This is not the way in which a priest of God, trained in the divine teachings, should be held accountable to the casual enquirer or required to furnish explanations regarding the grace and hope that is in us. You see, I'm not ashamed of Christ's gospel, which is God's doing and brings salvation to every believer. And so, since we were chosen as ministers of the gospel by the mercy of our supreme king, Christ, Who is God, the views we hold are correct and unsailable. In this we remain ever faithful to holy scripture, and to the pronouncements of conciliar fathers: those who gathered at Nicea and at Constantinople, and those who met at Ephesus under the chairmanship of Cyril of pious memory, and then bishop of the city of the Alexandrines. And we proclaim that our one and only Lord Jesus Christ was, as regards His divinity, eternally and timelessly begotten from God the Father, while as regards His humanity He was born in historical times for our sake and for our salvation from Mary the virgin. He is both fully God and, by the assumption of a rational soul and a body, fully man. He is consubstantial both with the Father in His divinity, and with His mother in His humanity. So we confess Christ in two natures after His taking flesh from the holy virgin and becoming man, yet in a single Person, a single Being. Thus we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord, and one nature of the Word of God, asserting this without misgiving since our one and the same Lord Jesus Christ shares in both natures. We condemn those who preach two sons or two beings or two persons, not proclaiming one and the same Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, and we declare such persons not to be members of the Church. Above all we condemn the impious Nestorius and those who hold or disseminate his views; we deem such people excluded from God's adoption, as promised to those whose beliefs are true and correct.
The Greek text above is taken from a long footnote to p.161 of *The Oecumenical Documents of the Faith*, by T. Herbert Bindley, 1899, revision by F. W. Green, 1950 (Methuen). Reference is there made to collections of patristic writings by Mansi, vol.vi, p.539, and by Hahn, p.320.

The statement was delivered in writing to Theodosius II in 449, prior to the opening of Ephesus II; subsequently drawn on in part for the Chalcedonian Definition, not without textual and editorial uncertainties.

There is, at least at first sight, nothing unorthodox about the 'confession of faith', or formal statement of belief, made by Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, to the Emperor Theodosius II in 449, shortly before the Second Council of Ephesus, which opened in August of that year. There was, however, something very unorthodox about the circumstances of his making it, and indeed about the council itself, destined to go down in history as the 'Robber Council'.1 Quite apart from the anomaly of a Christian bishop being required to give proof of his orthodoxy to the civil authority (and he the bishop of a patriarchal See, though just prior to Chalcedon, whose twenty-eighth canon exalted it above all other Sees in the East), there seems no good reason ever to suspect that Flavian might have strayed from doctrinal orthodoxy; or if any such doubts arise at all, they will be rather in the contrary direction to that suspected by Theodosius, if at all.

The circumstances are briefly as follows: the First Council of Ephesus in 431, recognised by the whole church (excepting the followers of Nestorius) as the third ecumenical council, had condemned the errors imputed to Nestorius, a former bishop of Constantinople, whereby the Divine Logos, while dwelling in the human person of Jesus Christ, was held not actually to have formed a substantial union with that person; in other words, the divine and human components in the figure of Christ remained not only distinct, but separate.2 Nestorius could not accept that 'God suffered' or that the Virgin Mary was the 'God-bearer' (Θεοτόκος, deipara): given the unclear status of Christological terminology prior to Ephesus I and especially prior to the Chalcedonian definition that was to follow in 451, it is not prima facie obvious that the views of Nestorius were incompatible with 'right

