

Systematic Theology 3.1

The Person of Christ

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*Part Three: The Doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ — Section 1: The Person
of Christ*

Editorial note

The text has been updated to UK English; gloss boxes have been added to explain technical terms; summaries have been included; and questions for further study have been added. We have also included a master outline with the part represented in this volume shown in bold.

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Berkhof's Systematic Theology: Master Outline

This six-part guide is designed for use at the beginning of each volume. The part represented in this volume is shown in bold.

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The Person of Christ

I. The Doctrine of Christ in History

The Church has confessed Jesus Christ as truly God and truly man, while repeatedly rejecting explanations that deny either His full deity, His real humanity, or the unity of His person.

A. The Relation Between Anthropology And Christology.

GLOSS Christology: the doctrine of the person and work of Christ; it explains how God brings sinful people back into fellowship with Himself.

THERE is a very close connection between the doctrine of man and the doctrine of Christ. The former deals with man, created in the image of God and endowed with true knowledge, righteousness and holiness, but through wilful transgression of the law of God despoiled of his true humanity and

transformed into a sinner. It points to man as a highly privileged creature of God, still bearing some of the traces of his original glory, but yet as a creature that has lost its birthright, its true freedom, and its original righteousness and holiness. This means that it directs attention, not merely, nor even primarily, to the creatureliness, but to the sinfulness of man. It emphasizes the ethical distance between God and man, the distance resulting from the fall of man, which neither man nor angels can bridge; and is as such virtually a cry for divine help. Christology is in part the answer to that cry. It acquaints us with the objective work of God in Christ to bridge the chasm, and to remove the distance. It shows us God coming to man, to remove the barriers between God and man by meeting the conditions of the law in Christ, and to restore man to His blessed communion. Anthropology already directs attention to the gracious provision of God for a covenant of friendship with man, which provides for a life of blessed communion with God; but it is a covenant which is effective only in and through Christ. And therefore the doctrine of Christ, as the Mediator of the covenant, must necessarily follow. Christ, typified and predicted in the Old Testament as the Redeemer of man, came in the fulness of time, to tabernacle among men and to effect an eternal reconciliation.

B. The Doctrine Of Christ Before The Reformation.

GLOSS Council of Chalcedon: the Church council of AD 451 which affirmed that Christ is one person in two natures, truly God and truly man.

1. UP TO THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON. In the early Christian literature Christ stands out as both human and divine, the Son of Man, but also the Son of God. His sinless character is maintained, and He is regarded as a proper object of worship. Naturally, the problem presented by Christ, as at once God and man, and the difficulties involved in such a conception, were not fully felt by the early Christian mind and only dawned on it in the light of controversy. It was but natural that Judaism, with its strong emphasis on monotheism,

should exercise considerable influence on the early Christians of Jewish extraction. The Ebionites (or part of them) felt constrained, in the interest of monotheism, to deny the deity of Christ. They regarded Him as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, who was qualified at His baptism to be the Messiah, by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him. There were others in the early Church whose doctrine of Christ was constructed on similar lines. The Alogi, who rejected the writings of John, because they regarded his doctrine of the Logos as in conflict with the rest of the New Testament, also saw in Jesus a mere man, though miraculously born of a virgin, and taught that Christ descended on Him at baptism, conferring on Him supernatural powers. In the main this was also the position of the Dynamic Monarchians. Paul of Samosata, its main representative, distinguished between Jesus and the Logos. He regarded the former as a man like every other man, born of Mary, and the latter, as the impersonal divine reason, which took up its abode in Christ in a pre-eminent sense, from the time of His baptism, and thus qualified Him for His great task. In view of this denial it was part of the task of the early Apologetes to defend the doctrine of the deity of Christ.

If there were some who sacrificed the deity to the humanity of Christ, there were others who reversed the order. The Gnostics were profoundly influenced by the dualistic conception of the Greeks, in which matter as inherently evil is represented as utterly opposed to spirit; and by a mystic tendency to regard earthly things as allegorical representations of great cosmic redeeming processes. They rejected the idea of an incarnation, a manifestation of God in a visible form, since it involved a direct contact of spirit with matter. Harnack says that the majority of them regarded Christ as a Spirit consubstantial with the Father. According to some He descended upon the man Jesus at the time of His baptism, but left Him again before His crucifixion; while according to others He assumed a merely phantasmal body. The Modalistic Monarchians also denied the humanity of Christ, partly in the interest of His deity, and partly to preserve the unity of the Divine Being. They saw in Him merely a mode or manifestation of the one God, in whom they recognised no

distinction of persons. The Anti-Gnostic and Alexandrian Fathers took up the defence of the deity of Christ, but in their defence did not altogether escape the error of representing Him as subordinate to the Father. Even Tertullian taught a species of subordination, but especially Origen, who did not hesitate to speak of a subordination as to essence. This became a steppingstone for Arianism, in which Christ is distinguished from the Logos as the divine reason, and is represented as a pre-temporal, superhuman creature, the first of the creatures, not God and yet more than man. Athanasius took issue with Arius, and strongly defended the position that the Son is consubstantial with, and of the same essence as, the Father, a position that was officially adopted by the council of Nicea in 321. Semi-Arianism proposed a *via media* by declaring the Son to be of a similar essence as the Father.

When the doctrine of the deity of the Son was officially established, the question naturally arose as to the relation in which the two natures in Christ stand to each other. Apollinaris offered a solution of the problem. Accepting the Greek trichotomic conception of man as consisting of body, soul, and spirit, he took the position that the Logos took the place of the spirit (*pneuma*) in man, which he regarded as the seat of sin. His chief interest was to secure the unity of the person in Christ, without sacrificing His real deity; and also to guard the sinlessness of Christ. But he did so at the expense of the complete humanity of the Saviour, and consequently his position was explicitly condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381. One of the things for which Apollinaris contended was the unity of the person in Christ. That this was really in danger became quite apparent in the position taken by the school of Antioch, which exaggerated the distinction of the two natures in Christ. Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius stressed the complete manhood of Christ, and conceived of the indwelling of the Logos in Him as a mere moral indwelling, such as believers also enjoy, though not to the same degree. They saw in Christ a man side by side with God, in alliance with God, sharing the purpose of God, but not one with Him in the oneness of a single personal life, — a Mediator consisting of two persons. In opposition to them Cyril of

Alexandria strongly emphasized the unity of the person in Christ, and in the estimation of his opponents denied the two natures. While they in all probability misunderstood him, Eutychus and his followers certainly appealed to him, when they took up the position that the human nature of Christ was absorbed by the divine, or that the two were fused into a single nature, a position involving the denial of the two natures in Christ. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 condemned both of these views and maintained the unity of the person as well as the duality of the natures.

2. AFTER THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON. For some time the Eutychian error was continued by the Monophysites and the Monothelites, but was finally overcome by the Church. The further danger that the human nature of Christ would be regarded as entirely impersonal was warded off by Leontius of Byzantium, when he pointed out that it is not impersonal but in-personal, having its personal subsistence in the person of the Son of God. John of Damascus, in whom the Christology of the East reached its highest development, added the idea that there is a circumincession of the divine and the human in Christ, a communication of the divine attributes to the human nature, so that the latter is deified and we may also say that God suffered in the flesh. He shows a tendency to reduce the human nature to the position of a mere organ or instrument of the Logos, yet he admits that there is a co-operation of the two natures, and that the one person acts and wills in each nature, though the human will is always subject to the divine.

In the Western Church Felix, bishop of Urgella, advocated adoptionism. He regarded Christ as to His divine nature, that is, the Logos, as the onlybegotten Son of God in the natural sense, but considered Christ on His human side as a Son of God merely by adoption. He sought to preserve the unity of the person by stressing the fact that, from the time of His conception, the Son of Man was taken up into the unity of the person of the Son of God. Thus a distinction was made between a natural and an adoptive sonship, and the latter did not begin with the natural birth of Christ, but had its inception at the time of His

baptism and was consummated in the resurrection. It was a spiritual birth that made Christ the adopted Son of God. The Church saw the unity of the person in Christ once more endangered by this view, and therefore it was condemned by the Synod of Frankfort in 794 A.D.

