

Acta Sanctæ Sedis

Pope Pius XII

Encyclical Letter *Sempiternus Rex Christus* on the Council of Chalcedon.
Numbers 26-29.

26 For the reason just given there are today some separated bodies in Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, Armenia and elsewhere, who go wrong mainly in their use of words in defining the doctrine of the Incarnation. This may be demonstrated from their liturgical and theological books.

27 Moreover, in the twelfth century, a writer of the highest repute, among the Armenians, clearly expounded his views of this matter in these words: "We speak of Christ as one nature, not to imply confusion as does Eutyches, nor diminution, as does Apollinaris, but in the sense of Cyril of Alexandria, who in his book *Scholiorum Adversus Nestorium* says, "There is one nature of the Incarnate Word as the Fathers taught". And we also teach this according to the tradition of the saints, but not according to the opinion of heretics. For they introduce confusion and change and alterations into the union in Christ. We say there is one nature referring to the hypostasis, which you also speak of in Christ; and this is correct and granted by us, and equally valid is our own expression: "One Nature." Nor do we refuse to say "two Natures", provided there is no implication of the division maintained by Nestorius, but the expressionist the confusion introduced by Eutyches and Apollinaris' (Nerses iv, 1173 in his *Libellum Confessionis Fidei* to the Emperor Manuel Comnenus (cf. I. Capelletti *S. Narsetis Claiensis Armenorum*



Venice 1836, pp. 182-83).

28 If then it is the climax of gladness and the consummation of holy joy, when that comes to pass which the Psalmist said: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to live together in unity' (Ps. 132, I); if then the glory of God combined with the greatest profit for all is

apparent when the sheep of Christ are joined together in the fullness of truth and the fullness of charity, let those whom with sorrow and love we have mentioned above, consider whether it is right and expedient that, principally on account of the original ambiguity of certain words, they should still hold apart from the one Holy Church, founded on sapphires (cf. Is. Liv, 11), that is to say, on the Prophets and Apostles, on the supreme corner stone itself, Christ Jesus (cf. Eph. ii, 20).

29 There is another enemy of the faith of Chalcedon, widely diffused outside the fold of the Catholic religion. This is an opinion for which a rashly and falsely understood sentence of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (ii, 7), supplies a basis and a shape. This is called the kenotic doctrine, and according to it, they imagine that the divinity was taken away from the Word in Christ. It is a wicked invention, equally to be condemned with the Docetism opposed to it. . . . 'With the entire and perfect nature of man--thus grandly St. Leo the Great--'He Who was true God was born, complete in his own nature, complete in ours' (Ep. xxviii, 3. PL. Liv, 763. Cf. Serm. xxiii, 2. PL. lvi, 201).

8th of September, 1951