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(unpublished class notes)

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4. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

In the last two chapters, two and three, we have considered the doctrine of Christ from two distinct aspects. First, we considered it from the aspect of the historical life and work of Christ the Incarnate Son of God, and we considered that both in terms of His obedience to the Father, and in terms of His mission of reconciliation toward men, and we saw that at the heart of both was the relation between the Son and the Father which the Incarnate Son translated into our flesh, and into which He sought to gather lost mankind, that all who came to Him might share in His sonship and be reconciled as sons of God. There we considered the doctrine of Christ dynamically in the whole course and movement of His Incarnate life and mission. Second, we considered the doctrine of Christ from its aspect of mystery, from its source in the eternal decision of God, and from the aspect of those who in the Church are drawn by the Spirit into communion with Christ, and participate in the mystery hid from the ages, but now revealed and set forth in the Gospel of the Incarnate Saviour. There we considered the doctrine of Christ sub specie aeternitatis, in the light of His divine glory, in terms of His relation in Being and Person to the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the eternal communion of the Trinity. And we saw that to be no less a dynamic account of Christ, for Christ is the only-begotten and beloved Son moving into time and completing within time that movement of the eternal Love of God. Now in the third place, we act on that two-fold biblical basis and give a theological account of the doctrine of Christ, but in doing so we must be careful not to move away from either of these basic Biblical aspects of the Person and Word of Christ we have found to be the very essence of the New Testament Revelation. We try to do this by penetrating into its inner logic - not by arguing logico - deductively from fixed premises, but by seeking to lay bare the precision embedded in the intrinsic of the subject-matter. And here we are faced with a fundamental problem: how can we give careful theological statements about this amazing Christ without committing the sin of stripping our account of His eternal glory, or without converting the movement of His love and grace into a static relationship? Or to put the matter otherwise: How can we be faithful in our theological statements to the nature of the eternal Being of the Son who became Man and who yet remains God, and at the same time to the nature and person of the historical Jesus Christ? That has been the constant problem of theology. We see it already in the early Church, in the contrasting emphases between Antioch and Alexandria, in the tendency of the Logos-Christology even before that to depreciate the historical Jesus, and then after the battle with Arianism, a tendency of post-Nicene Christology, while affirming the true humanity of Christ, to fail to give adequate account of the saving significance of the historical humanity of Christ, content apparently to give the historical Jesus a place only in the liturgical year, and not in the actual doctrine of Christ. On the other hand, the modern tendency, especially /

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especially in the West, has been to give an account of Christ solely in terms of what He did for man, rather than in terms of His Person and Being as the Son of God become Man, with the result that the doctrine of Christ tended to be displaced by historicism on the one hand, or religious experience and spiritual values on the other hand.

A study of the history of the doctrine of Christ makes it clear that if we try to state the doctrine of Christ purely in substantival terms, without adequate attention to His action and saving mission in history, then we fail to do justice to the New Testament Revelation, and replace the living Christ by a still dogma about Him; but if we try to state the doctrine of Christ in purely verbal terms, without adequate attention to the eternal Being and Person of Christ as God and Man in one Person, then we fail to do justice to the New Testament Revelation, and replace the authentic Christ by a modern construction, in fact by a Jesus dressed up in the ideas and clothes of our own times. The doctrine of Christ in the Early Church had at least this great advantage, that it sought to give its account of Christ in such a way, as to leave Christ Himself ample room for His own Glory and self-revelation. It refused to encase the doctrine of Christ within the mind of man. It gave its account of Him in such a way as to acknowledge the reality of His divine and human natures in their union in the one Person of the Son, but declined to state how those two natures were united in Christ, being content to declare that the difference of these two natures was not removed by their union, but rather that the propriety of each nature was preserved precisely in their concurrence and union in the One Person of Christ the Lord. In other words, the Early Church sought to preserve the mystery of Christ, and sought to guard that mystery from errors that divided or separated the two natures of Christ on the one hand, or that confounded them or fused them into a higher or lower unity on the other hand. In so doing, the Early Church rendered theology magnificent service, and its account has ever since commanded the Church's assent, although it is increasingly clear that it did not say enough - not that it could say one iota more about how the divine and human natures of Christ are united in the mystery of His Person, but that it did not relate that mystery adequately to the historical obedience of Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son, and to His atoning work, and so did not give sufficient attention to the saving significance of the Humanity of Christ. That aspect was largely recovered by the Reformers who made the next major contribution to the historical doctrine of Christ. In our account we must try to give both the patristic and the Reformed doctrines of Christ their full weight, and state the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union of two natures in the One Person of Christ in such a way that we are faithful throughout to the whole biblical account of His Person and Work as the Incarnate Son of the Father. This does not mean that at this point we have to recapitulate all that we have already said especially in chapter two, but it does mean that we must be careful not to state a doctrine of the Person of Christ, or of the hypostatic union, and then go on to state the doctrine of /

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of the saving work of Christ as atoning reconciliation, as if atoning reconciliation were something that had to be added on to the doctrine of the hypostatic union. On the contrary, we have to see that reconciliation is the hypostatic union at work in expiation and atonement, and therefore cannot be expounded aright except in terms of Christ's active ministry within our darkness and estrangement, bringing revelation and reconciliation. If the mystery is the Incarnation of the eternal purpose of God, then the doctrine of the Person of Christ cannot be abstracted from the doctrine of the divine decision to bestow eternal love upon us, and to gather us back into eternal life. On the other hand, it is important to see that the doctrine of Christ's work of atoning reconciliation presupposes the doctrine of the hypostatic union of two natures in one person, for the whole work of reconciliation depends upon the fact that One Person acts both from the side of God, and from the side of man, both in the divine acts and in the human acts, and that these acts are really and truly identical in the Person of the Mediator. But before we see fully that relation between the hypostatic union and atoning mediation or reconciliation, we have to consider the saving significance of Christ as truly divine and truly human.

(a) The Humanity and the Deity of Christ

Let us first consider the Humanity of Christ.

The very fact that God became Man in order to save us, declares in no uncertain way that the Manhood of Christ is absolutely essential to our salvation. We may even say, and say reverently, that God had to become Man for us and our salvation, if we hasten to add that this 'had to' is of sheer grace, and not necessity. In the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren".

The Humanity of Jesus Christ means that God has actually come among men to reveal Himself and to reconcile men to Himself. Christ's Humanity signifies the objective actuality of God's coming and presence in the same sphere of reality and actuality in which we human being belong. If Jesus Christ were not Man as well as God, that would mean that God had not actually come all the way to man, that He had not really got a foothold in our creaturely world, as it were, within the time-series in which we are, and that God would still be far away from us, as far as the heaven is from the earth, as far as Creator is from creature. Any docetic view of the Humanity of Christ snaps the life-line between God and man, and destroys the relevance of the divine acts in Jesus for men of flesh and blood.

The New Testament is at pains to make clear the full Humanity of Christ. He comes as bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; He speaks with a human voice, is brought up in a human family, eats, drinks, thirsts and is hungry, grows weary and is pained, rejoices and sheds tears, and is encompassed with our frailty and infirmity. Here in Jesus the Eternal God comes so near that He is a particular man among men, a particular historical individual, a frail human being, such a man in fact that men could easily pass Him by just as /

as another man, and easily fail to see anything else in Him than ordinary humanity. All that means that in Jesus Christ, the Eternal God has actually come to us, and is one of us in the same sphere of reality in which we exist, and with which we are so very familiar.

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The stark actuality of Christ's humanity, His flesh and blood and bone, guarantees to us that we have God among us. If that manhood were in any sense unreal; God would be unreal for us in Him. The full measure of Christ's Humanity is the full measure of God's reality for us, God's actuality to us, in fact the measure of God's love for us. If Christ is not Man, then God has not reached us, but has stopped short of our humanity - then God does not love us to the uttermost, for His love has stopped short of coming all the way to where we are, and becoming one of us. But Christ's humanity means that God's love is now flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone.

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This Humanity of Christ is essential to God's Revelation, for the actuality of His Revelation is grounded upon the actuality of Christ's Humanity. In Jesus Christ, God's Truth has become actual. Jesus Christ is the Truth, the mystery in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and from whose fulness we may all receive. The astounding thing is that the Eternal Word by whom all things were created become a creature, became man, certainly without ceasing to be that Eternal Word, and therefore its very creatureliness constitutes the act of Revelation, and is the guarantee that Revelation is here within creation and accessible to human creatures; it is the guarantee that God's Revelation is Revelation to creaturely man, in the language and life of man, man who is involved within the limitations of time and space, and who cannot escape from them, who can only know within them, within time and history. Because the eternal has become temporal, man can know the eternal Truth in creaturely temporal form, the Eternal Truth in time. The historical Humanity of Jesus is the guarantee that within the relativities and contingencies of our historical human existence, Revelation is reality, and is actuality accessible to us.

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This Humanity of Christ is essential to God's Reconciliation, for the actuality of atonement is grounded upon the fact that in actual human nature, it is God acting on our behalf. Thus any docetic view of the humanity of Christ would mean that God only appears to act within our human existence, or that His acts are only of tangential significance, and do not really strike into the roots of our existence and condition, and have no relevance to our need. Atonement is real and actual only as if the Mediator acts fully from the side of man as man, as well as from the side of God as God. If the manhood of Christ is imperfect, atonement is imperfect, and we would still be in our sins. If Jesus Christ is really and truly man, then His death for sin is an act of God in human nature, and not just an act upon human nature. But if atonement is to fulfil its object, it must not only be act of God upon man, but act of man in response to God, man's sacrifice, man's oblation, man's satisfaction for sin. Apart from the human obedience

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and human life and death of Christ, apart from His human sacrifice, we have nothing at all to offer to God, nothing with which we can stand before God, but our sin and guilt. But here in the full humanity of Jesus, as it is joined eternally to His Deity in Incarnation and atonement, man's destiny as man is actually assured and restored to its place in God from which he has fallen; man's wrong has been set aside in and with the judgement accomplished upon the humanity of Christ, and now in His humanity our new right hand has been established before God.

Now in the second place, let us consider the Deity of Christ.

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If the Humanity of Christ is the guarantee of the action of God among men, revealing Himself and reconciling sinners to Himself, the Deity of Christ is the guarantee that that work of revelation and reconciliation is not hollow and empty and unreal on its objective side; it is the guarantee that in Jesus Christ we have to do with the reality of God Himself. That Jesus does in forgiveness is not just the work of man, but the work of God, and is therefore of final and ultimate validity. Only God against whom we sin can forgive sin, but the Deity of Christ is the guarantee that the action of Christ in the whole course of His life is identical with the action of God toward us. It is not something of God that we have in Christ, but God Himself, very God of very God.

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Let us note that strictly speaking, we cannot say that Jesus is divine, any more than we can say that God is human. We can say that God is become Man, such that He is also Man in Christ. And so we can say that Jesus is Man and also God, but to talk about divine humanity is confusion, and a form of monophysite heresy; it is to deny His humanity. Christ is fully Man, but while Man, He Himself in the whole course of His life is also God. Christ is God, true God as well as true Man. The significance of His Deity lies in the fact that it is God Himself who acts in Jesus Christ, in His teaching and reconciliation. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We worship and adore Christ as very God of very God, for He is God. The relationship we have with Jesus is therefore identical with relationship with God. What Christ Jesus is to us in His Person, in Word and Deed, what He is to us in all our knowledge of Him in grace and forgiveness, that He is eternally in God. The Deity of Christ is thus the guarantee that the actions of Christ are not in time only, not just temporary or temporal actions, but the eternal action of God, eternally real in the Godhead.