The Middle Ages added very little to the doctrine of the person of Christ. Due to various influences, such as the emphasis on the imitation of Christ, the theories of the atonement, and the development of the doctrine of the mass, the Church retained a strong grasp on the full humanity of Christ. “The deity of Christ,” says Mackintosh, “came into view rather as the infinite co-efficient raising human action and passion to an infinite value.” And yet some of the Scholastics in their Christology set forth a docetic view of Christ. Peter the Lombard did not hesitate to say that in respect of His humanity Christ was nothing at all. But this Nihilism was condemned by the Church. Some new points were stressed by Thomas Aquinas. According to him the person of the Logos became composite at the incarnation, and its union with the manhood “hindered” the latter from arriving at an independent personality. The human nature of Christ received a twofold grace in virtue of its union with the Logos, (a) the *gratia unionis*, imparting to it a special dignity, so that it even became an object of worship, and (b) the *gratia habitualis*, which sustained it in its relationship to God. The human knowledge of Christ was twofold, namely, an infused and an acquired knowledge. There are two wills in Christ, but ultimate causality belongs to the divine will, to which the human will is always subject.

C. The Doctrine Of Christ After The Reformation.

GLOSS Two natures: Christ’s complete divine and human natures, united without confusion or separation in the one person of the Son.

1. UP TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. The Reformation did not bring any great changes in the doctrine of the person of Christ. Both the Church of

Rome and the Churches of the Reformation subscribed to the doctrine of Christ as it was formulated by the Council of Chalcedon. Their important and deep-seated differences lay elsewhere. There is one peculiarity of Lutheran Christology that deserves special mention. Luther's doctrine of the physical presence of Christ in the Lord's supper led to the characteristically Lutheran view of the *communicatio idiomatum*, to the effect "that each of Christ's natures permeates the other (*perichoresis*), and that His humanity participates in the attributes of His divinity." [Neve, *Lutheran Symbolics*, p. 132.] It is held that the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence were communicated to the human nature of Christ at the time of the incarnation. The question naturally arose, how this could be harmonized with what we know of the earthly life of Jesus. This question led to a difference of opinion among Lutheran theologians. Some held that Christ laid aside the divine attributes received in the incarnation, or used them only occasionally, while others said that He continued in possession of them during His entire earthly life, but concealed them or used them only secretly. Some Lutherans now seem inclined to discard this doctrine.

Reformed theologians saw in this Lutheran doctrine a species of Eutychianism or of the fusion of the two natures in Christ. Reformed theology also teaches a communication of attributes, but conceives of it in a different way. It believes that, after the incarnation, the properties of both natures can be attributed to the one person of Christ. The person of Christ can be said to be omniscient, but also, to have but limited knowledge; can be regarded as omnipresent, but also as being limited at any particular time to a single place. Hence we read in the Second Helvetic Confession: "We acknowledge, therefore, that there be in one and the same Jesus our Lord two natures — the divine and the human nature; and we say that these are so conjoined or united that they are not swallowed up, confounded, or mingled together, but rather united or joined together in one person (the properties of each being safe and remaining still), so that we do worship one Christ, our Lord, and not two. . . . Therefore we do not think nor teach that the divine nature in Christ did suffer,

or that Christ, according to His human nature, is yet in the world, and so in every place.”[Chap. XI.]

2. IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. About the beginning of the nineteenth century a great change took place in the study of the person of Christ. Up to that time the point of departure had been prevailingly theological, and the resulting Christology was theocentric; but during the last part of the eighteenth century there was a growing conviction that better results could be attained by starting closer at home, namely, with the study of the historical Jesus. Thus the so-called “second Christological period” was ushered in. The new point of view was anthropological, and the result was anthropocentric. It proved to be destructive of the faith of the Church. A far-reaching and pernicious distinction was made between the historical Jesus, delineated by the writers of the Gospels, and the theological Christ, who was the fruit of the fertile imagination of theological thinkers, and whose image is now reflected in the creeds of the Church. The supernatural Christ made way for a human Jesus; and the doctrine of the two natures, for the doctrine of a divine man.

Schleiermacher stood at the head of the new development. He regarded Christ as a new creation, in which human nature is elevated to the plane of ideal perfection. Yet his Christ can hardly be said to rise above the human level. The uniqueness of His person consists in the fact that He possesses a perfect and unbroken sense of union with the divine, and also realises to the full the destiny of man in His character of sinless perfection. His supreme dignity finds its explanation in a special presence of God in Him, in His unique God-consciousness. Hegel’s conception of Christ is part and parcel of his pantheistic system of thought. The Word become flesh means for him God become incarnate in humanity, so that the incarnation really expresses the oneness of God and man. The incarnation of Christ was, so it seems, merely the culmination of a racial process. While mankind in general regards Jesus only as a human teacher, faith recognises Him as divine and finds that by His coming into the world the transcendence of God is changed into immanence.

Here we meet with a pantheistic identification of the human and the divine in the doctrine of Christ.

Something of this is also seen in the Kenotic theories, which represent a rather remarkable attempt to improve on the construction of the doctrine of the person of Christ. The term kenosis is derived from Phil. 2:7, which teaches that Christ “emptied (ekenosen) Himself, taking the form of a servant.” The Kenoticists take this to mean that the Logos literally became, that is, was changed into a man by reducing (depotentiating) Himself, either wholly or in part, to the dimensions of a man, and then increased in wisdom and power until at last He again became God. This theory appeared in various forms, of which the most absolute is that of Gess, and for a time enjoyed considerable popularity. It aimed at maintaining the reality and integrity of the manhood of Christ, and to throw into strong relief the greatness of His humiliation in that He, being rich, for our sakes became poor. It involves, however, a pantheistic obliteration of the line of demarcation between God and man. Dorner, who was the greatest representative of the Mediating school, strongly opposed this view, and substituted for it the doctrine of a progressive incarnation. He saw in the humanity of Christ a new humanity with a special receptivity for the divine. The Logos, the principle of self-bestowal in God, joined Himself to this humanity; the measure in which He did this was determined at every stage by the ever-increasing receptivity of the human nature for the divine, and did not reach its final stage until the resurrection. But this is merely a new and subtle form of the old Nestorian heresy. It yields a Christ consisting of two persons.

With the exception of Schleiermacher, no one has exercised greater influence on present day theology than Albrecht Ritschl. His Christology takes its starting point in the work, rather than in the person of Christ. The work of Christ determines the dignity of His person. He was a mere man, but in view of the work which He accomplished and the service He rendered, we rightly attribute to Him the predicate of Godhead. He rules out the pre-existence, the incarnation, and the virgin birth of Christ, since this finds no point of contact

in the believing consciousness of the Christian community. Christ was the founder of the kingdom of God, thus making the purpose of God His own, and now in some way induces men to enter the Christian community and to live a life that is motivated entirely by love. He redeems man by His teaching, example, and unique influence, and is therefore worthy to be called God. This is virtually a renewal of the doctrine of Paul of Samosata.

On the basis of the modern pantheistic idea of the immanence of God, the doctrine of Christ is to-day often represented in a thoroughly naturalistic way. The representations may vary greatly, but the fundamental idea is generally the same, that of an essential unity of God and man. The doctrine of the two natures of Christ has disappeared from modern theology, and instead we have a pantheistic identification of God and man. Essentially all men are divine, since they all have a divine element in them; and they are all sons of God, differing from Christ only in degree. Modern teaching about Christ is all based on the doctrine of the continuity of God and man. And it is exactly against this doctrine that Barth and those who are like-minded with him have raised their voice. There are in some circles to-day signs of a return to the two-nature doctrine. Micklem confesses in his *What Is the Faith?* that for many years he confidently asserted that the ascription to Christ of two natures in one person had to be abandoned, but now sees that this rested on a misunderstanding. [p. 155.]