1. The name derives from Pope Leo's characterisation of the council as such: quidquid in illo ephesino non iudicio sed latrocinio potuit perpetrari. Or elsewhere: illa synodus quae nomen synodi nec habere poterit nec meretur. In English, 'Robber Synod' is also used.
2. Whether Nestorius himself actually held or promulgated such views is uncertain, but is not the immediate point at issue. Like Plato before him and Marx after him, Nestorius is all too easily portrayed as founder of a school and upheld as a figurehead by its later adherents. In a very recent article on the Θεοτόκος (which Nestorius denied), Dr Elizabeth Briere writes 'Nestorius looks like a pillar of Orthodoxy in comparison with some of his spiritual descendants' (Sobornost, 7:1, 1985).
teaching’ (ἡ ὁρθή δόξα, whence ‘orthodoxy’). In any case, the champion of this right teaching against that of Nestorius was Cyril of Alexandria, an able diplomat but also a skilled polemicist, whose letters to Nestorius prior to the latter’s condemnation are at once urbane and tactful but equally forthright and unsparing of any departure from what Cyril — with all the weight of Alexandria and Rome, at least, behind him — deemed to be right teaching. The first of the twelve anathemas appended to the third letter of Cyril to Nestorius expressly summoned Nestorius to acknowledge the Virgin as Θεοτόκος; when Nestorius failed to do this, his condemnation was assured. It is vital to realise that what was at stake in the controversy over ‘theotokos’ was not the exalted status of the Virgin, which was never in doubt, but the precise ontological status of the Being that was born from her: was it or was it not possible to say that ‘God was born’ (or that ‘God suffered’, or that ‘God died’), and thus that the Virgin was the ‘Bearer of God’ (θεο-τόκος, from θεός and τεκεῖν). Thus the term ‘theotokos’ was used as an acid test of Christology, and was so understood by all interested parties. However, in Egypt, by way of reaction to the Antiochene emphasis on Christ’s humanity (Nestorius came from Antioch and represented, or was held to represent, its ‘school’), there was a tendency to overplay the divinity of Christ, and while this was not strictly at the expense of His humanity it is understandable that the Alexandrian position should have come to be seen in this way, not least because of a free use (prior to Chalcedon) of φύσις in senses that shade into ύπόστασις and πρόσωπον, and giving rise to the characterisation of the Alexandrian ‘school’ as Monophysite, or ‘Believers in One Nature’.

It must be pointed out that prior to their respective condemnations in 431 and 451, neither Dyoprosopianism (Belief in Two Persons, or Two Sons, or as a label of convenience ‘Nestorianism’) nor Monophysitism were obviously heretical: each presented a legitimate Christological hypothesis opposed to that presented by the other, but both were within the credal bounds set at Nicea in 325 and at Constantinople in 381, and certainly both Cyril and Nestorius regarded themselves as champions of Niceo–Constantinopolitan orthodoxy. The position however was altered not only by the proclamation of ‘theotokos’ at Ephesus I but also by the death of Cyril in 444, and by the uninhibited and belligerent monophysitism of his successor Dioscurus.

Alexandria, which means Dioscurus, continued to suspect that Constantinople secretly harboured sympathy for Nestorius or for the heresy attributed to him, and this suspicion was only exacerbated by the ‘Eutyches affair’, which came to a head in 448. Eutyches, archimandrite (or abbot) of a large monastery near Constantinople, was an ardent proponent of monophysite doctrine, of which he developed a somewhat exaggerated variant according to which Christ possessed both a divine and a human nature before
the Incarnation, but only one nature, namely divine, after it. Thus He was to be described as έκ δύο φύσεων rather than έν δύο φύσεσι; problems relating to His apparent corporeal existence prior to the Incarnation seem not to have been considered important. Eutychianism was by no means co-extensive with monophysitism, but was rather an extreme case of it, and was subsequently to be condemned by other less thorough-going but equally fervent monophysites. It was also condemned by, and its originator was arraigned before, the permanently sitting council or ή ενδημούσα σύνοδος of the diocese of Constantinople, presided over by its bishop, Flavian, occupant of the See since only the year before. As chairman of the local council that had condemned Eutyches, Flavian was seen by the Alexandrians and their sympathisers as an opponent not only of Eutychianism but of monophysitism tout court and such sympathisers were to be found in many places outside Egypt, not excluding Constantinople itself.