When we say that Christ is the object of our faith and worship, we do not simply say that we believe through Christ, as we might believe through a prophet. We do believe through Him, and only through Him, but through Him as Mediator who Himself is God as well as Man, and so we believe through Him, and directly in Him, as God Himself. The Deity of Christ is not a derivative of our faith, not an inference from His consciousness or from His perfection or from His work on our behalf; Faith in Christ directly as God, is the immediate statement of faith. It is such a primary statement that all /

all other statements of faith have their source there, and are related directly to it. Christian faith starts from the fact that in laying hold of Christ, we lay hold of God Himself, for what Christ is, God is. If Christ is not God, if God is not fully and wholly present in Christ, and identical with Christ, then God does not reconcile the world to Himself, then the work of Jesus is not eternally valid, but is only temporal and contingent and relative. If Christ is not God, then the Love of Christ is not identically God's love, and so we do not know that God is Love. We may know that Christ is Love, but if He is not really God in the complete sense, then all we have in Jesus Christ is a revelation of man at his highest reaching up into the clouds. If Christ is not God, then we do not have a descent of God to man. Thus as the obverse of the fact that Christ's real Humanity means that God has actually come to men and dwells among men, Christ's Deity means that GOD HIMSELF has come to save us. The dogma of the Humanity of Christ asserts the actuality in our world of the coming of God, and the dogma of the Deity of Christ asserts the divine content of our knowledge and Salvation, the objective reality of our relation of God Himself. The dogma of the Deity of Christ means that our salvation in Christ is anchored in Eternity; that it is more sure than the heavens.

The full reality of Christ's Deity is essential to Revelation, for the reality of Revelation is grounded in the reality of Christ's Deity. Certainly Revelation would not be revelation to us unless it were in our human language and thought, but its reality as Revelation of God is grounded on the reality of God's presence in it, the reality of God's act of self-communication and through it, that is, on the identity between Revelation and God the Revealer. The Humanity of Christ guarantees the actuality of Revelation, but the Deity of Christ guarantees its nature as Revelation of God. Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father, and as such He is the Revelation He brings. In Christ, God reveals Himself in an act that is identical with His Person. Were Christ not Man, God's revelation would not actually be revelation to men, but were He not also God, it would not be valid, for only God can reveal God. To reveal God, the revealer must take the place of God, and only God can take His own place. This identity of Christ's Revelation with God's self-revelation is the ground of our assurance and certainty that what we know in and through Jesus Christ, is none other than God, and that there is nothing in God essential to our knowledge of Him which is hid from us, and that God as He is in Himself, is not a reality other than the God revealed to us in and through Jesus Christ.

Thus the weakening in the affirmation of the Deity of Christ, results in indecision and uncertainty. It is indeed because of this weakness that men are engulfed in relativity, and are not sure about what they believe. How do you know that you are right and not wrong? How do you know that they are not right, and you are not wrong? Such is the uncertainty that is born of clouded vision of the Deity of Christ. When the Deity of Christ is denied, the /

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the bottom falls out of Christianity. When the Deity of Christ is denied, His Humanity is denied as well, because Jesus is made out to be a liar, and if Jesus is cut adrift from the Truth, then we are all hopelessly at sea. Thus the full reality of Christ's Deity is essential to Revelation, and faith, for the reality of revelation is grounded in the reality of the action and presence of God in Christ, on the identity of His Revelation with God's self-Revelation.

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The full reality of Christ's Deity is essential for salvation, for the reality and validity of salvation are grounded upon the reality of Christ's Deity. Man's salvation must be an act of God, else it is not salvation. The Deity of Christ tells us that the action of Jesus in the Incarnation and on the Cross is identical with God's own action. How can man be saved? The answer is given in the words, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" - but if that "I" is not God Himself, it is ultimately an illusion. Everything depends on the fact that the whole course of Christ's life is identical with the course of God's action towards man. The whole of our salvation depends on the fact that it is God in Christ who suffers and bears the sin of the world, and reconciles the world to Himself. The validity of our salvation depends on the fact that He who died on the Cross under divine judgement is also God the Judge, so that He who forgives is also He who judges. The reality of our salvation means that its reality is anchored on the divine side of reality, that the Lamb is slain before the foundation of the world, that He has ascended to the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and sits down with God on His own throne because He is God. Everything depends upon the fact that the Cross is lodged in the heart of the Father.

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It is important to see that if the Deity of Christ is denied, then the Cross becomes a terrible monstrosity. If Jesus Christ is man only and not also God, then we lose faith in God and man. We lose faith in God because we could not believe in a God who allows the best man that ever lived to be hounded to death on the Cross - is that all that God cares about our humanity and its search after God, after truth and righteousness and peace? Put Jesus Christ a man on the Cross, and put God in heaven, like some Mohammedan deity imprisoned in His own lonely abstract Deity - and you cannot believe in Him, in such a god who is monstrously unconcerned with our life, and who does not even lift a finger to help Jesus. But if you deny the Deity of Christ we lose faith in man also, for that means that man is such that when he sees the very best, the very highest and noblest the world has ever known, he crucifies it in spite, and will have nothing to do with it except to hate it. Put God in heaven, and Jesus a man only on the Cross, and you destroy all hope and trust, and preach a doctrine of the blackest and most abysmal despair. Denial of the Deity of Christ destroys faith in God and in man, and turns the Cross into the bottomless pit of darkness. But put God on the Cross, and the Cross becomes the world's salvation. All the Gospel rests upon the fact that it is God who became incarnate, and it was God who in Christ has reconciled /

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We see then the significance of Christ's Deity and Humanity to lie in regard to His work of Revelation and Reconciliation. He who reveals God to man, and reconciles man to God, must be both God and Man, truly and completely God, and truly and completely Man. If the Son was to redeem the whole nature of man, He had to take the whole nature of man; if in the Son man is to be gathered into the fellowship and life of God, it must be by One who is truly and completely God. Only He can be Mediator who is Himself the Union of God and Man, only He can be Pontifex who is Himself the Pons.

(b) The Hypostatic Union in Revelation and Reconciliation

When we take the essential significance of the Humanity of Christ, and the essential significance of His Deity, and put them together, as we must, for there is but one Christ, we are forced to acknowledge that the divine acts in the human nature of Christ, and the human acts in Christ, are both acts of one and the same person, and therefore that in that One Person, the divine and human acts are united, and further, that the divine and human natures are united. Moreover, here we acknowledge that what God is in Christ, in all His acts in revelation and reconciliation, in mercy and holiness, He is antecedently and eternally in Himself, and that the love of Jesus and His decision to give Himself a ransom for many, are a love and decision that repose upon and issue out of the eternal love and decision of God. We worship and acknowledge the Person of Christ as the very Person of God, but this one Person whom we worship and acknowledge as the Person of God Himself, is the One Person in whom divine and human acts, divine and human natures are united, so that they are all predicates of the One whole Christ, the One and only Lord and Saviour. That worship and acknowledgement of Christ the Lord in His divine and human acts, His divine and human natures, is the doctrine of the hypostatic union, in which we assert of the mystery of Christ that divine and human natures and acts are truly and completely united in one Person or Hypostatis. That hypostatic union is also known as "personal union", but personal union means union in the One Person. That is a personal union unlike any personal union we know even at its most intimate in marriage, which is union in one flesh, but union of two persons in one flesh. But this is such a union of natures and acts that they are united in one and only One Person.

Another way of putting this is to say that when we examine the significance of Christ's Humanity and the significance of His Deity, we find that the Humanity of Christ has no revealing or saving significance for us apart from His Deity, and that His Deity has no revealing or saving significance for us apart from His Humanity. The doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of true and complete Humanity in full union with true and complete Deity, and it is in that UNION that the significance of both revelation and reconciliation lies. It is such a union that the presence of full and perfect humanity does /

does not impair or diminish or restrict the presence of full and perfect Deity, and the presence of full and perfect Deity does not impair or diminish or restrict the presence of full and perfect humanity. It is such a union that true Godhead and true manhood are joined together in Jesus Christ in such a way that they cannot be separated, and yet in such a way that they can never be confused, and so that one does not absorb the other, or that both do not combine to form a third entity which is neither divine nor human. In the hypostatic union, God remains God and Man remains Man, and yet in Christ, God who remains God is for ever joined to man, and becomes Man, and remains Man. In this union God has become Man without ceasing to be God, and man is taken up into the very being of God without ceasing to be Man. That is the mystery of Jesus Christ in whom we have communion through the Holy Spirit.

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Now we must consider that hypostatic union in relation to Revelation and Reconciliation.

(1) The Hypostatic Union of God and Man in One Person is the heart of Revelation, and its full substance

The Incarnation of the Word means that the Word assumes human form and approaches us from within the forms of human life in the only way along which we can understand. God's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways; He does not reveal Himself to us, however, as He is in Himself in His total difference from us, but condescends to us to reveal Himself within the conditions of our human and creaturely natures. But the fact that God has become Man, means that He is and can be free for us, so that it is possible for us to know Him, not on the ground of any possibility or capacity that we have in ourselves or in human nature, but solely on the ground of the fact that God is free and able to meet us within our human nature, and to reveal Himself there to us as very God. There within human nature God reveals Himself as God in terms of what is not-God, in terms of what is man. He speaks to us in man's voice, in man's language, and in man's thought-forms. He assumes the humble form of a servant within the condition of our human nature. He did not assume a form unknown to us, but our very form under law, the form of servitude, and so speaks our creaturely and earthly language under all its limitations and imperfections. But all that would not make Revelation, for the Incarnation of the Word of God in a human form does not mean that if we think about human forms, we will automatically think about God, and that if we think correctly in our human forms, we will think correctly about God. No, not even in Jesus can we get across from Man to God, unless in Jesus Christ there is hypostatic union between Him and God, unless the human forms and speech and acts of Jesus are predicates of the one Divine Person (of Hilary). ^{also said} It is only because Christ is Himself personally God that His human speech and human actions, and His human forms of thought, are also divine Revelation. The language of Jesus was creaturely language, and quite distinct from God's language, even His language about God /

God, and creaturely language is only capable of speaking of creaturely things. If here God's language has become human and creaturely language, we would not hear God in Jesus' creaturely speech, unless there was hypostatic union between His creaturely language, and God's own godly language. It is only in that union in which God's language condescends to take on creaturely form, and human language is joined to God's language, that there is real Revelation. Gal 4:4; Phil. 2

Hypostatic union involves two important factors here:

(a) it tells us that we can only know God in human terms, in terms of analogy: all knowledge of God and his relations with man are analogical, for in Christ, God has become like man, has taken on man's image, so that in terms of man's image, likeness and analogies, men may know God, and understand His Revelation.

