

The Didache

The Text

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Introduction

Title

The Didache or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, borrows its title from Acts 2.12. It does not claim to be written by the apostles, however, but only to summarize their teaching. As Schaff says, “It differs in this respect very favorably from similar productions where the Apostles are introduced by name as speakers and made responsible for doctrines, canons and regulation, of which they never dreamed” (Schaff, Philip; *The Oldest Church Manual Called the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles: The Didache and Kindred Documents* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1885).

Discovery

Discovered in 1873 by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia (Ismid), the manuscript of the *Didache* had lain unnoticed for 800 years in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of Constantinople. Until published by Bryennios in 1883, the *Didache* had been entirely lost to the world except for a few references to it by the Greek fathers.

Date and Provenance

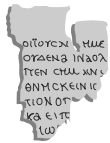
Various dates from A.D. 70 to 150 have been championed for the writing of *The Didache*. Its composite nature complicates attempts to date it, but most scholars place it’s time of origin at around A.D. 100. Internal, and circumstantial evidence (e.g. the mention of mountains) suggest Syria or possibly Palestine as its place of origin.

Authorship

The Didache appears to be a composite document, stitched together by unknown authors.

Content

The Didache is a document that predates the theological



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controversies with the Gnostics and other sects. Hence it lacks the dogmatism of later works, and presents Christianity as simply a pure and holy life. In this respect it bears similarity to the book of James.

Translation

The translation of *The Didache* used in this syllabus was made by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, edited by Michael W. Holmes, and published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1992. The text is used by permission, and reproduction of any part of it, beyond that allowed by the fair-use clause of the copyright law, should only be made with the explicit permission of the Permissions Editor of Baker Book House.

The Didache

or

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

Excerpted from

The Apostolic Fathers

Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings,

Second Edition

J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer

(Baker, 1992)

The teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the twelve apostles.

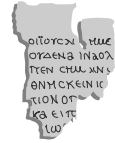
1 (1) There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways.

(2) Now this is the way of life: first, “you shall love God, who made you”; second, “your neighbor as yourself”; and “whatever you do not wish to happen to you, do not do to another.”

Cf. Jeremiah 21.8.

Matthew 22.37

Matthew 7.12; Job 4.15



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(3) The teaching of these words is this: “Bless those who curse you” and “pray for your enemies,” and “fast for those who persecute you.” “For what credit is it, if you love those who love you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” But “you must love those who hate you,” and you will not have an enemy. (4) Abstain from physical and bodily cravings. “If someone gives you a blow on your right cheek, turn to him the other as well,” and you will be perfect. If someone “forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles”; “if someone takes your cloak, give him your tunic also”; “if someone takes from you what belongs to you, do not demand it back,” for you cannot do so. (5) “Give to everyone who asks you, and do not demand it back,” for the Father wants something from his own gifts to be given to everyone. Blessed is the one who gives according to the command, for such a person is innocent. Woe to the one who receives: if, on the one hand, someone who is in need receives, this person is innocent, but the one who does not have need will have to explain why and for what purpose he received, and upon being imprisoned will be interrogated about what he has done, and will not be released from there until he has repaid every last cent. (6) But it has also been said concerning this: “Let your gift sweat in your hands until you know to whom to give it.”

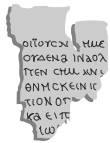
Matthew 5.44,46

Matthew 5.39-41

Matthew 5.42

Extra-canonical saying of Jesus?

2 (1) The second commandment of the teaching is: (2) “You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery”; you shall not corrupt little boys; you shall not be sexually promiscuous; “you shall not steal”; you shall not practice magic; you shall not engage in sorcery; you shall not abort a child or commit infanticide. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s possessions; (3) you shall not commit perjury; you shall not give false testimony”; you shall not speak evil; you shall not hold a grudge. (4) You shall not be double-minded, or double-tongued, for the “double-tongue” is a deadly snare. (5) Your word must not be false or meaningless, but confirmed by action. (6) You shall not be greedy or avaricious, or a hypocrite or malicious or arrogant. You shall not hatch evil plots against your neighbor. (7) You shall not hate anyone;



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Auger = οἰωνοσκοπος (bird watcher).
Astrologer = μαθηματικὸς (mathematician).

Matthew 5.5

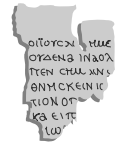
instead you shall reprove some, and pray for some, and some you shall love more than your own life.

3 (1) My child, flee from evil of every kind, and from everything resembling it. (2) Do not become angry, for anger leads to murder. Do not be jealous or quarrelsome or hot-tempered, for all these things breed murders. (3) My child, do not be lustful, for lust leads to fornication. Do not be foul-mouthed or let your eyes roam, for all these things breed adultery. (4) My child, do not be an auger, since it leads to idolatry. Do not be an enchanter or an astrologer or a magician, or even desire to see them, for all these things breed idolatry. (5) My child, do not be a liar, since lying leads to theft. Do not be avaricious or conceited, for all these things breed thefts. (6) My child, do not be a grumbler, since it leads to blasphemy. Do not be arrogant or evil-minded, for all these things breed blasphemies.

(7) Instead, be humble, for “the humble shall inherit the earth.” (8) Be patient and merciful and innocent and quiet and good, and revere always the words which you have heard. (9) Do not exalt yourself or permit your soul to become arrogant. Your soul shall not associate with the lofty, but live with the righteous and the humble. (10) Accept as good the things that happen to you, knowing that nothing transpires apart from God.

4 (1) My child, night and day remember the one who preaches God’s word to you, and honor him as though he were the Lord. For wherever the Lord’s nature is preached, there the Lord is. (2) Moreover, you shall seek out daily the presence of the saints, that you may find support in their words. (3) You shall not cause division, but shall make peace between those who quarrel. You shall judge righteously; you shall not show partiality when reproofing transgressions. (4) You shall not waver with regard to your decisions.

(5) Do not be someone who stretches out his hands to receive, but withdraws them when it comes to giving. (6) If you earned something by working with



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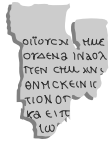
your hands, you shall give a ransom for your sins. (7) You shall not hesitate to give, nor shall you grumble when giving, for you shall yet come to know who is the good paymaster of the reward. (8) you shall not turn away from someone in need, but shall share everything with your brother, and not claim that anything is your own. For if you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more so in perishable things!

(9) You shall not withhold your hand from your son or your daughter, but from their youth you shall teach them the fear of God. (10) You shall not give orders to your slave or servant girl (who hope in the same God as you) when angry, lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both. For he comes to call not with regard to reputation but upon those whom the Spirit has prepared. (11) And you slaves shall be submissive to your masters in respect and fear, as to a symbol of God.