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY. What was the background of the Christological controversy in the early centuries? What ancient errors were revived by Roscelinus and Abelard? What was the Christological Nihilism in vogue among the disciples of Abelard? How did Peter the Lombard view Christ? Did the Scholastics bring any new points to the fore? Where do we find the official Lutheran Christology? How can we account for the seemingly inconsistent representations of the formula of Concord? What objections are there to the Lutheran view that divine attributes may be predicated of the human nature? How did the Lutherans and the Reformed differ in their

interpretation of Phil. 2:5-11? How does the Reformed Christology differ from the Lutheran? What is the main difference between recent and earlier Christologies? What objections are there to the Kenosis doctrine? What are the objectionable features of modern Christology? How do Barth and Brunner view Christ?

II. The Names and Natures of Christ

The biblical names of Christ reveal His person and saving office. Scripture presents Him as the eternal Son of God who truly took human nature without ceasing to be divine.

A. The Names Of Christ.

GLOSS **Messiah / Christ:** the Anointed One promised by God; Jesus is appointed as Prophet, Priest, and King for His people.

There are especially five names that call for a brief discussion at this point. They are partly descriptive of His natures, partly of His official position, and partly of the work for which He came into the world.

1. **THE NAME JESUS.** The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Jehoshua, Joshua, Josh. 1:1; Zech. 3:1, or Jeshua (regular form in the post exilic historical books), Ezra 2:2. The derivation of this common name of the Saviour is veiled in obscurity. The generally accepted opinion is that it is derived from the root yasha', hiph., hoshia', to save, but it is not easy to explain how Jehoshua' became Jeshua'. Probably Hoshea', derived from the infinitive, was the original form (cf. Num. 13:8,16; Deut. 32:44), expressing merely the idea of redemption. The yod, which is the sign of the imperfect, may have been added to express the certainty of redemption. This would best agree with the interpretation of the name given in Matt. 1:21. For another derivation from

Jeho (Jehovah) and shua, that is help (Gotthilf) cf. Kuyper, Dict. Dogm.[De Christo, I, pp. 56 f.] The name was borne by two well known types of Jesus in the Old Testament.

2. THE NAME CHRIST. If Jesus is the personal, Christ is the official, name of the Messiah. It is the equivalent of the Old Testament Mashiach (from mashach, to anoint), and thus means “the anointed one.” Kings and priests were regularly anointed during the old dispensation, Ex. 29:7; Lev. 4:3; Judg. 9:8; I Sam. 9:16; 10:1; II Sam. 19:10. The King was called “the anointed of Jehovah,” I Sam. 24:10. Only a single instance of the anointing of a prophet is recorded, I Kings 19:16, but there are probably references to it in Ps. 105:15 and Isa. 61:1. The oil used in anointing these officers symbolized the Spirit of God, Isa. 61:1; Zech. 4:1-6, and the anointing represented the transfer of the Spirit to the consecrated person, I Sam. 10:1,6,10; 16:13,14. The anointing was a visible sign of (a) an appointment to office; (b) the establishment of a sacred relationship and the consequent sacrosanctness of the person anointed, I Sam. 24:6; 26:9; II Sam. 1:14; and (c) a communication of the Spirit to the anointed one, I Sam. 16:13, cf. also II Cor. 1:21,22. The Old Testament refers to the anointing of the Lord in Ps. 2:2; 45:7, and the New Testament, in Acts 4:27 and 10:38. Formerly references to it were also found in Ps. 2:6 and Prov. 8:23, but to-day Hebraists assert that the word nasak, used in these passages, means “to set up” rather than “to anoint.” But even cf. also Isa. 11:2; 42:1. Christ was set up or appointed to His offices from so the word points to the reality of the first thing symbolized in the anointing, eternity, but historically His anointing took place when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:35, and when he received the Holy Spirit, especially at the time of His baptism, Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32; 3:34. It served to qualify Him for His great task. The name “Christ” was first applied to the Lord as a common noun with the article, but gradually developed into a proper noun, and was used without the article.

3. THE NAME SON OF MAN. In the Old Testament this name is found in Ps. 8:4; Dan. 7:13, and frequently in the Prophecy of Ezekiel. It is also found in

the Apochrypha, Enoch 46 and 62, and II Esdras 13. The dependence of the New Testament usage of it on the passage in Daniel is now quite generally admitted, though in that prophecy it is merely a descriptive phrase, and not yet a title. The transition from the one to the other was made later on, and was apparently already an accomplished fact when the book of Enoch was written. It was the most common self-designation of Jesus. He applied the name to Himself on more than forty occasions, while others all but refrained from employing it. The only exception in the Gospels is in John 12:34, where it appears in an indirect quotation of a word of Jesus; and in the rest of the New Testament only Stephen and John employ it, Acts 7:56; Rev. 1:13; 14:14.

Dr. Vos in his work on *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus* divides the passages in which the name occurs into four classes: (a) Passages which clearly refer to the eschatological coming of the Son of Man, as for instance, Matt. 16:27, 28; Mark 8:38; 13:26, etc. and parallels. (b) Passages which speak particularly of Jesus' sufferings, death, and (sometimes) resurrection, as, for instance, Matt. 17:22; 20:18,19,28; 12:40, etc. and parallels. (c) Passages in the Fourth Gospel, in which the heavenly superhuman side and the pre-existence of Jesus is stressed, as for instance, 1:51; 3:13,14; 6:27,53,62; 8:28, and so on. (d) A small group of passages, in which Jesus reflects upon His human nature, Mark 2:27, 28; John 5:27; 6:27,51,62. It is hard to determine why Jesus preferred this name as a self-designation. Formerly the name was generally regarded as a cryptic title, by the use of which Jesus intended to veil rather than to reveal His Messiahship. This explanation was discarded when more attention was paid to the eschatological element in the Gospels, and to the use of the name in the apocalyptic literature of the Jews. Dalman revived the idea and regarded the title once more as "an intentional veiling of the Messianic character under a title which affirms the humanity of Him who bore it." [Words of Jesus, p. 253.] The supposed proof for this is found in Matt. 16:13; John 12:34. But the proof is doubtful; the latter passage even shows that the people understood the name Messianically. Dr. Vos is of the opinion that Jesus probably preferred the name, because it stood farthest removed from every possible Jewish prostitution of

the Messianic office. By calling Himself the Son of Man, Jesus imparted to the Messiahship His own heaven-centered spirit. And the height to which He thus lifted His person and work may well have had something to do with the hesitancy of His early followers to name Him with the most celestial of all titles.[The Self-Disclosure of Jesus, pp. 251 ff.]

4. THE NAME SON OF GOD. The name “Son of God” was variously applied in the Old Testament: (a) to the people of Israel, Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1; (b) to officials among Israel, especially to the promised king of the house of David, II Sam. 7:14; Ps. 89:27; (c) to angels, Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 29:1; 89:6; and (d) to pious people in general, Gen. 6:2; Ps. 73:15; Prov. 14:26. Among Israel the name acquired theocratic significance. In the New Testament we find Jesus appropriating the name, and others also ascribing it to Him. The name is applied to Jesus in four different senses, which are not always kept distinct in Scripture but are sometimes combined. The name is applied to Him:

a. In the official or Messianic sense, as a description of the office rather than of the nature of Christ. The Messiah could be called Son of God as God’s heir and representative. The demons evidently understood the name Messianically, when they applied it to Jesus. It seems to have this meaning also in Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32. Even the name, as uttered by the voice at the baptism of Jesus and at His transfiguration, Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35, can be so interpreted, but in all probability has a deeper meaning. There are several passages in which the Messianic sense is combined with the trinitarian sense, cf. under (b).

b. In the trinitarian sense. The name is sometimes used to denote the essential deity of Christ. As such it points to a pre-existent sonship, which absolutely transcends the human life of Christ and His official calling as Messiah. Instances of this use are found in Matt. 11:27; 14:28-33; 16:16, and parallels; 21:33-46, and parallels; 22:41-46; 26:63, and parallels. In some of these cases the idea of the Messianic sonship also enters more or less. We find the ontological and the Messianic sonship interwoven also in several Johannine

passages, in which Jesus clearly intimates that He is the Son of God, though He does not use the name, as in 6:69; 8:16,18,23; 10:15,30; 14:20, and so on. In the Epistles Christ is frequently designated as the Son of God in the metaphysical sense, Rom. 1:3; 8:3; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:1, and many other passages. In modern liberal theology it is customary to deny the metaphysical sonship of Christ.

c. In the nativistic sense. Christ is also called the Son of God in virtue of His supernatural birth. The name is so applied to Him in the well known passage in the Gospel of Luke, in which the origin of His human nature is ascribed to the direct, supernatural paternity of God, namely, Luke 1:35. Dr. Vos also finds indications of this sense of the name in Matt. 1:18-24; John 1:13. Naturally, this meaning of the name is also denied by modern liberal theology, which does not believe in the virgin birth, nor in the supernatural conception of Christ.

d. In the ethico-religious sense. It is in this sense that the name “sons” or “children of God” is applied to believers in the New Testament. It is possible that we have an example of the application of the name “Son of God” to Jesus in that ethico-religious sense in Matt. 17:24-27. This depends on the question, whether Peter is here represented as also exempt from the templetax. It is especially in this sense that modern liberal theology ascribes the name to Jesus. It finds that the sonship of Jesus is only an ethico-religious sonship, somewhat heightened indeed, but not essentially different from that of His disciples.

