

accepted as he taught that one does not worship the icon... it is merely an aid in giving us a concrete representation and, since the Lord in particular had a real body, the concrete representation of it cannot be wrong if the body were not wrong. The same general principle could be applied to all pictures of saints, etc. Enlightened parties would claim the icons were aids to worship...less enlightened persons will call them idols! But the great frenzied condition of the church ca-not be overestimated as the scholars argued and people alternately hid their treasures or brought them out for vespers!

b. The Resolution

The 7th ecumenical Council (Nicaea-787) was called at the insistence of a new emperor. It was not originally planned as ecumenical but grew to that proportion. Leo's ideas were denounced and the council offered this opinion:

Those, therefore who dare to think or teach otherwise, or as wicked heretics to spurn the traditions of the church and to invent some novelty, or else to reject some of those things which the church hath received (i.e. The Book of the Gospels, or the image of the Cross, or the pictorial icons, or the holy reliques of a martyr,) or evilly and sharply devise anything subversive of the lawful traditions of the Catholic Church or to turn to common uses the sacred vessels or the venerable monasteries, if they be bishops or clerics, we command that they be disposed; if religious or laics, that they be cut off from communion.

That is pretty straightforward and you may see something of the amplifications of it in the Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. XIV Series Two, page 526.

Ultimately the meaning was that the historical usages of the church could not be denied. In our study at this point it means that God the Son had a true human body and likenesses that purported to be after that pattern could not be denied or considered idols. Likewise figuring of other members of the godhead could not be considered wrong since they had at various times appeared in some fashion. The resemblance was not to be worshipped at any time but it could stand there and offer suggestions (mutely) about whom to worship. The reality of the Lord's body, etc., was somewhat endorsed through this matter but the importance of worshipping God as a spirit and not a physical form was also stressed.

c. The Frankfort aftermath

It is interesting that a synod meeting under the aegis of Charlemagne in Frankfort (794) condemned the Nicene (787) decision! But today we think that someone