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(b) it tells us that it is not by human image, likeness, and analogies that we know God and understand His Revelation, but through the hypostatic union of the human images, analogies and likenesses in Jesus Christ to God Himself, that we know God. That means that only certain particular analogies are used, those which repose upon, and derive from, this one particular Man, for He alone is in hypostatic union with God. All other analogies are empty, and contain nothing of God, but Jesus Christ is filled analogy, analogy where the content and substance lie in the hypostatic union. In the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, He is the effulgence of God's glory, but also the express image of God, or the reality of the God He images in Himself. All true knowledge of God is through Christ the Word, for there is only One Word, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, who has declared Him. But that Word has one and for all become man, assumed human form, and never divests Himself from that human form. It is in this particular and unique human form, for ever joined to the Word or Son of God, that we are given to share in the mystery of God. In Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in Him alone, do we know God, and have communion with Him.

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(2) The hypostatic union of God and Man in One Person is the heart of Reconciliation, and its full substance

In Jesus Christ, God has come in the humble form of a servant; veiling His divine majesty, for we could not look on the face of God and live. If God came openly in His glory and majesty, we would be smitten to the ground in sin and death; the last judgement would be upon us, with no time to repent, no opportunity for personal decision in faith. The very humnity of Christ is the veiling of God, the flesh of sin, the humiliation and the form of a servant, and the death of Christ all veil God - and so God draws near under that veil in order to reveal Himself, and save us. It is sometimes asked if God cannot reveal Himself to us apart from or without Christ, without the humble form of a servant. But if Revelation were to take place apart from the veiling of Christ, or in a form totally unknown to us, it would /

would disrupt the conditions of our world and of our humanity, and instead of saving us, it would mean our disintegration. No, the very Humanity of Jesus Christ makes salvation possible, for here in the Man Jesus, God comes alongside us as another Man and within our historical existence with its temporal relations, choices and decisions, He acts there upon us personally through word and love, through challenge and decision. God does not come to manipulate man, but to save him personally in personal reconciliation with the Father; and so He confronts man in such a way, that while He judges sin and exposes man's heart with all its evil, He forgives him and draws out his heart in surrender and love to Himself. And yet in all that, God has come to be one with man, and to act from within man, and as man to yield to the Father in obedience of a true and faithful Son, and so to lay hold of God for us from the side of man. It is within that union of the Son to the Father that the sinner is drawn, and given to share. In other words, the hypostatic union is enacted as reconciling event in the midst of human being and existence, in which men are given to share by adoption and grace in Jesus Christ. We shall study that fully later under the doctrine of reconciliation, but here it is important to see that at its heart lies the hypostatic union of God and Man in Christ. The Humanity of Christ is the actuality of God's presence among men, but this humanity holds man at arm's length away from God, in order to give man breathing space, time, and possibility for surrender to God's challenge in grace, time for decision and faith in Him. But it is Humanity united to Deity, and it is the action of God as Man in Christ which delivers man from himself and draws him out in surrender to God.

That is the more subjective side of reconciliation, but the hypostatic union is also the objective heart of reconciliation, in atonement. The unassured is the unhealed, but in the hypostatic union God the Son has assumed our flesh of sin into oneness with Himself, and in so doing has judged sin in the flesh, and made expiation for our sin in His own blood shed on the Cross, and so worked the hypostatic union through our alienation into the resurrection where we have the new humanity in perfect union with God, and in that union we are given to share. ^{cf. Calvin} The significance of that atonement lies not merely in that Jesus Christ offered as Man a perfect sacrifice to God, not does it lie merely in that God here descended into our bondage and destroyed the powers of darkness, sin, death and the devil, but that here in atonement God has wrought an act from the side of God as God, and from the side of Man as Man, in real and final union between God and man. Atonement means that God's action was translated into terms of human action, for only so doing it reaches man and becomes relevant to him as saving act, but it remains God's action, for only so does it touch and lay hold of man, and raise him up to salvation in reconciliation with God. There are not two actions in the life and death of Jesus Christ, but one action by the God-Man, one action which is at once manward and Godward. It was act in our place, and yet act of God for us, Man cannot atone; ho /

he cannot repair his past. Even Jesus as Man, as sinless Man, could not do that. If He were but sinless Man under the judgement of God, He would be annihilated in judgement - the Cross would prove a fiasco. And yet atonement, if it is to take place, must take place in man's life, from man's side, but if it is to be saving and life-giving atonement, it must be atonement for man, by God for man, for God alone can repair the past, and only the Word through whom man was made, by becoming man, can act in man's place, and for man in such a way as to restore that which man lost, and recover what he lost in the Creator Word of God. [The atonement is the work of the God-Man, of God and Man in hypostatic union, not simply an act of God in man, but an act of God as Man. And so the hypostatic union and atonement belong together.] Atonement is possible on the ground of the hypostatic union, and only on the ground of atoning reconciliation can the oneness of the Word and our flesh of sin be brought to its full telos in the hypostatic union of God and Man in the risen Jesus Christ.

cannot divide | What we have just said can be reinforced at two points by putting them differently. If we could divide between the two natures of Christ, His divine and His human nature, into a nature of a divine person and a nature of a human person, then the human acts would not be acts of the divine person, and the divine acts would not be in the human person. In the event, the accomplishment of reconciliation would be illusory, for its ultimate achievement would not have been carried through. It is the doctrine of the union of two natures in One Person which is thus the mainstay of a doctrine of atoning reconciliation. On the other hand, atonement is not an end in itself, any more than the judgement of sin and the expiation of guilt are ends in themselves; atonement is in order to reconcile man back to God, so that atonement issues in union between man and God, but it issues in union between man and God, because it is that union already being worked out between estranged man and God, between man's will and God's will in the one Person of Christ. It is the hypostatic union, therefore, which lies embedded in the very heart of atonement; and all that is done in the judgement of sin, expiation of guilt, in the oblation of obedience to the Father is in order to bring man back to union with God, and to anchor that union within the eternal union of the Son and the Father, and the Father and the Son, through the communion of the Holy Spirit.

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(c) The Patristic Doctrine of Christ

The main stages in the history of the Church's doctrine of Christ are as follows:-

1 EC

1) The Council of Nicaea in AD 325, which affirmed that Jesus Christ is truly (ὁληθῆς θεός) God, in an affirmation of faith against the Arians.

2 EC

2) The Council of Constantinople in AD 381, which affirmed that Jesus Christ was perfectly (ὁληθῆς ἄνθρωπος) Man, against the Apollinarians whose teaching impaired the perfect humanity of Christ.

3 EC

3) The Council of Ephesus in AD 431, which affirmed that Jesus Christ is One Person, against the Nestorians who divided Christ into two persons.

4 EC

4) The Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, which affirmed that in Jesus Christ there are two distinct natures in one Person, and that in the one Person of Christ they were hypostatically united unconfusedly, inconvertibly, indivisible, inseparably. This was affirmed against the Eutychians and Monophysites.

5) The Council of Constantinople AD 680, which asserted that Jesus Christ possessed a human will as well as a divine will, against the Monothelites who asserted that in Jesus Christ there was only one single will. (Xt not tempted)

Those are the five main stages in the Patristic doctrine of Christ, but to them we must add two more from modern times, which we shall consider in the next section.

6) The Reformation, which sought to state the whole Catholic doctrine of Christ more in terms of Christ's saving and reconciling mission, i.e. in more dynamic terms.

7) Today, after the assessment of the vast documentary study in the historical Jesus, in which anhypostasia and enhypostasia are brought together for to give stress upon the historical Christ as the Very Son of God.

Pre-Chalcedon

As we have already had occasion to note, the attempts to formulate a doctrine of Christ in the Early Church tended to fall into two camps, according to the tendencies associated with Antioch and Alexandria, which involved in the Antioch teaching, an ebionite tendency, and in the Alexandrian teaching, a docetic tendency. But between those more extreme positions, there was a middle stream of development running from Irenaeus to Athanasius, which stressed equally the full humanity and the full deity of Christ, and it was out of that that there emerged the Orthodox doctrine of Christ.

In the teaching of Irenaeus and Athanasius, however, there was considerable stress upon the obedience of the Incarnate Son, and consequently upon the saving significance of the Humanity of Christ, both in regard to Revelation and in regard to Reconciliation, and in their writings, notably in that of Athanasius, there is found a full and satisfying account of the atonement, in which Incarnation and atonement are very closely associated, and are mutually involved.

This was unfortunately not followed when the Councils came to offer their formulations of the doctrine of Christ, in which they had to affirm against heretical teaching, first the full Deity of Christ, and then His full Humanity. In the concern to assure the proper place in faith of the Deity and Humanity of Christ, they lost sight of His atoning work, so far, that is, as Creedal formulations/

weak on doctrine of atonement

→ diophysite tendencies

formulations were concerned, although it must be admitted that the lack in credal formulation corresponded to a lack in clarity and understanding among the fathers as to the significance of the death of Christ. When Chalcedonian Christology came to be formulated, largely under the guidance of the Epistle of Leo, that is from the Church in the West, the doctrine of the Person of Christ was carefully and clearly formulated, but in such a way that the atoning work of Christ was not given its proper place. In the theology of the West there was an adequate doctrine of the Incarnation, as in the teaching of Leo himself, but the doctrine of the death of Christ tended to be thrust in sacrificial terms of a forensic character, and these two, the Incarnation and the Death of Christ, were not properly or fully related in doctrine. But whenever Incarnation and Atonement are not properly and fully related, there is an inevitable tendency toward a conception of the two natures of Christ in which the two natures are not seen in their full unity in the One Mediator. That diophysite tendency, however, tended itself to be counter-balanced or corrected by a tendency in the opposite direction, i.e. toward monophysitism, both in the East and in the West, that is to say a tendency to allow the full humanity of Christ to be impaired through absorption into His divine nature, in spite of the rejection of Monothelitism. That would appear to be a direct result of the failure to give the atoning work of Christ the Mediator its full place in Chalcedonian and subsequent Christology. Whenever the Mediatorship of Christ is thrust into the background, as becomes increasingly apparent in the growth and development of the Liturgy in East and West, it is very difficult to stem the tide of monophysite tendencies in Christology.

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As we look back upon the development of patristic Christology, we can see that the danger-point lay ultimately not in attacks against the Deity of Christ, but against His full Humanity. The first great Council did of course reckon with the dangerous attack of Arianism, and against it it declared in unmistakable terms, faith in the true and full Deity of Christ - but in the post-Nicene period, where that emphasis was carried through, there grew up a shyness of speaking about the assumption by the Son of our flesh of sin, in case that would detract from the perfection of the Incarnate Son; and again when after Chalcedon attacks were launched against the fulness of Christ's human nature, there was no encouragement to take in all its seriousness the fact that He who know no sin was made sin for us, lest the assumption of 'flesh of sin' should detract from the perfect humanity of Christ.