5. THE NAME LORD (Kurios). The name “Lord” is applied to God in the Septuagint, (a) as the equivalent of Jehovah; (b) as the rendering of Adonai; and (c) as the translation of a human honorific title applied to God (chiefly Adon), Josh. 3:11; Ps. 97:5. In the New Testament we find a somewhat similar threefold application of the name to Christ, (a) as a polite and respectful form of address, Matt. 8:2; 20:33; (b) as expressive of ownership and authority, without implying anything as to Christ’s divine character and authority, Matt. 21:3; 24:42; and (c) with the highest connotation of authority, expressive of an

exalted character, and in fact practically equivalent to the name “God,” Mark 12:36,37; Luke 2:11; 3:4; Acts 2:36; I Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11. In some cases it is hard to determine the exact connotation of the title. Undoubtedly, after the exaltation of Christ, the name was generally applied to Him in the most exalted sense. But there are instances of its use even before the resurrection, where the specifically divine import of the title has evidently already been reached, as in Matt. 7:22; Luke 5:8; John 20:28. There is a great difference of opinion among scholars respecting the origin and development of this title as applied to Jesus. In spite of all that has been advanced to the contrary, there is no reason to doubt that the use of the name, as applied to Jesus, is rooted in the Old Testament. There is one constant element in the history of the conception, and that is the element of authoritative ownership. The Epistles of Paul suggest the additional idea that it is an authority and ownership resting on antecedently acquired rights. It is doubtful, whether this element is already present in the Gospels.

B. The Natures Of Christ.

GLOSS Incarnation: the Son of God taking a real human nature, while remaining fully God, in order to save His people.

From the earliest times, and more particularly since the Council of Chalcedon, the Church confessed the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. The Council did not solve the problem presented by a person who was at once human and divine, but only sought to ward off some of the solutions which were offered and were clearly recognised as erroneous. And the Church accepted the doctrine of the two natures in one person, not because it had a complete understanding of the mystery, but because it clearly saw in it a mystery revealed by the Word of God. It was and remained ever since for the Church an article of faith, far beyond human comprehension. Rationalistic attacks on the doctrine were not entirely wanting, but the Church remained

firm in the confession of this truth, in spite of the fact that it was once and again declared to be contrary to reason. In this confession Roman Catholics and Protestants stand shoulder to shoulder. But from the last part of the eighteenth century on this doctrine was made the butt of persistent attacks. The Age of Reason set in, and it was declared to be unworthy of man to accept on the authority of Scripture what was clearly contrary to human reason. That which did not commend itself to this new arbiter was simply declared to be erroneous. Individual philosophers and theologians now tried their hand at solving the problem presented by Christ, in order that they might offer the Church a substitute for the two-nature doctrine. They took their starting point in the human Jesus, and even after a century of painstaking research found in Jesus no more than a man with a divine element in Him. They could not rise to the recognition of Him as their Lord and their God. Schleiermacher spoke of a man with a supreme God-consciousness, Ritschl, of a man having the value of a God, Wendt, of a man standing in a continual inward fellowship of love with God, Beyschlag, of a God-filled man, and Sanday, of a man with an inrush of the divine in the sub-consciousness; — but Christ is and remains merely a man. To-day the liberal school represented by Harnack, the eschatological school of Weiss and Schweitzer, and the more recent school of comparative religion, headed by Bousset and Kirsopp Lake, all agree in denuding Christ of His true deity, and in reducing Him to human dimensions. To the first our Lord is merely a great ethical teacher; to the second, an apocalyptic seer; and to the third a peerless leader to an exalted destiny. They regard the Christ of the Church as the creation of Hellenism, or of Judaism, or of the two combined. To-day, however, the whole epistemology of the previous century is called in question, and the sufficiency of human reason for the interpretation of ultimate truth is seriously questioned. There is a new emphasis on revelation. And influential theologians, such as Barth and Brunner, Edwin Lewis and Nathaniel Micklem, do not hesitate to confess faith once more in the doctrine of the two natures. It is of the utmost importance to maintain this doctrine, as it was formulated by the Council of Chalcedon and is contained in

our Confessional Standards.[Conf. Belg., Art. XIX; Heidelberg Cat., Qs. 15-18; Canons of Dort II, Art. IV.]

1. SCRIPTURE PROOFS FOR THE DEITY OF CHRIST. In view of the widespread denial of the deity of Christ, it is of the utmost importance to be thoroughly conversant with the Scripture proof for it. The proof is so abundant that no one who accepts the Bible as the infallible Word of God can entertain any doubt on this point. For the ordinary classification of the Biblical proofs, as derived from the divine names, the divine attributes, the divine works, and the divine honour ascribed to Him, we would refer to the chapter on the Trinity. A somewhat different arrangement is followed here in view of the recent trend of historical criticism.

a. In the Old Testament. Some have shown an inclination to deny that the Old Testament contains predictions of a divine Messiah, but this denial is quite untenable in view of such passages as Ps. 2:6-12 (Heb. 1:5); 45:6,7 (Heb. 1:8,9); 110:1 (Heb. 1:13); Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Dan. 7:13; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 13:7; Mal. 3:1. Several of the latest historical scholars strongly insist on the fact that the doctrine of a superhuman Messiah was native to pre-Christian Judaism. Some even find in it the explanation for the supernatural Christology of parts of the New Testament.

b. In the writings of John and Paul. It has been found quite impossible to deny that both John and Paul teach the deity of Christ. In the Gospel of John the most exalted view of the person of Christ is found, as appears from the following passages: John 1:1-3,14,18; 2:24,25; 3:16-18,35,36; 4:14,15; 5:18,20,21,22,25-27; 11:41-44; 20:28; I John 1:3; 2:23; 4:14,15; 5:5,10-13, 20. A similar view is found in the Pauline Epistles and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Rom. 1:7; 9:5; I Cor. 1:1-3; 2:8; II Cor. 5:10; Gal. 2:20; 4:4; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1-3,5,8; 4:14; 5:8, and so on. Critical scholars sought escape from the doctrine clearly taught in these writings in various ways as, for instance, by denying the historicity of the Gospel of John and the authenticity of many of the Epistles of Paul; by regarding the representations of John, Paul,

and Hebrews as unwarranted interpretations, in the case of John and Hebrews especially under the influence of the Philonic Logos doctrine, and in the case of Paul under the same influence, or under that of his pre-Christian, Jewish views; or by ascribing to Paul a lower view than is found in John, namely, that of Christ as a pre-existent, heavenly man.

c. In the Synoptics. Some maintain that the Synoptics only furnish us with a true picture of Christ. They, it is said, portray the human, the truly historical Jesus, as contrasted with the idealized picture of the Fourth Gospel. But it is perfectly evident that the Christ of the Synoptics is just as truly divine as the Christ of John. He stands out as a supernatural person throughout, the Son of Man and the Son of God. His character and works justify His claim. Notice particularly the following passages: Matt. 5:17; 9:6; 11:1-6,27; 14:33; 16:16,17; 28:18; 25:31 ff.; Mark 8:38, and many similar and parallel passages. Dr. Warfield's *The Lord of Glory* is very illuminating on this point.

