

Novel 132.

To the people of Constantinople; an edict  
concerning the faith.

(Edictum de fide Constantinopolitanis.)

We believe the first and greatest good for all men to be the right confession of the true and pure Christian faith, so that it may be strengthened thereby in every respect and all holy priests may be joined in concord and with one accord profess and preach the right Christian faith, and every pretext invented by heretics may be destroyed, as is shown by the books and the different edicts written by us. But since heretics, not having the fear of God in their hearts, and not bearing in mind the penalties and the severity of the law with which they are threatened, perform the work of the devil, deceive some of the simple folk, hold assemblies not in accord with the holy catholic and apostolic church of God and celebrate secret baptism, we have thought it pious to warn all men by the present law, that they must themselves abstain from heretical insanity and must not fraudulently destroy the souls of others, but that they should rather go to the holy church of God, in which the right creed is worshipped and all heresies, together with their sponsors, are anathematized. For we want every one to know, that if hereafter there are found those who hold unlawful assemblies or come together therein, we shall not suffer that to be done in any manner, but the houses where anything of the kind takes place, shall be given to the holy church, and the penalties specified by law shall in every respect be inflicted upon those who hold unlawful assemblies or who come together therein.

Given at Constantinople April 4, 544, A.D., in the 18th year of the reign of the emperor Justinian.