(12) You shall hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord. (13) You must not forsake the Lord's commandments, but must guard what you have received, neither adding nor subtracting anything. (14) In church you shall confess your transgressions, and you shall not approach your prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

5 (1) But the way of death is this: first of all, it is evil and completely cursed; murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magic arts, sorceries, robberies, false testimonies, hypocrisy, duplicity, deceit, arrogance, malice, stubbornness, greed, foul speech, jealousy, audacity, pride, boastfulness. (2) It is the way of persecutors of good people, of those hating truth, loving a lie, not knowing the reward of righteousness, nor adhering to what is good or to righteous judgment, being on the alert not for what is good but for what is evil, from whom gentleness and patience are far away, loving worthless things, pursuing reward, having no mercy for the poor, not working on behalf of the oppressed, not knowing him who made them, murderers of children, corrupters of God's creation, turning

Acts 4.32



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Cf. Justin Martyr, Apol. 1.61: “As many as are persuaded and believe that the things taught and spoken by us are true, and promise to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray, and to entreat God with fasting for the remission of their past sins, while we at the same time pray and fast with them. Then they are brought by us to a place where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated. For in the name of the Father and Lord of the whole universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, ‘Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.’”

Matthew 6.9-13

away from someone in need, oppressing the afflicted, advocates of the wealthy, lawless judges of the poor, utterly sinful. May you be delivered, children, from all these things!

6 (1) See that no one leads you astray from this way of the teaching, for such a person teaches you without regard for God. (2) For if you are able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect. But if you are no able, then do what you can.

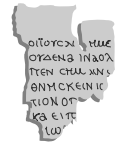
(3) Now concerning food, bear what you are able, but in any case keep strictly away from meat sacrificed to idols, for it involves the worship of dead gods.

7 (1) Now concerning baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” in running water. (2) But if you have no running water, then baptize in some other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm. (3) But if you have neither, then pour water over the head three times “in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit.” (4) And before the baptism, let the one baptizing and the one who is to be baptized fast, as well as any others who are able. Also, you must instruct the one who is to be baptized to fast for one of two days beforehand.

8 (1) But do not let your fasts coincide with those of the hypocrites. They fast on Monday and Thursday, so you must fast on Wednesday and Friday.

(2) Nor should you pray like the hypocrites. Instead, “pray like this” just as the Lord commanded in his Gospel:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.



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Give us today our daily bread,
and forgive us our debt,
as we also forgive our debtors;
and do not lead us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one;
for yours is the power and the glory forever.

(3) Pray like this three times a day.

9 (1) Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks
as follows.

(2) First, concerning the cup:

We give thanks, our Father,
for the holy vine of David your servant,
which you have made known to us
through Jesus, your servant;
to you be the glory forever.

Vine: See Isaiah 5; John 15.1.

(3) And concerning the broken bread:

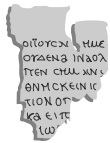
We give thanks, our Father,
for the life and knowledge
which you have made known to us
through Jesus, your servant;
to you be the glory forever.

(4) Just as this broken bread was scattered
upon the mountains and then was
gathered together and became one,
so may your church be gathered together
from the ends of the earth into your kingdom;
for yours is the glory and the power
through Jesus Christ forever.

(5) But let no one eat or drink of the Eucharist except
those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord,
for the Lord has also spoken concerning this: "Do not
give what is holy to the dogs."

Matthew 7.6

10 (1) And after you have had enough, give



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Matthew 24.42,44.

cf. 1 Peter 1.13.

thanks as follows:

(2) we give thanks, Holy Father,
for your holy name which you
have caused to dwell in our hearts,
and for the knowledge and faith and immortality
which you have made known to us
through Jesus your servant;
to you be the glory forever.

(3) you, almighty Master, created all things for your
name's sake,
and gave food and drink to men to enjoy,
that they might give you thanks;
but to us you have graciously given
spiritual food and drink,
and eternal life through your servant.

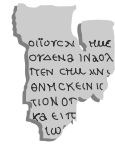
(4) Above all we give thanks because you are mighty;
to you be the glory forever.

(5) Remember your church, Lord,
to deliver it from all evil
and to make it perfect in your love;
and gather it, the one that has been sanctified,
from the four winds into your kingdom,
which you have prepared for it;
for yours is the power and the glory forever.

(6) May grace come, and may this world pass away.
Hosanna to the God of David.
If anyone is holy, let him come;
if anyone is not, let him repent.
Maranatha! Amen.

(7) But permit the prophets to give thanks however
they wish.

11 (1) So if anyone should come and teach you
all these things that have just been mentioned above,
welcome him. (2) But if the teacher himself goes astray
and teaches a different teaching that undermines all
this, do not listen to him. However, if his teaching
contributes to righteousness and knowledge of the
Lord, welcome him as you would the Lord.



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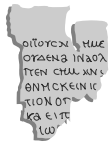
Notes

(3) Now concerning the apostles and prophets, deal with them as follows in accordance with the rule of the gospel. (4) Let every apostle who comes to you be welcomed as if he were the Lord. (5) But he is not to stay for more than one day, unless there is need, in such case he may stay another. But if he stays three days, he is a false prophet. (6) And when the apostle leaves, he is to take nothing except bread until he finds his next night's lodging. But if he asks for money, he is a false prophet.

(7) Also, do not test or evaluate any prophet who speaks in the spirit, for every sin will be forgiven, but this sin will not be forgiven. (8) However, not everyone who speaks in the spirit is a prophet, but only if he exhibits the Lord's ways. By his conduct, therefore, will the false prophet and the prophet be recognized. (9) Furthermore, any prophet who orders a meal in the spirit shall not partake of it; if he does, he is a false prophet. (10) If any prophet teaches the truth, yet does not practice what he teaches, he is a false prophet. (11) But any prophet proven to be genuine who does something with a view to portraying in a worldly manner the symbolic meaning of the church (provided that he does not teach you to do all that he himself does) is not to be judged by you, for his judgment is with God. Besides, the ancient prophets also acted in a similar manner. (12) But if anyone should say in the spirit, "Give me money," or anything else, do not listen to him. But if he tells you to give on behalf of others who are in need, let no one judge him.