d. In the self-consciousness of Jesus. In recent years there has been a tendency to go back to the self-consciousness of Jesus, and to deny that He was conscious of being the Messiah or the Son of God. Naturally, it is not possible to have any knowledge of the consciousness of Jesus, except through His words, as these are recorded in the Gospels; and it is always possible to deny that they correctly express the mind of Jesus. For those who accept the Gospel testimony there can be no doubt as to the fact that Jesus was conscious of being the very Son of God. The following passages bear witness to this: Matt. 11:27 (Luke 10:22); 21:37,38 (Mk. 12:6; Luke 20:13); 22:41-46 (Mk. 13:35-37; Luke 20:41-44); 24:36 (Mk. 13:32); 28:19. Some of these passages testify to Jesus' Messianic consciousness; others to the fact that He was conscious of being the Son of God in the most exalted sense. There are several passages in Matthew and Luke, in which He speaks of the first person of the Trinity as "my Father," Matt. 7:21; 10:32,33; 11:27; 12:50; 15:13; 16:17; 18:10,19,35; 20:23; 25:34; 26:29,53; Luke 2:49; 22:29; 24:49. In the Gospel of John the consciousness

of being the very Son of God is even more apparent in such passages as John 3:13; 5:17,18,19-27; 6:37-40,57; 8:34-36; 10:17,18,30,35,36, and other passages.

2. **SCRIPTURE PROOF FOR THE REAL HUMANITY OF CHRIST.** There has been a time, when the reality (Gnosticism) and the natural integrity (Docetism, Apollinarianism) of the human nature of Christ was denied, but at present no one seriously questions the real humanity of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is at present an extreme emphasis on His veritable humanity, an ever-growing humanitarianism. The only divinity many still ascribe to Christ, is simply that of His perfect humanity. This modern tendency is, no doubt, in part a protest against a one-sided emphasis on the deity of Christ. Men have sometimes forgotten the human Christ in their reverence for the divine. It is very important to maintain the reality and integrity of the humanity of Jesus by admitting his human development and human limitations. The splendor of His deity should not be stressed to the extent of obscuring His real humanity. Jesus called Himself man, and is so called by others, John 8:40; Acts 2:22; Rom. 5:15; I Cor. 15:21. The most common self-designation of Jesus, “the Son of Man,” whatever connotation it may have, certainly also indicates the veritable humanity of Jesus. Moreover, it is said that the Lord came or was manifested in the flesh, John 1:14; I Tim. 3:16; I John 4:2. In these passages the term “flesh” denotes human nature. The Bible clearly indicates that Jesus possessed the essential elements of human nature, that is, a material body and a rational soul, Matt. 26:26,28,38; Luke 23:46; 24:39; John 11:33; Heb. 2:14. There are also passages which show that Jesus was subject to the ordinary laws of human development, and to human wants and sufferings, Luke 2:40,52; Heb. 2:10,18; 5:8. It is brought out in detail that the normal experiences of man’s life were His, Matt. 4:2; 8:24; 9:36; Mk. 3:5; Lk. 22:44; John 4:6; 11:35; 12:27; 19:28,30; Heb. 5:7.

3. **SCRIPTURE PROOF FOR THE SINLESS HUMANITY OF CHRIST.** We ascribe to Christ not only natural, but also moral, integrity or moral perfection, that is sinlessness. This means not merely that Christ could avoid

sinning (potuit non peccare), and did actually avoid it, but also that it was impossible for Him to sin (non potuit peccare) because of the essential bond between the human and the divine natures. The sinlessness of Christ has been denied by Martineau, Irving, Menken, Holsten, and Pfeleiderer, but the Bible clearly testifies to it in the following passages: Luke 1:35; John 8:46; 14:30; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 9:14; I Pet. 2:22; I John 3:5. While Christ was made to be sin judicially, yet ethically He was free from both hereditary depravity and actual sin. He never makes a confession of moral error; nor does He join His disciples in praying, "Forgive us our sins." He is able to challenge His enemies to convince Him of sin. Scripture even represents Him as the one in whom the ideal man is realised, Heb. 2:8,9; I Cor. 15:45; II Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:21. Moreover, the name "Son of Man," appropriated by Jesus, seems to intimate that He answered to the perfect ideal of humanity.

4. THE NECESSITY OF THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST. It appears from the preceding that, in the present day, many do not recognise the necessity of assuming two natures in Christ. To them Jesus is but a man; yet at the same time they feel constrained to ascribe to Him the value of a God, or to claim divinity for Him in virtue of the immanence of God in Him, or of the indwelling Spirit. The necessity of the two natures in Christ follows from what is essential to the Scriptural doctrine of the atonement.

a. The necessity of His manhood. Since man sinned, it was necessary that the penalty should be borne by man. Moreover, the paying of the penalty involved suffering of body and soul, such as only man is capable of bearing, John 12:27; Acts 3:18; Heb. 2:14; 9:22. It was necessary that Christ should assume human nature, not only with all its essential properties, but also with all the infirmities to which it is liable after the fall, and should thus descend to the depths of degradation to which man had fallen, Heb. 2:17,18. At the same time, He had to be a sinless man, for a man who was himself a sinner and who had forfeited his own life, certainly could not atone for others, Heb. 7:26. Only such a truly human Mediator, who had experimental knowledge of the woes of

mankind and rose superior to all temptations, could enter sympathetically into all the experiences, the trials, and the temptations of man, Heb. 2:17,18; 4:15-5:2, and be a perfect human example for His followers, Matt. 11:29; Mk. 10:39; John 13:13-15; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 12:2-4; I Pet. 2:21.

b. The necessity of His Godhead. In the divine plan of salvation it was absolutely essential that the Mediator should also be very God. This was necessary, in order that (1) He might bring a sacrifice of infinite value and render perfect obedience to the law of God; (2) He might bear the wrath of God redemptively, that is, so as to free others from the curse of the law; and (3) He might be able to apply the fruits of His accomplished work to those who accepted Him by faith. Man with his bankrupt life can neither pay the penalty of sin, nor render perfect obedience to God. He can bear the wrath of God and, except for the redeeming grace of God, will have to bear it eternally, but he cannot bear it so as to open a way of escape, Ps. 49:7-10; 130:3.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY. What Old Testament persons bore the name 'Jesus,' and in what respect did they typify the Saviour? Is the bare title 'the Messiah,' without a genitive or a pronominal suffix, ever found in the Old Testament? How does Dalman account for its occurrence in Jewish apocalyptic literature? Do the terms 'the anointed of Jehovah,' 'His anointed,' and 'my anointed' always have the same meaning in the Old Testament? Whence comes the idea that believers share the anointing of Christ? What about the idea that the name 'Son of Man,' reduced to its probable Aramaic original, simply means 'man'? How about the idea of Weiss and Schweitzer that Jesus employed the name only in a futuristic sense? Did He use it before Peter's confession at Cæsarea-Philippi? How do the liberals square their conception of Jesus as the Son of God only in a religious and ethical sense with the data of Scripture? What is the usual view of the origin of the Kurios-title? What theory was broached by Bousset and other liberal scholars? What accounts for the opposition to the two-natures doctrine? Is it a necessary doctrine, or is there some other doctrine that might take its place? What objections are there

to the adoptionist doctrine;—to the Kenotic theories;—to the idea of a gradual incarnation;—to the Ritschlian view;—to Sanday’s theory?

III. The Unipersonality of Christ

Jesus Christ is one person in two complete and distinct natures. This union is beyond full human explanation, but it safeguards both His true deity and His true humanity.

