

1-1-1992

# The Doctrine of the Two-Natures of Christ: A Historical and Critical Analysis

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO-NATURES OF CHRIST:  
A HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

by  
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A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in the Division of Christian History and Thought  
Western Evangelical Seminary  
October 1992

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## Acknowledgements

The labor of theological research is an exhausting process. Special thanks to the library staff at both Fort Vancouver Regional Library and Western Evangelical Seminary who assisted in locating and making accessible many works important to this study.

I am grateful to my father, Rev. Joseph Yong, who bore with my periodical rambling and helped me to synthesize my various theological discoveries. I have also been privileged to sit under the teaching and mentorship of Dr. W. Stanley Johnson, who took time out from the exacting demands of pastoral ministry to supervise this thesis. Thanks also to Dr. Susie Stanley and Dr. Irv Brendlinger, who were both part of my thesis committee, and whose knowledge of church history and theology contributed to inform and direct my research and writing.

I am especially indebted, however, to my wife--with whom I celebrated our fifth year anniversary while completing the initial manuscript--who endured patiently as well as supported me generously in every way throughout this project; and to my now twenty-two month old son for inviting me to take "time-out" during some of the hectic and pressured moments throughout the writing of this thesis. It is to them that this work is dedicated.

## Preface

During the spring term of 1991, while studying the development of Christian thought in the modern period under Dr. W. Stanley Johnson, I began research for my M.A. thesis on the Christology of Oneness Pentecostalism following a suggestion by Dr. Susie Stanley made in light of my background as a Pentecostal. Almost immediately, I came upon the definitive work of David Reed, "The Origins and Development of the Theology of Oneness Pentecostalism in the United States" (Ph.d Diss., Boston University, 1978), wherein he identified Oneness Christology as primarily Nestorian in character, thus introducing me to the decisive christological controversies of the patristic age. Over the the next six months, while wrestling with his work, I did further research in an attempt to determine the validity of his thesis. When I finally submitted my initial proposal to the faculty of Western Evangelical Seminary, my intention was to undermine the validity of the Oneness view of the Godhead by exposing the fallacious christological premises--basically Nestorian, following Reed--upon which it was enacted; this I sought to do by way of a historical evaluation of the Nestorian heresy, both in its ancient as well as in its modern dress.

At this point, the thesis committee recognized the importance of the history of doctrinal development to my study, and requested that I work closely with Dr. Johnson in completing

this project. In view of his expertise and interest in the history of the development of ideas--which was transferred to me as a student in the spring term of 1991 as noted above--I received this turn of events as a sign of divine graciousness and attention to my theological development. While the following purports to be nothing more than a historical survey-analysis of the doctrine of the person of Christ, it is presented with the anticipation that it is just the beginning of a lifetime of investigation into the fascinating subject of the development of ideas and doctrine, both in the area of Christian theology and philosophy as well as in the history of religions.



## Introduction

The doctrine of the two natures of Christ formulated at the Council of Chalcedon (451) has long been understood by church historians and theologians to be, on the one hand, the terminal point of the christological controversies of the patristic age and, on the other, the source of theological confusion which has since called for continuous clarification. The explication of the mystery of the incarnation using the two-nature model of Chalcedon has therefore sought to steer the narrow course between the Scylla of Apollinarianism and Eutychianism on the one hand, and the Charybdis of Nestorianism on the other. Although orthodox Christianity has traditionally been measured by the standard of Chalcedon, its formulation based upon philosophical and metaphysical categories foreign to both the biblical as well as modern world necessitates a reassessment of its validity for contemporary theology. Central to this study, therefore, will be the demonstration of the numerous insuperable difficulties of the two-nature dogma as evidenced by its development in the history of christological thought which will undermine its value for the modern age.

This paper will therefore be divided into two main parts. The primary method to be employed will be that of historical analysis. This will comprise the first, longer, part which will be a survey of the history of the two-nature doctrine itself,

beginning with the New Testament. Considerable attention will be devoted to the patristic formation of the doctrine leading up to Chalcedon and the ensuing christological debates extending through the Third Council of Constantinople (681) due to the crucial nature of both periods to a proper understanding of the issues surrounding the two-nature doctrine. Important christological developments during the middle ages and the Reformation will be highlighted before focusing on the numerous problems posed by the rationalist response of enlightenment theology. Both the impasse created by the Chalcedonian definition and the failures of the speculative metaphysics of the Greek fathers will be delineated throughout this study. Other theoretical and dogmatic developments in christological thought will be commented on primarily as they inform the two-nature doctrine central to this study.

The historical survey in part one will demonstrate the need for a critical reassessment of the two-nature dogma which will be the focus of part two. Here, the ontological incompatibility of Chalcedonianism with the twenty-first century will be argued using biblical, historical, linguistic, and philosophical criteria. As A. N. S. Lane has commented, "valuable though the Chalcedonian Definition may be, it is neither necessary nor<sup>1</sup> desirable nor possible to accept it unreservedly." This paper

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1. A. N. S. Lane, "Christology Beyond Chalcedon," in Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology presented to Donald Guthrie, Harold H. Rowden, ed. (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982), 258. We will return to Lane's criticism of Chalcedon in Chapter 8.

will conclude with suggestions for a preliminary reconstruction of the doctrine of the person of Christ which will seek to stay faithful to biblical and historic Christianity while attempting to avoid the various difficulties which have been posed by the Chalcedonian dogma of the two natures of Christ.

PART ONE

The Historical Development  
of the Doctrine of the Two-Natures of Christ

## CHAPTER 1

### The New Testament and the Person of Christ

The fact that the Chalcedonian Fathers considered their adherence to biblical orthodoxy as fundamental to their understanding of Christ as one person in two natures necessitates an analysis of the development of New Testament christology at the beginning of this study. The issues which will be examined in this chapter will not only shed light on all subsequent christological thought, but will also be crucial to the attempt at reformulation which will be suggested at the end of this work. The controlling question that directs our study in this chapter is whether the New Testament posits Christ as both divine as well as human, and if so, within what parameters. As relevant as this question is to any New Testament christology, one scarcely needs to be reminded that for the early Christian community, "the status of Jesus as a man was not a theme of interest but was taken for granted."<sup>1</sup> While the nineteenth century liberal quest for the historical Jesus failed in its primary objective,<sup>2</sup> it did

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1. I. H. Marshall, The Origins of New Testament Christology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 45.

2. See Albert Schweitzer, The Quest for the Historical Jesus, tr. W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan Co., 1971). The introduction to this edition is by James M. Robinson (1968) who is recognized by many to have, following E. Kasemann in Germany, launched the "New Quest" for the historical Jesus in the 1950s in the English speaking world. While we may agree with Stephen Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1986 (Oxford: University Press, 1988), 288, that this movement was

bring about a resurgence of a christology "from below" which was the operative method of the early church. This approach does not ignore the impact of the post-Easter experiences of the early disciples, but recognizes that behind the development of christological confessions and understanding, "there stands the figure of Jesus and the claims, indirect and direct, which he made for himself."<sup>3</sup>

### The Development of New Testament Christology

Various methods have been utilized in tracing the development of the understanding of the first century church on the person of Christ. The History-of-Religions School has posited at least three distinct periods of development beginning with the Jewish-Christian, expanding to the Jewish-Gentile, and finding final expression in the Hellenistic context.<sup>4</sup> More suitable for our purposes, however, is John Knox's succinctly outlined three stages of development which he has labelled as adoptionist,<sup>5</sup> kenotic, and incarnational. In Knox's view, the first stage is

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"doomed already to appear anachronistic," we hold that any valid reinterpretation of the person of Christ will have to begin with the perspective of the disciples who earnestly wrestled with the divine element of Christ only retrospectively from their post-Easter experiences.

3. Marshall, 128.

4. Representative of the work of this School is Wilhelm Bousset, Kyrios Christos, tran. John E. Steely (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970). For an early response, see A. E. J. Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of Christ (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926).

5. John Knox, The Humanity and the Divinity of Christ: A Study of Pattern in Christology (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), esp. 1-18.

depicted by the kerygmatic passages of the book of Acts which are held by many to reflect the earliest understanding of the post-Easter community. Thus Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost, "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to by miracles, wonders, and signs. . . .know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:22, 36). Further reflection on the resurrection of Christ "led directly and immediately to the affirmation of his pre-existence."<sup>6</sup> This concept included the corollary idea of kenosis which is most clearly expressed in Paul's Phillipian hymn. From this emerged the docetic, third stage christology as evidenced by the Johannine writings, which struggled to explain the process of how a divine being could have taken on human form. Although Knox's categories are not without difficulties,<sup>7</sup> this delineation is helpful to the overall scope of this study which cannot avoid grappling with the early church's developmental thinking of the divine element in Christ.

In attempting to comprehend the New Testament concept of pre-existence, one must grasp the writings of the Apostle Paul as a whole. It is immediately apparent that any ontological affirmations of Christ's person by the Apostle are subservient to the

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6. Ibid., 11.

7. One such criticism which antedates Knox's work can be noted as foreshadowed in Rawlinson's New Testament Doctrine of Christ, 267, where, in opposing Bousset's methodology, he downplays the significance or validity of early adoptionistic christology by seeing its plausibility as depending primarily on the failure of its proponents to "recognize clearly the distinction between the Jewish-Christian and Gentile-Christian connections of what was meant by Divine Sonship."

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the soteriological emphases which he places on Christ's work. This has led some scholars to go as far as to question the validity of the ontological inferences in the Pauline epistles. Thus, in his analysis of the concept of pre-existence, J. D. G. Dunn asserts, with the agreement of many, that

as the first century of the Christian era drew to a close we find a concept of Christ's real pre-existence beginning to emerge, but only in the Fourth Gospel can we speak of a full blown conception of Christ's personal pre-existence and a clear doctrine of incarnation. 9

Dunn also dispenses with any "Chalcedonian" reading of Romans 1:3-4 by positing the interpretation that "the 'deity' of the earthly Jesus is a function of the Spirit, is, in fact, no more and no less than the Holy Spirit."<sup>10</sup> The strength of Dunn's exegesis, while not completely satisfying, cannot be summarily dismissed. This is exemplified by the fact that the notion of

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8. See R. H. Fuller's summary article, "Aspects of Pauline Christology," Review and Expositor 71:1 (1974), 8-11.

9. J. D. G. Dunn, Christology in the Making (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1980), 259. My emphasis highlights Dunn's position that even the Pauline conception of pre-existence tends in the direction of Spirit or Wisdom Christology rather than strictly deity. C. H. Talbert, "The Problem of Pre-Existence in Philippians 2:6-11," Journal of Biblical Studies 86:2 (1967), 153, agrees with Dunn to the extent that he denies any two or three stage christology to the hymn--Dunn admits at most to two stages--preferring to see only the human existence of Jesus under the test: "a proper delineation of form leads to a correct interpretation of meaning." R. H. Fuller, "The Theology of Jesus or Christology? An Evaluation of the Recent Discussion," Semeia 30 (1984), esp. 108-111, criticizes Dunn for "exegetical overkill" in his (Dunn's) opposition to the German History-of-Religions schools, and holds to the traditional three stage christology for Philippians 2.

10. Dunn, "Jesus--Flesh and Spirit: An Exposition of Romans 1.3-4," The Journal of Theological Studies 24:1 (1973), 58.



Christ as divine agent has gained wide and current acceptance<sup>11</sup>  
among Pauline scholarship.

Clearly, the categories of pre-existence subsist primarily in<sup>12</sup>  
the New Testament christological hymns, especially the Philip-  
pian passage. In the most definitive work to date on the hymn,  
R. P. Martin has stipulated that the Sitz im Leben of the passage  
must be sought in hellenistic Jewish Christianity (which would be  
aligned with stage two of Knox's scheme) and "depicts the very  
earliest beginnings of Christian cosmic christology which came to<sup>13</sup>  
full maturity in later literature." Most will argue that while  
the emphasis of the hymn is primarily soteriological, liturgical  
and confessional, that does not detract from its implications  
regarding Christ's essential nature and person. Thus, Martin  
concludes his exegesis by saying, "the preincarnate Christ had  
as His personal possession the unique dignity of His place within  
the Godhead. . . . He possessed the divine equality . . . because

11. E. g., C. A. Wanamaker, "Christ as Divine Agent in Paul," Scottish Journal of Theology 39:4 (1986), 517-528.

12. J. T. Sanders, The New Testament Christological Hymns: Their Historical Religious Background (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), lists seven primary passages: Phil. 2:6-11, Col. 1:15-20, Eph. 2:14-16, 1 Tim. 3:16, 1 Pet. 3:18-22, Heb. 1:3 and the Prologue of John. Compare his exegetical work with the more systematic approach of F. Craddock, The Pre-Existence of Christ in the New Testament (Nashville: Abindgon Press, 1968). Our study will focus minimally only on the Philippian hymn, not because we assign any lesser importance to the others, but due to its influence on the later development of christological dogma, both in the patristic age and in the nineteenth century kenotic christologies.

13. R. P. Martin, Carmen Christi: Philipppians ii.5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 318.

He existed eternally in the 'form of God.'<sup>14</sup>

One cannot, however, feel the force of Martin's study without asking another crucial question in leading up to Johannine christology: Is Jesus called God in the New Testament? Or, if not, on what grounds are such inferences made which would lead later to the Chalcedonian statement? While seven key passages have been marshalled in the attempt to answer this question affirmatively--Rom. 9:5, Tit. 2:13, 2 Pet. 1:1, Heb. 1:8, John 1:1, 1:18 and 20:28--many have argued that the "only the last is more or less universally accepted as a genuine instance."<sup>15</sup> Whatever the difficulties are--and this task we leave to the exegetes--R. E. Brown has correctly concluded that chronologically, "if we date the New Testament times from 30 to 100, quite clearly the use of 'God' for Jesus belongs to the second half of the period."<sup>16</sup> Thus it is evident--and here we have to agree with Dunn--that only in the Johannine writings does the New Testament advance into the conceptual categories which later undergird the two-nature dogma.

### Johannine Christology and the Incarnation

Central to the incarnational christology of the Johannine

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14. Ibid., 148.

15. A. W. Wainwright, "The Confession 'Jesus is God' in the New Testament," Scottish Journal of Theology 10:3 (1957), 294.

16. R. E. Brown, "Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?" Theological Studies 26:4 (1965), 567. See his more complete study which developed out of this seminal article, Jesus God and Man: Modern Biblical Reflections (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1967).

writings is the Evangelist's use of the Logos concept: "And the Logos became flesh" (John 1:14). This use betrays the hellenistic influence on the Gospel and has led some to conclude that Johannine christology is basically docetic (where the humanity of Christ is understood as only apparent and not real).<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that "after the Prologue the Evangelist did not retain the Logos as a title for Jesus."<sup>18</sup> So when one follows the plot of the story through to the author's statement on the intended purpose of the Gospel (20:30-31), it is readily apparent that "assuming with his Jewish readers the humanity of Jesus, the Evangelist tried to persuade the Jews into believing in Jesus as Messiah, the only Son of God, who was pre-existent and now present in the life of his followers."<sup>19</sup>

Clearly there is sufficient material in the Fourth Gospel to form a foundation for an ontic christology. In attempting to further clarify the author's usage of the Logos concept in the Prologue, E. Miller has proposed that the intent of the anarthrous theos was to identify the Logos with God, but not in an absolute or wholistic sense. Obviously, if this was the original intent of the writer, the homoousios construct of the Nicene formula is amply justified. Miller thus concludes that John 1:1

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17. See Ernst Kasemann, The Testament of Jesus (London, 1968). Cf. Marianne Meye Thompson, The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) for a cogent rebuttal of Kasemann's position.

18. T. C. Smith, "The Christology of the Fourth Gospel," Review & Expositor 71:1 (1974), 29.

19. Ibid., 30.

is "suggestive, at least, of some sort of metaphysic of the Christian God."<sup>20</sup> Thus, John 1:14--where the divine reality of God, the Logos, "egeneto sarx"--suggests a genuine incarnation against any possibility of docetic misrepresentation. With this understanding, christological thought took a huge step forward. As later speculation would confirm, any attempt to conclude that the person of Christ was some sort of tertium quid--a mixture of God and man resulting in the loss of distinct properties of each--would go against the strict grammatical interpretation of this verse: God remained God and man remained man; both, however, were to be found in the Logos made flesh.

This conjunction of deity and humanity in Jesus is further substantiated by two further references in John. In the first, the translation of John 1:18 as "God the only Son" is argued by D. A. Fennema, who concludes that

with this paradoxical assertion that Father and Son together are "the only God," John has expanded the traditional Jewish, monotheistic conception of deity. No longer coterminous with the Father, the one true God is to be recognized as both God the Father and God the Logos/Son. 21

Secondly, in Jesus's words, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), "one" points to "one thing," not "one person,"<sup>22</sup> and

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20. E. L. Miller, "The Logos was God," The Evangelical Quarterly 53:2 (1981), 77.

21. D. A. Fennema, "John 1.18: 'God the Only Son,'" New Testament Studies 31 (1985), 131.

22. Leon Morris, Jesus is the Christ: Studies in the Theology of John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 99; "one" being a neuter rather than masculine.

asserts more than a volitional or social unity, thus invoking the hostile response of the Jews (vs. 31-33) who understood the ontological implications of this claim.

The Fourth Gospel is highly suggestive, but by no means conclusive, for the Chalcedonian definition. In the first place, many have held that the weight of the New Testament--as well as the Gospel--points to a subordinationist christology. Thus, C. K. Barrett, in his comments on John 10:30, stresses the unity of the Father and the Son as one of "love and obedience even while it is a oneness of essence."<sup>23</sup> While not entirely dismissing the ontological implications of the Gospel, he follows this line of thought in a more recent essay where he appeals to John 14:28 to buttress his position.<sup>24</sup> There, he traces the patristic interpretation of this text along two general lines. The former relegates its significance to the humanity of Jesus while the latter tends toward a functional subordinationism.

The issue seems to revolve around the Johannine concept of Sonship and even here, there is no consensus among scholars. The meaning of monogenes (1:14, 18, 3:16) has been debated.<sup>25</sup> Morris suggests that the more accurate rendition of the term should be

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23. C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 318. The Pauline strand of post-incarnational subordinationism (1 Cor. 15:24-28) strongly supports this interpretation.

24. C. K. Barrett, "'The Father is Greater than I' John 14:28--Subordinationist Christology in the New Testament," in Essays on John (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 19-36.

25. See Fennema, 124-135, for a brief discussion of the proposed interpretations.

"'only being,' rather than 'only begotten.'<sup>26</sup> It appears that B. F. Westcott's conclusion over a century ago maintains abiding significance when he argued the meaning of the word to be "centered in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the<sup>27</sup> generation of the Son."

Before turning our attention to post-Apostolic christology, the implications of this brief survey of the New Testament must be assessed for the Chalcedonian statement. While we have focused on the texts that have traditionally been appealed to for an ontological christology, these should not be exaggerated or weighed uncritically against the entire scope of the New<sup>28</sup> Testament affirmations about Christ. What has emerged, however, is that the "functional affirmations of early Jewish Christology inevitably lead to the ontic affirmations of the gentile mission,<sup>29</sup> and these, in turn raise pressing ontological questions."

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26. Morris, 92. Morris notes the term as stemming from ginomai, not gennao.

27. Quoted in Dale Moody, "God's Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version," Journal of Biblical Literature 72:4 (1953), 219. Moody prefers the implications of the translation "only one of its kind" which emphasizes the concept of uniqueness and leaves intact the essential-ontological christology which is formulated by the Fourth Evangelist.

28. This survey has avoided any mention of either the synoptic evidence, of which there is massive literature, or the use of christological titles. On the latter, which is of importance in further understanding the development of New Testament Christology but beyond the scope of the present study, see Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963).

29. R. H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965), 256.

Further, the centrality of Johannine christology to the later  
<sup>30</sup>  
 patristic debates cannot be underestimated. The question,  
 however, is whether the scattered ontic inferences in the New  
 Testament warrant the two-nature dogma posited by Chalcedon.

Undoubtedly, there is always the possibility that any attempt  
 to read the New Testament documents in light of the philosophical  
 and conceptual categories of later periods runs the risk of  
 skewing the evidence. The fact is, however, that such an uncritical  
 reading has occurred within historic Christianity since  
 Chalcedon. This traditional method has been called to task by  
 modern scholarship. Fundamentally, the bulk of the New Testament  
 focuses not on the incarnational christology located in Knox's  
 third stage, but rather in the functional, soteriological,  
 confessional and liturgical meaning of Jesus the Messiah as  
 understood by the post-resurrection Christian community.

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30. That the exegesis of the Johannine writings was crucial  
 to the christological formulation of the patristic fathers is  
 documented by T. E. Pollard, Johannine Christology and the Early  
 Church (Cambridge: University Press, 1970) and M. Wiles, The  
 Spiritual Gospel: An Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the  
 Early Church (Cambridge: University Press, 1960).

## CHAPTER 2

### From the Apostolic Age to the First Council of Constantinople (381)

Given the fact that an evolution of christological understanding is evident even within the New Testament itself, further development in the post-Apostolic period arising out of kerygmatic proclamation, confessional reflection, and apologetic necessity was unavoidable. The development of the doctrine of the Trinity which culminated at the Nicean Council (325) and its ensuing defense in the fourth century provide a valuable background by which to view the christological controversies of the fifth century. While the dogmatic formulation of Christ as one person in two natures was not finalized until Chalcedon, its existence in an embryonic form can be traced back to the second century. Thus, our purpose in this chapter will be to sketch an outline of christological thought through the fourth century,<sup>1</sup> giving special attention to the emergence of the two-nature formulation of the person of Christ.

#### Second Century Christologies

The eminent patristic christologist, Aloys Grillmeier, has succinctly outlined the task of orthodox christology subsequent

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1. We will discuss the fourth century Antiochene school of theology in the next chapter since it directly impacted the Chalcedonian Definition.



to the Apostolic age:

The confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, . . . demanded of Christian theology a twofold demonstration, first that it was compatible with Jewish monotheism, and secondly, that it was different from pagan polytheism. 2

That the task was formidable can immediately be recognized in the equivocation of second century writings. In this period, a plethora of christologies can be identified. The christologies contained in the Shepard of Hermes, for example, include a binitarian understanding of the Godhead along with "the first traces of what was later to become the christology of Adoptionism and Nestorianism. . . . But even Hermes insists that the divine Son-Spirit dwells in Christ the man." 3 The circulation of Angel, Wisdom, and Spirit christologies extend, in Harnack's observation, "wherever there is an earnest occupation with the Old Testament." 4

Throughout this period, however, scarcely a trace of two-

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2. Aloys Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, Vol. 1, From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451), tran. John Bowden, 2nd. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 106. Our indebtedness to Grillmeier's work will be evident in this and the next three chapters.

3. Karl Adam, The Christ of Faith, quoted in Ralph J. Tapia, The Theology of Christ: Commentary (New York: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1971), 27. Tapia, ix, defines his volume as a "selective but comprehensive anthology of the views of contemporary authors on the development of Christology" which we will refer to periodically.

4. Adolf von Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. 1, tran. Neil Buchanan (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958), 197. For a comprehensive survey of second century Jewish-Christian christology, see Richard N. Longenecker, The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity (Naperville, Il: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1970).

nature terminology or understanding can be detected. Conversely, the direct threats to the church's young tradition were the Ebionite and Docetic heresies which impinged upon the basic two-nature structure; the former denied the deity of Christ while the latter denied his humanity. J. Pelikan summarizes the Ebionite christology generally associated with the Cerinthian School as teaching that "born as other men are, Jesus was elected to be the Son of God, and that at his baptism Christ, an archangel, descended on him, as he had on Adam, Moses, and other prophets."<sup>5</sup> Docetism, on the other hand, can generally be understood as influenced by Gnostic ideas, and their accompanying "assumptions about divine impassibility and the inherent impurity of matter,"<sup>6</sup> concepts which would plague christological speculation until the Enlightenment. It is significant that "in producing docetism, Gnosticism presented us with the first heresy that can be clearly lodged within Christianity."<sup>7</sup> Undeniably, this underscores the inherent dangers in the task of christological formation. Both of these second century heresies demonstrate that even at this early stage, the church struggled with the difficulties involved in recognizing both deity and humanity in Christ

It is in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch that we find the

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5. Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600) (Chicago: University Press, 1971), 24.

6. J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, rev. ed (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1978), 141.

7. Harold O. J. Brown, Heresies: The Image of Christ in the Mirror of Heresy and Orthodoxy from the Apostles to the Present (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), 52.

first references to the method of argumentation--with its<sup>8</sup> antithetic two-membered formula" --that would be central to the development of the two-nature dogma:

there is only one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it, Jesus Christ our Lord. 9

This divine-human tension, so precisely enunciated by Ignatius, is later developed in the middle of the second century by writings traditionally ascribed to Melito of Sardis, who "could be credited with a significant step in the direction of a more technical terminology for the doctrine of the two natures."<sup>10</sup> In opposing the gnostic heretic Marcion, Melito held to the corporeality of God in Christ, and championed both his Godhead and manhood. Credit for initial authorship of the two-nature formulation, however, has been formally afforded to the Latin theologian, Tertullian of Carthage, to whom we now turn.

#### Tertullian and the Monarchian Controversies

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Although a voluminous author on various theological subjects,

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8. Grillmeier, 1:87.

9. To the Ephesians 7:2, in The Apostolic Fathers, trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, 2nd. ed., ed. and rev. by Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 88.

10. Grillmeier, 1:97. See his brief discussion of the authenticity of certain texts to Melito.

11. For a summary of Tertullian's contribution to theology as a whole, see A. C. McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. 2, The West From Tertullian to Erasmus (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 3-23.

it is in his polemical Against Praxeas that Tertullian's primary contribution to the christological doctrine of the two natures of Christ is most clearly defined. Praxeas' modalistic notion of God which identified Jesus as the Father logically implied either patripassianism--whereby the Father himself suffered and died on the cross--or a variant adoptionist christology that divided the man Jesus and the Christ. In attacking this monarchian error, the African resorted to legal terms such as "substance" and "person" (Latin substantia and persona) which may have been a source of confusion especially among those who fail to recognize<sup>12</sup> that he was "less a philosopher than a jurist." Based on his Stoic understanding of "substance" as essence (Latin ousia) and "person" as possession of individuality, he explained God as "in una persona Trinitatis," and Christ as "duplex status in una<sup>13</sup> persona." Tertullian's exegesis of Rom. 1:3-4 and other problematic christological texts of the Fourth Gospel led him to assert a "dual condition--not fused but united--in one person,<sup>14</sup> Jesus as God and man." Thus, in rejecting patripassianism,

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12. J. F. Bethune-Baker, An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, 8th ed. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1949), 138. Harnack, 4:145, blames Tertullian's use of "legal fictions which the East had to accept as philosophy, i.e., theology, or change into philosophy" as the cause of later misunderstanding.

13. From R. Cantalamessa's La Cristologia di Tertulliano, quoted in Tapia, 81. See Grillmeier, 1:121-31, for a more complete contextual and etymological analysis of Tertullian's legal-theological terminology. At this point, it is only important to note that Tertullian's use of "person" did not carry with it the modern conception of personality.

14. Against Praxeas 27, in Documents in Early Christian Thought, eds. Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer (Cambridge: Univer-

Tertullian gave "an alternative exegesis of those texts on which<sup>15</sup> Praxeas . . . had sought to base his case." At the same time, with Praxeas, he did allow for such language as "God was truly crucified, truly died," only however, on the basis of what was<sup>16</sup> later accepted as the concept of communicatio idiomatum. Despite his opposition to philosophy, however, Tertullian appears to have been the "first to assert the impassibility of the divine in<sup>17</sup> Christ." This he did by subscribing to an anthropological traducianism that assigned to Christ a human soul. This, along with Christ's body, was subjected to sufferings.

Tertullian's two-nature christology not only eventually led<sup>18</sup> to Chalcedon, but was also developed by other theologians. This can be seen especially in Novatian's De Trinitate which appeared during the middle of the third century, probably as a<sup>19</sup> refutation of the Sabellian heresy. He clearly predicates both deity and humanity of Christ:

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sity Press, 1975), 46-47; hereafter referred to as Wiles-Santer.

15. Wiles, The Spiritual Gospel, 117.

16. See Kelly, 152.

17. T. E. Pollard, "The Impassibility of God," Scottish Journal of Theology 8:4 (1955), 358.

18. Cf. G. P. Fisher, A History of Christian Doctrine, eds. Hubert Huncliff-Jones and Benjamin Drewery (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 69, who notes that Tertullian "became an unacknowledged source for the famous Tome of Leo."