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That difficulty is already seen in the Chalcedonian Christology itself, magnificent as it was, so far as it went. That Council followed the Councils of Constantinople and Ephesus, in which both Apollinarianism and Nestorianism were rejected. Hence at Constantinople the completeness of Christ's human nature was affirmed, and at Ephesus the unity of the divine and human natures in the one Person. Then came the Chalcedonian statement: "Following the holy fathers, we all teach with one accord One and the Same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ perfect in Godhead and perfect also in manhood (τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι, καὶ τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι), truly God and also truly man, being of reasonable soul and body (θεὸν ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος) of one essence with the Father as touching His Godhead (ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τὴν θεότητα) and also of one essence with us as touching His manhood (καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν τὸν ἀνθρωπότητα) being like unto us in all things except sin /

sin (κατὰ πάντα ὁμοίον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας), begotten of the Father before all times according to His Godhead, and also in the last days born for our sake and for our salvation, of the Virgin Mary the bearer of God according to His manhood, one and the same Christ, the Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, of two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without division, and without separation; the difference of natures not being removed by their union, but rather the propriety of each being preserved and concurring in one prosopon (ἐν πρόσωπον) and in one hypostasis (μὴν ὑπόστασιν) so that He is not divided or separated into two prosopa (οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα) μεριζόμενον ἢ διαίρε-
υμένον) but is One and the Same Only-Begotten Son, God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ, even as the prophets of old and Jesus Christ Himself taught us concerning Him, and the creed of our fathers that has been handed on to us.

Strictly speaking prosopon and hypostasis ought to be mentioned of Christ together: both are required to say what each lacks.

It is worth noting right away that the only place where the saving work of Christ is mentioned, is in connection with His birth "for our sake and for our salvation". That is important, for it means that the nativity of Christ was itself redeeming event, but it is not enough to say that, especially when it is silent about the saving work of Christ in His life and death, and when the statement about the human nature of Christ can be construed in such a way as to play down the fact that He assumed our fallen humanity.

The crucial factor here is the meaning of "the human nature" of Christ. There is no doubt at all that by 'human nature' the fathers wanted to stress the actuality of Christ's union with us in our true humanity; that Christ was a man in all points like us, yet without sin. And that is right as far as it goes, for Christ was a man like ourselves, coming into and living in our mode of existence, and sharing in it to the full within a span of temporal life on earth between birth and death, and in the unity of a rational soul, and a body. But the Chalcedonian statement does not say that this human nature of Christ was human nature "under the servitude of sin" as Athanasius insisted; it does not say that it was corrupt human nature taken from our fallen creation, where human nature is determined and perverted by sin, and where it is under the accusation and judgment of Holy God. But all that is essential, for the unassumed is the unhealed, and it is with and within the humanity He assumed from us that the Incarnate Son is one with the Father. Therefore the hypostatic union cannot be separated from the act of assumption of our fallen human nature, from the living sanctification of our humanity, through condemnation of sin in the flesh, and through rendering from within it, perfect obedience to the Father. In short: if we think of Christ as assuming neutral and perfect humanity, then the doctrine of the hypostatic union may well be stated statically, but if it is our fallen humanity which He assumed, in order to heal and sanctify it, not only through the act of assumption, but through a life of obedience and a death in sacrifice, then we cannot state the doctrine of the hypostatic union statically, but must state it dynamically, in terms of the whole course of Christ's life and obedience, from His birth to His resurrection.

For many people the difficulty with Chalcedonian Christology is this, that when it speaks of 'the human nature' of Christ, it seems to be speaking of some neutral human nature, of which we know in some way from our general knowledge of humanity, even though we have nowhere any actual experience of such human nature. Here then there appears to be a two-fold difficulty. It appears to define the human nature of Jesus in terms of some general conception of human nature; and then to think of Christ's human nature as perfect, or at least neutral, and to that extent unlike our actual human nature. Now if Christ's human nature is perfect, and further, if Christ is the Word become Man, the new Adam then we cannot define Christ's human nature in terms of some general idea of human nature we have already conceived, for it is the human nature of Christ alone that is the norm and criterion of all true human nature. The same mistake appears to be present in the Chalcedonian concept of the divine nature of Christ, for it too is defined in terms of some general concept of divine nature, which somehow we have already formed in our minds, whereas if Christ is the Son of God become man, then it is the Divine Nature of Christ which must be our only norm and criterion for the understanding of divine nature. It is not surprising therefore that the Chalcedonian Christology, in spite of its intention, should always tend towards a form of diophysitism tempting correction by being counterbalanced by a new monophysitism.

On the other hand, it is possible to interpret the term nature or physis rather differently, by distinguishing it from the Latin natura. Natura refers originally to the state of being born and appears to have retained more that in its later use than the Greek physis. Physis comes, similarly, from phuein meaning to make to grow or to grow, but very early it came to have a distinctive sense. This appears best perhaps in the Greek phrase kata physin, according to the nature of something: eg true knowing of something is to know it according to its nature, in terms of what it actually and really is. It is this sense of physis that Heidegger has highlighted when he speaks of physis as referring to emergence, the realm of that which arises, which is not synonymous with natural phenomena which we think of in terms of 'nature' (natura). Physis is rather being itself by virtue of which existents or essents become and remain knowable, that which manifests itself in unfolding, and perseveres and endures in that manifestation of itself. Thus Heidegger can speak of physis as referring to the realm of things that emerge and linger on. Physis is sometimes the process of emerging from the hidden, whereby the hidden is first made to stand. In this sense physis can apply not only to earthly realities but also to heaven, the world of God as well as the world of men and things.

That is to say, originally physis was not narrowed down in its reference, as it was when it was translated natura or nature, to the realm of natural phenomena: for it referred to the nature of things in their own being and as they emerge before us out of their hiddenness. Physis is experienced, Heidegger maintains, primarily as the forcing of being upon our attention.

Now truth (aletheia) is the manifestation of the hidden: that which is in it is in the event of its disclosure. Thus physis and aletheia are more or less equivalents, for truth is the truth of being coming out of its hiddenness into manifestation, the revealing of physis. Truth means that the physis of something stands out before us and manifests itself before us in accordance with what it is in its own/

own being, or physis. Thus Heidegger can also say that the essence of being is physis, being that emerges and makes itself manifest, being coming out of concealment, while truth (aletheia) is un-concealment (a-leittheia) of being and what inheres in being as it emerges to view. In view of this, we can understand why the Greeks could speak of knowledge of the truth, as a knowing in openness of being, knowledge that takes place in and with the emergence of disclosure of being, under the overmastering presence of being and under its power of aletheia.

physis as
with us
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If, then, we take physis in this sense we can understand how the Greek Fathers could use as equivalents thinking or knowing kata physin and thinking of knowing alethos. In this sense the Fathers could apply physis equally to God and to man, to Christ in His being as God, insofar as He homoousios with the Father, and to Christ in his being as man, insofar as He is homoousios with: This does not mean that we are concerned here with some neutral nature, but with something that comes to view and imposes itself upon our minds from the side of the being that masters our attention.

physis
as
one
reality

physis
as
one
nature

Moreover, understood in this way, it is possible to see why some of the Fathers could use the term physis as equivalent sometimes to ousia and sometimes to hypostasis. Thus when some Fathers could speak of Christ as nia physis, they mean that in Christ we have the manifestation of one reality (ousia) not two realities; and when they spoke of physis as equivalent to hypostasis they mean that he was in himself the reality which became manifest toward us, physis and hypostasis here being used to refer to the concrete objectivity of the one reality of Christ. In view of this, we can now see that some Fathers who spoke of Christ as one physis were not necessarily monophysite (denying divine and human 'natures' in Christ, and letting the human 'nature' be swallowed up in the divine), but were consistent with Chalcedonian thought. Thus many traditional 'monophysites' to this day hold a 'chalcedonian' Christology - much of the difference that has been traditionally exploited here in debate has been due to terminological difference rather than difference in actual meaning or intention.

Certainly after Cyril of Alexandria agreed to a formula which spoke of 'two natures' in one person in regard to Christ, agreeing to drop his own expression 'nia physis', some sort of convention began to settle in. But even then the term physis (= nature) does not come to be used in the later sense of physis=natura until after Chalcedon.

But now to return to our discussion: our immediate question is: How then are we to speak of 'the human nature of Christ' in the hypostatic union? We must surely begin with the fact that Christ is the New Man, the Perfect Man, and the One Man who represents all men. His human nature is true human nature (even if it was uniquely joined to divine nature, as we are not), and far from measuring its truth and fulness by our own human nature, we must judge the poverty of our human nature by the perfection and fulness of His human nature. But if we do that, we must also say clearly that He was made in the likeness of our flesh of sin; He assumed sinful man, that is, our Adamic fallen human nature, and in assuming it, began its redemption and healing, which He carried throughout the whole of His life, which He lived in perfect obedience, truth and holiness, and in which with the poor clay of our corrupt/

corrupt humanity, He showed forth perfect humanity, remaking and converting it in Himself, and through His obedience unto death, and His resurrection, in which He had power to lay down His life and to take it again, He raised it a perfect and incorruptible human nature, so that in the resurrection, the body which was raised from the dead was as perfect as His holy life and person all through His life from His birth to His death. Therefore, when we speak of the 'human nature' of Christ in the hypostatic union, we have to say two things:-

like us in incarnation
On the one hand, we have to say that He was completely like us, in all things, in our frail, feeble and corrupt and temptible humanity, yet without being Himself a sinner. But He did identify Himself in complete and utter solidarity with us in our fallen and guilty humanity, under God's wrath and judgment. He came to be one of us, and one with us in that condition, in order to save us and deliver us from the bondage and corruption of sin under the divine judgment. He was completely one with us vicariously.

unlike us in victory to God
On the other hand, we must say that He was completely unlike us in that by taking our fallen human nature upon Him, He condemned sin in it; He overcame its temptations, resisted its downward drag in alienation from God, and converted it back in Himself to obedience toward God, thus sanctifying it, and from the beginning to the end of His life, He submitted our fallen humanity with our human will to the just and holy verdict of the Father, freely and gladly yielding it to Father's judgment, and was therefore obedient unto the death of the Cross. In all that the Son is wholly like us, in that He became what we are, but wholly unlike us, in that He resisted our sin, and lived in entire and perfect obedience to the Father, and therefore in Christ's humanity there took place a sanctification of our human nature and a lifting of it up again into fellowship with God, where alone human nature can be true and perfect, for it is human nature that was made for fellowship with God, and it is always less than human when it withdraws from or alienates itself from that divine fellowship. Thus Christ is wholly unlike us in His human nature, for in His human nature He overcame the opposition and enmity of fallen human nature to God, and restored it to peace with God first in glad and willing submission to God's judgment, and then in the resurrection from the dead.

We can only state the doctrine of the hypostatic union aright if we state it in that two-fold situation of the Son of God in our flesh. We cannot for a moment allow to be dropped out of sight the fact that He suffered our corruption and curse, and was made sin for us, the Just for the unjust, suffering our conflict and its judgment in a way and at a depth that we can never fathom, and must never take for granted. Therefore we must think of the whole life of Christ, lived out our human nature, as a life of obedience to God in the midst of our disobedience, of peace with God in the midst of our enmity, of fellowship with God in the midst of our estrangement, of faithfulness to the divine covenant where we are unfaithful, so that from first to last, the hypostatic union means such a union of the Son with our own human nature under the servitude of sin and judgment, that it is one long act of atoning and sanctifying reconciliation, in which He both judges our sin, and enmity, and restores our human nature to its true relation with the Father, and therefore to its perfection as human nature. In that light, the Chalcedonian formulation can still be used, but with profound significance, and in a way much more faithful to the Biblical Revelation. In that light/

light, we can go on to make some statements about the hypostatic union.