Matthew 12.31

12 (1) Everyone "who comes in the name of the Lord" is to be welcomed. But then examine him, and you will find out-for you will have insight-what is true and what is false. (2) If the one who comes is merely passing through, assist him as much as you can. But he must not stay with you for more than two or, if necessary, three days. (3) However, if he wishes to settle among you and is a craftsman, let him work for his living. (4) But if he is not a craftsman, decide according to your own judgment how he shall live among you as a Christian, yet without being idle. (5) But if he does not wish



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Matthew 10,9,10

to cooperate in this way, then he is trading on Christ. Beware of such people.

13 (1) But every genuine prophet who wishes to settle among you “is worthy of his food.” (2) Likewise, every genuine teacher is, like “the worker, worthy of his food.” (3) Take, therefore, all the firstfruits of the produce of the wine press and threshing floor, and of the cattle and sheep, and give these firstfruits to the prophets, for they are your high priests. (4) But if you have no prophet, give them to the poor. (5) If you make bread, take the firstfruit and give in accordance with the commandment. (6) Similarly, when you open a jar of wine or oil, take the firstfruit and give it to the prophets. (7) As for money and clothes and any other possessions, take the “firstfruit” that seems right to you and give in accordance with the commandment.

Hebrews 10.22,25
Revelation 1.10

14 (1) On the Lord’s own day gather together and break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure. (2) But let no one who has a quarrel with a companion join you until they have been reconciled, so that your sacrifice may not be defiled. (3) For this is the sacrifice concerning which the Lord said, “In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and My name is marvelous among the nations.”

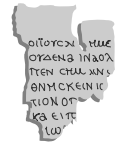
Matthew 5.23,24

15 (1) Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are humble and not avaricious and true and approved, for they too carry out for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. (2) You must not, therefore, despise them, for they are your honored men, along with the prophets and teachers.

Hebrews 13.7

(3) Furthermore, correct one another, not in anger but in peace, as you find in the Gospel; and if anyone wrongs his neighbor, let no one speak to him, nor let him hear a word from you, until he repents. (4)

Matthew 18.15,17



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As for your prayers and acts of charity and all your actions, do them all just as you find it in the Gospel of our Lord.

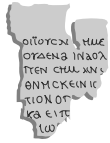
16 (1) “Watch” over your life: “do not let your lamps go out, and do not be unprepared, but be ready, for you do not know the hour when our Lord is coming.” (2) Gather together frequently, seeking the things that benefit your souls, for all the time you have believed will be of no use to you if you are not found perfect in the last time. (3) For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters will abound, and the sheep will be turned into wolves, and love will be turned to hate. (4) For as lawlessness increases, they will hate and persecute and betray one another. And then the deceiver of the world will appear as a son of God and “will perform signs and wonders” and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will commit abominations the likes of which have never happened before. (5) Then all humankind will come to the fiery test, and “many will fall away” and perish; but “those who endure” in their faith “will be saved” by the accursed one himself. (6) And “then there will appear the signs” of the truth: first the sign of an opening in heaven, then the sign of the sound of a trumpet, and third, the resurrection of the dead—(7) but not of all; rather, as it has been said, “The Lord will come, and all his saints with him.” (8) Then the world “will see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.”

Matthew 24.31,35
Luke 12.35

Matthew 24.10-14
2 Thess. 2.8-10

Matthew 24.30,31
1 Cor. 15.52
1 Thess. 4.16,17

Zechariah 14.5



The Passion of Perpetua



Notes

The Text

Introduction

Title

This rare document records the suffering (passion) of two women and a handful of other Christians who were martyred in Carthage. Since most of the document was written by the citizen, Vibia Perpetua, it is associated more often with her than with her maidservant, but the complete title names them both: *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*. The irony of their two names appearing together has been noted, since they would translate as “Eternal” and “Happiness.”

Date and Provenance

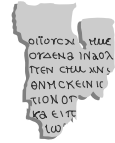
The Passion of Perpetua tells the story of a group of Christians who were martyred in Carthage on March 7, A.D. 202.

Authorship

Written originally in Latin, *The Passion of Perpetua* also survives in a Greek edition. The martyr, Perpetua herself, wrote the greater part of this document (ch. 3-10) as a sort of diary of her imprisonment. Chapters 11 to 13 were written by another of the martyrs named Saturus. As for the rest of the document, because of similarities to his other writings, it is believed that no less a theological giant than Tertullian (the greatest writer of the African church in Perpetua’s time) authored the other chapters and edited the whole. We should recall that Tertullian became a Montanist later in his career—the content of this document is very consistent with Montanist sentiments, and it is believed that the martyrs in this account were in fact Montanist Christians.

Content

Quasten describes this document well as “one of the most beautiful pieces of ancient Christian literature.” The reader will find rich material for meditation in



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Perpetua's vision a ladder to heaven (04), and of Sator's vision of actually arriving at heaven's gates (11). The account of the martyrs' actual passion under the hooves of beasts and blades of gladiators, and of their joyous testimony to the spectators, has to be one of the great literary treasures of our Christian heritage.

Translation

The translation of *The Passion of Perpetua* used in this syllabus was excerpted from *Some Authentic Acts of the Early Martyrs*, By Edward Charles Owen (SPCK, London, 1933), and appeared in *The Other Bible*, Edited by Willis Barnstone (HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1984). This text is used by permission of SPCK. Reproduction of any part of it, beyond that allowed by the fair-use clause of the copyright law, should only be made with the explicit permission of the Permissions Editor of SPCK, London.

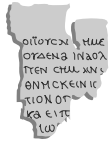
The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas

Excerpted from
Some Authentic Acts of the Early Martyrs
By Edward Charles Owen (SPCK, London, 1933),
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Francisco, 1984).

I

If the ancient examples of faith, such as both testified to the grace of God, and wrought the edification of man, have for this cause been set out in writing that the reading of them may revive the past, and so both God be glorified and man strengthened, why should not new examples be set out equally suitable to both these ends?





The Passion of Perpetua



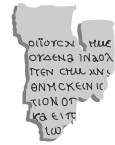
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For these in like manner will some day be old and needful for posterity, though in their own time because of the veneration secured to antiquity they are held in less esteem. But let them see to this who determine the one power of the one Spirit by times and seasons; since the more recent things should rather be deemed greater, as being "later than the last." This follows from the preeminence of grace promised at the last lap of the world's race. For "In the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh, and their sons and their daughters shall prophesy: and on my servants and on my handmaidens will I pour forth of my Spirit: and their young men shall see visions, and their old men shall dream dreams." And so we who recognize and hold in honor not new prophecies only but new visions as alike promised, and count all the rest of the powers of the Holy Spirit as intended for the equipment of the Church, to which the same Spirit was sent bestowing all gifts upon all as the Lord dealt to each man, we cannot but set these out and make them famous by recital to the glory of God. So shall no weak or despairing faith suppose that supernatural grace, in excellency of martyrdoms or revelations, was found among the ancients only; for God ever works what he has promised, to unbelievers a witness, to believers a blessing. And so "what we have heard and handled declare we unto you also," brothers and little children, "that you also" who were their eyewitnesses may be reminded of the glory of the Lord, and you who now learn by the ear "may have fellowship with" the holy martyrs, and through them with the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belong splendor and honor for ever and ever. Amen.