19. Sabellius taught a modalistic concept of God who revealed himself successively as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For a succinct summary of the various shades of monarchianism, see Reinhold Seeberg, Text-Book of the History of Doctrines, Vol. 1, History of the Doctrines of the Ancient Church, tran. Charles E. Hay (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), 162-168.

The Word had to become flesh that He might unite in himself the alliance between earthly and heavenly things . . . thus uniting God with man and man with God. Accordingly, the Son of God could become the Son of Man by taking flesh and the Son of Man could become the Son of God by the reception of the Word of God. 20

In his effort to distinguish the Son from the Father, however, Novatian tended to "emphasize the subordination of the Son to such a point that some have seen in him a forerunner to  
<sup>21</sup>  
 Arianism."

Interestingly, it was this subordinationist christology along with the notion of Christ's human soul--rather than any further elucidation of the two-natures formulation--which was circulated throughout the third century. While the two-nature concept of Christ was introduced by these Western Fathers, the fact that it drifted into oblivion during the remainder of the third century poses some interesting questions to pro-Chalcedonians. Its lack of popularity can be attributed primarily to the circumstances facing the Church which focused its attention during this century on the doctrine of God. Further, the fact that its terminology was foreign to Scripture may have also played a part in its demise. Possibly, however, the rise of the Alexandrian "Logos-sarx" christology during this period effectively suppressed whatever stimulus the two-nature formulation had gathered from

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20. Novatian, The Trinity 23:7, tran. Russell J. DeSimone, The Fathers of the Church, no. 67 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 85.

21. Justo L. Gonzalez, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. 1, From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 242.

Tertullian. It is to this Eastern theology that we now turn.

### The Development of Alexandrian Christology

The fountain of Alexandrian theology of a whole, which tended to subordinate the human nature of Christ to the divine, if not the person of the Son to the Father, may well be traced to Clement, bishop of Alexandria, whose allegorical method of biblical interpretation began to impact Eastern theology around the turn of the third century. Although Clement rejected the gnostic understanding of salvation by knowledge, he was not adverse to the Christian faith being preceded and supplemented by philosophy.<sup>22</sup> What is important to note in Clement's christology, however, is his concept of "soul within a soul." Clement posited the inner "soul" as the "governing power of the Logos,"<sup>23</sup> which logically led to a minimizing of the human soul as a factor in the person and sufferings of Christ. This has led Grillmeier to attribute to Clement "precisely that element of the non-Christian Logos doctrine which leads to the total obscuring of the distinction between Logos and soul"<sup>24</sup> in christology, an unfortunate development for the subsequent history of the church.

Undoubtedly many of Clement's ideas were developed by his prize pupil, Origen, who has been unanimously recognized as the

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22. For an summary of Clement's philosophical-ethical theology, see McGiffert, History of Christian Thought, Vol. 1, Early and Eastern (1932), 177-207.

23. Clement of Alexandria, Paedagogus, quoted in Grillmeier, 1:137.

24. Ibid., 136.

father of Eastern theology. While Clement was eclectic in wedding his philosophy and theology, Origen was "more bound by tradition than his teacher and made more than he the authority of the Catholic church."<sup>25</sup> Even so, Origen's christological speculations also led to later confusion. This is due primarily to his middle-Platonic notion of the pre-existence of souls. When<sup>26</sup> added to his concept of the "eternal-generation of the Son" --which clearly subordinated the Logos to the Father, and posited the necessity of the Logos in bridging the gap between a transcendent God and the created order--Origen's understanding of Christ took on a new twist:

One of these [pre-existent] souls destined to be the soul of the man Jesus, in every respect a human soul like the rest was from the beginning attached to the Logos with mystical devotion. . . . But since this soul, while thus cleaving to the Logos, properly belonged to a body, it formed the ideal meeting point between the infinite Word and the finite human nature. 27

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25. McGiffert, 1:210. This becomes all the more important in light of Origen's vast speculations, which were set forth not as the obstinate heretic for which he was later condemned, but in a spirit of humility that sought to contribute to theological understanding. For a balanced defense of Origen's orthodoxy and intentions, see G. L. Prestige, Fathers and Heretics (London: SPCK, 1963), 43-66. All further references to Prestige will be to this work unless otherwise noted.

26. This Origenistic concept, although difficult, cannot be subjected to the analogy of human generation. McGiffert, 1:219, summarizes that "it is not to be confounded with emanation, for emanation implies division of substance and this is impossible with indivisible spirit . . . whatever its nature, it means that God and the Son are of one substance not of different substances as God and the created universe are." Origen's phrase has since become classic in orthodox theology.

27. Kelly, 155. This appears to be a modified form of adoptionism, particularly that of souls!



Following his master, Origen also understood the Word as the governing principle of Christ which dominated, while "indwelling and directing the manhood."<sup>28</sup> Further, following Tertullian, "the Logos preserves his impassibility, and it is only the soul that hungers and thirsts, struggles and suffers."<sup>29</sup> This has led Grillmeier to conclude that "despite the clear assumption of a human soul in Christ, this soul does not seem to be the seat of the free acts which are decisive, for the seat of these acts is rather in the Godhead of Christ."<sup>30</sup>

Much criticism has been heaped on Origen's christology, not the least of which has been directed to his fallacious anthropology along with his explicit subordinationism and implicit adoptionism. It is clear, however, that in exalting the Logos at the expense of the genuine and full humanity of Christ, Origen launched the "Logos-sarx" christology which has characterized the Alexandrian school over and against the "Logos-anthropos" christology that gave impetus to the Chalcedonian formula.<sup>31</sup> Thus, it is only a half century later, at the condemnation of Paul of Samosata by the Council of Antioch (268), that there is "no longer any suggestion of Origen's theory of the intimate

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28. Ibid., 157.

29. Harnack, 2:371.

30. Grillmeier, 1:164.

31. H. R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 169, concurs with Harnack who sees Origen's christology "not so much a doctrine of two natures. . . as rather that of two subjects which gradually become amalgamated with each other."

adhesion of Christ's human soul to the Logos."<sup>32</sup> This is not surprising since Paul's strict modalism led him to an adoptionist christology which viewed Jesus as a "mere man who was endowed with the Holy Spirit."<sup>33</sup> Fischer rightly points to this period as the consolidation of the "Logos-sarx" christology which laid dormant the notion of Christ's human soul:

. . .from the time of Paul of Samosata onwards to postulate a human soul in Christ tended to suggest to many people that a dichotomy was being made between the divine Logos and the man Jesus, that a substantial union of deity and manhood centered in the divine person of the Logos was being denied, and that therefore what was generally believed to be the essential category of incarnation was being interpreted so as to bring it dangerously near to the category of inspiration.<sup>34</sup>

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Over the next half century, a number of dialectics brought the church to the formulation of the Council of Nicea (325). On the one hand, Origen's christology continued to develop into the "Logos-sarx" framework which would later be championed by St. Athanasius; on the other hand, it is evident that many appealed

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32. Kelly, 159.

33. C. A. Blaising, "Monarchianism," in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 727.

34. Fisher, 88. The adoptionist christology of the Samosatene could be seen as a forerunner to the degree christology of the modern period (see Chapter 7). For an analysis of Paul's unique exegesis which has been adopted by the twentieth century Oneness Pentecostal movement (along with its anti-Trinitarianism), see Pollard, Johannine Christology, 113-116.

35. From Bernard Lonergan, The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology, tran. Conn O'Donovan (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), esp. 48 ff. Lonergan's dialectical analysis can be applied to the doctrine of the person of Christ as well.

to the Alexandrian's subordinationism in arguing for the Arian  
<sup>36</sup> cause. At this juncture, however, it is important to note that  
 the triumph of the "Logos-sarx" christology led to a truncated  
 view of Christ's humanity. Thus, Methodius of Olympus asserted  
 in his christological passages, "only two elements compounded in  
 the God-man, viz. the Word and His flesh."  
<sup>37</sup> The acceptance of  
<sup>38</sup> Christ as homoousios (of the same substance) with the Father at  
 Nicea established as orthodox not only the notion of Christ's  
 pre-existence, but also fueled this "christology from above" and  
 led to an unconscious suppression of the full implications of  
 Christ's human experiences. It is clear that the ultimate  
 failure of Chalcedon can be traced back to the third century.  
 What will be evidenced below is that while the terminology of  
 Chalcedon was dictated by Antiochene theology, its underlying  
 concepts were that of the "Logos-sarx" christology of Alexandria.

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36. Regrettably, a survey of Arianism has to be deferred to the voluminous amount of existing literature. For an excellent analysis of all the factors involved in the dogmatic formulation of Nicea, see Pelikan, 1:172-225. For an exposition of Arian christology, see Grillmeier, 1:219-248.

37. Kelly, 161.

38. The history of this term is fascinating. For our purposes, its import is twofold. First, it appears to sanction the marriage between theology and philosophy--although not without its dissenters, as the history of dogma will reveal--an alliance which would prove to be extremely consequential at Chalcedon. Secondly, it approves the substitution of technical philosophy for biblical terminology in the creedal--liturgical and confessional--affirmations of the church (a highly questionable methodology, in our opinion). Especially on this score, it was not immediately received unanimously. Kelly, 239, notes that many "objected to the Nicene key-word as a departure from pure biblical standards." Thus, Cyril of Jerusalem, an avowed opponent of Arianism, avoided it "because in his eyes the expression was foreign to Scripture" (Grillmeier, 1:307).

### Christology From Nicea to Constantinople

The negative effects of the Alexandrian "Logos-sarx" christology on the full understanding of the humanity of Christ further unfold during the fourth century. This can be seen even in the christology of Athanasius, the great pillar of Nicene orthodoxy. It must be recalled, however, that Athanasius' primary focus was on the defense of Nicene trinitarianism against the various Arian factions.<sup>39</sup> It is therefore not suprising that we find most of Athanasius' christology discussed in his polemic Against the Arians. In this treatise, he further develops the "Logos-sarx" framework. Interestingly, however, he employs what M. Wiles has termed "two-nature exegesis"<sup>40</sup> in his exposition and followed 1 Pet. 4:1 in limiting Christ's suffering to the flesh. However, he also held to a communication of properties which allowed him to say that "the flesh is born of the God-bearing Mary."<sup>41</sup>

What is important to note in Athanasius' christology, however, is his apparent neglect of Christ's human will which followed the Alexandrian tradition. Although some have argued that Athanasius foreshadowed Apollinarianism (see below) in

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39. For a biographical survey of Athanasius, see Prestige, 67-93.

40. See Wiles, The Spiritual Gospel, 129 ff, who uses this label for the method by which the patristic Fathers assigned the various actions of Christ as recorded in Scripture to either his deity or humanity, depending on how the predications lined up with other logical, philosophical, and soteriological criteria.

41. Against the Arians III, in Wiles-Santer, 56. As will become clearer, the theotokos title for Mary was hotly debated right up to the Council of Chalcedon (see Chapters 3 and 4).

denying to Christ a human soul,<sup>42</sup> it may be safer to follow Grillmeier, who asserts that while Christ's soul was not a theological factor, it was a physical factor which Athanasius never explicitly denies.<sup>43</sup> His judgment is supported by A. Patterson who underscores the vitality of Athanasius' portrait of Christ's physical and psychological experiences contra Apollinaris.<sup>44</sup> In any case, what is clear for Athanasius is that he followed the Alexandrian tradition in asserting the dominance of the Logos as "the sole principle of all existence and therefore the subject of all statements about Christ."<sup>45</sup>

It is when we come to Apollinaris of Laodicea that the "Logos-sarx" framework is taken to its heretical monophysite conclusion. At the same time, it is also apparent that he was the first to seriously wrestle with the christological problem of the union of divine and human in Christ. Prestige summarizes Apollinaris' position as follows:

Christ was one and not two, and he could not see how two separate minds and wills and principles of actions could co-exist in a single living being. . . . In the Redeemer, the part played in other men by the soul was played by

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42. See Gonzalez, 1:310. Kelly, 287, asserts that Athanasius' christology "simply allowed no room for a human mind," thus even anticipating the seventh century monothelite controversies (see Chapter 5).

43. Grillmeier, 1:308-318.

44. See his illuminating article, "Did Athanasius Deny Christ's Fear," Scottish Journal of Theology 39:3 (1986), 327-340. Pollard, 237-244, sides with Grillmeier in his analysis of Athanasius' two-nature exegesis.

45. Grillmeier, 1:328.

the divine Spirit, and no other directing principle was needed. . . . The idea of two minds in Christ, one divine and one human, is absurd. 46

In Apollinaris' scheme, the dominance of the Logos was complete. He rejected the two-nature christology which to him led to the doctrine of two Sons, and spoke of Christ as "mia physis." <sup>47</sup> The Logos' unity with a body still produced but "one nature":

We confess. . . a single worship of the Logos and of the flesh he assumed. And we anathematize those who render diverse acts of worship, one divine and one human, and who worship the man born of Mary as being different from him who is "God from God." 48

It is not exactly clear to what extent the Bishop of Laodicea was reacting to Marcellus of Ancrya (d. 374) who posited two wills in Christ. <sup>49</sup> It is, however, evident that he was an ardent

46. Prestige, 109-110. Although somewhat dated, C. E. Raven's Apollinarianism: An Essay On the Christology of the Early Church (1923, reprint, New York: AMS Press, Inc, 1978) is still the most definitive work in English on Apollinaris' christology. While Raven, 171, suggests that Apollinaris was a traducian and a trichotomite, he essentially sees, with Prestige, a strict monothelitism in the Laodicean's christology.

47. Grillmeier, 1:334-335, notes that by his definition of physis as a "self-determining being," Apollinaris appears to have begun to extend beyond the static substance categories of his time. This formulation by the Bishop of Laodicea found its way into the Chalcedonian Creed through Cyril of Alexandria (although in a slightly modified sense) and continued to exercise considerable influence in the next few centuries (Chapters 4 and 5).

48. Apollinaris, Detailed Confession of Faith, quoted in Pelikan, 1:239. Pelikan, 1:248, further notes that Apollinaris' strict "Logos-sarx" framework was based on his exegesis of John 1:14 where he notes that "the Word became flesh," but not "flesh and soul."

49. Note, however, that Marcellus' two wills was that of the Logos and the flesh, not the Logos and the human soul of

opponent of the dualist or dyophysite christology which later<sup>50</sup> became associated with the Antiochene School. Interestingly, opposition to Apollinaris was not limited to the dyophysites alone, as his condemnation by the second ecumenical council at Constantinople in 381 clearly confirms. The potency of his<sup>51</sup> ideas which brought two centuries of christological speculation to their logical, albeit heretical, conclusion, was discussed by the Constantinopolitan Fathers from both within and without the "Logos-sarx" framework from which he operated. Thus, while his anti-Arian apologetic found many supporters, it did not lack in critics, the chief of whom were the distinguished triumvirate, the Great Cappadocians.

Cappadocian theology as a whole is to be understood as the consolidation of post-Nicene trinitarianism rather than as a precursor to Chalcedonian christology. Grillmeier, however, notes that in their anti-Apollinarianism, a distinct tendency toward an Antiochene concept of the two-natures of Christ can be detected, although the problem of Christ's unity remains fairly

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Christ (cf. Grillmeier, 1:282-285). Interestingly, (Pseudo?-) Athanasius's Fourth Oracle Against the Arians opposes both Marcellus' "Logos-anthropos" as well as the predominant "Logos-sarx" schemata of the fourth century and "puts forward a God-man schema which was to be enshrined in the christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon" (Pollard, Johannine Christology, 319).

50. Raven, 233-308, details Apollinaris' running battle with the Antiochene theologians along with their (especially Theodore of Mopsuestia's) response.

51. Raven, 132, notes that Apollinaris was "gifted with a brilliant and versatile intellect" and had "won a great reputation as a scholar" among his contemporaries.

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obvious. Thus, both Basil and Gregory Nazianzus went to great lengths to "think out the theological significance of the souls of Christ as a real redemptive principle."<sup>53</sup> This was clearly expressed by the latter's famous dictum, "What has not been assumed cannot be restored; it is what is united with God that is saved."<sup>54</sup> Clearly, Gregory recognized that the mia physis solution not only ignored the New Testament witness to the reality of Christ's human passion and suffering, but it also endangered the full redemption of humanity. Further, he became the first Greek theologian to adopt the two-nature concept into his christology.<sup>55</sup>

The imprecision of Cappadocian terminology which was uncritically transported from their trinitarian formulations quickly emerged. Grillmeier points out that

whereas in trinitarian doctrine. . .they clearly recognized that unity and distinction in the Godhead are to be sought through different approaches, they only dimly grasped a corresponding insight into christology. 56

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52. Grillmeier, 1:367-377. Contra Grillmeier, R. V. Sellers, Two Ancient Christologies: A Study of Christological Thought of the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch in the Early History of Christian Doctrine (London: SPCK, 1954), esp. 65-80, sees the Cappadocians as relying strictly on the "Logos-sarx" tradition of Alexandria, contrary to the dyophysitism of the Antiochene school. His analysis, however, tends to polarize the "Logos-anthropos" and "Logos-sarx" christologies to the extent that no via media or overlap is recognizable. Grillmeier's approach is much more flexible.

53. Grillmeier, 1:368-371 passim.

54. This translation from Kelly, 297.

55. Ibid. Sellers correctly maintains that the Cappadocians rejected any notion of Christ as two persons, or the possibility of two Sons (see his excerpt in Tapia, 112-113).

56. Grillmeier, 1:368.



Thus, we find their thoughts on the christological union  
expressed in such terms as "mingling," "fusion," and "mixture."<sup>57</sup>

These, along with other factors, held the Cappadocians back from making any true advancements either over Apollinaris or in terms of the two-nature doctrine. The similarities between the triumvirate and the Laodicean are evident: both were avowedly anti-Arian; both also operated from the Alexandrian "Logos-sarx" tradition. However, the swinging of the pendulum by Apollinaris to the monophysite extreme brought about his anathematization at the local synods of Alexandria and Antioch, in 378 and 379 respectively, which was confirmed by the second ecumenical<sup>58</sup> council at Constantinople in 381. Although the demise of Apollinarianism could be credited in part to the Cappadocian Fathers, their operative "Logos-sarx" framework hindered their ability to see through the logical inferences of the two-nature christology, and necessitated the reaction by proponents of a

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57. Kelly, 299, summarizes Gregory of Nyssa's synthesis by calling attention to his usage of "mingling": "In this 'mingling,' the flesh was passive, the Logos the active, element, and a transformation of the human nature into the divine was initiated." This deification of Christ's human nature made possible the full redemption of a race which participated in the universal humanity of Christ. This soteriologically determined doctrine of Christ moves away from the substance christology which was enshrined at Chalcedon.

58. Philip Hughes, The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils, 325-1870 (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1967), 47-49, notes that the primary doctrines addressed at the Council of Constantinople were the trinitarian and Arian issues, with the christology of Apollinaris receiving but a footnote to the proceedings. This may explain its continued attractiveness to "Logos-sarx" christologies in the period preceeding Chalcedon, and its strong post-Chalcedonian resurgence in the various monophysite factions (which will be the subject of our next two Chapters).

"Logos-anthropos" scheme.

Clearly, christology during the third and fourth centuries was dominated by the "Logos-sarx" framework of the Alexandrian School. What is especially important for this study is that historic Christianity has accepted as orthodox the theologians of that tradition such as Origen (methodologically and to a certain extent doctrinally), Athanasius, and the Cappadocians. With the exception of the Latin Tertullian, no other major theologian of the pre-Nicene age advocated the notion of Christ as one person in two-natures. On the other hand, however, none of the supporters of the "Logos-sarx" christology, except for<sup>59</sup> Apollinarius, were condemned for their views. Undoubtedly, the scriptural terminology of the "Logos-sarx" formula forged its popularity both within and without the Alexandrian tradition. The pre-Chalcedonian history of dogma reveals that for the most part, the Church was satisfied with a moderate "Logos-sarx" christology.

Obviously, proponents of Chalcedon have objected to the measurement of the fourth council by standards of the third and fourth centuries. They have also pointed out that Chalcedon can only be understood in the context of the Alexandrian-Antiochene dialectic which developed throughout the fourth century. It is to this counter christology that we now turn.

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59. We will show, however, that the views of the Bishop of Laodicea have continued to impact the doctrine of the person of Christ from Chalcedon to the modern period (see Chapter 5 ff).

## CHAPTER 3

### Christ as Logos-Anthropos

The counter-pole to the dominant "Logos-sarx" christology of the Alexandrians during the third and fourth centuries was the "Logos-anthropos" framework which was developed primarily by theologians from the Antiochene tradition.<sup>1</sup> While the former either denied or ignored the soul of Christ in emphasizing "flesh" as body, the latter understood Christ as genuine humanity, composed of both body and soul. The various via media christologies between the Alexandrian-Antiochene continuum testify against the limited, and yet nonetheless, rigid structure accepted at Chalcedon. Yet, Chalcedon, in its adoption of the two-nature formula, has been understood by many, including the Antiochenes themselves, as a vindication of Antiochene theology.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the orthodoxy of many members of the Antiochene tradition, while assumed by the Council, was later questioned and in some cases renounced (see Chapter 5). This fact, however,

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1. See especially Sellers, Two Ancient Christologies, who fully develops both poles. Grillmeier's analysis of fourth century christology also uses this dialectic. For our purposes we will use the phrases "Logos-anthropos christology" and "Antiochene tradition" interchangeably. This does not imply a simple identification nor are we ignoring the fact that the scope of "Logos-anthropos" christology extends much further than Antioch, or that Antioch contributed much more to patristic theology than its christology.

2. And justifiably so, when measured against the monophysite counter-reaction to what they considered as Chalcedonian heterodoxy (see Chapter 5).

does not necessarily translate into a conclusive statement on the heterodoxy of the tradition as a whole, nor of the individuals in question. It does, however, make indispensable to this study a survey of the development of the "Logos-anthropos" christology beginning with its preliminary rumblings at the turn of the fourth century.

### Antecedents to the "Logos-Anthropos" Christology

Some historians have pointed to Paul of Samosata as the source of Antiochene christology.<sup>3</sup> This assessment is valid only with regard to the general tendencies of the heresiarch, but is wholly defective in ignoring the underlying theological and philosophical presuppositions and the overall direction of the parties. For our purposes, it will be more expedient to begin with Eustathius (or Eustace) of Antioch.

As an avowed opponent of Arius, and a champion of the Nicene homoousios settlement, Eustathius' contribution to the "Logos-anthropos" christology is twofold. In the first place, his insistence on the complete mind, body, and soul of Christ led to his distinguishing a "duality of natures in the God-man."<sup>4</sup> The immediate and corollary concern--his second contribution--was his attempt to explain the unity of the distinctions in Christ using

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3. Thus Seeberg, 248, asserts that the "lineal relationship of Paul of Samosata, Lucian-Arius, Diodorus-Theodorus--is here plainly traceable." Raven, 72, posits Lucian as the founder of the Antiochene School, but Kelly, 230, asserts that Lucian's life and work "remains a complete enigma" and discourages such an identification.

4. Kelly, 283.

an "indwelling" framework: "The body [of Jesus] is the temple, the tabernacle, the house, the garment (peribole) of the Logos, in which he is concealed and through which he works as through an instrument."<sup>5</sup> Both of these views were destined to become the cornerstone of Antiochene christology as they were substantially developed by proponents of that School throughout the fourth century.<sup>6</sup>

Although directly descendant from the anti-Paulinan party of the bishop Meletius of Antioch (who objected to the homoousios catchword in opposition to the Paulinists who were faithful to Eustathius), the importance of Diodore (or Diodorus) to Antiochene christology cannot be underexaggerated.<sup>7</sup> Serving primarily as the bishop of Tarsus, Diodore was a contemporary as well as an opponent of Apollinaris. Thus, the double predication in his exegesis of the Gospel accounts sets forth "two subjects for the verbs in credal statements about Christ."<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, he

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5. Paraphrased by Grillmeier, 1:300-1.

6. This leads Prestige, 136, to give--correctly in our opinion-- Eustathius the title "father of the Antiochene school of Christology."

7. Grillmeier, 1:352-360, argues persuasively that Diodore's divisive christology was worked out of the Alexandrian "Logos-sarx" framework rather than the Antiochene "Logos-anthropos." R. Greer, "The Antiochene Christology of Diodore of Tarsus," Journal of Theological Studies 17:2 (1966), 341, however, in opposition to Grillmeier, asserts that Diodore's is a "Logos-anthropos" christology "both in its terminology and in its biblical and philosophical orientation." We agree with F. Young, From Nicea to Chalcedon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 199, when she says "whatever the roots of his theology, it had developed along the lines which in many ways foreshadowed the ideas, if not the terminology, of the later Antiochenes."

8. Greer, 328.

recognized the Logos, and on the other, that "the Logos became flesh." Diodore understood "flesh," however, in a wholistic sense as the "man born of Mary."<sup>9</sup> What is crucial for Diodore and the further development of "Logos-anthropos" christology is his understanding of the union of the person of Christ:

. . . the Lord, when he was in the virgin's womb--and in point of essence--did not possess the honour of Sonship. But when he was fashioned and became the Temple of God the Word, by virtue of receiving the Only Begotten, he received the honour of the name, and participated in His honour. 10

With this non-essential, degree christology, Diodore eschews the Alexandrian concept of the union of Logos and flesh, and foreshadows Theodore of Mopsuestia's christological union of grace.

#### Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Antiochene School

It is in Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia from 392 to 428, that all the strands of Antiochene theology and methodology are woven into a comprehensive "Logos-anthropos" christology. His voluminous commentaries on Scripture are reflective of his acumen as a biblical exegete--which followed the historical-grammatical

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9. Ibid., 336. Greer, 337, notes that Diodore's language is traditional and non-technical, and "should be interpreted biblically rather than philosophically." This tendency characterised the Antiochene school, and comes into full flowering in Theodore of Mopsuestia, who has also been called "The Exegete" of the ancient church (see below).

10. Diodore, Fragment 4, quoted in Greer, 337. Greer, 341, also notes that even Diodore's communicatio idiomatum is not in terms of substance, but a "communion of honor, grace, and worship." The failure to account for any metaphysical or essential union in the person of Christ--the perennial Achilles' heel of Antiochian christology--is evident.

method characteristic of the Antiochene school--rather than as a systematic theologian. As Theodore understands it, "the work of redemption involves a double agency. It requires to be the deed of both God and man--the product at once of divine self-giving and of human obedience."<sup>11</sup> It is already evident that Theodore may well have been the first to construct an anthropological christology. It is also clear that for the Mopsuestian, "the idea of a genuinely human victory is central. . . and the soul of Christ is not merely a theological construction but a religious concept of primary importance."<sup>12</sup> This naturally resulted in Theodore's abhorrence of Apollinaris' mia physis formula,<sup>13</sup> and led to his strict employment of two-nature exegesis by which he appeared to logically expound the Gospel data. Thus, Wiles summarizes that while "everything is attributed to one person, . . . the variety of phrasing in the Gospel texts bears indirect yet equally clear witness to the difference of the natures."<sup>14</sup>

Theodore, however, was not oblivious to the problem of the unity of Christ which was accentuated by two-nature exegesis. This he sought to resolve by suggesting a "prosopic union":

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11. R. A. Norris, Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 196.

12. Fisher, 129.

13. Norris, 79-122, examines the problems regarding Christ's unity inherent in Apollinaris' anthropology vis-a-vis Theodore. The former's anthropology understood flesh as completely passive and subservient to a rational soul. Christ's human soul, if existent, was irrational, according to Apollinaris.

14. Wiles, The Spiritual Gospel, 134.

"a union which has its root in the fact that by God's gracious initiative this human life [Jesus] is perfectly at one, in its willing and acting, with the Logos."<sup>15</sup> However, like his teacher Diodore, the bishop of Mopsuestia was unable to avoid denying an ontological or hypostatic union:

So God's indwelling [note again Eustathius' concept] cannot be a matter of essence or of activity. What remains? . . . It is obviously appropriate to speak of indwelling being a matter of good pleasure. "Good pleasure" is the name for that very good and excellent will of God which he exercises because pleased with those who are earnestly devoted to him. 16

It is apparent that the Mopsuestian's "indwelling" christology so intrinsic to the Antiochene tradition amounts to a reductionist doctrine of the Incarnation. The defects of Theodore's christology, however, are further complicated by his employment of Pelagian themes in his anthropology. Clearly, Theodore's appeal to the analogy of grace to explain the Incarnation leads to a dilemma:

The conventions of the analogy he employs suggest that the Man by his purposes and actions elicits God's grace. On the other hand, it is God's unique providential purpose that explains the Man's purposes and actions. 17

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15. R. A. Norris, The Christological Controversy (Sources in Early Christian thought) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 25.