Q/A

(1) The first thing to be said, is that the hypostatic union must be looked at only from the perspective of God's amazing act of grace, in which God the Son freely descended into our human existence, and freely assumed human being into oneness with His divine being. That is an act of sheer grace. He did not need to do it. He did not owe it either to Himself, or to man to do it; it is an act grounded only in the pure overflowing love of God. It is in no sense a two-sided event, for even though there is within it in the unity of divine and human natures act of God and act of man, the whole act of Incarnation including all the divine and human acts within the hypostatic union, is grounded solely and entirely and exclusively in the act of God's grace

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(2) Within this one supreme act of grace, in which God assumes human being into oneness with His own divine being, and maintains it in that oneness, there is a two-fold movement. There is first the act of divine condescension and humiliation, in which the Son mercifully descended to our alienated humanity, in order to assume our alien and creaturely human being into unity with Himself. But this act of humiliation on the part of the Son, is also an act of grace, elevating and exalting our poor human being into communion with the life of God, and into sanctification in the divine Holiness. These are not two acts, but one act, which completes its downward movement of grace in an upward movement of sanctification, and the upward movement takes place in the very act of condescension, which as such gathers man into fellowship and reconciliation with God. Just as the lifting up of the Son of Man on the Cross was already the beginning of His glorification and ascension to the right hand of God, so the assumption of our humanity, which also a sanctifying and healing act, was also its elevation and exaltation into union and communion with God.

W 201
Hypostatic

(3) The hypostatic union describes, then, the union mercifully and freely and savingly made by God in the hypostasis or the mode of existence or the Person of the Son. That is why it is hypostatic or personal, but it is as unique as the hypostasis or person of God the Son is, and is entirely without parallel or analogy. It is sui generis and to be understood only in terms of itself. It is not a personal union in our sense of the word 'personal', which involves a mutual relation between two personalities, but personal only in the sense that it is grounded in the one unique Person of God the Son. It is 'personal' because it is 'in the Person of the Son' - that is the meaning of hypostatic. That is why the expression 'anhypostasia' cannot mean 'impersonality' of what is 'impersonal', for those expressions 'impersonal' and 'impersonality' presuppose that when we speak of 'hypostatic union' we are speaking of a personal union in our sense of the term 'personal'. Hypostatic union does not mean, then, a union between two persons and in that sense a personal union, but precisely the opposite, a union in the one Person of the Son, so that it is only in and through the One Person of the Son that we can have personal relations with the Father. And here 'personal' relations is not therefore a psychological expression, but a Christological, because Christocentric expression.

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Eutyches followed Cyril of Alex.

(The Chalcedonian Definition)

(4) This hypostatic union is marked out and guarded from the extremes of Alexandrian theology by the first two Chalcedonian adverbs: inconfuse et immutabiliter. There can be no conmingling of the divine and human natures, and no changing of one into the other. But that has to be restated dynamically, and so we must say something like this: In His act of humiliation, in freely uniting Himself to our fallen human nature, and in taking its sin and corruption upon Himself in order to work out our salvation, the divine nature of Christ suffered no change, but remained truly and fully divine. It was precisely by remaining what it ever was, that it was able to save and redeem that which it assumed into oneness with itself. On the other hand, in being assumed, healed and sanctified in the Incarnate Son, and so elevated to participation in the divine, human nature suffered no change, but remained truly and fully human. It was precisely by being kept and maintained as human nature, and in being restored to its fullness as human nature in union and communion with the divine, that human nature was redeemed as human nature. Any transubstantiation of human nature from what it was, into something that it was not, would not mean the salvation of human nature, but its dissolution. That error, upon which the whole of our salvation would be shipwrecked, is carefully and decisively set aside by the Chalcedonian formulation of the hypostatic union.

not a change

Redtorius wanted to speak of merely a moral relation, a 6X664, 2 persons in 1 have only a moral connection, no ontological. write in reply with that the human nature became 1 of divine nature. 2 being a juxtaposition of no proper communion! indissoluble (natures) inseparable (acts of the natures). All acts conjoint.

(5) The hypostatic union is marked out and guarded from the extremes of Antichene theology by the second two Chalcedonian adverbs; indivise et inseparabiliter. There can be no dividing or separating of the divine and human natures from one another in the Incarnation. But that must also be stated more dynamically. The act of the Son is humbling Himself to take upon Himself our humanity in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and in the form of a servant, and the act of the perfect obedience of the Son in the whole course of His life in human nature, and His participation in the life of God, are not two independent acts or events separated from one another. In all their distinctiveness, they are fully and finally and irrevocably united in being the acts of the One Person of the Son of God. It is precisely in the impossibility of their separation that our redemption lies, as redemption into unbreakable union and communion with the Father, and of the once and for all exaltation of our human nature in Christ, into the life of Eternal God. It is because the Incarnate Son and the Father are One, and cannot be divided or separated from one another, that our salvation in the hand of Christ is eternally secure in the hand of the Father, for no one can snatch us out of His hand.

(6) The Chalcedonian formulation also asserted that "the distinction of the natures is no way destroyed because of the union, but rather the peculiarity of each nature is preserved."

This statement has more implications than at first appear. It states very clearly that the divine and human natures remain in their distinctiveness, and that what is proper to each is preserved in the union. That is of special importance for the preservation of the humanity of Christ. It is precisely because the humanity of Christ in all its distinctiveness is joined hypostatically to the divine nature, that the manhood of Christ remains in permanent existence; it does not pass away with the death of Christ, or with His resurrection and ascension. Therefore the hypostatic union means that Christ continues/

continues to exist as Man, risen Man, but as true Man even now at the right hand of God, and that He will come again as Man, and that it is through this Man, as Paul said on Mars Hill, that God would judge the world. That preservation of the human nature of Christ in and through death, resurrection and ascension, is of fundamental importance for the doctrine of Atonement, Christ's heavenly sympathy and Intercession, for the Sacraments, for His Advent and final Judgment - it is of absolute importance for the saving relevance of the Gospel of the risen Christ to us who remain creatures of flesh and blood. But there is more than this to the Chalcedonian statement. It means that each nature does what is proper to it in communion with the other, and not in separation from the other. Therefore, it is only right and natural, to use words of Origen much earlier (De Princ. 2.6.3), that human predicates are applied to the divine nature, and that the human nature is adorned by appellations of divine honour. In other words, because the divine and human natures, acts and qualities are predicated of the One Person of Christ, the qualities and acts predicated of the One Person in virtue of His divine nature as of God, may be predicated of Christ under his human appellation, e.g. Son of Man, or Son of David. Likewise, acts and qualities predicated the One Person of Christ in virtue of His human nature, may be predicated of Christ under His Divine appellation, e.g. Son of God. That is because the One Person shares equally in names, properties, acts and experience of both natures. That measure of mutual transference of qualities was called the communicatio idionatum.

But in Patristic theology, e.g. Cyril and Leo, this expression did not refer to a mutual interpenetration of the divine and human qualities or properties, as it came to mean in Lutheran theology. Chalcedonian Christology is careful to guard against any notion of intermingling or commingling of the natures which meant the absorption of the one into the other, or the impairing of either in its full reality and propriety (*integrity*)

(7) One other feature of the Chalcedonian Christology needs to be mentioned, though it concerns more the theology of Cyril and the rejection of Nestorianism than the actual terms of the Chalcedonian formulation itself. It is the distinct tendency to avoid the problem of Nestorian separation of the two natures of Christ, and its tendency toward there being two persons in Christ, by teaching that what the Word assumed in the Incarnation was not a man, but man. Now there is a clear danger in speaking of the assumption of a man, for that savours of adoptionism, but on the other hand, to speak of the assumption of man savours of the idea that what was assumed was only human nature in general, human nature with all its human properties and qualities. That was precisely the danger of Alexandrian theology, which ever since the Logos-Christology came on the field tended to throw into the background the significance of the historical Jesus as a single individual man. And there can be no doubt that it was this tendency all through, which prevented the Church for 1500 years and more, from giving full and proper place to the historical Jesus Christ. It was only because the influence of men like Irenaeus, Melito, Athanasius and Cyril of Jerusalem remained on in the Church, not least in the liturgy, in spite of its monophysite tendencies, that room was kept for the historical Jesus Christ in the faith and worship of the Church.

But besides the influence of these men, there were four distinct factors that tended to inhibit the excesses of Alexandrian Christology

(a)/

(a) the condemnation of Apollinaris, and the Apollinarians at the Council of Constantinople in 381. Apollinaris had taught that Christ did not possess a rational human soul, but had the Word instead of a rational human soul. The affirmation that Christ did possess a human soul, and was perfectly (teleos) man, was normative. It was our whole human nature that He assumed, mind and will and soul, for all these come under His redemption, and unless the whole of our human nature is assumed, the whole is not redeemed.

(b) after the triumph of Cyrillian Christology over the Nestorians, an extreme Alexandrian conception of Christ was put forward by Eutyches of Constantinople, which was condemned by a Synod at Constantinople in AD448, and by Chalcedon in 451 - this was the view that the act of hypostatic union meant the absorption of Christ's human nature into the divine. Nevertheless, the language both of Cyril and Leo cited at the Council, gave rise to doubts in some quarters about a tendency even on their part toward monophysitism.

(c) in the sixth century the teaching of Leontius of Byzantium (AD 485 - 543) played an important part in the history of Christology, mainly through his work against Nestorians and Eutychians. As against the doctrine of the anhypostatic manhood attributed to Cyril of Alexandria, Leontius taught the doctrine of the enhyposstatic Manhood of Christ. He repudiated the idea held by extreme Antiochenes that the human nature of Christ had an independent hypostasis, or independent centre of subsistence, but he taught that the true humanity of Christ was given full place within the hypostasis of the Son. The intention of this was to give a fuller place to the humanity of Jesus Christ than appeared to be allowed by the rebuttal of Nestorianism, while asserting that the human nature of Christ never existed apart from His Deity. From the very origin of the human nature of Christ, it was in hypostatic union with His divine nature, and had its subsistence in the hypostasis of God the Son. As Leontius himself, and as John of Damascus following Leontius, expounded this, the doctrine is not really clear, because sufficient stress is not laid upon the anhypostatic assumption in pure grace of our fallen humanity, and therefore the doctrine could not go far enough in stressing the anhypostatic humanity of Christ to secure fully the place of the historical Jesus as active agent and Mediator, and not simply as instrument, in Revelation and Reconciliation.

