

A Review and an Evaluation of Diverse Christological Opinions among American Evangelicals: Part 3: Incarnational Christology

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Abstract²

The writer, himself an American Evangelical, is discussing, in three articles, areas in which American Evangelicals disagree about how God the Son relates to God the Father and the meaning and effects of the true humanity and the true deity in Christ. Each position will be defined and exemplified. The rationale offered by proponents of each major position is provided. Evaluations are made. The first article focused primarily on the ancient doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son as held by some American Evangelicals but denied by others. The second article was used to consider the issue, within the perimeters of evangelicalism in America, of whether the Son is eternally or temporally only relationally subordinate to God the Father. This third article is devoted to addressing several different understandings within American Evangelicalism regarding the Incarnation. It will briefly cover Kenotic theory, views about what it means to say that Christ is true Man and true God, and how the two natures in the one Person of Christ relate to each other. Therefore, while this series is certainly connected to more general Trinitarian thought, the articles are written especially to focus on Christ. Aside from just exposing, perhaps for the first time to some readers, a number

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² The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

of the considerable differences among Trinitarians regarding the doctrines of God and Christ, it is hoped by the writer that these articles might also provide material useful to some to better understand the blessed Person of Jesus Christ our God, our Lord, and our Savior. To Him be glory forever.

1. Introduction

The inability of evangelicals to agree on so central a doctrine as what basically constitutes the essential Person of Christ justifiably compels one to question either the perspicuity of Scripture or, with a sounder rationale and a happier outcome, the efficiency of the exegetical and theological method used in some quarters. One might assume that the ecumenical Creed of 451 would do much to unify Christological tenets among Evangelicals who say that they hold to it, but that assumption would be wrong. Of course, as Harnack illustrates with Basilikus (1961:227-228) and Grillmeier with the Alexandrians (1975:548), we would not expect non-Chalcedonian Christologists, as also exemplified below by modern anti-Chalcedonians, to agree with that Creed's affirmation that Christ is perfect in manhood, that His manhood includes a rational soul, that the human nature is *distinct* from the divine, that its properties are preserved in *separateness* from the deity, yet that both natures concur in one Person (Schaff 1983:62). And that formula rightly provides this description of the true and complete humanity of the Saviour, distinct from His deity, as Scripture seems to affirm without hesitation. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to suppose that Chalcedon effects much uniformity of belief over some of these issues, even among its modern evangelical adherents.

I do not see how any Biblicist can question the integrity of the humanity of Christ, namely, that He is just as human as we are, given the emphatic Biblical teaching on it. Christ is a Man (John 4:29; Acts 2:22; Rom 5:15; 1 Tim 2:5). He has a human soul (John 12:27). And, that term, *psuchē*, can mean “the locus of emotional movement of the psychological life” (Schweitzer 1981:649), or “the seat of man's intellect or emotions” (Morey 1984:65). How can anything which is not truly a human have such human faculties? Further, Christ has the limitations of a man. While God is not tempted (Jas 1:13), as Man, Christ is tempted (Heb 4:15), although He never yielded to such tests (1 Pet 2:22). As Man, our Lord wearies (John 4:6), falls asleep (Luke 8:23), and

does not know some things (Mark 13:32), but such are not the experiences of deity. So, either nature experiences in distinction from the other. The intellect of God does not grow, but the intellect of the Manhood of Christ does (Luke 2:40, 52; Heb 5:8). These observations are important, and lest I be accused of just impractically theorizing, note that wrestling with such questions may have practical benefits.

This article is not an exercise in vain theory only; it has a praxis component too—unless we doubt that living for Christ and understanding the Gospels are practical. The topics of this article are related to other major doctrines and even to the Christian life. Unless Christ is truly Man, in distinction from His deity, as Chalcedon referenced above asserts, how can His rejection of temptation be any example for us to follow, as both Paul (Phil 2:5) and Peter (1 Pet 2:21) say it is? I am man facing temptation—not God. Or, if that is not a Man suffering the Passion, then why must or how is Christ made like His brethren in all things as Hebrews in 2:17 insists? His humanity is required, that text says, for the propitiation He makes.