16. Theodore, On the Incarnation, Book VII, in Wiles-Santer, 58.

17. R. Greer, "The Analogy of Grace in the Theodore of Mopsuestia's Christology," Journal of Theological Studies 34:1 (1983), 96. Interestingly, the great Western theologian, St.



Thus, Sullivan is entirely accurate when he says that in contrast to the "Logos-sarx" christology, Theodore "simply does not conceive of the Word as the one person involved; the Word is just one of the two natures, standing in symmetrical relation with the homo assumptus to the one person who is the effect of their union."<sup>18</sup> In this light, the primary defect of Theodore's christology lies in his conception of the unity of Christ in terms of a tertium quid. Grillmeier concludes thus:

But what he chiefly lacks is the recognition, rooted so deeply in Alexandrian intuition, that in Christ the "Logos" is the one "I" and the one subject. The human nature is quite subordinate to this "I". Theodore seems to put this one "I" as a third element over and above the two natures, which results from them. 19

In spite of his explicit denials of two persons in Christ, Theodore's "one person in two natures" formula fails to give any satisfactory explanation of the christological union. In his best effort, Theodore writes, "The unity of person is recognized

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Augustine, also utilized the analogy of grace to explain the unity of Christ, but only within his strictly predestinarian system in opposition to Pelagius. His famous "unity of body and soul" analogy which argues that the conjunction of God as spirit and the soul of man is not as problematic in contrast to that between man's body (corporeality) and soul (spirituality) carried much influence in the subsequent history of christology. We will not extend our comments on Augustine's christology any further inasmuch as his contributions to Chalcedon were rather insignificant, and at any rate, primarily filtered through Leo the Great (see Chapter 4).

18. F. A. Sullivan, The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Series Facultatis Theologicae, no. 82 (Rome: Universitatis Gregoriana, 1956), 282.

19. Grillmeier, 1:431.

by the fact that (the Word) accomplishes everything through him  
 [the man]."<sup>20</sup> Further, Theodore does nothing to allay the fears  
 of his opponents when following Matt. 19:6, he uses the analogy  
 of the husband and wife "who are no longer two *prosopa* but one,  
 though it is evident that the natures are distinct."<sup>21</sup> Theodore's  
 view of the humanity in Christ in terms of a moral agent "all two  
 often leaves the impression that the union in Christ was achieved  
 by the assumption of an already self-sufficient man."<sup>22</sup> If it can  
 indeed be demonstrated that Nestorius was dependent on Theodore's  
 christology, then Sullivan's thesis that Theodore of Mopsuestia  
 was the "Father of Nestorianism" appears justifiable.<sup>23</sup>

### The Christology of Nestorius

G. L. Prestige appears to support Sullivan's thesis when he  
 wrote "all that Nestorius did was to put a razor-like dialectical  
 edge on Theodore's tools and apply them to the cutting up of  
 Apollinarianism or anything else that he considered to betray an  
 Apollinarian character."<sup>24</sup> While Nestorius' usage of Theodore's

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20. Theodore, On the Incarnation, Book VII, in Norris, Christological Controversy, 118. My emphasis highlights the contention that Theodore did not hold to a metaphysical union.

21. Quoted in Norris, Manhood and Christ, 151-152.

22. Grillmeier, 1:429.

23. According to Sullivan, 284, the basic defect of Nestorianism was its denial that the one prosopon "of whom one can predicate what belongs to both divinity and humanity is actually the Divine Person of the Word." We have shown that was essentially the position of Theodore.

24. Prestige, 141. There is no indication that Sullivan relied on Prestige's earlier Bampton Lectures.

methodology may have led him to similar conclusions, we must recognize that the primary opponent of the former was Cyril of Alexandria, a less extreme student of Apollinaris. Further, Nestorian studies have been complicated by his rather early exit as a player from the stage of the pre-Chalcedonian debates. His untactful and at times obnoxious dogmatism was exploited by his adversaries and led to his condemnation at the Council of Ephesus in 431. It was during the next two decades that the exiled patriarch of Constantinople wrote his apology, The Bazaar of<sup>25</sup> Heracleides. In this recently unearthed work, it is clear that Nestorius had "read and welcomed the Tome of Leo thus indicating<sup>26</sup> that he stood at the very gateway of Chalcedon." No less a patristic scholar than J. F. Bethune-Baker reversed his assessment of the traditional verdict passed on Nestorius upon<sup>27</sup> examining the deposed patriarch's Bazaar. Attention to this work is therefore imperative for the study of Chalcedonian christology.

F. Young has succinctly defined Nestorius' three basic

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25. Nestorius, The Bazaar of Heracleides, eds and trans. G. R. Driver and Leonard Hodgson (1925, reprint, New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1978). For a defense of the authenticity of the disputed portions of this work, see Roberta Chestnut, "Two 'Prosopa' in Nestorius' Bazaar," Journal of Theological Studies 29:2 (1978), 391-398.

26. Richard Kyle, "Nestorius: The Partial Rehabilitation of a Heretic," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 32:1 (1989), 82.

27. Compare Bethune-Baker's Early History of Christian Doctrine, 255-280, with his later Nestorius and His Teaching: A Fresh Examination of the Evidence (1908, reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), esp. Chapter VI, "'Two Persons' not the Teaching of Nestorius."

metaphysical terms, ousia (substance), physis (nature), and prosopon (person):

A thing's ousia is what it is in itself; its physis is its totality of qualities, what gives it its distinctive characteristics; its prosopon is its concrete manifestation, its external presentation. 28

Thus, he could say, "If God the Word became flesh by nature and remained God as he was, then God the Word was two ousias naturally."<sup>29</sup> Further, he could object to the mia physis formula later accepted as the doctrine of the hypostatic union by asserting, "if the union of the divinity and the humanity resulted in one nature, that one is neither that of God nor that of man, but another nature which is foreign to all natures."<sup>30</sup> It was, however, Nestorius' "use of the word hypostasis as practically synonymous with ousia"<sup>31</sup> that has been the greatest source of confusion and controversy. Thus, he could say that in Christ was two ousias, two natures, or two hypostases. Clearly, this was contrary to the one hypostatic union of the Alexandrian "Logos-sarx" formulation.

The ambiguities in Nestorius' Bazaar are further accentuated by his twofold usage of prosopon. His first usage has been noted above in Young's summary. This prosopon was used synonymously

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28. Young, 236.

29. Nestorius, 15.

30. Ibid., 36. Obviously, Nestorius anticipated that his adversaries would deny the person of Christ as a tertium quid and thus prove his point.

31. Bethune-Baker, Nestorius and His Teaching, 51.

with hypostasis and pointed to the external form of a nature. For Nestorius, every substance (nature) had a distinct form, which he called its prosoyon. Thus, while body and soul were incomplete natures, "man<sup>32</sup> is a complete nature." And since the Logos was completely divine by nature, he spoke of two ousias in Christ "which left the impression that he upheld the doctrine of two persons artificially linked together."<sup>33</sup> Secondly, however, following Theodore, Nestorius spoke of a "prosopic union": "The two natures which are united voluntarily are not said to be united naturally, but prosopically."<sup>34</sup> By this, Nestorius appears to have had nothing in mind other than "the undivided appearance of the historic Jesus Christ."<sup>35</sup> Clearly, Nestorius posited unity and duality at different metaphysical levels in the Incarnate state. For Nestorius, "the union of the two persons results in a new person, namely, the person of Jesus, of which the original two persons are component parts, whereas the union of the two natures does not result in a new nature."<sup>36</sup> Here again, Nestorius steers dangerously close to Theodore's concept of unity which implied a tertium quid (see above, p. 38).

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32. Grillmeier, 1:506.

33. Kyle, 81.

34. Nestorius, 38.

35. Friedrich Loofs, Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine (Cambridge: University Press, 1914), 79. Chestnut, 404-406, finds three complementary aspects to Nestorius' "prosopic union": that of the will, that of activity and operation, and finally that of revelation.

36. Carl E. Braaten, "Modern Interpretations of Nestorius," Church History 32:3 (1963), 264.

Undoubtedly, Nestorius' christology was anchored upon two fundamental axioms: the philosophical concept of divine impassibility first introduced by Tertullian, and the soteriological premise set forth by Gregory of Nazianzas:

. . . the human and the divine had to be united closely enough to achieve the salvation, but not so closely as to render it irrelevant to man as man--or to involve the divine in the suffering of the cross. 37

In attempting to hold the two natures in tension, however, the question remains whether Nestorius succeeded in maintaining the unity of Christ. His christology also utilized the "indwelling" framework of the Antiochene tradition. This was also supplemented by his borrowing of the trinitarian concept of perichoresis first advanced by the Cappadocians in reinterpreting the communicatio idiomatum:

Just as in the Holy Trinity, the three prosopa are joined through the one ousia and thus penetrate each other in essence so in Christ the two ousiai penetrate each other without confusion to form the unity of one prosopon. 38

However, the impenetrable mystery surrounding this concept for the doctrine of the trinity--which still did not ensure lapses into tritheism--remained for christology. As it was for his mentor, there was still no guarantee of the unity of Nestorius' Christ.

That Nestorius did not consider himself "a Nestorian in the

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37. Pelikan, 1:254.

38. Grillmeier, 1:516.

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classic sense of the word" seems abundantly clear as he repeatedly denied that he held to a doctrine of two Sons. R. Chestnut has asserted, based on her study of Nestorius' use of prosopon in the Bazaar that his

basic christology presents to the twentieth century a far better place to begin to structure a christology in modern terms than his more successful opponents, for it takes into serious account the actual reality of the functioning humanity of Christ, as a genuine human being with no tricks up his sleeve. 40

However, while contemporary scholarship has succeeded to a large degree in restoring the image and orthodoxy of the condemned heresiarch,<sup>41</sup> the fact that he was initially rejected cautions against an uncritical adoption of his christology for the modern age. What is clear is that the "Logos-anthropos" christology argued by the Antiochenes floundered on either one of two points: that of maintaining the unity of the person of Christ or that of avoiding a tertium quid in the incarnate state.

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39. Kelly, 316.

40. Chestnut, 409. While similar in many respects, the re-emergence of the Antiochene "from below" christology in the modern era differs from the patristic version in two important respects: that of historical method, and underlying philosophical presuppositions (see Chapter 7).

41. Since the discovery of The Bazaar of Heracleides, most scholars agree with Bethune-Baker, Nestorius and His Teaching, 174, who concludes that Nestorius "used expressions which could only be interpreted as 'orthodox' (in accordance that is, with the definitions of Chalcedon)." Loofs, 126, contends that Nestorius was "nearer to the oldest theological tradition and nearer to the N. T. than this later [i.e., Chalcedonian] orthodoxy itself." For a fairly comprehensive survey of recent Nestorian studies--most of which concur with the conclusions of Bethune-Baker and Loofs--see Braaten, 251-267.

The task remains, however, for an investigation of the philosophical and conceptual categories which operated within the ecclesiastical and political circumstances of the fifth century that hindered any fruitful dialogue from developing between Nestorius and his opponents. The final word on the viability of Nestorius' christology will have to await the analysis of the historical context wherein the battles between the Alexandrians and Antiochenes were waged, the outcome of which was the Chalcedonian definition. These events will now occupy our attention.



## CHAPTER 4

### The Road to Chalcedon

Whereas the primary doctrine debated throughout the fourth century was that of the Trinity, the controversies of the fifth century revolved specifically around that of the Incarnation. Further, however, the ecclesiastical and political developments in the half century preceding Chalcedon were crucial to the formulation of the two-nature dogma and clearly depict that the forces which struggled to produce this definition were not limited principally to the theological or even religious. Thus, the viability of the Chalcedonian statement will have to be assessed against this background.

#### The Nestorian-Cyrrillian Debates

The event which seems to have triggered the controversy appears to have been Nestorius' "First Sermon Against the Theotokos" which he preached at the end of the first year of his appointment to the bishopric of Constantinople in 428. In holding strictly to his two-nature view of the person of Christ, Nestorius thundered:

Does God have a mother? . . . A creature did not produce him who is uncreateable . . . rather she gave birth to the human being, the instrument of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit did not create God the Logos [Matt. 1:20]. . . . Rather he formed out of the Virgin a temple for God the Logos, a temple in which he dwelt. 1

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1. Nestorius, "First Sermon Against Theotokos," quoted in

In place of Theotokos, Nestorius suggested Christotokos, following his understanding of Christ as one person conjoined in two natures.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, however, the patriarch of Constantinople was attacking a liturgical confession which had been in vogue for over a century, and "though his intentions were good, [he] made the mistake of halting a kerygmatic evolution of age and theological value he did not fully appreciate."<sup>3</sup>

Nestorius' sermon drew immediate attention from Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria since 412. Cyril's initial responses betray the fact that he was "totally oblivious to the concerns which prompted Nestorius' remarks."<sup>4</sup> Cyril wrongly understood Nestorius to attribute all of Jesus' saving acts solely to his human nature. In response, the Archbishop set out to safeguard "the permanence and surety of his salvation by ascribing it entirely to the power of God in overcoming the weaknesses of sin and humanity."<sup>5</sup>

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Norris, Christological Controversy, 124-125. Again, Nestorius' extreme hesitance in applying the communicatio idiomatum as the Alexandrians did is evident.

2. Nestorius was not completely dogmatic on this issue. Fisher, 133, notes that he was "willing to concede the use of theotokos . . . on the understanding that it does not signify that deity was born of Mary but that the union of manhood with deity from the moment of Christ's conception makes this title permissible."

3. Grillmeier, 1:447-448.

4. Robert L. Wilken, "Tradition, Exegesis, and the Christological Controversies," Church History 34:2 (1965), 136.

5. F. M. Young, "Christological Ideas in the Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews," Journal of Theological Studies 20:1 (1969), 153. Young, 154, goes on to point out that

Antiochene formula "in two natures, " and allowed him to unify the person of Christ without detracting from the fact of his humanity as well as deity:

The nature of the Word has not passed into the nature of the flesh, nor has that of the flesh into that of the Word. Rather, it is with each nature retaining its own distinctive character, and being perceived as such, that the ineffable and inconceivable union of the Word which we have just described discloses to us one nature of the Son, though, as we have said one incarnate nature. <sup>10</sup>

This understanding allowed for a real communication of properties which sanctioned the title Theotokos.

It was clear that Cyril was unable, either terminologically or conceptually, to agree with the Antiochenes. In the first place, Cyril understood ousia and hypostasis "to mean the same thing as applied to the divine nature, but not as applied to the human nature."<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the Alexandrian urged strict adherence to Scriptural terminology for all dogmatic and creedal formulation, arguing, "Since inspired Scripture says that he suffered 'in the flesh,' it is better for us to say the same rather than 'in human nature.'<sup>12</sup>" Further, Cyril followed the tradition of his see in asserting the dominance of the Logos in the person of Christ. This is evidenced in part by his exegesis of John 1:14

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10. Cyril, Second Letter to Succensus, in Wiles-Santer, 68. Cyril basically equated the flesh and human nature.

11. Harnack, 4:176. This distinction was recognized by Nestorius who asked "whether after all Cyril always means by hypostasis what he [Nestorius] calls prosopon" (Grillmeier, 1:508).

12. Cyril's Second Letter to Succensus, in Wiles-Santer, 71.

where he understood human nature to be "acquired by the subject Word as an accident, and thereby inheres within the subject, truly belonging to him and occasioning real change, in circumstance, not in substance."<sup>13</sup> It would thus appear that Cyril's christology fails on two counts: that of truly maintaining Christ's essential unity--which, if true, parallels the same problem confronted by the Antiochenes--and that of lacking the full range of authentic human existence.

The years 429-430 saw a sharp escalation in hostilities as the bishops of Constantinople and Alexandria exchanged letters and refutations. This included Cyril's Third Letter to Nestorius wherein twelve anathematizations were decreed against Nestorius<sup>14</sup> and those who held to his teachings. The adroit ecclesiastical and political maneuvers by the Alexandrian, coupled with the less tactful harangues of Nestorius led to the latter's condemnation<sup>15</sup> at the third ecumenical council of Ephesus in 431. Two years

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13. Ruth Siddals, "Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria," Journal of Theological Studies 38:2 (1987), 354.

14. For a copy of the letter, see Christology of the Later Fathers, eds. Edward R. Hardy and Cyril C. Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 349-354. For a succinct discussion of the twelve anathematizations vis-a-vis Nestorius, see Kelly, 324-326.

15. Clearly, Cyril was motivated both politically as well as theologically. Prestige, 127-130, superbly recounts the entire affair and suggests that Cyril may have acted in the interests of increasing the prominence of his see and gained his ends "by wholesale violence and bribery . . . [spending] large sums in 'presents' to palace officials." That the archbishop of Alexandria was not interested solely in resolving the theological differences between himself and Nestorius is also evident. Rather than seeing Ephesus as a forum wherein doctrinal matters could be aired and debated, Cyril came to the council solely to "execute the policy previously agreed upon between himself and

later, a "Formula of Reunion" appeared and seemingly appeased the Alexandrians and reconciled the opposing traditions.<sup>16</sup> This momentary peace, however, proved to be but a brief respite to the long and bitter controversies.<sup>17</sup>

From the Council of Ephesus to the "Robber Synod"

Upon the death of Cyril in 444, his successor to the see of Alexandria, Dioscorus, renewed hostilities with the Antiochenes by "emphatically rejecting the formula, 'two natures', because, to his mind, it carried with it the dividing of that one Person into a duad of Sons."<sup>18</sup> Under his auspices, the aged monk, Eutyches, revived Apollinarianism and carried it to its extreme conclusion. Historically, he has been understood as "the founder of [the] virtually Docetic form of monophysitism, teaching that the Lord's humanity was totally absorbed by his divinity."<sup>19</sup> This

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the Western Pope"--a policy undeniably formulated by, and favoring, the Alexandrian party.

16. Kelly, 328, noted that this document, also known as the "Symbol of Union," was "undoubtedly drafted by [the Antiochene] Theodoret of Cyrus" (to whom we will return below). For the text, see also Hardy-Richardson, 355-359.

17. In spite of his bias regarding the "hellenism of the Gospel," Harnack's assessment of the failure of this attempt is noteworthy. According to Harnack, 4:198, the "Formula" introduced a "stagnation into the dogmatic question that every one who attempted to state his christological views ran the risk of being regarded as a heretic, while on the other hand people found it possible . . . to give a favourable turn to every dogmatic utterance. It threw the East into a state of confusion and made of Christology an armoury of poisoned weapons for the warfare of ecclesiastical politics."

18. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon, 32.

19. Kelly, 331. Both Dioscorus and Eutyches firmly adhered to the Apollinarian-Cyrrillian formula "out of two natures," and

turn of events naturally prompted a reaction from the proponents of the two-nature formulation.

With the exile of Nestorius, the defense of Antiochene christology fell upon a new group of bishops, the chief of whom were Theodoret of Cyrus and Flavian, bishop of Constantinople. Although he was a peacemaker who acquiesced to Alexandrian terminology (as seen in the "Formula of Reunion"), Theodoret's commitment to a basic "Logos-anthropos" christology was clear. His concept of the Incarnation was a "symmetrical one--two natures juxtaposed (and of course, united in one prosopon), without the idea of the metaphysical dependence of the human nature on the divine."<sup>20</sup>

The unrelenting aggressiveness of Dioscorus, however, brought the confrontation to a head.<sup>21</sup> Eutyches' condemnation by Flavian at the important Synod of Constantinople in 448 prompted an immediate appeal by the Egyptian duo to Pope Leo the Great through the monophysite sympathizer, Emperor Theodosius II. While Leo awaited Flavian's report on Eutyches which he wanted before rendering his decision, Dioscorus requested that the

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rejected the Antiochene "in two natures" (see Grillmeier, 1:525).

20. Kevin McNamara, "Theodoret of Cyrus and the Unity of the Person of Christ," in *Tapia*, 150 (originally published in the 22nd volume of Irish Theological Quarterly). McNamara, 147, and Prestige, 167, respectively suggest that Theodoret and Cyril both held to a concept of "person" which was roughly equivalent to the modern concept of "personality." This identification should be strongly cautioned against.

21. On what follows, see the more complete historical account in Hughes, 77-88. For a balanced dogmatic interpretation, see Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon, 56-87.

Emperor call a General Council which would absolve Eutyches of heresy. This was held in the summer of 449 at Ephesus. Unfortunately, however, Dioscorus--who undoubtedly relied on the Emperor's support--dominated the entire affair and did not allow the views of the Pope to be voiced. He further employed arms at the council to procure Eutyches' reinstitution and the monophysite victory, thus giving this event its infamous name, "The Robber Synod."<sup>22</sup> Grillmeier's summary reflects the ecclesiastical and theological mood on the eve of Chalcedon:

Theodoret of Cyrus . . . had been deposed and exiled. The Antiochenes were excluded and the Formulary of Reunion of 433 had lost its significance. Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem, was the first to cast his vote for the orthodoxy of Eutyches. So the way seemed open for 'Monophysitism' in the East. 23

### The Council of Chalcedon

Immediately after the Ephesian synod, Leo wrote to the Emperor protesting against the proceedings of the event. Although the bureaucratic wheel was destined to creep slowly at the capitol due to the Emperor's Cyrillian inclinations, it was his unexpected death from a fall off his horse in August of 450 which opened the door for the reconvening of all who were unsatisfied with the Latrocinium. It was thus in the fall of 451, under the Emperor Marcian, that the fourth ecumenical council at

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22. Known in Latin as the notorious Latrocinium. Hughes, 83, notes that Dioscorus' ruthlessness led to the death of Flavian shortly thereafter, "apparently from shock or injuries received in the dreadful scene."

23. Grillmeier, 1:528.

Chalcedon adopted the two-nature formula which merged the three primary theological traditions: the Alexandrian doctrine of the "hypostatic union," the Antiochene doctrine of the "indwelling Logos," and the Latin-western view whose most influential advocate was Pope Leo the Great.<sup>24</sup>

The prominent role played by Leo and the West in the consolidation of the two-nature dogma evidences their via media contribution at the Council of Chalcedon. In his June 449 letter to Flavian, the pontiff condemned Eutyches by clearly defining Roman christology. In this Tome,<sup>25</sup> as it is usually known, Leo remained a faithful articulator of the christology of the Latin-West which was outlined initially by Tertullian's two-nature formulation, and which found "its most characteristic spokesman in Hilary [of Poitiers, and] its most creative interpreter in Augustine."<sup>26</sup> In following Augustine, whose christology "joined in one a static doctrine of two natures with a dynamic soteriology,"<sup>27</sup> Leo's two-natures language capsulated Western thought on the person of Christ:

The rhythm of his language swings to and fro like a

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24. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon, 203, contends that "in a very real sense the Council of Chalcedon may be called the place where three ways meet."

25. For the text of this important letter, see Norris, Christological Controversy, 145-154.

26. Pelikan, 1:256. Besides's Grillmeier's volume, the christology of the Western fathers is chronicled by Sellers' chapter "The Christological Thought of the West," in The Council of Chalcedon, 182-206.

27. Grillmeier, 1:532.



pendulum, from the divine side to the human side, from the transcendence of God to the immanence of our earthly history. . . . Despite all his predilection for a static treatment of the nature of Christ, Leo again and again shows his love for a salvation-historical approach. His christology serves as a support for his soteriology . . . [which was that of the] "mystic doctrine of redemption", i.e., that doctrine which sees the foundation of redemption already laid in the being of Christ, not merely in his acts. . . . The doctrine of two natures becomes a doctrine of the divinization of man. 28

Clearly, Leo's "static two-nature" view was complemented by the dynamism of a three state--pre-existence, kenosis, and exaltation--soteriological component which steered Western christology on a road between the two Eastern traditions. 29

Thus, Leo was, on the one hand, able to import the Antiochene framework to the extent that he stressed the "duality of will in Christ (John 5:30, 10:30)," 30 and yet on the other hand, reject their homo-assumptus concept. 31 J. N. D. Kelly has accurately summed up the crucial points of Leo's Tome relative to Chalcedon:

1. The Person of the God-man is identical with that of the divine Word
2. The divine and human natures co-exist in this one Person without mixture or confusion

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28. Ibid., 531.

29. R. Greer, "The Use of Scripture in the Nestorian Controversy," Scottish Journal of Theology 20:4 (1967), 418, notes that the "three states" approach of the West to the famous Philippian hymn avoids the diametrical exegesis of the East where "Cyril used the passage to explain the hypostatic union, [but] Nestorius uses it to establish his view of prosopic union."

30. Grillmeier, 1:535.

31. Leo, Sermon 28, in Wiles-Santer, 72, preached that "there was no previously formed and ensouled temple of Christ's body, which the Word was able to enter later and claim as a habitation."

3. The natures are separate principles of operation, although they always act in concert with each other
4. The oneness of the Person postulates the legitimacy of the 'communication of idioms.' 32

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The christological creed adopted at Chalcedon was a mosaic of excerpts primarily from "Leo's Tome, the Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius, and Cyril's letter [which] accepted the Formula of Reunion,"<sup>34</sup> with the first having the greatest impact.<sup>35</sup> What is important to note for our purposes is its definition of Christ "in" two natures, over and against the monophysite "out of" two natures, as well as its unitive formula "one prosopon and one hypostasis" against the dyophysites. Sellers notes that here, the Alexandrian-Antiochene dialectic is transcended as their two "positive christological principles--that of christological confession and that of christological inquiry"<sup>36</sup> --

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32. Kelly, 337.

33. See the Appendix for the relevant text.

34. Norris, Christological Controversies, 30. While all parties sought to be Scriptural in their apologetic, it is evident that at this stage in the history of dogma, the appeal to Scripture was insufficient, and the role of tradition indispensable. Wilken, 142, argues that the intensity of the fifth century controversies which led to Chalcedon destroyed forever the "classical argument from tradition [which was] crushed by the weight of a load it was never meant to bear." Since the time of Chalcedon, the paleographic collection of citations to support one's position has produced further schism and strife rather than led to ecumenical or theological unity. The defects in this dogmatic method are evident and will be elaborated on in Chapter 8 below.

35. At the conclusion of the reading of Leo's Tome, the bishops exclaimed, "It is Peter who says this through Leo. This is what we all of us believe. This is the faith of the Apostles. Leo and Cyril teach the same thing" (quoted in Hughes, 90).

36. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon, xiii. For Sellers,

were merged. While the Alexandrian deification soteriology tried to posit an ontological unity, the Antiochene moral-ethical anthropology looked to a real duality. The Chalcedonian fathers attempted to preserve elements of both in their formulation.

The majority vote at Chalcedon was nowhere close to being unanimous for a number of reasons. In the first place, the delegates were extremely reluctant to draw up a new creed, preferring to base orthodoxy on the Nicene and Constantinopolitan statements. Grillmeier points out that

even at the fourth session of the council, on 17 October 451, the . . . synod once again endorse[d] its purpose to create no new creed. It was only under constant pressure from the emperor Marcian that the Fathers of Chalcedon agreed to draw up a new formula of belief. 37

Therefore, it is apparent that the Chalcedonian formula was a statement that was never meant to be codified by its originators. Obviously, the fact that the statement was advocated by both the papal as well as imperial authorities in the interests of

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all christology combines both components, the former based on soteriological and the latter on philosophical premises.

36. Grillmeier, 1:543. That Nicea was the first and final standard of orthodoxy for the patristic fathers is evident. Grillmeier, 443, notes that all the parties involved, "Cyril of Alexandria, the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, Monophysites and Chalcedonians, read their christological framework from this council." That the fathers were not disposed towards the formation of new creeds explains not only why the Ephesian Council of 431 propounded avoided a new formula, but also accounts for the failure of the "Formula of Reunion." The Church was simply reluctant to invest a contemporary statement with the authority inherent in the traditional definitions of the first two councils.

ecclesiastical and provincial peace had much to do with the adoption of the formula.