The Emperor, Theodosius II, who apparently considered himself a theologian as well as an emperor, openly took the side of the Alexandrians and seems to have been determined to vindicate not only monophysitism but also the name and doctrine of Eutyches. Thus he decided on a further general council of the whole church with the express purposes of laying down monophysite doctrine, and as a preliminary step convoked a preliminary synod at Constantinople to review the condemnation of Eutyches by the σύνοδος ενδημούσα; but when this council merely confirmed the decision of its predecessor he overrode it, received a petition from Eutyches on favourable terms, wrote to Rome inviting Pope Leo I (Leo the Great) and other western bishops to the forthcoming general council, and appointed Dioscurus to be its president. In the meantime Flavian had also been in correspondence with Leo when he was required to declare his Christological prise de position before Theodosius.

Leo’s response to Flavian, now known as the Tome of Leo, was shortly to become, together with the creeds of Nicea and Constantinople, a primary document of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, but Flavian’s precipitate death in the wake of Ephesus II prevented him from receiving it. It is perfectly possible that Leo’s picture of Flavian’s position was coloured by the account he had received of it by Eutyches, in whose interest it lay to tar Flavian with the brush of Nestorius; but Flavian’s statement, made independently of Leo’s Tome, shows no need of papal correction.

The following commentary on the text is intended principally to highlight the Christological issues involved; other points are noted in accordance with their historical, ecclesiopolitical or textual interest:

3. Purists might prefer δύοιν. In fact both forms are found in both cases, and in Cyril’s letters occur in close conjunction with one another.
οὐδὲν οὕτω πρέπει
Flavian seems to sense the impropriety of having to give an account of himself to the Emperor.

ιερεῖ θεοῦ
If Flavian sees himself as a ‘priest of God’, and since the Christian priesthood derives from Christ, it can only follow that Christ is God. (Nestorius never denied this, but his opponents tended to write off his teaching as little better than Arianism, in which the divinity of Christ was denied.)

ιερεῖ . . . ἐτοιμον
The grammar is rather loose: we would expect the sentence to be recast permitting ιερεῖ and ἐτοιμον to be in agreement with each other.

παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι
Doubtless the Emperor is meant, and undoubtedly Flavian intended him to feel small about it.

ἐν ἡμῖν
As the document is Flavian’s personal auto-da-fé the plural here must be considered the plural of majesty, also below in ἡμεῖς . . . ἐκληρώθημεν. Within two years, Flavian’s See will formally be confirmed as the second See in Christendom.

οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι . . . παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι
Flavian is quoting Romans 1,16, though somewhat out of context (= the ‘Gentile’ question).

tοῦ παμβασιλέως ἡμῶν
Theodosius may be βασιλεὺς (the regular Greek term for ‘emperor’, thus undifferentiated from ‘king’), but Christ is King even of kings, thus παμβασιλεὺς. BASILE(YS) BASILE(ON) will later appear (in Roman letters) on anonymous follis coins of the ninth and tenth centuries, rendering explicit the superior Kingship of Christ.

ἰερουργοῖ
See above on ιερεῖ θεοῦ and on the plural of majesty. ἰερουργός corresponds closely to ‘minister’, and is found inter alia as a form of respectful address in the correspondence between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius preceding Ephesus I.
Both epithets are otiose: ‘Holy Scripture’ or ‘Sacred Scripture’ is equally so in English, while ‘Holy Father’ has been pre-empted by the Bishop of Rome. In any case, what is at issue here is not the holiness of the fathers as such but their conciliarity, or as we should now say the ecumenical character of these councils.

Cyril is acknowledged alike by the Roman, Orthodox and Coptic communions as a saint, though only the last-named body accords the same honour to his successor Dioscurus, at whose door responsibility for Flavian’s untimely death must be laid.