So, unless we understand the humanity of Christ, how shall we comprehend His maturation or His vicarious atonement? Is that God's nature which suckles at Mary's bosom in order to receive life giving sustenance? Does God not have life in Himself? Is that God who increases in size and understanding? Is God not unchangeable? Is that God who is led by the Spirit of God to be tempted by Satan in the wilderness? Does the divine faculty of will in Christ submit itself to the divine faculty of will in the Father, as if God has two or three faculties of wills of varying degrees of sovereignty? Is that God who is worn out while walking through Samaria? Is God not omnipotent? Is that God so troubled that He sheds great drops of sweat as blood in Gethsemane? Does a whip cause injury to the back of God's nature or do thorns or nails or a spear pierce His flesh? Can God die? Can burial cloth be wrapped around God? Can God rise from the dead? Can we see in God's resurrected flesh the holes in His hands and His side? Is God's nature not rather spirit and invisible? Is it not the humanity of Christ which is the Subject of all of these and, yes, which together with the immutable and impervious deity of Christ constitutes the one Person? We have significant motivations, therefore, to contemplate the answers to such questions by rigorously interacting with the issues which involve Incarnational Christology. And "issues" is the right word, not "issue".

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The subject includes several difficult questions. First, certainly the topic of the integrity of Christ's human nature is at the forefront of the discussion. But second, while pursuing that topic, it must be questioned also whether the Incarnation affected the integrity of the deity of Christ (see Erickson below). Else, how can it be decided that the incarnated Christ is both true God and true Man? Did God the Son lose the divine essence, or any attributes, or even any use of these? Then, assuming that one arrives at the Chalcedonian understanding that Christ has both a true human nature and a true divine nature, a cluster of several problems concerning how one of these natures relates to the other in Christ needs to be faced. But even these topics do not exhaust what I wish to do in this last article. For I feel a compulsion to selectively integrate nearly two millennia of thought into such things, and this invests the subjects with even more substance.

Despite the promise implied in the general title of these three articles to focus on the Trinal thought and Christology in American evangelicalism, I must abandon somewhat that limiting qualification in this final article. Historical theology simply provides too efficient an asset to help one understand, classify, and evaluate views on incarnational Christology to forego explanations of the opining of earlier theologians along with modern ones. Therefore, I must try to not only weave into the fabric of the discussion of the integrity of our Lord's humanity such issues as whether even a mild form of kenotic theory is theologically tenable, whether one nature invests the other with its attributes (see Pieper below), and whether each nature in Christ is capable of knowing, willing, experiencing, and acting in distinction from the other, I also must attempt to describe the views of the ancients on some of these matters, and not just those of American moderns. These ancients and moderns, with varying degrees of success, and only by contradicting of each others' opinions at every turn, have tried to define what it means to believe that Christ is the God-Man.

In attempting this, I will divide the selected 25-30 theologians to be discussed into two camps. First, I will summarize and critique the opinions of those who in various times and manners have placed what I think are unwarranted qualifications on the humanity of Christ. These have been called "Word-Flesh" Christologists (Grillmeier 1975:132, 166, 288). Their basic position is that Christ lacks some human faculties as intellect or volition, and that as a

result the humanity of Christ cannot know, experience, and will in distinction from the deity of Christ. So, it is God who lacks knowledge or falls asleep or suffers. God is the Subject—not Man—of all that Christ does. Second, I will do the same for the views of some who assert that the human nature is complete, having all the faculties of a man and consequently is able itself to know, will, experience, and act in distinction from the divine nature, not being dependent on the divine nature to be the Subject of all of such activities. These have been called “Word-Man” Christologists (Grillmeier 1975:287-477, *passim*). Yet, no one in either camp will say that the humanity of Christ exists apart from the Person.

Not being impaired by the humility and modesty which should adorn theologians, I have reached my own conclusions as to what is right and what is wrong on these mysterious matters. I believe firstly that in incarnating, God the Son lost nothing—not even divine attributes or the use of these. Secondly, I believe that the human nature of Christ wills, acts, and experiences in distinction from the divine nature, but not in separation from the one Person. What I wish to assert is that the second group of theories below evidence that these beliefs have been accepted among both ancients and moderns. My thesis, therefore, is this: *It is within orthodox Christology to believe that in the Incarnation of Christ the deity lost nothing, and the humanity acts and experiences.*

2. Discussion

2.1. Theories Which Limit Christ’s Humanity

Apollinarius

Heick misrepresents Apollinarius’ views when he states that the Bishop of Laodicea held that Christ “is both God and man” (1965:171). It is rather the case that Apollinarius maintained that “it is inconceivable that the same person be both God and entire man.” Consequently, Christ has “God as His spirit—that is, His intellect ...”. The incarnation could not have been accomplished if “there was also a human intellect in Christ”. Further, Christ “is ... moved only by a divine will. ... His activity is one” (Apollinarius 1980:107-111).