Besides this display of ecclesiastical and political power, however, one must ask if Chalcedon managed to preserve the biblical portrait of the person of Christ, and the answer must be no. While we will elaborate more fully on the failure of Chalcedon in Chapter 8, three primary defects may here be noted. Firstly, by focusing on a selected number of Scriptural texts, the formula erected an ontological Christ while avoiding the historical person testified to by the majority of the New Testament. Then, following the trend established at Nicea, the Council effectively succeeded in completely replacing biblical with philosophical terminology. This would not have been quite so objectionable if it were not for the fact that the constructions employed were based on a metaphysic foreign to that of the Bible. Finally, in looking ahead, the Chalcedonian concept of "person" is so far removed from the modern which emphasizes personality and consciousness rather than substance and materiality.

Whatever the difficulties of the Chalcedonian definition, it is important to remember, however, that the creed was erected to combat the heresies of Apollinarianism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism.<sup>38</sup> Although we may agree with P. Tillich when he says that "the doctrine of the two natures in the Christ raises

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38. Alan Richardson, Creeds in the Making: A Short Introduction to the History of Christian Doctrine (1935, reprint, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 80, reasserts that "the Church made no creeds and definitions until these were rendered absolutely necessary for the very existence of the one faith by the false speculations of the heretics."

the right question but uses wrong conceptual tools,"<sup>39</sup> we must remember that both the philosophical concepts as well as the dogmatic methods employed by the Fathers were the best that they could find. At the same time, however, the solution that they offered proved unsatisfactory to many. It cannot be denied that Harnack's famous diatribe against the "four bald negative terms [as being] profoundly irreligious"<sup>40</sup> has found many sympathizers ranging from the immediate monophysite reactors to orthodox christologians of the modern age. This assessment is particularly valid for the East where the Chalcedonian dogma settled little and provided the terms for

subsequent controversies rather than the solution for past ones and in the process alienat[ed] large segments of Christendom which, even after a millennium and a half, are still not reconciled either to the Council of Chalcedon or the churches that accept it.<sup>41</sup>

Given the fact that the value of dogmatic formulations cannot be divorced from the historical contexts within which they develop, our focus must next shift to the post-Chalcedonian period which specifically debated and addressed the viability of the two-nature doctrine for the ancient church.

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39. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. 2, Existence and the Christ (Chicago: University Press, 1957), 142.

40. Harnack, 4:223. The words, asugchutos (without confusion), atreptos (without change), adiairetos (without division), and achoristos (without separation), were objected to by Harnack due to his extreme bias against what he terms as the "hellenization of the Gospel" by the Eastern church.

41. Pelikan, 1:266.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Defense of the Chalcedonian Creed

The immediate monophysite denial of Chalcedon in the East drew the comment from the patristic historian J. Tixeront that "the Council of Chalcedon had drawn up a doctrinal formula: it had not produced a union of minds or of hearts."<sup>1</sup> The "orthodoxy" of Christ as one person in two natures was thus hardly settled at Chalcedon. Rather, almost three centuries of intense controversies followed upon the heels of this council. The fact that the next two general councils--both at Constantinople in 553 and 681--were not universally accepted as authoritative further called to question the catholicity of the Chalcedonian creed itself. The two-nature doctrine did not survive in the West without going through the fires of the monophysitism. Even its eventual triumph, however, may speak louder for the history of dogma (i.e. for the ecclesiastical politics and imperial policies of the period)<sup>2</sup> than for the theological acumen of the church.

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1. From Historie des Dogmes III, quoted in Hughes, 105.

2. This is noted by Grillmeier in the second volume of his magnum opus, Christ in Christian Tradition, Vol. 2, Pt. 1, From Chalcedon to Justinian I, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 109, 139, where he writes not only that "the christology of Chalcedon was tailor made for the emperor," but also that during this period, "the connexion between religion, faith, Church and the secular domain is so close that the secular order is also interpreted from the viewpoint of religion. . . . The emperor stands at the summit of the pyramid under which the human race and the Church are safe. One

It is thus imperative that our assessment of the viability of the two-nature dogma steer its way through this period of fervant controversy.

### The Monophysite Rejection of Chalcedon

P. T. R. Gray has correctly pointed out that Chalcedon in no way diminished the tension between the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools:

In large part what happened in the East after Chalcedon was precisely the struggle of the great schools of Antioch and Cyril to accomplish two tasks: internally, to work out the coherence of their traditions with the sometimes strange language of Chalcedon . . . , externally, to convince both anti-Chalcedonians and pro-Chalcedonians of other persuasions of the correctness of their particular view. 3

Post-Chalcedonian historians, however, have generally reclassified these traditions in three groups: the monophysites (basically Cyrillian Alexandrians who rejected Chalcedon), the diphysites (basically Antiochene), and the neo-Chalcedonites (who attempted to stay faithful to Cyrillian Chalcedonianism while<sup>4</sup> condemning Eutychianism). While rigid demarcation would

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God, one religion, one Emperor, one Church, calm within and without in 'ecclesial and royal peace.'" [Part two of this volume, projected to trace christology through Gregory the Great, is not yet in print at the time of this writing.]

3. Patrick T. R. Gray, The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451-553), Studies in the History of Christian Thought, no. 20 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), 174-175. This and the next chapter owe much to Gray's insightful study.

4. Both Gray and John Meyendorff, Christ in Eastern Christian Thought, tran. Yves Dubois (St. Vladimir: Seminary Press, 1975), 29-30, add to the above classification the Origenist movement of the sixth century. Our discussion of this group

inaccurately depict these movements, it is clear that the monophysites specifically objected to what they considered to be the fourth council's acceptance of Nestorianism adopted through Pope Leo the Great.<sup>5</sup> Sellers has summarized the reasons for the monophysite revolt against Chalcedon:

1. omission of the phrase "one incarnate nature of the Word"
2. omission of "hypostatic union"
3. omission of the confession "out of two natures"
4. acceptance of "in two natures" <sup>6</sup>

It was the last two points, however, that were initially crucial for the monophysites.<sup>7</sup>

It was on this note that the preeminent monophysite theologian, Severus, bishop of Antioch from 512-518, launched his anti-Chalcedonian campaign, claiming that the "formula 'in two natures' was not 'of faith' before Chalcedon."<sup>8</sup> Thus, Severus

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in the next section will show that they basically followed an Alexandrian-Cyrillian framework in their christology.

5. This is especially understandable since Rome "consistently took the view, throughout the whole period 451-533, that acceptance of Chalcedon's statement and of Leo's Tome was an essential condition of orthodoxy" (Gray, 75).

6. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon, 56-58.

7. W. A. Wigram, The Separation of the Monophysites (1923, reprint, New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1978), 107, asserts that the "awkward phrase, 'in two natures,' instead of 'of two natures' had become the rock on which the Church, and ultimately the Empire, were to split." The pro-Chalcedonites, however, eventually accepted both. This is seen especially in Pope Gelasius' (492-496) formula "out of two and in two," although Grillmeier, 2:1:301, points out that he "went beyond the terminology of Chalcedon, which consciously rejected" the former.

8. Wigram, 197. As noted at the end of our last chapter, the appeal to christological florilegia (the catenae of patristic



argued, against Leo, that Christ's death "in two natures" was absurd and heretical. He objected to the definition of Chalcedon as a misdirected attempt to "drive out the devil of Eutychianism with the Beelzebul of Nestorianism."<sup>9</sup> While Severus claimed to be a faithful follower of Cyril,<sup>10</sup> it is worth noting that the words used by the latter "to designate soteriological and kerygmatic realities acquired with Severus a more precise philosophical sense."<sup>11</sup> It was his adherence to an Aristotelian concept of being that eventually determined his "intrinsic understanding of the spiritual movements in Christ, of his knowing and willing [which] was . . . already on its way to monothelitisim."<sup>12</sup>

Undoubtedly, Severus' primary opponents were those who were ironically linked to the tradition of which his see was primary. At the extreme end of the Antiochene spectrum were obviously those who were strictly Nestorian and rejected Chalcedon as a

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testimonies and anthologies) was extensive throughout this period. Grillmeier's excellent analysis of these sources, Ad Fontes, deserves careful study (see 2:1:20-90).

9. Ibid., 277.

10. Severus' "creed," according to W. H. C. Frend, The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), 209, certainly bore a distinct Cyrillian stamp: "God the Word, the Unique One begotten by his Father without beginning, eternally, impassibly and incorporeally, did in the last times for our salvation take flesh of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary, flesh constubstantial with us, animated by an intelligent and reasoning soul." (Frend's volume is an excellent but much too detailed study for our purposes.)

11. Meyendorff, 42.

12. Grillmeier, 2:1:336.

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betrayal against Cyrillianism. The moderates, however, followed Theodore of Cyrus' acceptance of Chalcedon which was justified by identifying hypostasis with prosopon.<sup>14</sup> Even here, however, the blurring of terminology and categories of thought appear to have continued the process of undermining the standards by which the orthodoxy of Chalcedon was measured. Obviously, terminology aside, there could be no concessions made by either the monophysites or the strict Antiochenes on the issue, either at Chalcedon or otherwise.

It was left up to the neo-Chalcedonian theologians to find the via media between the two extremes and yet remain faithful to the confessional and dogmatic stand taken at Chalcedon. Gray defines this group as a "definable trajectory following the Cyrillian tradition. . . . the expression of the progressive coming of age of the tradition which alone was true to the spirit of Chalcedon, since it was the majority position of those present there, the tradition of Cyril."<sup>15</sup> Theirs was a huge task which

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13. The Nestorians rejected Cyril's concept of the hypostatic union, arguing, "the Word in hypostasis is infinite, but man in hypostasis is finite. He therefore who speaks of the hypostatic union of God and man, either brings God down to the finity of man, or raises man to the infinity of God" (treatise of Mar Michael Malpana in A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts, Vol. 2, Introduction, Translation and Indexes, eds. Luise Abramowski & Alan E. Goodman, Oriental Publications, no. 19 [Cambridge: University Press, 1972], 61). For a summary of the development of the Nestorian church and theology--which by 612, officially declared as doctrine Christ in two hypostases--see Gonzales, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. 2, From Augustine to the Eve of the Reformation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 98 ff.

14. See Gray, 86 ff.

15. Ibid., 169.

fully tapped the resources of both ecclesiastical theology and imperial politics for the next century after Chalcedon.<sup>16</sup> What may have doomed this effort from the beginning is the failure of the participants to recognize that "monophysitism originated in a monastery."<sup>17</sup> The numerous conciliatory attempts made by both imperial edicts as well as papal encyclicals--which included the famous Henotikon of the Emperor Zeno in 484, along with many other creedal statements--produced not ecumenical unanimity but rather further factional hostility between the many independent clerics. In the process, many large segments of the monophysite church were alienated from the West. The increasing rift heightened by other factors, eventually culminated with the final schism between East and West in the eleventh century.

Throughout these struggles, however, it was evident that the monophysites worked diligently to overcome the fifth century intrusion of the "Logos-anthropos" christology on the subject

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16. For an excellent historical-dogmatic survey of this period, see Gray's chapter "Imperial Policy, Ecclesiastical Politics and Theology," 17-79.

17. A. A. Luce, Monophysitism Past and Present: A Study in Christology (London: SPCK, 1920), 88. Luce identifies the "ethos of monophysitism" as that of philosophical monism and theological mysticism. See also Wigram, 88, who emphasizes that the "fighting in the theological quarrel was carried on mostly by monks."

18. Gonzales, 2:77, noted that the failure of this "unifying instrument" can be attributed primarily to its naive attempt "to return to what had been the situation prior to Chalcedon." Although the Emperor's agreed with the essence of Chalcedon, he avoided championing its orthodoxy by appealing to Nicea. By not clearly articulating his position on Chalcedon, however, the Henotikon was viewed suspiciously by both parties. For the text of the encyclical, see Grillmeier, 2:1:252-252.

which had been previously dominated by the Alexandrian "Logos-sarx" framework. The triumph of the latter as orthodoxy did not materialize until the middle of the sixth century when the efforts of the neo-Chalcedonians finally prevailed.

### The Triumph of Orthodox Christology

Interestingly, the period leading to the definition of orthodox christology saw the proliferation of controversies which spawned out of the monophysite issue. The various corollary disputes included the theopaschite movement which argued, against the diphysites, that "God suffered in the flesh."<sup>19</sup> The height of this movement was achieved when the monk, Leontius of Jerusalem, explained theopaschism by making "an absolute distinction between hypostasis and nature, a distinction that neither Cyril nor the Antiochene theologians had fully accepted: the Word remains impassible in his divine nature, but suffers in his human nature."<sup>20</sup> Other factions included the Phthartolatrists and the Aphthartodocetists. L. Berkhof's defines the former as those who

stressed the fact that the human nature of Christ was, like ours, capable of suffering, and were therefore said to worship that which is corruptible," [and the latter as representing] the opposite view, namely, that

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19. This particular controversy was touched off in 470 when the Antiochene bishop, Peter the Fuller, added to the Trisagion (the Chalcedonian victory hymn which originally read "Holy God, holy and mighty holy and immortal") the phrase "who wert crucified for us." For a more complete discussion, see Meyendorff's chapter, "God Suffered in the Flesh," in Christ in Eastern Christian Thought, 69-90.

20. Ibid., 77.

the human nature of Christ was not consubstantial with ours, but was endowed with divine attributes, and was therefore sinless, imperishable, and incorruptible. 21

While all these movements gave impetus to the inner life of monophysitism, the triumph of orthodox christology at the second council of Constantinople in 553 can be attributed primarily to the resurrection of a peculiar form of Origenist christology, which surprisingly joined with monophysitism in the final condemnation of Antiochene christology.

The demise of the Antiochene tradition was the unofficial objective of the monophysite agenda. This was evident in the first decade of the sixth century when Philoxene, bishop of Mabboug, accused the three stalwarts of that school--Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas, bishop of Edessa--of being guilty of the same heresy as their friend and associate, the infamous Nestorius. From the monophysite viewpoint, the exoneration of the latter two at Chalcedon was,

politically, one of the grounds for the charge that the council had made concessions to the Nestorians; theologically, it meant that there was some justification for interpreting the Chalcedonian formula in a mediating manner that still appeared to be soft on Nestorianism. 22

This struggle, labelled as the "Three Chapters Controversy,"

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21. Louis Berkhof, The History of Christian Doctrines (1937, reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 108. If this is not enough, Harnack, 4:240, notes the existence of the extreme Aphthartodocetists, called Adiaphorites, who "refused to make any distinction between the divinity and the humanity in Christ," giving further rise to mystical monism.

22. Pelikan, 1:275.

threatened to divide the empire during a century of instability which followed the Goth/Vandal invasion and preceded the Moslem conquests. It was during the reign of Justinian (527-565)<sup>23</sup> that anti-Antiochene fervor gain momentum. It was here that the neo-Origenist movement contributed to the controversy when it supported the notion that "an official condemnation of the 'Three Chapters' would be the best first step towards reconciling the anti-Chalcedonians."<sup>24</sup>

The Origenism of the sixth century did not revive the subordinationism of the third century theologian, but rather fully developed his anthropological speculations of the pre-existence of souls into a coherent christology. Filtered primarily through the fourth century Egyptian monk, Evagrius Ponticus, who was widely read by many Palestinian monks in the first half of the sixth century, this movement issued in a particular heterodoxy: "Though it was superficially Chalcedonian, the divine and human natures were said to be united in Evagrius' version of Origen's pre-existent soul of Christ, the nous-Christ."<sup>25</sup> It is in this context that many place the christology of the enigmatic but crucial figure, Leontius of Byzantium.<sup>26</sup>

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23. Justinian's dream "was to rebuild the unity that the Empire had lost" (Gonzales, 2:81).

24. Gray, 65.

25. Ibid., 62.

26. Due to the fact that numerous Leontii wrote in the sixth century, there have been some who have confused the Byzantium with his namesake from Jerusalem. Most have generally credited him with the authorship of Against Nestorius and Eutyches, which

The significance of Leontius for orthodox christology cannot be underestimated. Not only did his philosophical method lead many to classify him as the first scholastic theologian, but historic Christianity has interpreted his christology as the key which makes compatible the Alexandrian concept of the hypostatic union with Chalcedon. Berkhof's summary notes that Leontius feared that the

rejection of Nestorianism might lead to the idea of an independent impersonal existence of the human nature of Christ. . . . Therefore Leontius stressed the fact that the human nature of Christ is enhypostasia, not impersonal but in-personal, having its personal subsistence in the Person of the Son of God from the very moment of the incarnation. 27

Leontius preferred this solution which "did not prevent his  
[Christ's] energies or actions from being fully human,"<sup>28</sup> over

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may be the most significant christological treatise of the century. For a discussion of the identity of Leontius, see J. J. Lynch, "Leontius of Byzantium: A Cyrillian Christology," Theological Studies 36:3 (1975), 456-459.

Gray, 101, agrees with widely accepted external evidence that Leontius "was one of the Origenists of Palestine." His indebtedness to D. Evan's dissertation, Leontius of Byzantium: An Origenist Christology, is clear (see Gray, 98, nt. 33; regrettably, this writer was unable to obtain a copy of Evan's work). For a forceful rebuttal to the Evans-Gray thesis, see B. Daley, "The Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium," Journal of Theological Studies 37:2 (1976), 332-369, and Lynch's article noted above. Our agreement with Daley-Lynch will be clear as we proceed.

27. Berkhof, 109. While Sellers, Council of Chalcedon, 345, argues that "'impersonal manhood' is an unfortunate phrase" by which Leontius' christology is at times caricatured by modern theologians, the subsequent millenium evidences that this was precisely how he was understood (see next Chapter).

28. It should be noted here that Leontius' duality differed from Leo's in that the former's was philosophically directed while the latter's was soteriologically determined. See Meyendorff, 85 ff.

the anhypostatia option which followed the strict Alexandrian "Logos-sarx" christology and denied to Christ a fully personalized humanity. The appeal in Leontius' christology was the fact that his doctrine brought out "what is latent in Chalcedonian orthodoxy, and at the same time made it plain to the Monophysites that in affirming 'two natures,' the Chalcedonians were not countenancing the doctrine of 'two Sons.'"<sup>29</sup>

Leontius' christology, however, is not without difficulties. In the first place, recent studies have exposed the misunderstanding of traditional interpretations of his doctrine. Gray, for example, concludes that the Byzantium's enhypostasia formulation really posits the enhypostasia of both the divine and the human nature which coalesces into the anathemized concept of a tertium quid:

As, in the anthropological paradigm, "man" is the tertium quid in which body and soul are united by essence and by hypostasis at the same time, so now in the christological context, "Christ" is the tertium quid, at once ousia and hypostasis, in which Word and man are united . . . 30

Further, Leontius' Origenistic presuppositions--if genuine--are

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29. Sellers, 308.

30. Gray, 100-101. It is in explaining Leontius' tertium quid as the Origenistic notion of the nous-Christ that Gray links the Byzantium to the latter movement. Even if Gray is correct, Leontius' legacy for orthodoxy was invaluable in that he provided the terminology and philosophical framework on which subsequent christology was erected. Pelikan, 2:89, summarizes that orthodoxy reshaped Leontius' enhypostasia doctrine to "favor the view that the single divine hypostasis of the Logos was constitutive of the union in the God-man, taking up into that union a perfect human nature, which was not a hypostasis on its own but achieved hypostatic and personal reality in the union."



bound to pose problems for those who regard the philosophical speculations of the third century Alexandrian in disdain. Even if these hurdles could be overcome, it is clear that at best, Leontius must be regarded as a Cyrillian. One of the searching modern criticisms of his notion of enhypostasia is that it leaves the human nature of Christ

no strictly personal center; there is no ego around which the human life may move and upon which its experiences can "home." So the question has to be raised whether we may rightly ascribe to Jesus Christ the fulness of humanity, or whether in fact . . ., that Christ's human nature is an abstraction. 31

Thus, in spite of Leontius' diphysite terminology, we agree with Lynch's conclusion that "Christ, for Leontius, is one person.

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And Leontius, in Christology, is a Cyrillian."

Ironically, it was because of the "widespread identification  
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of Origenists and Antiochenes" that Antiochene christology eventually lost its attractiveness. This was the vote of the conservative majority at the Council of Constantinople in 553. Although as much a result of imperial politics as theological effort, the "Three Chapters" were anathemized, thus paving the

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31. John McIntyre, The Shape of Christology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 96.

32. Lynch, 471. We can concur with the Evans-Gray hypothesis only to the extent that Leontius' anthropology is informed by Evagrian Origenism; however, his affinity to the Cyrillian framework is evident since the subsequent development of christology tended in that direction.

33. Daley, 365. The same inconsistencies in Leontius' christology which have led to his being labeled as a Cyrillian Chalcedonian may have also led to this identification. See the complete account of the historical circumstances in Gray, 63, ff.

way for the triumph of Alexandrian-Cyrillian christology. Meyendorff's conclusion is apropos at this juncture for both East and West: "the fifth council realized the only possible basis for a reconciliation between Monophysites and Chalcedonians [was] the common faithfulness to Cyril of Alexandria."<sup>34</sup> The vindication of this statement in the form of Leontius' doctrine of enhypostasia is undeniable.

### The Monothelite Controversies

The final flickerings of monophysitism took place in the seventh century. Throughout, while the church verbally followed the Chalcedonian dogma, its Cyrillian tendencies and dependence were clear. J. A. Dorner has outlined three stages to these controversies:

1. the monergistic period - Christ as one power or energy
2. the diphysite-monothelite phase - Christ as two natures but one will
3. the strict monothelite stage - the number of wills in Christ debated. <sup>35</sup>

The debate in the first period revealed not only that the authority of the conservative majority at Constantinople in 553 stopped far short of settling the christological issue, but also that the mystery of the incarnation as formulated at Chalcedon left more questions than it answered. Initially, the attempt was

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34. Meyendorff, 89.

35. J. A. Dorner, History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ, Vol. 3, tran. D. W. Simon (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1886), 164-168.

made by the Emperor Heraclius--following Severus who had laid the groundwork--"to unite catholic and monophysite on the basis of the formula, 'two natures with one will and operation.'<sup>36</sup> The Chalcedonians resisted this proposal by falling back on the Gospel accounts (which were very scant, primarily Matt. 24:36, Luke 22:42 and John 6:38), and countered with the question of whether or not "a human nature without human energy [is] a true human nature."<sup>37</sup> The monergistic argument, however, was persuasive:

The notion of one action in Christ was able to claim the support of both christological extremes, the Nestorian and the Monophysite: the former taught that the two hypostasis in Christ concurred in a single action, while the latter taught that there was a "single, individual action of the one hypostasis" [Severus]. . . . It was no longer permissible to "speak of two actions after the union," but only of a "single dominant action," [Cyrus of Alexandria] which directed everything that the incarnate Logos said, or did, or experienced in mind or body. The alternative position, which ascribed a distinct action to each of the two natures, would be obliged to go on to posit a distinct action for the body of Christ's humanity and another for his soul, which, by a reductio ad absurdum, would lead to three actions in the incarnate Christ. 38

It was in this context that Pope Honorius' (625-638) proposal propelled the controversy into its second stadium. The Pope's encyclical on the subject not only resulted in a misunderstanding

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36. Luce, 84.

37. Meyendorff, 43.

38. Pelikan, 2:64, 67. The validity of the monothelite objection is felt even today since the modern psychologists and theologians both balk at dyothelitism and label as schizophrenic the notion of two wills in one person.

of his position but further complicated the issue. Whereas he had been asked to judge the accuracy of two wills or energies in Christ (divine and human), the Pope responded with the "assertion of the one human will in Jesus Christ [and] insisted on the absence of concupiscence in Him . . . likewise, there was in Him but one divine and human will as regards the willed object."<sup>39</sup>

The problem intensified as there were now as many as three wills involved: two natural and one hypostatic. The controversies during the decades after Honorius were finally addressed by the third Council of Constantinople (681), whose bishops declared

we also preach two natural wills in him [Christ] and two natural operations, without division, without change, without separation, without partition, without confusion . . . not contrary . . . , but his human will following his divine and omnipotent will, not resisting it nor striving against it, but rather subject to it. 40

The chief architect of this Constantinopolitan creed was Maximus Confessor, who following Leontius' an- and enhypostasis theories, submitted that "all philosophers and Christian theosophers have granted that a synthesis is only possible in the case of things which have a certain self-subsistence, but impossible

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39. Tixeront, History of Dogma III, in Tapia, 178. The church's misreading of Honorius' position resulted in his condemnation as a heretic at Constantinople in 681 (the only Pope to have been convicted of such). This fateful sentence would later impact the Roman Catholic doctrine of Papal infallibility, which scope is far beyond that of this paper.

40. Documents of the Christian Church, 2nd. ed., ed. Henry Bettenson (Oxford: University Press, 1963), 93. The commitment to Chalcedon at this council is apparent, both in letter as well as in spirit.

in the case of things which only subsist in another thing."<sup>41</sup>  
 Further, he distinguished between the "natural will" (which belonged to both natures), and the "rational will" (which produced decision and action).<sup>42</sup> The acute problem of the unity of Christ in Maximus' scheme was dealt with by the Confessor in using the trinitarian concept of perichoresis.<sup>43</sup> This ambiguous concept, however, did nothing to clarify orthodox christology. Obviously, no adequate basis could be given by Maximus for his distinction between natural and rational wills--a distinction which if false, would undermine the very foundations of the Constantinopolitan footnote to Chalcedon in 681.

It is important to remember that the "impetus" given to the sixth council was surrounded by a swirl of political and ecclesiastical events. As Hughes notes,

the emperors who, in the two hundred years after Chalcedon, showed such a passionate anxiety over the various pacts by which they sought to end the division, and who treated the opponents of their endeavours with such ferocity, were by no means despots, half-crazy through their determination that all men should believe as they believed about these high mysteries. What prompted them was their realisation that a continuation of the division meant the end of their empire. 44

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41. Dorner, 3:180.

42. Thus, Pelikan, 2:74, characterizes Maximus' distinction between the "natural will which was ontologically distinct from the divine will, and the deliverative will, which was functionally identical with the divine will."

43. See G. L. Prestige, God in Patristic Thought (London: SPCK, 1964), esp. 293-294, who discusses both the christological as well as trinitarian uses of this concept in Maximus as well as the fathers.

While the suspect formula drawn up at Constantinople served to  
<sup>45</sup>  
 defuse christological strife in the East, it never achieved the  
 catholicity that was afforded to the Nicene Creed. Dorner's  
 enlightenment mentality heartily endorsed the decision of his  
 tradition, the Lutheran Reformers, in "refusing to recognize the  
<sup>46</sup>  
 authority of this Council," and demonstrated the reaction of  
 many to what they considered as an "orthodox" condoning of  
 Nestorianism. Arguably, the commitment of the Constantinopolitan  
 bishops to the terminology of Chalcedon was consistent with  
 their acceptance of the fourth council as having authoritative  
 significance. Essentially, however, the triumph of Cyrillian  
 christology was finalized in 681 in the Council's assertion of  
 the dominance of the divine will. In doing so, however, the  
 Church unwittingly and unofficially was led down the twin paths  
 of the Apollinarian and Docetic heresies. The former resulted  
 from the subservience of the human to the divine while the  
 latter, a logical corollary following strict Cyrillianism,  
<sup>47</sup>  
 reasoned away the full reality of Christ's humanity. The next

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44. Hughes, 105.

45. Christology in Eastern Orthodoxy has remained relatively unaffected by the Enlightenment. For a succinct summary of the Eastern doctrine of Christ since the third Council of Constantinople, see Meyendorff, 173-208.

46. Dorner, 3:205. In our opinion, the rejection of this Council of Constantinople necessarily demands a critical reevaluation of Chalcedon as well (see Chapter 8).

47. We would concur with G. W. Stroup III, "Chalcedon Revisited," Theology Today 35:1 (1978), 56, who underscored the intricate connection between these heresies and orthodoxy by asserting that "in both Protestant and Roman Catholic theology

millenium confirmed these tendencies by assuming and building upon this "christology from above." Christological thought appeared to have returned full circle--traversing through the homo-assumptus version of the person of Christ posited by the Antiochenes and now reemphasizing the overpowering concept of Christ's divinity in a variant of the fourth century Alexandrian formulation.

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there is considerable evidence that if the church is to rid itself of the specter of Docetism it must find language and concepts other than Chalcedon's."

## CHAPTER 6

### From the Medieval Period to the Reformation

The conclusion of the christological controversies in the seventh century ushered the church into a millenium of theological stability. The controlling paradigm during this period was heralded by Pope Gregory the Great, who synthesized the Augustinian theological system by formulating "the common faith of his day, and handed it on to the Catholic church of the Middle Ages."<sup>1</sup> While far from justifying our treatment of the entire period of theological and dogmatic history in one chapter, the relative tranquility in the explication of the christological dogma during these centuries allows us to sketch an outline which will highlight important developments and give insight to the church's grappling with the Chalcedonian definition.