The style ‘Bishop of the Alexandrians’ rather than ‘Bishop of Alexandria’ may derive from the pre-Constantinian period, when the Christian community in most cities in the Empire (though not that of Alexandria itself) was small, depressed and by no means coextensive with the urban populace at large. In a similar fashion the restored Greek monarchy of the period 1833–1973 made free use of both styles: both ‘King of Greece’ and ‘King of the Greeks’ appearing on coins right up until the collapse of the monarchy. There is here a sense of Hellenic Diaspora: the Greeks of Albania, Turkey, Cyprus and Egypt remain uncompromisingly Greek in all but the political sense — not so the Greek-speakers of Italy.

The ‘one and only’ Lord as a counter to the (real or imagined) dyoprosopianism of the Nestorians. See below on ἕνα ... ἕνα ... ἕνα.

πρὸ αἰώνων
ante omnia saecula, ‘before all ages’; that is, before temporally conditioned beings existed, which is to say: outside time, timelessly.

ἀνάρχως
Literally ‘without beginning’, thus unconditioned by time, thus timelessly, as above. This, rather than ‘lasting forever’, is the proper meaning of ‘eternal’; cf. εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων, per omnia saecula saeculorum, ‘world without end’.

The same word is used both for the ‘begetting’ of the Son from the Father,
and for His human ‘birth’ from the Virgin. At a purely etymological level the word for ‘be born’ (γεννάσθαι) has a causative relationship to that for ‘be’, ‘become’, ‘enter a state of being’ (γενέσθαι), but close semantic associations should be discarded in favour of simple analogical language, as in all discourse about the Deity.

επ’ ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν
Literally ‘in recent times’, but over four hundred years had elapsed when Flavian wrote. There is an echo here of Hebrews 1,2 where the historical events were indeed recent.

δι’ ἡμᾶς . . . σωτηρίαν
This echoes both the ‘Nicene’ and the ‘Constantinopolitan’ creeds.

ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου
Though Flavian does not actually use the term Θεοτόκος it is obvious that he accepts it. Θεοτόκος, or in popular piety Παναγία, has long since supplanted Παρθένος as the standard term of reference to Mary in the Greek-speaking world.

Κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα
The phrase can be read as a face-saver for orthodox Antiochenes: Mary is the mother of the Incarnate Word qua man, she is not the mother of the Godhead as such. The phrase counterbalances κατὰ τὴν θεότητα (of the ‘begetting’) above.

τέλειον . . . τέλειον
Christ is 100% God and at the same time 100% man, He is not an admixture or alloy or amalgam of both. This point had been stated in similar language (ἀποτελεσάσων τὸν ἕνα Κύριον καὶ Υἱὸν θεότητός τε καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος) by Cyril in his second letter to Nestorius, and will shortly be reconfirmed at Chalcedon in terms that are almost an echo of Flavian:

Ἐπόμενοι τοῖνυν τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν, ἔνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὄμολογον Υἱὸν τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν καὶ συμφώνους ἀπαντεὶ ἐκδιδάσκομεν, τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι, τέλειον τὸν ἀνθρωπότητι, Θεὸν ἁληθῶς, καὶ ἀνθρωπὸν ἁληθῶς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, κατὰ πάντα ὅμως ἡμῖν χωρίς [Heb.iv.15] ἀμαρτίας: πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν
Indeed so close do the texts of Flavian and Chalcedon run at this point that speculation arises not only concerning Chalcedon’s conscious borrowing of Flavian’s wording, but also the converse hypothesis, namely that the text of Flavian’s statement was subsequently touched up in the light of the Chalcedonian Definition. (See below on έκ δύο φύσεων / ἐν δύο φύσεσι.)

‘Rational’ in the English text is not strictly necessary, but the Greek must distinguish the human (and hence rational) ‘soul’ from the ψυχαί of animals, and according to Aristotle even of plants.

The word was enshrined in the creeds of 325 and 381 in defence of Christ’s divinity. It is here used both of the divinity (with the Father as referent) and of the humanity (referring to Mary).