But how is that which lacks a human will and intellect man? The effect of these assertions by Apollinarius is that Christ is not completely human, and that the Subject of all the actions and experiences of Christ is the divine Word. This Christology, as is commonly known, was condemned in 381 at Constantinople during the second Ecumenical Council. Yet Apollinarius' basic notion, that God alone is the Subject of all the actions and experiences of Christ, inheres in the Christology of a number of writers, both ancient and modern too, as I shall now show.

Athanasius

It just must be accepted as an unfortunate fact that the most worthy among us is capable of not expressing Christology in what I would call correct terms. The defender of the Trinity of God seemingly may be found guilty of not adequately representing the humanity of Christ. Athanasius did not deny, as did his friend Apollinarius, that Christ has a human rational soul. But if it is true that Christ has such, then that human soul must be the Subject of some of Christ's actions. Otherwise, what is the function of that soul? Yet Athanasius repetitiously describes the Incarnation of Christ as the Word taking a body and the activities of Christ as the Logos moving that body around (Athanasius 1999:36-67).

This is not, in my opinion, proper Christology. It is not a satisfactory description of the deeds of Christ in the Gospels. A mere human body, animated only by the Logos, does not have human intellectual limitations because God has none. True man is not just God moving a body around.

Buswell

Even a modern evangelicals are not exempt from Apollinarius' error, as the writing of this Reformed theologian evidences. While affirming that the eternal Son became man, Buswell, nevertheless, asserts that the Incarnation is not God the Son adding humanity, but turning into humanity. This means that "His personal eternal being, His (divine) soul, became a human person, a human soul ...". Christ's human will is not a faculty which makes choices, but only "a behaviour complex". The human nature is God as a person (Buswell 1976, vol. 1:55, 251; vol. 2, 30, 54)

But how do such explanations fit the definition of Chalcedon? The framers of that Creed believed that Christ has two complete natures; one nature did not merge with the other, resulting in there being only one nature. Christ's humanity is like ours in all things except sin, yet our own humanity is not made out of the essence or person of God. Christ's two natures are said to be distinct; it is not that one changes into the other. The qualities of each nature are preserved; they are not blended together. Buswell seems closer to Apollinarius, or even to Eutyches—whom Harnack, I think correctly, describes as holding that there is “one incarnate nature of the divine Logos” (1961:197)—than he (Buswell) is to Chalcedon. Harnack (1961:197) correctly describes Buswell as holding that there is “one incarnate nature of the divine Logos”. Thus, Buswell seems closer to Apollinarius, or even to Eutyches, than to Chalcedon.

Cyril of Alexandria

A uniform Christology in Cyril is difficult to confirm with certainty. He may have been inconsistent over time in his views. Cyril also may have used ambiguous terminology or the same terms with different meanings (Norris 1980:27). The result is that opinions vary widely as to whether this father is rightly thought to have been a stalwart adherent to Chalcedon's Christology or instead to have been an unorthodox Monophysite (one who holds the belief that there is only one nature in Christ). Schmaus (1984:223) says that by “nature” (both *hypostasis* and *ousia*), Cyril, in applying these terms to Christ's humanity, at least sometimes meant “a concrete individual entity with its own activity”. Therefore, Schmaus insists that Cyril could not have been a Monophysite. On the other hand, Harnack (1961:178-179) claims that Cyril was a Monophysite, teaching that after the Incarnation, Christ out of two natures had but one. Perhaps I can do no better in such a brief review as this than to make some tentative conclusions based on a few observations of what Cyril, himself, wrote and what some of his contemporaries thought he believed.

In *Adversus Anthropomorphitus*, Cyril wrote that the ignorance of Christ as depicted in Mark 13:32 was merely a deception made on the part of the divine

Word (Bruce 1905:366).³ Christ only appeared (*dokein*) to be ignorant; He really knew all things.⁴ Cyril's position rather sounds Docetic. Tentatively I conclude that we seemingly see Cyril implying that that some of the limitations of Christ depicted in the Gospels are not genuine experiences of His humanity at all but are only a condition feigned by His deity.