#### Christology in the Middle Ages

What Gregory the Great did for Catholic doctrine as a whole, John of Damascus (675-749) did for christology. Following the Chalcedonian-Constantinopolitan creeds, John's Exposition of the Orthodox Faith "constitutes one of the clearest and best

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1. McGiffert, 2:161. See Hans Kung, Theology for the Third Millenium: An Ecumenical View, tran. Peter Heinegg (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 123-169, for a discussion of theological paradigms in general, and Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, Vol. 3, The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300) (Chicago: University Press, 1978), 9-105, for an historico-dogmatic analysis of the Augustinian in specific.



summaries of the orthodox christology that we have."<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, however, the Damascene relied more on Maximus Confessor<sup>3</sup> and Leontius of Byzantium than any other source. Chalcedonian christology during the next millenium can best be summed up in John's view that "in the last instance, accordingly, nothing remained for the self-ruling freedom of will of Christ's human nature, than to be the impersonal (as it actually is) transition-point and organ for the personality which takes its place [the<sup>4</sup> Logos]."

Interestingly, the eighth century Adoptionist heresy at the outskirts of the Empire (the controversy centered primarily in Spain, and did not affect Eastern Christianity substantially) attempted to carry out "the course entered upon by the Church<sup>5</sup> when it gave its sanction to Dyophysitism and Dyotheletism." Rather than heeding the patristic concept of person in essentialist terms, the Adoptionists' interpretation "now, for the first time, understood it to denote the 'Ego,'"<sup>6</sup> and posited a distinction between "a natural and an adoptive sonship, the former predicated of the divinity and the latter of the humanity

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2. McGiffert, 1:319.

3. See Harnack, 4:265. On the same page, Harnack notes that John's dependence on Maximus is evidenced primarily in his adoption of the latter's doctrine of perichoresis; thus, the Damascene speaks of the unity of Christ as a "coinherence or circumincession of the parts with one another."

4. Dorner, 3:214.

5. Ibid., 253.

6. Ibid., 252.

of Christ."<sup>7</sup> Although the Adoptionists emphatically denied the charge of Nestorianism which was frequently levelled against them, they were condemned at the Synod of Frankfort in 794 for "making sonship a predicate of the nature rather than of the person."<sup>8</sup> Again, the church clung to Chalcedon, refused to acknowledge the attempt to clarify the mystery of the person of Christ, and held fast to the enhypostasis doctrine which the Adoptionists disregarded.<sup>9</sup>

Pelikan has accurately summarized the state of medieval theology as consisting "in a further development of the doctrine of the work of Christ rather than of the doctrine of the person of Christ."<sup>10</sup> The doctrine of the incarnation continued to have advocates who approached the mystery from opposite ends of the spectrum. In the main, the Alexandrian-Antiochene dialectic remained untranscended, differing during this period only in philosophical and terminological jargon. Thus, pre-scholastic

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7. Berkhof, 111. H. Brown, Heresies, p. 225, distinguishes the adoptionism of the eighth from that of the third century by pointing out that the former was based on the doctrine of the Trinity--"the consubstantial Son, truly God, who adopted a man"--while the latter was derived out of a modalistic conception of God.

8. Quoted in Pelikan, 3:57.

9. Dorner, 3:268, concludes that the Adoptionist episode confirmed that the Church, "subsequently to the end of the eighth century, was greatly under the influence of these Monophysite . . . elements, which were in reality but a more subtle form of Docetism." This was all done under the dogmatic umbrella of Chalcedon and Constantinople.

10. Pelikan, 3:22. Dorner's history of christology, esp. 3:269-4:52, although quite dated, remains the most comprehensive survey of the subject for the medieval period.

christology revolved chiefly around the three opinions--

Assumptus, Habitus and Subsistence--of Peter the Lombard, whose Sentences evince the influence of both Augustine and John of Damascus.<sup>11</sup> As W. H. Principe's study of medieval christology has demonstrated, the thirteenth century theologians followed Chalcedon in rejecting the Assumptus (basically Antiochene) and Habitus (strictly Alexandrine) approaches for the most part, and opting for the via media Subsistence theory which held to a hypostatic union of the Word and a rational human nature.<sup>12</sup>

The scholastics, however, did not only adopt the christology of the patristic age. It is evident that they also borrowed the dogmatic method of the Fathers along with the philosophical categories of the late patristic age. With regard to the former, the scholastic theologians "seldom employed Scripture . . . at any length,"<sup>13</sup> preferring Augustine, John Damascene and Peter Lombard or other patristic fathers as their authoritative sources. Relative to the latter, Leontius' enhypostatic doctrine

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11. Pelikan, 3:270, notes that "Augustine is quoted most often," and Dorner, 3:207, that the Damascene was "particularly studied by Peter." Cf. Dorner, 3:310 ff, for an analysis of Lombard's christology.

12. Specifically, Principe, The Theology of the Hypostatic Union in the Early Thirteenth Century, Vol. 3, Hugh of Saint-Cher's Theology of the Hypostatic Union (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1970), 193. concludes that the "third opinion was universally regarded as heresy, the first opinion as false [and] the second opinion had won the field." Principe has analysed thirteenth century christology in four volumes, each devoted to a representative theologian (the other three being William of Auxerre, Alexander of Hales, and Phillip the Chancellor, published respectively in 1963, 1967 and 1975).

13. Principe, 4:193.

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was accepted without question. Principe does intimate, however, that scholastic theology may have been "vaguely aware of the inadequacy of a philosophy of essence and form as a tool for investigating the mystery of the Hypostatic Union"<sup>15</sup>--an inadequacy which strikes at the root of the problem for "orthodox" christology. Thus, we agree with T. V. Morris who undervalues Aquinas' --and by association, Western--christology by arguing that his concept of the person of Christ was erected on "metaphysical notions no longer accepted by most philosophers."<sup>16</sup>

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The Reformers and the Eucharistic Controversy

While the Reformation's sola Scriptura cry did not fully

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14. In his synoptical study at the end of volume four, Principe, 4:196, notes that all four of the theologians attempted to show "theologically how the human nature of Christ can be complete and yet lack human personality, thereby making possible the second person's assumption of this individual nature."

15. Principe, 4:208.

16. Thomas V. Morris, "St. Thomas on the Identity and Unity of the Person of Christ: A Problem of Reference in Christological Discourse," Scottish Journal of Theology 35:4 (1982), 424. Aquinas' affinity with the high scholasticism of the thirteenth century is clear. His understanding of the two natures of Christ differed little from Peter Lombard and his contemporaries. Thus, Aquinas held that there is "no human person properly so-called" (From H. M. Manteau-Bonamy, "The Mystery of the Incarnation," in Tapia, 228). It is no wonder that H. R. MacKintosh, Doctrine of the person of Christ, 228, concluded that "at bottom, the theory is monophysite."

17. Although similar on many counts, this controversy is not to be confused with the ninth century debate over the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist as initiated by the Frankish monk, Paschasius Radbertus. The issue involved there was that of transubstantiation, which is not directly connected with the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. See H. Brown, Heresies, 228-234, for a summary of that controversy.

divest itself from the philosophical Christ which had been erected by the two-nature dogma, its emphasis on "Christ's full and true humanity"<sup>18</sup> restored to the church that element of the God-man equation which had been neglected since Chalcedon. This was initially apparent in the dispute between the Luther and Zwingli over the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. While the former held to a real presence of the Lord in the Supper, the latter gave a symbolic interpretation to the words of Christ (i.e., Matt. 26:26, "This is my body").<sup>19</sup>

In order to fully understand the crux of the Reformation debate, however, it is necessary to outline their doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum. Luther's christology argued not only for a real communication of properties between the natures during Christ's incarnate state, but "he extended them into eternity."<sup>20</sup> This allowed him to predicate suffering of God in the passion of

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18. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Reformers and the Humanity of Christ," Perspectives in Christology: Essays in Honor of Paul K. Jewett, eds. Marguerite Shuster & Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 82.

19. See Timothy George, Theology of the Reformers (Nashville: Broadman, 1988), 144-158, for a recapitulation of Zwingli's stand against Luther.

20. Ibid., 153. This notion aside, Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, in Tapia, 253, has argued that Luther's christology was otherwise "orthodox," holding to the "impersonality of the human nature of Christ (anhypostasis)."<sup>20</sup> His soteriological emphasis noted by Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, Vol. 4, Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700) (Chicago: University Press, 1984), 161--"Christ was what he was in order to do what he did"--opened the door for the traditional Lutheran connection between Christ's person and work as capsulated in Melancthon's famous dictum, "To know Christ is to know his benefits."

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 Christ as well as hold to the doctrine of the ubiquity of  
 22  
 Christ's glorified human body.

It was Martin Chemnitz, however, who developed Luther's understanding of the communication of attributes by distinguishing three separate exchanges:

1. genus idiomaticum -- where the properties of each nature are ascribed to the one person
2. genus apotelesmaticum -- where the works of the one person are common to both natures [reminiscent of the two energy, one will argument of moderate monophysitism]
3. genus maiestaticum -- where the divine nature communicates to the human nature 23

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21. H. Brown, 316, points out that Luther so poignantly portrayed Christ's "spiritual and psychological agony, i.e., Anfechtung . . . that he seems in danger of falling into patipassianism."

22. This doctrine was adopted by the Lutheran Formula of Concord which agreed that Christ as man no less than God "is present to all creatures [and can] impart his true body and his blood in the holy supper" (quoted in Bromiley, 101).

23. See chapters XIII, XVII and XIX in Chemnitz's great work of erudition, The Two Natures in Christ, tran. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971). R. Kelly, "Tradition and Innovation: The Use of Theodoret's Eranistes in Martin Chemnitz' De Duabus Naturis in Christo," in Perspectives on Christology, 124, acutely observed that Chemnitz followed the Lutheran rejection of the authority of the post-Chalcedonian councils, and cited Theodoret of Cyrus "in support for various of his own arguments [as well as] to take issue with him." Obviously, however, Chemnitz was unable to disassociate himself from the traditional "from above" methodology which was characteristic of Alexandrian christology and was sanctioned at Chalcedon. Thus, traditional Lutheran christology as perpetuated by the Formula of Concord (of which Chemnitz was one of the principle authors) reflected, in the main, that of Chalcedon and Catholicism. Cf. G. M. Faleide, "Article VIII of the Formula of Concord and Contemporary Christological Concerns," Concordia Journal 9:6 (1983), 226-230, who notes the differences between the traditional "from above" and the modern "from below" methods in christology, and opts for a return to the former.

It was this last exchange that specifically allowed Chemnitz to posit a modified version of Luther's doctrine of ubiquity: "that Christ can choose to be present according to his humanity wherever he wills."<sup>24</sup> This doctrine eventually determined the Lutheran view on the Eucharist.

Calvin, on the other hand, agreed only with the Lutheran genus idiomaticum and denied "that the properties of one nature can be attributed to the other nature."<sup>25</sup> This distinction of the natures by the Genevan Reformer meant that "the deity of Christ had to be thought of apart from its personal union with the humanity."<sup>26</sup> Thus, it is clear that while following Chalcedonian orthodoxy, Calvin's christology leaned "more towards the ancient Antiochenes than toward the Alexandrians."<sup>27</sup> This has often led the Lutherans to accuse the Calvinists of veering towards Nestorianism while they have not been able to escape the reverse charge of Eutychianism.<sup>28</sup>

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24. Friedrich Mildenerberger, Theology of the Lutheran Confessions, ed. Robert C. Schultz, tran. Erwin L. Lueker (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 180.

25. Joseph N. Tylanda, "Calvin's Understanding of the Communication of Properties," Westminster Theological Journal 38:1 (1975), 64. Gonzales, History of Christian Thought, Vol. 3, From the Protestant Reformation to the Twentieth Century (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 136, reminds us that "Calvin's doctrine of the hypostatic union . . . was developed in opposition to Servetus," whose anti-trinitarianism led to his martyrdom at the hands of the Genevan. For a summary of Calvin's christology, see George, 216-233.

26. Mildenerberger, 179. This aspect of Reformed christology has been designated the Extra Calvinisticum by the Lutherans.

27. Gonzales, 3:138.

28. See Pelikan, 4:353-354.

While the Reformers were centuries removed from Chalcedon, their basic allegiance to patristic theology did not enable them to avoid the problems and questions which confronted the ancient church. Although the Reformers placed much greater emphasis on Christ's humanity than their predecessors, they were unable to extricate themselves from the clutches of Docetism that were inherent in the traditional enhypostasia doctrine. Thus, they also anchored at the impasse created by their understanding of the communicatio idiomatum which was approached from angles as different as the patristic Alexandrine-Antiochene traditions. This led to a parting of the ways between both traditions which is far from breached even today. Neither the Eucharistic controversy of the sixteenth century--nor, for that matter, the defects of orthodox christology--were resolved.

Chemnitz' work, however, served as a transition from Luther and Melancthon to the scholastics and launched the debates between the Geissen and Tübingen schools which prefigured the kenotic controversies of the nineteenth century. Further, the Reformers' revival of the doctrine of Christ's humanity laid the foundations for the modern quest for the historic Jesus. The year 1694 saw the birth of H. S. Reimarus, whose Fragments of the Unknown (published posthumously by G. E. Lessing) transformed the question of the humanity of Christ "from a problem of Chalcedonian christology to a task of historical-critical research . . . Once that happened, the modern period had begun."<sup>29</sup>

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29. Pelikan, 4:362.



## CHAPTER 7

### Christology in the Modern Era

J. Pelikan has accurately stated that "the modern period in the history of Christian doctrine may be defined as the time when doctrines that had been assumed more than debated for most of Christian history were themselves called into question."<sup>1</sup> This is especially true in the doctrine of the person of Christ. Whereas christology since the seventh century had been dominated by the Nicene "from above" methodology, the Chalcedonian two-nature terminology, and the notion of Christ's impersonal humanity, the advent of the "Religion of Reason" in the eighteenth century devastated the authoritarian structures which undergirded the traditional doctrine of Christ and attacked the fundamental assumptions at the core of dogmatic orthodoxy. Furthermore, the many questions left unanswered by Chalcedon were exploited by the rationalist critique in the attempt to render unintelligible the historical doctrine of the incarnation. In one way or other, all theology since Kant's "Copernican Revolution"<sup>2</sup> has had to

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1. Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, Vol. 5, Christian Doctrine and the Modern Culture (since 1700) (Chicago: University Press, 1989), viii.

2. Kant freed theology from its subservience to rationalist empiricism by positing morality as the foundation of rational faith. Thus, his christology consisted of a Christ who was the "historical exemplification of the archetype of humanity well-pleasing to God, and no more" (James C. Livingston, Modern Christian Thought from the Enlightenment to the Vatican II [New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc, 1971], 74).

both defend the use of metaphysics in christological speculation, as well as redefine metaphysical concepts vis-a-vis those proposed by the Chalcedonian fathers.

It is thus not surprising that the diversity of christologies propounded during the last three hundred years have exhibited a vast array of opinions and speculations ranging from the liberalism of European Protestantism to the reaction of conservative fundamentalism and the current movement towards post-modernism. The task of this chapter will be to briefly elucidate the major trends which have contributed to christological discussion relative to the Chalcedonian formula rather than to attempt any in depth analysis of such efforts.

### The Christology of Theological Liberalism

No account of christology since the Enlightenment can avoid beginning with Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who has been titled the "Father of modern theology." In acknowledging and responding to the rationalist attack on Christian orthodoxy, Schleiermacher erected his "theology of feeling" on the central axiom of God-consciousness. While he initially attempted to translate "the ontological language of the creeds into confes-

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3. The specialization of the theological task in this century has produced quantitatively as well as qualitatively on our topic. Unfortunately, the many disciplines involved in the current study of christology--New Testament, dogmatic, historical, and systematic, just to name four--restricts our ability to accomplish no more than just a kaleidescopic survey of the field. Thus, our focus will be primarily on the speculations of modern theologians in their wrestling with the doctrine of the two-natures of Christ.

sional terms,"<sup>4</sup> he ultimately failed, being unable to hold to an essential unity of deity and humanity in the person of Christ:

The Redeemer, then, is like all men in virtue of the identity of human nature, but distinguished from them all by the constant potency of His God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in Him. 5

Schleiermacher clearly began not with the Logos of patristic christology, but with the empirical humanity of the historical Jesus. However, it is also undeniable that he took his anthropological-christology much farther than the ancient Antiochenes. While the latter attempted to argue for an ontological indwelling, the former was reluctant to posit such a union, and abandoned the conceptual and terminological apparatus of the ancients for an "indwelling of consciousness."<sup>6</sup> Schleiermacher's christology-of-degree was quickly accepted by the church as a viable alternative to the pure skepticism of modern rationalism, but only at the price of the abandonment of the doctrine of the hypostatic union.

The obvious difficulty with Schleiermacher's degree

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4. C. W. Christian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publishers, 1979), 121.

5. F. Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, Vol. 2, eds. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 385. Thus, students of Schleiermacher are agreed that he could not "retain the dogma of the two natures, since it [was] not possible to speak of the nature of God" (Louis Perriraz, Le Probleme Christologique, in Tapia, 285).

6. H. R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology (London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1952), 90, summarizes that Schleiermacher's Christ is "'archetypal humanity' rather than the personal incarnation of God."

christology is that the "indwelling" of God in the man Jesus becomes indistinguishable from other men. Thus it is only a short step from Schleiermacher to his contemporary, G. W. F. Hegel, who asserted that Jesus was "not the God-man, though he perceived that God and man are one."<sup>7</sup> This blurring of the distinction between divine and human was taken to its logical conclusion by his student, L. Feuerbach, who posited theology and christology as nothing more than anthropology.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, the traditional formula of Christ as one person in two natures was declared obsolete by liberal Protestantism within a generation<sup>9</sup> after Schleiermacher.

Not all nineteenth century European christologies, however, followed Feuerbach's radical assertions. A group of mediating

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7. Ibid., 109.

8. Thus, Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, tran. George Eliot (1841, reprint, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), xxxviii, boldly asserted, "I . . . while reducing theology to anthropology, exalt anthropology into theology, very much as Christianity, while lowering God into man, made man into God." The influence of Hegel's dialectic is clear as summarized by A. K. Min, "The Trinity and the Incarnation: Hegel and Classical Approaches," The Journal of Religion 66:2 (1986), 186: "Human nature must be understood as something that was created from the first with the capacity an inner need to enter into union with the divine. . . . Unless human nature were created with an inner teleological relation to the divine, the Incarnation would mean only an external imposition of the divine on the human . . . a mere juxtaposition of two heterogeneous elements."

9. Feuerbach's approach on the metaphysical flank combined with D. F. Strauss' attack via the historical question to lead to the triumph of radical liberalism by the mid-nineteenth century (Strauss's Life of Jesus appeared in 1835). Undoubtedly, the liberal quest for the historical Jesus in Europe during this century entirely ignored and rejected the authority of the Chalcedonian formula thus justifying the limiting of our comment on this movement to this footnote. The interested reader can refer to the above referenced work by Schweitzer (Chapter 1, note 2).

theologians attempted to reconstruct traditional christology without ignoring the criticism of modern research. Included in this group were two representative thinkers, A. Biedermann and I. A. Dorner. Biedermann, whose speculations were partially dependent on Hegel's philosophy, sought to reconstruct the conceptual content of christology while utilizing the traditional formulas. He posited the "Christian principle" of the Christian religion as "God-manhood, which as divine childhood becomes a religious actuality in human spiritual life."<sup>10</sup> Here, the humanity in Christ is taken empirically while the divinity is understood only principally.

I. A. Dorner, on the other hand, endeavored to reconstruct a viable christology which would "retain some sense of Jesus' divinity without denying the historical-critical insistence that Jesus had lived on earth as a mere man."<sup>11</sup> Thus, Dorner proposed a developing incarnation which culminated at Christ's resurrection and ascension:

The divine-human articulation, the bodily and the spiritual eternal organism, of the divine-human person, needs first to be developed; and this can only take place through the continued act of the incarnation of the Logos. This incarnation may be termed an

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10. A. Biedermann, Christian Dogmatics, in God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology, ed. and tran. Claude Welch (Oxford: University Press, 1965), 367. For an excellent synopsis of Biedermann's christological reconstruction vis-a-vis his theological system, see Livingston, 159-161.

11. J. M. Drickamer, "Higher Criticism and the Incarnation in the Thought of I. A. Dorner," Concordia Theological Quarterly 43:3 (1979), 198.

increasing one, in so far as through it, on the one hand, an ever higher and richer fulness becomes actually the property of the man Jesus, and he, on the other hand, becomes ever more completely the mundane expression of the eternal Son, the image of God. 12

The failure of these attempts with regard to Chalcedon is clear. Dorner's growing unity of the Logos and the human Jesus is judged to be Nestorian during the incarnate stage, Eutychian<sup>13</sup> after the ascension, and inadequate in the light of Scripture. Both he and Biedermann posited christologies which steered away from the two-natures formula, and thus ultimately fell short of the ontological definition set forth by the Chalcedonian fathers.

The efforts of both Biedermann and Dorner, however, were quickly eclipsed by the purely moral christology of A. Ritschl (1822-1899). Following Kant, Ritschl eschewed metaphysics and advocated the "practical as a new foundation and form for<sup>14</sup> theology." For Ritschl, the confession of Christ's divinity<sup>15</sup> was a "direct value judgment based on historical perception." Thus, he nullified the value of the traditional christological formulas and asserted that they served only to "confuse a

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12. Dorner, 5:258.

13. See Drickamer, 204.

14. Welch, "General Introduction" to God and Incarnation, 12. Along this vein, Ritschl brought Lutheranism to its liberal conclusion: "To know Christ is to know his benefits, not to speculate about the union of his natures" (A. D. Furwood, "Albrecht Ritschl," Handbook of Modern Christian Theologians, eds. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman, enlarged ed. [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987], 61).

15. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Christology, 163.

disinterested, scientific judgment with a judgment of faith."<sup>16</sup>

The height of liberal theology was achieved in the work of Adolf von Harnack, whose History of Dogma was built on Ritschl's "distaste for metaphysical speculations and devotion to a historical interpretation of Christianity."<sup>17</sup> As already pointed out, Harnack held that the transplantation of Jewish Messianic categories of thought into hellenistic soil saw the addition of the Logos concept which slowly transformed the core of the Gospel message into the final form as embodied in the ontological creedal statements of the patristic councils.<sup>18</sup> Thus, by 1899, Harnack's christology had eroded to the point where he viewed Jesus as no more than the greatest prophet in the history of humankind.<sup>19</sup> C. Welch has correctly summarized the christological situation in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century:

All the mid-nineteenth century's powerful systems for uniting the dogmatic and the philosophical were to be left behind. . . . the Christological question as an "objective" or "metaphysical" matter was to be given up in favor of other modes of posing the question of Christ, restricted to "historical" or "value" or

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16. Livingston, 252.

17. Ibid., 258.

18. For an excellent condensation by Harnack of his History of Dogma thesis, see the celebrated What is Christianity?, tran. T. B. Saunders (1900, reprint, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 197-207. The importance of Harnack's essay was noted by W. Pauck, "Adolf von Harnack," in Handbook of Christian Theologians, 88, in his assesment of the later volume: "It certainly has become generally regarded as the one book which more directly than any other represents so called liberal Protestant theology."

19. See Harnack, "Christ as Saviour," in Adolf von Harnack: Liberal Theology at its Height, ed. Martin Rumscheidt (Glasgow: Collins Publishers, 1989), 309.

"existential" judgments. 20

It was the Neo-Orthodox movement during the first half of the twentieth century that stemmed the tide of theological liberalism on the Continent. Karl Barth, the spokesman for the new dialectical method, began with a theology of "contradiction<sup>21</sup> and paradox," and was castigated for the use of myth and his equivocal attitude towards history.<sup>22</sup> Barth entire theological enterprise, however, spanned five decades and was thoroughly christocentric throughout.<sup>23</sup> D. Mueller has pointed to Barth's

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20. Welch, 18.

21. The Lutheran World War II martyr, D. Bonhoeffer, a contemporary of Barth, agreed with the latter that the doctrine of the two natures of Christ worked "with concepts whose formulations are declared to be heretical except when they are used in contradiction and paradox. . . . If one is to think of any progress from the Chalcedonian Definition, it cannot be progress in thinking about the relationship between the natures" (Christ the Center, tr. Edwin H. Robertson [San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978], 88). Bonhoeffer thus refused to ask the "how" or "what" of the christological question, preferring the Lutheran approach, "who," which focused on the work of "Christ for me" (see Part One of Bonhoeffer's book).

22. Thus, while Barth may have found many sympathetic advocates among conservative evangelicals (e.g., Gregory G. Bolich, Karl Barth & Evangelicalism [Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 1980]), his equivocation on the historical nature of the resurrection, for example, have led others to classify him along with the liberal theology which he combatted. On this, see especially the hostile polemics of the Princeton apologist, Cornelius van Til, Christianity and Barthianism (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962), and The New Modernism: An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973). For our purposes, therefore, it is more appropriate that we treat Barth within the context of liberal European theology than that of the theology of the English speaking world.

23. See his Church Dogmatics, 14 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-1969). Livingston, 336, notes that "not only the doctrine of God but the doctrines of creation, election, and



unhesitating affirmation of Chalcedon which defined Christ as truly God and truly man:

Barth begins and ends all his discussions about revelation and christology by affirming with . . . Chalcedon (451) that the content of the incarnation must be understood in terms of the divine and human natures which were united in the one person, Jesus Christ. 24

Interestingly, however, inspite of his acceptance of the traditional doctrines of an- and enhypostasia, Barth insisted that the belief that Christ "took some kind of neutral human nature upon himself, and not our actual corrupt nature, was evangelically and soteriologically deficient." <sup>25</sup> Thus, his 1956 essay, "The

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anthropology are now all defined christologically." Because of his avowed christocentricity, Barth's discussion of the person of Christ is dispersed throughout his magnum opus in various contexts.

24. D. L. Mueller, Karl Barth (Waco, TX: Word Books Inc., 1972), 75, emphasis his. On this point, Barth finds support from Emil Brunner, another dialectician with whom Barth was divided by the question of natural theology. Brunner's The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith, tran. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), is a classical exposition of Neo-Orthodox christology. His earlier Dogmatics, Vol. II, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, tran. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952), 359, revealed the characteristic Neo-Orthodox ambivalence regarding history, along with his Ritschlian anti-metaphysical bias: "Once we begin asking about the 'Two Natures' we are both Monophysites and Diophysites. Just as all speculation about the way in which the Incarnation came to be is fruitless--and therefore dangerous--so also is it fruitless to speculate about the 'Two Natures.'"

25. T. F. Torrance, "The Legacy of Karl Barth (1886-1986)," Scottish Journal of Theology 39:3 (1986), 306. Here, Barth followed the views of the nineteenth century Scottish theologian, Edward Irving. Gordon Strachan, The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1973), 48, quotes Irving's understanding that Christ's human nature "was holy in the only way in which holiness under the Fall exists or can exist, . . . through inworking or energizing of the Holy Ghost." While Irving never asserted that Christ actually

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Humanity of God" --which Barth considered to be a christological statement--appeared to have brought his theology full circle from his earlier polemic against Ritschlian liberalism which held to a concept of God as "wholly other." Barth, however, never compromised his view of Christ as vere Deus vere homo.

Undoubtedly, liberal theology in Europe since Barth has managed to avoid the radical pitfalls which plagued its nineteenth century forebears primarily because of the efforts of the Neo-Orthodox movement. In spite of their influence, however, the liberal theology (and christology, for that matter) that survived was "no longer [that] of the New Testament or the ecumenical creeds."<sup>27</sup> The inescapable fact of historical relativity became intrinsic to the theological methodology of liberal Protestantism as exemplified in the famous maxim of the historian E. Troeltsch:<sup>28</sup> "one must overcome history by history." It was mainly the English speaking world that took up the standard of traditional christology against its European colleagues. Even here, however, the gauntlet of rationalistic naturalism had left indelible impressions on the theological world. It was in this context that the modern kenotic theories developed.

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committed sin, he was tried and condemned by the London Presbytery in 1832. For a sympathetic treatment of his christology, see Colin Gunton, "Two Dogmas Revisited: Edward Irving's Christology," Scottish Journal of Theology 41:3 (1988), 359-376.