The ‘received text’ of Flavian’s statement has the Chalcedonian ἐν δύο φύσεσιν. However, it seems that Flavian was quoted in antiquity as having used the expression ἐκ δύο φύσεων, so that it is legitimate to entertain the hypothesis that ἐκ δύο φύσεων is what he actually wrote in his Confession, and that the phrase was subsequently altered to bring it into line with Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Thus Herbert Bindley and Green. However, it is not an inescapable conclusion. On the one hand, Eutyches had no quarrel with δύο φύσεις πρὸ τῆς σαρκώσεως provided this was balanced by μία φύσις μετὰ τὴν σάρκωσιν, and clearly Flavian was at pains to distance himself from Eutyches.

3a. Extract from the Chalcedonian Definition of the Faith in English translation:
So following the conciliar fathers, we confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and we all agree in proclaiming Him perfect in both divinity and humanity, truly God and truly man (possessing) a rational soul and body. He is consubstantial with the Father in His divinity, and with us in His humanity, being like us in all respects except sin. As regards His divinity He is eternally begotten of the Father, but as regards His humanity he was born from the deiparous (= θεοτόκος) virgin Mary in historical times for us men and for our salvation. (We confess) one and the same Christ, the Son, the Lord, the Only-begotten, (to be) in two natures.

Note: Very similar wording again occurs in Cyril’s letter to John of Antioch. It is obvious that a number of standard formulae were in widespread circulation.

himself from Eutyches. On the other hand, Cyril had written εἰς ἐξ άμφοτες Χριστός καὶ Υἱὸς in the letter to Nestorius alluded to above, yet had not been found in need of ‘correction’ by the promulgators of the Chalcedonian formula. Thus either reading is compatible with pre-Chalcedonian Christology, and Flavian was not to live to see the formal conciliar enthronement of ‘in two natures’. If the whole argument smacks today of theological hair-splitting, or of proverbial angelic choreography on the heads of pins, it was not so in ancient times. St Gregory of Nyssa relates, against the background of the Arian controversies of the preceding century, how a simple market transaction was liable to spark off theological (and Christological) wrangles, with customer and stallkeeper hotly disputing the relationship of Son and Father. How far passions were excited by the issues themselves and how far the catchwords and slogans that summarised them became a kind of code for sectarian (and nationalistic, and political) allegiance, is something that cannot be known with certainty.

The ‘becoming man’ (one word in Greek, as if we should coin ‘enmanment’) is not substantially different from the ‘taking flesh’ or Incarnation, but the point is being made that the Logos did not merely dwell in a fleshly body (the position of the dogmatic Nestorians, if not necessarily that of Nestorius himself) but actually became substantially united (‘hypostatically’ united) to it as man. Christ is not God-in-man, but the God-man (ὁ ᾿Ο θεόνθρωπος): it is a pity that Latin, English and other Western languages have no active verb for ἐνανθρωπεῖν.

These are technical words, yet not as yet so precisely defined, or refined, as they were later to become, and as are their Latin equivalents substantia, persona in Scholastic contexts. ὑπόστασις is that which underlies (the Greek, and after it the Latin, may better be given as ‘under-stands’, not of course in the English sense) and is thus the principle of action, what prompts an agent to act. πρόσωπον, originally ‘mask’, then ‘face’, is the external appearance of an agent, then by metonymy becomes near to agent qua agent, and thus virtually identical with ὑπόστασις.

The unicity of Christ is here being asserted, at the expense of Nestorian dyoprosopism. This latter doctrine did not mean that Christ was two ‘persons’ in the modern sense, but that in Him the divine and human natures operated separately and independently of each other. It is in the
same sense of ‘person’ that the Deity is triune.

