

# MIAPHYSITE CHRISTOLOGY

## A PATRISTIC READER



Compiled by DAVID P. GEORGE

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Compiled and Edited by David P. George (@hypatiusbrontes).

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## Note

This is an anthology of patristic texts, knitted together to serve as an introduction to Orthodox, Miaphysite christology for beginners. It is not intended to be a florilegium, and is not to be considered as such.

Translations provided derive from various sources which are cited, and are often revised by the compiler in accordance with what appeared to him as a better reading of the original text. Instances of British English have been corrected to accord with the American. Greek texts have been added using [square brackets] where it was considered to be necessary for knowledgeable readers to cross-check.

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TEXT

# I

382–383 CE

## St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *First Letter to Cledonius*

PG37: 176-193; Bradley K. Storin, tr. 'Gregory of Nazianzus, Letter 101 to Cledonius' in *The Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings: Christ Through the Nestorian Controversy* (Vol. 3).

1. To the most honorable and God-beloved brother, my fellow priest, Cledonius, Gregory sends greetings in the Lord.

Here is what we would like to learn: what innovation is pervading the church, that it permits everyone who so desires and everyone who passes through, as it is written<sup>1</sup>, to scatter the well-tended flock and wreak havoc on it with clandestine raids, or in this case, with bandit-like and unreasonable teachings? For if the current attackers really have something with which to condemn us regarding the faith, they wouldn't have needed, without warning us, to be so daring in such matters. For one should want first to persuade or be persuaded (if there is any account of us as ones who fear God, toil for the Word, and render service to the church), and then, if even then, to make innovations; in that case, the insulters may perhaps have some defense. But since our faith has been proclaimed in writing and orally, near and far, inside and outside of dangers, how is it that some undertake such attacks while others keep quiet about them?

2. And it wouldn't be too bad – still bad, though – if people used villainous acts to instill their wrong belief within guileless souls. However, they also spread lies about me – that I hold the same belief and mind as them – putting the bait on the hook, wickedly using this cover to fulfill their own selfish desire, and turning my simplicity,

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<sup>1</sup> Psa. 79(80):13.

because of which I used to see them as brothers and not strangers, into an opening for wickedness. Not only this, but they also claim, as

I'm learning, that they have been accepted by the western synod by which they had formerly been condemned, as is well known to everyone. 3. Well, if the Apollinarian party was accepted either now or previously, let them show proof of it and I'll extend my affection. For then, if they had obtained this, it would be clear that they agreed with right doctrine – there is no other way to admit them. They must make their case entirely by means of a synodical decree or letters of fellowship. This indeed is the custom of our synods. If the claim turns out to be a fiction and fabrication, invented for the sake of a good appearance and plausibility with the masses on account of the trustworthiness of the main characters, instruct them to keep quiet and utterly refute them. I assume that this course suits your style of governance and orthodoxy.

4. Let the people neither deceive nor be deceived into accepting that the lordly human being, as they say, is a mindless human being, instead of our Lord and God. For we do not separate the human being from the divinity [οὐδὲ γὰρ τὸν ἄνθρωπου χωρίζομεν τῆς θεότητος], but we lay down as doctrine one and the same, not a human being previously, but God and [God's] only Son before the ages, unmixed with a body and with whatever pertains to bodies, who recently assumed a human being for our salvation – passible in flesh, impassible in divinity; circumscribed in body, uncircumscribed in spirit; the same one is earthly and heavenly, seen [by the eyes] and contemplated [by the mind], contained and uncontained – so that a whole human being who has fallen under sin's sway may be refashioned by the whole human being, the same one who is also God.

5. If anyone supposes that the holy Mary is not Theotokos, he stands apart from the divinity. If anyone were to say that [Christ] ran through the Virgin as if through a conduit, and was not fashioned inside her in simultaneously divine and human ways as God and human at the same time (divinely, because it happened without a man; humanly, because it happened by the regular process of pregnancy), he is likewise godless. If anyone were to say that he was fashioned as a human being,

and then God slipped into him, he stands condemned. **6.** For this is not the birth of God, but a way of avoiding birth. If anyone introduces two sons – one from God his Father, the other from his mother, but not one and the same – he has also fallen away from the adoption promised to those who believe correctly. The natures are two, God and man [φύσεις μὲν γὰρ δύο Θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος]<sup>2</sup>, since there is both soul and body. But there are neither two sons nor two gods. For in our case, there are not two humans, even if Paul talks about the inner and outer person like this<sup>3</sup>.

**7.** And if I must speak concisely, there is one thing and another out of which the Savior comes (unless the invisible is the same as the visible, or the atemporal as the temporal), not one and another. Absolutely not! For the two become one in the compound [τὰ γὰρ ἀμφοτέρω ἐν τῇ συγκράσει]: God becomes human, and the human being is made God, or whatever one might call it. But I say “one thing and another” differently than how it applies to the Trinity. In that case, it’s “one and another” so that we do not confuse the hypostases, and not “one thing and another” – for the three are one and the same with respect to their divinity.

**8.** If anyone were to say that [the divinity] acted in him by grace as it does with a prophet, but that it neither was nor is linked to him essentially, he would be bereft of the superior activity and even full of the contrary one. If someone does not worship the Crucified, let him be anathema and ranked among the God-killers. **9.** If anyone were to say that he was deemed worthy of adoption once he had been perfected by his works, or after his baptism, or after his resurrection from the dead, like those whom the Greeks entered into their registries, let him be anathema. For the one who has a beginning, makes progress, or becomes perfect is not God, even if he is spoken of like this because of his gradual manifestation.

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<sup>2</sup> There are indeed ‘two natures’ given the natural, qualitative distinction / difference does not vanish post-union. Notice how the Doctor avoids referring to two natures post-union, but rather prefers “there is one thing and another out of which the Savior comes” and “the two things become one in the compound”.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16.



**10.** If anyone were to say that his flesh has been stowed away for the time being and that his divinity exists now denuded of the body, but that it exists and will come without this garment, he will not see the glory of Christ's advent. For where is the body now if not with the one who assumed it? For certainly it is not stored away in the sun, as that Manichaeian riff-raff supposes – consequently, it would be honored through dishonor – nor was it poured into the air and dissolved, like the nature of a sound, the waft of a scent, and the flash of a fleeting lightning bolt. How would he have been touched after the resurrection, or seen by his piercers way back then? For, by itself, divinity is invisible. But I argue that he will come with the body to the same degree that he was seen by or shown to his disciples on the mountain, with the divinity wholly prevailing over the fleshiness. Just as I say these words to ward off suspicion, I also write them to set the innovation straight.

**11.** If anyone were to say that the flesh came down from heaven, and that it is not from here and from us, let him be anathema. For we ought to consider that the following verses (and any other such one) are spoken on account of his union with the heavenly: “The second human being is from heaven,”<sup>4</sup> “As the heavenly one, so too the heavenly ones,”<sup>5</sup> and, “No one has ascended to heaven except for the Son of Man, the one who descended from heaven.”<sup>6</sup> The same goes for, “Through Christ all things came to be,”<sup>7</sup> and, “Christ dwells within our hearts”<sup>8</sup> – not according to God's observable aspect, but according to God's intelligible aspect; just as the natures are mingled [κίρναμένων ὥσπερ τῶν φύσεων], so too are the names interchangeable with each other by virtue of the natural union [τῷ λόγῳ τῆς συμφυΐας].

**12.** If anyone has placed hope in a mindless human being, it is actually he who is mindless and wholly unworthy of being saved. For what is not assumed is not healed, but what is united to God is saved. If half of

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 15:47.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 15:48.

<sup>6</sup> John 3:13.

<sup>7</sup> John 1:3.

<sup>8</sup> Eph. 3:17.

Adam had fallen, then that's the half that would have been assumed and saved. But if the whole [Adam], then he was united as a whole to the Begotten and wholly saved. Well then, let them not begrudge us complete salvation and let them not attribute only bones and sinews – a sketch of a human being – to the Savior. **13.** For if [they say that] the human being was soulless, the Arians said the same thing, resulting in the attribution of the passion to the divinity since the body's mover is also the sufferer! If, though, the human being was endowed with a soul but not with a mind, how would it even be human? For the human being is not a mindless animal. [In this case] his form and tent would necessarily be human, but his soul could be that of a horse, cow, or any other mindless being, and thus, this would be what was to be saved, and it would be me who had been deceived by the truth, since one part of me would boast [of being saved] even though another part of me had the honor [of being saved]. But if the human being is endowed with a mind, and not mindless, let them stop being truly mindless.

**14.** But in the place of the mind, the divinity, [Apollinarius] says, suffices. What good does this do me? For a human being is neither divinity with flesh alone, nor with soul alone, nor with both [flesh and soul], but without mind, which is really what a human being is. So, keep the humanity whole and mix it with the divinity, so that you may benefit me completely. But there is no room, he says, for two completions / perfections [δύο τέλεια]<sup>9</sup>. There's not, if you examine it corporeally; there's no room for two bushels of corn in a one-bushel vessel and one body doesn't have space for two or more bodies. **15.** But if [you examine it] intellectually, and incorporeally you would observe that even I myself have room for a soul, a rational faculty, a mind, and the Holy Spirit, and before I existed, this universe (I mean, the whole complex of visible and invisible things) had room for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That's the nature of intelligible entities [ἡ τῶν νοητῶν φύσις]: they incorporeally and indivisibly mix with each other and with bodies. Since there is room for several sounds in one act of hearing, and aspects of several things in the same field of vision,

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<sup>9</sup> This is with reference to divinity and the human *nous*.

and [several] scents in [one act of] smelling, the senses aren't confined or oppressed by each other, nor are the things perceived lessened by the size of the apprehending faculty.

**16.** How can a mind, human or even angelic, be perfect in comparison with the divinity so that the former is squeezed out by the presence of the superior? For the relation of a certain amount of light to the sun or a little bit of moisture to a river is not such that when we get rid of the smaller things beforehand – a house's light, the earth's moisture – there would thus be room for the greater and more perfect. Let's investigate this issue, how there will be room for two completions, the house with respect to the light and the sun, and the earth with respect to the moisture and the river; indeed, the matter truly deserves a lot of attention.

**17.** Or do they not know that, that which is perfect in relation to one thing may be imperfect in relation to something else? For instance, a hill relative to a mountain or a mustard seed to a bean or any larger seed, even if it is said to be larger than those of the same kind? If you don't mind, what about an angel relative to God and a human being to an angel? Our intellect is perfect, then, and it is the governing agent, but [only] of the soul and body; [it is] not perfect without qualification, since it is God's slave and subordinate, not God's partner in governing or honor. **18.** For Moses was a god to Pharaoh, but a servant to God, as it is recorded. Stars, too, shine during the night but are obscured by the sun so that no one realizes that they exist during the day. And when a measly torch joins with a great bonfire, it is not destroyed, it is not visible, it is not distinguished; rather, it is entirely bonfire, since the superior prevails.

**19.** But our mind, [Apollinarius] says, is condemned. What about the flesh? Isn't it condemned? Either abandon the latter for its sinfulness or add the former for its salvation. If the inferior was assumed so that it would be sanctified through the incarnation, won't the superior be assumed so that it would be sanctified through the humanification? If, O sages, the clay was leavened and a new dough emerged, won't the image be leavened and permeated with God, divinized by the

divinity.<sup>10</sup> I'll also add this: if the mind was wholly spat upon as sinful and condemned, and for that reason the body was assumed, but the mind left behind, those who lapse in the mind have an excuse. For God's testimony would plainly indicate the impossibility of healing.

**20.** May I mention a more important point? You dishonor my mind, good sir, as a "flesh-worshiper" (if I am a "human-worshiper") for this reason: you bind God to flesh despite the fact that God cannot be bound in any other respect, thereby taking away the partition. What then is my argument, unphilosophical and uneducated though I am? Because of their greater proximity and affinity, the mind is mixed with the mind and, through it, with flesh, since the mind acts as a mediator between divinity and materiality.

Let's see what argument they have for the humanification, whether it is really an enfleshment as they say. If it's that God is contained, being otherwise uncontainable, and that he kept company with human beings beneath a veil – the flesh – they would then have an exquisite mask and the drama of an outward show; let me not say that he could converse with us in another way, for instance, in a bush of fire or in a human form even before that. **21.** But if it's that [God] would dissolve the condemnation of sin by sanctifying like with like, he would have needed flesh and soul due to the condemned flesh and soul, and in the same way [he would have needed] a mind because the mind not only fell in Adam, but also suffered an initial reaction, of which physicians speak in the case of illnesses. For what received the commandment also failed to keep the commandment; what failed to keep it also dared a transgression; what transgressed stood in particular need of salvation; what needed salvation also was assumed. The mind was therefore assumed.

**22.** This has now been shown, even if they don't mean it to, by geometrical necessities and proofs, as even they admit. It is you who act almost as if, when a person's eye fails and [consequently] the foot stumbles, you were treating the foot while letting the eye go untended;

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<sup>10</sup> Orthodox christology is a precondition for true and genuine deification / divinization (*theosis*) of man, for unless the divinity of Christ is truly and naturally united to the humanity and permeates it, there is no divinization of humanity.

or when the painter fails to paint something well, you make a change to the painting while failing to set the painter straight. If, constrained by the aforementioned suppositions, they appeal to God's ability to save humanity without a mind, I would bet that [God] could do it without the flesh, simply by his willing it, just like he does everything else, past and present, in an incorporeal way. Take away the flesh, then, along with the mind so that you put the finishing touch on your insanity! They are deceived by the letter, however, and therefore run to the flesh, ignorant of the custom of scripture. I'll educate them on this point too.

**23.** To those who know it, why do I need to say that, everywhere throughout scripture, he is called a human being and "Son of Man"? If they rely upon this verse – "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us"<sup>11</sup> – and for this reason scrape away the best part of the human being, as tanners do with the thicker parts of hides, in order to glue God to flesh, it's time for them to admit that God would be a god of only the fleshly, but not of souls too, because of what is written: "As you gave him authority over all flesh,"<sup>12</sup> "To you all flesh will come,"<sup>13</sup> and, "Let all flesh bless his holy name,"<sup>14</sup> that is, every human being.

**24.** Furthermore, [it's time for them to admit] that our forebears were incorporeal and invisible when they descended into Egypt and that it was only Joseph's soul that was bound by the Pharaoh, because of what is written: "With seventy-five souls they descended into Egypt,"<sup>15</sup> and, "His soul went through iron"<sup>16</sup> – an object that cannot be bound. Indeed, those who say such things don't realize that they are named by way of synecdoche, where the whole of something is indicated by a part [ἀπὸ μέρους τοῦ παντός δηλουμένου], as in this phrase, "Young ravens invoke God,"<sup>17</sup> so that the winged nature is indicated, and where the Pleiades, the Evening Star, and the Bear are mentioned in the place of all stars and the administration of them.

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<sup>11</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>12</sup> John 17:2.

<sup>13</sup> Psalms 64(65):3.

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 144(145):11.

<sup>15</sup> Acts 7:14-15.

<sup>16</sup> Psalm 104(105):18.

<sup>17</sup> Psalm 146(147):9.

**25.** And at the same time, God's love for us cannot be otherwise revealed except by mentioning the flesh and that he came down for us even to our inferior part. That the flesh is lowlier than the soul, everyone of sound mind would confess. And so, I think that this verse – “the Word became flesh”<sup>18</sup> – means the same as the one that says that he became sin and a curse. **26.** How could it not, since the Lord was transformed into them? No, by accepting them, he took up our lawlessness and bore our ailments. These words, then, are sufficient for the present situation on account of their plainness and comprehensibility to the masses. For I write these things, not intending to draft a treatise but to keep their deceit in check, and I will offer up a longer, fuller account of these matters if it seems right.

**27.** This next point, more important than previous ones, must not be ignored. “Those who hassle you” – by introducing a second Judaism, a second circumcision, and a second sacrifice – “ought to castrate themselves.”<sup>19</sup> For if this were to happen, would anything prevent Christ from being born again for the annulment of those very things, and again being betrayed by Judas, crucified, buried, and raised, so that everything that occurred in its wake would be fulfilled like the Hellenic recurrence, when the stars' same motion brings the same events back around? Isn't it just arbitrariness that one previous event [gets to] occur [again] while another is passed over? Let the sages and fame-chasers demonstrate this point with their multitude of books.

Since those who are puffed up in their argument about the Trinity tell lies about me – that I am not sound in faith – and since they lure the masses, one must be aware of the fact that Apollinarius, who gave the name of divinity to the Holy Spirit, does not safeguard the divinity's power. **28.** For constituting the Trinity from great (the Spirit), greater (the Son), and greatest (the Father), as if from a sunbeam, brightness, and sun – which is plainly written in his own words – makes a ladder of divinity<sup>20</sup>, not ascending to heaven but descending from heaven. As for me, I know God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; these are

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<sup>18</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>19</sup> Gal. 5:12.

<sup>20</sup> In other words, Apollinarius is positing an *ontologically* hierarchical Trinity, according to St. Gregory.

not mere names that divide the inequalities of their dignities or their powers, but just as there is one and the same designation, so too is there the same nature, substance, and power of divinity.

**29.** If anyone supposes that these points are spoken correctly but still accuses me of communion with heretics, let anyone show this letter of mine, and we will either be persuasive or retire. Prior to a judgment, it is unsafe to make another innovation, only because the issue is serious and concerns important things. Well, as for me, I have given and continue to give testimony on these matters before God and human beings. I wouldn't even write these words now, you know well, were I not watching the church being torn apart and divided by some tall tales and the current council of vanity.

**30.** Given that I say these words and bear this witness, if anyone – because of any difficulty, human fear, absurd cowardice, longtime disregard for shepherds and leaders, or perverse pleasure in and readiness for innovations – spits on me as worth no account, and runs to such people, and divides the noble body of the church, it will be he who endures the judgment, whatever it may be, and will provide an account to God on the day of judgment. But if long treatises, new psalteries that clash with David's, and the gracefulness of verses are regarded as a third testament, I too will compose psalms, write many words, and give them meter, since I think that I too have God's Spirit, if indeed this is the grace of the Spirit and not a human innovation. I want you to bear these words as witness to the masses, so that I don't have to bear the weight of a wicked teaching gathering strength and spreading in the face of my own indifference, as I was overlooking so serious an evil.

END

## II

ca. 430-470 CE

### St. Mark the Monk, *On the Incarnation*

*Tim Vivian and Augustine Casiday, tr. 'On the Incarnation' in Counsels  
on the Spiritual Life: Mark the Monk (Vol. 2).*

1. Since you have often sought from me answers concerning the faith directed to those who oppose it, as well as responses to their arguments, and have also sought forthrightly to compare the disagreements between those on either side, I felt compelled to tell you what I have said before and, to the best of my ability, explain the cause of the disagreements that many people have. Since the truth reveals itself to those who love her and are her friends because they do what she wishes, by their activities those who are her rivals demonstrate the error of their ways to those closest to her. Doing the truth means the patient endurance of suffering and disgrace, while participating in error means seeking approval and sensual pleasure. On account of this, because of suffering one accepts doing the truth with difficulty, while most people gladly participate in error because of the pleasure it brings them. Those who love suffering confess as Teacher and Master and Lord the Son of God, who was crucified for our sake and looked with contempt on disgrace and dishonor, while those who love pleasure - or, rather, those who relish praise - are ashamed to make this confession.

2. With the two parties fighting this way, certain people who can not decide one way or the other see the aforementioned difference of opinion and, not knowing how to judge what is better from what is worse, decide that it is not possible to recognize which belief is true. This, then, is the way that disagreements arise about the two. All of Holy Scripture persuades those who love suffering that these people



err in being unable to distinguish between these contrary opinions, while blessed Paul necessarily does so also. He is "the chosen instrument"<sup>21</sup> who rouses us to the truth even in our ignorance and forces us to do battle against the enemies of the cross, not only against Jews but also against heretics, who emulate them. Just as he called the former enemies, so too did he name the latter enemies, since one who really is an enemy ought to be called such. The former, in fact, are an enemy, and Paul, accordingly, calls them that<sup>22</sup>. If these people do not call the crucified Christ a mere man and do not share in the enmity that the Jews have for us, let them not be called enemies, but if they hold the same opinions as the Jews, how will they escape being so designated? On all occasions, someone who works closely with another will inevitably share the same name.

### *Refutation of those who attempt to divide Christ*

3. How are they not enemies who divide the Lord of glory in two, I mean the crucified Lord<sup>23</sup>? No doubt they will attack the phrase "Lord of glory" and will say to us, "So, was the 'Lord of glory' crucified?" When they do, I will confess the source of my salvation and will not deny the truth. 4. I will say, "Yes, the Lord of glory was crucified." I have Paul as advocate and witness to these ineffable matters. He says, "We speak wisdom couched in mysteries, hidden throughout the ages and generations, which none of the rulers of this age understood. If they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"<sup>24</sup>.

So, now I want to question those who divide God: "Who is he who is both the crucified one and the Lord of glory?" I will be amazed if they surreptitiously introduce division into even this phrase. If, in running away from unity, they say that he is "a mere human being", I will say, "And how is it possible for a 'mere human being' to be Lord of glory?" If they say that God the Word is "bare", how was the "bare" Word crucified? So what do they say? "The Word is the Lord of glory, but the human being was crucified". But Saint Paul did not say "two", nor did

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<sup>21</sup> Acts 9:15.

<sup>22</sup> Rom. 11:28.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Cor. 2:7; Col. 1:26; 1 Cor. 2:8.

he introduce a division; he spoke, rather, of one Lord of glory, and him crucified "for if they had known": he says, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"<sup>25</sup>. And you, you heretic, must confirm the unity that Paul talks about. If they are bound by the truth, they will confess that the Word became flesh, who is Christ Jesus. Then we will say to them, "Now you have got it right".

5. The Apostle, then, neither divided the Word from the flesh within the sovereignty of glory nor, in turn, the flesh from the Word in the crucifixion. Instead, he confessed unity without division, both with regard to Christ's glory and with regard to the cross<sup>26</sup>. So too ought we to believe, and we ought not to meddle with "division" concerning the Son of God, either by thinking or talking about it. All of Holy Scripture, both the Old and the New Testament, confesses God the Word, with his own flesh, to be one and the same Christ and Son of God, in everything he did. Whether it be angels, or prophets, or apostles, or martyrs, in speaking and teaching about Christ, about-to-be brief-not only the complete divine dispensation taking place for our sake but also Christ's coming advent and kingdom undefiled by sin, they made their confession affirming the one and undivided Son of God. They did so whether with regard to his revelation or his glory, his signs and wonders, his admonitions or healings, his sufferings and the violent assaults against him, or his cross and death.

6. See why Isaiah says, "Like a lamb led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. His judgement was contained in his humility. Who will speak of his generation?"<sup>27</sup>. Tell me, you heretic: Who is [the one who is like] a lamb led to the slaughter, and who has an indescribable generation? Do not say, "You are talking about two" [μὴ εἴπης δύο]! The prophet was speaking about one and the same in both cases. If you tell me Christ is a mere human being, how can his generation be at the same time ineffable? And yet, Christ can trace his genealogy according to the flesh. If you say that he is God the Word, how can a bare God at

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<sup>25</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8.

<sup>26</sup> If the mere flesh suffered on the cross, there is no salvation. Unless the one and united Incarnate Word suffered by virtue of his flesh, there is no salvation.

<sup>27</sup> Isa. 53:7-8 LXX.

the same time be led to the slaughter? All that remains, then, is to tell the truth about both cases: Christ, according to the prophet, is indivisible. 7. Listen, too, to what the prophet Jeremiah has to say: "This is our God; no other can be compared to him. He found the complete path to Knowledge and gave her to his servant Jacob, and to Israel, whom he loved. Afterward, she appeared on earth and lived among humankind"<sup>28</sup>.

Once again, if you want to divide him, I will repeat to you: Who appeared and lived among humankind? If you say to me "a mere human being", listen: How, then, is he God, to whom no other can be compared? But if you say, "It is the bare Word"- how then was he seen on earth, and how did he live among human beings? All that remains to do here too is to confess Christ without division in both situations.

8. What did both Daniel and Ezekiel and the Twelve say? To introduce such witnesses as these one by one in support of my position will only make it more difficult to grasp and will, perhaps, also be pointless. The throng of ideas will overshadow what we are seeking to accomplish and will be above the heads of those reading this treatise, so that it may come to pass in terms of the intellect as it was written, "Jesus vanished since there was a throng in the place"<sup>29</sup>. There again, we might become the cause for a more severe condemnation of the faithless due to the surplus of our arguments, as it says: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin"<sup>30</sup>.

9. My sole aim at this point is to demonstrate that none of the saints and Spirit-bearing men dared to divide as an entity him who had been united in a manner worthy of God in accordance with the Father's good pleasure. There are, to be sure, certain heretics who, after being refuted, know the truth in their conscience, but nevertheless neither acknowledge it nor cease being argumentative. The aim of these people is not to establish right belief, but to self-importantly draw attention to themselves by being victorious over their opponent. What

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<sup>28</sup> Bar. 3:35-37.

<sup>29</sup> John 5:13.

<sup>30</sup> John 15:22.

is obvious from this? They want to hang on to a careless way of life and seek after self-conceit rather than seeking the will of Christ. If they were to seek him properly, they would successfully keep his commandments to the best of their ability.

**10.** Our task, by contrast, is not to be puffed up with self conceit, but rather to help these people in the Lord. Thus, with confidence in the truth of Christ, we thought it necessary to proclaim not only what they are saying now, but also whatever deleterious notions they are likely to come up with later, and to propose solutions for them. In this way, both parties will benefit. When those among them who are wise see us foretell all the machinations involved with these people's notions and see the rightful solutions, if they are lovers of the truth they will, without a doubt, be directed to the truth. If, however, because of long-held prejudices, they do not change their minds, they will at any rate be put to shame by what they so confidently teach. Those who, due to their ignorance, have been carried away by the wise, but who now recognize the truth, will undoubtedly no longer allow themselves to remain in their error. **11.** If one of them should be so foolish, however, as to conceal the solutions offered by us and propose instead mere words in order to deceive the simpler sort, and does this not by using whole chapters but rather snippets from the Scriptures, we are not responsible. We have laid out both the chapters and the solutions to the problems, but they, clearly, are word thieves who will also have to give an accounting for this wickedness: "They will be put to death for the harm they inflicted on the innocent"<sup>31</sup>, says Holy Scripture. Likewise, they will not harm those well-grounded in the faith, for, it says, "Even if they drink something deadly, it will do them no harm"<sup>32</sup>.

### *The Lord of Glory, the Christ*

**12.** What, then, are the notions that accord with these erroneous beliefs that they have not discovered the means to express to us? First, this: "Even if": they say, "the Apostle said that the crucified one and the Lord of glory are one and the same, he said this because the crucified human being was worthy of glory after the resurrection."

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<sup>31</sup> Prov. 1:32.

<sup>32</sup> Mark 16:18.

Thus, they pilfer away the indivisible unity that existed before the crucifixion!<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, their refusal to think that Saint Paul called Christ the Lord of glory before the crucifixion smacks of blindness and not of the truth-for, he says, "if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"<sup>34</sup>. Besides, he did not say that Christ "participated" in glory, but rather that he is the Lord of glory. The Lord has power over all glory, just as he is also able to give power to whomever he wishes, for, it says, "all of us have received from his fullness"<sup>35</sup>, and "we have seen his glory, glory as of a Father's only Son"<sup>36</sup>.

Since you have heard Scripture affirm the same thing on numerous occasions, my friend, you should know that the Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same Lord of life and death in every time and place and in every mighty work and circumstance. To say "Lord of glory" is to say "Lord of eternal life", and to say "they crucified him"<sup>37</sup> is to make clear that he died on our behalf. If life and death, therefore, the most powerful elements in all of nature, have been unable to divide Christ, as Paul demonstrates, neither can every sort of ruler and power, or height or depth, or things present or things to come<sup>38</sup>.

**13.** Why, then, do you stumble over the stumbling stone and say that the Lord's body is mere flesh? If it is mere flesh, how is it the life of the world and bread come down from heaven?<sup>39</sup> If, on the other hand, you believe the Lord's body to be God the Word alone, understand what the Lord says: "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"<sup>40</sup>. The world died on account of Adam's transgression. If the Lord's flesh were merely human flesh, therefore, not participating in the *hypostasis* of God the Word [μὴ μετέχουσα καθ' ὑπόστασιν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου], it would clearly derive only from Adam

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<sup>33</sup> Here St. Mark is critiquing a certain Antiochene notion that there was a genuine unity post-Resurrection, but not before it.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8.

<sup>35</sup> John 1:16.

<sup>36</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>37</sup> Mark 15:24; John 19:18.

<sup>38</sup> Rom. 8:38-39.

<sup>39</sup> John 6:32-33.

<sup>40</sup> John 6:51.

and would fall under sin. How, then, was the flesh given for the life of the world when, in your opinion, it itself needed the same redemption as the world itself?

**14.** The Word did not suffer, divested of the humanity. If the Word were mere flesh - I am speaking as you do - in need of purification, where, as a consequence, would salvation come from for us? If he who suffered were exclusively and merely human, he would scarcely have suffered even on his own behalf! Thus, those who believe this are still in their sins<sup>41</sup>. They live for themselves, and not for him who died and was raised for them<sup>42</sup>.

If, on the other hand, they believe absolutely that Christ died not for himself, but for us, in accordance with the Scriptures<sup>43</sup>, they should not say that the one who suffered was a mere human being, nor should they meddle in how the union came about. Instead, they should believe and concern themselves with keeping his commandments, in accordance with what Saint Paul says: "For we hear", he says, "that some of you are living in idleness, not doing any work, acting as busybodies. Such persons we command to do their work quietly and to earn the bread they eat"<sup>44</sup>.

**15.** It is clear that the work the Apostle is talking about is the work of keeping the commandments, that is to say, such work is what we really ought to be doing, just as "bread" is really the Lord's flesh, as he said earlier. But what do they say? "One must first believe, and then work". These are words that cause internecine strife! As a consequence, they deny both the faith and their baptism. If they were not initiated in the mysteries of the Church, they would have every right to say these things and to meddle in such matters. But if they have received the seal [of baptism] as believers and have confessed not a mere human being, not a stripped-down God, but the Word incarnate, and have been baptized into Christ, having confessed him to be the Word incarnate, as I said earlier, they as a consequence have an obligation to

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<sup>41</sup> 1 Cor. 15:17.

<sup>42</sup> 2 Cor. 5:15.

<sup>43</sup> 1 Cor. 15:3.

<sup>44</sup> 2 Thess. 3:11-12.

keep the commandments and will have renounced making such meddlesome statements.

### *The Truth of the Incarnation*

**16.** When we say these things, we are not presenting the Orthodox Faith as unknowable and devoid of witnesses - Holy Scripture is full of supporting statements concerning the faith - but, rather, are confessing in our baptism that God the Word took flesh and became human and in the flesh was crucified, died, and was buried, and for us rose from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven and will come to judge the living and the dead. They, by contrast, are even now dividing Christ and splitting him asunder, on the one hand dividing the flesh from the Word and on the other the Word from the flesh, and, using human logic, are meddling with his ineffable union, inquiring into what is indescribable and asking "How?" And if they do not get an answer, they refuse to believe any longer.

So those who were once united to the Lord through the spiritual mysteries are called adulteresses so long as their husband is still alive - and indeed he is alive - for he himself lives and abides indivisible and incarnate, seated at the right hand of the Father. Incarnate, he will come to judge the living and the dead; incarnate, he is worshiped by the angels; incarnate, he is escorted by the powers; incarnate, he is glorified by the archangels; incarnate, he is praised in song by the whole creation; incarnate, he is prophesied by the prophets; incarnate, he is preached by the apostles; incarnate, he is confessed by the martyrs; incarnate, he is witnessed to by John [the Baptist]; incarnate, he pleases the Father; incarnate, he is witnessed to by the Spirit; incarnate, he is praised by the Church. Incarnate, he is the indivisible and immortal Son of God forever and remains incarnate forever.

### *One, not Two*

**17.** Do you not shudder, you heretic, when you attempt to use his actions to divide him who is unified by *hypostasis* and indivisible by grace? If not, starting from "all the fullness of the Godhead was

pleased to dwell bodily in him"<sup>45</sup>, show me where in Holy Scripture he is divided at such and such a time or in such and such a place, or when doing some mighty work or performing some action, and I will put up with your perverse folly! Even if you say "he was begotten", that does not mean that God is "bare" or that Christ is "a mere human being". Scripture does say that Christ was begotten, but it also says that the divine and the human were united in him. Thus does Holy Scripture everywhere confess him, not as God here and as a human being there, but one Christ Jesus, from both God and human being. Thus, too, you will find him everywhere in Holy Scripture: Jesus Christ, whom we profess and in whom we believe.

