

b. The Theological Foundations

(1) From a practical point of view, there are no new theological issues although there will be a vigorous rehash of some old ideas.

(2) The monophysite leaders, however, are anxious to overthrow the Chalcedonian decision. They feel they have some grounds for reconsideration of the whole in some actions taken at Chalcedon that were indiscreet, at best. These grow from the approval (tacit, implicit, explicit, as you will) of three items. These are:

*irregularities
outside
Chalcedon* }

(a) a letter from Bishop Ibas to the bishop in Persia.-.which seemed clearly to have a counter-chalcedonian motif.

(b) the theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia, clearly not Chalcedonian.

(c) and the writings of Theodoret of Cyprus against Cyril of Alexandria...who had previously been viewed as the pillar of orthodoxy.

In monophysite circles it was thought that if the erroneous nature of these decisions could be established, the whole Chalcedonian decision could be reversed. The three items are referred to as the Three Chapters and their approval at Chalcedon and summary reconsideration at Constantinople is known as the Three Chapter Controversy.

Justinian, however, feels that what Chalcedon did that may have been wrong, can be corrected without reversing the whole matter. And that is the issue...can the wrong be corrected and the total decision not be lost.

(3) The papal forces fear a new council. Vigilius (pope 537-555) is fearful to condemn the three chapters...fearing that it might cost the influence of Rome and the work of Leo. Previously some papal legates had expressly stated that Ibas was right. Hence he does not want a council. But Vigilius is compelled to go to Constantinople and in spite of many vacillations is forced to go with the Justinian thrust. Roman influence is never weaker than it is in this particular council.

*A council can err but
you can correct it.*

(4) But, in addition to this, Justinian feels that many of the Christological problems grow from the vague discussions of Origen and he would like to bring that problem to resolution. If the vagaries of Origen could be set aside, perhaps no new Christological problems would arise. To that end also he desires the council.