Second, the above conclusion on Cyril's understanding is consistent with the fourth of the twelve Anathemas, as provided in Ferm (1964:163), which Cyril heaped on Nestorius' head in 431 at Ephesus. Cyril denied that any text in the New Testament can pertain to only one of Christ's natures. If that contention were true, there would be no room for the activity of Christ's humanity. However, that which is truly human is capable of being the subject of its own actions.

Third, Cyril, according to Grillmeier (1975:473-474), accepted the *mia phusis* (one nature) formula of Apollinarius, which Succenus (according to Cyril's second letter to Succenus) so vigorously found to be a fault in Cyril's Christology.⁵

And finally, were Cyril consistently demonstrating an adherence to what would be soon be codified by Chalcedon, then how could Eutyches in his trial dare argue that he, Eutyches, in believing that Christ is one nature *ek duo phuseōn* (from two natures) only taught what Cyril taught? Eutyches vainly pleads: "I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the incarnation, but after the union one nature ... [In so doing] I follow the teaching of the blessed Cyril" (Ferm 1964:170). It seems highly unlikely that Eutyches would use a lie about Cyril before those who knew Cyril. Consequently, there is reason to suspect that Cyril's position, at least sometimes, was that the humanity of Christ is neither capable of being the Subject of action nor is it a nature distinct from the deity.

³ A.B. Bruce's (1905) *The Humiliation of Christ* is a helpful book on the history of Christology. Unfortunately, I think that it is out of print. But in it are excerpts from several of Cyril's writings in the original Greek with the English translation.

⁴ This is contrary to Schmaus' (1984:223) view, who holds that Cyril believed the humanity in Christ is an individual entity with its own activity.

⁵ For a contrary view on the meaning of *mia phusis* in Cyril, which view wrestles Cyril awkwardly back into orthodoxy, see Adam (1971:105-109).

Waheeb and Sarkissian: non-Chalcedonian Christology

These are two non-Chalcedonian Christologists. The first, Waheeb, was a professor at the Coptic Theological Seminary in Cairo. He believed that after the Incarnation there is only one nature. Sarkissian was a bishop in the Armenian Apostolic Church in Cilicia. He taught that there is one united nature in Christ (*mia phusis*) which is from two (*ek duo phuseōn*). Here are their supporting argument, with my brief reply after each one (see Tapia 1971:341-353):

1. *No single Biblical text proves that Christ is of two natures.* But, we are required to synthesize Scriptural doctrine, which teaches both the immutability of God and the humanity of Christ. There are, besides, such texts as Romans 1:3-4 and 9:5, which allude to both natures.
2. *Acts 20:28 says that the blood shed is God's.* There is, of course, some support for the variant reading “church of the Lord” (Metzger 1985:480-482). But, even were the original “church of God”, Hodge based on his *Christology* comments that here “the Person is designated from the divine nature when the predicate is true of only the human nature” (1981:393). Bruce, based on his understanding of the grammar says the translation should be, “by means of the blood of His own one.”(1979:416)
3. *The two-nature doctrine does not denote a real union.* But the blending of deity and humanity into one nature is a denial of both the immutability of God and the integrity of the humanity of Christ.
4. *Were only Man crucified, there can be no redemption.* But God cannot die, and where does Scripture say that the flesh of the Man Christ is insufficient for redemption? It rather says, “there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).
5. *If Christ has two distinct natures, then Mary cannot be the Mother of God.* Agreed—Mary is the mother only of Christ's humanity.
6. *Man also has an earthly and spiritual element, but only has one nature.* But it is the humanity of Christ which is like us (Heb. 2:14, 17). Christ is not merely physical and spiritual, He is God and Man.
7. *Cyril rejected the two-nature doctrine of Chalcedon.* But, even if he did, we are not required to accept Cyrillian Christology.

Erickson and mild kenotic theory

Erickson asserts that in the Incarnation, God the Son was required to accept “certain limitations” on His divine attributes. For example, as an incarnate being, He was limited in exercising omnipresence (1985:735). Also, after the Incarnation, God the Son was no longer omniscient in Himself. He no longer had direct access to the consciousness of the Father and the Spirit (1984:223). Can there be two intellects in God, one omniscient and one not? If the infinite God cannot change (so Erickson 1985:274-279), then how can God become limited? These assertions require a mutability in God the Son, which Scripture does not seem to allow (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:12). Instead of denying God the use of His qualities, we should think of the divine Logos as existing both in Jesus’ humanity and outside His humanity.