**18.** Now I want to ask you a question on this subject, you heretic, and, since you say you love the truth, give me a truthful answer, without resorting to clever circumlocutions. Give me an answer that responds to the question. Tell me, is Christ one or two? [εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ἢ δύο] Undoubtedly you will say that he is one, in accordance with what Scripture says: "one Lord, Jesus Christ"<sup>46</sup>. If that is the case, that he is one, then tell me: In your opinion, what is he? A mere human being or unconcealed God? If you tell me, "He is one from both" [εἷς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν], as you confessed at the time of Holy Baptism, you have spoken well.<sup>47</sup> But if you say that he is a mere human being, how can he also be God over all, begotten from the being of the Father? If you say, "The Word is unconcealed", you will hear [the question], "How was the Word begotten unconcealed from a woman?" and will finally be forced to tell the truth: that Christ is both divine and human.

I am amazed at how they show no respect for Holy Scripture, which clearly says concerning these things that "they have left us, but they never really belonged to us; if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us"<sup>48</sup>. Notwithstanding this, their spikes are mercilessly aimed at our hearts; they stab us with their sudden barbs, saying, "You are the ones who left us"! What a pitiable and perverse

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<sup>45</sup> Col. 1:19; 2:9.

<sup>46</sup> 1 Cor. 8:6.

<sup>47</sup> The Doctor witnesses that the faithful during his time confessed at the time of Baptism, that Christ is "one from both".

<sup>48</sup> 1 John 2:19.



belief! Have we set ourselves up in opposition to Holy Scripture? No! Are we, after our baptism, putting Christ to the test? No! Are we renouncing the confession of faith that we professed? No! Listen to Paul, who says, "From now on, we know no Christ according to the flesh, even though," he says, "we once knew Christ according to the flesh. We no longer know him that way. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away"<sup>49</sup>.

**19.** Once you have been baptized and have become a new creation, you impious wretch, do not become a new Tertullus, publicly declaiming against the truth, and do not employ sophistical arguments against Paul, the equal of Wisdom herself. Learn what the gospel proclaims and show some shame in opposing it. Paul did not say, "We proclaim crucified flesh", as you say, nor the opposite, "the Word crucified", as you think we say. No, he gave a name to the union and said, "We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles"<sup>50</sup>. So, if you too stumble over this and say, "It is foolish to believe in someone crucified as Son of God", see how Saint Paul identifies you as a Jew and a Gentile, for he says Christ is "a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles". It is clear, therefore, that those who stumble over this are Judaizers, and it is obvious that those who think the proclamation about the crucified one is foolish are practicing paganism; for, he says, "a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, but to those who themselves are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and wisdom of God"<sup>51</sup>.

**20.** I will ask you a question, therefore, you apostate: Who is the crucified one, and how is he "the power and the wisdom of God"? You have heard the Apostle say that Christ is the crucified one and that Christ is the power of God and wisdom of God. By no means does he say there are two Christs, but that both descriptions describe one and the same! So tell me: Who is he talking about? The bare Logos or a mere human being? Confess one, as the Apostle does-and say which one you mean. If you say, "The Word is bare", I will repeat the

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<sup>49</sup> 2 Cor. 5:16-17.

<sup>50</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23.

<sup>51</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23-24.

question, so listen: How was God the bare Word crucified? If you say, "He was mere flesh", tell me: How could mere flesh be both the wisdom and power of God? If you admit that you are at a loss to explain this too and that you want to learn, do not divide Christ, and your difficulties on both accounts will disappear, for Christ is himself both the crucified one and the power and wisdom of God, being God the Word united with the humanity of the Savior.

**21.** So, having heard about Christ Jesus in Holy Scripture, you will understand that in every case it means God the Word, united with his own flesh: "Jesus Christ" defines the indivisible combination of divinity and humanity<sup>52</sup> [τῆς γὰρ ἀδιαρέτου συναφείας τὸ ὄνομά ἐστι Ἰησοῦς Χριστός]. It is clear, therefore, that the person who denies the union with regard to God's divine plans will also deny that Jesus Christ defines this union. So then, my friend, are you not afraid to call him a mere human being and dead body whom Paul confesses to be the power of God and wisdom of God and the Lord of glory? With these merely human conceptions of yours, are you not dividing that which has been indivisible for all time and has in actual fact by its very nature been united in a manner worthy of God?

### *Proclaiming the Crucified Christ*

**22.** If Christ was crucified for himself and not for us, we will allow also your assertion about him being merely a corpse. Listen how Saint Paul anathematizes those who do not believe that he was crucified for us - not once, but twice even: "Even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you something contrary to what you received before, let him be accursed!"<sup>53</sup>. Why does he say this? "For I handed on to you", he says, "what I in turn first received: that Christ Jesus died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures"<sup>54</sup>. And again: "He died for all", Paul says, "so that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who died and was raised for them"<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Word, the divine-human *hypostasis*, the whole out of the union of the divine and human *natures* and *hypostases*.

<sup>53</sup> Gal. 1:8-9.

<sup>54</sup> 1 Cor. 15:3.

<sup>55</sup> 2 Cor. 5:15.

**23.** If he who died and was raised is a mere human being, we live for a mere human being and live no longer for the Son of God, for it is written that we live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and was raised for us. Hearing these words from Scripture, then, will you finally acknowledge the lordship of him who died for us? If you still say he is a mere human being and a corpse, how can a mere human being be Lord of glory and the power and wisdom of God?

For the Apostle says that the crucified Christ was these things. And if he was a mere human being, how did he die for all, since he himself would still have needed someone to die for him? If you tell me that he did not commit sin and, on account of this, did not need someone to die for him, you must realize that the righteous, as well as sinners, are ruled by death, for, the Apostle says, "Death exercised dominion even over those who did not sin"<sup>56</sup>. Everyone, from the time of Adam, has been ruled by death, not because of their own transgressions but because of Adam's.

**24.** Since even Christ himself and the holy apostles command us to believe in him as the crucified one, are they forcing us to believe in a mere human being? If, however, by once again making use of sophistries, you say that they are not talking about believing in him as the crucified but rather about believing in God who indwelt him, think about this: Either prove what you have said, so we too may understand, or we will demonstrate our faith in the Lord and, once you understand, you will no longer contradict what we say.

**25.** Pay attention! What does blessed Paul, the Lord's chosen instrument, say? He makes his confession not for himself alone but also on behalf of all the apostles. He says, "But we proclaim Christ crucified"<sup>57</sup>, and confirms this when he again says, "Whether it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe"<sup>58</sup>. And again: "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified"<sup>59</sup>. If, therefore, you do not accept the union even upon the

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<sup>56</sup> Rom. 5:14.

<sup>57</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23.

<sup>58</sup> 1 Cor. 15:11.

<sup>59</sup> 1 Cor. 2:2.

cross, you will not be able to escape the fact that you are denying what the Scriptures proclaim, for the holy apostles say that neither a bare God nor a mere human being suffered, but rather he who is at one and the same time God and human: Christ Jesus, the Lord of glory. They do not divide the divine economy but confess one from both, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who suffered in the flesh: "We preach Christ crucified"<sup>60</sup>. Thus the apostles proclaim, and thus we believe.

Our opponents immediately respond to this by saying, "And so God is crucified? Or does God die? Or have hunger? Or grow weary?" You fool! Having heard numerous passages of Scripture concerning the Word incarnate, do you still unsatisfactorily call him God unconcealed, even given these workings of the divine economy that I have enumerated? It seems to me that you have forgotten not only what the apostles say but also the Holy Gospels!

**26.** Have you not heard that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"<sup>61</sup>? He who became flesh for us received wounds corporeally but did so without division. In addition, he who pre-existed embraced his passionless Passion.

"If he unites the divine and the human in *hypostasis*", one might say, "how was he able to embrace his passionless Passion?" I believe that asking this question of God is blasphemy. All the same, I will point out to you things in creation that people can do that are not invisible but can be seen by the eyes or held by the hands. Now, you tell me how the following happens: How is the flame united with smelted gold, or melted together with it, or penetrated so as to flow together with it, or incised together with it, or carried together with it, without suffering a change?<sup>62</sup> The fact that fire undergoes these things when it comes into contact with gold without suffering a change makes it clear that you do not know what you are talking about when you ask "How?" If it is

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<sup>60</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23.

<sup>61</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>62</sup> This is a classic example of the Stoic *krasis*: one of the two united elements is the active participle (divinity / fire), while the other is the passive participle (humanity / gold). The former works in and through the latter, being genuinely united so as to form 'one thing', while not suffering any change naturally.

possible among created things to see something that in its essence is ungoverned and unharmed by what it is governing, does not melt together with what it is melting and, when being united with what it is taking possession of, can affect that substance without being affected in its own substantive reality, why do you still refuse to believe in the all-powerful Divinity? Why do you go on asking how he does it?

**27.** So do not ask specious and malicious questions such as "Does God die?" or "Does God suffer?" You conceal the incarnation and indivisible union with all this talk about a stripped-down God. Say, rather, what is true - "Did Christ die, or suffer, or get hungry?" - and you will get an answer: Yes, he both suffered and died, and all the other things that Holy Scripture says he endured in the flesh. He was not forced to endure them by his nature, but rather by grace endured them for us. If, having died, he lives, how much more easily could he have not died! In addition, if he walked on the sea, he was also able to walk on the earth without getting tired. And if he walked through closed doors, how much more easily could he have walked right through those attempting to seize him! But since he suffered not for himself but for us, he willingly endured all things.

### *Danger of Dividing the Lord*

**28.** What do they have to say to these things? "Is he who suffered for us God, or not?" Yes, he is God - but not God stripped of his humanity. I am telling you that he was a human being, but a human being united with the Godhead. When you hear about the great things that Christ did as God, do not talk about a stripped-down God as you observe these wonders; instead, speak of Divinity united with humanity. And again, when you hear about all of his sufferings, do not retort that because of his sufferings he is a mere human, but say instead that he is humanity united with Divinity. When the angels saw him incarnated on earth, they did not divide him in two, as you people have attempted to do; instead, recognizing the divine union, they wondrously offered their praises, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace, goodwill among people"<sup>63</sup>. Do you see how they joined together praise in the highest places with goodwill among people and

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<sup>63</sup> Luke 2:14.

how they clearly proclaimed to the shepherds the good news of the birth of Christ the Savior, speaking of one - not two, as you do?

29. "We too", they say, "speak of one Christ and appropriately divide the natures depending on what he did."<sup>64</sup> Who, when he hears what we have said, will not shudder at the way they war against God? These people! Rectifying the Lord's ineffable make-up! They divide the things that he himself did not divide. He did not hobble our faith! These people, acting as though they were preachers second only to the Apostles and Prophets, claim they are making perfectly clear whatever Holy Scripture - both the Prophets and the Apostles - is silent about. They do not realize that this is leading them into committing great blasphemy. Sometimes they divide him who is indivisible, and sometimes they join him together, dressing and undressing the Word like a coat that one puts on and takes off. In doing so, they are destroying nothing but their own lives.

30. If Christ has not assumed our flesh in *hypostasis*, how will he give us the gift of the Spirit? We believe Holy Scripture: when God the Word was pleased to become human, he did not turn himself into flesh, but rather united humanity to himself. By doing this, he made every human being capable of receiving the Holy Spirit. He himself, by virtue of this union, assumed flesh as God, while we, by participation, receive the Spirit as human beings. He became incarnate for us and died for all human beings "so that through death he might destroy the one who has power over death, that is, the Devil"<sup>65</sup>, and save all people who believe in him, and graciously bestow the kingdom of heaven on the faithful through his incarnation. Did a dead man do all these things, as you say, or were they, rather, extraordinary events exceeding all power and wisdom, as the Apostle says, which demonstrates that these works are even more wondrous than the wonderful things God did in the beginning? For Scripture says that "all things are summed up in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth"<sup>66</sup>. In the beginning God made heaven and earth, the sea, and

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<sup>64</sup> St. Mark condemns separating / enumerating the natures based on Christ's activities and operations befitting each nature.

<sup>65</sup> Heb. 2:14.

<sup>66</sup> Eph. 1:10.

everything in them, for our sakes, as it is written: "all things are ours, and we belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God"<sup>67</sup>.

**31.** As marvelous as these benefactions and extraordinary doings are, his incarnated presence is even more marvelous and defies comparison, because it has illuminated the previous marvels God did for us in creation, and bestowed even greater gifts on us. The first human, after enjoying the aforementioned bounties through created things, was tricked by the Devil's sophistries and disobeyed God. Because of this disobedience, he fell under sin and, because of sin, was handed over to death. Because of him, we all have fallen from eternal life, whether sinners or righteous. No human being has escaped accusation, because the root of our nature, I mean the first human being, is mortgaged to him. Afterward, danger was inevitable; death, likewise, became inescapable.

If the commandment was prescribed, then the condemnation for transgressing it was determined, the judge infallible, his verdict trustworthy, his law truthful, his justice unvarying, repentance impossible because it does not have an undefiled priest. Everyone is liable to condemnation. If only the effects of sin had stopped there! Sin has in addition introduced a plethora of impious acts. Once human beings were cut off from the light of paradise, they forgot about the light and became enamored of its opposite. Error became more characteristic of them than the truth; wickedness became second nature; idolatry acceptable, pleasure-seeking legitimate, covetousness something to be deliberately sought, sin something to be multiplied, rage more fearful, the serpent more audacious; human beings are at times befuddled and at other times distracted, ignorant of the future while being wrapped up in the present, while still "the creation was subjected to futility", as it is written, "not of its own will but by the will of the one who had subjected it, in the hope"<sup>68</sup> of his own coming.

**32.** The person who lets loose a swarm of such evils in the end becomes captive to them, unable to get free. It necessarily follows that all these evils turn out to be a just sentence for an initial transgression.

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<sup>67</sup> 1 Cor. 3:22-23.

<sup>68</sup> Rom. 8:20.

If death was decreed for a single act of eating, what further penalty can be levied commensurate with such additional wrongdoing except for a person to live under eternal punishment? The Devil sentenced human beings to just such a punishment. In all likelihood he endeavored to make his situation our own, saying, "Just as they have become my partners in evil, so too shall they be my companions in punishment. God is just and truthful and does not weaken his own law: Just as he cast human beings out of paradise because of their one transgression and handed them over to death, so too shall he condemn them to be punished eternally with me for the additional evils they do."

**33.** The Evil One understood God's righteousness; nevertheless, he did not realize that God is all-powerful, just as the Devil's followers fail to understand now, those who ask God, "How?" and who attempt to pry into the nature of Christ, the power and wisdom of God. Therefore, the Power of God came to battle the power of the Enemy. Taking flesh, the Power of God redeemed human beings, not by arrogating power to himself, lest he abrogate justice, but by exchanging himself for us and acting with justice. He was begotten in human fashion, taking upon himself a perfect human - or, rather, through this unique human being he took upon himself all human beings. He also suffered for us in order to release us from judgement, establish justice, fulfill his own purpose, and free human beings from death. To do so, he himself died for all and nullified the power of the Devil, without giving him the opportunity to arrogate power to himself and do what he wanted, just as he rescued us without arrogating power to himself, but by acting lawfully and using his almighty power.

### *The Unfathomable Incarnation*

**34.** So, you blaspheming and unbelieving wretch, all these wondrous things take place on your behalf and on behalf of us all. Do you still say he is a "dead" power and not the power of God and wisdom of God [1 Cor 1.24], as Saint Paul affirms? In an abbreviated fashion we have reminded the unbelieving of these things so we may persuade them that the Word became flesh for us, as Holy Scripture says. He did not turn into a human being, but in *hypostasis* united himself with



humanity. But you say, "How?" And I tell you, "Incomprehensibly. With regard to God, one does not ask, 'How?' He suffered as a human being and yet did so impassibly". Once again, you say, "How?" And I tell you, "In the manner of the Lord. He was crucified in the flesh but was not altered in spirit, for flesh and spirit were united in his mother's womb." You say, "How?" And I tell you, "Incomprehensibly. He died physically, but in his actions was immortal." Once again, you say, "How?" And I tell you, "All-powerfully. He was buried as a mortal and rose from the dead as God." Once again, you say, "How?" And I tell you, "Unfathomably."

**35.** Once again, I will ask you a question, and I want you to give me an answer. Do not talk all around the matter, but give me a straight answer. Is the Son of God all-powerful? Yes or no? If you say, "I do not know because I do not comprehend what 'the power of God' is", I will say to you, "If you do not comprehend what 'the power of God' is, how is it that you divide the union in two without understanding by what sort of power the union is effected?" If you say the opposite, that he is not all-powerful, look here: Holy Scripture refutes you when it says, "I know you can do all things and nothing is impossible for you"<sup>69</sup>. If you confess the truth, however, and say, "Yes, God is all-powerful", do not seek any longer to find out "How?" with regard to what has taken place and what is written concerning the divine economy. By doing so, you seem not to believe that he is all-powerful. If he is, do not seek how. If you find it necessary to know how, he is no longer all-powerful as far as you are concerned.

**36.** Tell me, then, a minor point - for it is minor - as I said earlier: How did he *ex nihilo* make heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them<sup>70</sup>? If you have nothing to say on these matters, do not meddle with what is even more marvelous - how he became human or how, by means of the flesh, he suffered impassibly - nor seek to explain in terms of the natures how these things took place. Instead, believe that God, being all-powerful, does exactly as he pleases. Or have you not heard the Scripture that says, "The Lord does whatever he pleases"<sup>71</sup>?

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<sup>69</sup> Job 42:2.

<sup>70</sup> 2 Macc. 7:28.

<sup>71</sup> Psa. 135:6.

## *Scripture on the Unity of Christ*

**37.** So, then, we ought to believe only those things that Holy Scripture says about him and not meddle with "How?" Scripture says that Jesus Christ is Son of God, and that for us he became incarnate, and for us suffered, and for us was crucified, and for us died, and for us was buried and rose again, and was taken up into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead, and remains forever. Let us therefore believe whatever Holy Scripture says the incarnate Word suffered impassibly or did. Since Scripture does not say how these things happened, let us not meddle there. It is written: "All the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in him bodily"<sup>72</sup>. If God himself was pleased to act in this manner, why do we inquire "How?" or attempt to divide him with regard to his activities? Why do we attempt to discern by our own powers of discernment in what way he bodily existed or how he dwelt, as though sometimes he dwelt and at other times did not? Again it is written: "From them, according to the flesh, comes Christ, who is God over all"<sup>73</sup>. Do you see how Holy Scripture everywhere confesses the Son of God incarnate and inseparable?

**38.** Let us imitate Peter, who, when he heard the Son of Man, confessed him to be Son of God and, on account of this, heard, "Blessed are you"<sup>74</sup>. Let us imitate Mary, who, when she was looking for his holy body, said, "They have taken my Lord, and I do not know where they have put him"<sup>75</sup>. Let us imitate the blind man, who, when he heard the Son of God speaking to him and saw him, believed, and worshiped him by taking hold of his feet. Does Scripture say that Christ answered the woman with the hemorrhage, "Who touched 'the human being'?"<sup>76</sup> No. Does it say, "The soldier struck 'the human being'?"<sup>77</sup> No. Did Christ say to Pilate, "The one who handed 'my body' over to you is guilty of the greater sin?"<sup>78</sup> No. Does Scripture say,

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<sup>72</sup> Col. 1:19; 2:9.

<sup>73</sup> Rom. 9:5.

<sup>74</sup> Matt. 16:13-17.

<sup>75</sup> John 20:13.

<sup>76</sup> Mark 5:20.

<sup>77</sup> John 18:22.

<sup>78</sup> John 19:11.

"They crucified 'the human person' - or 'the body' of Christ"? No. Does it say, "They clothed 'the human person' - or 'the body' - with a scarlet robe"?<sup>79</sup> No. Does it say, "'A person' placed his hands upon the eyes of the blind man"?<sup>80</sup> No. Does it say, "'The human person' is going to my Father"?<sup>81</sup> No. Does it say, "Place your hand into the side of my 'person'"?<sup>82</sup> No.

No, everywhere Holy Scripture says there is one Christ and Son of God, God the Word, with his own flesh. If Scripture says, "Son of God", it is speaking about Christ in unity. If Scripture says, "Son of Man", it is likewise speaking about one and the same person. If he is slapped, if he is betrayed, if he is persecuted, if he is disbelieved or believed, or hungers or grows weary or, in general, whatever Scripture says about him, it is speaking about one and the same, God the Word, with his own flesh, united, without division or separation: Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

**39.** Believe, therefore, in accordance with what Scripture says, that he came in the flesh, not that flesh came [σαρκι ἐλθοντα, ἀλλ' οὐ σαρκὰ ἐλθουσάν]; that he grew weary in the flesh, not that flesh grew weary; that he suffered in the flesh, not that flesh suffered; that he died in the flesh, not that flesh died<sup>83</sup> [σαρκὶ θανόντα, ἀλλ' οὐ σάρκα θανοῦσαν]; that he was crucified in the flesh, not that flesh was crucified; that he rose in the flesh, not that flesh arose; that he was taken into heaven in the flesh, not that flesh was taken into heaven; that he healed in the flesh, not that flesh healed; that he was seated at the right hand of God in the flesh, not that flesh was seated. And, in general, whenever Holy Scripture speaks about him bodily, you cannot show that it is speaking about the flesh as one part of the whole, but rather united [οὐκ ἔχεις

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<sup>79</sup> Matt. 27:28.

<sup>80</sup> Mark 8:25.

<sup>81</sup> John 16:28.

<sup>82</sup> John 20:27.

<sup>83</sup> In explicit contrast to Pope Leo who claims that "each form performs what is proper to it.. the Word obviously enacts what pertains to the Word and the flesh carries out what pertains to the flesh", St. Mark explicates that such is heresy, for the Word suffered *in* the flesh. The flesh performs nothing, but the one Incarnate Word performs all acts and operations befitting both natures.

δείξαι ὅτι τὴν σάρκα μονομερῶς λέγει, ἀλλ' ἡνωμένην]: he made the deeds of the flesh his own.

For Scripture says: Christ was begotten, Christ healed, Christ ate, Christ slept; Christ's body, Christ's blood, Christ's feet, Christ's wounds. The soldier slapped Christ on the face, Christ grew weary, Christ suffered, Christ died for us, Christ was crucified, Christ arose, Christ was taken into heaven, Christ was seated at the right hand of God, Christ will come to judge the living and the dead, Christ is the Son of God, Christ is God over all things. Nowhere does it say, "his humanity suffered something", or "God the Word did something". It says everywhere in Scripture, rather, that he claimed the deeds of the flesh as his own, not only on earth in the here and now, but also in heaven forever.

**40.** If these words you have heard from Holy Scripture are true, you ought to believe and not ask meddlesome questions. What does somebody say now? "How am I supposed to believe what I do not understand?" or "What is belief?" Belief is confessing what you professed at your baptism, when you said, "I believe in God, the Father almighty, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Word, God from God, light from light, power from power, who, in the last days, for us took flesh, was begotten, became a human being, was crucified, died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead". Did you not confess these things, either for yourself or through someone else? Were you not "buried with him through baptism"<sup>84</sup> and raised with him by means of the resplendent robe and the Holy Mysteries?

**41.** Seeking what is godly, therefore, describe to me first what your concerns are and reflect on them with discernment, so that through what you say and think I may believe that you too are capable of understanding Christ's nature. How, being alive in the flesh, did you die with Christ and become buried with him? How did you also eat his body if it is merely flesh? How did you also drink his blood if it itself is merely blood? You receive neither God the Word nor Christ himself, but instead hear "the body of Christ" and "the blood of Christ". So, if

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<sup>84</sup> Col. 2:12.

they are not united - I am talking as you do - how will the body and blood give you life? If these things are not made holy by means of the union, how will they make you holy or grant you forgiveness of your sins? **42.** If I were to speak to you about Christ, once again you would quibble and divide Christ. But now I am talking to you about the body and the blood. Tell me how they bestow life on you in and of themselves. Do you hear what the holy priest says? "The holy body of Jesus Christ, for eternal life". If he were to say, "The holy Christ, for eternal life", you would once again say, "He is holy because of the indwelling God." But now you hear the body and blood each on its own called holy. You should understand, you poor man, that they are holy by nature, united in *hypostasis* with the Godhead from the time he was conceived in his mother's womb, and not after he was begotten, derivatively by participation.

The person who believes this keeps the commandments of Christ afterward and does not ask meddlesome questions about his nature. We learn this from Saint Paul, knowing for a fact that no one who asks meddlesome questions about Christ's nature keeps his commandment, but that the person who believes and keeps Christ's commandment receives the Holy Spirit and becomes someone taught by God. Like a river, he pours out the truth for others too, in accordance with the word that the Lord spoke when he said, "As Scripture has said, out of the belly of the person who believes in me 'shall flow rivers of living water.' Now when he said this, he was speaking about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were about to receive"<sup>85</sup>.

### *Jesus Christ, the Son of Man*

**43.** Again, listen to what Paul says about him whom you so confidently divide. "Every knee shall bow to him", he says, of those "in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"<sup>86</sup>. Will you not tremble on that day when the above-mentioned holy powers simply worship him, without asking meddle some questions, and give glory to God for the ineffable mystery of the union? Are you going to divide him even

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<sup>85</sup> John 7:38-39.

<sup>86</sup> Phil. 2:10-11.

then and ask, "How?" There, it seems to me, wasted with fear you will undoubtedly neither say these things nor think them. No, consider that what you think here will be reckoned against you there. Therefore, you poor man, repent your wrongheaded belief and believe as Christ wants you to believe.

**44.** Listen to what the Lord says to his disciples: "Who do people say that I am? The Son of Man?"<sup>87</sup>. Carefully observe how he did not say, "Son of God", but rather "Son of Man". After hearing the disciples say, "Some say John [the Baptist], others Elijah", he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" The foundation of the apostles, Peter, answered by saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God", and to these words the Lord responded, "Blessed are you, Simon Peter, son of Jonah, because flesh and blood" - that is, human ways of thinking - "has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven"<sup>88</sup>.

The Lord praised Peter because when the latter heard "Son of Man", he confessed the Lord to be Son of God. And what did the Lord say to him? "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail over it"<sup>89</sup>. So, if you too transcend human ways of thinking, you will confess the Son of Man, whom Mary bore, to be Son of God. He will surely call you blessed, just as he did Saint Peter, and he will build on this rock of faith the whole church of your thoughts<sup>90</sup>, and the gates of hell will not prevail over it because, in coming down from heaven, he loosened the bonds of Hades by means of his holy body in order to save those who believe in him without making divisions.

**45.** If you oppose even these arguments, however, and still attempt to divide the Lord, tell me, who is the Son of Man? If you tell me, "God the Word", then how is he also Son of Man? If you say, "He is a mere human being", how did Peter call him Son of God? If, unable to slip out of this bind, you say, "He is both a mere human being and is called Son of God", you are introducing two Christs - one God the Word, and one

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<sup>87</sup> Matt. 16:13.

<sup>88</sup> Matt. 16:14-17.

<sup>89</sup> Matt. 16:18.

<sup>90</sup> The Doctor expressly clarifies that the *Rock* upon which the Church is built is the confession of faith in Christ, and not the figure or person of St. Peter.

a human being, for Saint Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"<sup>91</sup>. **46.** Will you accept how blessed Thomas bears witness to the truth? He touched the Savior's side and hands and confessed him to be Lord and God. He did not pronounce him Lord and God either because of the Lord's wondrous works or because of his divine words, lest you should say that he was talking about God "indwelling" a human being. No, having touched the Lord's holy body with his hands, he explicitly confessed him also to be God. What do you have to say to that? Who is the person who was touched? A mere human being? So how did Thomas confess him to be both Lord and God? But was he the Word "stripped down"? How was even a "stripped-down" God touched?

You need to confess the truth here too: Jesus Christ is Lord. Or have you not heard in the Gospels how he accused the apostles on this point, saying, "Come and see that it is I myself, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have"<sup>92</sup>. Why did he not say, "Come and see that it is my humanity"? Instead, showing them flesh and bone, he said, "See that it is I myself." Why am I still seeking testimony concerning the orthodox faith? All of Holy Scripture clearly states that he was one and the same Son of God with regard to both kinds of actions - divine and human, I mean - that our Lord Jesus Christ both did and suffered.

### *Reality of the Incarnation*

**47.** If Holy Scripture particularly mentions the Lord's holy body after the crucifixion, it does not do so to divide it from his divine dignity or from the holiness that was his by nature, but rather wants to demonstrate that the Lord Jesus Christ came not as some sort of apparition - as some think - but truly came in the flesh and died for us. Therefore, Scripture also clearly says, "If someone does not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, this person opposes Christ"<sup>93</sup>. Where did he come except, clearly, into the world? Why did he come except for us? Why? In order to teach perfect truth, which no one else

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<sup>91</sup> Matt. 16:17.

<sup>92</sup> Luke 24:39.

<sup>93</sup> 1 John 4:2-3.

had taught-to believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but through keeping the commandments, however, and not through mere knowledge-and in order to suffer on behalf of all the faithful, to be despised, spat upon, beaten, tied up, scourged, crucified, to drink gall and sour wine, to die, be pierced with a lance, and rise from the dead on the third day. He likewise came in order to do himself the things of God in the flesh so we might see the angels ascending and descending on him, to give the Holy Spirit to those who show their belief in him by keeping his commandments, to save them, and to be taken into heaven and sit at the right hand of Power<sup>94</sup>, and come to judge the living and the dead, and abide with the Father forever. Having heard these things from Holy Scripture, we believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**48.** No doubt you will say to me, "I too believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit", understanding by "the Son" the Word bare and not with his own holy flesh. But hear what the Lord, too, says on this subject: "This is eternal life: that they may believe in you, the only true God, and in Jesus Christ, whom you have sent"<sup>95</sup>. You have heard that Jesus Christ came "in the flesh", not "without flesh"! If you do not believe what Holy Scripture has to say about this, explain to me how the Word came "stripped down", or how the Father sanctified the Son and sent him into the world. According to you, did this happen by displacement or alteration or mutation, or by apparition and imaginary appearance? Heaven forbid that we think this way about the advent and appearance of the Lord! No, the union with holy flesh came about through the Father's commissioning and sending him down and sanctifying and anointing him: God the Word, from the time he was conceived in his mother's womb, made the flesh his own, uniting in himself everything about the flesh, ineffably and without change. The Lord's advent and presence is nothing other than the marvelous incarnation, and whatever things he said or did or suffered - and does and will do - by means of that advent and presence.

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<sup>94</sup> Matt. 26:64.

<sup>95</sup> John 17:3.



**49.** Just as he came and suffered for us, so too does he maintain his priesthood and intercede for us, as Saint Paul confirms<sup>96</sup>, acting not as a subordinate but by divine dispensation. As a result, in accordance with the Father's good pleasure, by becoming human he took responsibility for us, so that he himself might do for us all those things we ought to do but are unable to do. He himself, by doing for us what we ought to do ourselves, demonstrates to us what it means to be truly human. For this reason, he fasted forty days and afterward was hungry, in order to show us how, for love's sake, not to lose heart, even if we are hungry, or listen to the Devil, who commanded the stones to become loaves of bread<sup>97</sup>. So too he thirsted and grew tired and slept and ate with sinners<sup>98</sup>, and prayed and said that the Son did not know the hour or the day of the final consummation<sup>99</sup>, and went to a wedding<sup>100</sup>, and sorrowed at hardheartedness<sup>101</sup>, and was deeply grieved, even to death<sup>102</sup>, and ate with sinners<sup>103</sup>, and prayed that, if possible, the cup of death might pass him by<sup>104</sup>, and wept for the dead<sup>105</sup>, and ordered [the disciples] to catch fish<sup>106</sup>, and did not stop them from buying food, and, in general, took upon himself and demonstrated everything possible for human beings, except sin<sup>107</sup>. He not only assumed flesh for us, but also assumed all of its physical attributes, except for sin, in order that we might know that nothing physical compels us to sin.

When you hear, then, that Jesus did or said something corporeal or human, do not think that he was incapable of doing something better, but instead marvel at his love for humankind and his accommodating himself to our human condition. If he became human for us, it is clear

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<sup>96</sup> Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24-25.

<sup>97</sup> Matt. 4:2-3.

<sup>98</sup> Matt. 9:11.

<sup>99</sup> Matt. 24:36.

<sup>100</sup> John 2:2.

<sup>101</sup> Mark 3:5.