II

Certain young catechumens were arrested, Revocatus and his fellow slave Felicitas, Saturninus, and Secundulus. Among these also Vibia Perpetua, well-born, liberally educated, honorably married, having father and mother, and two brothers, one like herself a catechumen, and an infant son at breast. She was about twenty-two years of age. The whole story of her martyr-



The Passion of Perpetua

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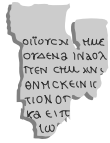
dom is from this point onwards told by herself, as she left it written, hand and conception being alike her own.

III

“When I was still,” she says, “with my companions, and my father in his affection for me was endeavoring to upset me by arguments and overthrow my resolution, ‘Father,’ I said, ‘Do you see this vessel for instance lying here, waterpot or whatever it may be?’ ‘I see it,’ he said. And I said to him, ‘Can it be called by any other name than what it is?’ And he answered, ‘No.’ ‘So also I cannot call myself anything else than what I am, a Christian.’

“Then my father, furious at the word ‘Christian,’ threw himself upon me as though to pluck out my eyes; but he was satisfied with annoying me; he was in fact vanquished, he and his Devil’s arguments. Then I thanked the Lord for being parted for a few days from my father, and was refreshed by his absence. During those few days we were baptized, and the Holy Spirit bade me make no other petition after the holy water save for bodily endurance. A few days after we were lodged in prison; and I was in great fear, because I had never known such darkness. What a day of horror! Terrible heat, thanks to the crowds! Rough handling by the soldiers! To crown all I was tormented there by anxiety for my baby. Then Tertius and Pomponius, those blessed deacons who were ministering to us, paid for us to be removed for a few hours to a better part of the prison and refresh ourselves. Then all went out of the prison and were left to themselves. My baby was brought to me, faint for want of food. I spoke anxiously to my mother on his behalf, and strengthened my brother, and commended my son to their charge. I was pining because I saw them pine on my account. Such anxieties I suffered for many days; and I obtained leave for my baby to remain in the prison with me and at once recovered my health, and was relieved of my trouble and anxiety for my baby; and my prison suddenly became a palace to me, and I would rather have been there than anywhere else.”

Baptism



The Passion of Perpetua



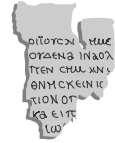
Notes

The Text

IV

“Then my brother said to me: ‘Lady sister, you are now in great honor, so great indeed that you may well pray for a vision and may well be shown whether suffering or release be in store for you.’ And I who knew myself to have speech of the Lord, for whose sake I had gone through so much, gave confident promise in return, saying: ‘Tomorrow I will bring you word.’ And I made request, and this was shown me. I saw a brazen ladder of wondrous length reaching up to heaven, but so narrow that only one could ascend at once; and on the sides of the ladder were fastened all kinds of iron weapons. There were swords, lances, hooks, daggers, so that if anyone went up carelessly or without looking upwards he was mangled and his flesh caught on the weapons. And just beneath the ladder was a dragon couching of wondrous size who lay in wait for those going up. Now Saturus went up first, who had given himself up for our sakes of his own accord, because our faith had been of his own building, and he had not been present when we were seized. And he reached the top of the ladder, and turned, and said to me: ‘Perpetua, I await you; but see that the dragon bites you not.’ And I said: ‘In the name of Jesus Christ he will not hurt me.’ And he put out his head gently, as if afraid of me, just at the foot of the ladder; and as though I were treading on the first step, I trod on his head. And I went up, and saw a vast expanse of garden, and in the midst a man sitting with white hair, in the dress of a shepherd, a tall man, milking sheep; and round about were many thousands clad in white. And he raised his head, and looked upon me, and said: ‘You have well come, my child.’ And he called me, and gave me a morsel of the milk which he was milking and I received it in my joined hands, and ate; and all they that stood around said: ‘Amen.’ And at the sound of the word I woke, still eating something sweet. And at once I told my brother, and we understood that we must suffer, and henceforward began to have no hope in this world.”

God reveals time to leave the world



The Passion of Perpetua

The Text

Notes

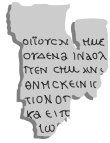
V

“After a few days a rumor ran that we were to be examined. Moreover, my father arrived from the city, worn with trouble, and came up the hill to see me, that he might overthrow my resolution, saying: ‘Daughter, pity my white hairs! Pity your father, if I am worthy to be called father by you; if with these hands I have brought you up to this your prime of life, if I have preferred you to all your brothers! Give me not over to the reproach of men! Look upon your brothers, look upon your mother and your mother’s sister, look upon your son who cannot live after you are gone! Lay aside your pride, do not ruin all of us, for none of us will ever speak freely again, if anything happens to you!’ So spoke my father in his love for me, kissing my hands, and casting himself at my feet; and with tears called me by the name not of daughter but of lady. And I comforted him, saying: ‘It shall happen on that platform as God shall choose; for know well that we lie not in our own power but on the power of God.’ And full of sorrow he left me.”

VI

“On another day when we were having our midday meal, we were suddenly hurried off to be examined; and we came to the marketplace. Forthwith a rumor ran through the neighboring parts of the marketplace, and a vast crowd gathered. We went up on to the platform. The others on being questioned confessed their faith. So it came to my turn. And there was my father with my child, and he drew me down from the step, beseeching me: ‘Have pity on your baby.’ And the procurator Hilarian, who had then received the power of life and death in the room of the late proconsul Minucius Timinianus, said to me: ‘Spare your father’s white hairs; spare the tender years of your child. Offer a sacrifice for the safety of the Emperors.’ And I answered: ‘No.’ ‘Are you a Christian?’ said Hilarian. And I answered: ‘I am.’ And when my father persisted in trying to overthrow my resolution, he was ordered by Hilarian to be thrown down, and the judge struck him

THE EXAMINATION



The Passion of Perpetua



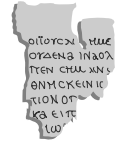
Notes

The Text

with his rod. And I was grieved for my father's plight, as if I had been struck myself, so did I grieve for the sorrow that had come on his old age. Then he passed sentence on the whole of us, and condemned us to the beasts; and in great joy we went down into the prison. Then because my baby was accustomed to take the breast from me, and stay with me in prison, I sent at once the deacon Pomponius to my father to ask for my baby. But my father refused to give him. And as God willed, neither had he any further wish for my breasts, nor did they become inflamed; that I might not be tortured by anxiety for the baby and pain in my breasts.