This is Alexandrine terminology, and as the term φύσις is used from Chalcedon onwards, it is indeed unorthodox. But φύσις is for the Alexandrines barely distinguishable from ύπόστασις before Chalcedon, and the rest of the Confession leaves Flavian’s position in no doubt. Nonetheless it is arguable that Flavian is going out of his way here to convince his philo-monophysite audience (Theodosius II and his party) that he is anything but Nestorian. Cyril also uses the phrase in the letters, passim.⁵

διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἀμφότεροιν

Again the terminology is Alexandrine, but see above on μία φύσις and on Cyril’s use of ἐξ ἀμφότεροιν. At least Flavian (and Cyril) cannot be accused of tying the use of this expression to the timing of the Incarnation. See above on the doctrine of ‘two persons’ in Christ, as maintained by Nestorianism.

Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζώντος

Clearly an echo of Peter’s ‘Confession of Faith’ as recorded in Matthew XVI, 16. Since this declaration of Peter’s faith immediately precedes the giving of the name ‘Peter’ (= ‘Rock’) and the promise that nothing shall prevail against the Church built on that Rock; and since both Flavian and his opponents had been in correspondence with Peter’s successor in Rome (Leo I) over the issue; it seems reasonable to assume that Flavian is here arrogating to himself a certainty comparable to that of Peter, as a ‘Rock’ of faith. The Roman Catholic interpretation of the Petrine passage is well known, and indeed receives a certain degree of support from the ready recourse to Rome on the part of conflicting Sees or other ecclesiastical parties in the Eastern half of the empire. The Orthodox view of Petrine authority is that every bishop inherits it, always providing he adheres to Peter’s confession of faith and its subsequent elaboration in creeds and conciliar declarations: on this basis, Flavian was quite correct in taking the stand he did. Flavian is invoking an authority based on faith in pronouncing the anathemas that follow.

ἀναθεματίζομεν . . . κρίνομεν

The dittography and the plural of majesty reinforce the formal, official character of these anathemas involving excommunication (ἀλλοτρίους εἶναι τῆς ἐκκλησίας).

⁵. μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη (or —μένου) is a kind of slogan with Cyril, who seems to have attributed it to St Athanasius, the prime opponent of Arius. In fact the expression had an Apollinarian origin, but was dogmatically tolerable before Chalcedon.
Even if we admit that Nestorius was in his own person heretical (and a case can be made out for arguing that he was not) it does not follow that he was thereby ‘impious’ or otherwise lacking in zeal for God. Indeed the contrary is the case to the extent that he regarded himself as a defender of Nicene orthodoxy against various strands of Arianism still alive in the East. It was a ploy of the Monophysites to portray the Nestorians as pandering to Arianism; the Nestorians replied in kind by regarding monophysitism as a resurgence of the Apollinarian heresy, and in the realm of polemic and repartee it seems that Nestorius gave as good as he got. The use of intemperate language, *ad hominem* remarks, and what we should now call character assassination, were all part and parcel of theological debate in this period, not excluding genuinely orthodox, holy men, most notably St Cyril and indeed Flavian himself.

The subjunctive seems to be a formula of excommunication; cf. ἀλλοτρίους εἶναι κρίνομεν above.

This is a Pauline concept, principally in Romans (chs. VIII, IX) and Galatians (ch.IV), used here by metonymy for the community of right believers.

What is the criterion of ὀρθὴ πίστις? Any specific criterion (the See of Rome, the Bible, the Ecumenical Councils) must in purely epistemological terms be self-authenticating, and one’s option for one or the other dictates (or more often is dictated by) one’s confessional allegiance. Thus the ‘mark of truth’ (the Stoic *nota*, σημείον), inevitably *parti pris* (or worse) to the outsider, is an inescapable concomitant of Christian belief.