<sup>102</sup> Matt. 26:38.

<sup>103</sup> Matt. 9:11.

<sup>104</sup> Matt. 26:39.

<sup>105</sup> John 11:35.

<sup>106</sup> John 21:6.

<sup>107</sup> Heb. 4:15.

that for us he spoke and acted and suffered as a human being. Do not judge all of Christ's power by the fact that he became human for us, so that as a result you divide him according to his different activities [ὥς διὰ τοῦτο μερίζειν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὰς διαφορὰς τῶν πραγμάτων], ascribing some to "mere flesh" and others to the "bare Godhead".<sup>108</sup>

### *Unity of the Divine and the Human in Christ*

**50.** Since we have learned not to put our faith in his commandments but rather to persevere in what is hidden, perhaps if you too reflect on this, you will say to me, "Tell me, whom, according to Scripture, did the Father beget before the morning star<sup>109</sup>, God the Word, or humanity?" I will tell you, "By nature, God the Word - but, by grace, he made the humanity his own, too. This is so because God the Word, by means of the good pleasure of God the Father, also united humanity with himself, in accordance with Scripture, which says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"<sup>110</sup>. If he was not united, he would not bear the name "Jesus Christ", but rather "God the Word", which he bore from the beginning. If this is not the case, you tell me: For what reason did the apostles not proclaim the Son of God "the naked Word", but rather in every instance proclaimed him Jesus Christ, and him crucified? Is it not obvious that they did so because of the union? The Lord Jesus Christ is Son of Man not because of mere flesh but because of the union with holy flesh. Likewise, he is Son of God not because of the bare Word, but because of union with the Word. A characteristic is one thing, union another.

**51.** I am speaking of a mystical and unconfused union [ἐνωσιν δὲ λέγομεν μυστικὴν καὶ ἀσύγχυτον], for the Word neither turned into flesh, nor did flesh dissolve into the Word; rather, with the Word remaining exactly as he was and with flesh being exactly what it is [ἀλλὰ μένοντος τοῦ Λόγου ὅπερ ἦν, καὶ οὔσης τῆς σαρκὸς ὅπερ ἐστίν], God the Word, in accordance with the will of God the Father, was pleased to be united with flesh in his mother's womb. Each nature remains what it is without confusion, without either of them insisting

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<sup>108</sup> See footnote 83.

<sup>109</sup> Psalms 109:3 LXX.

<sup>110</sup> Matthew 3:17.

on its own distinct identity in Christ<sup>111</sup> [οὐδ' ὁποτέρᾳ αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ μεμερισμένην ἔχει τὴν ιδιότητα], by virtue of either the names the Lord was known by or the deeds he did. According to Scripture, the same Christ who is called "Son of Man" is also called "Son of God", for [the angel] says to Saint Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God"<sup>112</sup>.

Do you see that the same person who was born of Mary is also called "Son of God" by means of the union effected in his mother's womb? He himself both spoke and taught; he himself both performed divine deeds and suffered human sufferings [καὶ τὰ θεῖα ἐποίει καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἔπασχεν]. Although it was the Word who did the divine deeds, this was nonetheless not God "stripped down:" but was rather God the Word united with humanity, and even if it was a human being who suffered human sufferings, it was nevertheless not humanity divided from Divinity, but was rather united with the Godhead.

**52.** I am speaking therefore of the transformation of neither the Word nor the flesh, but rather am confessing their undivided union [ἁδιαίρετον τὴν ἔνωσιν]. Thus we can conceive of the impassible Word and believe that he is the Son of God who suffered for us, since each nature, in a manner befitting God, remained integral to itself while making the properties of the other its own for us. As a result, Christ, composed of both, became mediator between God and humanity<sup>113</sup> [ὅπως ὁ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν Χριστὸς μεσίτης Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων γένηται]. May he be conceived of as sole Son of God and believed in at every moment and in every place and through every powerful act and deed, in accordance with Holy Scripture.

To Christ be the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

END

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<sup>111</sup> The united divine and human natures remain as they are qualitatively, for there is no confusion of nature. However, they do not remain as distinct entities / elements after the union, since there is strictly one *entity* and *thing* post-union.

<sup>112</sup> Luke 1:35.

<sup>113</sup> 1 Tim. 2:5.

### III

430 CE

#### St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Third Letter to Nestorius*

*Eduard Schwartz, Concilium Universale Ephesenum, ACO 1.1.1, 33-42;  
Matthew R. Crawford, tr. 'Cyril of Alexandria, Third Letter to Nestorius' in The  
Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings: Christ Through the Nestorian  
Controversy (Vol. 3).*

1. To the most reverent and God-loving fellow minister Nestorius, Cyril and the Synod of the Diocese of Egypt gathered in Alexandria send you greetings in the Lord.

Since our Savior clearly said, “The one who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and the one who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,”<sup>114</sup> what penalty would we incur when Your Reverence demands that we love you more than Christ, the Savior of us all? Who will be able to help us on the day of judgment? Or what sort of defense will we find if we place such a high value on a prolonged silence in the face of the blasphemies against him that are coming from you?

Now, if you were only doing wrong to yourself by thinking and teaching such things, we would not be as concerned. But since you have scandalized the entire church and have spread among the people the leaven of a bizarre and alien heresy – and not only among those there, but also among those everywhere, since the books of your expositions have been disseminated – what sort of answer would suffice for our continued silence? How could we not recall the saying of Christ, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father and

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<sup>114</sup> Matt. 10:37.

a daughter against her mother.”<sup>115</sup> For when the faith is being injured, let reverence for parents be done away with as vain and misleading, let even the law of affection toward children and brothers be set aside, and henceforth let the pious prefer death to life, in order that “they may attain a better resurrection,”<sup>116</sup> as it is written.

2. Accordingly, together with the holy Synod that has met in Great Rome, presided over by our most holy and God-fearing brother and fellow minister Bishop Celestine<sup>117</sup>, we are solemnly warning you now with this third letter, advising you to dissociate yourself from the extremely crooked and perverse doctrines you both hold and teach, and to embrace instead the orthodox faith handed down to the churches from the beginning by the holy apostles and evangelists, who “were both eyewitnesses and ministers of the word.”<sup>118</sup>

And unless Your Reverence does this by the date appointed in the letters of our aforementioned fellow minister Celestine, the most holy and God-fearing bishop of the Church of the Romans, know that you have no clerical standing with us, nor any place or status among the priests and bishops of God. For we cannot simply stand by watching churches being thrown into a tumult and people being scandalized and the orthodox faith being rejected and the flocks being torn asunder by you who should be saving them, if you ever were, like us, an adherent of orthodoxy, following the religion of the holy fathers. As for us, we all are in communion with all those laity and clergy who have been excommunicated or condemned by Your Reverence on account of the faith. For it is not right that those people who are wise enough to hold orthodox views should be wronged by your decrees simply because they did what was right by speaking out against you, as you yourself pointed out in the letter you wrote to Celestine, our most holy fellow bishop of Great Rome.

And it will not be sufficient for Your Reverence merely to confess with us the symbol of the faith which was expounded in the Holy Spirit by

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<sup>115</sup> Matt. 10:34-35.

<sup>116</sup> Heb. 11:35.

<sup>117</sup> Notice the position of the See of Rome: it is a fellow See, headed by a Primate who is equal to St. Cyril (“fellow minister bishop Celestine”).

<sup>118</sup> Luke 1:2.

the holy and great synod assembled in time past at Nicaea. (For you have not understood and interpreted it in an orthodox sense, but rather in a twisted manner, even if you have verbally confessed the words.) Consequently, you must also confess in writing and by oath that, on the one hand, you anathematize your own abominable and profane doctrines and, on the other hand, that you hold and teach the same as all of us, the bishops and teachers and leaders of the people in both the West and the East<sup>119</sup>. Moreover, both the holy synod in Rome and all of us here have agreed that the letters written to Your Reverence from the churches of Alexandria are orthodox and blameless. And we have attached to this letter of ours what it is that you must think and teach, as well as those things from which you must separate yourself. For this is the faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, which all of the Orthodox bishops in both the West and in the East agree upon:

3. We believe in one God, Father, almighty, maker of all things both seen and unseen; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things came to be, both those in heaven and those on earth, who for the sake of us human beings and for our salvation came down, and became incarnate and became human, suffered, and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens, and is coming to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit. Now as for those who say: There was a point when he did not exist, and before he was begotten he did not exist, and that he came to be from nothing, or from a different subsistence or substance, claiming that the Son of God is either changeable or mutable, these people the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.

We follow in every point the confessions the holy fathers made with the Holy Spirit speaking in them, and we stick to the intent of their thoughts, keeping, as it were, to the Royal Way. Therefore, we affirm

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<sup>119</sup> In other words, *consensus patrum*.

that the only-begotten Word of God himself, begotten from the very substance of the Father, true God from true God, light from light, the one through whom all things came to be, both those in heaven and those on earth, came down for our salvation and descended into self-emptying. He thus became incarnate and became human, that is, he took flesh from the holy Virgin and made it his own such that he endured a birth like ours from his mother and came forth as a human being from a woman.

He did all of this not by ridding himself of what he was. Rather, even though he assumed flesh and blood, he still remained what he was – God by nature and in truth. And we affirm that neither was the flesh turned into the nature of the divinity nor was the ineffable nature of God the Word changed into the nature of flesh. For the one who abides eternally, according to the scriptures, is entirely unchanging and immutable, so that even when he is seen as an infant in swaddling clothes in the lap of the Virgin who bore him, he was still filling the entire creation as God, enthroned with the one who begot him. For what is divine is unquantifiable and without extension, and it admits of no boundaries.

4. So confessing that the Word was united with flesh hypostatically, we worship one Son and Lord, Jesus Christ. We neither separate nor divide human being and God, as if they were conjoined with one another by a union of dignity or authority (for this is nothing but foolish nonsense). Nor do we specify the Word from God as Christ and likewise the one from the woman as another Christ. Instead, we know only one Christ, the Word from God the Father with his own flesh. For it was at that point that he was anointed as human along with us, even though he also “gives the Spirit without measure”<sup>120</sup> to worthy recipients, as the blessed evangelist John says.

But we do not assert that the Word from God dwelled in an ordinary human who was born from the holy Virgin, lest Christ should be regarded as a God-bearing human being. For even though it has been said that “the Word dwelt among us”<sup>121</sup> and also that “all the fullness of

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<sup>120</sup> John 3:34.

<sup>121</sup> John 1:14.

the deity dwelt bodily”<sup>122</sup> in Christ, still we recognize that it was by becoming flesh that he undertook this indwelling. By this we do not mean that the indwelling occurred in him in the same way that he is said to have dwelled in the saints, but rather that, by being united naturally to flesh, though not changed into it, he undertook the kind of indwelling that the soul of a person may be said to have with its own body.

5. Therefore, there is one Christ and Son and Lord, not as if a human being simply had a conjunction with God, as though it were a union of dignity or authority, since equality of honor does not unite natures. Surely both Peter and John each have the same amount of honor as the other insofar as both are apostles and holy disciples, but these two are not one. We do not regard the manner of the conjunction in terms of a juxtaposition - for this is not enough to produce a natural union<sup>123</sup> [ἔνωσιν φυσικὴν] - nor in terms of a relational participation in the way that “we also are joined to the Lord and so are one spirit with him,” as it is written<sup>124</sup>. Rather, we reject the word “conjunction” [συναφείας] as insufficient to signify the union. And we do not call the Word from God the Father either the “God of Christ” or the “Master of Christ” for the obvious reason that we would then be cutting into two the one Christ and Son and Lord, and in this way fall under the charge of blasphemy by making him God and Master of himself.

For, as we have already said, the Word of God, having been united to flesh hypostatically, is God of all and Master over everything, and he is neither slave nor master of himself. For it is absurd – or rather, profane – to think or say such things. He did indeed say that the Father is his “God,” although he is God by nature and from his substance, but we nevertheless do not overlook the fact that, in addition to being God, he also became a human being subject to God, in keeping with the law proper to the nature of humanity. But how

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<sup>122</sup> Col. 2:9.

<sup>123</sup> A natural union - a union of natures, is necessary for salvation: for a non-genuine union is a mere conjunction, and the Word doesn't truly assume the flesh in such a model. For St. Cyril, the natural union is the same as the hypostatic union: two natures / hypostases unite to become one.

<sup>124</sup> 1 Cor. 6:17.



could he become the God or Master of himself? Therefore, inasmuch as he was a human being and experienced what was appropriate to the limitations of his self-emptying, he declared himself to be subject to God along with us. In this way he also was born under the Law, even though he himself, as God, spoke the Law and is the Lawgiver.

6. Now, we reject this statement about Christ: “I venerate the one who is worn because of the wearer. I worship the one who is seen because of the one who is unseen.” It is shocking then to add to this, “The one who has been assumed shares the name ‘God’ with the one who has assumed him.” For the one who says these things again severs him into two Christs, setting up successively a distinct human being and similarly a God. For such a person is unquestionably denying the union that ensures we do not “co-worship” or call “God” one along with another but instead understand that Christ Jesus, the only-begotten Son, is one, he with his own flesh being honored by one worship. And we confess that the same Son and only-begotten God, begotten from God the Father, although being impassible according to his own nature, “has suffered in the flesh”<sup>125</sup> on our behalf, according to the Scriptures, and was in the crucified body, impassibly making his own the sufferings of his own flesh.

And “by the grace of God he tasted death on behalf of all,”<sup>126</sup> offering his own body to death, even though he was life according to nature and is himself the resurrection. For by his inexpressible power he trampled on death, so that he, in his own flesh, might be the first one to become “the firstborn from the dead”<sup>127</sup> and the “first fruits of those who have fallen asleep,”<sup>128</sup> and might blaze a trail for human nature to return to incorruptibility. Thus, as we just said, “by the grace of God he tasted death on behalf of all,” and after three days came to life again, having despoiled Hades. Therefore, even if it is said that “the resurrection of the dead” came to pass “through a human being,”<sup>129</sup> we understand this to mean that the Word from God became a human

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<sup>125</sup> 1 Pet. 4:1.

<sup>126</sup> Heb. 2:9.

<sup>127</sup> Col. 1:18.

<sup>128</sup> 1 Cor. 15:2.

<sup>129</sup> 1 Cor. 15:21.

being and that the dominion of death was destroyed through him. And he will come at the due time as one Son and Lord, in the glory of the Father, in order to “judge the world in righteousness,” as it is written<sup>130</sup>.

7. We must deal with the following too. In proclaiming the death, according to the flesh, of the only-begotten Son of God, that is, Jesus Christ, and in confessing his return from the dead to life and his ascension into heaven, we perform the bloodless worship in the churches and approach the mystical blessings, and we are sanctified, becoming thereby participants in the holy flesh and “precious blood”<sup>131</sup> of Christ the Savior of us all. We do not receive it as if it were normal flesh – God forbid! – nor indeed as if it were the flesh of a man sanctified and conjoined to the Word in a union of dignity, or as if he merely possessed a divine indwelling. Rather, we receive this flesh as being truly life-giving and the very Word’s own flesh.

For being life by nature, qua God, and since he has become one with his own flesh [ἐπειδὴ γέγονεν ἐν πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα], he has declared it to be life-giving. So even if he says to us, “Amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,”<sup>132</sup> we do not regard it as the flesh of a human being like one of us – for how could the flesh of a human being be life-giving according to its own nature? – but as flesh which has truly come to belong to the one who has, for our sake, become the Son of Man, and was so called.

8. Now, as for the sayings of our Savior in the gospels, we do not divide them either between two hypostases or indeed between two persons<sup>133</sup> [φωνὰς οὔτε ὑποστάσεσι δυσὶν οὔτε μὴν προσώποις καταμερίζομεν]. For the one and only Christ is not twofold [οὐ γάρ ἐστι διπλοῦς], even if he is understood as having been brought together from two different things into an indivisible unity [κὰν ἐκ δύο νοῆται καὶ διαφόρων πραγμάτων εἰς ἐνότητα τὴν ἀμέριστον συνενηνεγμένος],

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<sup>130</sup> Acts 17:31.

<sup>131</sup> 1 Pet. 1:19.

<sup>132</sup> John 6:53.

<sup>133</sup> Since St. Cyril as well as the Fathers believed in a union of two *hypostases* (cf. Third Anathema and its *Explanation*; also the excerpts from his *Defense* below), they considered Nestorius’s dyophysite model to end up with a conjunction of two *persons* resulting in a continuing distinction between the two *persons*.

just as, for instance, a human being is also understood as consisting of soul and body, and yet is not twofold, but one from both [ἀλλ' εἰς ἐξ ἁμφοῖν]. So, holding the correct view, we will be inclined to think that both the human sayings as well as the divine ones were spoken by one. For when he says about himself, speaking in a manner appropriate to God, “The one who has seen me has seen the Father,”<sup>134</sup> and “I and the Father are one,”<sup>135</sup> we think of his divine and ineffable nature, according to which he is one with his own Father on account of their identity of substance, and he is the image and “imprint and radiance of his glory.”<sup>136</sup> But because he did not disdain human limitation, when he says to the Jews, “But now you are seeking to kill me, a human being who has spoken to you the truth,”<sup>137</sup> again we no less acknowledge him as God the Word in his equality and likeness with the Father and [speaking] from his human limitations.

For if it is incumbent upon us to believe that, though being God by nature, “he became flesh”<sup>138</sup> (in other words, a human being animated by a rational soul), what reason could anyone have for being ashamed of the fact that these sayings of his are expressed in a manner appropriate to a human being? For if he rejects words proper to a human being, who was it that compelled him to become a human being like us? But if he has lowered himself for our sake into a voluntary self-emptying, why would he then reject those words that are proper to the self-emptying? Therefore, all the sayings in the gospels must be ascribed to one person – the one incarnate *hypostasis* of the Word [ὑποστάσει μιάι τῇ τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένῃ]. For “there is one Lord Jesus Christ,”<sup>139</sup> according to the scriptures.

9. Now if he should be called “the apostle and high priest of our confession,”<sup>140</sup> because he acts as a priest to God the Father and ministers the confession of faith which is offered from us both to him

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<sup>134</sup> John 14:9.

<sup>135</sup> John 10:30.

<sup>136</sup> Heb. 1:3.

<sup>137</sup> John 8:40.

<sup>138</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>139</sup> 1 Cor. 8:6.

<sup>140</sup> Heb. 3:1.

and through him to God the Father, and also indeed unto the Holy Spirit, again we affirm that he does so as the only-begotten Son who comes from God by nature, rather than assigning the title and reality of priesthood to another alongside of him. For he has become “a mediator between God and human beings”<sup>141</sup>, a mediator for peace, offering himself up as “a fragrant offering”<sup>142</sup> to God the Father. This is why he also said, “‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but you have fashioned a body for me. In burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not delight.’ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come, O God, to do your will, as it is written of me in the roll of the book.’”<sup>143</sup>

For he has offered his own body as a fragrant offering on our behalf and certainly not on his own behalf. For what sort of offering or sacrifice would he have needed on his own behalf, since as God he is greater than all sin? For if “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,”<sup>144</sup> in the sense that we became prone to going astray and human nature has become afflicted with sin, while he is not like this, which is why we are inferior to his glory, how could anyone doubt that the true lamb has been sacrificed for our sake and on our behalf? To say that he has offered himself both on his own behalf and on our behalf would by no means escape the accusation of impiety, since in no way did he go astray, “nor did he commit any sin.” Therefore, what sort of offering did he need, in the absence of the sin which would have required such an offering?

**10.** Now when he says about the Spirit, “That one will glorify me,”<sup>145</sup> we understand this in an orthodox manner, and so we say that the one Christ and Son did not take glory from the Holy Spirit as if he was in need of glory from someone else, because his Spirit is neither greater than him nor above him. Rather, it is because he used his own Spirit to perform magnificent deeds as a demonstration of his own deity that he says he has been glorified by the Spirit, just as one of us might say about his innate ability or some special skill, “They will glorify me.”

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<sup>141</sup> 1 Tim. 2:5.

<sup>142</sup> Eph. 5:2.

<sup>143</sup> Heb. 10:5-7.

<sup>144</sup> Rom. 3:23.

<sup>145</sup> John 16:14.

For even if the Spirit exists in his own hypostasis and indeed is understood as distinct, inasmuch as he is Spirit and not Son, still he is not alien to the Son [εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἔστιν ἐν ὑποστάσει τὸ Πνεῦμα ἰδικῇ, καὶ δὴ καὶ νοεῖται καθ' ἑαυτὸ].

For he has been named the “Spirit of truth”<sup>146</sup> and Christ is the truth, and the Spirit goes forth from Christ [προχεῖται παρ' αὐτοῦ] just as he does of course also from God the Father<sup>147</sup>. Therefore, when the Spirit also performed miraculous deeds through the hands of the holy apostles after our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, he glorified Christ. For it is believed that he is God according to nature, and so he himself works through his own Spirit [πάλιν αὐτὸς ἐνεργῶν διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου Πνεύματος]. This is the reason that he said, “He will take from what is mine and proclaim it to you.”<sup>148</sup> And in no way do we claim that the Spirit is wise and powerful by participation, since he is pure perfection and does not lack anything good. But since he is the Spirit of the Father’s Power and Wisdom (that is, the Son), he is absolute Wisdom and Power.

**11.** Now since the holy Virgin brought forth in a fleshly manner God united hypostatically to flesh, for this reason we also say that she is *Theotokos*. We do not say this in the sense that the nature of the Word began to exist from the flesh (for he was “in the beginning” and “the Word was God” and “the Word was with God,”<sup>149</sup> and he is the maker of the ages, co-eternal with the Father and fashioner of all things). Rather, we call her *Theotokos* because, as we have already said, he hypostatically united to himself that which is human and endured a fleshly birth from her womb.

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<sup>146</sup> John 16:13.

<sup>147</sup> The progression here is clearly energetic and economic: notice that both examples cited are economic (the Spirit performing miracles through the Apostles, and Christ working through the Spirit). When Theodoret thought St. Cyril was “suggesting that the Spirit has his existence from or through the Son”, the Doctor clarified that he made this point against Nestorius who believed that the Spirit empowered Christ in some manner as if foreign to him, and affirmed that “the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father and is not foreign to the Son”.

<sup>148</sup> John 16:14.

<sup>149</sup> John 1:1.

He did not need, out of necessity or for his own nature, a temporal birth in the last times of the age. Rather, he did all this in order to bless the very beginning of our existence, so that, with a woman having begotten him united to flesh, the curse against the whole race which sends our earthly bodies to death might finally cease. Thus the sentence, “in sorrow you shall bear children,”<sup>150</sup> was abolished through him, and he demonstrated the truth of what was said through the voice of the prophet, “Death prevailed and swallowed them up, and God has again removed every tear from every face.”<sup>151</sup> We say that it was for this reason that he, in keeping with the economy, also himself blessed marriage, and, when he was invited, went to Cana in Galilee with the holy Apostles.

12. We have been taught to think in this way by the holy Apostles and Evangelists, as well as by all the inspired Scripture, and on the basis of the true confession of the blessed Fathers. Your Piety must also agree with and affirm all these things without any deceit. And what Your Piety must anathematize is appended to our letter here.

### *The Twelve Anathemas*

1. If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth and for this reason that the holy Virgin is *Theotokos* (for she gave birth in the flesh to the Word from God who had become flesh), let him be anathema.
2. If anyone does not confess that the Word from God the Father was hypostatically united to flesh, and that he is one Christ with his own flesh, that is, the same one is simultaneously God and human being, let him be anathema.
3. If anyone divides the hypostases in the one Christ after the union<sup>152</sup> [εἰ τις ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰνός Χριστοῦ διαιρεῖ τὰς ὑποστάσεις μετὰ τὴν ἐνωσιν], conjoining them by a conjunction merely in terms of

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<sup>150</sup> Gen. 3:16.

<sup>151</sup> Isa. 25:8.

<sup>152</sup> It is simply presumed that Christ is composed of *hypostases*, and that they are not to be divided after the union. The Fathers - particularly at Ephesus 431 - explicitly affirmed this, for as St. Ephrem the Syrian says, “A *qnuma* [*hypostasis*] is what is required to minimally assert that something exists in reality.”

dignity or authority or lordship and not instead by a coming together in the sense of a natural union [καθ' ένωσιν φυσικήν], let him be anathema.

4. If anyone distributes the sayings in the evangelical and apostolic writings to two persons or two hypostases [ει τις προσώποις δυσίν ή γοϋν ύποστάσεσιν], whether those things said by the saints about Christ or those said by him about himself, and if he attributes some of them to a human being thought of separately alongside the Word from God [παρά τον έκ θεοϋ λόγον ιδικώς νοουμένωι προσάπτει] but others exclusively to the Word from God the Father because they are appropriate for God, let him be anathema.
5. If anyone dares to say that Christ is a God-bearing human being and does not instead say that he is God in truth because he is the one Son and this by nature, insofar as the “Word became flesh”<sup>153</sup> and “partook like us of flesh and blood,”<sup>154</sup> let him be anathema.
6. If anyone says the Word from God the Father is the God or Master of Christ, and does not instead confess that the same one is simultaneously God and human being, since according to the Scriptures the Word became flesh, let him be anathema.
7. If anyone says that Jesus was acted upon by God the Word as a human being would be, and that the glory of the Only-Begotten was attached to him as though he were another alongside the Only-Begotten, let him be anathema.
8. If anyone dares to say that the human being who was assumed ought to be worshiped together with, glorified together with, and named God together with God the Word, as if he were one with another (for the continual addition of “together with” requires us to think this), and if he does not instead honor the Emmanuel with a single worship and ascribe to him a single glorification [καί οϋχι δή μᾶλλον μιᾷ προσκυνήσει τιμαῖ τόν Ἐμμανουήλ καί μίαν

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<sup>153</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>154</sup> Heb. 2:14.

αὐτῷ τὴν δοξολογίαν ἀνάπτει, καθό γέγονε σὰρξ ὁ λόγος], insofar as “the Word became flesh,”<sup>155</sup> let him be anathema.

9. If anyone says that the one Lord Jesus Christ has been glorified by the Spirit, making use of the power that came through the Spirit as if it belonged to someone else and receiving from the Spirit the ability to work against unclean spirits and to accomplish divine signs among humanity, and if he does not instead say that the Spirit through whom he performed the divine signs is his very own<sup>156</sup> [και οὐχι δὴ μάλλον ἴδιον αὐτος τὸ πνεῦμά φησιν, δι' ου και ἐνήργηκε τὰς θεοσημείας], let him be anathema.
10. The divine Scripture says Christ became “the high priest and apostle of our confession,”<sup>157</sup> and that he “offered himself on our behalf as a fragrant offering to God the Father.”<sup>158</sup> Therefore, if anyone says that the Word from God did not himself become our high priest and apostle when he became flesh and a human being like us, but another alongside him did so, a human being apart from him, “born of a woman,”<sup>159</sup> or if anyone says that he brought an offering on his own behalf too and not instead solely on our behalf (for the one who knew no sin needed no offering), let him be anathema.
11. If anyone does not confess that the Lord’s flesh is life-giving and is the very own flesh of the Word from God the Father, but [says] that it belongs to someone else alongside him who is connected with him in terms of dignity or who merely has a divine indwelling, and does not instead confess, as we have already said, that his flesh is life-giving because it became the very own flesh of the Word who is able to give life to all things, let him be anathema.

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<sup>155</sup> John 1:14.

<sup>156</sup> See footnote 152.

<sup>157</sup> Heb. 3:1.

<sup>158</sup> Eph. 5:2.

<sup>159</sup> Gal. 4:4.



12. If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, tasted death in the flesh [παθόντα σαρκί και έσταυρωμένον σαρκί και θανάτου γευσάμενον σαρκι], and became the firstborn from the dead, insofar as he, as God, is both life and life-giving, let him be anathema.

END

## IV

431 CE

### St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Explanation of the Twelve Chapters*

*Eduard Schwartz, Concilium Universale Ephesenum, ACO 1.1.5, 15-25; John A. McGuckin, tr. 'Explanation of the Twelve Chapters' in St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts.*

*Explanation of the twelve chapters spoken in Ephesus by Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, when the Holy Synod asked him to provide them with a clearer exposition of their meaning.*

As it is written: "All things are evident to those who have understanding, and right for those who find knowledge"<sup>160</sup>. Those, on the one hand, who go to the sacred words of the God-inspired scripture with an acute and pure perception gather into their souls what is useful from them like a divine and heavenly treasure. Those, on the other hand, who have a mind inclined to falsity, given up to the babblings of others and avid for profane knowledge, then they will be the associates of those whom Paul writes about: "For among them, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so that the radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ will not shine on them"<sup>161</sup>. For they are blind and are the leaders of the blind and so shall fall into the pits of destruction, just as our Savior said somewhere: "If the blind leads the blind, both shall fall into the pit"<sup>162</sup>. So it is that certain people have scorned the teachings of the truth and filling their own minds with demonic crookedness they strive to debase the mystery of truth, knowing no bounds in the slanders they bring against the economy in the flesh of the Only Begotten. "They do not understand

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<sup>160</sup> Prov. 8:9.

<sup>161</sup> 2 Cor. 4:4.

<sup>162</sup> Matt. 15:14.

what they are saying or about whom they are making their statements”, as it is written<sup>163</sup>.

Many different people have been the inventors of this kind of wickedness in previous ages, but in this present time Nestorius and those with him in no way lag behind their profanity. They have risen up against Christ like those ancient Pharisees and are ceaselessly crying out: “Why do you who are a man make yourself God”<sup>164</sup>? This was why it was necessary that we ourselves should strip for action against their words and anathematize their impure and profane doctrines, remembering the words the Lord spoke through the prophet: “Listen you priests and bear witness to the house of Israel, says the Lord the Almighty”<sup>165</sup>. And again: “Go forth through my gates and clear the stones from the road”<sup>166</sup>. It is necessary for us who contend for the dogmas of the truth to move the stumbling stones from the highway so that the people may not fall over them, but might pass as if on level roads to the sacred and divine courts, each confessing: “This is the gate of the Lord, and the just shall enter through it”<sup>167</sup>.

Since Nestorius introduced a host of strange and profane blasphemies in his own books, it was necessary, thinking of the salvation of those who read them, that we should compose anathemas, but not in a straightforward way as if someone had made a mental slip requiring us to write a letter of encouragement to him. No, as I have said earlier, it was necessary to demonstrate what strange things alien to piety spring from the teachings of his madness. Perhaps certain people cannot accept our words either because they really do not understand the significance of what is written, or because they have become part of the phalanx of the impure heresy of Nestorius, thereby sharing in his wickedness, and thinking the same things as him? Yet the truth can escape the notice of no one who is accustomed to think correctly. Since it is likely that certain things might not be understood by those

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<sup>163</sup> 1 Tim. 1:7.

<sup>164</sup> John 10:21.

<sup>165</sup> Amos 3:13.

<sup>166</sup> Isa. 62:10.

<sup>167</sup> Psa. 117:20.

who are laden with philosophical subtleties, I thought it necessary to interpret each anathema briefly to show why and how they came about, and to explain their significance as best I can. In my opinion, this might serve as a useful aid to the reader.

**First Anathema:** “If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth and for this reason that the holy Virgin is *Theotokos* (for she gave birth in the flesh to the Word from God who had become flesh), let him be anathema.”

The blessed Fathers who met of old in the city of Nicaea and set forth the definition of the orthodox and blameless faith, said that they believed in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible, and in One Lord Jesus Christ, his Son, and in the Holy Spirit. They said then that he was the Word born of God, he through whom all things came to be, light from light, true God from true God, who was made flesh and was made man, who suffered and rose again. For the Only Begotten Word of the Father, since he was God by nature, took descent from Abraham as the blessed Paul says and shared in flesh and blood just like us. He was born of the holy virgin according to the flesh and became a man like us, though he did not set aside the fact that he was God (God forbid) but continues to be what he was and abides in the nature and glory of the divinity.

This is why we say that he became man, not that he underwent a change or alteration into something that he previously was not, for he is ever the same and does not admit to suffer the shadow of a change. We declare that there was no mingling or confusion or blending of his essence with the flesh, but we say that the Word was ineffably united to flesh endowed with a rational soul in a manner which is beyond the mind's grasp, a manner such as he alone comprehends. So, he remained God even in the assumption of the flesh and he is the one Son of God the Father, Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the same one who is before all ages and times in so far as he is understood as the Word, and “the impress of God's very *hypostasis*”<sup>168</sup>, and it was he that in these last times became man in an economy for our sake.

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<sup>168</sup> Heb. 1:3.