Others have denied the kind of mutability Erickson supports. Calvin, for example, does not limit God the Son after the Incarnation to a confinement in the body of Jesus. Although the Son descended, He did not abandon heaven. While in the Virgin’s womb, He yet filled the world (outside the humanity) just as before. All properties of either nature, just as Chalcedon teaches, remain entire (Calvin 1979, sections II:XIII:4, II:XIV:1). So, how can God the Son lose or discontinue the use of any of His divine properties? Likewise, Grudem says that the eternal Son of God never ceased, *even “for a time”*, to be both omniscient and omnipresent (1994:551, italics added). So, the concept of God the Son, after the Incarnation, yet existing also out of the confines of His humanity is required to preserve God’s immutability, and God, given that concept, remains unlimited even after the Incarnation.

But how then can we explain the obvious limitations of Christ as depicted in the gospels, and how, given these, can Erickson not be right? The answer is simple. As Calvin and Grudem explain, the human nature in Christ experiences in distinction from the divine nature. But Erickson, by making these limitations apply to Christ’s divine too, is rejecting the view that the Subject of some of Christ’s activity is distinctly and only His humanity. In fact, Erickson says, “His actions were always those of divinity-humanity” (1985:735). So God grows, sleeps, and tires? These are circumstances only true of humanity.

Up to a point, the more we distinguish Christ's deity from His humanity, the more we affirm the integrity of both.

Pieper and the communion of attributes

Despite in one place affirming that Christ has a true and full humanity, replete with a rational soul and a human will (1951:67-68), a sub heading in volume 2 of Pieper's four volume *Dogmatics* is, "The Impersonality of the Human Nature of Christ". How can a human rationale soul and will be impersonal? According to Pieper (1951:80-81), there is no incarnation if the Man Christ is "personally distinct from the Son of God". Pieper takes Dorner's view (see below), that the humanity of Christ is personal, to be naive. It is naive because (a) were the Man Christ a separate person, there would be no incarnation, and (b) "the human nature of Christ is the *body* of the Son of God" (emphasis added). This, Pieper asserts, is evidenced by Colossians 2:9. How a soul and will are the equivalent of a body, Pieper does not explain.

Pieper's arguments for saying that "body" is the equivalent of what is Christ's humanity are flawed. Who is asserting that the humanity is a separate Person? Not even Nestorius said that. The humanity is distinct from the deity, and this means that the humanity experiences, wills, and acts in distinction from the divine, but not in separation from the Person. And if it does this, it is personal. Personality is not the precise equivalent of individual being. It is no more difficult to conceive of two acting and experiencing natures in the one Being—Christ—than it is to conceive of three Persons who act in the one Being of God. The alternative is to have a body moved around like a robot by the Logos.

The Incarnation is not a metamorphosis of deity into humanity; it is rather, as Feinberg correctly understands based on the modal participle *labōn* ("took") in Philippians 2:7, the adding of something (humanity), not a changing into something. If God is not changed into Man, then it seems that the Subject of the actions of Christ at times is His humanity and at other times is His deity—unless we incorrectly suppose that real humanity is God acting like a man.

As for Pieper's argument regarding "bodily" (*sōmatikōs*) in Colossians 2:9, there is considerable difference of opinion over what "in bodily form" means

(O'Brien 1982:112). Dunn suggests that *sōmatikōs* refers to "Jesus' life on earth" (1996:152). But "dwells" (*katoikei*) is present tense, so limiting the teaching of the text to the past seems improper. BAG (1952:807) suggests that Paul's point is the reality of the fullness in Christ, not a confinement of it to flesh. Lightfoot (1969:182) explains that as Paul did not write "*en somatikō*", he was not saying that God is "confined" in (*en*) the body, but rather that He is fully manifesting Himself through the body. Yes, the deity is manifested "through Him," but "Him" is more than a body. Colossians 2:9 does not say that the Incarnation is a changing of deity into a body; it also does not require that the body of Christ be His entire humanity.

In fact, I do not see how, given his understanding of the communication of attributes from the divine nature to the human nature, Pieper can think that the humanity in Christ is but the equivalent of Jesus' body. There are, Pieper teaches, three *genera* of the communication of the attributes. The first *genus* is that the acts of either nature are that of the Person (1951:135). This is agreeable also to such as me. But this is curious; how can the humanity act unless it is personal? The second *genus* is that the divine shares such attributes as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence with the human nature (1951:152-243). But how can anything, save an intellect, be omniscient? So, there must be a human intellect in Christ. Yet were the humanity at first, before that communication of divine qualities, only knowing some things, how is that something which knows even some things not personal? Is God the Subject of a limited intellect? No, He is not! The human nature is limited, but even a limited intellect must have personality.