VII

After a few days, while we were all praying, suddenly in the middle of the prayer I spoke, and uttered the name of Dinocrates; and I was astonished that he had never come into mind till then; and I grieved thinking of what had befallen him. And I saw at once that I was entitled, and ought, to make request for him. And began to pray much for him, and make lamentation to the Lord. At once on this very night this was shown me. I saw Dinocrates coming forth from a dark place, where there were many other dark places, very hot and thirsty, his countenance pale and squalid; and the wound which he had when he died was in his face still. This Dinocrates had been my brother according to the flesh, seven years old, who had died miserably of a gangrene in the face, so that his death moved all to loathing. For him then I had prayed; and there was a great gulf between me and him, so that neither of us could approach the other. There was besides in the very place where Dinocrates was a font full of water, the rim of which was above the head of the child; and Dinocrates stood on tiptoe to drink. I grieved that the font should have water in it and that nevertheless he could not drink because of the height of the rim. And I woke and recognized that my brother was in trouble. But I trusted that I could relieve his trouble, and I prayed for him every day until we were transferred to



The Passion of Perpetua

The Text

Notes

the garrison prison, for we were to fight with the beasts at the garrison games on the Caesar Geta's birthday. And I prayed for him day and night with lamentations and tears that he might be given me.

VIII

During the daytime, while we stayed in the stocks, this was shown me. I saw that same place which I had seen before, and Dinocrates clean in body, well-clothed and refreshed; and where there had been a wound, I saw a scar; and the font which I had seen before had its rim lowered to the child's waist; and there poured water from it unceasingly; and on the rim a golden bowl full of water. And Dinocrates came forward and began to drink from it, and the bowl failed not. And when he had drunk enough of the water, he came forward being glad to play as children will. And I awoke. Then I knew that he had been released from punishment.

IX

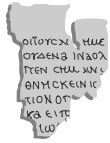
Then after a few days Pudens the adjutant, who was in charge of the prison, who began to show us honor perceiving that there was some great power within us, began to admit many to see us, that both we and they might be refreshed by one another's company. Now when the day of the games approached, my father came in to me worn with trouble, and began to pluck out his beard and cast it on the ground, and to throw himself on his face, and to curse his years, and to say such words as might have turned the world upside down. I sorrowed for the unhappiness of his old age.

X

On the day before we were to fight, I saw in a vision Pomponius the deacon come hither to the door of the prison and knock loudly. And I went out to him, and opened to him. Now he was clad in a white robe without a girdle, wearing shoes curiously wrought. And he said to me: 'Perpetua, we are waiting for you; come.' And he took hold of my hand, and we began to pass through rough and broken country. Painfully and panting did

Purgatory is a pre-Christian idea which takes a Christian form beginning with Augustine.

The adjutant would have been an "assistant overseer." See my embellishment of Pudens's story entitled, "Pudens's Ring."



The Passion of Perpetua



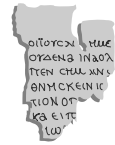
Notes

The Text

we arrive at last at an amphitheatre, and he led me into the middle of the arena. And he said to me: 'Fear not; I am here with you, and I suffer with you.' And he departed.

“And I saw a huge crowd watching eagerly. And because I knew that I was condemned to the beasts, I marveled that there were no beasts let loose on me. And there came out an Egyptian, foul of look, with his attendants to fight against me. And to me also there came goodly young men to be my attendants and supporters. And I was stripped and was changed into a man. And my supporters began to rub me down with oil, as they are wont to do before a combat; and I saw the Egyptian opposite rolling in the sand. And there came forth a man wondrously tall so that he rose above the top of the amphitheatre, clad in a purple robe without a girdle with two stripes, one on either side, running down the middle of the breast, and wearing shoes curiously wrought made of gold and silver; carrying a wand, like a trainer, and a green bough on which were golden apples. And he asked for silence, and said: ‘This Egyptian, if he prevail over her, shall kill her with a sword; and, if she prevail over him, she shall receive this bough.’ And he retired. And we came near to one another and began to use our fists. My adversary wished to catch hold of my feet, but I kept on striking his face with my heels. And I was lifted up into the air, and began to strike him in such fashion as would one that no longer trod on earth. But when I saw that the fight lagged, I joined my two hands, linking the fingers of the one with the fingers of the other. And I caught hold of his head, and he fell on his face; and I trod upon his head. And the people began to shout, and my supporters to sing psalms. And I came forward to the trainer, and received the bough. And he kissed me, and said to me: ‘Peace be with you, my daughter.’

“And I began to go in triumph to the Gate of Life. And I awoke. And I perceived that I should not fight with beasts but with the Devil; but I knew the victory to be mine. Such were my doings up to the day before the games. Of what was done in the games themselves let



The Passion of Perpetua

The Text

Notes

him write who will.”

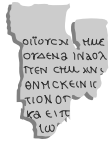
XI

But the blessed Saturus also has made known this vision of his own, which he has written out with his own hand. “Methought we had suffered, and put off the flesh, and began to be borne toward the east by four angels whose hands touched us not. Now we moved not on our backs looking upward, but as though we were climbing a gentle slope. And when we were clear of the world below we saw a great light, and I said to Perpetua, for she was by my side: ‘This is what the Lord promised us, we have received his promise.’ And while we were carried by those four angels, we came upon a great open space, which was like as it might be a garden, having rose-trees and all kinds of flowers. The height of the trees was like the height of a cypress, whose leaves sang without ceasing. Now there in the garden were certain four angels, more glorious than the others, who when they saw us, gave us honor, and said to the other angels: ‘Lo! they are come; lo! they are come,’ being full of wonder. And those four angels which bare us trembled and set us down, and we crossed on foot a place strewn with violets, where we found Jucundus and Saturninus and Artaxius, who were burned alive in the same persecution, and Quintus who, being also a martyr, had died in the prison, and we asked of them where they were. The other angels said unto us: ‘Come first and enter and greet the Lord.’”