(d) The final factor of importance we have to note, is the condemnation of the monothelites at the second Council of Constantinople in AD 680, that is the condemnation of those who taught that in Christ there was only one will, and the affirmation of the teaching that in Christ there was a human will as well as divine will, in the hypostatic union of the two natures in His One Person. That was a very important step forward, for it laid the stress not only upon nature and quality in unity but upon will and action in Christ as God and Man. The possession of a human will means that Christ was subject to temptation as we are, but the human will belonged to the One Person of God the Son. But again, unless we take seriously at this point the fact that Christ assumed our will, the will of estranged man in estranged Adamic human nature, in order to suffer all its temptations and to resist them and condemn sin in our human/

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human nature which He assumed had no independent existence

human nature, and then to bend back the will of man into oneness with the divine will, it is difficult to give the temptations of Christ their full place, and therefore the human obedience of Christ in struggle against the onslaught of evil and sin, its full and proper place in atoning reconciliation. If Christ assumed neutral or perfect human nature, and assumed it into oneness with His own divine Person, who could not choose to sin any more than He could choose not to be God, then the humanity of Christ is merely instrumental in the hands of God. But if so, then salvation is only an act of God done upon us and for us, and not also a real human act done in our place and issuing out of our humanity. Once again we see the weakness of the patristic Christology lay in failing to link it up adequately with the saving work of Christ, and in failing to think into each other sufficiently Incarnation and Atonement. Nevertheless, the condemnation of the monothelite heresy (including incidently the anathematizing of Pope Honorius I of Rome for explicit teaching rejecting 'the two wills' of Christ, and advocating the formula of 'the one will') marked a considerable advance, if only for the reason that it kept the door wide open for full consideration of the saving significance of the humanity of Christ in the whole course of His obedience to the Father.

Graham

- 1/2/1961

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(unpublished class notes)(d) The Reformed Doctrine of Christ

When we turn to the doctrine of Christ at the Reformation, we find a very definite turning to the teaching of the Early Church, and to the high patristic doctrine of Christ, away from the scholastic formulations of the Mediaeval Church. With the Reformation there took place a decided change in the whole doctrine of God, in a move away from the Latin-Stoic conception of God as Deus sive Natura to the living God/^{of} the Biblical Revelation, who actively intervenes in history, and who confronts us directly in Jesus Christ through His Word and Spirit, and acts upon us personally. With this change from a static to a dynamic conception of God, there was also a change in regard to the conception of being and substance and grace and person, all of which have direct bearing upon the doctrine of Christ. The conception of being was related anew to the act of God the Creator, who creates out of nothing, and to the Being of the Creator Himself, who creates other creaturely beings in entire dependence upon Himself. Thus the Mediaeval notion of a hierarchy of being between the lowest ens to the highest Ens in God was set aside. The conception of substance which arose from a peculiar Mediaeval interpretation of Aristotle, was set aside in a return to the patristic conceptions of ousia and hypostasis, and therefore the terms subsistentia and substantia as used by the Reformers, are decidedly patristic, and not scholastic in meaning. Again, the concept persona is changed - here there could not be a complete return to the patristic teaching, because of the development that had arisen as a result of the patristic teaching, but there was a definite move away from the individualism of the Mediaeval conception of persona, back to the patristic conception, but now informed with greater stress than ever upon the one supreme Person of Jesus Christ, who alone is determinative of the meaning of persona. In the Augustinian-Boethian-Thomist development, persona had come more and more to refer to an individualised substance of rational nature - that line of development was crowned with the Cartesian revival of the Augustinian cogito ergo sum, and the attachment of ego-consciousness to this individual personal substance. But all this was also bound up with the Augustinian conception of grace, which more and more, especially with the high Aristotelianism of the Schoolmen, came to be construed in causal and ontological categories, so that divine grace always carried the notion of divinisation, and fullness of grace, fullness of divinity.

The reaction from the Scholasticism of the Mediaeval Church, and the renewal of theology in the Biblical Revelation, had the effect of making the Reformers see the dangers inherent in the patristic formulations of the doctrine of Christ whenever the Greek philosophical terms, inevitably used in the doctrine of Christ, came to acquire a static independence over against the direct witness of the NT. While adhering loyally to the Catholic Christology of the Ecumenical Churches, Reformers sought to give it fuller and more definite formulation in accordance with the saving life and work of Jesus Christ. In their reformation of the Eucharist, the Reformers rejected the Roman idea of a timeless mystery and timeless repetition of the sacrifice in the Mass, and sought to recover the historical perspective of the Last Supper, and to reincorporate in the Eucharist, the double stress upon the once and for all character of the Incarnate work and self-oblation of /

of Christ, and upon continuous participation in His saving Humanity. That doctrine of the Lord's Supper, however, rested upon a corresponding doctrine of Christ which sought to recover the place of the historical Christ, and the essential integration of Incarnation and Atonement.

In carrying out this reformulation of the doctrine of Christ, there were distinct differences between the Lutheran and the Reformed theologians, difference which in some measure reflected the old patristic distinctions between Alexandrian and Antiochene Christologies, the Lutherans inclining toward the Alexandrian Emphasis in NT exegesis, and in doctrine, and the Reformed inclining toward the Antiochene emphasis in NT exegesis and doctrine - and yet these distinctions are not so clear cut, for they actually criss-cross one another at significant points. Roughly speaking, however, it may be said that the Lutherans tended to stress in the doctrine of Christ the union of divine and human natures, with a tendency that appeared to the Reformed to be suspect of Eutychianism; whereas the Reformed tended to lay the stress upon the Person of the Son of God as God and Man, with a tendency that appeared to the Lutherans to be suspect of Nestorianism. But let it be said right away that this remarkable reflexion of the two-fold emphasis in the patristic theology indicates that there is an inevitable duality in our human formulations of the doctrine of Christ, in which we must learn to see the important truths in both emphases and seek to combine them in the whole Truth of Christ. As the emphases appear between Lutherans and Reformed, they are not antitheses, but complementary and overlapping aspects of the Truth.

Both Lutheran and Reformed theologians rightly accepted the centrality of the doctrine of the hypostatic union, but they sought to give that doctrine a more dynamic interpretation by drawing out the implications of the unio in terms of communio and communicatio. That is to say, they sought to understand the hypostatic union not simply in terms of a state of union, but in terms of a divine movement of grace, which was translated into the history of the Man Jesus Christ. Hence all that the Son of God as Man accomplished in His historical life and work belongs to the doctrine of hypostatic union. Thus whereas patristic theology has tended to look upon the human nature of Christ as an appropriated state from the perspective of the end-result, the Reformers ought to look upon the human nature of Christ also from the perspective of His healing and sanctifying assumption of our Adamic humanity. They asserted of course that Christ was without sin, but they looked upon His life and His humanity also from the point of view of the fact that He came to bear our sin and bear it away, that He actually entered into our sinful existence, not to become guilty of the sin which we commit, but to bear our guilt as an alien guilt, and without any guilt of His own. He appropriated our corrupt and fallen existence in Adam, but within that He condemned sin in our existence, and overcame it by His obedience at every point to the Father - but He overcame it through humbling Himself to the uttermost, entering into our estranged and sinful condition under the bondage of the law, under the judgement of God, and under the thralldom of corruption and death, and through offering within it an expiatory sacrifice for sin and guilt, in which He was /

was well-pleasing to the Father, who did not suffer Him to see corruption, but raised Him from the dead triumphant over all the powers of evil and darkness and death.

This is one of the points where the Alexandrian-Antiochene emphases between Luther and Calvin, for example, criss-crossed, for Luther went much further in this direction than ever Athanasius went, using indeed extravagant language at times, whereas Calvin was definitely more restrained in the direction of the Alexandrian theologians. But in spite of that difference, they both sought in this way to reinterpret the hypostatic union, with Calvin laying greater stress than Luther upon the obedience of Christ, and Luther the greater stress than Calvin upon the mighty act of God in redemption.

We cannot go into the Lutheran and Reformed teaching in its details, but we may single out some of the main conceptions and terms employed, seeing something of the idfference, but also the basic unity of the Reformation doctrine of the hypostatic union.

→ (1) The problem of the so-called 'extra-Calvinisticum'. That is a Lutheran name for Calvin's doctrine that the Son became Man in His complete transcendence, and remains transcendentally the Son of God, while also man in the form of a servant "Although the boundless essence of the Word was united with human nature, nevertheless we do not imagine there to be any enclosing of the Word in it. The Son of God descended miraculously from heaven, yet without abandoning heaven; was pleased to be conceived miraculously in the Virgin's womb, to live on earth, to hang on the Cross, in such a way that He always filled the world as from the beginning" (Instit. 2.13.4).

In order to understand the point of Calvin's statement we have to remember the teaching developed by the Greek Fathers when they found they had to reject the pre-Christian Greek conceptions of space as a 'container', or 'receptacle'. The strictest definition of space in this way was given by Aristotle (Physics IV.C.5, 212 A 20):

which the mediaevals (St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, translated as terminus continentis immobilis primus - i.e. 'the immediately contiguous unmoved boundary of the containing body' or 'the first unmoved limit of the container'. This was a definition of space in terms of a container^{in what contains} and what is contained are inseparable or interdependent. The Christian Fathers found that the biblical teaching of the presence of God with us in space and time (of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, 'the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee') and the incarnate presence of God bodily (somatikos) in Jesus Christ, could not be construed in terms of any container notion of space. And so they insisted that God is present with us 'without leaving the throne of the universe', and that 'The Son of God became man, was born of the virgin Mary', etc. without leaving his rule over the universe - but in making those statements they were breaking with a notion of space as a container, as that which contained or enclosed, circumscribed or comprehended the presence or being of God within it; and they forged instead a thoroughly relation notion of space, in which they /

they thought of God in creation as 'containing all things by the Word of His power' and as contained by nothing, and yet of God coming to be with us in the realm of space and time which He created in and with the creation of the universe, yet in such a way that He did not cease to be the creator transcendent over all space and time. God 'makes room' for himself among us but in such a way the relation of God to the 'room' is controlled by his creative and transcendent relation, and not in such a way that God becomes 'boxed in' within the limits of our finite conditions. The Fathers ^{+ Reformers} wanted to assert their conviction that on the one hand in the Incarnation God takes space and time so seriously as to really accommodate himself to our space and time existence and 'littleness' yet in such a way that He remains God while becomes man, remains the Creator Word while becomes flesh, remains in control of the universe while with us in our weakness. It was to this Patristic way of thinking that Calvin turned, when he said that in the coming down and birth of the Son of God, he did not abandon heaven, and in being conceived in the womb of the Virgin, in living on earth, or hanging on the Cross, he did not cease to be the God whose presence is everywhere. Calvin is content, however, not to develop a thoroughly relational concept of space and time as the Greek Fathers did, but merely to reject with the Fathers, any idea that the incarnation involves an enclosing of the Deity of Christ within the limits of a containing vessel. On the other hand, the Lutherans operate with a receptacle notion of space, for they took over in its Ockamist form the Aristotelian concept of space in which the container and what it contains are inseparable. This is what gave the mediaevals such a headache especially when they came to contrive the real presence in the host ('in every bit of the host and in a thousand hosts at the same time') but it also created difficulties with their conception of the Incarnation. Operating then with a container notion of space of this sort, the Lutherans were aghast at Calvin's insistence that the Son of God become man in such a way as still to fill the whole world with His presence as from the beginning; and from their point of view they were bound to ask: "Well, what did the Son of God leave outside (extra) the flesh when He became man, if He was not wholly contained in the baby and wrapped in the swaddling clothes at Bethlehem". And so the Lutherans gave the nickname of 'the Calvinist extra' to Calvin's concept of the Incarnation, in which Calvin was followed by the Reformed. But in following Calvin, the Reformed theologians for their part were protesting against a Lutheran insistence that when the Word was made flesh the Word was not only for ever united to the human nature in Jesus, but that the Word now exists solely enclosed within that human nature. (It is instructive to remember that the Anglican tradition, like the Calvinist or Reformed tradition, also broke with the Roman-Aristotelian notion of space, and therefore also with the Lutheran notion of the Incarnation and the real presence interpreted in terms of a receptacle notion of space - see Richard Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V, Chs. LII-LVI.)