Certain people, however, have denied his birth according to the flesh, that birth which took place from the holy Virgin for the salvation of all. It was not a birth that called him into a beginning of existence, but one intended to deliver us from death and corruption when he became like us. This is why the first of our anathemas cries out against their evil faith and then confesses what is the right faith, saying that Emmanuel is God in truth, and for this reason the holy virgin is the *Theotokos*.

**Second Anathema:** “If anyone does not confess that the Word from God the Father was hypostatically united to flesh, and that he is one Christ with his own flesh, that is, the same one is simultaneously God and human being, let him be anathema.”

The divine Paul, priest of the divine mysteries, writes: “In truth the mystery of piety is a great thing. God manifested in flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached to the gentiles, believed in by the world, taken up in glory”<sup>169</sup>. What then does “manifested in flesh” mean? It means that the Word of God the Father became flesh not in the sense that his own nature was transformed into flesh through change or conversion, as we have already said, but rather that he makes that flesh taken from the holy virgin into his very own. One and the same is called Son: before the incarnation while he is without flesh he is the Word, and after the incarnation he is the self-same in the body. This is why we say that the same one is at once God and man, but do not split our conception of him into a man separate and distinct, and the Word of God equally distinct, in case we should conceive of two sons. No, we confess that there is one and the same who is Christ, and Son, and Lord.

As for those who think that this is not the case, or rather choose not to believe it, those who divide the One Son, and tear apart from one another the realities that have truly been made one, maintaining that there was only a conjunction of man with God in terms of dignity, or authority, then we maintain that such people are alien to the orthodox and blameless faith. Even if he is called an 'apostle' or is said to have been anointed, or is designated the Son of God, still we are not

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<sup>169</sup> 1 Tim. 3:16.

ashamed of the economy. We say that he is the Word of God the Father, but when he became a man like us, he was also called apostle, and anointed along with us according to the human condition. When he became like us, even though he always remained what he was, he did not deprecate our condition. No, for the sake of the economy he accepted, along with the limitations of the manhood, all those things which pertain to the human condition and he regarded nothing therein as unworthy of his personal glory or nature; for yet, and even so, he is God and Lord of all.

**Third Anathema:** “If anyone divides the hypostases in the one Christ after the union [εἰ τις ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰνός Χριστοῦ διαιρεῖ τὰς ὑποστάσεις μετὰ τὴν ἐνωσιν], conjoining them by a conjunction merely in terms of dignity or authority or lordship and not instead by a coming together in the sense of a natural union [καθ' ἐνωσιν φυσικὴν], let him be anathema.”

Having made a careful inquiry into the mystery of the economy with flesh of the Only-Begotten, we say that the Word of God the Father was united in a wonderful and ineffable manner to a holy body endowed with a rational soul and this is how we understand that there is one Son; although of course even in our own case it is legitimate to observe that the soul and the body are of different natures, or rather that both are composited in one living being. Certain people, however, do not think that this is the case. They divide out for us a man separate and distinct; they say that he was conjoined to the Word born of God the Father only in terms of dignity or authority but not in terms of a natural union (that is a true union) which is what we believe. In this sense the divine scripture says somewhere: “And by nature we were the children of wrath, like all the rest”<sup>170</sup>. And here we understand the words 'by nature' to mean 'truly'.

Therefore, those who divide the hypostases after the union and set each one aside distinctively, that is man and God, and those who regard them as having been conjoined only in terms of dignity are unquestionably setting up two sons, even though the God-inspired scripture says there is One Son and Lord. After the ineffable union,

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<sup>170</sup> Eph. 2:6.

therefore, even if you should call the Emmanuel God, we understand him as the Word of God the Father made flesh and made man; and even if you call him man we recognize him as no less than this even though he has economically descended into the limitations of the humanity. And we maintain that he who is untouchable has become tangible, and that the invisible has become visible; for his own body which he united to himself was not an alien thing, and this is what we say was tangible and visible. As for those who do not believe in this way, and as I said divide the hypostases after the union and understand them merely to have been conjoined in terms of only dignity or authority, then this preceding anathema shows them to be alien to those who think correctly.

**Fourth Anathema:** “If anyone distributes the sayings in the evangelical and apostolic writings to two persons or two hypostases [εἰ τις προσώποις δυσὶν ἢ γοῦν ὑποστάσεσιν], whether those things said by the saints about Christ or those said by him about himself, and if he attributes some of them to a human being thought of separately alongside the Word from God [παρά τον ἐκ θεοῦ λόγον ἰδικῶς νοουμένῳι προσάπτει] but others exclusively to the Word from God the Father because they are appropriate for God, let him be anathema.”

The Word of God is in the form of God the Father and equal to him, but did not consider that equality with God was something to be grasped, as it is written<sup>171</sup>, but rather humbled himself to a voluntary self-emptying, and freely chose to lower himself into our condition, not losing what he is but remaining so as God while not despising the limitations of the manhood. So all things pertain to him: those befitting God, and those of man. Why would he empty himself out if the limitations of the manhood made him ashamed? Or if he was going to shun human characteristics, who was it that compelled him by force or necessity to become as we are?

For this reason we apply all the sayings in the Gospels, the human ones as well as those befitting God, to one *prosopon*. We believe that Jesus Christ, that is the Word of God made man and made flesh, is but one Son. And so, even if he should speak in a human fashion, we

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<sup>171</sup> Phil. 2:6-11.

relate these human things to the limitations of his manhood because, once again, that very human condition is his own. Yet, if he should discourse as God, believing him to be God made man, once again we attribute these sayings which are beyond the nature of man to one Christ and Son. But those who divide the *prosopa* into two, must of absolute necessity posit two sons. For just as it is not right to divide any ordinary man into two *prosopa*, even if he can be thought of as composed of soul and body, because he is one and the same man, it is just so in the case of the Emmanuel. Since the Word of God enfleshed and made man is one Son and Lord he has absolutely only one *prosopon* and we attribute to him all the human characteristics on account of his economy in the flesh, and all the divine characteristics on account of his ineffable birth from God the Father. But those who wish to make distinctions and divisions of a man set apart on one side who is a different son to the Word of God, and a God on the other side who is another different son, then they are speaking of two sons, and they rightly fall under the force of the preceding anathematism.

**Fifth Anathema:** “If anyone dares to say that Christ is a God-bearing human being and does not instead say that he is God in truth because he is the one Son and this by nature, insofar as the ‘Word became flesh’ and ‘partook like us of flesh and blood’, let him be anathema.”

The divine evangelist John said that the Word of God had become flesh, not by way of his own nature being transmuted or changed over into the flesh, as we have already said (for God is unchangeable), but because he participated in flesh and blood just like us, and became man. It is the custom of the God-inspired scripture to refer to man as 'flesh'. So it is written: “All flesh will see the salvation of God”<sup>172</sup>. But the inventors of profane doctrines, Nestorius and those with him, or those who think the same things as he does, only pretend to confess the term incarnation though in reality they do not admit that the Word of God became flesh - that is, [God] became man like us while remaining what he was. They affirm, however, that the Only Begotten Word of God dwelt in a man who was born from the holy Virgin as if in one of the saints, with the result that one no longer confesses that

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<sup>172</sup> Luke 3:18.



there is One Christ and Son and Lord who is to be worshiped, but he is conceived of as a man, separate and on his own, who is held in honor because of a mere conjunction in terms of a union of dignity, and is thereby co-worshiped and co-glorified.

Yet the God of all dwells within us by the Holy Spirit, and even said of old through one of the holy Prophets: “For I shall dwell within them and shall walk among them, and I shall be their God and they shall be my people”<sup>173</sup>. The blessed Paul also writes: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells within you”<sup>174</sup>? And Christ himself said about his holy Prophets, or rather about the saints who came before him: “If Scripture calls these 'gods' to whom the Word of God came then why do you say of one whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming', because I said I am the Son of God”<sup>175</sup>? But God does not dwell in Christ as he does in us. For he was God by nature, who became like us. He was the one and only Son even when he became flesh. Those who dare to say that he was a God-bearing man rather than that he was God made man fall of necessity under the forementioned anathema.

**Sixth Anathema:** “If anyone says the Word from God the Father is the God or Master of Christ, and does not instead confess that the same one is simultaneously God and human being, since according to the Scriptures the Word became flesh, let him be anathema.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only true Son of God the Father, the Word who has become flesh, and together with his Father he has the dominion over all things. “For to him every knee shall bend, in heaven, on earth, in the underworld, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father”<sup>176</sup>. It is, therefore, the same One who is Lord of all in so far as he is understood to be, and actually is, God, even though he is in the flesh after the incarnation. So he is neither his own God nor his own Lord; this is a completely stupid thing to say or think, something indeed that

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<sup>173</sup> Lev. 26:12.

<sup>174</sup> 1 Cor. 3:16.

<sup>175</sup> John 10:35.

<sup>176</sup> Phil. 2:10.

is truly full of every wickedness. The preceding anathema, therefore, is rightly directed against such a position.

**Seventh Anathema:** “If anyone says that Jesus was acted upon by God the Word as a human being would be, and that the glory of the Only-Begotten was attached to him as though he were another alongside the Only-Begotten, let him be anathema.”

When the blessed Gabriel gave the holy virgin the good news of the birth of the Only Begotten Son of God according to the flesh he said: “You shall give birth to a son, and you shall call him Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins”<sup>177</sup>. But he is also called Christ since as man he is anointed along with us as the Psalmist says: “You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity and so God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above all your fellows”<sup>178</sup>. Even though he himself is the dispenser of the Holy Spirit and gives it in abundance to those who are worthy, since he himself is filled with it, as it is written, “And from his fullness we have all of us received”<sup>179</sup>, nevertheless he is said to have been anointed economically and spiritually as man when the Spirit descended upon him. This was so that the Spirit might once again abide among us, whom of old he had abandoned because of Adam's transgression. And this was why the Only Begotten Word of God himself, as he becomes flesh, is called Christ, and since he has as his very own that power which pertains to God, so he performs miracles. Those who say that the good favor of the Only Begotten endowed the Christ with power honorifically, as if the Only Begotten was someone different to the Christ, thereby conceive that there are two sons, the one activating and the other activated as a man just like us; and as such they fall under the force of this anathema.

**Eighth Anathema:** “If anyone dares to say that the human being who was assumed ought to be worshiped together with, glorified together with, and named God together with God the Word, as if he were one with another (for the continual addition of ‘together with’ requires us to think this), and if he does not instead honor the Emmanuel with a single worship and ascribe to him a single glorification [καὶ οὐχὶ δὴ

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<sup>177</sup> Luke 1:3; Matt. 1:21.

<sup>178</sup> Psal. 44:8 LXX.

<sup>179</sup> John 1:16.

μᾶλλον μιᾷ προσκυνήσει τιμᾷ τὸν Ἐμμανουήλ καὶ μίαν αὐτῷ τὴν δοξολογίαν ἀνάπτει, καθό γέγονε σὰρξ ὁ λόγος], insofar as ‘the Word became flesh’, let him be anathema.”

We were baptized into one God, the Father Almighty, and into one Son, and indeed into one Holy Spirit. The blessed Paul says: “Do you not know that as many of us as were baptised in Christ, were baptised into his death? And so, being buried along with him through this baptism into death, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so too shall we walk in newness of life”<sup>180</sup>. So, we have believed, and we were baptized, as I have said, into our one Lord Jesus Christ, that is the Word of God the Father made flesh and made man. We were taught to worship him as one and truly God, and this applies not only to us but to the heavenly powers as well. Thus it is written: “But when he brought the firstborn into the world, he said, Let all the angels of God worship him”<sup>181</sup>. The Only Begotten became the firstborn when he appeared as a man like us, and then he was also called a brother of them that love him. So, if anyone says that he ought to be worshiped as a man alongside but different to him who is the Word of God, or if anyone does not bring together in a true union one Christ and Son and Lord, so as to honor him with a single worship, then such a one rightly falls under the force of this anathema.

**Ninth Anathema:** “If anyone says that the one Lord Jesus Christ has been glorified by the Spirit, making use of the power that came through the Spirit as if it belonged to someone else and receiving from the Spirit the ability to work against unclean spirits and to accomplish divine signs among humanity, and if he does not instead say that the Spirit through whom he performed the divine signs is his very own [καὶ οὐχὶ δὴ μᾶλλον ἴδιον αὐτός τὸ πνεῦμά φησιν, δι’ οὗ καὶ ἐνήργηκε τὰς θεοσημείας], let him be anathema.”

When the Only-Begotten Word of God became man, he remained, even so, God, having absolutely all that the Father has with the sole exception of being the Father. He had as his very own the Holy Spirit which is from him and within him essentially and so he brought about

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<sup>180</sup> Rom. 6:3-4.

<sup>181</sup> Heb. 1:6.

divine signs, and even when he became man he remained God and accomplished miracles in his very own power through the Spirit. Those who say that he was glorified by the power of the Holy Spirit as a man like any one of us, or rather like one of the saints, but that he did not make use of his own power in a God-befitting manner, but instead used an external power and received his assumption to heaven from the Holy Spirit as a grace, then these rightly fall under the force of this anathema.

**Tenth Anathema:** “The divine Scripture says Christ became ‘the high priest and apostle of our confession’, and that he ‘offered himself on our behalf as a fragrant offering to God the Father’. Therefore, if anyone says that the Word from God did not himself become our high priest and apostle when he became flesh and a human being like us, but another alongside him did so, a human being apart from him, ‘born of a woman’ or if anyone says that he brought an offering on his own behalf too and not instead solely on our behalf (for the one who knew no sin needed no offering), let him be anathema.

Small indeed in the sight of the Word born from God are the human characteristics, but he did not reject them for the sake of the economy. He is by nature Lord of all, and he subjected himself to our condition, assuming the form of a slave, and was called our 'High Priest' and 'Apostle', since the limitations of the manhood summoned him even to this. He offered himself for our sake as a fragrant sacrifice to God the Father: “For in one offering he perfected those to be sanctified for ever”, as it is written<sup>182</sup>. I do not know how those who think otherwise are able to maintain that it was not the Word of God himself who became man so as to be called the apostle and high priest of our confession, but as it were a different man distinct from him. They say that this man was born of the holy Virgin, was designated apostle and high priest, arrived at this by a promotion, and offered himself as a sacrifice to God the Father not only for our sake but for his own as well. But all of this is completely alien to the orthodox and blameless faith, for he committed no sin and he who is greater than transgression and wholly blameless of sin would have no need to offer

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<sup>182</sup> Heb. 10:14.

sacrifice on his own behalf. So, because certain people who think differently reject this, and suppose instead that there are two sons, there was a great need for this anathematism to counter their wickedness clearly.

**Eleventh Anathema:** “If anyone does not confess that the Lord’s flesh is life-giving and is the very own flesh of the Word from God the Father, but [says] that it belongs to someone else alongside him who is connected with him in terms of dignity or who merely has a divine indwelling, and does not instead confess, as we have already said, that his flesh is life-giving because it became the very own flesh of the Word who is able to give life to all things, let him be anathema.”

We do not offer the holy life-giving and bloodless sacrifice in the churches as if we believed that what we offered was the body of an ordinary man like us, and the same is true with the precious blood. On the contrary, we receive it as something that has become the very own body and blood of the Word, who gives life to all. For ordinary flesh cannot give life, and the Savior himself testifies to this when he says: “Flesh profits nothing; it is the spirit which gives life”<sup>183</sup>. His body is understood to be, and actually is, life-giving in so far as it has become the very own [flesh and blood] of the Word. It is just as the Savior himself said: “As the living Father sent me, and I live through the Father, so whoever eats me shall live through me”<sup>184</sup>. Since Nestorius and those who think the same as him have foolishly dissolved the power of the mystery, this is why this anathema has rightly been composed.

**Twelfth Anathema:** “If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, tasted death in the flesh [παθόντα σαρκί και έσταυρωμένον σαρκί και θανάτου γευσάμενον σαρκί], and became the firstborn from the dead, insofar as he, as God, is both life and life-giving, let him be anathema.”

The Word of God the Father is impassible and immortal, for the divine and ineffable nature is above all suffering, and this it is which gives life to all things and is greater than corruption or anything else that can

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<sup>183</sup> John 6:63.

<sup>184</sup> John 6:57.

normally cause us grief. Yet even though the Word of God the Father is so by his own being, he made his own the flesh which is capable of death so that by means of this which is accustomed to suffer he could assume sufferings for us and because of us, and so liberate us all from death and corruption by making his own body alive, as God, and by becoming the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, and the firstborn from the dead<sup>185</sup>. He who endured the noble Cross for our sake and tasted of death was no ordinary man conceived of as separate and distinct from the Word of God the Father, but it was the Lord of Glory himself who suffered in the flesh, according to the Scriptures<sup>186</sup>. Because those who are trying to introduce stupid and profane teachings into the orthodox and blameless faith are saying that an ordinary man endured the cross for our sake, then this anathema became necessary to expose the magnitude of the wickedness prevalent among them.

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<sup>185</sup> 1 Cor. 15:20.

<sup>186</sup> 1 Pet. 4:1.

## V

431 CE

### St. Cyril of Alexandria, *A Defense of the Twelve Anathemas Against Theodoret (Excerpts)*

*Eduard Schwartz, Concilium Universale Ephesenum, ACO 1.1.6, 107-146;  
Daniel King, tr. 'A Defense of the Twelve Anathemas Against Theodoret' in St.  
Cyril of Alexandria: Three Christological Treatises.*

#### **On the First Anathema**

I have loudly shouted down any who would shy away from confessing Emmanuel to be truly God and the holy Virgin to be the *Theotokos*, seeing as, when the Word of God became flesh, that is, man, she gave birth to him according to flesh. If the one who is making accusations against this orthodox statement really thinks that Emmanuel is not truly God, or if he really thinks that it was not according to flesh that the holy Virgin gave birth to the Word of God when he became flesh, as the Scriptures have it, then why does he not clearly say so? What are you up to, my friend? You are spewing out some horrible blasphemies and wantonly opposing orthodox dogma by suggesting that Emmanuel is not truly God nor is the holy Virgin the *Theotokos*. By comparing carefully what the divinely inspired Scriptures say as against the arguments this fellow is ranting about, and by setting against him both the tradition of apostolic and evangelical faith and the confession of the Fathers who once gathered at Nicaea, we have become convinced, not so much that he is dishonestly attacking my own words, but that in so doing he is really launching a shameless attack upon the whole of divine Scripture. But this wise and shrewd interpreter simply passed over what he really ought to have been discussing, thought nothing at all of dealing with these issues first, and instead set out on a quite different path.

He turned straightaway to the crucial point, namely, that the Word of God is superior to change and did not alter into the nature of flesh, a point upon which the present anathema is quite firm and the truth of which it is trying to demonstrate. Well then, let him hear this, since he is totally clueless when he reads these expressions that he opposes: you are totally off the point, my friend, and you are battling against an idea that we, too, find despicable. We know perfectly well that the divine, transcendent nature cannot experience any “shadow of turning,”<sup>187</sup> nor did the Word of God give up being what he is to be transformed into a fleshly nature.

Since [Theodoret] points out that God’s form took upon himself the form of a servant, let him go on and explain whether it was just these “forms” that came together by themselves, quite apart from their *hypostases*. Well, I reckon that even he would shrink from saying that, for it was not mere resemblances and forms, things with no *hypostasis*, that conjoined together to bring about the saving union [ου γαρ ομοιότητες απλώς ανυπόστατοι καί μορφαί συνέβησαν ἀλλήλαις καθ’ ἑνωσην οἰκονομικήν]; rather, it was a convergence of the very things themselves, of two *hypostases* [ἀλλὰ πραγμάτων ἰσῶν ἢ γουν υποστάσεων γέγονεν σύνοδος]. Then we can really have faith that a genuine incarnation took place. So, if we do say, “The Word became flesh,” then we do not mean by this a confusion or a mixing, nor a change or alteration, but rather that, in a way that cannot be fully described, he was united with a holy body that possessed a rational soul. The parts that were united cannot be said to be confused, but rather the one took the other into itself.

What we affirm, then, is that the Word of God the Father took upon himself the holy and animate flesh and was truly united to it without confusion, and that he then came forth from the womb as a man, while also remaining truly God. It is on this basis that we call the holy Virgin *Theotokos*. Yet I think it is quite excessive to suggest that we should also call her *Anthropotokos*. Had there been some people foolishly suggesting that the Word’s nature was like a source and that he only began to exist as such when he took the flesh, then there

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<sup>187</sup> Jam. 1:17.



might have been some sort of argument that was not especially objectionable in favor of those willing to call her also the *Anthropotokos*. But since such a premise is wholly detestable to all concerned and nobody would disagree that the holy Virgin should be reckoned as *Theotokos* — so long as one accepts the belief that the Word of God the Father became flesh, that is, a man (after all, as I have said, the Virgin certainly did not bring forth divinity on its own) — then what point is there in insisting that she be called *Anthropotokos*?

It appears, however, that they actually used this device against Christ, for they do not allow one to state or think that he who is the pre-existent Son of God the Father actually united himself in the womb, in these last days of the age, without confusion and without change, to flesh possessed of a rational soul, and that he thereby became one of us; instead, they insist on announcing, and also persuade people to agree, that God indwelt him as he would a saint. They fail to realize that, through the Spirit, the God of the universe is also within each of us, as in holy temples, as it says, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and God’s Spirit lives in you? So if anyone ruins God’s temple, God will ruin him; for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”<sup>188</sup> So if even we ourselves are called temples because God indwells us by his Spirit, then we can be sure that it is otherwise with the mystery of Christ.

Now, given that we say that the flesh was genuinely united to God the Word, within whom was a rational soul, I would gladly learn of him whether he argues that the Word was genuinely united to the man, that is, to the rationally ensouled holy body; or whether he accords with others in thinking that it happened by a connection pertaining between a servant-like form without its own *hypostasis* and a divine form similarly without its own *hypostasis* [ή τοις άλλοις ὁμοῦ και αὐτός κατά συνάφειαν σχετικήν δουλοπρεποος και ανυπόστατου μορφής προς άνυπόστατον και θείαν μορφήν και καθ' ἕτερον τρόπον]; or in yet another way, by means of an ambiguity in the term “son” or by their sharing an equal dignity. It is really questionable whether one should entertain any such notion as “connection” anyway.

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<sup>188</sup> 1 Cor. 3:16-17.

## On the Second Anathema

It is precisely because Nestorius constantly denied that God the Word's birth happened according to flesh, and instead introduced a mere unity of dignities, and it is because he said that a man, honored by sharing the title of Sonship, was connected to God, that we were forced to battle against these notions of his and to assert instead that the union was at the level of *hypostasis*, meaning by this simply that the Word's nature, that is, his *hypostasis*, which is the Word himself, was genuinely united to a human nature, quite apart from any change or confusion, as we have said often enough. He is reckoned to be, and actually is, a single Christ; the same individual is both God and man. I do think that Theodoret would actually agree on this point, since he says that the god is not separated from human nature nor is the humanity reckoned apart from divinity. We do not agree, however, that the forms, the servant's and God's, were united apart from their *hypostases* [οὐκ οὐν οὔτε δίχα των υποστάσεων δούλου τε και θεου μορφήν ἠνώσθαι φαμέν], nor would we affirm that a regular man was honored by a mere equality of dignities and was contingently connected to the Word. What we do say is that the Only-Begotten Son of God himself took upon himself the flesh possessed of a rational soul that had been united to him and became a man while remaining also God. But this man, who is so smart with his words and has such a keen intelligence, argues that the expression implies mixture, and he even dares to suggest that the integrity of the natures would be damaged by being part of this mixture, as if we did not know this.

## On the Fourth Anathema

What amazes me is how hypocritical he can be in confessing that Christ is one, that is, that the same individual is at the same time both God and man, and then divide the one into two [διίστησι πάλιν εἰς δύο τον ένα], as if he had drifted off into forgetting what he had previously taken to be correct. For he quotes the Savior's saying, "Nobody knows about that day or that hour, not even the heavenly angels, nor the Son, but only the Father,"<sup>189</sup> and then, while affirming that the Word

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<sup>189</sup> Matt. 24:36.

begotten of God the Father is Wisdom itself and knows the whole future, he goes on to say: “[I]t was not God the Word who was lacking in this knowledge; it was the form of the servant, which at that exact time knew only as much as the indwelling Godhead had revealed to him. The same can be said also about the other similar passages.”

So if you are not lying when you call Jesus one Christ and Lord and say that the same individual is at the same time both God and man, why do you then divide him, and why are you not embarrassed to mention two sons? If the one who is omniscient is not identical with the one who has limited knowledge — the one perfect in wisdom, who knows all that the Father knows, not identical with the one who receives only a partial revelation — then certainly there would indeed be two subjects. And if because of the fact of there being a genuine union he is actually one and the same individual, not two separate things, each on its own [καί οὐχ ἕτερος καί ἕτερος διηρημένως τε καί ἀνά μέρος], then knowing and also not knowing can both be reasonably predicated of him. He has divine knowledge because he is the Father’s wisdom, but since for salvation’s sake he has subjected himself to the boundaries of human knowledge, then this boundary he has made his very own along with the other characteristics, even though, as I just mentioned, there is nothing he does not know — in fact, he has complete knowledge like the Father.

What is the reason, then, that one may say that he was hungry or that he was travel-weary, even though he is Life and, as God, the Giver of life, and also the living Bread come down from heaven who gives life to the world, and who is himself likened to the Lord of powers? Well, so that we might believe that he really did become a man, he made the human characteristics his very own, albeit continuing to enjoy the full possession of his own nature’s virtues, retaining without confusion the state in which he was, is, and ever shall be. Arguing that God indwelt the form of the servant and granted him a revelation, and that a partial one, suggests to us that Emmanuel is merely a prophet and a god-bearing man, and nothing else.

He reckons that to be sensible and uncontroversial. If (following his argument) it was the Word of God who cried, “Father, if possible, let

this cup pass from me,”<sup>190</sup> then in the first place he is not of one mind with the Father [πρώτον μὲν διχονοεῖ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα], and, further, he is wrong to pray against drinking the cup, even though he knows full well that his Passion is going to be for the world’s salvation. He infers, then, that these sayings were not made by God the Word. Therefore, anyone who goes along with such spurious arguments will get some come back from us. Since you think that such sayings ought to come nowhere near God the Word and that they should be attributed only to the form of the servant, are you not thereby dividing the one back again into two sons? So much is obvious to anyone with half a mind! After all, even someone who follows your line of reasoning, my friend, would agree that there is absolutely no way that the form of the servant would pray against the Passion or would appear to have a different intention from the Father and even from the indwelling Logos himself. Surely, I might suggest, he knew that the Passion was going to bring salvation to everything under heaven and give life to those defeated by death.

### **On the Seventh Anathema**

For we argue that, through the Spirit, Christ carried out the actions of the saints, who were separate individuals, but we do not think that the Word carried out the actions of Jesus through the Spirit in this way, as if he were a separate son beside God’s Only-Begotten. The notion of the union implies singularity, and hence we take care not to make a division into two [ένα γὰρ δέδειχεν ἡ ἐνώσις καὶ τὸ διαιρεῖν εἰς δύο παραιτούμεθα]. Even when the Scriptures say that the Word became flesh, he is also the Only-Begotten Son because there was a genuine, albeit impossible to express or understand, union between them. That is precisely why we argue that the one and only Christ Jesus carried out the miracles using his very own body as an instrument and that this did not happen in the same way as in the case of the saints; such a parallel would be wholly profane and unacceptable.

If, however, it was his very own body that he raised from the dead (because he is both Life and the Life-giver), then he would seem to be glorifying himself and showing how his own nature is life-giving rather

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<sup>190</sup> Matt. 26:39.

than granting some other individual his own glory. Admittedly, even though he is God, comes naturally out of God, and is Lord of glory, he did say to God the Father in heaven, “Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world existed,”<sup>191</sup> in which case how can it be that he asks for the glory he had before the world began as if he now lacked it? For since he became a man and by God’s grace tasted death in his own flesh for everyone, as the blessed Paul says, he avoided the ignominy of lacking glory by predicting his own resurrection, by which he would be recognized as both Life and Life-giver (because he is God), and thus would cause us to believe in him. He therefore glorified not some other individual but himself and demonstrated that the temple that had genuinely been united to him was above death. After all, we have said again and again that we believe that the body united to him was possessed of both soul and mind.

### **On the Ninth Anathema**

Theodoret: We would agree with [Cyril] that the Spirit is the Son’s own, and would accept his formula as a godly one, so long as he also says that the Spirit is of one nature with the Son and proceeds from the Father. But if he is suggesting that the Spirit derives his existence from or through the Son [εἰ δε ως ἐξ υἱοῦ ἢ δι’ υἱοῦ την υπαρξιν ἔχον], such a doctrine we would reject as entirely blasphemous. For we believe the Lord when he speaks of “the Spirit which proceeds from the Father” and similarly the most divine Paul when he says that “we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of the Father.”

I explained beforehand that the meaning of the anathemas is directed specifically against Nestorius’s stuttering and careless explanations. When he referred to the Holy Spirit as “this thing which bestowed such a great glory upon Christ, which caused the demons to fear him and which granted him to be taken up into heaven,” and spouted such garbage as if Christ were a person just like the rest of us, the anathema became absolutely necessary, not to exclude people who say that Jesus, namely, God the Word made man, was glorified by the Holy Spirit, but in opposition to those who openly claim that he made use of a power that came through the Spirit and was something other than his own. After all, remember how he said quite clearly about the Holy

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<sup>191</sup> John 17:5.

Spirit, “He shall glorify me,”<sup>192</sup> and by this we know that it was because the Holy Spirit was at work within him that he could shatter evil, unclean powers; what we deny is that he made use of a power that he had through the Spirit as something that did not belong to him, just as a saint would do.

No, the Spirit was and is his own, just as [the Son] in turn belongs to the Father [ην γαρ και εστίν αὐτου το πνεῦμα, καθάπερ αμελεί και του πατρός]. This is what the god-inspired Paul makes abundantly clear to us when he wrote, “Those who are in the flesh are not able to please God; but you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not possess the Spirit of Christ, then he does not belong to him.”<sup>193</sup> As our Savior said, the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father and is not foreign to the Son<sup>194</sup> [εκπορεύεται μεν γαρ εκ του θεού και πατρός το πνεῦμα το αγιον κατά την του σωτήρας φωνήν, αλλ ουκ άλλοτριόν εστίν του υίου], since everything is with the Father. He also taught about the Holy Spirit, “All that the Father possesses is mine; because of this I said to you that he would take from me and make it known to you.”<sup>195</sup> The Holy Spirit, then, glorified Jesus by enacting miracles, but he did so as his own Spirit, not as some power over and above him, seeing as he is reckoned to be God.

## **On the Twelfth Anathema**

Of course, I agree that the nature of the Word is impassible. I would think that everyone is well aware of this, nor would be so crazy as to suggest that the ineffable nature (which is really above all natures), which is in no way capable of suffering, was possessed by human weaknesses. The whole plan of redemption must have been ingeniously designed since suffering brought about the salvation of the world, even though it is impossible for the Word who is begotten of God to suffer in respect of his own nature. For he made the passible body his very own, the result of which is that one can say that he

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<sup>192</sup> John 16:14.

<sup>193</sup> Rom. 8:8-9.

<sup>194</sup> Notice how St. Cyril agrees with Theodoret that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and does not possess his existence from the Son too.

<sup>195</sup> John 16:15.

suffered by means of something naturally passible, even while he himself remains impassible in respect of his own nature; and since he willingly suffered in the flesh, for this very reason he is called, and actually is, the Savior of all. It is just as Paul says, “By the grace of God he tasted death on behalf of all.”<sup>196</sup> The divinely inspired Peter will testify to the same thing, rightly saying, “since Christ suffered for us,”<sup>197</sup> not in his divine nature, but in his flesh.

In what way, then, can we say that the Lord of glory has been crucified? How is it that the one through whom and in whom everything exists (as the blessed Paul has it)<sup>198</sup> is appointed by God the Father as the head of the body, the church, and how is it that he became also the firstborn from the dead? Surely it was because he took personal ownership of the sufferings that pertained to his own flesh. The Lord of glory could not have become a normal person like us. Maybe, however, you would at least say this, that the fact of the union is enough to demonstrate that the single Christ is to be identified with the crucified Lord. Therefore, let them predicate all these things of him and confess that God the Word is the Savior who remains impassible in his divine nature while also suffering in the flesh, just as Peter said. For the body that tasted death belonged to him because the union was totally genuine.