In the year 451 A.D. the Council of Chalcedon met and formulated the faith of the Church respecting the person of Christ, and declared Him “to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of the natures being in no wise taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons.” This formulation is mainly negative, and simply seeks to guard the truth against various heretical views. It clearly states the faith of the early Church respecting the person of Christ, but makes no attempt to explain the mystery involved, a mystery that is not susceptible of a natural explanation. The great central miracle of history was permitted to stand forth in all its grandeur, the supreme paradox, to use Barthian language, God and man in one person. We are simply told what Jesus is, without any attempt to show how He became what He is. The great truth enunciated is that the eternal Son of God took upon Himself our humanity, and not, as Brunner reminds us, that the man Jesus acquired divinity. The deliverance of the Council of Chalcedon testifies to a movement from God to man, rather than vice versa. Centuries have gone by since that time, but, barring certain explications, the Church has really never gotten beyond the formula of Chalcedon. It has always recognised the incarnation as a mystery which defies explanation. And so it will remain, because it is the miracle of miracles. Several attempts have been made in course of time to give a psychological explanation of the person of Jesus Christ, but they were all bound to fail, because He is the Son of God, Himself

very God, and a psychological explanation of God is out of the question. The following paragraphs are intended as a brief statement of the doctrine of the Church.

A. Statement Of The Church’S View Respecting The Person Of Christ.

GLOSS Unipersonality: the truth that Christ is one person, the eternal Son, who possesses both a divine and a human nature.

1. DEFINITION OF THE TERMS “NATURE” AND “PERSON.” With a view to the proper understanding of the doctrine, it is necessary to know the exact meaning of the terms “nature” and “person,” as used in this connection. The term “nature” denotes the sum-total of all the essential qualities of a thing, that which makes it what it is. A nature is a substance possessed in common, with all the essential qualities of such a substance. The term “person” denotes a complete substance endowed with reason, and, consequently, a responsible subject of its own actions. Personality is not an essential and integral part of a nature, but is, as it were, the terminus to which it tends. A person is a nature with something added, namely, independent subsistence, individuality. Now the Logos assumed a human nature that was not personalized, that did not exist by itself.

2. PROPOSITIONS IN WHICH THE VIEW OF THE CHURCH MAY BE STATED.

a. There is but one person in the Mediator, the unchangeable Logos. The Logos furnishes the basis for the personality of Christ. It would not be correct, however, to say that the person of the mediator is divine only. The incarnation constituted Him a complex person, constituted of two natures. He is the Godman.

b. The human nature of Christ as such does not constitute a human person. The Logos did not adopt a human person, so that we have two persons in the Mediator, but simply assumed a human nature. Brunner declares that it is the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ that at the point where we have a sinful person, He has, or rather is, the divine person of the Logos.

c. At the same time it is not correct to speak of the human nature of Christ as impersonal. This is true only in the sense that this nature has no independent subsistence of its own. Strictly speaking, however, the human nature of Christ was not for a moment impersonal. The Logos assumed that nature into personal subsistence with Himself. The human nature has its personal existence in the person of the Logos. It is in-personal rather than impersonal.

d. For that very reason we are not warranted to speak of the human nature of Christ as imperfect or incomplete. His human nature is not lacking in any of the essential qualities belonging to that nature, and also has individuality, that is, personal subsistence, in the person of the Son of God.

e. This personal subsistence should not be confused with consciousness and free will. The fact that the human nature of Christ, in and by itself, has no personal subsistence, does not mean that it has no consciousness and will. The Church has taken the position that these belong to the nature rather than to the person.

f. The one divine person, who possessed a divine nature from eternity, assumed a human nature, and now has both. This must be maintained over against those who, while admitting that the divine person assumed a human nature, jeopardize the integrity of the two natures by conceiving of them as having been fused or mixed into a *tertium quid*, a sort of divine-human nature.

B. Scriptural Proof For The Unipersonality Of Christ.

GLOSS Person of Christ: the one acting subject in the Gospels: the Son of God, who speaks and acts through both His natures.

The doctrine of the two natures in one person transcends human reason. It is the expression of a supersensible reality, and of an incomprehensible mystery, which has no analogy in the life of man as we know it, and finds no support in human reason, and therefore can only be accepted by faith on the authority of the Word of God. For that reason it is doubly necessary to pay close attention to the teachings of Scripture on this point.

1. NO EVIDENCE OF A DUAL PERSONALITY IN SCRIPTURE. In the first place there is a negative consideration of considerable importance. If there had been a dual personality in Jesus, we would naturally expect to find some traces of it in Scripture; but there is not a single trace of it. There is no distinction of an “I” and a “Thou” in the inner life of the Mediator, such as we find in connection with the triune Being of God, where one person addresses the other, Ps. 2:7; 40:7,8; John 17:1,4,5,21-24. Moreover, Jesus never uses the plural in referring to Himself, as God does in Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7. It might seem as if John 3:11 were a case in point. The plural is peculiar, but in all probability refers to Jesus and those who were associated with Him, in opposition to Nicodemus and the group which he represented.

2. BOTH NATURES ARE REPRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE AS UNITED IN ONE PERSON. There are passages of Scripture which refer to both natures in Christ, but in which it is perfectly evident that only one person is intended, Rom. 1:3,4; Gal. 4:4,5; Phil. 2:6-11. In several passages both natures are set forth as united. The Bible nowhere teaches that divinity in the abstract, or some divine power, was united to, or manifested in, a human nature; but always that the divine nature in the concrete, that is, the divine person of the Son of God,

was united to a human nature, John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4; 9:5; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:11-14; I John 4:2,3.

3. THE ONE PERSON IS SPOKEN OF IN TERMS TRUE OF EITHER ONE OF THE NATURES. Repeatedly the attributes of one nature are predicated of the person, while that person is designated by a title derived from the other nature. On the one hand human attributes and actions are predicated of the person while he is designated by a divine title, Acts 20:28; I Cor. 2:8; Col. 1:13,14. And on the other hand divine attributes and actions are predicated of the person while he is designated by a human title, John 3:13; 6:62; Rom. 9:5.

C. The Effects Of The Union Of The Two Natures In One Person.

GLOSS Communication of attributes: speaking of the one person of Christ in ways that reflect either His divine or human nature.

1. NO ESSENTIAL CHANGE IN THE DIVINE NATURE. The doctrine of creation and the doctrine of the incarnation always constituted a problem in connection with the immutability of God. This was already pointed out in the discussion of that attribute. However this problem may be solved, it should be maintained that the divine nature did not undergo any essential change in the incarnation. This also means that it remained impassible, that is, incapable of suffering and death, free from ignorance, and insusceptible to weakness and temptation. It is well to stress the fact that the incarnation was a personal act. It is better to say that the person of the Son of God became incarnate than to say that the divine nature assumed human flesh. If Reformed theologians do occasionally speak of the divine nature as incarnate, they speak of it “not immediately but mediately,” to use the language of scholastic theology; they consider this nature not absolutely and in itself, but in the person of the Son of God. The result of the incarnation was that the divine Saviour could be

ignorant and weak, could be tempted, and could suffer and die, not in His divine nature, but derivatively, by virtue of His possession of a human nature.

2. A THREEFOLD COMMUNICATION RESULTED FROM THE INCARNATION.

a. A *communicatio idiomatum*, or communication of properties. This means that the properties of both, the human and the divine natures, are now the properties of the person, and are therefore ascribed to the person. The person can be said to be almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, and so on, but can also be called a man of sorrows, of limited knowledge and power, and subject to human want and miseries. We must be careful not to understand the term to mean that anything peculiar to the divine nature was communicated to the human nature, or vice versa; or that there is an interpenetration of the two natures, as a result of which the divine is humanized, and the human is deified (Rome). The deity cannot share in human weaknesses; neither can man participate in any of the essential perfections of the Godhead.

b. A *communicatio apotelesmatum* or *operationum*. This means that the redemptive work of Christ, and particularly the final result of that work, the *apotelesma*, bears a divine-human character. Analysing this, we can say that it means: (1) that the efficient cause of the redemptive work of Christ is the one undivided personal subject in Christ; (2) that it is brought about by the co-operation of both natures; (3) that each of these natures works with its own special *energeia*; and (4) that, notwithstanding this, the result forms an undivided unity, because it is the work of a single person.

c. A *communicatio charismatum* or *gratiarum*. This means that the human nature of Christ, from the very first moment of its existence, was adorned with all kinds of rich and glorious gifts, as for instance, (1) the *gratia unionis cum persona tou Logou*, that is, the grace and glory of being united to the divine Logos, also called the *gratia eminentiae*, by which the human nature is elevated high above all creatures, and even becomes the object of adoration;

and (2) the *gratia habitualis*, consisting of those gifts of the Spirit, particularly of the intellect, of the will, and of power, by which the human nature of Christ was exalted high above all intelligent creatures. His impeccability, the non *posse peccare*, especially should be mentioned here.

