter 55.*

(3) It was necessary that this work should come to your pious and Christ-loving ears, since among other good things this also is a part of your tranquillity that you choose without ceasing to be delighted by words about the true faith.

Appendix 4

Canons 4, 7, 8 of the Council of Constantinople 553 AD

Canon IV: “... The Holy Church of God, on the contrary, rejecting the impiety of both heresies (Nestorius & Eutyches), confesses the union of God the Word with the flesh by a combination, i.e. personally. For the **union according to hypostasis or according to combination** (synthesis) **kaq u`po,stasin h` ga.r kata. su,nqesin** not only preserves, in regard to the mystery of Christ, that which has come together (the two natures) unconfused, but allows of no separation (of the persons).”

Canon VII: “If anyone, speaking of the two natures does not confess that he acknowledges in the Godhead and manhood the one Lord Jesus Christ, so that by this he signifies the difference of natures, of which the unspeakable **union** takes place **without confusion**... let him be anathema”.

Canon VIII: “If anyone does not take the expressions, **of two natures**, the Godhead and the manhood, the union took place, or, the **one incarnate nature of the Word**, as the holy Fathers taught, that from the divine nature and the human, **hypostatic union e`nw,sewj kaq u`po,stasin** having taken place, one Christ was constituted, but endeavors, by such expressions, to bring in one nature or essence of the Godhead and manhood of Christ, let him be anathema. For, when we say that the only-begotten Word was hypostatically **kaq u`po,stasin** united, we do not say that a confusion of the natures with each other has taken place; but rather we think that, whilst each nature remains what it is, the Word has been united with the flesh..”