XII

“And we came near to a place whose walls were built like as it might be of light, and before the gate of that place were four angels standing, who as we entered clothed us in white robes. And we entered, and heard a sound as of one voice saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy,’ without ceasing. And we saw sitting in the same place one like unto a man white-haired, having hair as white as snow, and with the face of a youth; whose feet we saw not. And on the right and on the left four elders; and behind them were many other elders standing. And entering we

THE FLIGHT TO HEAVEN



The Passion of Perpetua



Notes

The Text

MAKING PEACE

stood in wonder before the throne; and four angels lifted us up, and we kissed him, and he stroked our faces with his hand. And the other elders said to us: ‘Let us stand.’ And we stood and gave the kiss of peace. And the elders said to us: ‘Go and play.’ And I said to Perpetua: ‘You have your wish.’ And she said to me: ‘Thanks be to God, that as I was merry in the flesh, so am I now still merrier here.’”

XIII

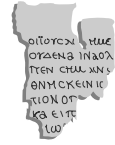
“And we went forth, and saw before the doors Optatus the bishop on the right, and Aspasius the priest-teacher on the left, severed and sad. And they cast themselves at our feet, and said: ‘Make peace between us, for you have gone forth, and left us thus.’ And we said to them: ‘Are not you our father, and you our priest? Why should ye fall before our feet?’ And we were moved, and embraced them. And Perpetua began to talk Greek with them, and we drew them aside into the garden under a rose-tree. And while we talked with them, the angels said to them: ‘Let them refresh themselves; and if you have any quarrels among yourselves, forgive one another.’ And they put these to shame, and said to Opatatus: ‘Reform your people, for they came to you like men returning from the circus and contending about its factions.’ And it seemed to us as though they wished to shut the gates. And we began to recognize many brethren there, martyrs too amongst them. We were all fed on a fragrance beyond telling, which contented us. Then in my joy I awoke.”

XIV

Such are the famous visions of the blessed martyrs themselves, Saturus and Perpetua, which they wrote with their own hands. As for Secundulus, God called him to an earlier departure from this world while still in prison, not without grace, that he might escape the beasts. Nevertheless, his body, if not his soul, made acquaintance with the sword.



The Passion of Perpetua



The Text

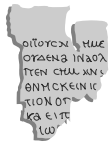
Notes

XV

As for Felicitas indeed, she also was visited by the grace of God in this wise. Being eight months gone with child (for she was pregnant at the time of her arrest), as the day for the spectacle drew near she was in great sorrow for fear lest because of her pregnancy her martyrdom should be delayed, since it is against the law for women with child to be exposed for punishment, and lest she should shed her sacred and innocent blood among others afterwards who were malefactors. Her fellow martyrs too were deeply grieved at the thought of leaving so good a comrade and fellow traveler behind alone on the way to the same hope. So in one flood of common lamentation they poured forth a prayer to the Lord two days before the games. Immediately after the prayer her pains came upon her. And since from the natural difficulty of an eight-months' labor she suffered much in childbirth, one of the warders said to her: 'You who so suffer now, what will you do when you are flung to the beasts which when you refused to sacrifice, you despised?' And she answered: 'Now I suffer what I suffer: but then another will be in me, because I too am to suffer for him.' So she gave birth to a girl, whom one of the sisters brought up as her own daughter.

XVI

Since, therefore, the Holy Spirit has permitted, and by permitting willed, the story of the games themselves to be written, we cannot choose but carry out, however unworthy to supplement so glorious a history, the injunction, or rather sacred bequest, of the most holy Perpetua, adding at the same time one example of her steadfastness and loftiness of soul. When they were treated with unusual rigor by the commanding officer because his fears were aroused through the warnings of certain foolish people that they might be carried off from prison by some magic spells, she challenged him to his face: 'Why do you not at least suffer us to refresh ourselves, "the most noble" among the condemned, belonging as we do to Caesar and chosen to fight on his birthday? Or is it not to your credit that we should



The Passion of Perpetua



Notes

The Text



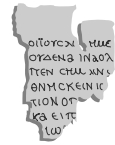
appear thereon in better trim?" The commanding officer trembled and blushed; and so ordered them to be used more kindly, giving her brothers and other persons leave to visit, that they might refresh themselves in their company. By this time the governor of the prison was himself a believer.

XVII

Moreover, on the day before the games when they celebrated that last supper, called "the free festivity" not as a "festivity," but, so far as they could make it so, a "love-feast," with the same steadfastness they flung words here and there among the people, threatening them with the judgment of God, calling to witness the happiness of their own passion, laughing at the inquisitiveness of the crowd. Said Satorus: "Tomorrow does not satisfy you, for what you hate you love to see. Friends today, foes tomorrow. Yet mark our faces well, that when the day comes you may know us again." So all left the place amazed, and many of them became believers.

XVIII

The day of their victory dawned, and they proceeded from the prison to the amphitheatre, as if they were on their way to heaven, with gay and gracious looks; trembling, if at all, not with fear but joy. Perpetua followed with shining steps, as the true wife of Christ, as the darling of God, abashing with the high spirit in her eyes the gaze of all; Felicitas also, rejoicing that she had brought forth in safety that so she might fight the beasts, from blood to blood, from midwife to gladiator, to find in her Second Baptism her childbirth washing. And when they were led within the gate, and were on the point of being forced to put on the dress, the men of the priests of Saturn, the women of those dedicated to Ceres, the noble Perpetua resisted steadfastly to the last. For she said: "Therefore we came to this issue of our own free will, that our liberty might not be violated; therefore we pledged our lives, that we might do no such thing: this was our pact with you." Injustice acknowledged justice; the commanding officer gave permission



The Passion of Perpetua

The Text

Notes

that they should enter the arena in their ordinary dress as they were. Perpetua was singing a psalm of triumph, as already treading on the head of the Egyptian. Revocatus, Saturninus, and Saturus were threatening the onlookers with retribution; when they came within sight of Hilarian, they began to signify to him by nods and gestures: "You are judging us, but God shall judge you." The people infuriated thereat demanded that they should be punished with scourging before a line of beast-fighters. And they for this at least gave one another joy, that they had moreover won some share in the sufferings of their Lord.

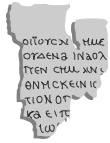
XIX

But he who had said: "Ask and you shall receive" had granted to those who asked him that death which each had craved. For, whenever they talked amongst themselves about their hopes of martyrdom, Saturninus declared that he wished to be cast to all the beasts; so indeed would he wear a more glorious crown. Accordingly at the outset of the show he was matched with the leopard and recalled from him; he was also later mauled on the platform by the bear. Saturus on the other hand had a peculiar dread of the bear, but counted before hand on being dispatched by one bite of the leopard. And so when he was offered to the wild boar, the fighter with beasts, who had bound him to the boar, was gored from beneath by the same beast, and died after the days of the games were over, whereas Saturus was only dragged. And when he was tied up on the bridge before the bear, the bear refused to come out of his den. So Saturus for the second time was recalled unhurt.