The third *genus* is that the acts of one nature are common to both natures (1951:243). But if the human nature is only an impersonal body, then how does it act at all? Do mere bodies move and think on their own? Pieper, in the references above, points out to his readers with various texts, which no one rightly can deny, that Christ has all power, all knowledge, and is everywhere. Since we know those are not normally qualities of humanity, Pieper reasons those qualities are given to His humanity by His deity. Is there no escape from that clever logic? Sure there is: such texts describe the conditions of His deity only.

The last two of Pieper's *genera* are rejected by Reformed theologians such as Hodge. Hodge explains: one nature does not participate in the attributes of the other. But the attributes of both natures belong to the Person. Some acts of Christ are purely divine, as creation, but other acts, as digesting food, are purely human. Only the human nature obeyed, suffered, and died (1981:392-395). Clearly, Hodge would fall under Cyril's fourth anathema!

Strong

Strong, along with Pieper, exemplifies the inconsistency required to say that Christ is true man possessing "the essential elements of human nature" (1967:674), yet say that Christ lacks some faculty of man which is supplied instead by the deity of Christ. The human faculties which Christ cannot have, Strong asserts, are a human consciousness and a human will. Strong argues his position on the basis that "the Logos furnishes the principle of personality". That sounds like Apollinarianism, not orthodoxy. Otherwise, Strong explains, there would be two personalities in Christ" (1967:695). A response to whether Christ can lack a human will, will be discussed under Miley and Derickson below. But consider the matter of consciousness.

A human consciousness is required in order to be human. By "consciousness" I mean a "lived experience" (Revonvo and Kampinnen 1994:25) or the manifold sensations, perceptions, and ideas one has (Holt 1914:184). By these definitions Christ can only lack a human consciousness if He lacks the human potential to experience and have human perceptions. But, if He lacks that, then how is He human? Yet if He does not lack that, then He has a human consciousness. If Christ has a human consciousness, then how is the Subject of that consciousness not a human nature? Without a human consciousness, how can He be like His brethren in all things (Heb. 2:17)? But, if Christ has a human consciousness, how can He lack a human personality? To me the choice is clear: accept that Christ's human nature has personality, which while developed by interaction with the divine, remains, being human, distinct from the divine nature or, instead, deny that the incarnated Christ is true Man.

Miley and Derickson

While differing on other theological matters, Miley (a Wesleyan-Arminian) and Derickson (a Baptist) concur on what constitutes the essential nature of Christ's humanity—His humanity does not include a human will. Miley (1989:8-9) states that Christ's human nature is "real and complete". But, he states, we must believe that it lacks a human volition lest we fall into Nestorian "dualism". I shall argue below that Nestorius was orthodox.

In denying Christ a human will, Miley (cf. Derickson 2001; Strong 1967) is rejecting the Christology of the Sixth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople of 680-681. This Creed was a reaction to Monophysitism (one nature) revived in the form of Monothelitism (one will) (Heick 1975:186-187). The framers of this Constantinople Creed assert that "we likewise declare that in Him are two natural wills ... not contrary the one to the other ... but His human will follows His divine and omnipotent will". In the view of Constantinople, Christ without a human will has only one nature, which is why Kerr (1989:732) calls the Monothelitism to which Strong, Miley, and Derickson subscribe a "heresy".

Derickson takes Grudem to task for writing that Christ has two wills (2001:223). But, were Christ to have only a divine will, how could He be tempted? How could His successful resistance to temptation be our example if it is God's omnipotent will which is resisting? This is an excellent example of the practical significance of these Christological issues.

2.2. Theories Which Do Not Limit Christ's Humanity

Leo

The most thorough source on Leo's Christology is Letter XXVIII, also called the Tome. With reference to Christ's natures, Leo states, "each form does what is proper to it ... the Word performing what appertains to the Word, and the flesh carrying on what pertains to the flesh. ... what was human not impairing what was divine. ... The divinity has equal Godhead with the Father." This teaching is repeated in Sermon LIV: "Each nature does indeed express its real existence by actions that distinguish it ... one of them gleams

bright with miracles the other succumbs to injuries ... the one departs not from equality with the Father's glory, the other leaves not the nature of our race." Clearly, according to Leo, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