26. Barth, The Humanity of God, tran. J. N. Thomas (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), 37-68.

27. Brown, Heresies, 412.

28. Quoted in Livingston, 258.

### The Kenotic Theories

The roots of modern kenoticism lie in the Tübingen-Geissen controversies of Lutheran scholasticism. The position of the of the former was exemplified chiefly in the writings of G. Thomasius, who understood the incarnation

as the self-limitation of the Son of God. . . . Thus here is a twofold mode of being, a double life, a doubled consciousness; the Logos still is or has something which is not merged into his historical appearance, which is not also the man Jesus. . . 29

This concealment of the divine nature of the Logos should more accurately be labelled the "kryptic theory," and veered toward classical Nestorianism. The latter Geissen theologians, however, followed the Calvinist, W. F. Gess, who interpreted John 1:14 to mean a literal kenosis and complete renunciation of all divine functions. While such attributes as omnipotence and omniscience belong to the divine nature, their "use or actuality thereof is in general denied for the period of his sojourn on earth."<sup>30</sup> This true kenotic view naturally tended toward Apollinarianism.

The problem, simply put, was the growing realization of the implications of the full humanity of Christ. How could deity be predicated of the man Jesus without compromising the genuineness of his humanity? Building primarily on the Philippian kenotic hymn, the proposed solutions attempted to explain how divine omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience could be reconcilable

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29. G. Thomasius, Christ's Person and Work, in Welch, 46-47.

30. Dorner, 4:283.

with human finitude. The traditional creedal statements had  
<sup>31</sup>  
 failed to successfully articulate a response and were therefore  
 abandoned. In their place, the kenoticists posited the doctrine  
 of exinanition (self-emptying).

It was A. B. Bruce who most systematically presented the  
 German kenotic theories to his English colleagues in his book,  
<sup>32</sup>  
The Humiliation of Christ, originally published in 1881. Within  
 a short period of time, many serious attempts were made to  
 implement the basic themes of kenotic christology, most of them  
 following after Tübingenian dualism. Almost all divided the  
 properties of deity into two parts:

those which constitute the moral character of God and  
 are hence inseparable from his Personality, and those  
 which are manifested in his relation to the finite  
 creation and hence described as "relative," which  
 properties, in fact, the Son of God is held to have  
 given up when he entered that finite sphere with which  
 they would have been incompatible. <sup>33</sup>

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31. Thus the Roman Catholic critic of the kenotic theories,  
 F. J. Hall, The Kenotic Theory (New York: Longmans, Green, and  
 Co., 1898), 151, followed Constantinople III and wrote, "in the  
 Word incarnate, the two modes of activity and knowledge which  
 belonged respectively to His Divine and human natures could and  
 did concur without mutual confusion or impairment. . . . To  
 explain how, we do not venture to undertake [and here he appeals  
 to Leo who resorted to explicating the incarnation as mystery]."

32. A. B. Bruce, The Humiliation of Christ, 2nd. ed. (New  
 York: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.). Bruce held to four distinct  
 kenotic types: (1) absolute dualistic (Thomasius), (2) absolute  
 metamorphic (Gess), (3) absolute semi-metamorphic, and (4) real  
 but relative (139 ff). The latter two, however, both followed  
 Thomasius' dualism, and were in many ways identical (cf. Berkhof,  
 121, for a succinct definition of the various positions).

33. John S. Lawton, Conflict in Christology: A Study of  
 British and American Christology, From 1889-1914 (London: SPCK,  
 1947), 135. Representative of this approach is A. M. Fairbain,

The primary exponent of English kenoticism, however, remains  
the Anglican, Charles Gore (1853-1932).<sup>34</sup> Gore was unable to  
accept Chalcedonian christology since the "older doctrine of a  
substantial soul . . . possessing two quite distinct natures was  
meaningless"<sup>35</sup> against the modern concepts of personality and  
consciousness. Thus, he forcefully argued from the New Testament  
for a single consciousness in Christ:

1. Consistently, Christ's experiences are incompatible with practical omniscience
2. Certain texts are clear as to his lack of omniscience (e.g., Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32)
3. The subordinationism of Johannine christology argues against the double life of the Logos and for limitation during the incarnate state
4. The argument from silence, where Christ "never enlarges our stock of natural knowledge, physical or historical, out of the divine omniscience." 36

Gore, however, ultimately fails to escape from the Nestorian problem. For all his championing of a single consciousness in

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The Place of Christ in Modern Theology (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1893), 476, who wrote, "the external attributes of God are omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence; but the internal are truth and love. . . . The external alone might constitute a creator, but not a Deity; the internal would make out of a Deity a Creator."

34. Gore's theories are developed primarily in his 1891 Bampton Lectures, The Incarnation of the Son of God, the later Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation (London: John Murray, 1907), and his editorship of Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation (New York: John W. Lovell Company, 1889).

35. Lawton, 152. Thus, Gore obviously accepted Christ as one person--so long as personality were redefined in terms of consciousness--but rejected the adjectival "in two natures."

36. Gore, Dissertations, 87; see 81-88 for his full discussion.

Christ, he could at best accomplish nothing more than a single human consciousness, but a duality of Logos consciousness. Lawton's valuable criticism is to the point: "What has happened is that duality has been pushed back a stage--instead of a duality of natures we have a duality of Logos consciousness . . . for thirty three years he lived a double life at one and the same time, the omniscient Logos, and the finite Jesus."<sup>37</sup> Lawton had previously noted that Gore's kenoticism fails on another significant point:

If God the Son remains during the period of the Incarnation in the full and complete exercise of his functions 'in the Father' and in the universe, and is only limited within the sphere of the Incarnation, a sphere which did not previously exist, then wherein lies the self-emptying? <sup>38</sup>

Later kenoticists such as P. T. Forsyth and H. R. Mackintosh held that "rather than altering or changing the essential nature of God, the divine kenosis expressed it more fully."<sup>39</sup> Although the theory was variously restated, it could never adequately overcome its numerous defects. From the left, the rationalist critics argued against its affinities with classical theological concepts and its failure "to account properly for the reality

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37. Lawton, 155.

38. Ibid., 154

39. Robert R. Redman Jr., "H. R. Mackintosh's Contribution to Christology and Soteriology in the Twentieth Century," Scottish Journal of Theology 41:4 (1988), 524. See Mackintosh's Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, 477-478, and P. T. Forsyth's The Person and Place of Jesus Christ (London: Independent Press, 1930), 291-320.

of Christ's humanity [since] the Logos, albeit in a limited form, was the personalising and integrative center of Christ's personality."<sup>40</sup> Defendents of orthodoxy, on the other hand--<sup>41</sup> which included Hall<sup>41</sup> and the Protestant H. P. Liddon<sup>42</sup> --"accused it of reductionism . . . [and its unfounded premise] that a fully worked-out doctrine of God exists without reference to Christ."<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, its speculative potency went far beyond the Scriptural boundaries, both conceptually as well as terminologically. The development of theology in the twentieth century would confirm that the import of kenoticism lay, ironically, in its impact on the doctrine of God rather than christology. For the present, however, the insoluble difficulties in the kenotic theory and the endless speculations to which it gave rise led to its quiet burial, and directed Anglican christology away from its conservative roots toward the liberalism of her European counterparts.

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40. Donald Dawe, "A Fresh Look at the Kenotic Christologies" Scottish Journal of Theology 15:4 (1962), 346.

41. Hall, 147-148, queried that a reversal of the kenotic logic would dictate that, "for reasons strictly similar, if we are to maintain the verity of our Lord's Godhead, we must maintain a genuine possession by Christ of infinite power and knowledge."

42. Liddon's work, The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908) was the last bastion of the traditional Nicene-Chalcedonian "from above" christology to appear in England.

43. Graham James, "The Enduring Appeal of a Kenotic Christology," Theology 86 (1983), 9-10. James, 11, argues that "much of the strength of traditional kenoticism lay in its devotional power."

Twentieth-Century Christology in England  
and the United States

Successors to Liddon's Chalcedonian orthodoxy were found in the Princeton Theology in the United States at the turn of the century. It was primarily the works of B. B. Warfield, who insisted that "Chalcedonian Christology . . . in its complete development is only a very perfect synthesis of the biblical data,"<sup>44</sup> which gave impetus to the fundamentalist and evangelical christologies of conservative American Protestantism. These movements objected vigorously to the reductionist agenda of the modernists, and held strictly to the Chalcedonian two-nature formula, the doctrine of the hypostatic union and the impersonal humanity of Christ.<sup>45</sup> The elder statesman of evangelical theology, C. F. H. Henry, correctly diagnosed the crux of the issue as "whether the personal center of Christ's consciousness is on the side of His deity or humanity,"<sup>46</sup> and faulted the liberals' choice of the latter. In his view, it was this decision which led to the abandonment of traditional and orthodox christology:

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44. B. B. Warfield, The Person and Work of Christ (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1950), 215. Further, Warfield, 250, 256, argued that "the entire Christian tradition . . . is a tradition of a two-natured Jesus. . . . Of a one-natured Jesus, Christian tradition knows nothing about;" and "we must choose between a two-natured Christ and a simply mythical Christ."

45. See the famed polemical series against liberalism, The Fundamentals (1917, reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988). The article by John Stock in volume two, "The God-Man," 261-281, is a dogmatic defense of the historic doctrine of the person of Christ against the avalanche of modern criticism.

46. C. F. H. Henry, The Protestant Dilemma: An Analysis of the Current Impasse in Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 181.



In Christology, the alternatives are a one-nature or a two-nature view. Contemporary philosophy had no room for Docetist emphasis on a completely divine Christ, so that a one-nature view in modern times has come always to mean a completely human Christ, differing from other men only in the degree of divine indwelling. 47

The degree christologies of modernism have continued to be staunchly opposed by American evangelicalism. The conservative option is still characterized by a confessional acceptance of the two-nature dogma of Chalcedon without compromising the ontological implications of the christological union. Thus, the recent statement of the Evangelical and Reformed theologian, D. Bloesch, is representative of one branch of orthodox Christianity, and deserves the following rather lengthy quote:

The heresies of today like the heresies of yesterday begin not with the God-Man, the Absolute Paradox, but with Jesus as a historical personage or with the Christ Spirit who transcends time and space. We reject both a Christology from below and one from above [addressing both Ebionitism as well as Docetism] and affirm instead a Christology of the center. The object of our faith is neither Jesus as the Christ nor the New Being manifested in Jesus but Jesus Christ of biblical faith who is in himself very God and very man. Jesus is not the symbol of transformed personal identity under the impact of the divine but the divine Word him self in human garb (Phil. 2:7). In him we see not simply a development of God-consciousness but the living God himself who forms human consciousness in his image and who guides and directs the human will. 48

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47. Ibid., 203.

48. Donald Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Vol. 1, God, Authority, & Salvation (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 139. It is thus not surprising that evangelical texts usually follow a methodological format which sequentially discusses the divine and human natures of Christ and concluding with the unity of his person. See, for example, Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 683-738.

It is imperative, however, to trace the liberal tendencies in the development of twentieth century English christology<sup>49</sup> in order to fully comprehend the evangelical reaction described above. In many ways, christological speculation in England has attempted to forge a middle road between European liberalism and American evangelicalism in light of the reworked concept of personality as equalling self-consciousness. This view not only precipitated the controversy over the knowledge of Christ which the kenotic christologies endeavored to explain, but also struck the final death blow to Constantinopolitan dyothelitism: "The will was now almost a synonym for person--not a portion of the nature as a whole--and hence to say that Christ possessed two wills was to divide his Person."<sup>50</sup> This led to W. Sanday's psychological christology which posited

the human consciousness of the Lord as entirely human. . . . [And] as it were, the narrow neck through which alone the divine could come into expression. This involves that only so much of the divine could be expressed as was capable of expression within the forms of humanity. We accept this conclusion unreservedly, and have no wish to tamper with it. 51

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49. For a succinct synopsis of christology in England from Liddon to the present, see chapter 6 of B. Hebblethwaite's The Incarnation: collected essays in Christology (Cambridge: University Press, 1987), 53-76, entitled "The propriety of the doctrine of the Incarnation as a way of interpreting Christ."

50. Lawton, 260.

51. William Sanday, Christology and Personality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1911), 167. Earlier, Sanday, 165-166, had objected to the classical vertical line drawn between the divine and human natures of Christ, and proposed to "draw a horizontal line between the upper human medium, the proper and natural field of all active expression, and those lower depths

Thus, even as early as 1912, W. Temple asserted that Chalcedon was "in fact, a confession of the bankruptcy of Greek Patristic Theology."<sup>52</sup> The literature of the next sixty years reveals that just as the final form of Chalcedonianism lay in the direction of Cyrillian Docetism, no true via media could be found for the modern debate. The issue in this century, however, revolved around the question of whether Christ's humanity differed from other's in kind or degree.<sup>53</sup> The answers postulated by the Englishmen reveal that modernity had opted for the latter.

This is glaringly evident in the work of the Presbyterian, D. M. Baillie. Central to Baillie's thesis was the declaration of "No more Docetism!"<sup>54</sup> His proposed reconstruction, however, was set forth in terms of "the paradox of Incarnation," and in many ways relied on Theodore of Mopsuestia's analogy of grace.<sup>55</sup> While coherent on many points, however, Baillie's ultimate failure is acutely noted by J. Hick: "What in other men is

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which are no less the proper and natural home of whatever is divine." Lawton, 285-295, criticizes Sanday's views as falling into an ontic substance-materialism similar to what he was trying to avoid.

52. Quoted in Lawton, 314; originally published by Temple in his 1913 Foundations, a collection of apologetic essays on Christianity for the modern era.

53. As W. R. Matthews, The Problem of Christ in the Twentieth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 69, queried, "How can we conceive that the Universal of universals, God, is fully manifested and present, not in a whole class of individuals but in one individual?"

54. D. M. Baillie, God was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), esp. Chap. II, "The End of Docetism."

55. Ibid., 106-132.

inspiration amounted in Christ to Incarnation. . . . Christ's uniqueness is one of degree--degree of divinely enabled moral achievement."<sup>56</sup>

It is thus not surprising to find that during the next three decades, Anglican theology lapsed almost completely away from Chalcedon, reasoning that "a Christology which is expressed in terms of functional and personal relationship rather than in ontological categories means a return to the biblical perspective."<sup>57</sup> S. W. Sykes clearly demonstrates that this dead end is the inevitable conclusion of degree Christology. For, if Jesus were only human, then no christology, in the strict sense of the word,<sup>58</sup> is possible.

In spite of protests like Sykes', however, the antagonism toward the doctrine of two-natures showed no signs of relief. The next major christological statement in England was set forth by J. A. T. Robinson, whose The Human Face of God<sup>59</sup> continued the modern trend. In following through with his earlier "reluctant revolution"--which included the collapse of classical metaphysics along with the notion of a transcendent God who ruled over a

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56. John Hick, "The Christology of D. M. Baillie," Scottish Journal of Theology 11:1 (1958), 6, 8.

57. H. W. Montefiore, "Towards a Christology for Today," Soundings: Essays Concerning Christian Understanding, ed. A. R. Vidler, (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), 159.

58. See his penetrating critique of "from below" christologies, "The Theology of the Humanity of Christ," in Christ, Faith and History: Cambridge Studies in Christology, eds. Sykes and J. P. Clayton (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), 53-72

59. J. A. T. Robinson, The Human Face of God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973).

three story universe<sup>60</sup> --Robinson called for christology to move from the ontological to the functional, just as it had before moved from the mythological to the ontological.<sup>61</sup> Whereas he had earlier rejected the two-nature construction of Chalcedon as unavoidably Docetic,<sup>62</sup> he now argued without inhibition for the full humanity of Christ and audaciously called for the recognition of the full range of human characteristics--including such traditionally tabooed subjects as sexuality--in the manhood of Jesus:

There is every reason from the Gospel evidence, as well as from the Epistle to the Hebrews [namely 2:9-14 and 5:7-9] that Jesus was fully a man like ourselves, sharing the same unconscious drives and libido, with a temper and an intolerance, an anxiety and fear of death, as strong as anyone else's. 63

While the Bishop of Woolwich realized that traditional christologians would charge him with "cultural relativism and

60. Title to chapter one of Robinson's highly controversial book, Honest to God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

61. Robinson, Human Face of God, 33-35.

62. Robinson powerfully states in Honest to God, 67: "For as long as God and man are thought of as two 'beings', each with distinct natures, one from 'the other side' and one from 'this side', then it is impossible to create out of them more than a God-man, a divine visitant from 'out there' who chooses in every respect to live like the natives. The supranaturalist view of the Incarnation can never really rid itself of the idea of the prince who appears in the guise of a beggar. However genuinely destitute the beggar may be, he is a prince; and that in the end is what matters."

63. Robinson, Human Face of God, 85; cf. an earlier passage in Human Face of God, 63-65, where he discusses Jesus' sexuality and pleads for the acknowledgement of such while fully cognizant that the Scriptures are descriptively silent on the subject.

psychological subjectivism,"<sup>64</sup> his resolute defense was that the higher christology was not that of the "patristic and medieval period [which sought] to push things as far as possible in a monophysite direction," but rather that which took the "highest possible view of Christ's humanity."<sup>65</sup>

Robinson's harsh critique of Chalcedonian orthodoxy had shifted the battlefield from the ontological to the linguistic.<sup>66</sup> However, the impossibility of drawing a sharp demarcation between the two meant that it would be just a short step to the declaration that both the doctrine of the incarnation as a whole, as well as the entire notion of God itself, was obsolete. This was precisely what developed within a half decade in the debate over the book, The Myth of God Incarnate.<sup>67</sup> Here the extreme radicalism of mid-nineteenth century German liberalism was resurrected under the guise of intellectual honesty and academic

64. Ibid., 35.

65. Ibid., 141.

66. Robinson, 113, stated that "the formula we presuppose is not of one superhuman person with two natures, divine and human, but of one human person of whom we must use two languages, man-language and God-language."

67. The Myth of God Incarnate, ed. John Hick (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1977), was followed within six months by a conservative rebuttal, The Truth of God Incarnate, ed. Michael Green (London: Hodder, 1977), and continued in Incarnation and Myth--The Debate Continued, ed. Michael Goulder (London: SCM, 1979). Ten years later, one of the contributors to the rebuttal edition, B. Hebblethwaite, concluded in his essay, "Further reflections and responses," in The Incarnation, 166), that the defects of The Myth of God Incarnate consisted primarily in the authors' criticism of the distinctively "Christian" doctrine while operating "with a totally different idea of incarnation than that informing the Christian tradition."

integrity which led, again, not surprisingly, to either silent  
 agnosticism or open atheism.<sup>68</sup> J. Dewart, however, has recognized  
 that apart from their theological and philosophical presupposi-  
 tions, the mythographers were objecting primarily to the  
 Alexandrian-tainted christology of traditional Christianity, and  
 "rejecting any but this understanding of the Incarnation and,  
 finding that unacceptable, repudiated the very notion of Incar-  
 nation itself."<sup>69</sup> Dewart then questions their wholesale rejection<sup>70</sup>  
 of orthodoxy without "considering the Antiochene alternative."

It is clear that while the modern intellect has attempted  
 to squelch the authority of classical dogmatism, voices of  
 traditional orthodoxy continue to sound their displeasure at  
 this reductionist agenda. It is in this context that the  
 fundamentalist and evangelical christologies described above  
 developed. Even in the United States, however, it would be a  
 crude distortion of the situation if the various trends which  
 have appeared since mid-century are neglected in this survey.  
 While generally conservative in its overall climate, the  
 distinctive milieu of American culture has also allowed for the

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68. This "degeneration" is explicitly set forth by Don  
 Cupitt, in his Taking Leave of God (London: SCM Press, 1980).

69. Joanne M. Dewart, "Christological Particularity: Need  
 It be a Scandal," Anglican Theological Review 57:1 (1980), 64-65.

70. Ibid. In further objecting to the Myth's pluralism as  
 well as skepticism, M. Tinker, "Truth, Myth and Incarnation,"  
Themelios 14:1 (1988), 17, asserts that when understood as an  
 attempt to transcend the Alexandrian-Antiochene dialectic--which  
 is easier said than done--Chalcedon remains "by far the most  
 satisfactory understanding of the function of the doctrine [in]  
 that it is informative, possessing of great explanatory power and  
 operative within the framework of factual discourse."

emergence of some recent philosophical christologies. The influence of two in particular, governed by existentialist and process thought, have become increasingly influential and deserve a brief mention.

The names of Paul Tillich and John Macquarrie are usually associated with the development of existentialist theology in American thought in the latter half of this century. Both sought to reconstruct theology systematically along the lines of Heidegger's philosophy of being. Thus, Tillich rejected the use of the term "nature" in christology as ambiguous with regard to man, and completely erroneous when applied to God. He then sought to translate Chalcedon into acceptable modern conceptual categories, by reframing christological language and seeing Christ as the "New Being":

The assertion that Jesus as the Christ is the personal unity of a divine and a human nature must be replaced by the assertion that in Jesus as the Christ the eternal unity of God and man has become historical reality. . . . We replace the inadequate concept "divine nature" by such concepts "eternal God-man-unity" or "Eternal God-Manhood." Such concepts replace a static essence by a dynamic relation. . . . By eliminating the concept of "two natures," which lie beside each other like blocks and whose unity cannot be understood at all, we are open to relational concepts which make understandable the dynamic picture of Jesus as the Christ. 71

Since humankind was to be understood existentially as "always

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71. Tillich, Systematic Theology, 2:148. While we may agree with Tillich in seeing the need for a reformulation of the Chalcedonian definition, his christology is not without weaknesses. These cannot, however, be criticized apart from his theological effort as a whole. For a wholistic analysis of Tillich's theology, see R. A. Killen, The Ontological Theology of Paul Tillich (J H Kok, N. V. Kampen, 1956).



incomplete and on his way,"<sup>72</sup> Macquarrie agreed to the use of "nature" in christology only on the grounds that it be conceived as "open-ended." In this light, however, Christ's complete human "nature" takes on a new meaning: "at the limit of existence, that is to say, at the furthest point along the road toward fulfilling or unfolding this 'nature' (existence), he manifests divine Being."<sup>73</sup> Macquarrie has at least attempted to stay somewhat moored to traditional Christianity: "A christology that begins with the human Jesus comes eventually to an incarnational christology, but the latter complements it rather than supercedes it."<sup>74</sup>

It is, however, process theology which has made the bold claim of resolving the dilemma in modern christology that had developed from the spurning of metaphysics since the time of Ritschl.<sup>75</sup> Specifically it claims to supply the philosophical ontology sought by many:

What we desperately need is a theological ontology that will put intelligible and credible meanings into our analogical categories of divine deeds and of divine self-manifestation through events. . . . Only an ontology of events specifying what God's relation to ordinary

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72. J. Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 273.

73. Ibid., 274.

74. Macquarrie, "The Humanity of Christ," Theology 74 (1971), 249.

75. Montefiore, 161, had noted that the "impasse in which christology (and all theology) finds itself is primarily due to this lack of a metaphysic in which it can be securely grounded."

events is like, and thus what his relation to special events might be, could fill the now empty analogy of mighty acts, void since the denial of the miraculous. 76

While various process christologies have been developed in the last two decades, their success cannot be understood apart from the work of W. N. Pittenger.

Pittenger's christological contributions have spanned a little more than four decades.<sup>77</sup> Following the lead of Baillie, who built on II Cor. 5:19, Pittenger argued against the notion of Christ's "impersonal manhood," which to him tended toward Apollinarianism in saying that "the only true self or personality of Jesus is the Word . . . [thus] he was not man in his innermost human life."<sup>79</sup> The christology of indwelling espoused by the ancient Antiochenes and revived by modern theology is also

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76. Langdon Gilkey, originally in "Cosmology, Ontology, & the Travail of Biblical Language," Journal of Religion 41 (1961), quoted by David Griffin, A Process Christology, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), 203. Griffin, 226 ff., argues for the viability of process philosophy in reconstructing Christian theology (and christology) along four lines:

- 1) its rootage in the key events of the biblical tradition, especially the ministry of Jesus
- 2) its consistency with other essential presuppositions and doctrines of Christian faith
- 3) its adequacy to the facts of experience, and
- 4) its illuminating power.

77. Beginning with Christ and the Christian Faith (New York: Round Table Press, 1941), finding clearest expression in The Word Incarnate: A Study of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ (Digswell Place: James Nisbet & Co. Ltd, 1959), and restated in Christology Reconsidered (London: SCM Press, 1970), along with numerous articles in the early seventies.

78. Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, 120.

79. Ibid., 115.

accepted as the "fullest, most complete, the most organic and integrated union of Godhead and manhood which is conceivable. . . [There] is no other way of bringing the two together which does not deny the deity of God or wreck the reality of man's own existence."<sup>80</sup> Pittenger's commitment to a christology of degree is thus evident:

Christ is divine not by being utterly different from other men in whom God dwells and through whom the divine activity works; rather he is divine in that he actualizes in human nature that transcendental divine principle which is at the root of man's being, but which through other men is only potentially or at best very partially expressed.<sup>81</sup>

Can Christ, however, be understood as final or absolute in Pittenger's process christology? Only in the sense of his being special, unique and decisive. For Pittenger, this means a<sup>82</sup> "finality of inclusion, not exclusion."

Whatever the defects of process christology (and they are rooted primarily in their philosophical/theological enterprise as

80. Ibid., 188. Against the Alexandrian Logos ensarkos, Pittenger prefers Logos enanthropesanta--the Word "en-manned."

81. Ibid., 167-168. It should be noted that Pittenger, 243, objected to the phrase "difference in kind" as illogical: "In a world in which there is organic consistency and co-inherence, there can in fact be no absolute difference in kind. I wish to qualify this statement by insisting on a difference in kind between the uncreate and the created, God and the world; but not between finite realities as such, nor between the divine operations in them at the several levels which have appeared in the course of creation."

82. Pittenger, "The Incarnation in Process Theology," Review & Expositor 71:1 (1974), 56. Here, the panentheism of process philosophy stands out in stark contrast to the classical metaphysic of divine transcendence on which the theology of the ancient Fathers stood.

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a whole), it is clear that it would agree heartily with the modern rejection of the traditional doctrine of the hypostatic union and posit in its place a degree christology. Historic Christianity has always resisted inspirational, functional and degree christology as insufficient to meet the human need. However, this instinctive conservative rebuttal is not without defects itself, as exemplified primarily on its appeal either to paradox or mystery to explain the incarnation, or its reliance on the liturgical and confessional value of Nicene and Chalcedonian orthodoxy.<sup>84</sup>

It is clear that both the christologies of American evangelicism and the British anglo-Catholic efforts have fallen short in their attempts to reinterpret the Chalcedonian doctrine for this age. The former has lapsed at times into rigid conservative dogmatism while the latter into post-modern liberalism.

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83. See R. F. Aldwinckle, More than Man: A Study in Christology (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), Appendix B, for a fair evangelical treatment of process theology and philosophy. Aldwinckle, 293, asserts that process philosophy satisfies some religious and theological needs, but errs in its truncated view of God; thus, he concludes by asking, "what shall it profit a man if he gain Jesus and lose God?" Cf. the even harsher criticism of B. Demarest, "The Process Redution of Jesus and the Trinity" On Process Theology, ed. R. H. Nash (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1987), 59-90, who denies that process philosophy makes any gains in either christology or theology.

84. See Norman Anderson, The Mystery of the Incarnation (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1978), esp. 129 ff., for a representative statement. The attempts of some evangelicals today to explain the logic of the incarnation have ended where Chalcedon did over fifteen hundred years ago; on this, see N. Geisler and W. D. Watkins, "The Incarnation and Logic: Their Compatibility Defended," Trinity Journal 6 (1985), 185-197, who conclude that the "mystery of the incarnation lies in the how, not the what."

Surprisingly, however, the way forward may be found in post-Barthian Protestantism and post-Vatican II Catholicism of continental theology.

### Recent Thought on the Incarnation

Thus far, our survey of the modern era has revealed a plethora of christological restatements, some no more than a rehashing of by-gone centuries, and others entirely novel.<sup>85</sup> While the innovations of European theology prior to the Neo-Orthodox movement were characterized by their radical rejection of traditional orthodoxy resulting in an unrecognizable "christianity," those in the latter half of the twentieth century have propounded an ecumenical liberalism which has demonstrated a surprising degree of adaptability in maintaining sustained dialogue with both historic Christianity and non-Christian religions alike. Included among this group are two Protestant theologians, W. Pannenberg and J. Moltmann.