XX

For the young women the Devil made ready a mad heifer, an unusual animal selected for this reason, that he wished to match their sex with that of the beast. And so after being stripped and enclosed in nets they were brought into the arena. The people were horrified, beholding in the one a tender girl, in the other a woman fresh from childbirth, with milk dripping from her

THE MARTYRDOMS



The Passion of Perpetua



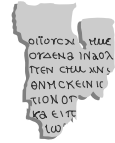
Notes

The Text

breasts. So they were recalled and dressed in tunics without girdles. Perpetua was tossed first, and fell on her loins. Sitting down she drew back her torn tunic from her side to cover her thighs, more mindful of modesty than of her suffering. Then having asked for a pin she further fastened her disordered hair. For it was not seemly that a martyr should suffer with her hair disheveled, lest she should seem to mourn in the hour of her glory. Then she rose, and seeing that Felicitas was bruised, approached, gave a hand to her, and lifted her up. And the two stood side by side, and the cruelty of the people being now appeased, they were recalled to the Gate of Life. There Perpetua was supported by a certain Rusticus, then a catechumen, who kept close to her; and being roused from what seemed like sleep, so completely had she been in the Spirit and in ecstasy, began to look about her, and said to the amazement of all: "When we are to be thrown to the heifer, I cannot tell." When she heard what had already taken place, she refused to believe it till she had observed certain marks of ill-usage on her body and dress. Then she summoned her brother and spoke to him and the catechumen, saying: "Stand fast in the faith, and love one another; and be not offended by our sufferings."

XXI

Saturus also at another gate was encouraging the soldier Pudens: "In a word," said he, "what I counted on and foretold has come to pass, not a beast so far has touched me. And now, that you may trust me wholeheartedly, see, I go forth yonder, and with one bite of the leopard all is over." And forthwith, as the show was ending, the leopard was let loose, and with one bite Saturus was so drenched in blood that the people as he came back shouted in attestation of his Second Baptism, "Bless you, well bathed! Bless you, well bathed!" Blessed indeed was he who had bathed after this fashion. Then he said to the soldier Pudens: "Farewell! Keep my faith and me in mind! And let these things not confound, but confirm you." And with that he asked for the ring from Pudens's finger, plunged it in his own



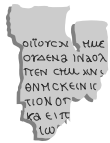
The Passion of Perpetua

The Text

Notes

wound, and gave it back as a legacy, bequeathing it for a pledge and memorial of his blood. Then by this time lifeless he was flung with the rest on to the place allotted to the throat-cutting. And when the people asked for them to be brought into the open, that, when the sword pierced their bodies, these might lend their eyes for partners in murder, they rose unbidden and made their way wither the people willed, after first kissing one another, that they might perfect their martyrdom with the rite of the Pax. The rest without a movement in silence received the sword, Saturus in deeper silence, who as he had been the first to climb the ladder, was the first to give up the ghost; for now as then he awaited Perpetua. Perpetua, however, that she might taste something of the pain, was struck on the bone and cried out, and herself guided to her throat the wavering hand of the young untried gladiator. Perhaps so great a woman, who was feared by the unclean spirit, could not otherwise be slain except she willed.

O valiant and blessed martyrs! O truly called and chosen to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord! He who magnifies, honors, and adores that glory should recite to the edification of the Church these examples also, not less precious at least than those of old; that so new instances of virtue may testify that one and the self-same Spirit is working to this day with the Father, God Almighty, and with his son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom belong splendor and power immeasurable forever and ever. Amen.



Nisibene Hymn 52

Notes

Introduction

St. Ephrem was a little-known, fourth-century theologian from Edessa. He wrote his verses in Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. His hymns reflect ancient Semitic patterns—parallel structure and antithesis—that would have been familiar to readers of the Jewish scriptures. They also have a didactic or homiletic quality: through analogy and metaphor, he utilized them as vehicles for theological reflection and instruction. He enlisted choirs of women to sing them at worship.²⁸

The Text



NISIBENE HYMN 52

by
Saint Ephrem



I heard Death and Satan loudly disputing which was the strongest of the two amongst men.

Death has shown his power in that he conquers all men.
Satan has shown his guile in that he makes all men sin.

Death: Only those who want to, O Evil One, listen to you, but to me they come, whether they will or not.

Satan: You just employ brute force, O Death, whereas I use traps and cunning snares.

Death: Listen, Evil One, a cunning man can break your yoke, but there is none who can escape from mine.

Satan: You, Death, exercise your strength on the sick, but I am the stronger with those who are well.

Death: The Evil One has no control over the person who reviles him, but all who have cursed me, in the past or now, still come to me.

Satan: You, Death, received your power from God, but when I make men sin I do it without any outside help.

Death: You, Evil One, lay snares like a coward, but I use my power like a king.

Satan: You are too stupid, Death, to recognize how great I am, seeing that I can capture free will.

Death: You, Evil One, go around like a hooligan, whereas I am like a lion, fearlessly crushing my prey.

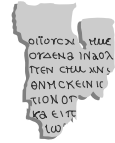
Satan: You have no one who serves or worships you, O Death, but me kings honor with sacrifices like a god.

Death: But many address Death as a benefactor, whereas no one ever has or shall call on you as such, O Evil One.

Satan: Do you not realize, Death, how many call on me in one way or another, and offer me libations?



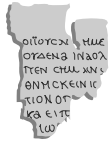
Nisibene Hymn 52



The Text

Notes

- Death: Your name is hated, Satan, you cannot remedy it; everyone curses your name. Hide your shame.
- Satan: Your ear is dull, Death, for you fail to hear how everyone howls out against you. Go, hide yourself.
- Death: I go open-faced among creation, and do not use deceit like you:
you do not pass a single night without some kind of deceit.
- Satan: You have not found a better lot for all your truth: men hate you just as much as they do me.
- Death: Everyone fears me as a master,
but you they hate as the Evil One.
- Satan: People hate your name and your deeds, O Death: my name may be hated, but my pleasures are loved.
- Death: Your sweet taste ends in setting the teeth on edge; remorse always accompanies those pleasures of yours.
- Satan: Sheol is hated for there is no chance of remorse there: it is a pit which swallows up and suppresses every impulse.
- Death: Sheol is a whirlpool, and everyone who falls in it is resurrected, but sin is hated because it cuts off a man's hope.
- Satan: Although it grieves me, I allow for repentance; you cut off a sinner's hopes if he dies in his sins.
- Death: With you his hope was cut off long ago; if you had never made him sin, he would have made a good end.
- Chorus: Blessed is he who set the accursed slaves against each other so that we can laugh at them just as they laughed at us.
- Our laughing at them now, my brethren, is a pledge that we shall again be enabled to laugh, at the resurrection.
- Refrain: Praise to you, Son of the Shepherd of all, who has saved his flock from the hidden wolves, the Evil One and Death, who had swallowed it up.



