

Faith of our Fathers

A Tour Through Church History

Class #7 – More Heresies & More Clarity (4th century)

A. Neo-platonism

- Dualism: physical, material = *bad*; spiritual, immaterial = *good*

... we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4.18

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12.2

I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. 1 Cor. 9. 27

... when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. Col. 4.3

- Emanations from the “One”

“I am striving to give back the Divine in myself to the Divine in the All, for Life is the flight of the alone to the alone.”

“Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labor to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiseling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendor of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness established in the stainless shrine.”

— Plotinus

B. Manichaeism

- Believed that the story of the universe was the story of conflict between darkness & light (2 equal yet opposing forces)

C. Donatism

- Argued that Christian clergy must be faultless for their ministry to be effective and their prayers and sacraments to be valid.

D. Arianism

- The Father alone is God
- The Son and the Spirit were created by the Father before the creation of the world
- The Son is the highest created being
- The Son and the Spirit are called “God” as a title of respect
- *“There was when he was not.”*

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

*And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy
Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human.*

*He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.*

*And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.*

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

Nicene Creed

Whoever desires to be saved should above all hold to the catholic faith.
Anyone who does not keep it whole and unbroken will doubtless perish eternally.

Now this is the catholic faith:

That we worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity, neither blending their persons nor dividing their essence.

For the person of the Father is a distinct person,
the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another.
But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.

What quality the Father has, the Son has, and the Holy Spirit has.
The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Spirit is uncreated.
The Father is immeasurable, the Son is immeasurable, the Holy Spirit is immeasurable.
The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit is eternal.
And yet there are not three eternal beings; there is but one eternal being.
So too there are not three uncreated or immeasurable beings;
there is but one uncreated and immeasurable being.

This is the catholic faith:
one cannot be saved without believing it firmly and faithfully.

- excerpts from the Athanasian Creed

E. Macedonianism

- The Holy Spirit is a created subordinate of the Son

*Our Lord commanded us to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In baptism, then, we profess faith
in the Creator, in the only-begotten Son and in the One who is the Spirit. There is one Creator of all things, for in God there is one
Father from whom all things have their being. And there is one only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things
exist. And there is one Spirit, the gift who is in all. Nothing is wanting to this flawless union: in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there is
infinity of endless being and perfect reflection of the divine image.*

Hilary of Poitiers