The immediate aftermath of Flavian’s statement is a sad and sorry tale. The council that Theodosius was so determined to hold convened as planned at Ephesus, site of the original condemnation of Nestorius, and was no small affair: with nearly four hundred bishops present, it was the largest episcopal assembly the East had known prior to Chalcedon. However, faith is not determined by numbers and already before the council began

6. To consider oneself orthodox is of course no proof of orthodoxy, but Dr Elizabeth Briere’s remarks in footnote 2 should be referred to.
7. Not however in the West, where a greater number, well over four hundred, had assembled in a local council of the Western church at Ariminum (= modern Rimini) in 359.
there were signs that its principal instigator (Dioscurus) trusted less in the Spirit of God than in the spirit of foul play, noticeably by forbidding the presence of bishops of the ‘opposition’ (Antiochenes), including their chief spokesman Theodoret of Cyrus, and by taking other measures to ‘rig’ the outcome. And if only bishops attended the actual sessions, both Theodosius and Dioscurus himself had taken the precaution of surrounding their men with a bodyguard of rowdies, who (to quote Adrian Fortescue) ‘understood nothing about nature and person, but were going to brain anyone who annoyed their Pharaoh’. In fact both Dioscurus and his rowdies got their way: Dioscurus in condemning Flavian along with Theodoret, and in restoring Eutyches; his bodyguard, not intending to be deprived of their sport, in storming the church where the council Fathers were in session and severely maltreating a number of dissident bishops, including Flavian, who died just days later from injuries sustained in the fracas. The Roman bishop’s legates left in disgust, but those bishops who remained were forced to accede to all Dioscurus’ demands.

Before succumbing to his injuries Flavian had time to appeal again to Rome, but the Roman bishop (Leo I) considered himself to have already said his last word on the subject in his previous letter to Flavian, which however Flavian had not received in time. This document, now known as the Tome of Leo, was endorsed enthusiastically by the council Fathers at Chalcedon, only two years later, even though its author, fearful of yet another conciliar fiasco, was at first reluctant to agree to a further council to undo the harm done at Ephesus. It is Leo also who first described Ephesus II as a ‘latrocinium’ (the word has a good Ciceronian pedigree, in Pro Roscio Amerino and elsewhere), whence ‘Robber Council’ in English.

Needless to say, the second council of Ephesus has never been regarded as ecumenical, or its decisions as valid, except presumably by the monophysite church of Egypt (= the Copts), and even then there are other monophysite bodies that would be reluctant to endorse it, as well as Coptic

8. Properly, Theodoret of Cyrrhus (Κύρρος), but ‘Cyrus’ has become accepted usage. The town is in Syria, near the Euphrates. Theodoret’s writings, though not his person, fell under the condemnation known as the Three Chapters, issued by the Emperor Justinian long after Theodoret’s death and confirmed in 553 at the second council of Constantinople; later again, these condemnations were to be withdrawn.

9. In The Lesser Eastern Churches, C.T.S., 1913, p.173. This volume is a fascinating compendium of information on Nestorians, Copts, Ethiopians, Jacobites, Malabaris and Armenians, and happily much less marred by the incessant Roman triumphalism that marks its predecessor The Orthodox Eastern Church (1907) or its incomplete and posthumously published sequel The Uniate Eastern Churches (1923).

10. By ‘Pharaoh’ Fortescue evidently means ‘Patriarch’, but if Dioscurus’ personal and fiscal tyranny was in fact such as described by his enemies and reported by Fortescue, the comparison is apt.
patriarchs (such as Τιμόθεος Αἰλουρος, or 'Timothy the Cat') who have not hesitated to condemn Eutychianism, while still upholding 'one nature' in Christ. The council intended as a counter-synod to Ephesus II was planned for Nicea but, in the end held at Chalcedon, just across the Bosporus from Constantinople, and despite Leo's foreboding turned out to be, theologically speaking, a great success, if at the same time an ecclesiopolitical disaster. But this was neither Leo's fault, nor that of the recently murdered Flavian or of his successors at Constantinople. It is probable that Cyril would have found nothing (other than strictly verbal quibbles) that he would not have wanted to accept at Chalcedon, and the same might even be said of Nestorius, who (unlike Cyril) was still alive when that council met, though now excommunicate and living in exile.