Luth. Objections, View

The Calvinists then felt that the Lutherans were going too far to speak of the Son or Word of God as being for ever enclosed within the human body of Jesus. They protested that we cannot think of the Incarnation of the Son in such a way as /

as to deny His eternal transcendence to the creature, by making Him a prisoner of time or the time-series. The Word cannot be subordinated to the flesh it assumes nor can it be limited by the creaturely reality with which it is united, and so be altered in its transcendent and divine nature.

The Lutherans rejected this on the grounds of its alleged Nestorianism, or separation of the divine and human natures of Christ - but they on their part were only able to hold their doctrine that the Word is wholly included in the body of Jesus by attributing to that body, divine attributes in virtue of which it could be said to fill the whole world. But the Calvinists felt that was a form of Monophysite error in which the human nature of Christ was being absorbed in His divine nature, and they protested that when they spoke of the transcendence of the Word or Son, even when incarnate, the so-called 'extra' was only held distinctive not separative. Now there can be no doubt that in this, the Reformed Theologians had the agreement of the whole of the Early Church behind them, and indeed Calvin's language cited above derived in part from that of John of Damascus. But the Lutherans had their important point: that with the Incarnation of the Word, we must never think of the Word apart from the Man Jesus, with whom the Word is for ever united, and is not to be apart from Him. Now that the Incarnation has taken place, we must say that the Son is none other than Jesus, but is identical with Him. And yet the Lutherans did have their doctrine of the deus absconditus alongside the doctrine of the deus revelatus, which from another perspective is precisely what Calvin and his followers were maintaining. Here we are not to think then of alternatives or a contradiction, but rather of two complementary aspects of the Truth which belong to the mystery of Christ, and which we are unable to put into precise language in such a way as to express the whole truth in a unitary way. (c.KB, CD, 1/2, pp. 168 ff; 4/1, pp. 180f.).

(2) The communio naturarum

Under this term, the theologians of the Reformation sought to give a more dynamic account of the hypostatic union, and in doing so, went back to the emphasis we have in Irenaeus, who spoke of union and communion, and of the whole movement of assumption in terms of anakephalalosis, which for him did not only mean the recapitulation of our fallen humanity from its origin in Adam and its restoration through Obedience to union and communion with God, but the gathering up into union with God of the whole life of Christ from His birth to His mature manhood. Be that as it may, the hypostatic union was now seen to involve a comm-union of two natures in one Person. This reaffirmed the Chalcedonian doctrine of a union of two natures without change, and without confusion, without division or separation, but it should show clearly three things:

(i) That there is a distinction of natures which is in no way destroyed by their union in one person, for the union involves real communion;

(ii) That both natures have communion in being the natures of one person in whom the two natures are united;

(iii) That in the one person there is a mutual communion of the two natures,
so /

so that in that mutual communion each nature does what belongs to it.

Now at this point, there is a divergence between the Lutheran and Reformed teaching. Among the Lutherans, the stress was laid upon union of two natures in a communion in which the human nature is (assumed) into the divine nature. The Reformed theologians refused to think of an assumption of human nature into the divine, but of an assumption of human nature into the divine person of the Son, in whom there was an indirect union between the two natures. There was a unio immediata between the human nature and the Person of the Son, but a unio mediata between the divine and human natures through the Spirit. In that way, the Reformed theologians sought to speak of an active communion between the natures without teaching a doctrine of mutual interpenetration between the natures, which is precisely what the Lutheran conception of mutual communion or participation led to. The Lutheran theologians therefore spoke of a communio or communicatio naturarum in which there was a mutual participation in the person of Christ of the divine and human natures, through which the divine nature, by participating in the human nature, permeates, perfects and inhabits it, and so appropriates it to itself, while the human nature, by being made participant in the divine, is permeated by it, perfected and inhabited by it. This relation was called mutual penetration or in which the divine actively penetrates into the human nature and the human nature passively penetrates into the divine. (Cf. Schmid, Die Dogmatik, p. 230 f.) Note here that the accent is laid decisely on the divine action, but within that upon a mutual participation.

What are we to say about this mutual participation between the divine and human natures of Christ? We must emphasise with the Lutherans that there is a real difference, participation of the divine in the human is not the same as participation of the human in the divine. It is the divine act that gives, and gives to the human nature; it is the human act only to receive, and receive from the divine nature. But for that very reason, there is no reciprocity here of the kind that the relationship can be reversed. Thus in assumption the Divine Son assumed human nature into union with His divine being, but there is no counterpart to that in a human appropriation of the divine into the human. God became man in Christ, but man did not, or did not also, become God. In the assumption of man into unity with the divine being, human nature was not divinised, but only raised into union and communion with God. If the divine Son assumed human nature into unity with Himself only then to divinise it, then that would mean that He had no sooner condescended to be our brother, than He broke off that brotherhood - divinisation of the human nature thus makes nonsense of the Incarnation and Reconciliation.

(3) The communication of properties - communicatio idiomatum

KNOW
properties

This expression was used by both Lutheran and Reformed theologians to give the concept of the hypostatic union more adequate and dynamic formulation, not simply in terms of substance, but in terms of active communication of the divine and human properties of Christ in His life and work. Whereas the Ancient Church /

Church tended to think too much in terms of substance and its predicates, or of static natures and their attributes, the Reformers wanted to think this out in terms of the egeneto sarx as well as the assumptio carnis - i.e. not only in terms of the once and for all event at Bethlehem, but in terms of the growth of Jesus before God and before man, and in terms of His whole historical life and work of reconciliation. In order to do this, they took over and made further use of the doctrine of the communication idiomatum of the Early Church. Now the Greek term idioma means strictly a property of nature which cannot be communicated to another nature. The Greek Fathers therefore held a very mild form of communicatio idiomatum as a kind of mutual metonymy, but which did not involve mutual penetration of the two natures into one another. At this point the Reformed and the Lutherans diverged again. The Reformed theologians taught that in Christ, the properties of each of the two natures coincide in one and the same Person, and only in that way they are attributed to and are true of both natures. But the Lutherans were not content with this, as is clear from their doctrine of the communio naturarum.

Lutheran doctrine of communicatio idiomatum

Lutherans speak of this communication of properties as of three kinds:

(a) The genus idiomatum which speaks of the fact that the properties of either nature belong to the whole Person of Christ, and therefore we can say that "God died", and "the man Christ Jesus is almighty". Here there is a reciprocal communication of properties; (b) The genus maiestaticum, according to which it is said that the Son of God communicates His own divine majesty to the human flesh He assumed. Here, the Lutherans affirmed, there is no reciprocation, no genus tapeinoticum, whereby the divine nature is humbled through the communication to it of properties from the human nature of Christ; (c) The genus apotelesmaticum which refers to the co-operation of the two natures in the common purpose, and specific result, of redemption.

Now the last of these corresponds to the Reformed doctrine of the communicatio operationum to which I shall return, but it is the second, even apart from the first, which horrified the Reformed theologians. In a real sense, of course, and not just metaphorically, we must say that God died, and that the Man Jesus is Almighty, but there are important senses in which we cannot say these things. We must say that God was directly present and active in the death of Christ, and that the Son of God suffered and bore the judgement on our sins in the death of Christ on the Cross; and we must also say the human nature is assumed into unity with the divine Being of the Son, and that there is now a Man on the throne of God as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but can we say that the human nature as such is so interpenetrated by divine majesty and power and all the divine attributes, that in point of fact, its human properties are swallowed up or nullified in the divine-eg in the ubiquity or immensity of the body of Christ? What kind of humanity is this, to which all the divine attributes can be ascribed? Have we not here comprised^{ed} the true and complete humanity /

humanity of Christ? And does this not really mean that God not only became man, but that man has become God in Christ? Moreover, if we remember that the humanity which God assumed in Christ is our humanity, in which we are given to share, then who can stop short at applying all the divine attributes to the humanity of Jesus, and not apply them to humanity in general? Indeed, that is exactly just what German idealistic theology and philosophy did do, so that it is very difficult indeed to dissociate that deification of man which we find in 19th century German philosophy, from the Lutheran doctrine of the Incarnation with its attribution of divine properties to human nature.

Now how did the Reformed theologians deal with the problems raised by the unio et communio naturarum? They spoke of a triple communicio or communicatio in the hypostatic union.

(a) Communicatio gratiarum. By this, the Reformed theologians distinguished between the gifts of grace to the human life of Jesus, who grew therefore from His earliest infancy in wisdom and grace as well as stature, and this growth was not only before man, but before God. By this is not meant that as Jesus grew into manhood there was especially after His baptism, an increase in union between His divine and human natures, as though that were not already completed once and for all in His birth, but what is meant is that from the first moment of His life, His properties as God and man, and the communication of the properties of His divine and human natures, effectively entered into operation step by step with His developing human life - and here we think especially of the graces of knowledge, will and power in which He increased and grew, growing in knowledge, and learning obedience. It is at the Baptism of Jesus, when He was anointed for His ministry and consecrated for His sacrificial life and death as the Suffering Servant, that we are surely to think of this growth and increase as reaching its culmination.

(b) Communicatio idionatum. This was stated in such a way as to preserve the fact that what is peculiar or proper to one nature, cannot be called common to another, for on being communicated to another nature, the idionata of one nature would cease to be idionata. Thus communicatio idionatum can only mean that what is proper to one nature in Christ, is attributed not to the other nature as such, but to the person named from the other nature, whether divine or human. Thus the properties of each of the two natures coincide in one and the same Person, and are thereby also predicated of that Person. But what is the property of one nature is by no means common to the other one, in it, because of the essential and eternal difference between the natures, though it is common to the Person, and one of the natures in the Person. But the real point of the communicatio idionatum is seen in their co-operation in the office of the Person in whom they coincide, that is, in the office of Christ as Mediator. The mediatorial office, while requiring two natures, also requires a conjoint but distinct operation of each of the two natures. In executing the office of Mediator, each nature in communion with the other effects what is proper to each. Thus the communicatio idionatum cannot be expounded properly, apart from the third aspect of the communio naturarum.

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incommunicable

(c) The Communicatio operationum. Here we must think, then, of a communication of the divine and human acts in the One Person of Christ. In Him there takes place such a union and communion between His divine and human natures, that the divine acts are acts in His human nature, and the human acts are in His divine Person. Each nature in communion with the other performs acts appropriate to it, but performs them as acts of the one person who embraces both natures, and is the One Subject of all the divine and human acts. But communicatio operationum is concerned with more than that. It asserts a dynamic communion between the divine and human natures of Christ, in terms of His atoning and reconciling work. It stresses the union of two natures for mediatorial operation in such a way that these works proceed from the one Person of the God-Man by the distinct effectiveness of both natures. In other words, the whole dynamic movement of the hypostatic union has to be understood in terms of the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and so the hypostatic union is the ontological side of the dynamic action of reconciliation. Thus we understand the meaning of the hypostatic union not merely in terms of the Incarnation, but in terms of the reconciliation between God and Man, and we understand the Reconciliation not simply in terms of Christ's work on the Cross, but in terms of His Incarnation, so that the reconciling union of God and man is understood as wrought out in the historical person of Christ, and in the whole course of His historical life and death and resurrection from the dead.