John of Damascus

The Damascene taught, in Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, that the properties of Christ's humanity are not to be ascribed to His deity. The deity, for example, is not subject to passion (IV). John denies that the nature of the Word suffered; only the humanity did (VI).⁶ "Each nature keeps its own natural individuality strictly unchanged" (V). Each also has its own subsistence as a nature cannot exist without a subsistence (IX). Each nature has its own energy and activity (XV). Clearly, according to John, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Theodoret of Cyprus

Theodoret reacted to Cyril's anathemas against Nestorius, who was Theodoret's friend, by writing the "Counter-Statements" against Cyril. Here Theodoret explains that the Incarnation is not the Word changing into flesh, but adding the form of a servant (I). While there is one Christ, there are two *hypostases* or natures (III). Only the human nature tires, sleeps, and does not know some things (IV). Each nature has its own properties and these remain unchanged (VIII). It is only human nature which learns obedience and suffers (X). Only Christ's humanity is passible (XII). Clearly, according to Theodoret, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Gregory of Nyssa

In his "Treatise Against Apollinarius", also called *Antirrheticus*, Gregory stated that it was not the divine nature that grew, slept, grieved, ate, or suffered blows and stripes; these are experiences of Christ's humanity (p. 38). God is immutable and so did not change into a created being (p. 67). And, only the humanity was separated from God on the cross, as God cannot be divided in

⁶ Cyril's fourth anathema also would fall heavily on the head of John.

suffering (p. 39). It was not God who died (p. 63). The humanity of Christ has its own intellect (p. 41) and will (pp. 46, 53). The divine nature remains immutable (p. 67). Clearly, according to Gregory, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Constantinople

The framers of the Constantinopolitan Creed of 680-681 stated their belief that in Christ there are two natural (of the natures) wills and natural operations. Each nature (*morphē*) does what is proper to it. The properties of each nature are preserved. Clearly, according to the framers of this Creed, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Agatho

In his letter to the Emperor Constantine, Pope Agatho states that the Word in Christ is unchangeable. In Christ are “two natural wills and two natural operations”. A will inheres in a nature. Obedience to God was of Christ’s human will. Christ is perfect God and perfect Man. Clearly, according to Agatho, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Anselm

In his “On the Incarnation of the Word”, Anselm teaches that while there is one Person, there are two natures (11); the humanity was not assumed into the deity (9). In “Why God Became Man”, Anselm explains that the divine nature did not become human (2:7). The wholeness of either nature is kept intact. Man and God are distinct, but combine in one Person (2:7). The acts of the humanity are not those of the deity; only the humanity, by its weakness, suffered (1:8). Clearly according to Anselm, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Calvin

In the *Institutes*, Book II, Calvin affirms that in the Incarnation the Word retained His divine qualities (Calvin 1979:414). There is no mingling of attributes, but rather “the entire properties of each nature remain entire”. Any

knowings or doings which are limited are strictly those of the humanity (p. 415). Clearly, according to Calvin, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Chemnitz

This Lutheran theologian, a contemporary of Luther, wrote an excellent work called “The Two Natures in Christ”. In this, Chemnitz explained that “the divine nature of itself is perfect and is immutable, nothing is added or subtracted to it by this union” (1971:71). The human nature has its own mind, will, power, and activity (p. 235). While it is the one Christ acting, each nature in Christ performs, in communion with the other, that which is proper to it (pp. 236-237). Clearly, according to Chemnitz, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Dorner

This Lutheran theologian taught that in the Incarnation neither is the Logos contracting Himself in order to dwell in Christ nor is God transformed into humanity (1882:302). The humanity has its own self-consciousness and self-determination (1882:309) as these are necessary to true humanity (1882:310, 313). Clearly, according to Dorner, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Charles Hodge

According to Charles Hodge, a nature (*phusis* or *ousia*) is a substance. Attributes cannot exist without a substance. Properties, powers, or forces imply a substance. Each nature in Christ is a substance and is “an objective entity which acts”. The attributes of one substance cannot be communicated to the other (1981:387). The divine and human natures cannot be mingled ...; each retains its own properties and attributes. The humanity of Christ has its own intelligence, sensibility, and will as does the divine nature, Were the humanity given divine attributes, Christ ceases to be Man. Neither can the divine nature lose any properties as that would be a loss of essence (pp. 389-

391). Clearly, according to Hodge, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Baille