<sup>86</sup>  
Pannenberg's Jesus--God and Man has been hailed as the

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85. One such intriguing attempt is the reemergence of "Spirit-christology" in modern dress by one of the contributors to The Myth of God Incarnate, G. W. H. Lampe, who considered Jesus as the "adverbial"--rather than the "substantial"--expression of God, and dismissed the notion of Christ's pre-existence as mythological (see his earlier "The Holy Spirit and the Person of Christ," in Christ, Faith & History, 111-130, and his more fully developed 1976 Bampton Lectures, God as Spirit [Oxford: University Press, 1977]). Lampe's reconstruction, however, knowingly lapses into the binitarian view of God prevalent in the second century (and superceeded by Nicea), and amounts ultimately, to a impoverished degree christology. See Anderson, 113-128, for a valuable critical response.

86. W. Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, trans. Lewis L. Wilkens and Duane A. Priebe, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977).

most refreshing attempt at reformulating Chalcedonian christology with the same conceptual and methodological tools which modern liberalism had used in their its criticism. In fact, Pannenberg forthrightly declared that christology should be approached in the only manner allowed by strict scientific inquiry--from below: "Christology must begin with the man Jesus . . . [since] it is clear that the confession of the divinity of the man Jesus requires substantiation; it is not self-explanatory."<sup>87</sup>

What then justifies the predication of deity to the human Jesus? Here, Pannenberg appeals to the proleptic structure of Jesus' pre-Easter assertions which were confirmed by his resurrection from the dead:

The confirmation of Jesus' unity with God in the retroactive power of his resurrection makes the hiddenness of this unity during Jesus' earthly life comprehensible and thus makes room for the genuine humanity of this life. <sup>88</sup>

In Pannenberg's view, this approach to christology is far superior to the static doctrine of the two natures of Christ:

The problem results from speaking of "two" natures as if they were on the same plane. This poses the pseudo-task of relating two natures to one another in such a

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87. Ibid., 36-37. Pannenberg, 34-35, posited three strikes against the traditional "from above" method:

- 1) it presupposes the divinity of Christ rather than substantiating it
- 2) its resulting christology is formulated at the costly expense of the true humanity of Christ, and
- 3) human finitude cannot claim the vantage point of God himself, which christology "from above" incorrectly assumes.

88. Ibid., 322.

way that their synthesis results in a single individual in spite of the hinderances posed by the idea of a "nature". . . . Jesus is no synthesis of human and divine of which we can only see the human side in the historical Jesus. Rather, as this man, Jesus is God . . . as this man, Jesus is not just man, but from the perspective of his resurrection from the dead (kata pneuma--"according to the Spirit" [Rom. 1:4]) he is one with God and thus is himself God. 89

It appears that Pannenberg's historico-eschatological approach has come full circle. In the analysis of E. F. Tupper, on the one hand, Pannenberg's "Christology 'from below' necessarily precedes and conceptually sustains a Christology 'from above;'"<sup>90</sup> on the other, the historical "Jesus Christ is the unsurpassable Incarnation of the eschaton, the Incarnation of the God who comes."<sup>91</sup>

Interestingly, however, while the christology of Moltmann is also eschatological in character, it is conceived more strictly in trinitarian rather than christological terms.<sup>92</sup>

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89. Ibid., 322-3.

90. E. F. Tupper, "The Christology of Wolfhart Pannenberg," Review and Expositor 71:1 (1974), 72.

91. Ibid., 73.

92. It is clear that Moltmann's christology informs the entirety of his theological reconstruction. Thus, when Moltmann speaks of kenosis, he is first and foremost talking about God's self-limitation which precedes and allows for creation (see The Trinity and the Kingdom, tran. Margaret Kohl [San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981], 108-111), and then only dealing the self-emptying of the Logos or Christ. Further, the central reality of Christ's passion translates for Moltmann into the final burial of the Greek concept of an apathetic God as well as a sweeping theodicy (cf. Warren McWilliams, "The Passion of God and Moltmann's Christology," Encounter 40:4 [1979], 313-326). Thus, many feel that Moltmann's theological enterprise amounts to one of the major contributions to contemporary theology.

Beginning within an earshot of Jesus' cry of dereliction on the cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46), Moltmann follows the lead of Luther's theologia crucis and argues for a reconstruction of both christology as well as theology. The understanding of the cross must not be interpreted in the same manner as the ancients who saw the death of only the humanity of Christ. Rather, "in contrast to the traditional doctrine of the two natures in the person of Christ, it must begin from the totality of the person of Christ and understand the relationship of the death of the Son to the Father and the Spirit."<sup>93</sup> Moltmann strenuously objects to the traditional limitation of Jesus' suffering to the flesh as a denial of the historical unity of the human Christ: "For the one person of Jesus Christ is not a matter of two metaphysically different 'natures'. [The 'only begotten Son'] is an expression of his

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93. Moltmann, The Crucified God, trans. R. A. Wilson and J. Bowden (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 205-206. Moltmann, 244-245, further clarifies: "If one wanted to present the event within the framework of the doctrine of the two natures, one could only use the simple concept of God (esse simplex). . . . In that case one would have to put the formula in a paradoxical way: God died the death of the godless on the cross and yet did not die. God is dead and yet not dead. If one can only use the simple concept of God from the doctrine of the two natures, as tradition shows, one will always be inclined to restrict it to the person of the Father who abandons and accepts Jesus, deliver him and raises him up, and in so doing will 'evacuate' the cross of deity. . . . The doctrine of the two natures must understand the event of the cross statically as a reciprocal relationship between two qualitatively different natures, the divine nature which is incapable of suffering and the human nature which is capable of suffering. . . . Here we have not interpreted the death of Jesus as a divine-human event, but as a trinitarian event between the Son and the Father." In our opinion, trinitarian speculation such as proposed by Moltmann follows a much safer course than christological novelty since the former is exempt from empirical investigation.



exclusive relationship to the Father . . . and his many brothers  
<sup>94</sup>  
 and sisters." In this manner, Moltmann speaks of Jesus' passion  
 and death not strictly as the death "of God," but as death "in  
<sup>95</sup>  
 God." This emphasizes the trinitarian history of God that  
<sup>96</sup>  
 "leads into a new creation."

While the christologies propounded by Pannenberg and Moltmann

94. Moltmann, Trinity and the Kingdom, 120.

95. Moltmann, The Crucified God, 207. Because of the very nature of his language and his interpretation of God along the lines of a social trinity, K. Runia, The Present-Day Christological Debate (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 41, has objected to Moltmann's theology as "balancing the tightrope of pure theopaschitism, even of patripassianism." Others have taken issue with his predication of death to God. In Moltmann's defense, D. G. Attfield, "Can God be Crucified? A Discussion of J. Moltmann," Scottish Journal of Theology 30:1 (1977), 57, resorts to the familiar kenotic double role theory, and explains that "the crucified God, as man, knew he was being crucified but not that he was God the Son being crucified. . . . Hypostatic union is such that, to God, at the level of self-consciousness experience is possible in one role of himself in another role, that is in a human role veiled from the divine by drastic kenosis. In this way, God's enfleshment can reach death."

In our estimation, however, Moltmann's own concept of death does allow him to speak of a crucified God, and that apart from the traditional doctrine of communicatio idiomatum. We would question J. Moulder, "The Concept of Death and the Concept of God," Theology 86 (1983), 95--who argues basically from the OT that a biblical anthropology "equates the concept of death and the concept of annihilation"--on whether he is limiting death to the physical realm and avoiding the NT data which speaks of a "second death" in ontological-eschatological terms. It is this latter understanding of death that Moltmann appears to be speaking about in The Crucified God, 246: "What is salvation? Only if all disaster, forsakenness by God, absolute death, the infinite curse of damnation and sinking into nothingness is in God himself, is community with this God eternal salvation, infinite joy, indestructible election and divine life. The 'bifurcation' in God must contain the whole uproar of history within itself . . . the whole abyss of god-forsakenness, absolute death and the non-God."

96. Moltmann, The Crucified God, 247.

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are not free from criticism, their refreshing efforts have been applauded and utilized by both evangelicals as well as liberals alike. Further, Moltmann's contributions, especially, have opened avenues of ecumenical dialogue,<sup>98</sup> as well as served to bridge the gap between Western and non-Western christologies.<sup>99</sup>

It is not surprising that the christology of Liberation Theologies has relied to a great extent on Moltmann's eschatological Christ. The socio-political agenda of the Liberationists, however, has influenced such Latin American theologians as J. Sobrino to construct a christology based on "orthopraxis" rather than vice versa. Thus, the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two-natures of Christ is acknowledged only for its doxological value and summarily dispensed in favor of a Jesus as "the way to the Father: Jesus gradually fashioned himself into the Son of God, became the Son of God."<sup>99</sup> This leads us to our discussion of Roman Catholic christology which emerged out of the closet at Vatican II and has since been at the forefront of the movement

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97. Runia, 45, for example, notes that both "lead to an eschatological and universalistic divinization of man" which is but a logical conclusion to their Hegelian roots. Further, Moltmann's slightly modified social trinitarianism has naturally brought the familiar charges of tritheism.

98. E. g., Moltmann and Phinn E. Lapide, Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).

99. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin-American Approach (New York: Orbis Books, 1978), 338; cf. also his trenchant criticism of Chalcedon on pp. 328-335, 384-388. It must be remembered, however, that Liberation theologians are much more interested in Christ as moral influence and example, than in the metaphysical constructs of either philosophical or doctrinal theology. Thus, many liberationist texts fail to even discuss the doctrine of the person of Christ.

toward ecumenism.

Catholic christology has held strictly to the Chalcedonian formula down through the centuries. At Vatican II, however, the acknowledgement of modernity propelled the Church from the middle ages to the twentieth century in one generation. Instrumental to the success of this transition has been the work of such theologians as Karl Rahner, Piet Schoonenberg and Hans Küng.<sup>100</sup>

Rahner's critique of Chalcedon which began prior to the second Vatican Council<sup>101</sup> was eventually summarized in his Foundations of Christian Faith where he writes:

Although the hypostatic union is a unique event in its own essence, . . . it is nevertheless an intrinsic moment within the whole process by which grace is bestowed upon all spiritual creatures. . . . In this human potentiality of Jesus the absolute salvific will of God, the absolute event of God's self-communication to us along with its acceptance as something by God himself, is a reality of God himself, unmixed, but also inseparable and therefore irrevocable. 102

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100. This is not to slight the accomplishments thus far of the Dutch theologian, E. Schillebeeckx. His contribution to christology, however, has thus far been focused primarily on its NT origins and the application of narrative exegesis to the Gospels (see his two massive works, Jesus: An Experiment in Christology [New York: Seabury Press, 1979], and Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord [New York: Crossroad, 1980]). His promised third volume will deal with the dogmatic statements of the church as developed throughout history.

101. See the collection of Rahner papers, "Current Problems in Christology," Theological Investigations, Vol. 1, tran. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), and "Christology," Theological Investigations, Vol. 4, tran. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 196).

102. K. Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity, tran. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 201-203.

While Rahner has claimed to be faithful to the Catholic tradition in broadening the "horizons, the modes of expression, and the different aspects for expressing the ancient Christian dogmas,"<sup>103</sup> does not his equivocal language cast doubt on his intentions? Thus, it is not surprising that Rahner later speaks of the "indetermination of the point of unity of the hypostatic union," where he hints at his acceptance of locating the existential center of activity of Christ in the human reality of Jesus.<sup>104</sup>

It is in the christology of the Jesuit, P. Schoonenberg, that one finds the initial expression of Rahner's later tendencies. While the standard of adhering to a "from below" methodology by modern theologians had diminished the significance of Christ's divinity and vitiated the coherence of classical christology, it was Schoonenberg who argued novelly for a reversal of the traditional doctrine of enhypostasia--what he called the theory of the "enhypostasia of the Word":

[The] Word is person in Jesus through its being man, that it is divine person through being a human person. . . . However, it is not primarily the human nature which is enhypostatic in the divine person, but the divine nature in the human person. 105

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103. Ibid., 291.

104. Ibid., 292.

105. P. Schoonenberg, The Christ, tran. Della Couling (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 87. Schoonenberg, 179, affirms that in this way, "all the human element comes to Jesus and he is therefore no less personal than we; on the contrary, he is more personal. If he is now, on the other hand, also a divine person, then no dialogue can be assumed between the divine and the human person within the one Christ such as between Christ and the Father [the rock on which some classical christology floundered]. The divine person of the Word cannot be a 'counterpart' of the

Schoonenberg bases his reversal on three factors: the applicability of "personhood" only to humans, the singularity of Christ's personality as expressed by Chalcedon, and the removal of the antinomies in speaking of Christ posed by the traditional doctrine of the communication of properties.<sup>106</sup> One would have to acknowledge that this conjecture regarding the unity of the divine and human in Christ is just as viable for modern christology given its method "from below" as Leontius' theory was applauded for most of church history in following the Alexandrian Logos-christology.<sup>107</sup>

While Rahner and Schoonenberg have openly assented to the essence (if not the terminology) of Chalcedon and sought to contextualize its formula for the modern church, their colleague, Hans Kung, has taken the ecumenical agenda of the Catholic church one step farther by dialoguing with the world religions.<sup>108</sup> The significance of this venture for christology is that it is

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man Jesus, as the Father is. The Word is then person--and is the Son--not over against the man Jesus but in him, the Word is enhypostatic in the man who is the Christ, the Son of the Living God." In the same way, Schoonenberg, 136, reverses the decision of Constantinople III and places the realization of the divine will only in the expression of the human decisions of Christ.

106. Ibid., 87-89.

107. Ultimately, however, the question arises whether Schoonenberg, 92, has avoided drifting into a degree christology when in his argument for the necessity of the unity of Christ, he asserts that "it is then a matter of superseding the two natures of the one person by a paramount presence of God in this human person." This unity of "presence" does not appear to do much better than the height of Schleiermacher's God-consciousness.

108. See especially Hans Kung, et. al., Christianity and the World Religions: Paths to Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, tran. Peter Heinegg (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

possible only along the lines of a radical pluralism which historic Christianity has thus far been unable to accept as compatible with evangelical faith. Thus, although Küng could repeat the Chalcedonian formula with hearty approval,<sup>109</sup> his reinterpretation of the Definition is far removed from the intentions of the patristic Fathers: "Jesus' divine dignity is conceived primarily functionally and not physically or meta-physically."<sup>110</sup> That Küng has boldly taken modern christology to its logical conclusion is clear. For him, "the divinity of Christ [is] only a theological conclusion [and] Jesus can be neither God nor the representative of God, but exclusively man."<sup>111</sup>

The Enlightenment has clearly propelled christology from the exclusivistic Chalcedonianism which prevailed during the Reformation to its unrecognizable form in the pluralistic theology characteristic of Küng.<sup>112</sup> The diversity of contemporary

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109. Küng, On Being a Christian, tran. Edward Quinn (New York: Image Books, 1984), esp. 449-450.

110. Ibid., 448.

111. Battista Mondin, "The Christological Experiment of Hans Küng," Biblical Theology Bulletin, tran. W. Stanley Fleming 7:2 (1977), 88. Mondin, ibid., predicted Küng's pluralism which was expressed in Christianity and the World Religions and challenged Küng to "prove incisively that it is better to be Christians than to be Jews, Buddhists or Moslems."

112. A. Race, Christians and Religious Pluralism (New York: Orbis Books, 1982), 110 ff., points to the inclusivistic christology of theologians such as Rahner as the bridge from exclusivism to pluralism. The current trend, however, is definitely toward pluralism. The boldest attempt to interface the Christ of Christianity with the post-modern world is John B. Cobb Jr.'s Christ in a Pluralistic Age (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975). Mary T. Rattigan, "The Christology of John Cobb," Encounter 47:3 (1986), 205-217, criticizes Cobb's endeavors on three fronts:

christologies due to the breakdown of tradition and authority in the church can be seen by the many positions advocated along the continuum from one end of the spectrum to the other--from the fundamentalist to the radical liberal. Throughout the last three centuries, the incessant attack on the Chalcedonian formula has succeeded in rendering it impertinent to all but a diminishing group of extreme conservatives. While a great many more would hold to the essence of Chalcedon, the doctrine of the two natures of Christ has been replaced by language of divinity and humanity, Godhead and manhood. In many instances, however, even these concepts have failed to communicate the essence of the incarnation which the patristic Fathers attempted to convey at Nicea and Chalcedon. Can it be said of Chalcedon that its wineskins are no longer capable of holding the ever revelant truth of Jesus Christ as vere Deus vere homo?

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- 1) Christ the Logos is reduced to a divine activity and principle
  - 2) the historicity of Jesus is rendered irrelevant, and
  - 3) Cobb's reductionist christology is undoubtedly tailored toward his ecumenical interests (i.e., his christological method is incorrectly subservient to his theological agenda rather than vice-versa).

## PART TWO

### An Evaluation of the Doctrine of the Two-Natures of Christ for Contemporary Theology



## CHAPTER 8

### The Failure of the Chalcedonian Definition

The preceeding survey has traced the development of the doctrine of the two natures of Christ from the New Testament writings to its formal ratification at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and highlighted the post-Chalcedonian attempts which were made to uphold, interpret, as well as criticize the validity of the formula down to the modern period. While historians of dogma would readily grant that the Chalcedonian definition shielded orthodox christology from the heretical impulses of its age (i.e., chiefly Arianism, Apollinarianism, Eutychianism, and Nestorianism), its purpose may well have been served in the patristic period and its value confined to that epoch. The history of the doctrine appears to confirm this thesis. Although Chalcedon has been recognized as the standard of orthodoxy since 451, its reception has been limited only to the West, and even then only until the Enlightenment. Catholicity has never been achieved for the formula. Even the American evangelical attempt in the modern period to uphold the continuing standard of the Council has been at times caricatured as nothing more than a reaction to liberal Protestant theology by its more progressive critics. It has also been noted that whether it be scholastism, evangelicalism, or Roman Catholicism, adherence to Chalcedon down through the ages has more often than not been strictly a traditional "lip service" to creedal terminology rather than a

logical allegiance to the essential content of the definition. Thus it is no surprise that popular piety in these circles has by and large understood the Christ of Chalcedon in either a monophysite or Docetic manner.

The onslaught of modern theology on the doctrine of the two natures of Christ appears to have undermined the continuing value and especially authority of the Chalcedonian formula. While the previous chapter has capsulated some of the modern objections to the doctrine, our present task will be to summarize the failure of Chalcedon and to systematically detail the bankruptcy of the two nature formula along three fronts: its inadequate representation of the christological emphases in the New Testament, its historical relativity, and its philosophical defects.

#### Chalcedon and the New Testament Witness

Most importantly, the Chalcedonian two-nature doctrine can be faulted for its failure to reproduce a picture of Christ fully compatible with the entire scope of the New Testament evidence. As C. A. Blaising has cautioned, it is "possible to critique the definition of Chalcedon, but only from the standpoint of Scripture."<sup>1</sup> While the desire of the Chalcedonian fathers to be loyal to Scripture cannot be questioned, it is doubtful whether the christological heresies which they addressed allowed them to appropriately translate the biblical data into the philosophical categories of thought to which they were dependent. This

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1. Blaising, "Chalcedon and Christology: A 1530th Anniversary," Bibliotheca Sacra 138:552 (1981), 335.

methodological shortcoming is evidenced primarily in the Chalcedonian emphasis on ontological terms and concepts foreign to the New Testament.

A. N. S. Lane has appropriately concluded that "whereas the New Testament is predominantly (but not exclusively) functional, Chalcedon is overwhelmingly ontological in its approach."<sup>2</sup> The error of the Chalcedonian fathers may be traced to their over-arching dependence on the Fourth Gospel and selected epistolary hymns to the neglect of the remainder of the New Testament data. Thus, while present day research in New Testament christology has focused almost exclusively on the exegesis and origins of the titles of Christ (i.e, Son of God, Son of Man, Saviour), this functionalism appears to be all but invisible in the Chalcedonian creed. The familiar appellations preserved in the biblical writings are almost completely subservient to the metaphysical construction of the formula which is based on hypostasis, ousia and physis. The soteriological and functional value of Christ cherished by the New Testament church is therefore replaced by the substantive Christ of Chalcedon.

It is indeed an oddity that the Chalcedonian fathers attempted to metaphysically define the person of Christ whose humanity was unquestioned by the disciples and whose divinity was confessed only in the context of the post-Easter development. While the historically grounded "from below" approach of the disciples did not prevent them from recognizing that the salvific

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2. Lane, 264; emphasis mine.

importance of Christ was predicated upon his divinity, the early church avoided floundering on the rock of dualism which Chalcedon unashamedly declared. That Jesus was one person was not doubted by his disciples. As far as they were concerned, it was clearly "possible to experience the divinity of Jesus Christ without. . .<sup>3</sup> articulating that experience in terms of the two-nature dogma."

However, the Chalcedonian definition introduced a disjointed Christ who acted sometimes as God and sometimes as man. The New Testament church would not have recognized such a Jesus. The resultant cosmic Christ of Chalcedon is far removed from the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. The historical Jesus who confronted the original disciples loses all connection with the<sup>4</sup> human race when filtered through the Chalcedonian formula.

It must also be recalled that the intrusion of philosophical terms into the creedal affirmations of the church was not accomplished without resistance. From the beginning, the Fathers had expressed extreme hesitancy in employing non-Scriptural terms in their definitions. The fact that such terms were necessary points to the historical context wherein the creeds originated. While this development has been documented in part one of this study, the problem of historical relativity needs to be reemphasized at this point.

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3. Aldwinckle, 126.

4. Thus, Mackintosh, Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, 293, has cautioned against reading the New Testament with the "Chalcedonian formula in the background of our minds." No such notion of division can be detected either in the thinking of the original disciples or in the records which are preserved.

### Chalcedon and the History of Dogma

Although made in the context of the argument against the miraculous and the prophetic in Scripture, Lessing's famous dictum, "accidental truths of history can never become the proof<sup>5</sup> of necessary truths of reason," is much more applicable to the culturally conditioned formulations of the creeds of the church<sup>6</sup> than it is to the biblical record. The Christian theologian must assent to the absolute manifestation of God in history in the person of Jesus Christ. However, the history of the development of doctrine operates under the fundamental constraints of cultural and historical relativity. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Chalcedonian definition.

It has already been observed that the further christological thought was removed from the New Testament era, the more varied were the sources which were appealed to in its formulation. Grillmeier has already called attention to the much neglected subject of the literary genres utilized in the formation of both<sup>7</sup> the Chalcedonian definition as well as in the ensuing debates.

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5. Quoted in Livingston, 32.

6. While the importance of the tradition of the church cannot be denied, the foundation of Christianity rests on the revelation of the Son of God to the original disciples, which is mediated to the church through the Holy Scriptures. This was the point which the Reformers' Sola Scriptura argument addressed. Thus, while historical research can be done in isolation from involvement in the church and irrespective of its membership, Hebblethwaite, "The Church and Christology," in The Incarnation, 77-94, argues that such endeavors do not provide the proper framework within which the Scriptural data may be accurately interpreted.

7. Grillmeier, 2:88, notes that by the end of the sixth century, the existing catanae comprised of "synodal documentation

Again, while the intention of these sources to be faithful to Scripture cannot be doubted, the polemic as well as apologetic purposes which spawned their appearance are found within a historical context vastly different from that of the New Testament world. Thus, although the terminology encoded at Chalcedon "went through a long and slow process of elaboration, each term being tested, disputed, and carefully defined before it was finally adopted,"<sup>8</sup> in the end its comprehensibility against the entirety of the biblical witness was questionable. Undeniably the language of Chalcedon was clear only within the context of the christological controversies which raged during the fourth and fifth centuries.

The circumstances which contributed to the development of Chalcedonian christology, however, involved not only the hellenistic milieu of the patristic period but also the political climate which dawned with Constantinian imperialism. It has been demonstrated that the theology of the ancient councils was tainted as much by imperial legislation as internal ecclesiastical squabbles. The re-emergence of Apollinarianism in the period immediately after Chalcedon was given impetus by the many

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and the publizistische Sammlungen [collected reference works] which go together with it, the extremely comprehensive florilegia, and finally the catalogues of heresies, the collections of definitions and the Epaporemata [compilations of rebuttals used to demonstrate the opponent's self-contradiction and illogicity]."

8. R. L. Ottley, The Doctrine of the Incarnation, 8th ed. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1946), 593. Norris, Christological Controversy, 31, may well be right when he says that the Chalcedonian definition "dictates not a Christology but formal outlines of an adequate christological language."

emperors who were sympathetic toward the monophysite cause. Although the intentions of the Fathers at both the latter Constantinopolitan councils cannot be doubted, the creedal statements which were formulated there were fueled as much by the political imperative which called for the unification of the empire against its threatening foes as the need for theological or doctrinal eirenicon.

This is not to completely undermine the validity of the patristic creeds, but rather to accentuate their relevance primarily for that period. The very fact that the post-Chalcedonian disputes were as heated as the Nestorian-Cyrillian debates points to the transitory and fleeting nature of the fourth council's authority. Thus it is not surprising that the christological views that prevailed and were later rendered synonymous with orthodoxy for the millenium from the dark ages through the Reformation were those which circulated during the pontificate of the preeminent codifier of all ancient dogma and theology, Gregory the Great. As Harnack has clearly summarized, the matrix of orthodox christology passed on by the first systematizer after Gregory, John the Damascene, was a blend of various strands of Cyrillian monophysitism under the terminological and dogmatic umbrella of the Chalcedonian formula:

. . . in their religious aspect, Apollinaris had triumphed. The moderate Docetism which the latter expressed in a plain, bold and frank way forms the basis of the orthodox idea of Christ, though it is indeed concealed under all sorts of formulae. 9

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9. Harnack, 4:266-267.

Of final import in viewing the historical context of christological development until the Enlightenment is the dominance of Platonic dualism as well as the substance philosophy of Aristotelianism during the entire period which impeded the Chalcedonian fathers from going beyond the definition which they proposed. While the indebtedness of the fathers to the language and philosophy of the ancient Greeks does not constitute an a priori falsification of their christology, it does have implications for both their procedural methodology as well as their speculative limitations. The defects of the resulting metaphysical Christ are aptly noted by Raven in an eloquent passage:

The gravest defect of Hellenic and indeed of most early theology, is its subservience to chemical and physical metaphors. All through the literature of the patristic age it is constantly evident how its authors are handicapped by their lack of abstract terms and their habit of concrete and materialistic thinking. Instead of conceiving of God in terms of love, in terms appropriate to personality, they are concerned with substances, with images borrowed from the fusion of metals or the mixing of liquids or the hybridising of animals, images too crude to do justice to the subtleties of living relationships. <sup>10</sup>

Thus, while we may not go as far as Harnack in considering the hellenization of the Gospel as a travesty of convoluted terminology, we insist with Lane that at the very least, the "language and concepts of [Chalcedon] need to be translated into contemporary terms if they are not to be misunderstood."<sup>11</sup> Is, however, a mere translation of Chalcedon into today's terms and

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10. Raven, 277-278.

11. Lane, 274.



categories sufficient? We would argue that only a reconstruction of christology will do. This is imperative especially since the archaic philosophical and theological presuppositions which undergird the two-nature formula were relegated to inconsequence with the passing of the Middle Ages.

### Chalcedon and the Current Crisis

The advent of the Enlightenment brought about the awareness of the historical and cultural relativity of the ancient creeds and questioned the ongoing significance of traditional orthodoxy. As G. C. Berkouwer has stated, "in the nineteenth century especially one can speak of a frontal assault on the doctrine<sup>12</sup> of the two natures." This attack was fueled by no less than a revolution in the three areas of theology, anthropoloophy and methodology.

The theological revolution has undoubtedly not been limited to the atheistic responses of Neitsche or the Darwinian evolutionists. Even conservative theologians have discarded the concept of the apathetic God of hellenistic philosophy,<sup>13</sup> the transcendent God of scholasticism (along with the immanentist/pantheistic God of liberalism) in favor of a "concomitant" God as

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12. G. C. Berkouwer, Studies in Dogmatics: The Person of Christ, tran. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), 22.

13. See esp. K. J. Woollcombe, "The Pain of God," Scottish Journal of Theology 20:2 (1967), 142. Thus, Lane, 265, concludes that the traditional doctrine of the immutability of God has also been reinterpreted in a more Scriptural manner as referring not to his ontological composition but to his "moral constancy and unchanging purposes."