3. THE GOD-MAN IS THE OBJECT OF PRAYER. Another effect of the union is, that the Mediator just as He now exists, that is, in both natures, is the object of our prayer. It should be borne in mind that the honour adorationis does not belong to the human nature as such, but belongs to it only in virtue of its union with the divine Logos, who is in His very nature *adorabilis*. We must distinguish between the object and the ground of this adoration. The object of our religious worship is the God-man Jesus Christ, but the ground on which we adore Him lies in the person of the Logos.

D. The Unipersonality Of Christ A Mystery.

GLOSS **Mystery:** a divine truth made known by Scripture which exceeds complete human understanding but is not contrary to reason.

The union of the two natures in one person is a mystery which we cannot grasp, and which for that very reason is often denied. It has sometimes been compared with the union of body and soul in man; and there are some points of similarity. In man there are two substances, matter and spirit, most closely united and yet not mixed; so also in the Mediator. In man the principle of unity, the person, does not have its seat in the body but in the soul; in the Mediator, not in the human, but in the divine nature. As the influence of the soul on the body and of the body on the soul is a mystery, so also the connection of the two natures in Christ and their mutual influence on each other. Everything that happens in the body and in the soul is ascribed to the person; so all that takes place in the two natures of Christ is predicated of the person. Sometimes a man is denominated according to his spiritual element,

when something is predicated of him that applies more particularly to the body, and vice versa. Similarly things that apply only to the human nature of Christ are ascribed to Him when He is named after His divine nature, and vice versa. As it is an honour for the body to be united with the soul, so it is an honour for the human nature of Christ to be united with the person of the Logos. Of course, the comparison is defective. It does not illustrate the union of the divine and the human, of the infinite and the finite. It does not even illustrate the unity of two spiritual natures in a single person. In the case of man the body is material and the soul is spiritual. It is a wonderful union, but not as wonderful as the union of the two natures in Christ.

E. The Lutheran Doctrine Of The Communication Of Attributes.

GLOSS *Communicatio idiomatum*: Latin for the communication of attributes; a discussion of how Christ's divine and human properties relate in His one person.

1. STATEMENT OF THE LUTHERAN POSITION. The Lutherans differ from the Reformed in their doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. They teach that the attributes of one nature are ascribed to the other on the basis of an actual transference, and feel that it is only by such a transference that the real unity of the person can be secured. This position does not involve a denial of the fact that the attributes of both natures can be ascribed to the person, but adds something to that in the interest, as they see it, of the unity of the person. They did not always state their doctrine in the same form. Luther and some of the early Lutherans occasionally spoke of a communication in both directions, from the divine nature to the human, and also from the human to the divine. In the subsequent development of the doctrine, however, the communication from the human nature to the divine soon receded from sight, and only that

from the divine to the human nature was stressed. A still greater limitation soon followed. Lutheran scholastics distinguished between the operative attributes of God (omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience), and His quiescent attributes (infinity, eternity, etc.), and taught that only the former were transferred to the human nature. They were all agreed that the communication took place at the time of the incarnation. But the question naturally arose how this could be squared with the picture of Christ in the Gospels, which is not the picture of an omniscient and omnipresent man. This gave rise to a difference of opinion. According to some, Christ necessarily exercised these attributes during His humiliation, but did it secretly; but according to others their exercise was subject to the will of the divine person, who voluntarily left them inoperative during the period of His humiliation. Opposition to this doctrine repeatedly manifested itself in the Lutheran Church. It was pointed out that it is inconsistent with the idea of a truly human development in the life of Christ, so clearly taught by Luther himself. The great Reformer's insistence on the communication of attributes finds its explanation partly in his mystical tendencies, and partly in his teachings respecting the physical presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

2. OBJECTIONS TO THIS LUTHERAN DOCTRINE. There are serious objections to the Lutheran doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum.

a. It has no Scriptural foundation. If it is inferred from such a statement as that in John 3:13, then, in consistency, it ought also to be concluded from I Cor. 2:8 that the ability to suffer was communicated to the divine nature. Yet the Lutherans shrink back from that conclusion.

b. It implies a fusion of the divine and the human natures in Christ. Lutherans speak as if the attributes can be abstracted from the nature, and can be communicated while the natures remain separate, but substance and attributes cannot be so separated. By a communication of divine attributes to the human nature that nature as such ceases to exist. Omnipresence and omniscience are not compatible with humanity. Such a communication results

in a mixture of the divine and the human, which the Bible keeps strictly separate.

c. In the form in which the doctrine is now generally accepted by the Lutherans, the doctrine suffers from inconsistency. If the divine attributes are communicated to the human nature, the human must also be communicated to the divine. And if some attributes are communicated, they must all be communicated. But the Lutherans evidently do not dare to go the full length, and therefore stop half way.

d. It is inconsistent with the picture of the incarnate Christ during the time of His humiliation, as we find it in the Gospels. This is not the picture of a man who is omnipresent and omniscient. The Lutheran explanations of this inconsistency failed to commend themselves to the mind of the Church in general, and even to some of the followers of Luther.

e. It virtually destroys the incarnation. Lutherans distinguish between the incarnatio and the exinanitio. The Logos is the subject only of the former. He makes the human nature receptive for the inhabitation of the fulness of the Godhead and communicates to it some of the divine attributes. But by doing this He virtually abrogates the human nature by assimilating it to the divine. Thus only the divine remains.

f. It also practically obliterates the distinction between the state of humiliation and the state of exaltation. Brenz even says that these were not successive states, but states that co-existed during the earthly life of Christ. To escape the difficulty here, the Lutherans brought in the doctrine of the exinanitio, of which not the Logos but the God-man is the subject, to the effect that He practically emptied Himself, or laid aside the divine attributes. Some spoke of a constant but secret, and others of an intermittent use of them.

F. The Kenosis Doctrine In Various Forms.

GLOSS Kenosis: Christ's voluntary self-humbling in taking the form of a servant; it does not mean that He ceased to be God.

About the middle of the nineteenth century a new form of Christology made its appearance in the Kenotic theories. It found favour especially among the Lutherans, but also with some Reformed theologians. It represents part of an attempt to bring the Lutheran and the Reformed sections of the Church closer together. The advocates of this new view desired to do full justice to the reality and integrity of the manhood of Christ, and to stress the magnitude of His self-denial and self-sacrifice.

1. STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE. The term “kenosis” is used in a two-fold sense in theology. Originally it was used by Lutheran theologians to denote the self-limitation, not of the Logos, but of the God-man, whereby He, in the interest of His humiliation, laid aside the actual use of His divine attributes. In the teachings of the Kenoticists, however, it signalized the doctrine that the Logos at the incarnation was denuded of His transitive or of all His attributes, was reduced to a mere potentiality, and then, in union with the human nature, developed again into a divine-human person. The main forms in which this doctrine were taught are the following:

a. The theory of Thomasius, Delitzsch and Crosby. Thomasius distinguishes between the absolute and essential attributes of God, such as absolute power, holiness, truth, and love, and His relative attributes, which are not essential to the Godhead, such as omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; and maintains that the Logos while retaining His divine self-consciousness, laid the latter aside, in order to take unto Himself veritable human nature.

b. The theory of Gess and H. W. Beecher. This is far more thorough-going. La Touche speaks of it as “incarnation by divine suicide.” The Logos so

depotentiated Himself of all His divine attributes that He literally ceased from His cosmic functions and His eternal consciousness during the years of His earthly life. His consciousness became purely that of a human soul, and consequently He could and did take the place of the human soul in Christ. Thus the true manhood of Christ, even to the extent of His peccability, was secured.

c. The theory of Ebrard. Ebrard agrees with Gess in making the incarnate Logos take the place of the human soul. The eternal Son gave up the form of eternity, and in full self-limitation assumed the existence-form of a human life-centre. But with him this self-reduction does not amount to a complete depotentialization of the Logos. The divine properties were retained, but were possessed by the God-man in the time-form appropriate to a human mode of existence.

d. The theory of Martensen and Gore. Martensen postulated the existence of a double life in the incarnate Logos from two non-communicating life-centres. As being in the bosom of God, He continued to function in the trinitarian life and also in His cosmic relations to the world as Creator and Sustainer. But at the same time He, as the depotentiated Logos, united with a human nature, knew nothing of His trinitarian and cosmic functions, and only knew Himself to be God in such a sense as that knowledge is possible to the faculties of manhood.