So the question must be asked: what did Flavian die for? The answer will be more in terms of ecclesiopolitical rivalry than of theology for, as we have seen, his theology as contained in the *Confession* is fully orthodox, reservation being made only concerning the terminology of μία φύσις τού θεού λόγου σεσαρκωμένη, in which he was merely echoing Cyril, who in turn thought (mistakenly) that he was echoing Athanasius, the original champion of the Right Faith against the teachings of Arius.

One party to the dispute that comes out of it well is Rome, and it is of some interest to see how both Eutyches and Flavian (and, indeed, Theodosius) write to the Pope of Rome detailing their case, vilifying that of their opponent, and asking for a judgment. If it is not obvious that such recourse comprises an 'appeal' in the full juridical sense, which present-day Roman Catholic apologists would want to maintain, it is at least an acknowledgment that for whatever reason (Petrine, political or Rome's purity of faith) that distant Western See, which indeed was the only Western See of apostolic foundation, had a certain recognised pre-eminence in the church of the conciliar era. Further, the disgust of the Roman legates at Ephesus II, and their chairmanship of Chalcedon, were both exemplary, making it possible for the Fathers of Chalcedon to adopt as 'working documents' for their Christological definition not only the two creeds (of 325 and 381) and relevant correspondence of Cyril, but also Leo's *Tome*,

11. See my paper on Canon XXVIII of Chalcedon in *Prudentia* vol. xvi, no. 2, November 1984, and for a non Roman Catholic statement of Roman pre-eminence see the volume alluded to there: *The Primacy of Peter in the Orthodox Church* by J. Meyendorff, N. Afanassieff, A. Schmemann and N. Koulomzine (Faith Press, 1963). Remarks on the 'purity of faith' argument for Roman primacy are relevant to what follows here.

12. Namely, Cyril's second letter to Nestorius (Καταφλυάρουαι/Obloquuntur) and his letter to John of Antioch (ἐυφραίνεσθωσαν/Laetentur caeli). The former has been mentioned above; the latter was written after Ephesus I, bringing about a temporary *modus vivendi* between Alexandria and Antioch. Its citation at Chalcedon suggests that harmony between major patriarchal Sees, psychological as much as theological, was a necessary concomitant of acceptance of sound doctrine.
or letter to Flavian. Further, the council were able to conclude not only that Cyril and Leo were in agreement (which should have, but did not, put the Alexandrians’ minds at rest) but also that ‘Peter has spoken through Leo’. While these points are all grist to the mill of Roman Catholic apologetic, it is perhaps not out of place to observe that the text of the Chalcedonian Definition at one point refers to the Tome as τήν ἐπιστολήν . . . ἄτε δὴ τῇ τοῦ μεγάλου Πέτρου ὀμολογία συμβαίνουσαν thus suggesting that Leo’s contribution has authority not because it comes from Leo or from Rome as such, but because (or rather ‘inasmuch as’, ἄτε) it is found to be in agreement (my italics, unsupported by anything in the Greek text) with the confession of Peter, who nonetheless retains the style of ‘Great’. Thus the role of the Roman See at Chalcedon, while prominent, raises clouds of denominational dust and confessional controversy that, while outside the scope of this paper, can only prove problematic to those who have a confessional or denominational interest in pursuing one side of the argument or the other.

Be that as it may, Flavian’s orthodoxy is today accepted by all parties to whom the above-mentioned controversy is a live issue, and in Flavian we observe on the one hand a readiness to lay his case before the Roman bishop and a disposition to hear his reply, and on the other a conviction of his doctrinal autonomy or dogmatic self-sufficiency in uttering his anathemas against the Nestorians. For the expression and exegesis of this see the above comments on Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζώντος. In short, Flavian is at once utterly orthodox and utterly catholic, and though not commonly referred to as ‘saint’ there seems to be no reason why he should not be accorded that title, since both by his Confession, and by his death as a result of defending it, he showed himself to be a witness, μάρτυρ or ‘martyr’ for the Right Faith that he was proud to profess.