D.M. Baille explains his view of incarnational Christology in his “God Was In Christ”. I think Erickson (1989:734) wrongly criticizes Baille, saying that Baille denied the divinity of Christ. Rather, as Henry (1992:98) affirms, Baille was a defender of Christ’s deity. Baille says that Christ is “God Himself” (1948:66). Baille also rejects the idea that the Incarnation required the divinity in Christ to empty Himself “of those attributes which essentially differentiate God from man”. God does not change Himself temporarily into man or exchange His divinity for humanity (pp. 95-96). The humanity of Christ has both the limitations (p. 130) and the faculties of man (p. 91). The latter includes “a human centre of consciousness” (p. 91), which is the subject of “experiences mediated through the human body (p. 87). Clearly, according to Baille, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Warfield

In “The Person and Work of Christ”, Warfield insists on the integrity of the divine nature in Christ as well as the human (1970:213). He asserts that Christ has “dual centers of consciousness” (p. 258). This “double consciousness” is human and divine (p. 260). To deny this is “a new Doceticism” (p. 259). Each nature has its own mental states (p. 259). Only this understanding can be the “solution of the enigmas of the life-manifestation of the historical Jesus” (p. 262). Clearly, according to Warfield, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Shedd and Wiley

These two are treated together because they explicitly hold the view that the acts of Christ are coordinated by each nature, allowing the other to act. Shedd, who affirms the immutability of the divine nature in Christ (1980:331), therefore insists that each nature “retains its own properties” (pp. 267-268). It is not the Logos—which remained omniscient and omnipotent (1980:275)—

which constantly acts through the human soul and body (p. 274). The humanity of Christ has its own intellect and will (p. 313). Obviously, the Logos does too (p. 276). As there are, then, two forms of consciousness, divine and human, each must yield to the other for there to be one activity of Christ. So, the human nature at times yields to the divine in Christ and the divine sometimes yields to the human nature (p. 320). “[T]here was a continual fluctuation of consciousness in Christ” (p. 321).

Likewise Wiley, who denies that either nature loses any properties or functions (1952:183), understands that the Hypostatic Union requires two forms of consciousness: human and divine (p. 181). The acts or qualities of either nature cannot be predicated of the other (p. 183). In Christ the modes of consciousness pass quickly from one nature to the other (p. 181). The “self” of Christ is where each nature meets and communes with the other (pp. 180-181). Clearly, according to both Shedd and Wiley, *the deity lost nothing, and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Grudem

Wayne Grudem believes that upon incarnating God the Son did not cease, even for a time, to be omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent (1994:551). There are in Christ two wills and two centers of consciousness (p. 561). “One nature does some things which the other nature does not do (p. 558). Clearly, according to Grudem, *the deity lost nothing, and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Clark

In “The Incarnation”, Gordon Clark states that the Persons of God are immutable and impassible. The Second Person “did not change one little bit” in the Incarnation (1988:11-12, 43). Will and intellect are required of the human nature for Christ to be a human person (p. 17). Therefore, in Christ there must be two separated consciousnesses (p. 24). Scripture does not say that Jesus is just a human nature; it says He is a Man (p. 50). Some experiences or acts of Jesus are just those of His humanity (p. 67). Clearly, according to Clark, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

Nestorius

Nestorius, in my opinion, is wrongly identified, as by Buswell (1976:46), as having taught that Christ is two Persons. Assuming that the “Bazaar of Heraclides” is by Nestorius, Nestorius therein claims to believe that Christ is one *prosōpon* (2057e). The confusion arises because Nestorius also calls natures *prosōpa*, yet saying that the two natures make one Person (2057-58; see also the Second Letter to Cyril, in Norris 1980). So, some moderns, not usually Catholic, are now questioning whether Nestorius really taught two Persons in Christ (e.g., Bruce 1905:49; Kyle 1989:74-75; Grillmeier 1975:449). Nestorius, in his second letter to Cyril, argues that while the divine nature remains impassible, the human nature is passible and that not the deity but the humanity in Christ suffered. Other acts and experiences of Christ as birth, growing, and eating also pertain only to His human nature. Clearly, according to Nestorius, *the deity lost nothing and the humanity acts and experiences*.

3. Conclusion

In my opinion, the material in this article has demonstrated that while some question the distinction and integrity of Christ’s humanity, others maintain that the humanity is complete including a human intellect, will, and consciousness. It is within orthodox Christology to believe that in the Incarnation God the Son lost nothing and that His humanity acts and experiences.

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