Apostle's Creed



Notes

The Text

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

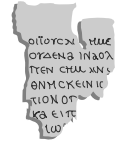
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen.



Creed of Nicaea

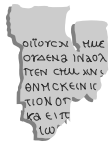


The Text

Notes

THE CREED OF NICAEA¹³, pg. 25
(AD 325)

We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign,
maker of all things.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
begotten of the Father, only-begotten,
that is, of the substance of the Father,
God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God,
begotten not made,
of one substance with the Father,
through whom all things were made,
things in heaven and things on the earth;
who for us men and for our salvation came down
and was made flesh,
and became man, suffered,
and rose on the third day,
ascended into the heavens,
and is coming to judge living and dead.
And in the Holy Spirit.
And those that say 'There was when he was not,'
and, 'Before he was begotten he was not,'
and that, 'He came into being from what-is-not,'
or those that allege, that the son of God is
'Of another substance or essence'
or 'created,'
or 'changeable'
or 'alterable,'
these the Catholic and Apostolic Church
anathematizes.



Nicene Creed



Notes

The Text

THE NICENE CREED (Constantinople, AD 381)

We believe in one God,
 the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is, seen and unseen.

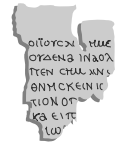
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,
 God from God, Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made,
 of one Being with the Father.
 Through him all things were made.
 For us and for our salvation he came down from
 heaven:
 by the power of the Holy Spirit
 he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
 and was made man.
 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
 he suffered death and was buried.
 On the third day he rose again in accordance with
 the Scriptures;
 he ascended in heaven and is seated at the right
 hand of the Father.
 He will come again in glory to judge the living and
 the dead,
 and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].
 With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and
 glorified.
 He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
 We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of
 sins.
 We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of
 the world to come.
 Amen.



Statement of Chalcedon



The Text

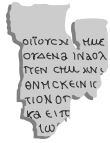
Notes

STATEMENT OF CHALCEDON (AD 451)

Definition of the Union of the Divine and Human
Natures in the Person of Christ.

Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, Act V.

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance (homoousios) with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer (Theotokos); one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and substance, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.



Quicunque Vult



Notes

The Text

QUICUNQUE VULT

(commonly called “The Creed of Saint Athanasius”)

Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith.

Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic 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 Godhead 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 uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

Any yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, 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.

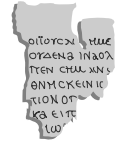
And likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

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 both God and Lord,



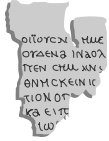
Quicumque Vult



The Text

Notes

So are we forbidden by the Catholic 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, not created, but begotten.
The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, 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.
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 all 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, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.
Who although he may be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ.
One, not by conversion of the Godhead 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



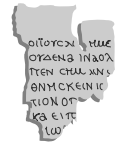
Quicunque Vult



Notes

The Text

hell, rose again the third day from the dead.
He ascended into heaven, he sittith 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 Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.



The Text

Notes

Some Medieval Curses From The Council of Trent

“If anyone denies that infants, newly born from their mother’s wombs are to be baptized... let him be anathema.” -Session 5, Decree Concerning Original Sin, Canon 4.

“If anyone says that man can be justified before God by his own works, whether done by his own natural powers or through the teaching of the law, without divine grace through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.” -Session 6, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 1.

“If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Canon 24.

“If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, or that there are more or less than seven, namely baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, order and matrimony, or that any one of these seven is not truly and intrinsically a sacrament, let him be anathema.” -Session 7, Canons On The Sacraments In General, Canon 1.

“If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation but are superfluous, and that without them or without the desire of them men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification, though all are not necessary for each one, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Canon 4.

“If anyone says that in the Roman Church, which is the mother and mistress of all churches, there is not the true doctrine concerning the sacrament of baptism, let him be anathema.” -Session 7, Canons On Baptism, Canon 3.

“If anyone says that baptism is optional, that is, not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Canon 5.

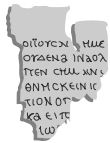


ANATHEMA

“Accursed, excommunicated, doomed, devoted to the direst woes, liable to the severest divine penalties.”

“As the sparrow in her wandering, as the swallow in her flying, so the curse that is causeless alighteth not.”

-Proverbs 26.2



Council of Trent Curses



Notes

The Text

VATICAN II

“This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers who are in the glory of heaven or who are yet being purified after their death; and it proposes again the decrees of the Second Council of Nicea, of the Council of Florence, and of the Council of Trent.” - Dogmatic Constitution On The Church, Vatican II, November 21, 1964: Chapter VII, Paragraph 51.

“If anyone says that children, because they have not the act of believing, are not after having received baptism to be numbered among the faithful, and that for this reason are to be rebaptized when they have reached the years of discretion; or that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted than that, while not believing by their own act, they should be baptized in the faith of the Church alone, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Canon 13.

“If anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist are contained truly, really and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but says that He is in it only as in a sign, or figure or force, let him be anathema.” - Session 13, Canons On The Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, Canon 1.

“If anyone...denies...transubstantiation, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Cannon 2.

“If anyone says that in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ the only begotten son of god, is not to be adored with the worship of latria, also outwardly manifested, and is consequently neither to be venerated with a special festive solemnity, nor to be solemnly borne about in procession according to the laudable and universal rite and custom of the holy Church, or is not to be set publicly before the people to be adored and that the adorers thereof are idolators, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Canon 6.

“If anyone says that Christ received in the Eucharist is received spiritually only and not also sacramentally and really, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Canon 8.

“If anyone denies that sacramental confession was instituted by divine law or is necessary to salvation; or says that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Catholic Church has always observed from the beginning and still observes, is at variance with the institution and command of Christ and is a human contrivance, let him be anathema.” -Session 14, Canons Concerning The Most Holy Sacrament Of Penance, Canon 6.

“If anyone says that in the mass a true and real sacrifice is not offered to God; or that to be offered is nothing else than that Christ is given unto us to eat, let him be anathema.” -Session 22, Canons On The Sacrifice Of The Mass, Canon 1.

“If anyone says that the sacrifice of the mass...ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathema.” -Ibid. Canon 3.