Now, when we look back over all these serious and difficult problems raised by the Chalcedonian Christology in the theology both of the Fathers and the Reformers, we find a fundamental difficulty which they all encountered in the Greek conception of the immutability of God. In that conception, God was regarded as too exalted to act in such a way that God Himself descended in utter humiliation in order to save us in such a way, that what He did meant anything at all for Himself. God was a prisoner of His own immutability, and His own impassibility. Thus, even in a doctrine of the communicatio operationum, the reformed theologians like Polanus insisted in speaking of participation by the divine nature of the Son in the work of atonement on the Cross, as kat'oikonomian, by way of economy, which was meant to guard the changelessness of the divine being and nature. But if we really take the Biblical view of God, then we must think of God the Father sending the Son into our lost existence, in utter humiliation in order to be really one with us, determining Himself freely to be our God, and directing Himself freely to share in our frail life, in all its limitations and weaknesses, and even in its loss in the profoundest way, in order to be our God, and to gather us into fellowship with Himself. But in this act of unspeakable humiliation, God was not simply using the humanity of Christ as His organ or instrument, while He remained transcendent to it all: He Himself actually came, the immutable God, humbling Himself to become a creature, and to suffer as a creature our judgment and throughout all that, to maintain His sovereign freedom and initiative, even when He gave Himself up to the death of the Cross, in an offering as unreserved in His self-giving as majestically omnipotent and free in its act of grace.

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That is the kind of immutability of God which we see in Jesus Christ, who is not mutable, for He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever, and who has immutably joined Himself to our humanity, and immutably joined our humanity to Himself, and who in becoming what we are, became that which He was not, in order that we might become that which we are not. That is the amazing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.

But it is here that we see that in the amazing grace of God, the movement of His assumption of our humanity in the hypostatic union and in atoning reconciliation, involves a two-fold participation, for the frail human nature which He assumed, the lowly human being which He condescended to become, is by that very act of divine self-participation, divine condescension, raised and exalted, not to become divine, but to share in the divine fellowship and life. What happens to this human nature, happens to it entirely in the grace of God, in the gracious will of God to exist in identity with the Man, but in the grace of God it is raised far above anything we can conceive or imagine, and yet not in such a way as to cease to be what God made it, creaturely human nature. As the Creator condescended to be a creature, He did not make the creature Creator, but in its unity of existence with His Son, He assumed it into fellowship with His being as God, Creator and Lord. But let us be clear about this fact, that it was the act of divine self-humiliation as such which did that, which is the exaltation of the Man Jesus, and in Him, of our human nature into union and communion with the life and being of God. The whole act of the Incarnation and atonement, and the whole doctrine of the hypostatic union, has to be understood only in that free and omnipotent condescension of the living and eternal God to be one with us for ever, and so to make us one with Him for ever.

(4) The doctrine of anhypostasis and enhypostasis

The Reformed theologians insisted that the assumption of the humanity into the person of the Son of God is not an assumption of it into the divine nature, but into the person of the Logos. They made use of the concepts of anhypostasis and enhypostasis to express that accurately, bringing them fully and clearly together, and thus marking real advance over the patristic usage of these concepts. Two statements from Heidegger may be adduced here, (Heppé, Ref. Dog., pp. 427 f.): "... the assumption of human nature into the person of the Son of God, whereby the Logos, the Son of God, in the very moment of formation and sanctification assumed the human nature void of an hypostasis of its own into the unity of its own person, in order that there might be one and the same hypostasis of the Logos assuming and of the human nature assumed, outside of which it neither ever subsists, nor can subsist". But because the human nature assumed in the Incarnation is more than human nature in general, because in the Incarnation Jesus the individual Man is the human nature in with the eternal Son, more must be said. "The human nature is per se anhypostatos and becomes enhypostatos in the Logos, who being pre-existent, in fact existent from all eternity, has received in time the form of a servant, and assumed the seed of Abraham as its shrine and instrument.

The first thing we have to note here, is that the anhypostasis asserts that the Incarnation is an act of pure grace alone, and repudiates any form of adoptionism, that is the adoption of a pre-existing man to become Son of God. It asserts then that true Man is a predicate of God's gracious action. When the Word was made flesh, God and Man were so related that Jesus came to exist as Man only so far as He now exists as God. In other words, there is only One Christ, One Mediator, one Lord, only One Person in Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son of God. This One Person means that His human nature had no independent subsistence or hypostasis, no independent centre of personal being.

If there had been a human person to whom a divine Person was added, there would have been an independent centre of personal being in Jesus over against the Person of the Son of God; but the human nature of Jesus never existed apart from the Incarnation of God the Son. At the first moment of the existence of His human nature, it was in hypostatic union with His Godhead. That is, the human nature in the first moment of its existence had its hypostasis or personal subsistence in the personal subsistence of God the Son. That is the meaning of an-hypostasia.

But when we have said that, we have to add, that although there was no independent personal being called Jesus apart from the Incarnation, that does not mean that in the Incarnation there was no particular individual called Jesus existing as a particular human being, with a rational human mind and will and soul; and therefore it does not mean that He did not completely possess human nature. Jesus had a fully human mind and human soul and human will, and lived a fully human life in hypostatic union with His divine life, and in that union with His divine life, His human life had manifested the most singular and unique personality as Man. That is the emphasis of enhypostasia. It preserves the acknowledgment of the full humanity of Jesus, and indeed of His historical Person as a Man among other men, and as one of us men, a true Man. The anhypostasia stresses the general humanity of Jesus, the human nature assumed by the Son with its hypostasis in the Son, but enhypostasia stresses the particular humanity of the One Man Jesus, whose person is not other than the Person of the divine Son. Therefore from the enhypostasia we have to go back again to the anhypostasia and say this: while the Son of God assumed our human nature, and became fully and really like us, nevertheless, His full and complete human nature was united to God in a unique way, (hypostatically in one person) as our human nature is not, and never will be. Therefore He is unlike us, not unlike us as to the humanity of His human nature, but in the unique union of His human nature to the Divine nature in the One Person of God the Son. (This is the baffling element in the Virgin Birth, which tells us that while it is our very human nature He assumed, He did not assume it in the way we share in it, because He took it in a unique relation with His Deity). But it is upon the unique, hypostatic relation of His human nature to His divine nature, that the truth of our human nature depends, for we are in union and communion with God, as we share in His human nature, which is hypostatically united to God.

The anhypostasia and enhypostasia taken together tell us that the Incarnation was the union of the Word of God with mankind in its solidarity with all men; yet it was union with One Man, or rather such a union with all men that it was achieved and wrought out in and through this One Man, Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth for all men.

It is in this connexion that we are helped to see the solidarity of Jesus Christ with all men in His reconciling work.

(a) The Incarnation was the Incarnation of the Creator Word, by whom all men are made, and in whom all men cohere, with our human flesh in Jesus. Here we have the union of the Universal Word and one Human creature, created by that Word which makes Jesus at once Man, and a Man. Is that not the deepest significance of the expression 'Son of Man'?

(b) In the doctrine of the Anhypostasia we state that the Son did not join Himself to an independent personality existing on its own as an individual. That is, He so took possession of human nature, as to set aside that which divides us men from one another, our independent centres of personality, and to assume that which unites us/

us with one another, the possession of the same or common human nature. But apart from the doctrine of enhypostasia in addition to that, that could only mean a solidarity between Christ and all men which was, so to speak, only ontological and therefore physical and mechanical - a causal and necessitarian solidarity. The doctrine of enhypostasia insists that ^{within that} anhypostatic solidarity of Christ with our common human nature, He came also as an individual human being in our humanity, seeking in addition a solidarity in terms of the interaction of persons within our human and social life, in personal relations of love, commitment, responsibility, decision, etc. Thus His birth within a human family, His growing up among men, and His growing relations with others, and His public entry into a ministry of vicarious suffering and service as Son of Man, the One Man in love for all Men, the one Man in whom all men are encountered and met by the Person of God - all that ministers anhypostatically to His solidarity by acutely personal modes of existence and encounter and communion with our human life.

(c) The doctrine of anhypostasia and enhypostasia (put together as one concept) helps us also to understand how God the Son was made in the likeness of our flesh of sin, and yet was not himself a sinner; how he became one with us in continuity of our Adamic and fallen existence in such a way as to make contact with us in the very roots of our sin, and yet did not himself repeat our 'original sin' but vanquished it, and broke its continuity within our human nature which He assumed. He assumed our corrupt and estranged humanity, but in such a way as at the same time to heal and sanctify in Himself what He assumed.

The act of anhypostatic assumption speaks of God's gracious and amazingly humble act in assuming our humanity in the concrete likeness of the flesh of sin, but within that enhypostasia speaks of the fact that the person of Christ was the person of the obedient Son of the Father, who remained in perfect holy communion with the Father from the very beginning, and so was sinless and absolutely pure and spotless and holy. Thus He, the anhypostatic Son of Man, lived out a life of perfect and sinless obedience to the Father in the midst of our fallen human nature, which He anhypostatically assumed, and in virtue of which Jesus Christ entered into solidarity with all men. But as anhypostatic Son of Man, Jesus Christ entered deeply and acutely into personal relations with sinners, that in personal and responsible ways of the profoundest nature, He might enter within our personal human structure of existence, and assume personally and answerably the whole burden of our sin and guilt upon Himself, so that He, the Just, was loaded with our unrighteousness, and He, the Holy One, was loaded with our guilt, that He in our place and on our behalf might expiate our sin and guilt and make propitiation for us before God the Father, thus restoring us to the Father in purity and truth and love.

Note in the use of theological terms such as anhypostasia and enhypostasia. All technical theological terms such as these are to be used like 'disclosure models', as cognitive instruments, helping us to allow the reality of Christ to show through to us more clearly. As in natural science we must often cast our thought of certain connections into mathematical or algebraical form in order to /

to see how those connections work out in the most consistent and rigorous way, so here we may well think of 'anhypostasia and enhypostasia' as a sort of 'theological algebra' to help us work out the 'inner logic' in Christology more consistently and purely. But once we see the connections more clearly in this way, they have to be translated back into 'the flesh and blood' of reality, translated back into terms of the person and work of Christ Himself. Just as in a natural science, we may have to resort to algebra to work out the connections (using algebra like a computer, to compute for us what our brains are incapable of doing by themselves) but must then translate the algebra back into 'physical statements' in order to discern the real relations in empirical reality, so we must do much the same here. Anhypostasia and enhypostasia do not contain themselves the 'stuff' of Christology, but they are, rightly used, theological instruments or lenses through which we may discern more deeply and clearly into the ontological structures of the Incarnation.