How else would he be “a Jew in respect of the flesh, Christ who is God over all and forever blessed, amen”?<sup>199</sup> Into whose death were we baptized? Whose resurrection do we acknowledge when we are justified? Although in respect of his own nature God the Word is above dying, he is actually life itself. Were we, then, baptized into the death of an ordinary man? And is it in him that we put our trust and are justified? Or do we, in fact, proclaim the death of God made man, who suffered death in his flesh for us? Do we escape the grief caused by sin through his resurrection? For we were bought “at a price,” “not with corruptible things, silver or gold, but with the precious blood of

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<sup>196</sup> Heb. 2:9.

<sup>197</sup> 1 Pet. 4:1.

<sup>198</sup> Heb. 2:10.

<sup>199</sup> Rom. 9:5.

Christ, as of a lamb without guilt or stain.”<sup>200</sup> It would not be hard to say lots more than this on the subject, and we could provide citations from the holy Fathers, but these things, I deem, will suffice for those who are keen to understand. After all, it is written, “Grant a wise man an opportunity, and he will become wiser; instruct a just man, and he will accept further instruction.”<sup>201</sup>

END

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<sup>200</sup> 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.

<sup>201</sup> Prov. 9:9.



## VI

433-438 CE

### St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Letters to Succensus*

*Eduard Schwartz, Concilium Universale Ephesenum, ACO 1.1.6, 151-162;*  
*Matthew R. Crawford, tr. 'Cyril of Alexandria, First Letter to Succensus' & ibid,*  
*tr. 'Cyril of Alexandria, 'Second Letter to Succensus' in The Cambridge Edition*  
*of Early Christian Writings: Christ Through the Nestorian Controversy (Vol. 3).*

#### **First Letter to Succensus.**

1. I have read the memorandum sent by Your Holiness. It gave me great joy that, although you are capable of benefiting us along with others owing to your great love of learning, you saw fit to urge us to write down what we have on our mind and what we have resolved to maintain. So then, when it comes to the economy of our Savior, we hold the same view as the holy Fathers before us. For by reading their works we attune our own mind, so that we may follow after them and not introduce anything novel to their orthodox doctrines.

2. Now since Your Perfection is inquiring whether or not, with respect to Christ one should ever speak of two natures [πότερόν ποτε χρῆ λέγειν ἐπὶ Χριστοῦ δύο φύσεις ἢ μὴ], it seems to me necessary to address this. A certain Diodore, who they say had been a fighter against the Spirit for a time, came into communion with the Church of the Orthodox. Believing himself to have put off the stain of the Macedonian heresy, he then fell into another sickness. For he was of the opinion, which he put in writing, that the one born of David's seed from the holy Virgin was one distinct son, while the Word from God the Father was separately another son. And as if disguising a wolf in a sheepskin, he pretends to speak of "one Christ," attributing the title solely to the only-begotten Son, the Word who was begotten from God the Father, but also assigning the title to David's seed, as he says,

“in the category of grace.” And so he calls David’s seed “son” since he is united, so he says, to the true Son, though not united in the sense that we understand it, but instead only in terms of dignity and authority and equality of honor.

3. Nestorius became a disciple of this Diodore, and with his mind darkened by his books he too pretends to confess one Christ and Son and Lord, but he also divides into two him who is one and indivisible, saying that a human being was conjoined to God the Word by a shared name, by equality of honor, and by dignity. What’s more, he divides the sayings about Christ in the evangelical and apostolic proclamations and says that some ought to be applied to the human being (namely, the human ones), and others are appropriate only for God the Word (namely, those appropriate to God). And so, by making so many distinctions, he posits in succession the one born from the holy Virgin separately as a human being, and similarly he posits the Word from God the Father separately as a son. It is for this reason that he says the holy Virgin is not *Theotokos* but rather *Anthropotokos*<sup>202</sup>.

4. But as for ourselves, we hold that this cannot be the case. Rather, we have been taught from the divine Scripture and the holy Fathers to confess one Son and Christ and Lord, that is, the Word from God the Father. He was begotten from the Father before the ages in an indescribable and divinely befitting manner, yet the same one in the last times of the age was begotten from the holy Virgin according to the flesh for our sake. And since she has given birth to God made human and made flesh, for this precise reason we also name her *Theotokos*. Therefore, there is one Son, one Lord Jesus Christ, both before the incarnation and after the incarnation. For it is not the case that the Word from God the Father was one son, and the one from the holy Virgin was again another son, but rather our faith is that the very same one who was before the ages was also born from a woman according to the flesh. This does not mean that through the holy Virgin his deity started to exist or was called into being for the first time, but rather that, as I said, the Word who existed before the ages is said to have been born from her according to the flesh. For the flesh

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<sup>202</sup> Meaning “bearer of the human being”.

was his own flesh, just as, for example, each one of us too possesses his body as his own.

5. Now some persons are entangling us in the opinions of Apollinarius and assert, “If you say that the Word from God the Father, who became human and was made flesh, was one Son according to an exact and clenched union, then perhaps you imagine or have come to think that there was a confusion, a blending, or a mixture of the Word with his body, or maybe a transformation of the body into the nature of divinity?” On this point we astutely reject their chicanery and say that the Word from God the Father, in a manner inconceivable and unspeakable, united to himself a body animated by a rational soul and went forth from a woman as a human being, becoming like us not by a transformation of his nature, but rather by his good pleasure in line with the divine economy. For he willed to become a human being not by rejecting his existence as God according to nature. Rather, even if he has condescended to our limitations and taken on the “form of a slave,”<sup>203</sup> still he has retained the preeminence of his deity and his lordly nature.

6. Therefore, in some inexpressible way that surpasses human understanding, we unite the Word from God the Father unconfusedly, unchangeably, and without transformation to the holy flesh endowed with a rational soul. Thus, we confess one Son and Christ and Lord, the same one God and human, not one and another, but one and the same is and is understood to be both things. Therefore, sometimes, as a human being, he discourses in human fashion in keeping with the economy, whereas at other times, as God, he speaks with the authority proper to the deity. Moreover, we assert that by skillfully examining the manner of the economy with the flesh and carefully scrutinizing the mystery on all sides, we shall observe that the Word from God the Father both became human and became incarnate, and did not fashion that holy temple of a body from his own divine nature but rather took it from the Virgin. For otherwise how did he become a human being, unless he bore a human body?

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<sup>203</sup> Phil. 2:7.

Therefore, as I said, when we consider the manner of the humanification, we observe that two natures have come together with one another unconfusedly and unchangeably according to an inseparable union. For the flesh is flesh and not divinity, even if it has become God's flesh, and likewise God the Word is also not flesh, even if he has made the flesh his own for the purpose of the economy. Therefore, whenever we consider this, we do no wrong when we say that the coming together into a unity occurred from two natures, though, to be sure, after the union we do not divide the natures from one another nor do we take him who is one and indivisible and chop him into two sons. Instead, we affirm one Son, and, as the Fathers have said, one incarnate nature of the Word [μίαν φύσιν τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένην]<sup>204</sup>.

7. Therefore, insofar as it is a matter of contemplation and perceiving strictly with the eyes of the soul the manner in which the Only-Begotten became human [οὐκοῦν ὅσον μὲν ἦκεν εἰς ἔννοιαν καὶ εἰς μόνον τὸ ὁρᾶν τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμασιν τίνα τρόπον ἐνηνθρώπησεν ὁ μονογενής], we affirm that there are two natures that were united but one Christ and Son and Lord, that is, the Word of God who became human and was incarnated. And now, if it seems good to you, let us take the example of our own composition, that which constitutes us as human beings. For we are composed from soul and body and thus we perceive two natures, one belonging to the body and the other belonging to the soul. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the union, there is one human being from the two, and the fact that we are composed out of two natures does not make one human being into two human beings, but rather, as I said, there is one human being as a consequence of the composition formed out of soul and body<sup>205</sup> [ἀλλ' ἓνα τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ σύνθεσιν, ὡς ἔφην, τὸν ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος].

<sup>204</sup> St. Cyril here attributes the *mia-physis* formula to the Fathers. While scholars generally consider St. Cyril to have borrowed the phrase from Apollinarius, it is quite certainly a part of the Alexandrian christological tradition. As early as the third century, Origen speaks of the "compound nature" [σύνθετόν τι χρῆμά] of Christ, and Pope St. Alexander refers to the *hypostases* of the Father and the Son as "two natures" [δύο φύσεις].

<sup>205</sup> Similarly, the Incarnate Word is a product of the union of the divine and human *natures* / *hypostases*, formed out of both.

For if we should repudiate the claim that the one and only Christ is from two different natures – albeit existing as indivisible after the union – then those who fight against orthodoxy will say, “If the entirety is a single nature [εἰ μία φύσις τὸ ὅλον]<sup>206</sup>, how did he become human or what kind of flesh did he make his own?”

8. Now since I found in your memorandum an expression suggesting that, after the resurrection, the holy body of Christ, the Savior of us all, migrated into the nature of divinity, such that the entirety is only divinity, I deemed it necessary to speak also to this point. When the blessed Paul was explaining to us the reasons for the humanification of the only-begotten Son of God, at some point he wrote, “For what the law was unable to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God has done by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and because of sin. He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to Spirit.”<sup>207</sup> And on another occasion he wrote, “For since the children have shared in flesh and blood, he himself has likewise partaken of the same things, in order that through death he might destroy the one who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might set free all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely he is not concerned with angels, but is concerned with the offspring of Abraham. This is why he had to be made like the brothers and sisters in every way.”<sup>208</sup>

9. Therefore, we affirm that, because human nature suffered corruption from Adam’s transgression and because our thoughts are held under tyranny by pleasures or rather by the innate impulses of the flesh, the salvation of those of us upon the earth required the Word of God to become human. He did this in order that he might make his own the human flesh that is subject to corruption and sick from its love of pleasure, so that he, being life and life-giving, might

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<sup>206</sup> While certain sources have claimed that the *mia-physis* formula was not important or essential for St. Cyril’s overall christological framework, the very fact that the Eastern (dyophysite) opponent knows that St. Cyril’s position affirms the whole of Christ being one nature out of both proves the opposite.

<sup>207</sup> Rom. 8:3-4.

<sup>208</sup> Heb. 2:14-17.

abolish corruption in the flesh, rebuking its innate impulses – that is, its love of pleasure. For it was in this way that the sin in the flesh was put to death; we recall the blessed Paul who also called the innate impulse within us “a law of sin.”<sup>209</sup> Therefore, from the moment the human flesh became the Word’s own flesh, it has ceased to be subject to corruption, and, since he who appropriated the flesh and showed that it is his own knew no sin (since he is God), the flesh, as I said, has also ceased being sick from love of pleasure. And the only-begotten Word of God has not achieved this for himself (for he is what he is, always), but obviously did it for us. For if we have endured the evil consequences of Adam’s transgression, surely also Christ’s accomplishments will come to us, that is, incorruptibility and the putting to death of sin.

Accordingly, he became a human being – he did not assume a human being, as Nestorius supposes – and to make us believe that he became a human being while remaining what he was, that is, God according to nature, it is said that he hungered and grew weary from traveling, and that he experienced sleep, agitation, grief, and all the other human passions that do not incur blame. And again, in order to fully assure those who saw him that along with being a human he was also true God, he used to perform divine signs: rebuking seas, raising the dead, and accomplishing other wonders. And he even endured a cross, in order that, having suffered death (in the flesh and not in the nature of divinity), he might become “firstborn from the dead.”<sup>210</sup> He also did so in order that he might pave the way for human nature to progress to incorruptibility and so that, by despoiling Hades, he might have mercy on the souls imprisoned within it.

**10.** And indeed after the Resurrection, it was the same body that had suffered, albeit no longer possessing human weakness within itself. For we assert that it was no longer susceptible to hunger, or weariness, or anything else of this kind, but was thereafter incorruptible and not only this, for it was also life-giving. For it is a body of life, that is, it is the body of the Only-Begotten, and it is illuminated by the glory proper to God and is understood to be God’s body. Hence, even if

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<sup>209</sup> Rom. 7:23.

<sup>210</sup> Col. 1:18.

someone should call it “divine,” just as, for instance, you call a body that belongs to a human being, “human,” such a person would not be deviating from appropriate logic. It was for this reason, I think, that the all-wise Paul too said, “Even if we knew Christ according to the flesh, now we no longer know him so.”<sup>211</sup>

For, to repeat my point again, the body existed as God’s own body and thus surpassed all things human, though it is not possible for a body from the earth to undergo a transformation into the nature of divinity. For this is impossible, since in this case we would be accusing the divinity of being generated and receiving into itself something which was not proper to it according to nature. For it is just as absurd to say that the body was transformed into the nature of divinity as it would be to say that the Word was transformed into the nature of the flesh. For just as the latter is impossible (since he is immutable and unchanging), so also is the former. For it is not in the realm of possibility that one of the created things should be able to migrate into the substance or nature of the divinity – and indeed the flesh is a created thing. Therefore, on the one hand, we affirm that the body of Christ is divine, since it is also the body of God, resplendent with ineffable glory, incorruptible, holy, and life-giving. But, on the other hand, the idea that it was transformed into the nature of divinity was never thought or expressed by any of the holy Fathers, and we do not intend to do so either.

**11.** I do not want Your Holiness to be unaware of this issue as well, that when certain individuals in his day were agitated, our father Athanasius, of blessed memory, formerly bishop of Alexandria, wrote a letter to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth, which is full of all orthodoxy. And Nestorius was refuted by it, and those intent on holding the same views as him were put to shame when it was read by the defenders of the orthodox faith. As a result, his supporters, out of their dismay at the refutations it contained, devised a vindictive scheme worthy of their heretical impiety. For they corrupted the letter by publishing a version in which they had removed certain things and added others, so that it seemed that that famous man thought in harmony with

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<sup>211</sup> 2 Cor. 5:16.

Nestorius and his partisans. Therefore, in order to prevent certain persons there from introducing the corrupted letter, it was necessary to get a transcript from the certified copies we have and send it to Your Reverence. For when the most pious and reverent Paul, bishop of Emesa, came to Alexandria, he raised this issue, and we discovered that he had a copy of the letter that had been corrupted and falsified by the heretics. Hence, he too thought it was a good idea to have a transcript based on our certified copies forwarded to those in Antioch, and so we have sent it.

**12.** Following in every respect the orthodox views of the holy Fathers, we have written a book against the teachings of Nestorius, and also another against certain individuals who impugn the meaning of the Chapters. I have sent these to Your Reverence, so that, if there should be any of our other brothers who, despite sharing our faith and being one in soul with us have nevertheless been beguiled by the nonsense of certain individuals and suppose that we have changed our mind about the things I have written against Nestorius, they may be reprov'd by reading and learning that we have fairly and properly rebuked him as someone who has gone astray, and that even now we are pressing no less hard against him, fighting everywhere against his blasphemies. Now Your Perfection, whose mental powers are greater still, will help us both by your writings and by your prayers.

## **Second Letter to Succensus.**

**1.** The truth reveals itself to those who love it, but I believe it hides itself from and tries to elude those with crafty minds. For they show themselves to be unworthy of beholding it with radiant eyes. And those who love the blameless faith “seek the Lord in simplicity of heart”, as it is written<sup>212</sup>. But those who proceed along twisted paths with “a crooked heart,” as it is said in the Psalms<sup>213</sup>, amass for themselves crafty pretexts for perverted thoughts with the aim of perverting the straight ways of the Lord and leading astray the souls of the simpler folk so that they inevitably hold wrong ideas. And I assert

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<sup>212</sup> Wis. 1:1.

<sup>213</sup> Psa. 100(101):4.



these things having read the memoranda from Your Holiness and finding in them certain dangerous propositions put forward by those who – I do not know how – love the perversity of knowledge falsely called.

Now here they are: 2. He says, “If Emmanuel has been brought together from two natures, and after the union there is understood to be one incarnate nature of the Word [μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἔνωσιν μία φύσις νοεῖται τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη], it will surely follow that one must say he suffered in his own nature.”

The blessed Fathers who decreed for us the sacred symbol of the Orthodox Faith<sup>214</sup> said that the Word from God the Father, who is from his substance, the Only-Begotten through whom are all things, became incarnate and was made human. Now of course we do not say that those holy ones were unaware that the body united to the Word was animated by an intelligent soul, so that even if someone should use the words “become incarnate,” he is not confessing that the flesh united to him was without an intelligent soul. Thus, I think – no, instead I boldly affirm – even the all-wise evangelist John did not say, “the Word became flesh,”<sup>215</sup> as though the Word was united to a flesh without soul (God forbid!), nor as though he was subject to change or alteration. For he remained what he was, that is, God by nature. Even while accepting existence as a human being, that is, being born like us from a woman according to the flesh, still he remained one Son, although he was not without flesh as he was previously, that is, before the time of his humanification, but he was clothed as it were with our own nature too.

But even if the body, which was indwelt by an intelligent soul and united to the Word begotten from God the Father, is not consubstantial with the Word (for the mind imagines the natural difference between the things united), still we confess one Son and Christ and Lord, since the Word has become flesh. And whenever we speak of “flesh,” we mean “human being.” What sort of necessity is it then that requires him to suffer in his own nature, if we should speak

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<sup>214</sup> That is, the Nicene Creed.

<sup>215</sup> John 1:14.

of one incarnate nature of the Son after the union? For if the principles of the economy included nothing that naturally experiences suffering, they would have been correct in saying that, in the absence of something naturally inclined to suffer, the suffering would inevitably and unavoidably fall to the nature of the Word.

But if, on the contrary, when we say “incarnate” we introduce the whole principle of the economy with flesh (for he became incarnate in no other way than by “laying hold of the seed of Abraham”<sup>216</sup> and “becoming like his brothers in every respect”<sup>217</sup> and “taking the form of a slave”<sup>218</sup>), then those who say that it absolutely must follow that he had to experience suffering in his own nature have spoken utter nonsense, since we are presupposing the flesh, which of course is understood to have suffering as an attribute, while the Word is impassible. Nevertheless, we do not for this reason rule out saying that he suffered. For just as the body became his own body, so also everything that belonged to the body, except sin alone, is said to belong to no one else except him, according to the economy of appropriation.

3. He says, “If there is one incarnate nature of the Word [εἰ μία φύσις, φησί, τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη], then there absolutely must somehow be a blending and a mixture, with the human nature in him being diminished and, as it were, suppressed.”

Those who “pervert what is upright”<sup>219</sup> are again ignorant that there is, in actual fact, one incarnate nature of the Word [ὅτι κατὰ ἀλήθειάν ἐστι μία φύσις τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη]<sup>220</sup>. For if the Word ineffably begotten from God the Father, who afterward in accordance with the assumption of flesh (not a soulless flesh but one animated with an intelligent soul) came forth as a human being from a woman – if this Word is truly by nature one Son, then he shall not for this reason be

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<sup>216</sup> Heb. 2:16.

<sup>217</sup> Heb. 2:17.

<sup>218</sup> Phil. 2:7.

<sup>219</sup> Mic. 3:9 LXX.

<sup>220</sup> Notice how St. Cyril is expressly proclaiming that there is, according to truth and fact, one incarnate nature of God the Word. Those who attempt to deny this are those who “pervert what is orthodox”.

divided into two persons or sons. Instead, he has remained one, except that he is not fleshless or without a body, but has made the body his own according to an inseparable union. And whoever says this does not in any way at all signify a mixture, or a confusion, or anything else of this sort, nor indeed would this follow as a necessary deduction. Why? Because even though we say that the only-begotten Son of God, who became incarnate and became human, is one, this does not mean he has been jumbled together as they suppose, nor that the nature of the Word converted into the nature of the flesh, but neither does this mean that the nature of the flesh converted into the nature of the Word. Rather, while each of them remains in the particular property that it has according to nature and is perceived as such<sup>221</sup> [ἀλλ' ἐν ιδιότητι τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐκατέρου μένοντός τε καὶ νοουμένου] (as we have just explained), nevertheless having been ineffably and indescribably united, he exhibited to us the Son's single nature, although, as I have said, it was one incarnate nature [μίαν ἡμῖν ἔδειξεν υἱοῦ φύσιν, πλήν, ὡς ἔφην, σεσαρκωμένην].

For “one” is a word properly used not only for those things that are simple according to nature, but also for those things that are brought together through a combination [ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ σύνθεσιν συνηγμένων], the sort of thing that applies, for example, in the case of a human being who is comprised of soul and body. For soul and body are of different kinds / types and are not consubstantial with one another [ἑτεροειδῆ μὲν γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ ἀλλήλοις οὐχ ὁμοούσια]. Yet they form one united nature of a human being [ἐνωθέντα γε μὴν μίαν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἀπετέλεσαν], even though the natural difference between those things brought together into unity subsists in the principles of the combination. Hence, those people are wasting their words when they say that if there is one incarnate nature of the Word it must assuredly follow that there is a blending and a mixture, as if the nature of the human being were diminished and suppressed. For it is neither diminished nor, as they say, suppressed. For to say “he became

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<sup>221</sup> The natural difference is not abolished: the sets of natural properties of both the divinity and the humanity are not confused, but rather they remain really distinct with respect to quality, and are “perceived” by the mind as such.

incarnate” suffices as the most complete indication that he became a human being. For if we had let this fact go by unmentioned, then there would have been a pretext for their calumny, but since the claim that he became incarnate has been added, as necessity required, how is there any kind of diminution or duplicity?

4. He says, “If the same one is understood as ‘complete God’ and ‘complete human being,’ and is, on the one hand, ‘consubstantial with the Father with respect to the divinity’ and, on the other hand, ‘consubstantial with us with respect to the humanity,’ where is the completeness if the human nature no longer subsists? And how is he consubstantial with us if our substance, that is, our nature, no longer stands?”

The solution (or rather defense) in the previous section suffices also as an explanation for these questions too. For if when we said “one nature of the Word” we had stopped there, not adding the word “incarnate” (as if we were excluding the economy), then perhaps there would somehow be a plausible reason for them to feel justified in asking, “Where is the completeness of his humanity?” or, “How has the substance like ours subsisted?”<sup>222</sup> But since both the completeness of his humanity and an indication that he has a substance like ours have been introduced when one says “incarnate,” let them stop supporting themselves with this staff made out of a reed. For if someone disregarded the economy and denied the incarnation, it would be just to charge them with stripping the Son of his complete humanity.

But if, as I have said, to say “he became incarnate” is a clear and unambiguous confession of the fact that he became a human being, nothing any longer prevents one from understanding that the same one, Christ, existing as one and only Son, is God and human being, just as complete in divinity as he is complete in humanity. And Your

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<sup>222</sup> In other words, the opponent’s argument that Christ being double consubstantial (i.e. with the Father as well as with mankind) necessitates the flesh subsisting post-union and therefore implying two natures post-union is rendered moot. For the one nature of the Word is not simple (in which case, the divinity and humanity of Christ would both be incomplete), but composite: hence the addition of the term, “incarnate”, to “one nature of the Word”.

Perfection has expounded the rationale of the Savior's suffering most correctly and with great wisdom when you maintain that the only-begotten Son of God himself, insofar as he is understood to be and actually is God, did not suffer bodily things in his own nature, but rather that he suffered in his earthly nature.

For it was necessary that both assertions must be preserved with respect to the one and true Son: both that he did not suffer with respect to his divinity and that he is said to suffer with respect to his humanity. For the flesh that suffered belonged to him. Again, however, these people think that with this statement we introduce what they call "theopaschism," and they do not take account of the economy, but with evil intent attempt to transfer the suffering to the human separately, foolishly pursuing a punishable piety. Hence, the Word of God is not confessed as Savior, as the one who gave his own blood on our behalf. Instead, Jesus, who is understood rather as a distinct human being by himself, is said to have accomplished this. But to think in this way is to rattle the economy with the flesh down to its very foundation, unambiguously reducing the meaning of our divine mystery to the worship of a human being. What's more, they do not realize that the blessed Paul said that the one who is from the Jews according to the flesh – the one who is the seed of Jesse and David – is "Christ" and "Lord of glory," and "God over all blessed forever."<sup>223</sup> Hence, Paul shows that it was the Word's own body that was nailed to the tree and that for this reason the cross is ascribed to him.

5. Now I understand that there is still another matter to discuss in addition to these: "So then, whoever says the Lord suffered in bare flesh makes the suffering irrational and involuntary. But if someone were to say that he suffered with an intelligent soul, so that the suffering would be voluntary, nothing prevents one from saying that he suffered in the nature of humanity. But if this is true, then how can we avoid conceding that two natures subsist undividedly after the union? [πῶς οὐ τὰς δύο φύσεις ὑφ'εστάναι δώσομεν μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν ἀδιαιρέτως] Thus, if you say, 'Therefore Christ suffered for us in the

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<sup>223</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8; Rom. 9:5.

flesh,’<sup>224</sup> this is nothing other than saying, ‘Christ suffered for us in our nature.’”

Again, this problem is just one more attack on those who say that there is one incarnate nature of the Son. Intending, as before, to show that such an idea is pointless, they are obstinately endeavoring at every turn to demonstrate that two natures subsist [δύο φύσεις ὑφεστώσας ἀποφαίνειν].<sup>225</sup> But they have failed to realize that whatever things tend toward being distinguished at more than a merely theoretical level may definitely also withdraw completely from one another into the difference between two entirely independent things, one alongside another.

Now let us take again the example of a human being like us. For in this case too we also perceive two natures: on the one hand, the nature of the soul and, on the other hand, the nature of the body. But even though we distinguish them in mere thought and accept the difference through subtle contemplation or by the mind’s imagination<sup>226</sup> [ἀλλ’ ἐν ψιλαῖς διελόντες ἐννοίαις καὶ ὡς ἐν ἰσχναῖς θεωρίαις ἤτοι νοῦ φαντασίαις τὴν διαφορὰν], we are not positing two natures in succession, nor are we allowing someone to imagine a thorough severance of them. Instead, in so doing we are regarding them as belonging to one thing, such that the two are no longer two [ὥστε τὰς δύο μηκέτι μὲν εἶναι δύο], but are constituted as one living thing through them both.

Therefore, even if they should speak of a nature of humanity and of divinity in the case of the Emmanuel, still the humanity is now proper to the Word and so we understand one Son with the humanity. Now since the divinely inspired scripture says “he suffered in the flesh,”<sup>227</sup> it is better for us too to speak in this manner, rather than to say he

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<sup>224</sup> 1 Pet. 4:1.

<sup>225</sup> The Doctor explicitly notes how the opponents attack the *mia-physis* formula and attempt to show that two natures subsist as such (i.e. as two) post-union.

<sup>226</sup> We enumerate the united divinity and humanity and consider their natural difference and distinctness in contemplation and thought alone. As St. Cyril states, this means that the two do not remain as two after the union in reality, for such (i.e. enumeration) is only in the contemplation of the mind. This means that any Neo-Chalcedonian attempt to incorporate both *en theoria* and dyophysitism together is erroneous and will fail.

<sup>227</sup> 1 Pet. 4:1.

suffered “in the nature of humanity,” even though this statement would do no damage to the principle of the mystery, unless certain people should say it in a cantankerous way. For what is the nature of humanity except flesh animated with an intelligent soul? And we affirm that the Lord has suffered in the flesh.

They are, therefore, splitting hairs when they say he suffered “in the nature of humanity,” as if separating the humanity from the Word and setting it to one side on its own, in order that two may be understood and the incarnate and humanified Word from God the Father may no longer be one. Adding the word “undividedly” seems to be a sign that they are with us on the side of orthodoxy, but they do not understand it in this sense. For they take the word “undivided” in a different sense, in terms of the absurdity of Nestorius.<sup>228</sup> For they say that the human being in whom the Word dwelt is undivided [from the Word] in terms of equality of honor, identity of will, and authority, with the result that they cite the words not straightforwardly but with a certain malice and deceit.

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<sup>228</sup> Similarly, the Chalcedonian Definition too states that the united natures are “undivided”, but it is not in the orthodox sense, for in their model, they still remain separated and divided.

## VII

428-431 CE

### St. Theodotus of Ancyra, *First and Second Homilies* *at the Council of Ephesus*

*Eduard Schwartz, Concilium Universale Ephesenum, ACO 1.1.2, 73-90;*  
*Luise Marion Frenkel, tr. 'Translation of Theodotus' Conciliar Homilies' in*  
*Theodotus of Ancyra's Homilies and the Council of Ephesus (431).*

#### **First Homily at the Council of Ephesus.**

*On the Day of the Nativity of our Savior, and read aloud in the Synod*

1. The theme of this present feast is both splendid and strange. Splendid, because it brings a common salvation to human beings. Strange, because it has conquered the word of nature. For nature no longer knows the Virgin who gave birth, but grace not only showed her giving birth, but preserved her virginity, made her a mother, and did not destroy the virginity. For it was grace which preserved chastity. O seedless earth, which blossomed with the fruit of salvation! O Virgin, who overcame the very paradise of Eden! For while, it brought forth the stock of propagated plants, after bringing forth trees out of virginal earth, the Virgin herself is better than that earth.

She did not bring forth trees of fruit, but the Jesse Tree, providing the fruit salvific for the human beings. That earth was a virgin and she herself (was) a virgin too; but there God ordained it to produce trees, while from this Virgin the Creator himself became an offspring in the flesh. Neither did that accept a shoot before the trees, nor did she herself impair the virginity by the birth. The Virgin has become more glorious than paradise, for paradise was merely the planting of God, but she cultivated God himself in the flesh, who decided on being combined to the nature of a human being [ἐλόμενον ἀνθρώπου συναφθῆναι τῇ φύσει].



Did you see how the strange mystery that surpasses the word of nature came to be? Did you see the thing beyond nature which came about through Gad's power alone? Did you see the word beyond the word being born? Because the one who is born is the Word of God, it is clear from these things that he did not undo the virginity. She who gives birth to mere flesh is deprived of virginity; but when the Word of God is born from flesh, it preserves virginity, showing himself as Word. And when you hear "the word", think of the essential and enhypostatic [Word], not that which is poured out through the mouth.

2. Then is born the Only-Begotten Son of God, who is also called Word, not taking out of the birth the beginning of being Word, but making the birth [the] beginning of becoming a human being. Before time the Word was God, co-eternal to the Begetter; then, when he willed to become a human being because of human beings, not by a change of divine nature but by a wonder and a will of God, he welcomed birth as [the] beginning of becoming a human being. Because of this, the Word is born as man, and, as God, preserved virginity. For neither does our word, being born, destroy thought, nor does the essential and enhypostatic Word of God, deciding on birth, corrupt virginity. Therefore, what came to be is beyond a natural word, and no longer does it conform to a word of nature: I tell you a wonder. Do not disturb the reasonings! I tell you that God was born, deciding on birth, not making a beginning of divinity. Being God, he appropriated birth, the birth did not prepare him as God. What he was, he continued [to be], and he became what he was not. Therefore, wishing to become exactly what he was not, because of *oikonomia*, he decides on birth as the beginning of the *oikonomia*. He became a human being, yet the nature was not altered, the limits of divine essence were not disturbed; for "you are the same and your eternity does not cease"<sup>229</sup>, says holy Scripture, and "you reside [in] eternity"<sup>230</sup>, making this evident, that is, the unchangingness of the divine essence.

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<sup>229</sup> Psa. 101:28 LXX.

<sup>230</sup> Bar. 3:3.

And again it says: “the same I am, and have not changed”<sup>231</sup>. Therefore, he became a human being while the essence of God was not disturbed nor altered into another nature. For otherwise what came to be would not have been a wonder, if he had accepted a different nature through a change in nature. For many such changes of things come to be with us, but God performs a wonder inasmuch as, remaining what he was, he became what he was not, and indicating just that the great Apostle said: “who exists in the form of God”<sup>232</sup>, he says “exists”, but never ‘existed’, so as to show the lastingness of the nature. “Who exists in the form of God, deemed to be equal to God not a prize”, he says “to be equal to God”, never ‘to become’. Then again he proclaims, saying: “But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave”<sup>233</sup>. Do you see how he remained what he was, and emptied himself into the form of the slave, both being that, and becoming this, having performed a wonder — not having altered nature — having willed it — not having been compelled by change of essence? For what God says, he does, even when what is being said is beyond the word of nature. For to perform wonders he also has the power which is both capable and does not await the words of the nature. Because of this, he both exists as God and empties himself into a slave’s form, he both is equal to God and becomes a human being, he both is eternal and submits to birth, and performs precisely those wonders which the word of nature does not know.

3. Thence both the Greeks reason Christ’s mystery is a folly and the Jews say the word of the *oikonomia* is a stumbling-block, and Paul made it evident, saying: “We proclaim Christ crucified, on the one hand a stumbling-block for the Jews, on the other, a folly for the Greeks”<sup>234</sup>. Why a folly for the Greeks? “Because the souled human being does not accept the things of the spirit, and they are a folly for him”<sup>235</sup>. For the souled human being, seated next to the nature, and examining all things by reasonings of [the] soul, considers a folly the wonders of God, which do not have with them the natural reasoning.