2. SUPPOSED SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THE DOCTRINE. The Kenotics seek Scriptural support for their doctrine, especially in Phil. 2:6-8, but also in II Cor. 8:9 and John 17:5. The term “kenosis” is derived from the main verb in Phil. 2:7, *ekenosen*. This is rendered in the American Revised Version, “emptied Himself.” Dr. Warfield calls this a mistranslation. [Christology and Criticism, p. 375.] The verb is found in only four other New Testament passages, namely, Rom. 4:14; I Cor. 1:17; 9:15; II Cor. 9:3. In all of these it is used figuratively and means “to make void,” “of no effect,” “of no account,” “of no reputation.” [Cf. Auth. Ver. in Phil. 2:7.] If we so understand the word here,

it simply means that Christ made Himself of no account, of no reputation, did not assert His divine prerogative, but took the form of a servant. But even if we take the word in its literal sense, it does not support the Kenosis theory. It would, if we understood that which He laid aside to be the *morphe theou* (form of God), and then conceived of *morphe* strictly as the essential or specific character of the Godhead. In all probability *morphe* must be so understood, but the verb *ekenosen* does not refer to *morphe theou*, but to *einai isa theoi* (dat.) that is, His being on an equality with God. The fact that Christ took the form of a servant does not involve a laying aside of the form of God. There was no exchange of the one for the other. Though He pre-existed in the form of God, Christ did not count the being on an equality with God as a prize which He must not let slip, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. Now what does His becoming a servant involve? A state of subjection in which one is called upon to render obedience. And the opposite of this is a state of sovereignty in which one has the right to command. The being on an equality with God does not denote a mode of being, but a state which Christ exchanged for another state.[Cf. Kennedy, in *Exp. Gk. Test.*; Ewald, in *Zahn's Comm.*; Vos, *Notes on Christology of Paul*; Cooke, *The Incarnation and Recent Criticism*, pp. 201 ff.]

3. OBJECTIONS TO THE KENOSIS DOCTRINE.

a. The theory is based on the pantheistic conception that God and man are not so absolutely different but that the one can be transformed into the other. The Hegelian idea of becoming is applied to God, and the absolute line of demarcation is obliterated.

b. It is altogether subversive of the doctrine of the immutability of God, which is plainly taught in Scripture, Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17, and which is also implied in the very idea of God. Absoluteness and mutability are mutually exclusive; and a mutable God is certainly not the God of Scripture.

c. It means a virtual destruction of the Trinity, and therefore takes away our very God. The humanized Son, self-emptied of His divine attributes, could no longer be a divine subsistence in the trinitarian life.

d. It assumes too loose a relation between the divine mode of existence, the divine attributes, and the divine essence, when it speaks of the former as if they might very well be separated from the latter. This is altogether misleading, and involves the very error that is condemned in connection with the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

e. It does not solve the problem which it was intended to solve. It desired to secure the unity of the person and the reality of the Lord's manhood. But, surely, the personal unity is not secured by assuming a human Logos as co-existent with a human soul. Nor is the reality of the manhood maintained by substituting for the human soul a depotentiated Logos. The Christ of the Kenotics is neither God nor man. In the words of Dr. Warfield His human nature is "just shrunken deity."

The Kenotic theory enjoyed great popularity in Germany for a while, but has now practically died out there. When it began to disappear in Germany, it found supporters in England in such scholars as D. W. Forrest, W. L. Walker, P. T. Forsyth, Ch. Gore, R. L. Ottley, and H. R. Mackintosh. It finds very little support at the present time.

G. The Theory Of Gradual Incarnation.

GLOSS Incarnation: the Son's taking human nature at a definite moment; Scripture does not present it as a gradual process.

Dorner was one of the first and the greatest of the opponents of the Kenosis doctrine. He set himself the task of suggesting another theory which, while escaping the errors of Kenoticism, would do full justice to the humanity of

Christ. He proposed to solve the problem by the theory of a gradual or progressive incarnation. According to him the incarnation was not an act consummated at the moment of the conception of Jesus, but a gradual process by which the Logos joined Himself in an ever-increasing measure to the unique and representative Man (virtually a new creation), Christ Jesus, until the full union was finally consummated at the time of the resurrection. The union resulted in the God-man with a single consciousness and a single will. In this God-man the Logos does not supply the personality, but gives it its divine quality. This theory finds no support in Scripture, which always represents the incarnation as a momentary fact rather than as a process. It logically leads to Nestorianism or the doctrine of two persons in the Mediator. And since it finds the real seat of the personality in the man Jesus, it is utterly subversive of the real pre-existence of our Lord. Rothe and Bovon are two of the most important supporters of this doctrine.

The crucial difference between the ancient and the really modern theories respecting the person of Christ, lies in the fact that the latter, as appears also from the theory of Dorner, distinguish the person of the Logos, conceived as a special mode of the personal life of God, from the personality of Christ as a concrete human person uniquely divine in quality. According to modern views it is not the Logos but the man Jesus that constitutes the ego in Christ. The personality of Jesus is human in type of consciousness and also in moral growth, but at the same time uniquely receptive for the divine, and thus really the climax of an incarnation of which humanity itself is the general cosmic expression. This is true also of the theory suggested by Sanday in his *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, a theory which seeks to give a psychological explanation of the person of Jesus, which will do justice to both the human and the divine in Jesus. He stresses the fact that the subliminal consciousness is the proper seat of all divine indwelling, or divine action upon the human soul; and holds that the same or a corresponding subliminal self is also the proper seat or locus of the deity of the incarnate Christ. The ordinary consciousness of Jesus was the human consciousness, but there appeared in

Him occasionally an uprush of the divine consciousness from the subliminal self. This theory has rightly been criticized severely. It ascribes a significance to the subliminal in the life of man which it does not possess, wrongly supposes that the deity can be located in some particular place in the person of Christ, and suggests a picture of Christ, as being only intermittently conscious of His deity, which is not in harmony with the data of Scripture. It reveals once more the folly of trying to give a psychological explanation of the person of Christ. Besides Sanday some of the more influential representatives of modern Christology are Kunze, Schaeder, Kaehler, Moberly, and Du Bose.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY. What change did the eighteenth century effect in Christology? What causes contributed to the present widespread denial of the deity of Christ? How do negative critics deal with the Scriptural proofs for the deity of Christ? Did the Liberal-Jesus-School succeed in presenting a tolerable picture of Jesus, which really squares with the facts? What is the distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, and what purpose did it serve? What about the argument *aut Deus aut homo non bonus*? How is the reality of Christ's manhood sometimes endangered? Was there a single or a double self-consciousness in Christ? One or two wills? On what grounds is the Messianic consciousness of Jesus denied? How can it be defended? Did Jesus regard the Messiahship merely as a dignity that would be His in the future? Has the eschatological school any advantages over the liberal school? How do the Reformed, the Lutheran, and the Roman Catholic conceptions of the union of the two natures in Christ differ? What does the Formula Concordiae teach on this point? What was the Giessen-Tuebingen controversy? How did Kant, Hegel, and Schleiermacher conceive of this union? In what respect do the Kenosis theories reveal the influence of Hegel? How did the modern conception of the immanence of God affect more recent Christologies? Is Sanday's psychological theory an acceptable construction?