Immanuel--God with us. Unlike the patristic fathers, many contemporary theologians recognize not only that the doctrine of divine impassibility applies to each member of the Godhead, but that strictly held, the resultant dualism in the person of Christ is unavoidable since his sufferings would of necessity be limited to his human nature. Further, the traditional doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum could not escape a Docetic Christ since it only allowed suffering to be ascribed to the divine in Christ rather than affording a genuine experience of passion to that nature. The modern concept of God, on the other hand, having been filtered through the horrifying tragedies of Auschwitz and other global disasters, calls out for a wholistic understanding of the genuine sufferings endured by the person of Christ.

Added to this redefinition of God are the upheavals caused by modern anthropology. The doctrine of the two natures of Christ had to be replaced not only because the divine nature could never be strictly defined, but also because the materialistic or substantive views of human nature characteristic of patristic philosophy have since been rendered incomprehensible by modern psychology and in the main, discarded. Patristic christology was caught in an impasse which its metaphysical tools could not resolve:

It is important to acknowledge the universality of Christ's human nature so that all men may share in the benefits of his atonement; but it is equally important to do justice to the particularity of the human nature of Christ, in order to secure its reality. 14

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14. McIntyre, 105-106.

In place of Aristotelian materialism, human personhood was now defined as a psychological unity with a central ego of consciousness "possessing four component parts--thought, feeling, will and conscience."<sup>15</sup> The problems posed for Chalcedonian christology as interpreted primarily by Constantinople proved to be insurmountable:

Does the fact that Jesus had two natures imply that there were two streams of consciousness in his personality, two series of judgments, attitudes, reactions, each appropriate to the nature concerned? [In reference to Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane] would it be correct to say that the human will was here aligning itself with the will of the Father, and/or with the will of the divine nature? 16

Obviously, modernity opted to dispense with the two-nature formula in light of the psychological demand for the unity of Christ's person. By and large today, Constantinopolitan dyothelitism holds a virtual minority position only among strictly conservative theologians, and the two-nature terminology of Chalcedon itself has become almost obsolete.

This combination of modern theology and anthropology made it possible for the first time in the history of dogma to recognize the complete humanity of Christ. While the Church had long understood Christ as vere Deus vere homo, a complete vision of the latter phrase had essentially been obscured due to its

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15. H. Brash Bonsell, The Person of Christ, Vol. 1, The Doctrine (London: Christian Literature Crusade, 1967), 74.

16. McIntyre, 129. This explains the appearance of various psychological studies in christology. See, for example, Jacques Guillet, The Consciousness of Jesus, tran., Edward Bonin (New York: Newman Press, 1972).

subservience to the predominant Alexandrian method employed since Chalcedon. The bankruptcy of the Chalcedonian formula, however, was dealt by the modern "from below" approach to the christological question. No longer was Christ's divinity the starting point for christological investigation and speculation. Rather, the fact of his humanity has become paramount in any viable methodology. Included in an adequate modern conception of Christ would be 1) the recognition of his genuine physical body, 2) a distinct self-consciousness, 3) a gradual growth to maturity, 4) rational, moral, and spiritual capacities, 5) the development of human knowledge subject to the limitations of trial and error, and 6) the genuine experiences of human temptation.<sup>17</sup> This approach from below now demanded a view of Christ's divinity which could be posited only if compatible with all the components of a full humanity. This undoubtedly ran the risk of defining deity strictly in anthropological terms--a risk which was actualized by the left-wing Hegelians.

The modern decision to advance beyond the Chalcedonian formula, however, could no longer be delayed. The difficulties posed by the problem of the unity of the person of Christ inherent in the Chalcedonian definition could not be overcome. In spite of recent attempts to reinterpret the doctrine of enhypostasia,<sup>18</sup> christology from below demanded the rejection of

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17. Adapted from Aldwinckle, 112-118, who summarizes the essential characteristics of human nature and personality from a philosophical, scientific, and psychological point of view.

18. See. H. M. Relton, A Study in Christology (London: SPCK, 1917), and R. G. Crawford, "The Relation of the Divinity and the

the primary--and traditionally offered--interpretation of Chalcedon that followed from Leontius' doctrine of Christ's impersonal humanity. With that the primary solution to the problem of the unity of Christ had to be abandoned. The resultant dualism left modern theology without the option of recognizing the two-nature formula as a continuing authority.

The inability of both Chalcedon and Constantinople to adequately meet the needs of modern christological thought had been clearly exposed. The ancient definitions appear untenable both theologically and philosophically. The import of the Chalcedonian formula is now limited primarily to its devotional or doxological value. For all intents and purposes, the pertinence of the two-nature doctrine to contemporary theology is negligible. On one front, its terminology and emphases have fallen short of the New Testament record. On the second, the history of dogma has revealed the lack of unanimity which surrounded the formula without which its claim to catholicity is undermined. The "majority" vote at Chalcedon hardly suffices against the onslaught of both the immediate as well as modern hostilities. Finally, the revolution of modern theology along with its corollary disciplines have not only opened the door toward a contemporary view of Christ, but demanded at the very least a reinterpretation of the Chalcedonian creed, if not its absolute rejection.

Unfortunately, the influence of liberalism has denied the

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Humanity in Christ," Evangelical Quarterly 53:4 (1981), 237-240.

possibility of reinterpretation on a priori grounds and opted rather for a reductionism which has dispensed altogether with the idea of the incarnation and preferred to identify Christ as the fullest expression of humanity. On the other hand the conservative response has called for faithfulness to Chalcedon as the terminal point of orthodox speculation on the mystery of the person of Christ.<sup>19</sup> The modern theologian, however, need not succumb to either extreme. The necessity of articulating a christology apart from the two-nature terminology and formulation of Chalcedon is not only imperative but possible. Our reconstruction will attempt to avoid the pitfalls encountered in the historical development of christology while remaining true to the letter and spirit of the New Testament.

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19. Berkouwer, 87, lucidly summarizes the views of F. W. Korff who "calls a halt at Chalcedon" in its negative definition of Christ as "very God and very man;" cf. also his insightful Chapter V, "Chalcedon A Terminal Point."

## CHAPTER 9

### A Preliminary Christological Reconstruction

No criticism of Chalcedonian doctrine of Christ as one person in two natures would be fair or complete without the proposal of an alternative christological "model."<sup>1</sup> At the same time, one cannot completely disregard the contribution of the Chalcedonian fathers to the christological task. While we have demonstrated that the two-nature terminology and formulation is outmoded for a contemporary christology, the essence of Chalcedon which gave a definitive shape and structure to Christian orthodoxy needs to be reconstructed and recast for the modern age if it is to be continuous with the historic Christian tradition. We can agree, therefore, with Aldwinckle who said, "Chalcedon's 'finality' is not the end but . . . the starting point of further reflection."<sup>2</sup> The crux of a contemporary Christian christology, however, must also be first and foremost defensible biblically, as well as coherent according to the philosophical and conceptual categories of the modern era. We will proceed by noting the essential elements of the Chalcedonian doctrine, and then define its connection both with the Scriptural data and the methods and emphases of modern christology.

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1. Taken primarily in the sense used both by McIntyre and John F. O'Grady, Models of Jesus (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1982). We will discuss O'Grady's models in more detail below.

2. Aldwinckle, 43.

### Chalcedon and Christological Models

S. Davis has asserted that "What the Fathers at Chalcedon produced was not an explanation of the Incarnation (that was wisely left to the individual theologians) but rather a guide-<sup>3</sup>  
line." He then further defines the boundaries of Chalcedonian orthodoxy to be that which "affirms the divinity, the humanity,<sup>4</sup> and the unity of the person of Christ." While Davis argues that modern christology can be successful within those boundaries, we can see he did not insist strictly on the Chalcedonian "two-natures" terminology. We can agree with Davis simply because the modern concepts of divinity and humanity do not carry with them the baggage of static hellenistic philosophy. Therefore, his formulation poses no insurmountable objections to the christological task. As we have asserted above, only as long as the Chalcedonian terms of "person" and "nature" are employed according to the substantive categories of thought characteristic of the ancient church do the problems emerge and remain.

In further determining the "guidelines" set for orthodox christology by the Chalcedonian Fathers, we are reminded by Lane that in spite of all the ontological affirmations of the Definition, the "dominant concern underlying their Christology<sup>5</sup> was soteriological (and therefore functional)." His point is well taken. Chalcedon demanded that Christ's true humanity be

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3. Stephen T. Davis, "Is 'truly God and truly man' coherent?" Christian Scholars Review 9:3 (1980), 224, emphasis his.

4. Ibid.

3. Lane, 264.



recognized in following the soteriological premise set forth by Gregory of Nazianzus. It was primarily their inadequate concept of God in absolutely transcendent and apathetic terms that drove the Fathers to their distinctive formulation.<sup>6</sup> Whatever "functionalism" that remained was therefore overwhelmed by the ontic categories of thought which were necessary to adequately refute the rampant christological heresies of their time. While ontology is ultimately inescapable in the task of christological construction, it would benefit from a renewed emphasis on the work of Christ in conjunction with his person. As N. Anderson succinctly stated, "no understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation can be true to the biblical revelation unless it also explains the meaning and significance of the Atonement. . . . For soteriology and Christology are inextricably bound together."<sup>7</sup>

The question before us then, is whether the essence of Chalcedon--i.e., that Christ is one person, divine as well as human--can (1) be translated into an adequate model for modernity and post-modernity that improves on the "two-nature" formula while (2) not neglecting its soteriological emphasis. The former's "from above" approach has often been understood to be diametrically opposed to the latter's "from below" perspective. In arguing for the continual relevance of the Chalcedonian

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6. Colin Gunton, Yesterday and Today: A Study of Continuities in Christology (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 100, has accurately stated that "the two-nature doctrine was developed in part to resist any reduction of time to eternity or eternity to time."

7. Anderson, 137.

formula, Runia questions whether

the model used by John (and also by Paul and the writers of Hebrews, who with John are the representatives of the approach 'from above') is just 'a' model that can be discarded and replaced at will. Or does it represent the most comprehensive and inclusive model, which is able to incorporate all the valuable elements of other models, while the latter models are too limited to include the fundamental concern of the incarnational model? 8

Runia's skepticism regarding the validity of other models is well founded, especially in light of the dominance of the Chalcedonian formulation for almost two-thirds of the history of the church. J. F. O'Grady, however, has listed seven criteria by which all christological models should be assessed:

1. a firm basis in Scripture
2. compatibility with the Christian tradition
3. a capacity to help Christians in their efforts to believe in Jesus
4. a capacity to direct believers to fulfill their mission as members of the church
5. correspondence with the Christian religious experience
6. theological fruitfulness
7. the ability to foster a good sense of Christian anthropology. 9

Interestingly, while writing as a loyal Catholic, O'Grady's  
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 analysis of the six major models leads him to conclude that the

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8. Runia, 77, emphasis his.

9. O'Grady, 197-198. It would seem that O'Grady has left one key ingredient off his list--that of truth, both in its salvific/existential as well as its ontological sense. It may be inferred that he intends to subsume the question of truth under one or more of his other criterias, but his failure to explicitly denote that raises the question in our minds.

10. The major models discussed by O'Grady are the traditional Nicene-Chalcedonian formulation, the "Mythological Christ"

predominant paradigm of Chalcedonian christology is the weakest, while tentatively suggesting that the model of

Jesus as the human face of God offers the greatest possibilities [for the modern era] since it includes in it a sense of social mission as well as what-Jesus-means-for-me, and maintains the divinity without the limitations often associated with the [Incarnational] model. 11

O'Grady views this model as falling considerably short under criterias number two and six, but nevertheless opts for its relevance based on its strengths vis-a-vis the other standards.

While we do not uncritically accept O'Grady's assessment, we concur in rejecting the terminology as well as the traditional understanding of the doctrine of the two-natures of Christ as irrelevant to our time. At the same time, we disagree with his views as to the weaknesses of his preferred "Jesus-as-the-human-face-of-God" model. In the first place, it does not reject the essence of theological orthodoxy. Rather "Jesus has the human face of God" marks a distinct advance over the traditional formulations on two points: Whereas, traditional christology has floundered on the rocks of terminological incoherence and the tendency toward conventional misinterpretation, O'Grady's model avoids both pitfalls. Secondly, we would debate that this model is theologically impoverished relative to any of the others, or

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of liberal Christianity, "Jesus the Ethical Liberator" which is overwhelmingly functional in its approach, the "Human face of God" (reminiscent of Robinson, but not fully following all of his presuppositions), the existentially oriented "Man for Others", and the "Personal Savior" of Christian Pietism.

11. Ibid., 204-205.

even in contrast to Chalcedon. Theological value is weighed only with the passage of time, and the relative youth of this model pleads for the opportunity to manifest its richness and vitality. Already, however, the merits of this model for the entire spectrum of theology has proven immense primarily due to the power of its relevance. At the same time, we will argue below that when elaborated within a sufficiently trinitarian context, the model of Jesus as the humanity of God<sup>12</sup> is viable also in a strictly theological sense, as well as adducing a coherent philosophical ontology. Both the divine as well as the human aspects of Christ argued for by the Chalcedonian Fathers are preserved without dividing his essential unity--a unity of person that is imperative for any viable modern christology. Before we proceed to that, however, we must first enumerate the biblical bases on which this model is founded.

### The Standard of Scripture

It should be clear by now that the epistolary emphasis in the New Testament on the work of Christ follows on the heels of the picture of the historical Jesus preserved in the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels. It was a fully human Jesus who interacted with his natural environment and presented himself as the risen Christ in his post-Easter epiphanies. As argued in Chapter One, further reflection by the primitive Christian community on the unique

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12. This is in contrast to O'Grady's and Robinson's "human face of God," and similar to the later position of K. Barth. The difference, however, between my label and O'Grady's or Robinson's is more semantical than essential.

significance of the person of Christ along with the kerygmatic function of his evangelion combined to form the beginnings of an ontological concept of the risen Lord by the end of the first century. What is of utmost importance, however, is that the title of "Son" is dispersed throughout the New Testament as both a recognized and self-accepted appellation of Christ. While a detailed analysis of both the titles, "Son of God" and "Son of Man" are beyond the scope of this study,<sup>13</sup> they are of immeasurable value for the construction of a modern biblical christology.

In the first place, the concept of "Son" is a first order or revelational model for christology. It is biblically precise, and its use is unobjectionable on that basis. At the same time, its doxological and liturgical power has proven to be unsurpassed (except perhaps when compared with the title "Lord" which carries similar authority). As C. Gunton has observed, "if we are to find an authentically modern christological language it must be that which reality gives us as we orient ourselves to it through<sup>14</sup> the language of worship and tradition."

Secondly, however, the concept of sonship entails relationship. This dynamic aspect of the person of Christ is much more congruent with the modern understanding of personhood than are the terms of the Chalcedonian definition. R. Bauckham has acutely noted and accurately insisted that in spite of the

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13. See especially Oscar Cullman, The Christology of the New Testament (cf. Chapter 1, note 28) and Vincent Taylor, The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching (London: Macmillan, 1958).

14. Gunton, Yesterday and Today, 149, emphasis his.

predications "of Man" and "of God," Jesus' sonship is not divided but rather descriptive and applicable to him as an individual personality. At the same time, Bauckham asserts that they continue to possess significant implications for our understanding of the divine and the human in Christ:

What then will it mean to call Jesus' sonship divine sonship? As the divine Son he is God's existence in the world for man, the Son for other sons. For God to be the Son in this way, as Jesus of Nazareth was, means that he seeks other sons. For God to reveal himself as the Father of Jesus of Nazareth means that he will be the Father of other men. To see the sonship of the historical Jesus grounded in the eternal Trinitarian being of the Father and the Son is to see the eternal Trinity open in love to men. In the sonship of Jesus God provides a new possibility of human existence out of the resources of love of his own inner being. 15

Some, however, may object to Bauckham's conclusion that "Jesus' sonship is not to be distinguished as divine or human."<sup>16</sup> In reply, it must be noted that the predication of divinity to the person of Christ is still fundamentally confessional at its core. Aside from the biblical definition of God as spirit, it is only in the person of Christ himself that the essence and character of God is evidenced. Thus, the advantage of Bauckham's proposal over the Chalcedonian formula is clear. It focuses away from "the relation between the Logos and the man Jesus, about which the historical evidence is silent, [and] on the relationships of Jesus to his Father and to men, to which the evidence of

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15. Richard Bauckham, "The Sonship of the Historical Jesus in Christology," Scottish Journal of Theology 31:3 (1978), 260.

16. Ibid.

his consciousness of sonship is relevant."<sup>17</sup>

Of special interest in shedding light on Jesus' relationship to the Father is his use of the Aramaic abba as an invocation to God. Following the exegesis of NT scholar J. Jeremias, the Jesuit J. Guillet notes that "abba was an everyday word, a homely family word, a secular word, the tender address of a child to his father. . . . No Jew would have dared to address God in this manner."<sup>18</sup> The implication of the uniqueness of this relationship for both the consciousness as well as the passion of Christ is clear.

While we will delve further into the ramifications of the passion of Christ below, we need to clarify at this point that we are not proposing a psychological model of Christ which the concept of sonship and of consciousness suggests.<sup>19</sup> Our position is simply that the New Testament records reflect a distinct consciousness of God in the historical person of Jesus Christ. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, the primitive Christian community confessed an atoning work which accomplished reconciliation between God and humankind. The one person, Jesus Christ, was recognized as the mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) of this atonement, and he who accepted the title "Son of Man" was then understood to

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17. Ibid.

18. Jacques Guillet, The Consciousness of Jesus (New York: Newman Press, 1972), 206.

19. E. L. Mascall, Christ, the Christian and the Church, quoted in McIntyre, 140-141, has argued that "christological doctrine is not primarily psychological but ontological. No amount of discussion of our Lord's psychology can have any direct bearing on the Catholic creeds and the Chalcedonian definition."

also be the "Son of God."

The connection between soteriology (functionalism) and christology proper (ontology) should at least begin to emerge at this point. Christ could only accomplish redemption if he were both divine as well as human. However, neither should the person of Christ be rendered subservient to his work, nor vice versa. We are aware of the dangers of a solely degree christology which have been posited especially in the modern period. Therefore, while we affirm that Christ was both divine as well as human in an ontological sense, we deny that this "sense" can be defined in explicit or synonymous terms due to the qualitative distinction between the two. As previously noted, the canon of Scripture permits us to speak of the divinity of Christ while plainly declaring his humanity; however, it is silent with regard to the relationship between the two, content solely with the definition of the unity of Christ's personhood and his relationship to both the Father as well as his fellow humanity.

#### Toward a Modern Christology

Clearly, if we are to begin to speculate on the relationship between the divine and the human in Christ, we must proceed from below. Modern christology has no other option. Even the Christ of the Christian faith is grounded in the historical personality of Jesus of Nazareth. Christ's deity is not arrived at by any other means except through the witness of the New Testament (whose approach was also that from below). Admittedly, Hebblethwaite has a point when he argues that "only if one both begins and ends with Jesus the man does one's Christology remain



thoroughly earthbound--'from below'--throughout."<sup>20</sup> Our reconstruction, however, is not limited to a purely naturalist methodology. We are only insisting that the role of faith and confession be recognized as distinctive human responses to divine revelation. In that light, two final issues need to be addressed: on the one hand, we will need to outline the ontological bases on which the unity of the person of the Son is predicated, and on the other, a cogent defense of the unity between the Son and the Father--intrinsic to the doctrine of the Trinity--must be elucidated.

Throughout our reconstruction, we have suggested that the model of Jesus as the humanity of God is most viable for modern christology. It is biblically anchored in the sonship of Christ as well as the historical reality of Jesus of Nazareth. When pressed to conceptualize in substantive terms, the proposed speculations of P. Schoonenberg's enhypostasia of the Logos in the human Jesus affords the most plausible modern solution to the age-old and venerated structure of Leontius of Byzantium. It would be difficult to undermine Schoonenberg's christology due to its contextual relevance as long as we accept the Byzantium's traditional doctrine of enhypostasia which was formulated under different historical constraints.

Fortunately, however, Schoonenberg's model is not the only available construction. If the findings of modern anthropology

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20. Hebblethwaite, 80. Gunton, Yesterday and Today, 31, also cautions that we "build a christology after the pattern of our own alienated humanity."

and psychology are accurate, it is no longer an option to conceptualize on the person of Christ in dualistic terms. To be strictly contemporary, the unity of the person of Christ should not even be in question. The unity as defined by Chalcedon is a misnomer as it uses "'person' without implication of the separate cognitive (self-)awareness, in a way which is incompatible with modern psychology and universal way of speaking."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, in order to preserve the essential unity of the person of Christ which is reflected in the Scriptures, it is possible only to speak coherently of one nature in Christ--that which pertains to his person.

Here, we are building on the the work of R. W. Leigh, who argues for a one "God-man" nature of Jesus based on the doctrine of the imago Dei. This allows him to be a third classification (although not a tertium quid since he qualifies for both of the primary classifications) by the inclusion of properties essential to both divinity as well as to humanity.<sup>22</sup> Especially important in our estimation (although Leigh endeavors to arrive at this notion rather than pre-supposing it) is his view that the "nature of Jesus is determinative for our understanding of the essence of the nature of man, as well as for our understanding of the essence of the nature of God."<sup>23</sup> This allows us to accu-

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21. Robert North, "Soul-Body Unity and God-Man Unity," Theological Studies 30:1 (1969), 59.

22. Cf. Ronald W. Leigh, "Jesus: the one-natured God-man," Christian Scholars Review, 11:2 (1982), 124-137.

23. Ibid., 137.

rately recognize the fullness of Jesus' humanity while at the same time allowing for the presence of deity. Rather than viewing this approach as a blatant antinomy, we assert that it recognizes the spiritual truth enunciated in the Johannine Prologue: "The Word became flesh." As R. North concludes, "the living being is not matter plus life, but living matter; man is not body plus soul, but animated body; Christ is not a human nature plus God, and not 'God assuming a human nature,' but God-<sup>24</sup>  
become-man."

If then the historical Jesus is to be identified as the Son of God, and his person is to be undivided against himself, then the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity unfolds in a new light following a re-reading of the Gospel accounts. The words and actions of Jesus--previously incomprehensible they were understood as a mysterious interaction between the two natures--are now rendered explicable when viewed in relationship to the Father. The passion of Christ is no longer subject to the vain theological and philosophical speculations which earlier theologians felt obligated to devise both for apologetic as well as for logical reasons. Christ suffered fully as the God-man. While previously only the suffering of the human nature and body was obvious, the emphasis now on the ontological suffering of the whole person is allowed. It is here that the modern concept of a passible deity is brought especially into focus. Truly, the good news that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"

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24. North, 59, emphasis his. North's argument is a modern revision of Augustine's version of the soul-body unity of Christ.

(2 Cor. 5:19) can be proclaimed without hesitation. The indivisible unity of the person of Christ resulting from the Logos' becoming man is the ontological basis by which the eternal God effects reconciliation for an alienated race.

At the same time, the trinitarian history of God allows for a genuine separation between Father and Son--to the point of "death"--as part of the purchase price for human redemption. The ancient heresy of patripassianism is avoided and replaced by a biblical theocompassianism. The danger of tritheism is circumvented primarily by staying within the boundaries of Scriptural terminology. At the same time, the subordinationist texts are rendered intelligible: the Son is functionally and voluntarily yielded to the initiative of the Father. Nowhere, however, can the charge of metaphysical subordinationism be levelled against this construction without assailing the very core of the Gospel narratives.

We are aware that some may object to our proposed reconstruction to be revival of ancient monophysitism. We would reply, however, that the monophysitism of the late patristic age was defined strictly within the parameters of Cyrillian Alexandrianism: the dominance of the Logos in the human Christ was taken for granted. This contrasts significantly from our ontological "monophysitism" as approached "from below" thus limiting the possibility of speculative error which is unbounded by the opposite method.

It is apparent that Jesus understood as the humanity of God preserves both the biblical functional and soteriological

emphases, as well as the divine-human dialectic of Chalcedonian ontology. Other advantages include a more coherent doctrine of both the immanent as well as economic Trinity. Finally, the model presupposes both a theology and anthropology which are compatible with modern modes of discourse. The essence of Chalcedon is contextualized without resorting to its antiquated terminology. The words of Emil Brunner--whose dialectical christology avoided the archaic terminology of Chalcedon--written over half a century ago are still appropriate for a truly viable contemporary christology:

The Mediator is the Mediator just because--as One who belongs to both sides--He can stand at the same time both with God above men and with men beneath God. He would not be the Mediator apart from this two-fold character--it is precisely this dual character which is the characteristic of Mediatorship. 25

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25. Brunner, The Mediator, 353.

## APPENDIX

### The Definition of Chalcedon, 451<sup>\*</sup>

Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance [homoousios] with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer [Theotokos]; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized IN TWO NATURES, WITHOUT CONFUSION, WITHOUT CHANGE, WITHOUT DIVISION, WITHOUT SEPARATION; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence [hypostasis], not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.

\* From Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church, 51-52.

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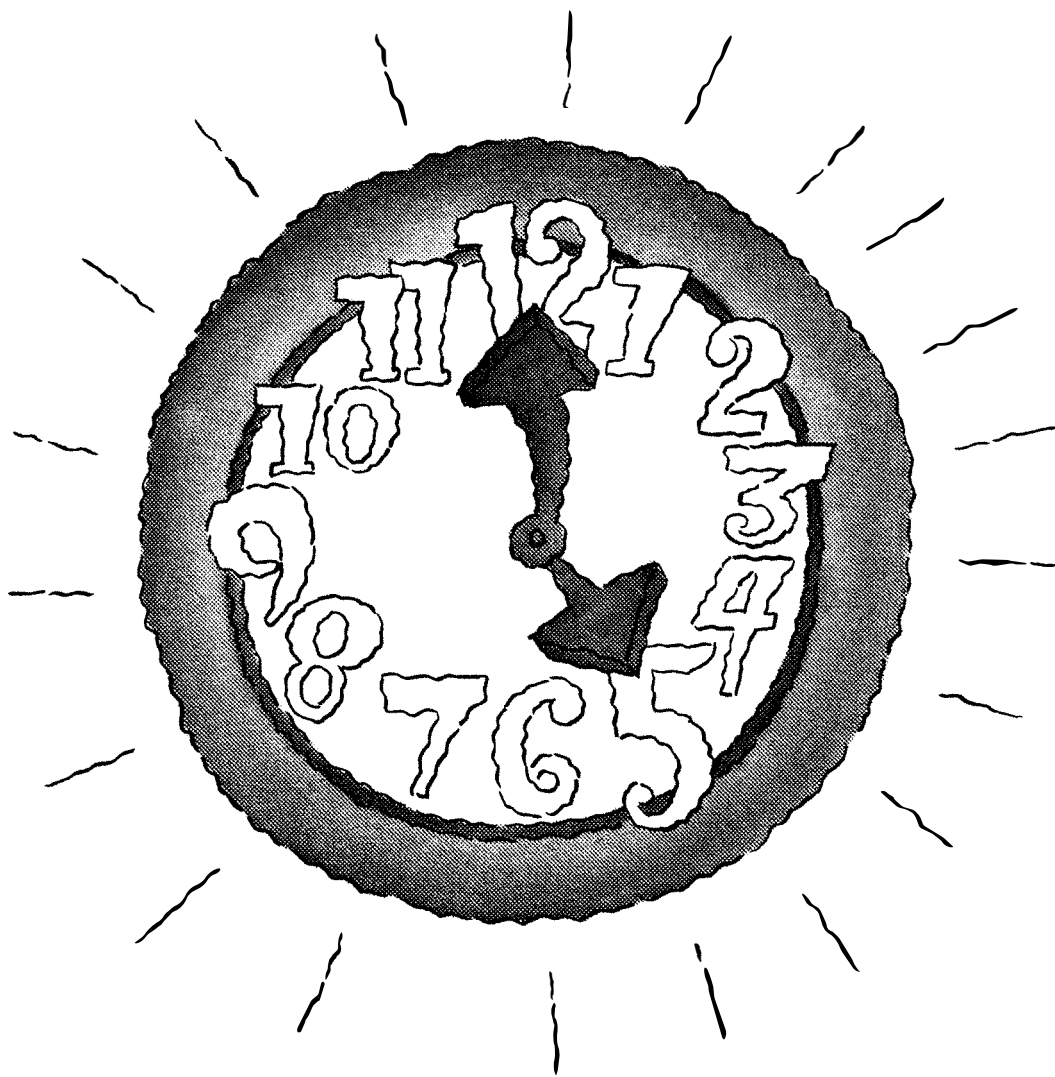
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