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<sup>231</sup> Mal. 3:6.

<sup>232</sup> Phil. 2:6.

<sup>233</sup> Phil. 2:7.

<sup>234</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23.

<sup>235</sup> 1 Cor. 2:14.

Indeed, when the Greek hears that the Savior entered while the door was locked, having brought through his dense body, which needed a place, he laughs, not believing the wonder, but seeking the word of the thing, And when he hears that a child-bearing virgin remained a virgin, he deems the word a folly, not having learned to believe in God's wonder-workings. Surely then, when he also hears that God became a human being unchangingly, he thinks that what came to be is impossible, demanding too, that [there should be] a change of nature.

But Paul did not teach thus, when he said that the One who is equal to God became a human being. For he says that he emptied himself, not that he cast away the fullness of the divinity. On this account he also said: "We proclaim Christ crucified, on the one hand a stumbling-block for the Jews, on the other, a folly for the Greeks". And why is it a folly for the Greeks if a mere human being has been crucified? Nothing which came to be according to nature is considered foolish. If what suffered existed naturally, how is the narrative considered foolish? But, he says, when we proclaim Christ crucified, we again say [he is] Power of God and Wisdom of God — for "to those who are called", he says, "both Jews and Greeks", we proclaim "Christ, Power of God and Wisdom of God"<sup>236</sup> — proclaiming that God's Wisdom is crucified, he says, we are considered to talk foolishness by the Greeks, who know not to believe in a wonder-working God, but disturb reasonings about the nature of everything, and who deem [they] outrage God, who appropriated sufferings, in order to save the sufferer. For they do not see the achieved aim, which is salvation and is proper to the goodness of God, but they only say that God joined sufferings to himself, not examining the accomplishment of human beings' salvation from this. Nothing that saves a human being outrages God, who by them is shown not subject to suffering, but loving mankind.

4. "Nonetheless", he says, "I do not dare to attribute a human beings' sufferings to God". Surely then you neither say that he saves man from the sufferings, nor that by the Cross he exposes the power of the devil,

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<sup>236</sup> 1 Cor. 1:24.

nor that he nailed our sin to the wood, nor that through his own sufferings he cures the sufferings of human beings, nor do you say that he made death ineffective through death. If God had not appropriated the sufferings, whence [came] such great accomplishments through the sufferings of Christ, how did powers come to be? How is death destroyed by death, if God did not make it his own? But these sufferings, having been appropriated by God, took the strength for such great accomplishments from divinity, becoming as God's own, but they did not impair the essence of divinity in its own impassiveness, which always remains. How was the record of sin against us, nailed to the wood, when a mere human being bore the Cross? How did the Cross crucify sin, or death break up the tyranny of death, unless these had become God's and had taken the power from him, while he appropriated what was ours, not suffering in nature? And indicating just that, the great Apostle said: "No one of the rulers of this age knew" the mystery of the Lordly suffering, "for if they had known", he says, "[they] would not have crucified the Lord of glory."<sup>237</sup>

5. On this account, we say both that he remained what he was, and that he became exactly what he was not. For remaining in essence what he was, he accepted sufferings, having united himself to the suffering nature. He became a subject, without having laid aside empire; he became a human being, while remaining both God and word; being incorporeal as to the nature, he became flesh unchangingly. How and in what way? Not as you are able to reason, but as he is capable of working wonders. For whenever I tell you a wonder, abandon the reasonings! For wondrous and prodigious things are strengthened by belief in God and are not investigated by reason. Nor is any other of the wonders according to our reason, but each came about similarly, even if our reasoning does not attain the thing.

The Magi also admitted these things, having believed the star and not being inquisitive about nature. The Gentiles accept wonders through belief, and what do you, believer, disbelieve, falling by human reasoning? Those who descended from Chaldea, as the Evangelist said today<sup>238</sup>, showed, through their gifts, the mystery to someone who

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<sup>237</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8.

<sup>238</sup> Referring to the liturgical reading from the lectionary for Christmas.

comprehends the aim of the Gentiles well. For they brought as gifts a threefold kind of presents — gold, incense, myrrh: on the one hand, gold because he who is honored was emperor, the other, incense, because he who had been born was God; for through custom they had brought this to whom they consider gods. They also offer myrrh, disclosing by it, I think, the suffering of death. Do you see how the Magi too recognized that he remained God and also became a human being, accepting death? For he became the very thing which I am, in order to raise our nature towards his own worth.

For the union [of two] does this: it combines to each one the things of the other [ή γάρ ένωσις τούτο ποιεί έκάτέρωι τά τοῦ έτερου συνάπτουσα]. Because of this, then, being God, he became a human being, in order that a human being might also become God, lifted up towards divine glory by this combination, so as to be single one and itself [ώς ένα και τον αυτόν είναι], both divinely glorified and suffering what is human. And all who admit the union of divinity and humanity would agree with us on them! For what has been united is no longer named two but one [το γαρ ένωθέν ούκέτι δύο, άλλ' εν όνομάιεται], for if conceptually you divide again and examine each according to itself [έκαστον κατ' ιδίαν], surely then you undo the union: for it is impossible both to preserve the union and to examine each at the same time according to itself, but what was united came to be one indissolubly and no longer becomes two<sup>239</sup> [άλλα τό ένιυθέν άλύτως έν γέγονε και ούκέτι γίνεται δύο].

6. “But, I distinguish by conceptualization only”, he says. Surely then you also undo the union with the same rationalization; for by what you might separate one from the other, by this you also sever the combination<sup>240</sup> [τούτωι και τήν συνάφειαν έτεμες]. Then why do you split the saving *oikonomia*, thinking of two and cancelling the union

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<sup>239</sup> The united divinity and humanity cannot be enumerated as two post-union. Here is an explicit condemnation of the Chalcedonian notion that, though united, the two natures which united can be said to be “two” post-union.

<sup>240</sup> A prominent neo-Chalcedonian theory in Late Antiquity was that the original Chalcedonian definition of “in two natures” is orthodox because there are two natures existing / subsisting *en theoria*. The Ephesian Doctor condemns this prophetically, pointing out that such is to effectively undo the union.

[δύο νοών καί τήν ἐνώσιν ἀθετών]? But even as the great Apostle also says: “Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and for eternity”<sup>241</sup>, saying [that they are] one and the same, God eternal and man, who began from [a point in] time, and we admit that the same one [is] God and man, being the one before, and becoming the other later.

“But”, says he, “how did the Only-Begotten become a slave, remaining what he was, and becoming what he was not?” Do you then wish to understand this? Understand that he came to be, yet only he who works wonders knows how he came to be; for neither are you able to tell me how the Egyptian river became blood, while the nature of the water remained unchanged [ἀμεταβλήτου μείνάσης της του ὕδατος φύσεως]. Indeed on the one hand, the Hebrews enjoyed [it] as water, on the other hand, the Nile became blood for the Egyptians, and became what it was not, while remaining what it was. Tell me the manner! But you cannot tell: for it is a wonder of God, which rejects reasonings. And how in Egypt did light become darkness, without having become extinguished, but remaining what it was? For it was day for the Israelites and splendid light surrounded them, but this light became darkness for the Egyptians, and what was seen, being one, was at once light and darkness, without having been quickly turned from this, and becoming that. For while the light did not suffer anything, darkness came about, when God worked miracles and did not await the word of nature. Then how did the water of the Nile, while remaining water, become blood? Or how did the light, while remaining in its own nature, become darkness? For this was not destroyed and became that. For the nature of the water was not destroyed, and the Hebrews revealed this by being able to drink it; but the nature both remained itself within its own limits [ἀλλ' ἐμεινε καί αὕτη ἡ φύσις ἐν ἰδίοις ὅροις] and became blood, which precisely it was not, when God shows the wonder beyond reason.

7. And how did the Babylonian flame become dew for the three youths? Indeed, it was flame and became dew, and both these things are revealed by the energy. For, on the one hand, the three youths, being cooled by this, taught that it was dew; on the other, the

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<sup>241</sup> Heb. 13:8.

Babylonians who were burnt by this disclosed that it was also flame. Do you know how the fire remained fire and became dew? What was seen was not two things nor two natures, but one and <the same><sup>242</sup> [οὐ δύο πράγματα οὐδέ δύο φύσεις, ἀλλ' ἓν ἦν καὶ <τό αὐτό> τό ὁρώμενον]. For that which was flame became dew, and the just ones bear witness to it, Therefore no longer ask me the way of the signs of God. For again I will tell you on the one hand what came about, showing the wonders, on the other, leaving it to God to know the word of the wonders! Tell me next: God works these wonders and [preserving] the flame makes dew, without altering the flame and transforming it to dew, wishing to undo the sentence of the tyrant, and willing to avenge the wronged ones, and wishing to consume the guilty gentiles — and God works such wonders, preserving the fire within its own limits and exhibiting dew, and, in order that the three youths should be saved, God worked such wonders — yet, in order that God might save the world, do you doubt that God, remaining the same, became a human being? It was not necessary to alter the flame in order to produce dew, and wishing himself to become a human being because of the salvation of human beings, was it necessary to alter his own nature? The fire remained and became dew, and you say: “how does God remain and become a human being?”

For then, wishing to save our nature, God prepared our salvation not through others, but through himself, since all creation was enervated in respect of our salvation, seeing that we have the habituation to both evil and error; for the great habit of evil, which rejected the nature, became contrary to nature for the human beings: a prophet prophesied, but the word was enervated, defeated by evil; angels became ministers of our salvation — and the great Paul bears witness to [it], saying of angels: “Are they not all ministering spirits, who were sent out into service for those who are about to inherit salvation?”<sup>243</sup> An angel, stronger as to the nature, ministered toward our salvation, but no human being was saved, being seriously involved in evils,

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<sup>242</sup> As St. Theodotus goes on to expound below, the fire remained naturally as fire, yet *became* (not merely appeared, *contra* Phantasiasts) dew. Yet, the dew is not counted as a secondary principle or thing besides the fire, but one thing and nature with the fire.

<sup>243</sup> Heb. 1:14.

therefore everything was enervated towards the indifference of human beings; for the evil of the malicious defeated the zeal of the good, not because God is defeated, but because he entrusts virtue to a judgement from the freedom of choice, he does not force you by necessity towards accomplishment, nor does he drag [anyone] who does not wish towards virtue, so that having prepared for you virtue [as] voluntary, he makes [the very] accomplishment itself yours.

8. What then? Since prophets had been defeated, and teachers were not efficacious, and law was enervated, and angels failed in the zeal, inasmuch as the judgement of human beings does not yield to the good, the Maker of nature himself visited, wishing to restore nature, which had been defeated; and he descends — not resounding as God nor terrifying the ears with thunders, nor throwing round himself darkness and showing dreaded fire in the darkness, nor frightening the hearers with [the] voice of a trumpet, as once he presented himself to the Jews, producing fear, nor frightening the servant, — rather, he invites him with grace and goodness. He does not introduce a guard of archangels; he does not rouse up the armies of the angels. For he did not will to frighten the one who became a runaway fugitive from that law, but the Lord of all comes in the form of a slave, throwing round himself poverty, in order not to frighten the prey. He was born in an unseen locality, having chosen for engendering an unnoticed field; he was born through a poor virgin, and he took on himself all poor things, in order to catch the human being quietly for salvation.

For if he had been born gloriously and descended throwing round himself much richness, the unbelievers would say that the extravagance of richness performed the change in the world, he had decided on the great city of Rome, they would reason about the change in the world by the lordship of the citizens. If he had become the son of an emperor, they would have ascribed the gain to lordship. If he had become the son of a legislator, they would have ascribed the gain to commands. But what does he do? Every [action] poor and mean, everything average and unnoticed by the crowd, so divinity alone should be made known [as] modifying the world. Because of this, he decides on a poor mother, a poorer native-land, he comes to be lacking money.



And let the manger explain to you the lack. For since no couch exists on which the Lord may lay down, he is placed in a manger, and the helplessness of advantage becomes a most beautiful disclosure of prophecies. For he was laid down in the manger, disclosing that he will be nourishment for ineloquent ones too. For the Word of God, living in destitution, and having been placed in the manger, drew to himself both rich and destitute, both [the] eloquent and [the] slow in the word. Do you see how the lack of advantage performed the prophecy, and the poverty illustrated that he, who was poor because of us, [was] accessible to everything? For no one was discouraged, fearing Christ's excessive richness; the grandeur of an empire hindered no one from approaching him, but he who exposed himself for the salvation of everything was seen as common and destitute. In a manger, then, the Word of God is laid down, also through [the] mediation of the body, so that both reasoning and ineloquent know how to partake of the abundance of the saving nourishment. And perhaps the Prophet also loudly proclaimed this beforehand, describing the mystery of this manger, saying: "An ox knows the owner and an ass the manger of his Lord, but Israel does not know me and the people do not perceive me"<sup>244</sup>. For even if the word has a simpler concept, showing the Hebrews as most unknowing among the ineloquent, it may, however, also be possible to reveal this, that it illustrates the manger of the Lord upon which was placed the One who became nourishment for those [who were even] more unreasoning. Indeed, the prophet does not reveal the manger indeterminately, but this manger he affirmed "[being] of his Lord", indicating, I think, the manger definitely by this connective. And on the one hand, let [anyone] who wishes philosophize over these things, revelling in the changeful consideration of divine Scripture!

9. On the other hand, we have shown that the rich One was poor because of making salvation easily grasped by all through the reason of divinity. And indicating just that, the great Paul said: "For us, he, being rich, was poor, so that we might be enriched by his poverty"<sup>245</sup>. And who was he who was rich? What was enriched? And how was this

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<sup>244</sup> Isa. 1:3.

<sup>245</sup> 2 Cor. 8:9.

one poor because of us? Let them say to us, they who divide the flesh from God's Word and who separate what was made one by the recollection of the natures [και τό ένωθέν διιστάντες τήι μνήμηι τών φύσεων], they who say that Christ is two [things] and for defense provide the <one> by conceptualization alone<sup>246</sup>.

Therefore, tell me, who, being rich, was poor with my poverty? Is it the one who seems to be a human being, from whom you separate the divinity? But this never became rich! He was poor, born of poor ancestors. Then who was the rich One and of what was he rich, who because of us became destitute? God, he says, enriched the creation. Surely then God also became destitute, making his own the destitution of what is seen. For the same One both enriched the divinity and became destitute because of us. Neither would you say that the human being enriches [itself], being poor both by nature and in money, nor, in fact, would you say that One who enriches [the] worth of divinity is poor without attributing humanity to him. Because of this the Apostle too, combining the glory of divinity to human sufferings, not wishing either to divide by rationalization, or to separate by word what had been made one, said that the same [being] enriched divinity, and was poor through sufferings, and was the one because of himself, and suffered the other because of us. But if he who enriched the divinity was poor with human poverty, how did he not also suffer the rest, having once chosen to become a human being because of [his] philanthropy?

**10.** But enough of these things! I bid you, rather, behold that poorest of dwellings of him who enriches the heaven! Behold the manger of him who sits above the cherubim! Behold, swaddling-clothes of him who fettered the sea with sand! Behold the poverty below, reasoning about his richness above! For thus you would see the greatness of grace and of philanthropy, if you reason about [the] so great condescension of God. Indeed, the richness of his divinity is shown in this poverty, inasmuch as the also star reveals the destitute to the Magi, and leads the gentiles to the manger of the destitute. But angels,

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<sup>246</sup> Notice here too: that which is made one is divided when we *recollect*, i.e. enumerate, the elements. This remains a division, even if we were to posit a unity in another way.

rejoicing in this, were proclaiming the poor One to the shepherds, singing of his richness of divinity. Indeed, the Magi brought as a gift the incense to him who appeared as if to a god, not separating one nature of another, and not severing the united one by rationalization [οὐ διυστώντες τὴν φύσιν τῆς φύσεως οὐδέ ἐπινοίαις τέμνοντες τὸν ἠνωμένον], but having once seen with wonder the God who appeared, offered incense to him, disclosing by this the divine worth. And the angels did not separate who had been born from the divine word by rationalizations like yours, but knowing [him to be] one and the same, and seeing and apprehending, were loudly proclaiming, saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good-will among human beings"<sup>247</sup>, and not, like you, saying some things, while rationalizing others and admitting with words that Christ Jesus is one, yet dividing the same by rationalization, just as you, who have concepts which fight with the words, but they glorify one and the same God.

Accordingly, he appeared both in destitution and in a manger to everything. Because of this, he is both in swaddling-clothes and glorified by angels. While the star did not descend for the Magi — for stars do not interchange the places — but since the land of the Chaldeans has many devoted to [the] motion of the stars, the stronger power, which guided the Magi, took up [the] property of a star, in order that the Chaldeans, from what they had learnt, would learn what they did not know, and turning to astronomy, would be taught by the stars themselves the mysteries of Christ. That it was not a star, but angelic power, guiding the Gentiles towards piety, the Evangelist himself reveals, saying that this star once also appeared during [the] day, once was hidden, and he says at another time that it guided the Magi and that it went with them to Bethlehem, which no one would say that any of the habitual stars, clearly perceived does, but a power that appears to astronomers in the shape of a star. And what was said about the star, "stood above the child"<sup>248</sup> will obviously disclose that what appeared is power. For no particular star among those fixed in the sky would have become clear standing above the child, since the

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<sup>247</sup> Luke 2:14.

<sup>248</sup> Matt. 2:9.

greatness of distance, deceiving the sight's judgement, makes clear to the perception neither the stationariness nor the motion of the stars.

He says: "The star stood above where the child was". Surely then, the star which appeared, having left the heights, came to be nearer to ground, in order to show by [its] stationariness the engendering of the emperor. Indeed, the Magi were seeking [someone] as an emperor, inquiring after an emperor's birth and saying to the Jews: "Where is he that is born emperor of the Jews? For we saw his star in the East and came to prostrate ourselves before him."<sup>249</sup> Do you seek an emperor, Magi? Why do you offer incense as if to a God? However, I both know an emperor and gained knowledge of a God; because of this I offer him both gold and incense, disclosing by the gifts at once both God and emperor.

**11.** But this One, who then drew Magi with ineffable power towards piety, has now also attracted today the bright audience, when he is no longer placed in a manger, but set before on this saving altar. For that manger became the mother of this altar; because of this he is placed in the one so that on this other he may be eaten and may become saving food for the believers. On the one hand, however, the manger displayed this splendid altar, on the other, the Virgin made these choirs of the virginity blossom; the meanness of the cottage in Bethlehem displayed these notable shrines, while the swaddling-clothes now became the deliverances from the failures. Did you see the accomplishments of the former destitution which have now appeared? Did you see poverty that has come to be mother of such great richness? Surely, the meanness of the Only-Begotten for a little [time] below, which conveyed so great a richness for the world, does not destroy [it]? Then why do you reproach Christ for the meanness in Bethlehem? Why do you adduce destitution to our midst, without reasoning about the profits to the world [coming] from it? Why do you say that God's suffering, which became cause of such great good things, is unworthy? Why do you set aside the wounds of the Only-Begotten, which brought forward so great a salvation to the human beings? Why do you seat next to the sufferings and do not

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<sup>249</sup> Matt. 2:2.

behold the accomplishments of the sufferings which now come about? Why do you say that suffering is unworthy of God, by which the tyranny of the devil has been undone? Why do you say that destitution is unworthy of God, by which the world is enriched with piety? Why do you say that death is unworthy of God, by which God spent death? For what [reason] do you say that the Cross is not God's, by which God triumphed over the evil of the devil? Why do you say that this alone is not of God, who nailed my sin to the wood?

Do not discredit the sufferings from which the impassive One is born; do not ridicule meanness through which the tyranny of the devil is dissolved; do not reproach God [for] a buffet, through which he released the human being from sin; do not say that a chain is unworthy of God, by which he split sin's chain of ropes; do not say that destitution is unworthy of God, because the devil, being rich in deceit, was made poor; do not judge a Cross which dissolved altars; do not disparage the nails through which Christ brought together the world to a single purpose of piety. Do not reason about the mean things, but rather the accomplishments of the suffering One which have come about from these things, [those] which you would not say have come about from the mere suffering human being, inasmuch as you are mindful and are persuaded by what appears.

And why do you also call 'mean' the things which God welcomed because of the salvation of human beings? For if sufferings are and are said to be by the nature, but became [the] cure of our sufferings: no longer then designate them sufferings, but remedy of our sufferings! And do not adduce to me the limbs of the Virgin for a reproach of divinity. For their nature is not unworthy also, even if the sufferings of the dishonor that followed defiled the nobility of the body. For limbs [are] not base by the nature, but are outraged through unnatural desire. For if they were base by the nature, God would not have plastered them with his own palms, since God is indeed not the maker of base things, but of the most beautiful ones; "for God saw all the things, as many as he had made, and, look, very beautiful"<sup>250</sup>. For none of them that came to be under God through his own nature [is] bad,

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<sup>250</sup> Gen. 1:32.

nor did God prepare anything base, but we, falling from the first preparation, insulted our nature with unnatural desires. Then, if God, who molded the limbs of the woman, is not discredited, neither is he mocked, having dwelt in them; for God does not live unworthily in his own creation. **12.** And if you say: how, leaving behind heaven, did he reside in a womb? I will also say to you that he, being God, became a human being because of human beings, remaining God without interchanging essences [μείνας θεός και ού μετατεθείσης ουσίας].

For that very reason I admit the same [one as] God and man, on the one hand, God before time, on the other, a human being who came to be, beginning from the birth, not two, but one, not being declared as one, yet rationalized [as] twofold [ού δύο, ἀλλ' ένα, ού φραζόμενον ως ένα, διττόν δέ ἐπινοούμενον]: for it is necessary that the concept does not fight with the word. We do not think two, and we admit a single one [ού νοοῦμεν δύο, ὁμολογούμεν δέ ένα]; let neither word nor concept separate what was joined by *oikonomia* and wonder.<sup>251</sup> Yet if someone would separate by rationalization what had been united, he would think that it had been sundered, and the concept would become false, having separated clearly what had always been united. It is then necessary to have the concept agreeing with the word. Do you say that Christ is one, that the same [one is] God and human being? Surely then also think of one. Yet if you say one, but rationalize two, you have the concept battling with your word. So do not say two, separated by some difference [μή ουν λέγε δύο διαφοραί τι διστάμενα]. For if you unite with words, do not sever with concepts: for if you sever with concepts, you deny union.

So do not lead away the reasoning to separated natures [μή ουν προς φύσεις δισταμένας καταγάγηις τόν λογισμόν], inasmuch as God works the wonder of the extreme union. Believe the wonder and do not explore with reasonings what came to be! Do not dissolve the wonder, being eager to find the word; for the wonder which word makes known, does not remain. If in the word of what came to be is

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<sup>251</sup> The mystical union must not be verbally nor conceptually numerically distinguished. The Doctor emphasizes that what we speak must be in harmony with what we conceive.

well-known, the fact is no longer a sign nor a wonder; and, if it is sign and wonder, leaving behind the reasonings, recover the belief, admitting that the one Lord Jesus Christ is the same, both God and man, not separated either by rationalizations or reasonings [οὐδέ ἐπινοίαις οὐδέ λογισμοῖς διιστάμενον], order that we do not, separating with reasonings the things which are united, deny the saving *oikonomia*. For if the union of God and man is made known through the *oikonomia*, he who separates the union denies the *oikonomia*. Let us then believe in the wonders of the *oikonomia*, in order that Christ, [whom we] believe in, may present this imperial grace of heavens to those who admit, from which it may come to pass that we all succeed to the grace of Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

## **Second Homily at the Council of Ephesus.**

*On the Day of the Engendering of our Savior, and read aloud in the Synod*

1. The theme of this present feast is splendid, and conveys a common salvation to human beings. And splendid also is the present gathering, which welcomes grace gratefully. And abundant grace is given to those who welcome her with gratitude; for so great a measure of bounty is provided as the greatness of the gratitude of those to whom the grace is conveyed, as when you, taking bounty, gratify the giver, not only having repaid for the things you took, but also making the giver more of a debtor to you. Gratefully, then, accept the grace, by exhibiting that this audience is splendid for us. Yet the theme of the feast is God's manifestation towards human beings, the coming of the ever-present one, the visit of the all-fulfilling one, attention of the all-seeing one. "He came into his own", he says, "and his own did not receive him"<sup>252</sup>, rather "he was in the world and the world came to be through him, and the world did not know him"<sup>253</sup>. But ignorance itself is not part of the accusation against human beings. For God is unattainable to human reasonings because of the divinity of [his] nature; for it is not natural for the mind of human beings to descry him. The divine nature eludes the mind of human beings; it is loftier than our reasoning. We then suffer loss of knowledge of God through [his] better nature; in

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<sup>252</sup> John 1:11.

<sup>253</sup> John 1:10.

order that precisely that does not come about, the invisible takes up a visible nature, the one who is not governed by touch accepts a body that is tangible. The invisible God becomes seen; the Word is tangible; the in Only-Begotten child of God becomes akin to the slaves, in order that the nature which surpasses the human being may not pass unnoticed by the recognition of human beings. And do not consider strange to God the Son who came into being<sup>254</sup>.

2. For long ago the advent of God was pre-prepared; he, appearing, was always made known by human characteristics, appropriating from us materials which can be seen. For let a Jew come forward into the midst; let anyone who utterly disbelieves the manifestation of God that appeared to human beings in the nature of a human being come forward! Let him tell me, how did Moses see God? Did he see the invisible nature? In no wise! For it is unattainable to human reasonings. But how did he see? Talk! [He saw] fire being kindled out of the bramble and not destroying the bramble. Then why do you disbelieve in the one who was born from a Virgin, and who did not destroy virginity?

Or, on the one hand, hearing that God speaks out of the bramble and says to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"<sup>255</sup>, and that Moses, falling down, makes obeisance, do on you believe, not reasoning about the seen fire, but the speaking God; the other hand, whenever I recollect a virgin womb, you loath it and turn away. For what is more worthless, talk, a bramble or a virgin womb spotless as regards the sufferings of sin? Do you not know that ancient things are a practice for the newer and for the things that have come to be now? For the mysteries are prefigured through what is old. Because of this, a bramble is kindled, fire appears and the elements of the fire neither operate nor indeed afflict. Do you not see, in the bramble, the virgin? Do you not behold, in the fire, the philanthropy of him who descended? The Judge [is] among the condemned and judgement does not come about; the arbiter, among the sentenced, and nowhere retribution. The Judge has been established, yet not judging but teaching, not sentencing but healing. Do you see how that

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<sup>254</sup> Referring to the incarnate child.

<sup>255</sup> Exo. 3:6.



gentle fire thus disclosed philanthropy? Do not wonder if he, being God, is born through a Virgin's womb; for God does not consider anything an outrage which is a cause of salvation for human beings. Yet do not give me this retort, that the nature of God is mean, as it once became attainable for outrages.

For nothing of the mean things that he decided on for our sake outrages that nature, but he appropriates lesser things in order to save our nature. Then, since the mean things do not outrage the nature of the blessed God, but produce salvation for human beings, **3.** how will you say that the motives of our salvation became causes of outrage to God? Therefore, today God became visible through a Virgin, and the virgin remained a virgin and became a mother. For the agent of incorruption does not produce deterioration; the maker of immortality corrupts nothing. Yet, since Photinus<sup>256</sup> also says that the one who is born is a mere human being, denying that the birth is from God, and assumes that the human being coming forth from the womb is divided from God, let him now say to me how the human nature, being born through a virgin womb, preserved the virginity of the mother uncorrupted. For no mother of a man has remained a virgin. Do you see how what happened provides me with a twofold concept of who was born? On the one hand, if he was born like us, he was a human being; on the other, if he preserved the mother as a virgin, he who was born is made known as God by those who consider properly.

For God visited the world, not interchanging one place for another, but having enveloped himself with my nature, and, as I said, wished to be visible, [he], the invisible one by nature, that from the birth he did not begin to be God, but [began] to appear to human beings. For since he was God, he undertook to become a human being because of the philanthropy towards us, in order that we should embrace the Judge as [our] kin, order that we, who have no free-speech [arising] from our own accomplishments, are able to be confident. For having been led to the tribunal, they, who do not speak freely through their own virtues, reap free-speech as if from their own kin. What then? God visited as a human being, not exchanging one place for another, but

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<sup>256</sup> Photinus was a fourth-century heresiarch, who spouted that Christ was a mere human being and disbelieved in the personal pre-existence of the Word.

exhibiting the invisible nature as visible and having been seen as man, and appeared akin to human beings, even as the evangelist announces, saying that “the Word became flesh”<sup>257</sup>.

4. “And how”, says he, “did the Word become flesh? How was it possible for the divine Word to become a human being?” Do you ask the way of God’s wonders? If the incomprehensibility of the Word was attainable for us, it would not be a wonder, but a natural thing; but if what has come to be is a wonder and a sign, concede the word to the wonder-working lord! For that he came about, I wish you to know and to reap the profit for your faith from what happened; and how he came about, concede to him who effects it! Or do you believe the doctor, who prescribes, and do not meddle with the way of the treatment, trusting your own salvation to the art, though anyone else, who is unskilled, meddles with the way of the art; but on the one hand gain knowledge of what came to be, on the other, concede the way to the art! Yet, do you seek after the words of all the wonders that have been worked by God as though you were in need of [the] words, in order that you also might work the same wonders for God?

But precisely what I was saying, I say now: of a thing, of which we know the word, its nature is neither wonder nor sign. Such is what I say. A builder creates a house: we know the word, we gain knowledge of the materials put together, we are able to talk about what has come to be, although because of [our] unskillfulness we will not be competent to effect it. The Only-Begotten molded from mud eyes for the one blind since the hour of birth; this is beyond our word; a wonder it is called, not investigated by reasonings of human beings; a sign it is called that happened beyond habitual nature. And that it came to be we know, but we are unable to talk of the way. For tile and brick are prepared out of mud, [but] a nobility of eyes is not molded, fine membranes do not come to be, changefulness of seeing is not assembled, exactness of a sphere is not rounded off with such a fine mien. Mud is not by nature proper to be lifted up towards a nobility of eyes. Surely, then, it is precisely that which the nature of the earth does not admit; for it is not by nature proper to admit of the idea of an

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<sup>257</sup> John 1:14.

eye, it accepted this from the wonders-working one, who drew the nature towards his own will, while he himself is not a slave to the word of nature. No longer then rely on a weakness of human nature nor say: how did the nature of a human being have room for God? How did God become man? How did the Word of God become visible flesh? But believe that it came to be, [and] allow the one who has made it to know the way.

5. And if you also will to articulate clearly out of an illustration what is set before [us], I will show you how the incorporeal is embodied, the invisible is not seen, the intangible is tangible, having been altered according to his own nature, but having taken up visible and tangible shape. This word, the one spoken, which I call of the human beings, by employing which we associate with others, and explain notions to one another, is a word not seen, nor touched with hand, only resonating through hearing. But whenever I adduce the spoken word as an illustration of the enhypostatic Word of God, you shall not consider that I say that the divine Word is spoken! Begone! For “Word” is said of the Only-Begotten, while divine Scripture explains the impassivity of his engendering, since the mind of human beings also gives birth to the word impassively<sup>258</sup>. Because of this, there it designates the Son of God himself, here it names “Word”, elsewhere the divine Scripture calls [him] effulgence<sup>259</sup>, saying each of these names about him, in order that you may think the things said about Christ exempt from blasphemies. For sometimes it employed such designations, sometimes others, willing that the instruction appropriate to the glory of God is made.

6. Such is what I say: it calls the Only-Begotten “Son of the Father”, having willed to present the consubstantiality by the glory. For since your son comes to be for you of the same nature [as you], the word, wishing to show one single essence of Father and Son, says Son of the Father of the Only-Begotten engendered out of him. Next, since “engendering” and “son” provides us with an impression of the suffering according to the begetting, it designates this Son also Word,

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<sup>258</sup> The Son is termed the *Logos* to emphasize the eternal and impassive begetting, for in the case of man, begetting involves passion.

<sup>259</sup> Heb. 1:3.

revealing by this name the impassivity of the engendering. But since someone who, admittedly as a man, becomes a father is exhibited older than his own son, while the designation itself provides that [we] observe the father before the son, so the that you shall not retort the same also of the divine nature, but shall think that Only-Begotten already existed with the Father continuously, it calls “effulgence” the Only-Begotten of the Father. For the effulgence is born out of the sun, while in no wise it is thought as taking place later than the sun, but we think that exactly from when the sun [is], then also [is] the effulgence born out of the sun. Then let the effulgence disclose for you that the Son always existed with the Father! Let the word reveal the impassivity of the begetting! Let the Son make known the consubstantiality!

