

The Athanasian Creed^{1, 2, 3}

(SYMBOLUM QUICUNQUE)⁴

- (1) Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith;
- (2) Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
- (3) And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;
- (4) Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.⁵
- (5) For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Spirit.
- (6) But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.
- (7) Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit.
- (8) The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.⁶
- (9) The Father incomprehensible⁷, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit

¹ Formated by James Richardson 4/04/2016 originally but I have reformatted for this document. You can Download Christian Confessions, Creeds, and Statements of Faith for free at apostles-creed.org/documents-creeds-catechisms-confessions.

² According to the mediæval legend, Athanasius composed it during his exile in Rome, and offered it to Pope Julius as his confession of faith. Since the middle of the seventeenth century the Athanasian authorship has been abandoned by learned Catholics as well as Protestants. The evidence against it is conclusive. Schaff, Philip. *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes: The History of Creeds*. Vol. 1. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1878. Public Domain.

³ The pseudo-Athanasian Creed originated in the Latin Church from the school of St. Augustine, probably in Gaul or North Africa. It borrows a number of passages from Augustine and other Latin fathers.¹ It appears first in its full form towards the close of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century. Ibid.

⁴ The ATHANASIAN CREED is also called SYMBOLUM QUICUNQUE, from the first word, 'Quicumque vult salvus esse.' Ibid.

⁵ Ver. 4 .*Person* in the sense of *persona*, πρόσωπον (also ὑπόστασις in the post-Nicene use of the term), i. e., *character, face, manifestation, subsistence*. It must not be confounded with *essence* or *being* (essentia, substantia, natura, οὐσία, φύσις). God is one in essence, three in persons (*Deus est trinus, h. e. in essentia unus, tres habet subsistendi modos*). In modern philosophical usage the term *person* means a separate and distinct rational individual. But the tripersonality of God is not a numerical or essential trinity of three beings (like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), for this would be tritheism; nor is it, on the other hand, merely a threefold aspect and mode of manifestation, in the Sabellian or Swedenborgian sense;¹ but it is a real, objective, and eternal, though ineffable, distinction in the one Divine being, with a corresponding threefold revelation of this being in the works of creation, redemption, and sanctification. Hence the distinction between the immanent, intrinsic (or ontological) trinity and the extrinsic (or œconomical) trinity; in other words, between the trinity of essence and the trinity of manifestation. Ibid.

⁶ I changed the antiquated language of uncreate to uncreated.

⁷ Ver. 9. *Incomprehensible* is a false translation, unless it be taken in the unusual sense, 'not to be comprehended within any bounds.' The Anglican translator of 1548 perhaps followed a Greek copy (of 1533) which renders *immensus* by ἀκατάληπτος. But other Greek copies read ἀπειρος or ἀμετρος instead. Usher's Greek text has παντοκράτωρ, *omnipotent*. The Latin *immensus* means, what can not be circumscribed or limited by any boundaries, what is illocal, omnipresent. Fortunatus explains the word: 'Non est mensurabilis in sua natura, quia illocalis est, incircumscripatus, ubique totus, ubique præsens, ubique potens.' The author of the Athanasian Creed glories in the clear revelation and statement

incomprehensible.

(10) The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.

(11) And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal.

(12) As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles⁸, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

(13) So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty;

(14) And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.

(15) So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God;

(16) And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

(17) So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord;

(18) And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

(19) For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord;

(20) so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say: There are three Gods or three Lords.

(21) The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

(22) The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten.

(23) The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

(24) So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

(25) And in this Trinity none is afore, nor after another; none is greater, or less than another.

(26) But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and co-equal.

(27) So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

(28) He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

(29) Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(30) For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man.

(31) God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and made of the substance of His mother, born in the world.

(32) Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

(33) Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.

(34) Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.

(35) One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God.

(36) One altogether, not by the confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

(37) For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;

(38) Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell⁹, rose again the third day from the dead;

of the mystery of the Trinity rather than in the mystery itself. The Utrecht Psalter reads *inmensus*. Ibid.

⁸ Schaff (Ibid) in his translation of the Latin word *Immensus* renders it in brackets *infinite* which is in line with the usage of the word *incomprehensible* in verse 9. Verse 12 is then understood to communicate ...: *there are not three infinites, but one uncreated: and one infinite*.

⁹ Here to be understood as the Greek Hades or the Hebrew Sheol. Refer to Carpenter, Eugene E., and Philip W. Comfort. *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined and Explained*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000, for a broad overview on these concepts.

- (39) He ascended into heaven, He sits¹⁰ on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty;
- (40) From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
- (41) At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
- (42) And shall give account of their own works.
- (43) And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.
- (44) This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

¹⁰ I changed the antiquated sitteth for sits.