7. But let us recapitulate what is set before [us], and let us reveal the manifestation of the divine Word born today, and let us exhibit through an illustration how what is not seen by nature becomes seen, and what is not tangible because of [its] incorporeal nature, is found, tangible. Therefore, this word, which we speak, <which is in> the communications [which] we employ, is an incorporeal word, not appearing to sight, not being tangible by touch. But whenever the word puts on letters and sounds, it becomes apparent, is grasped by sight, is tangible by touch. For me, then, assume one speaking with another! The pre-existing word is not seen, is it? We do not touch with hands the word that is poured out, do we? However, if you write on papyrus those [words] which you said, what you did not see beforehand, you see later, and the very kind of word which you did not touch beforehand, you shall touch through the papyrus and the letters. Why? Because the incorporeal word puts on the body of the papyrus and the shape of sounds.

Surely then, since the illustration became clear and you remembered by habitual illustrations, come, let us show how the Only-Begotten Son of God, the divine Word, who is eternal with the Father, being incorporeal as to the nature, appropriating nature of man, later was born through a Virgin, not beginning to be God, but beginning to appear [as] a man. For you shall not say: “since the Only-Begotten has been engendered from the Father, how was he born again from a Virgin?” Out of the Father he has been engendered by nature, out of a

Virgin he has been engendered through *oikonomia*: that, as God, this, as man. Since your word also is an offspring of your thought, but, whenever you will to put in sounds and you wish to imprint on papyrus the word — this to which your mind gave birth — you write the letters with your hand, and in some way with the hand you give birth to the word again, which did not then began to be when the hand was imprinting the letters, and did not then come forth into being when the hand was imprinting the letters, but on the one hand it is engendered from the mind, the other, the word accepted the beginning of appearance from the hand which imprinted the letters.

8. Since then the illustration has become clear, and the image [is] best-known, come, let us accommodate the image to the archetype. Here mind, there think of a Father; here you know a word being born out of the mind, there, think of a Word essential and enhypostatic, begotten of the Father; here behold a hand giving birth to a word through letters, there think of a Virgin in labor with the Word through the body, not indeed giving the beginning to divinity through birth — perish the thought! — but to God appearing to human beings, having become man. For since he became exactly what I [am], he was, perforce, born exactly as I, with my nature and, perforce, he decides on my birth. Because of this, the divine Word also appropriated begetting, and welcomed the Virgin as mother and came through a womb adorned with virginity. For God loathes nothing of what he molded, since indeed nothing of [his] works became unworthy of him. Everything is beautiful and very beautiful, if we see these things as the molder saw what had come about: ‘For God saw all things as many as he had made, and, look, very beautiful’<sup>260</sup>. Behold everything with impassive eyes, and you, like God, behold them very the beautiful. Banish the suffering, and gain knowledge of the nobility of what came to be!

9. What then is wonderful if God settled within his own work and house? You, however, say on the one hand that he dwells in heaven worthily, on the other you think that the human being is his sole unworthiness, judging things not by the truth of the words, but by the

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<sup>260</sup> Gen. 1:31.

suffering and the preconception. What then is loftier, tell me: heaven or human being? For God, what is more prized: sun or human being? For me, do not heed the splendor of the sounds, nor prefer nature for the fine mien, nor be astounded with the radiance that leapt from the sun, nor that I am clad in skin and flesh, according to the divine Job, but examine the nobility of a reasoning soul. Behold the preparation of a human-being and wonder at the living being. He is mindful of being able to govern and lead all living beings: he took hands, serving the wisdom of the mind, organs creative of manifold art; only one of all the created beings came to be free of necessity; God created only the man as lord of his own judgement. Do you not see that the sun is constrained to run [its] course? Do you not behold its uniform motion? Why? Because it did not become lord of its own judgement. And you proceed freely, you perform what you want, you do not have necessity forcing you through life, you were instituted free by the soul. A sun, a slave of necessity, but a human being, free as to [his] judgement. Then, who is better, tell me, the slave or the free man? The one under the yoke of necessity, or the one detached from all necessity? Nothing is wonderful or unbelievable if God abided in [the] man which he welcomed, straightaway molded in his own image.

**10.** For God straightaway at the beginnings of creation exhibited the purpose about the human being, on the one hand, having taken soil from the earth and having molded it, on the other, having prepared the image of his own divinity. Why then out of a mean nature did he mold thus one whom he intended to honor in the preparation? Why did he make the [actual] human being without having taken [him] from the utmost splendor of the sun, but from earth, and plasters him of soil, when the element lies below and is trodden-down? Do you will to understand for whom? Because he intended to honor the human being by the image, he gives him the mean nature, in order that the excess of honor does not excite the human being towards madness, in order that whenever he was honored beyond the nature, he was abased through the recollection of the nature, and he gains knowledge of the greatness of the honor, not of his own worth, but of the grace of the giver. Surely then, this was also philanthropy of the preparer, that the image of God has [its] nature from earth; for he had the nature [as

a] pledge of measured purpose: **11.** so that man [should be] a noble living being even if later outraged by the sufferings entering unawares. Do not then see him as having given offense, but reason about the nobility of the image of God before the transgression of the law.

Why then do you disparage the expelled man, forgetting his first preparation, and not reasoning about the ancient honor, which God rendered him again with much distinction, having united to himself his own image? Nothing then came to be without his philanthropy. Neither is it outraging to a good lord to share in [the] slavery of the slaves towards a gain of the servant. For the good one is not outraged by these things, but what he really is, is made known through such things. And do not wonder at the matter! Indeed, if you should now prepare yourself as a house of God, he would also dwell in you, even if not so as in Christ: for in Christ “the whole fullness of the divinity dwells bodily”<sup>261</sup>. But lo, what a wonder! The whole fullness of the divinity dwells bodily in a single one, and fills all, and outdoes the creation, being entire in a single one, and distinguished from none of the creatures. And indeed, do not let what has been said appear impossible to you. Indeed, I also now speak a word: this word is in a single one and the word came to be in all, and a single one had room for the entire word and the word is not circumscribed by a multitude. Therefore, if also a thing, which comes to be and decays, abides entire in a single one and comes to be in all, what appears wonderful to you if God both abided entire in a human being and is found in all?

**12.** Therefore, the theme of today’s assembly [is] that God becomes man, deciding on the human things in order to give the divine things, and appropriating the sufferings, in order to gratify impassiveness, entering unawares upon death in order to present immortality. And he acquired the sufferings of the human beings for his own, not altering the nature, but appropriating this by [his] judgement, and he makes these things very suitably, proposing to save the human being. Then, for what sort of motive has he made the sufferings of the human beings his own?

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<sup>261</sup> Col. 2:9.

Because he wanted to destroy the suffering by suffering and to make death ineffective by death, and he willed to overthrow similarities through similarities, he appropriates the cross, he makes the buffeting his own, he has made the chain his, in order that the sufferings, having become God's, take authority over sufferings [ἵνα θεοῦ γινόμενα τὰ πάθη κατά παθῶν ἐξουσίαν λάβωσιν]. For neither was God's nature wronged — indeed, not by any change of his own did he accept the sufferings — and the sufferings take from God the strength against similarities. Henceforth, then, death, having become as of God, makes death ineffective, and having died, it undoes the tyranny of death, since he was both God and man. For the Jews did not crucify a mere man, neither did they nail the visible nature only [οὐδέ τὴν ὁρωμένην μόνην καθήλωσαν φύσιν], but they brought [their] daring to the God [who was] in it, who had appropriated the sufferings of the united nature<sup>262</sup> [ἀλλ' εἰς τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ θεὸν ἤγαγον τὰ τολμήματα τῆς ἡνωμένης φύσεως οἰκειωσάμενον τὰ πάθη].

And in order that this also should become clear to you, let us bring the word to the illustration which was said in the beginning. **13.** Let it then be posited that the emperors pronounce a word, and that this is imprinted in letters on some papyrus to dispatch the so-called sacra to the cities, a word clothed with both papyrus and letters, gratifying freedom or conveying another imperial bounty to the needy. But let this so-called sacra, in the language of the Italians, be received by someone, [who is] an unbeliever and disobedient and hostile to the city and an enemy of the emperor, and he, having taken the papyrus, tears it apart. What was torn here? Tell me! Only the papyrus, or the imperial word also? Truly, if papyrus was torn apart with regard only to itself, the destroyed [object] was cheap; he who tore was not accountable, or accountable for five obols only. But he receives the ultimate penalty — and is punished — and by it is brought to death, not for only having maltreated papyrus, but as if he had also torn apart the imperial word. Truly the word of the emperor is impassive, neither

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<sup>262</sup> It was not *merely* the humanity / flesh of Christ that was crucified, but rather God himself, who, being perfectly and fully united with the flesh, made its sufferings his own. Since there is only one nature post-union, the result of the union, the suffering is proper to it (hence, “sufferings of the united nature”).



by its nature having been taken with hands, nor being able to be torn apart, however, it was also itself torn apart, having appropriated the suffering of the papyrus and the letters. Do you see how the impassivity accepts suffering, whenever it shares a suffering nature? For the word was not torn apart in its own nature, and it accepted the suffering of the papyrus and of the sounds.

**14.** Wherefore let the Jew not be confident that he crucified a mere man. For what appeared was a papyrus, yet the word hidden in it [was] imperial from nature, not spoken by tongue. For the Only-Begotten is said [to be] Word, yet not a spoken one, but an essential and enhypostatic one, which on one hand suffers nothing through its own nature, being an impassive word, and on the other, makes its own the sufferings of what appears, and, just as the imperial word itself both accepted the matter of the letters, and the suffering of the papyrus became the word's own, so the Only-Begotten Word of God has made the sufferings of the crucified his own. Because of this, just as one who maltreats an imperial sacra is led to death as if having torn the word of an emperor, so the Jew who crucified the appeared receives the penalty, having extended the daring to the divine Word itself. Henceforth, God avenges what happened as his own suffering [ὁ γὰρ θεός λοιπόν ὡς ἴδιον πάθος ἐκδικεῖ τό γεγόμενον].

But by what has been said is enough, since it is also necessary to ponder your recollections! For the multitude of things that have been said, gushing over the concept of the listeners, makes the listener forgetful of what has been said. But God's grace may it come to pass both that through recollection you embrace what has been said, and, secondly, that you benefit from these things, and inherit the empire of the heavens in return for them! May it come about that we all succeed to that, by the grace of Christ, to whom be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

END

## VIII

431-435 CE

### St. Theodotus of Ancyra, *Exposition of the Nicene Creed*

PG77: 1313-1348; Edward Hunter, tr. 'Theodotus of Ancyra's Exposition of the Nicene Symbol' in *Theodotus of Ancyra's Exposition of the Nicene Symbol: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Examination; compared with and revised according to an independent translation.*

1. The strength and steadfastness of your Christ-loving soul is not shaken by anything in faith, even if enemies sow the weeds of unbelief. Having received this faith from your ancestors, you have the foundation of your life in piety. Since this true faith has corrected the world, eliminated deception, expelled demons, and demonstrated a more brilliant kingdom than trophies, the trial of these things has become a witness to the Word. Even the most pious kings overthrew more tyrants by far, striking them down from afar with prayer, and repeatedly defended themselves against barbarian folly through their faith, having been taught by the piety of their ancestors. Since they have unshakeable faith, God guards their kingdom inviolable. Just as a barbarian attack takes place against bodies, so the demon arms himself against souls, waging war with words of deceit against the truth. The Lord gently indicated these things to his own disciples in another way. After sowing the seed of piety, he revealed to them the beautiful fruit of faith, while pointing out the weeds sown by the doctrine of unbelief.

For no farmer harvesting grain rejoices like Christ himself exults when reaping authentic faith from those who are firmly established. So, because he himself came forth in order to sow the word, he said, "I came forth from the Father and I am here"<sup>263</sup>. The "I came forth"

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<sup>263</sup> John 8:42.

discloses the descent of the divinity, but he 1 am here signifies his personal manifestation. 2. Further, he even stated the reason for his presence by saying, “a sower came forth to sow”<sup>264</sup>. But this good farmer sowed the word of correct faith, showing himself as a man who became God through humanity. Not as some people think, a mere human being honored by God, but as I said, God who took part in human fellowship. For this is the first honor and salvation of mankind, that God took upon himself human things through philanthropy. So he speaks of himself, showing himself as both God and man: the former by his nature, the latter through his philanthropy. For he also descended to humans, and that is why he became man, truly being what he appeared to be, and remaining what he was without casting off that which he had become. He did not change his divinity, but he assumed humanity from Mary. He did not relinquish what he was, but he became what he was not. For he himself speaks about himself in both ways, indicating that he is equal to his own Father when he says, “I and the Father are one”<sup>265</sup> and “He who has seen me has seen my Father”<sup>266</sup>, and showing himself as a man when he said, “why do you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth”<sup>267</sup>.

He does not signify one thing with divine expressions and another with human passions<sup>268</sup> [οὐχ ἕτερον μὲν τινα σημαίνων τοῖς θεϊκοῖς ιδιώμασιν, ἄλλον δὲ δηλῶν τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις παθήμασιν], but he speaks of himself as one and the same God, and shows himself as a man. For he was one and the same, and was shown as both. For he shows himself to the Father to be consubstantial, and to mankind as of equal honor; existing by nature, and taking on humanity out of love for humanity. For the humanity was not separated from the divinity [οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρωπότης διεστήκει θεότητος], as those who now divide Christ say, making the mystery one, and by the skill of words deceiving the simplicity of our faith; but they abandoned the humanity of the

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<sup>264</sup> Matt. 13:3.

<sup>265</sup> John 10:30.

<sup>266</sup> John 14:9.

<sup>267</sup> John 7:19; 8:40.

<sup>268</sup> In other words, Christ performing actions and operations befitting both divinity and humanity does not mean that there are two “things”.

divinity, and dissolved this saving union, wasting the *oikonomia* with their plausible arguments. For what was economized, let them tell us, if as always God was divided from humanity then? But we speak of the *oikonomia* of God, and through his emptying we speak of condescension; that God himself, the Word, became man, not changing his nature, but miraculously effecting the union. And this *oikonomia* has moved every human reason.

3. For this reason, the great Paul also attributes human passions to God, not teaching passivity of the divinity, but declaring the divine sympathy towards human beings, which is miraculous. For God, willing to suffer for human beings, took on human nature which is capable of suffering, and descended to unite with the suffering, so that the union may make the suffering also that of God, since the nature of God was not susceptible to suffering. And the great Paul indicated this when he said, "We preach the wisdom of God in a mystery, which none of the rulers of this age have known. For if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"<sup>269</sup>. And yet the Lord of glory is not impassive; rather, he accepted the Cross, uniting to himself the ability to suffer. This is what the great Peter remembered when he healed the man who had been lame from birth, and he was amazed, as he looked intently at the Jews, who were astonished at the miracle. And in response, he said, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you stare at us, as if by our own power or godliness we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life."<sup>270</sup> And indeed, our leader of life is immortal; but he was put to death in union with the mortal, as it says. For the union with God does not allow the sufferings to be described only for man. Therefore, he calls the Only-Begotten Son of God Jesus, indicating the appellation given to him by Mary to that infant; and he also calls him Jesus again,

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<sup>269</sup> 1 Cor. 2:7-8.

<sup>270</sup> Acts 3:12-15.

and refers to him as the ruler of life. He shows him to be the same Creator of all things and as a man who has tasted death.

4. And in order that you may not conceive of one in one way, and another in another way, the Apostle Paul, mixing together the divine and human elements [τοις ἀνθρωπίνοις ... αναμίξας τὰ θεϊκά], speaks of both concerning one and the same, pointing out God made man, and showing that the same One does some things in a divine and some in a human manner, the nature of God remaining unchanged, nor his appearance transformed. For the union which has taken place is paradoxical. For if a confusion of natures [σύγχυσις φύσεων] had brought about the union, the result would not have been surprising; but now the very strangeness of the coming-together indicates to you a sign and a paradox. Do not therefore seek the explanation of these supernatural and miraculous events from the power of God, for the reason of the nature lies within our comprehension, but the human mind transcends it. For if you cannot say anything about the childbirth according to the flesh: for the fact that the same person was a Virgin and gave birth, the word does not know the nature of it, but the power of God has made it possible. And all who claim to be Christians would agree with us on this.

Why do you seek to understand the ineffable union of God with man by words? But I think that the one who rejoices should know what to seek concerning God and what to believe. For whatever pertains to our nature, we should investigate with our minds, but what goes beyond our reason and nature, we should hold by faith, not by words. This is now what is presented in the speech. God chose to suffer for humanity; he made whatever he wanted. "For whatever the Lord wanted, he did"<sup>271</sup>. Do not be led astray, thinking that he became passible according to his divine nature. Rather, being able to do whatever he wanted, he chose to be born of a virgin since, before this, man had accepted [death]. So, having taken on human nature, he did not reject being born. The great Paul also indicates this, saying, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of

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<sup>271</sup> Psa. 135:6.

woman"<sup>272</sup>. For grace unified the existed one and the born one, God working a wonder, not confusing natures.

5. Where is the one crying now, "O friend, Mary didn't give birth to God"<sup>273</sup>? You deny, man, the condescension of God towards men. For this is the reason why God descended to men, that being God by nature, he accepted birth as a Savior for men. Do you reject the birth? Then you have denied the saving condescension. Do you reject grace? Then you have lost salvation. Are you ashamed of what happened? Then the Lord Jesus will be ashamed of you in the kingdom of heaven. "For whoever is ashamed of me and my words", he says, "I will be ashamed of him before my Father in heaven."<sup>274</sup> Indeed, if God had not endured human things, but had remained in his godly nature, neither nature would have been disgraced. For while man proclaimed virtue, God healed diseases. What then was he saying one must not be ashamed of, if the man didn't do anything worthy of shame, and God didn't consent to anything inferior to his own divinity?

But since he was God, he endured human things so that you may not be ashamed of God and of the *oikonomia* that he worked out through philanthropy. He says, "whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." Upon hearing these things, the great Paul cried out, saying, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel."<sup>275</sup> For what shame does the Gospel have, O marvelous Paul? In what respect do you say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel"? You proclaim virtue, teach God's philanthropy, heal the sick, drive out demons, and raise the dead. What, then, is the boastful saying, "I am not ashamed"? "I declare God," he says, "for I have suffered human things; what seems shameful to many, I do not feel ashamed of. For I do not introduce a passible nature, but I teach God's philanthropy. For we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles"<sup>276</sup>. And who is the crucified Christ? He says,

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<sup>272</sup> Gal. 4:4.

<sup>273</sup> That is, Nestorius.

<sup>274</sup> Mark 8:28 / Luke 9:26.

<sup>275</sup> Rom. 1:16.

<sup>276</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23.

“but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, we preach Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”<sup>277</sup> To the Greeks, these things are considered foolishness, for when they hear of God's wisdom being crucified, they stretch out their wide laughter, thinking that divinity can be passible for the believer.

6. Therefore, do not consider God weak by paying attention to sufferings; but understand his power surpasses and overcomes our weakness. Paul says, "For the weakness of God is stronger than human strength."<sup>278</sup> What weakness does God have, unless someone considers my weakness to be his own? How can the Creator of the heavens be weak? What weakness does the Word have, who created all things? What weakness of God bound the earth with unknown boundaries? But since he made my weakness his own in order to destroy our weaknesses, Paul says, "The weakness of God is stronger than human strength."

Moreover, since "the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom,"<sup>279</sup> as Paul said, what can be called foolishness of God, if not that which we say about God, that he receives the passions without being affected by them? This is considered foolishness by the Greeks, who do not know the truth, but rather are constantly distressed by their thoughts. But we consider these things the power of God and abundance. However, as it is said, what is foolishness to the Greeks is believed to be wisdom among us, for the wisdom of God has become wiser than men. For what the wisdom of the world didn't destroy as wickedness, it reported about as this foolishness believed about God, which is credible to us, but has been considered folly to Greeks and unbelievers. But we have the proof of faith in our actions, and we reap the benefits of the weakness that is considered by God regarding himself; for it healed our diseases. And this foolishness that is considered by God conquered the wisdom of the world through piety. Therefore, do not accuse the passion, nor slander what appears to be foolishness to unbelievers. For the things said by unbelievers have

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<sup>277</sup> 1 Cor. 1:24.

<sup>278</sup> 1 Cor. 1:25.

<sup>279</sup> *ibid.*

corrected the plan. Why then are you seeking the logic of the miracles of God and not focusing on his achievements?

7. But since some, by following the reasoning of the unbelievers, have presented themselves as Christians, they do not want to believe in the miracles of God, saying there is one Son, but conceiving of two [νοούντες δε δύο], explaining what is meant by the Son. And say there is one Christ, but they attach this name to a different one, so as to distinguish a man from God and to divide the unity that God the Creator of heaven and earth had brought to mankind. For the appearance of God on earth made human beings citizens of heaven, but they dishonor our nature, seeking to abolish the honor bestowed on us by the kindness of God towards mankind. For if God had not become man, as he willed and was able to do, then human beings would not have been united with divinity, but would have been divided by their own peculiarities and natures. What then would have been the *oikonomia* for us? What kind of condescension from God would they speak of? Who emptied himself in the form of God? Who humbled himself in the likeness of God, being God?<sup>280</sup> Who became poor<sup>281</sup>, possessing divinity? How could the Lord of glory be crucified<sup>282</sup>, if he had not acquired a union with the one crucified? How did the Jews kill "the Author of life"<sup>283</sup>, if he had not been united in every way with what had died, without any division? How did the Son of Man come down from heaven<sup>284</sup>, if he had not been united in precision with what descended, not to remain below, but to gather to himself what had been united and was lying in the depths?

O man, do not join yourself to God if you do not confess the condescension of God. One is the one who descended, just as the one who ascended, Paul says; there is not another and another, but the same one who is no longer divided, no longer thought of as two after the union [οὐκέτι μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν δύο νοούμενος]. For "he who descended," he says, "is also the one who ascended up far above men,

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<sup>280</sup> Phil. 2:6-8.

<sup>281</sup> 2 Cor. 8:9.

<sup>282</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8.

<sup>283</sup> Acts 3:15.

<sup>284</sup> John 3:13.



that he might fill up all things."<sup>285</sup> What was once seen as two [τὰ θεωρηθεντα ποτὲ δύο], the *oikonomia* of salvation has made into one. Therefore, no longer speak of two after the indivisible union<sup>286</sup> [οὐκοῦν μηκετι λέγε δύο μετὰ τὴν ἄλυτον ἔνωσιν]. What grace has united, let mind not divide!

8. This is also what the Fathers taught, inheriting the mystery of the dispensation from the Apostles. This is what the three hundred and eighteen assembled at Nicaea decreed about the Only-Begotten. In spite of saying to trust them, the one thinking Christ is two fights them, having completely repudiated their faith by reasonings. For although they all said "just as there is one Father, so also there is one Son," this man repudiated the faith of those who said one Son by claiming that two are signified by the title "Son".

But so that what has been said might become more fully clear, we will explain from the expressions of the Fathers themselves, not making our interpretation from external sources but from the things that have been said themselves. The faith, then, of those men will be found to be as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth. He descended for us humans and for our salvation, became incarnate and humanized, suffered, rose again on the third day, ascended to heaven, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>285</sup> Eph. 4:10.

<sup>286</sup> The Doctor confesses that while there were two natures pre-union, there are no longer two - i.e. an enumeration - after the union. We may presume based on St. Acacius's contemporary attestation that there were dyophysites (particularly in the Latin world) who disagreed with the Antiochene dyophysites ("Nestorians") yet confessed two natures post-union, that St. Theodotus is aiming to correct the same notion. Notice, for instance, that the unbelieving opponents are described to have spoke of one Son, yet confessing him as being two post-union.

But as for those who say "there was when he was not" and "before he was brought forth he was not" and that he came into being "from nothing" or who assert the Son of God to be "from a different essence or substance" or to be mutable or liable to change; these ones the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

These are the words of the Fathers, setting forth the faith in the Only-Begotten, correcting every human idea as if by a rule. For just as the error about the straightness of a plank is corrected by a rule, when it is tested and found to be distorted, so too this word of ours corrects the meaning of those who wish to distort our faith.

We follow these, believing in the words, not weaving problems. For they said, we believe, not "we offer proofs through words." Therefore, let us also believe that what was spoken is true, completely avoiding all curious inquiries. For we do not hold accountable what has been entrusted by the Fathers, but we acknowledge that it has been given by God, our faith confirming the meaning to us. Therefore, anyone who thinks differently from this exposition is a stranger to Christianity, even if they seem to say something about our faith. For neither does anyone outside demand proof of the beginning of the teachings, but by faith they receive the beginning from the teacher, without being moved by any argument against it.

9. Therefore, the exposition of the Fathers is the beginning of the faith concerning the Only-Begotten. For when their thought was directed towards the Only-Begotten, then, just as Arius and now Nestorius, sowing weeds among the seed of prosperity, attempted to corrupt the glory of the Only-Begotten. And while the Father said that he was the Only-Begotten, he was left without the worth and glory of the Lord; for this reason, the Fathers, gathered together even now, make our piety the law, closing the ears of the simpler ones with all the subtleties concerning the Only-Begotten. Therefore, as the thought concerning the Only-Begotten was proposed to them, the Fathers set forth the rule of faith, making the beginning from the Father, and there was never any inquiry about God and the Father.

How then did they make the beginning of the exposition from the Father without any inquiry about him? But doing something wise and great for the security of our faith, they first spoke of the Father. Let us enter into their wisdom, paying careful attention to their words: “we believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of all things visible and invisible.” For which of the rightly minded, employing natural reasonings, is ignorant of this? It is evident to all! But the Fathers don't begin the Creed this way, in order to say what is familiar to everyone. Rather, since they understood that like there is one Father, so also there is one Lord Jesus Christ, they placed the one Father prior to the Son so that, just as you have thought the one God Almighty to be in regard to the Father, so also we will think one to be about the Son, not in any way thinking two to be signified by the title "the Son." For just as, by having said “one ... Father”, they didn't declare their conception of him twofold, so also, by having said “one ... Son”, they didn't desire our Lord Jesus Christ to be indicated twofold in any manner. For, with regard to God, neither the title "Father" signifies two, nor does the name "Son" indicate two things [οὐτε υἱοῦ τὸ ὄνομα τὰ σημαινόμενα δύο δηλοῖ]. Therefore, the Fathers, beginning with the teaching about the one Father, introduced the one and Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may comprehend the meaning of the unity of the Father concerning the one Son.

**10.** But, wishing to cloud the simplicity of our faith with alien words, and being hindered by Christ, who is called by the common name of Son and Christ, he opens this door of blasphemy against Christ. And concerning our Savior, he speaks two declarative things [δύο πράγματα], each one having one name, but two things [τὰ δὲ πράγματα δύο], and he says that one name is to be one, but the things signified are two. But if you say that the name of the Son is one, and you place the name Christ as one, but you say that different substances [ουσίας διαφόρους] are signified by this name, you do not agree with the Fathers, who believed in one Lord Jesus Christ in this way, as they believed in one God the Father Almighty.

If their concern was only about the name, and they said "there is only one Son", have your sophistry explain how the name is one thing, but

the things signified are many, why complicate the designation, leaving the referent behind? And if they used a single name for the Only-Begotten Son, why inflate it with additional significances? For instance, Nestorius, when he explained the language of the Fathers regarding the Son, while opposing the great archbishop of Alexandria, Cyril, who spoke plainly about the doctrine of piety and, in writing, accused Nestorius of being in error, and exposed his lack of faith in the 318 Holy Fathers, refuted Nestorius by quoting the very words of those Fathers. "If you give me a chance to present the evidence," [Nestorius] said, "I will give you the voices of those saints and thus set you free from the accusations of slander against them, and from your rejection of the divine Scriptures through them."<sup>287</sup> Then he quotes the language of the Fathers and says, "We believe..."

**11.** Consider now with me the fraud shamelessly committed here! For when the Fathers wished to express that the Son is one in mind, they said, "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God," which you shamelessly steal from the words of the Fathers, taking the one to mean two, so that you may have room to gather two things signified by the Son<sup>288</sup> [ἵνα ἔχη χώσαν συναγαγεῖν υἱοῦ δύο τὰ σημαινόμενα]. But you, best one, have missed the opportune moment of our faith. For they did not say, "We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," as you falsely claimed, but rather, "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, and in one Lord Jesus Christ," while you, by taking away the "one" regarding the Son, are opening the door to deception. So that you may be able to say that there are two things signified by the Son, one received by nature and the other acquired by grace. And yet you cannot turn away from revering the one who was crucified for us Christians, who is honored by God according to grace, more than others who have natural honor. For those who have honor by nature do not need the honor of God according to grace.

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<sup>287</sup> Nestorius, *Second Letter to Cyril*.

<sup>288</sup> St. Theodotus states here what the later Miaphysite Fathers consistently pointed out to the Chalcedonians: there cannot be unity and duality concerning the same thing (for there is only one and the same *hypostasis* / nature) simultaneously, for one excludes the other.

It seems to me both strange and amazing how Nestorius, by omitting the crucial points of the teachings of the Fathers, constructed his own doctrine and claims that it is in harmony with their faith. If he agrees with what has been said, he should not steal the more important parts; but if he takes away from the teachings of the Fathers, which clearly demonstrate their faith, how can he claim to be in agreement with those he does not want to obey? But by introducing his own doctrine and presenting it as a temptation, he deceives the simple and makes them adhere to the ancient faith, while at the same time he twists it with his deceitful words.

**12.** But since he himself calls the name Jesus the title of only the nature of a man - for, he says, the Virgin gave this designation to the infant in response to the oracle of the angel who said, "You shall call his name Jesus" - and repeating this frequently in his letter to the great and most holy Bishop Cyril, he says, "now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea and then our Lord Jesus Christ was born and they found Jesus in the midst of the teachers", desiring the human nature to be always called by the title "Jesus". See how the tradition of the Fathers completely overturns his intention. For they called him who was begotten from the Father, consubstantial with the Father, Jesus and Christ and Son of God, without ever dividing him from the other names. For they said, "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God," in order that you might not understand this as one and that one as another, but that he was begotten from the Father as the Only-Begotten, the same, namely, from the *ousia* of the Father. For even if they say what we do not understand according to nature, the union itself shows it to be true. That is why they said concerning the Son, "God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things were made". They called him the Son of [the Father], since this was begotten before the other. For this reason, they say that Jesus refers to the Only-Begotten, knowing him to be one and the same God, both Word and becoming man.

**13.** Nestorius diminishes Jesus as one who is weakened like milk, who becomes overpowered by time, and who is deprived of divinity by his circumcision, not diminishing the value of divinity itself. Rather, he

deprives himself of glory and salvation. And he who speaks such things concerning the exposition of faith says this with confidence. However, the Fathers at Nicaea did not insult Jesus, my good man. On the contrary, they called him “the only-begotten Son of God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father”, and through the most accurate unity of the *oikonomia*, they made him that one. For he too had been born immutable before this. For the nature was not changed, but the unity of the economy performed a wonder. Therefore, after the unity of God with man, the Fathers did not conceive two things [δύο πράγματα νοήσαντες], rightly calling Jesus the Word of God, and expressing it according to the Theologian, they indicate Jesus as the visible Word, not confusing the natures [οὐ τὰς φύσεις συγχέοντες], but showing the unity.

Therefore, the divine Scriptures declare that the Lord of Glory, who was born of God and not made, the Jesus who was born of Mary, was crucified. As Paul says, "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory"<sup>289</sup>, so that you may not separate the Lord of Glory from the one nailed to the cross. For this union of the impassible Word with the suffering human nature was prepared for this purpose. And this is what is meant by "union," namely that the properties of the united are brought together into one<sup>290</sup> [τὸ τὰ ἴδια τῶν ἐνωθέντων εἰς ἐν συνηλθεῖν]: this is said of the Son, and so are the other things. The Apostle says, "For the Lord of Glory was crucified." And again he says to us, “one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things”<sup>291</sup>, both thinking of the Lord of Glory as Jesus and calling Jesus the Word of God, by whom all things came to be.

**14.** Therefore, the Fathers at Nicaea, setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ, have declared that he is the Only-Begotten Son, not by the name or the honor alone, but in reality itself. Therefore, they called him consubstantial with the Father, and through us, he was incarnate

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<sup>289</sup> 1 Cor. 2:8.

<sup>290</sup> The Doctor provides a clear definition of the mystical union here: the properties of the united elements are combined into the *one*, in order that both immortality and passibility belong to the one and the same singular compound out of the two, and not one and another.

<sup>291</sup> 1 Cor. 8:6.

and suffered. The union was performed miraculously without confusion of nature. For if the pre-existent God had not assumed humanity, Mary would not have become a mother. And if the Virginity had not been preserved, then he who chose to suffer would not have had the power to change his nature. For if the Virgin[‘s virginity] was not altered and became a mother, and the birth did not come about by virginity having been altered (God having wrought the birth miraculously through the Virgin), then why are you surprised if God, by nature impassible, wanted to suffer and underwent suffering without having laid his impassibility aside? For he that did not need to destroy virginity in order to make a mother did not need to change his power because he desired to suffer (since he has a power that miraculously accomplishes something surpassing the limitations of his nature).

Because of this, he both remained God and became man; designated both "Jesus" and "Christ" and "Word." He both suffers and remains by nature impassible; he is both crucified and remains in substance inviolable; he both receives death and subdues death, accomplishing these things miraculously as one who is God, but submitting to them patiently as one who became man. In this way, he himself both dies and is not conquered by death; both suffers and destroys sufferings, accomplishing these things with his divinity, but submitting to them patiently with his own flesh: submitting himself, not watching another submit.

For Peter was also saying precisely these things when he held dialogue with the Jews about "Jesus the Nazarene." Thus, by saying "men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus the Nazarene"<sup>292</sup>, he calls him by his fatherland below, but later he signifies him Son of God. So the end of the discourse shows one and the same as being from earth and also from heaven, as originating both from the lands below and from the glory above, as existing before the ages, but being born later on our behalf. For he says, "men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus the Nazarene, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you

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<sup>292</sup> Acts 2:22.

yourselves also know; him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God has raised up from the dead, having loosed the pains of death"<sup>293</sup>, showing one and the same as being man and also God, impervious to death, since he both says "he died" and it was not possible that he should be held fast by death. Although the "he died" indicates a man, the "not being able to be held fast by death" discloses God, indicating one and the same as being God and also as having become man.

**15.** Therefore, the Fathers at Nicaea also say [that] this Jesus is brought forth from the Father and add in that is, "from his *ousia*", so that we might not assume Jesus to be someone adopted as "Son of God" and another to be the "Son by nature," denying the presumption of those who have erred. For in this way they are minded to separate "the Son by nature" from "the Son who was crucified" so that, having been created by "the Son by nature," we might think little of "the Son who was crucified" and, having worshiped a "Son of God" whom even Plato confesses, we might reject the Christ; they only call the honored nature of man "Jesus" and afterward cling to this title, even distinguishing him from [the natural Son of God] both in realities and the natural properties.

And so the great Peter, having been examined by the Lord along with the other Apostles, made this reply. For when the Lord asked them, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?", some answered, "some John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets"<sup>294</sup>. Then the Lord, indicating that those who speak in this way honor the Son of Man but lack knowledge of the truth, asks the Apostles if they have a greater understanding of him, saying, "But who do you say that I am?"<sup>295</sup>. Yes, moreover, they paid attention to the fact that he said these things, posing the question concerning the Son of Man about himself. To which Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>296</sup> Not saying of him that he was honored by

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<sup>293</sup> Acts 2:22-24.

<sup>294</sup> Matt. 16:13-14.

<sup>295</sup> Matt. 16:15.

<sup>296</sup> Matt. 16:16.



many with grace as a man, but confessing him to be the Only-Begotten Son of God verily becoming a man, and recognizing him as such, and in no way dividing the things. So what about the Lord? Did he strike Peter with punishment for not distinguishing the natures [ὥς μὴ διακρίναντι τὰς φύσεις], nor separating the Son of Man from the divinity of the Word?<sup>297</sup> Or rather did he bless him, saying "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven"<sup>298</sup>? For he who spoke of what he had not learned from his visible nature is blessed, as not having learned about the flesh from the flesh and blood, but from the Father who is in heaven. To recognize the God [the] Word in the flesh was truly the knowledge of God the Father.

**16.** Therefore, the Fathers at Nicaea also declared this Jesus, the Son of Man, about whom the Lord asked Peter, to be called the Only-Begotten, consubstantial with the Father. They spoke in harmony with the teachings of the great Peter, and followed in the footsteps of his doctrines. They confessed this Jesus to be the Son of the Living God, begotten of the Father, that is, of his *ousia*, consubstantial with the Father. Lest the erring ones consider Jesus to be a mere creature, the Fathers introduced the term "Only-Begotten" to express that he was begotten of the Father. Having clearly expressing the faith, they declared, "God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth." Regarding the Son of Man, those who spoke these words, which Peter confessed briefly, were judged to be blessed.

But since they declared that Jesus Christ is the Son who existed before the ages, see how again they demonstrate that the Only-Begotten Son who was before the ages is a man who has come into being. By these dispensations of the saving *oikonomia*, they stand firm in the unity and indicate one and the same who is God, being Only-Begotten, and a

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<sup>297</sup> Notice here the twofold attack against dyophysites: one targeted at those who emphasize on the (numerical) distinction of the natures post-union, and other at those who straightforwardly accept the logical implication of dyophysitism, that is to say, Nestorianism.

<sup>298</sup> Matt. 16:17.

man who has come into being for men. For when they say that “the Lord Jesus Christ is consubstantial with the Father”, they declare that he is the same, not different, and they say that “he came down for us humans and for our salvation, he became flesh, was crucified, and ascended on the third day”.

For when they said that the Only-Begotten God the Word had descended, so that you might not conceive of a local movement of God (for the divinity fills all things, not being diminished by its creation), they interpret the phrase "descended," saying that it means "became flesh," not that he only dwelt in the flesh, but that he became flesh. They use this expression to indicate the union of God and man more precisely. For they say that "descended" means that the fleshless one became flesh for the sake of human life, without any change in his nature. Let the dogmas be safeguarded again; closing every door to deception. God, without changing his nature, became man. Away with it! But marveling at the union, having not become passible in nature, but having suffered in communion with what is passible.

For if the nature of God received the passion in a naked way, we truly convict God of being passible. But if we believe that God willed to suffer for humans, and his nature did not accept the passion, he united with the passible, and through this union he received the passion, we do not say that God is passible, but we say that he is philanthropic. He did not become weak because of the passion, but rather he became powerful beyond nature. For this reason, the Fathers, when they said that he became incarnate, introduced the term *enanthroposis* [ἐνανθρωπήσαντα], and by these they attributed to him the extremes of both divinity and humanity. For this reason, they confidently said of God that he suffered, so that we may not conceive of the nature of God as capable of suffering, but rather as God who suffered, in order to become one with the passible.

**17.** Do not be amazed at hearing words that conquer logic. He who is superior by nature has become more excellent. For the nature of man is produced from seed, but our Savior works miracles beyond nature. He did not need seed and yet became a man. Do you marvel at this and not investigate the words with logic? Therefore, believe also in

that which you have believed concerning the Virgin. For if the Virgin had not been changed and become a mother, and God had not become man without being changed, then you would not have believed these things, marveling at them and not engaging with the reasonings of nature. And both these things and the wonders of God have happened. Learn both with one faith and do not throw yourself into boundless inquiries, so that you do not sink into the depths of the word without being able to withstand it, and end up shipwrecked, being nourished by the simplicity of faith.

For, misrepresenting us, he started tricking the simpler people into thinking that we were saying "the divine is passible," since we were saying "the sufferings have become his own" due to his ineffable and unconfused union to the passible, which we said came about by the God's working of a miracle, not by an alteration of his substance. For if we were to say that the suffering one had actually suffered, then what had happened would not be considered miraculous, since to suffer is in accordance with the nature of the sufferer.<sup>299</sup> I speak of wonder-working power so that you may believe only in this, that God does wondrous things beyond human understanding, and that you no longer stumble over the arguments of nature. For what is capable of experiencing something, even if it does not endure the suffering, is called "passible" and is known to all. For wood is combustible, even if it has never been exposed to fire. And a body is cuttable, even if it has never been subjected to the edge of iron. For such designations have arisen from the nature of things, not from their energy. How then can you call God "passible," when you do not say that he has a nature capable of suffering? For he worked a wonder by taking on suffering in himself, united in a paradoxical way with the passible, and did not receive it according to his nature.

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<sup>299</sup> If mere flesh suffered on the Cross, it wouldn't be a miracle, nor would it be useful for our salvation, for what does a mere man's death and resurrection do for the rest? But, if God united to himself the passible flesh and appropriated the sufferings, thereby suffering on the Cross by virtue of the flesh and raising the flesh through the flesh, activating and nourishing it by his own Spirit towards salvation, such would be a wondrous miracle, useful for the *oikonomia*.

**18.** Therefore, the most holy Fathers who gathered at Nicaea, being led by the Holy Spirit to the agreement of faith, confess that this same God, the Word, consubstantial with the Father and has an impassible nature, as we all know, “who for our salvation came down and became incarnate”, that is, was made flesh, so that you may know that the Word became flesh. If you do not yet understand that he was made flesh, they say that he was made human, as it was fitting for him to suffer human things. Those who were deceived in their faith and were unable to comprehend this miracle thought that the impassible God had become passible, having appropriated to himself the passions of human beings through a reasoning search. The suffering itself is not what makes one capable of suffering, but rather the nature that is capable of suffering. For then, the Virgin Mary is not even one who gave birth to a man, for her virginity does not permit childbirth, yet she gave birth to the Word of God who became human. Therefore, is every virgin a mother of God since one virgin gave birth? Absolutely not. Neither then is God passible because he formerly received the passion in his own flesh on account of the divine *oikonomia*. For this reason, the Fathers who convened at the Council of Nicaea boldly declared that they spoke of a God who suffered, but they did not teach that God is capable of suffering. For that which is accomplished through the *oikonomia* and wisdom of God, no one can fully comprehend through the reasoning of nature.

**19.** Then after the Fathers said the Only-Begotten who was brought forth from the Father to have become incarnate, to have become man, and to have suffered, they progress on, saying “he rose on the third day”. For this was the beneficial passion according to God. This fruit of God was taken for the sake of humanity's death. For the immortal would participate in our mortal nature in order to raise it up again. The great Apostle Paul, wanting to declare this clearly, said, “He raised us up and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”<sup>300</sup>. He did not say that he raised only himself, but he raised us together with him so that we would not only experience death and resurrection alone but also come to know the one who raised us, having endured this with his own wisdom and without changing nature. Hence, we do not call

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<sup>300</sup> Eph. 2:6.

him mortal but immortal. We call this philanthropy, for he abolished death by death and liberated the suffering by his own passions. As it is said, “who emptied himself unto death, even death on the cross”<sup>301</sup>, if not God, silently partaking in the nature of humans?

“Let this mind be in you”, he says, “which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped. But he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of humans, and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.”<sup>302</sup> What do you say, O marvelous Paul? “He who existed in the form of God”, and yet, “he did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped”. Tell me, and what is the form of this emptying? It says, “taking the form of a servant”. And if he only took “the form of a servant” as an associate, did he indeed “empty himself”? But consider in what manner he took on the form of a slave, and you will know that he emptied himself beforehand. For if God had simply taken on the form of a slave without descending to man, he would have only taken on the form of a slave, and he would not have emptied himself. But since he became man, as Paul says, and “was found in the likeness of men, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” - it is fitting to say that he emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave.

**20.** For how does one being in the form of God and himself thinking it not robbery to be equal to God empty himself? Let those who deny the grace of Christ's *oikonomia* tell us! They cannot explain how God emptied himself, saying that Christ was honored, but refusing to accept that the Word became flesh. For those who preach this error dare to steal from the apostolic teaching, fearing that the word may declare the communion between God and man, which he completely denied, saying not “God who has become man,” but rather “the Christ is a man deified by grace.” For when he wrote back and disagreed with the counsel given by the great Cyril, also making mention of this saying of the Apostle in his letter to that great man, he explained the

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<sup>301</sup> Phil. 2:8.

<sup>302</sup> Phil. 2:5-8.

passage with so much cunning as to snatch away into error those who were ignorant of the alteration of the phrase.

But in order to make what is said clear, I will present to them the words of the deceived [Nestorius] themselves in that epistle, in which he speaks in these words. He says: "the Apostle, intending to draw an inference from the things of the Passion, because he previously established 'the Christ' as what is common to the two, as a name for the natures, like previously said in a small way, applied the word 'Christ' to both of the two as suitable to the natures [ταῖς φύσεσι]." <sup>303</sup> For what does [the Apostle] say? "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God." <sup>304</sup> And after being silent about the rest, as he regarded them as hostile to him, he brings it up, saying, "but to avoid repeating everything, 'I became obedient even to death, death on a cross' <sup>305</sup>". And the things in the middle were not all that was said by the Apostle, for the middle alone has this: "he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." But he abbreviates it as 'long'? Certainly, the man is devious, to have clouded the truth by the theft of these words! For just as above, when he stole the confession and in one Lord from the Creed of the Fathers, he has taken license for himself to say Christ is a name common to many natures. So also here he removes the "he emptied himself" from the passage as something capable of teaching that God descended into a communion with human things.

**21.** But the deceiver did not remain unconvicted, even if he had hidden the most vital parts of the passage. For because he was ashamed of having stolen many parts of the argument, fearing that he might also be caught stealing, he reluctantly but nonetheless cited the following statement about the Only-Begotten from Paul, and he was clearly convicted of rejecting a crucial part of the *oikonomia* of the God the Word's communion with human beings. For when he said about him, "who became obedient unto death, even the death of the

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<sup>303</sup> Nestorius, *Second Letter to Cyril*.

<sup>304</sup> Phil. 2:5-6.

<sup>305</sup> Phil. 2:8.

cross," as spoken by Paul<sup>306</sup>, he is clearly convicted of perverting the faith and wrongly attributing to one man the sufferings. For if the one who existed in the form of God and was equal to God became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, it is evident that he himself was the one who suffered, not by his nature as God, but by his own flesh, which he precisely united to himself.

Instead, the one who deceived himself with all the definitions of the nature, continuing on in this way, both concealing these vital teachings and evading them by deceptions, opens a door of defense for the Jews, because he wishes to show the accusation of the cross against them to be a small matter like having crucified a man alone, and not having dared this toward God. But the holy Fathers who gathered at Nicaea declare him to be the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father, not made, that is, of the *ousia* of the Father, consubstantial with the Father, and that he was incarnate, and became man, and suffered; but for a little while they were silent about the impassivity. For they did not introduce a passible nature of divinity, but they teach the extreme union of the Word of God with the passible. This is also the cause of the passions that they ascribe to the divine; and instructing us in the usefulness of death, they show Jesus Christ, consubstantial with the Father, who was made flesh, suffered, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming to judge the living and the dead for our salvation.

For in order that we may have a Judge who is related to us, an immutable God becomes human, so that we may speak confidently to the Judge who is related to us, not having the boldness of those from our own achievements. For he is fearful as God, and desirable to us as a human. So that we may both fear him and desire him at the same time, the power instilling fear in us, and the kinship inspiring desire. Therefore, the one who shared in human nature with me is coming to judge the living and the dead, so that he may be a just judge to them, to those living, with whom he shared before their sufferings, and may become a merciful judge, according to the great Apostle, "having

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<sup>306</sup> Phil. 2:8.

learned obedience from what he suffered”<sup>307</sup>. For even though he knows all things, being God, the Only-Begotten, he accepted a test for the sake of the nature of his divinity, which was neither capable of being nor becoming receptive. For he united to himself the nature received from Mary, and with it, he accepted a test which the nature of his divinity, being infinite, was incapable of.

**22.** But he who slanders God’s birth from the Virgin seems to be ignorant of the mystery of the wisdom of God. For this birth is not the beginning of divinity, but was the prelude to the Word becoming flesh. For since he, being God before the ages, chose to become man, and since birth is the beginning of humanity, he receives this beginning, laying down this foundation for the divine dispensation in the realities. Always existing, he begins to be man, being God, but having chosen to become man as well. Therefore, the Fathers who were present at Nicaea wrote clearly, speaking of the Only-Begotten Son, “But those who say, ‘There was a time when he did not exist’, and ‘Before he was born he did not exist’, and that ‘He was made from nothing’, or from another substance or essence, claiming that he is created or mutable or alterable, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes these people.” And they also banish those who say before he was brought forth he was not as alien to the hope of Christians and set apart from our salvation, as well as those who say Christ came into being “from nothing”. And indeed, if he was only a man who had been honored with divine dignity, like those who have been erring say, then he did come into existence from nothing, like that irreverent tongue says. But since the one existing before the ages became man, they excommunicate from the salvation and hope of Christians those who say Christ to have come into existence from nothing.

**23.** And so much for that. But in order that we do not conceive that the Only-Begotten was begotten as a man according to his divinity, they anathematize those who say that the Son of God is mutable or subject to change. For the divine nature of the Only-Begotten did not show him to be a man subject to change, but it was a certain dispensation and a mysterious manifestation of divine wisdom. This is

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<sup>307</sup> Heb. 5:8.



what we call paradox, that God became a man while remaining God, which those who are misled seek to demonstrate as a common thing, investigating with their logic the things beyond understanding. And by disputing about words, they turned away from seeking the truth, striving in vain to dissolve the paradox, which is truly futile and impossible to investigate with words, the wonders beyond understanding. For if they were to scrutinize with reasoning all the miracles of God, they would allow no wonder at all. But neither would they allow any sign from God to occur, and the natural philosophers, striving after all great things, would force all great things. For to investigate all the words of everything is to dissolve miracles and to provoke God while he is benevolent to us in His miracles.

Therefore, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was condemned to silence because he did not believe the miracle performed by the grace of God and sought proof through rational thought rather than accepting it as a wonder. When Gabriel said to him, "Your wife Elizabeth, though barren, will bear you a son"<sup>308</sup>, he demanded proof, saying, "How can I be sure of this?"<sup>309</sup> However, since he asked for proof of the miracle, he was condemned to silence, receiving the punishment for seeking evidence of what was sought. And his tongue was afflicted for serving unbelief to the priest, so that the silence of Zechariah might teach us all to accept the things of God with silence and receive his glorious revelations, and might persuade all to believe in the miracle-working God and not to demand a logic for those things that themselves establish a new logic for all things<sup>310</sup>.

**24.** The Fathers who assembled at Nicaea knew and taught the churches to believe [these] in the matter of the Only-Begotten. But there was no inquiry then concerning the Holy Spirit, and they were content to declare the divine rank in few words, saying, "We believe in

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<sup>308</sup> Luke 1:7, 13.

<sup>309</sup> Luke 1:18.

<sup>310</sup> It would be well to consider the deep implications of what St. Theodotus says here. Our natural logic is limited and imperfect, merely an inferior reflection of the divine *Logos*. Therefore, the miracles and wonders of God are not to be seen as illogical things, but rather as furthermore enhancing our reasoning. For reasoning is necessary even to believe based on a miracle, and the Doctor is not wholly condemning the use of reasoning with respect to matters of confession.

the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." For those who say, "We believe in the Holy Spirit also," have set forth an equal value of belief with those who believe in the Father and the Son. For the equal faith shows the equal honor of the persons believed in as divine. So let no one assume them to teach us to believe in slave and master, or as Creator and creation, or as a greater God and a lesser one; for those who do not share in nature, one faith would not be appropriate for them from humans. But let these things be said now in a work about the Holy Spirit, more fully discussed by us concerning his divine dominion in three other books, in which we find the Holy Spirit, taught by divine Scripture, to be glorified with the Father and the Son. And now we present to you these gifts of our words, O beloved leader, not able to express adequately the worthiness of the command, but providing sufficient evidence by exposing the deceptions of those who are now deluded, not from their own homes, but from the divine Scripture and the holy Fathers gathered at Nicaea.

END

## IX

ca. 510 CE

St. Severus of Antioch, *Ad Nephaliium, Or. II*

*CSCO 64:10-21; Pauline Allen and C. T. R. Hayward, 'Text 1:  
Ad Nephaliium, Or. II', in Severus of Antioch'.*

Now we ourselves, according to the saving and truly divine statement of the three hundred and eighteen, I believe and confess that the only-begotten Son of God, who is equal in essence to the Father through whose power all things existed, came down at the end of days and became incarnate and was made man - that is, he was united to flesh which had a soul possessed of reason and intelligence by means of a free and hypostatic union from the holy Spirit and from the ever-virgin Mary, Mother of God; and that his nature was one, even when the Word had become incarnate, just as the God-inspired men and mystagogues of the church have instructed us; and we know him as simple, and not compound, in that which he is understood to be God, and composite in that which he is understood to be man. For since we believe him to be Emmanuel, even the same God the Word incarnate out of two natures which possess integrity (I mean out of divinity and out of humanity), we know one Son, one Christ, one Lord. We do not affirm that he is known in two natures, as the Council of Chalcedon declared as dogma, putting the expression 'indivisibly' onto its declaration as a kind of apology.

For that very synod bears witness that it is not the same thing to say that after the union he is "out of two natures" as it is to say that he is "in two natures", even if the word 'united' be added. For the Acts state as follows:

The excellent and illustrious leaders have declared: Dioscorus was alleging: "I accept the phrase 'out of two natures'; the

phrase 'in two natures', I do not accept". Moreover, the holy archbishop Leo declared that the two natures which are in Christ, himself the one only-begotten Son and our Saviour, are united without confusion and without change. To whom, now, are you attached? To the holy Leo, or to Dioscorus? The devout bishops shouted: 'Like Leo, thus we believe! Those who are at variance are Eutychians! Leo has made affirmation in orthodox manner!'

See how they dubbed the phrase "out of two natures" a heretical expression, whereas they determined the phrase "two natures united" to be of orthodox character, by this means making provision for him to be described after the union as being "of two natures". But if they had thought that the former and latter phrases had meant the same thing, it would have been proper for them to state plainly that Dioscorus was disputatious, and was being contentious for no reason about words which had possessed the same force and meaning. But they had known correctly that the phrase "out of two natures" was the cause of [the formula] "he is one through composition", and they were duly careful lest it should be stated "one nature of the Word incarnate"<sup>311</sup>; rather, they accepted the phrase "in two" and alongside it the expression "united" (that is to say, undivided) subtly and according to their own understanding, without regard for what would follow.

For the phrase "out of two natures" in fact denies that they are two, and demonstrates that he himself is one through composition, and that those things out of which he was compounded as the same Lord did not cease to exist because they were joined together without confusion; and that same one continues firm and unshaken after the sublime union. That formula, however, which is expressed as "two after the union" is one of those things which have no substance: for if two persisted, they would not be united, since union is that which erases duality<sup>312</sup>. And I shall try to make this plain from what will be

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<sup>311</sup> Chalcedon, being perfectly aware that the patristic formula of "out of / from two natures" implies one nature of the Incarnate Word post-union, departed from the blessed Fathers by condemning

<sup>312</sup> See footnote 288.

brought to bear later on, namely this: I maintain that the hypostatic union does not admit of division into two.

Pay attention, then, to what that loathsome Theodoret says by way of contradiction against the Second Anathema [of Cyril], when he indeed affirms two natures and confesses them as united, but denies the hypostatic union, about which the Synod of Chalcedon was also silent. For he states as follows: "Now it is fitting to believe the Lord as manifesting two natures when he says to the Jews, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I raise it up'<sup>313</sup>. Now if a mixing had taken place, then God would not have remained as God, and the temple would not have been known as the temple (for the principle of mixture requires such a thing), and our Lord would have said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I raise it up" superfluously. For it would have been appropriate for him to say: "Destroy me, and in three days I rise up", if indeed there had been some mixing and confusion. But now he manifests the temple as destroyed, and God as the one raising it up. Therefore, the hypostatic union which they propound to us instead of mixture is, as I suppose, superfluous; but it is enough that one should speak of a union which both demonstrates the properties of the natures and teaches [us] to worship one Christ."

And again, by way of contradiction in respect of the tenth anathema, [Theodoret] states as follows: "But what was from the seed of David, what was mortal, what was liable to suffering, what was afraid of death was assumed by him, even though this nature afterward destroyed the power of death because of its union with God who assumed it; and what walked in perfect uprightness and said to John, 'Allow it now, for so it befits us to fulfill all uprightness'<sup>314</sup>, this [is what] received the title of the high priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek'."

While this man, therefore, acknowledges two natures and also speaks of union, let us consider that the holy Cyril says by way of defense of his own tenth anathema: "How, then, do you assert that that Word who is from God was united to what was from the seed of David, if you have ascribed priesthood only to the one who is from the seed of

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<sup>313</sup> John 2:19.

<sup>314</sup> Matt. 3:15.

David? For if the union is truly a union, there are not two entities at all, but Christ is known as one and sole, out of the two [natures]. Therefore, it is clear that they hypocritically declare that they acknowledge the union, since they are willing to delude the minds of those who are more simple, but themselves regard the conjunction [of the two] as external and in appearance, a conjunction which we ourselves copy when we are shown as being partakers of his divine nature through the Spirit."

But perhaps you will say: "Theodoret, because he said 'who is of the seed of David', rightly bore the blame, since it was as if he were speaking of a unity of persons." Yet in fact he spoke rather of "what is of the seed of David"; and afterward the holy Cyril himself (in those discourses which were composed before the latter) also finds fault with him because of the term 'nature', when he states as follows: "Now this careful Theodoret, being an accurate imitator of that man's abomination, was not ashamed to say that he assumed human nature, and showed this nature as greater than that of ordinary high priests."

But this moaning Theodoret also states in his complaint about the same anathema: "Now for the experiencing of these sufferings of ours our nature was assumed on our behalf; and it was not the case that he assumed this nature for the sake of our salvation." How this man is reproved by his own words, in that both above and below he describes without fear "what was of the seed of David" as both person and nature in what he says himself: "Who is the one who is perfect in labors of virtue?" And again: "Who is the one who has lived in virtue?" And again: "The nature which was from us was assumed on our behalf". Thus Leo, too, in his Tome now says in fact: "Let him examine which nature was pierced with the nails and hung on the wood", and now: "For nevertheless in our Lord Jesus Christ there is, rather, one person of God and man".

For what man of those who reason, when he hears that there is one person of God and man in our Lord Jesus Christ, would not at once think concerning that expression that it conveys to us the sense of a union of persons, and not a hypostatic union out of two realities, I mean out of divinity and out of humanity? For if he had thought that he would show to us one and the same reality, then he would have

needed to say: “For because our Lord Jesus Christ is one out of perfect divinity and perfect humanity, the same is God and man at the same time”. For what [Leo] has stated: “In our Lord Jesus Christ there is one person of God and man”, shows first that there is one entity, God who is set apart, and then another entity, man; and that thence that title of ‘Christ’ binds the two of them together - as Nestorius also asserted: “For this reason also God the Word is named Christ, because he possesses perpetual conjunction to the Christ”.

For in another place the same man also states that the title ‘Christ’ is indicative of two natures, as also are ‘Lord’ and ‘Son’, and of the latter and of the former individually, such that there are two Christs, and two Lords, and two Sons, and again whichever of the two you wish together by means of the conjunction. And [Nestorius] states as follows: “Therefore when the divine Scripture is about to speak either of the birth of Christ from the blessed virgin, or of his death, it nowhere seems to put ‘God’, but ‘Christ’, or ‘Son’, or ‘Lord’, since those three expressions are indicative of the two natures, now of this, now of that; now of the one, now of the other.”

But you can say that the Synod of Chalcedon understood the union as hypostatic, for it says in its definition that there is to be acknowledged “one and the same Christ and Son and Lord and Only-Begotten in two natures without confusion, without change, without separation, and without division; the difference of the natures being in no way taken away on account of the union, but rather the distinctive characteristic of each being preserved from two natures concurring together into one person and one hypostasis”. But it is plain to all those who are even moderately educated and learned in the Orthodox dogmas that it is in the nature of a contradiction to say concerning the one Christ that on the one hand there are two natures, but on the other one hypostasis. For the person who speaks of ‘one hypostasis’ necessarily affirms one nature as well.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> This is because, as St. Cyril defines, Ephesus 431 dogmatizes, and reasoning necessitates, the united natures are particulars, i.e. *hypostases*. Therefore, if there are two natures post-union just as there were pre-union, there are necessarily two *hypostases*, which the Chalcedonians do not wish to affirm: however, this is the logical outcome of their position.

[Two excerpts attributed to St. Athanasius]

See how [Athanasius] has affirmed him as being one Christ, one person and one nature and one hypostasis. Furthermore, with the same words that holy Cyril comes forward. For he says, in the second treatise against the blasphemies of Nestorius: "Leave off from dividing the natures after the union". But immediately a malicious hearer disputes this and says: "Look, he forbids us to divide the natures after the union, and I declare that they are united!" But that person shall hear from us: "We do not pay attention to your disputations; but we shall inquire of the source of the statement what he defines as the meaning of [the instruction] that we should "not divide the natures".

Now in the same discourse he had stated earlier: "Thus everything shall be spoken of as if referring to one person: for one nature is perceived as existing after the union, that of the Word himself incarnate". Now, according to you, he ought to have said: "For the two natures are perceived as united after the union". But he himself knows that the union demonstrated to me one nature incarnate, that of the Word himself; and the fact that he also calls that same Christ *hypostasis* we can observe without any trouble. For he wrote as follows in the Third Chapter of his Anathemas: "If anyone divides the hypostases in Christ after the union, joining them together merely by a conjunction in dignity or authority or might and not rather by a conjunction of a union according to nature, let him be anathema".

But yet again those who attack these things which have been stated are calumniators, and assert that that union according to *hypostasis* allows us to speak of two *hypostases*, that is, two natures, after the union. But I do not need many words to deal with this, since I shall give testimony from the enemies themselves to the effect that this conjunction of hypostases, which is effected through a natural union, brings about one incarnate hypostasis in the composition of the Son himself. For Andrew<sup>316</sup> says, in his complaint against this anathema: "Again, let us remind him of these words of his, since they show him speaking of two *hypostases* (in those matters which he discusses in the first volume): 'So then, that Word which is from the Father was not

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<sup>316</sup> Andrew of Samosata, a fifth-century dyophysite bishop who was formally commissioned by John of Antioch to refute the Twelve Anathemas of St. Cyril.



sanctified with us according to his own nature, even if one were to suppose that he alone was also born of the holy virgin, was anointed, and sanctified; and because of this also assumed the title Christ'. How, then, as if disregarding these words of his, does he gather [the natures] into one *hypostasis* by confusing the natures, when he calls the divine union 'natural'?"

Look: he evidently complains of the anathema as something which introduces one *hypostasis*. How, then, do you presume to call the gathering together of the *hypostases* according to a natural union 'two natures', that is, two *hypostases* united, when you do not perceive as a result of the union one entity in composition? Now that this is indeed the case, hear along with the testimony of the enemies the voice of Cyril himself as well. For [Cyril] states in that letter to Nestorius, in which he also cites the anathema: "Therefore let us ascribe to one person all the Gospel expressions, to one incarnate hypostasis of the Word. For the Lord Jesus Christ is one according to the Scriptures."

Thus it is clear that those who were at Chalcedon, when they promoted the dogma that Christ is in two natures, threw in for us the term 'one *hypostasis*' to lead to deception. For if there is one *hypostasis*, there is, in short, also one nature, as has been demonstrated before. For the God-inspired voice of the Fathers clearly affirmed neither two natures nor two *hypostases* for the one Son, regardless of whether anyone should say that the natures were either united or separated. For the lack of definition of both terms is understandable and challenging because it is generic, according to external authorities as well as general opinions. Furthermore, on account of irreverent mouths especially is added also that phrase "but one nature of God the Word incarnate". Nor may they assert that by saying 'incarnate' he established that other nature separately: for that God-inspired man who had Christ speaking within him did not utter an expression so base and perverse, but had stated clearly that there were not two natures divided, but two united.

[An excerpt attributed to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus]

Why, then, do you frighten those who are more simple when you say: "See! The holy Cyril in sending letters to Nestorius states that the natures which were gathered together into the true union were

different from one another”, and thence you bring forth those matters which come out of your own heart when you assert: “So, then, if the natures are gathered together into a union, is it necessary for us to speak of them as two natures united?” For that man deserves to be believed rather than your opinion or your soothsaying, as though he were explaining himself, and saying: “Now one Christ and Son and Lord is understood from the two [natures], not as if the difference, but rather the separation of the natures were taken away on account of the union”. With understanding indeed, let us add this: for the natures from which comes the one Christ are in fact different, inasmuch as divinity and humanity are not the same. But we do not make their difference a cause of duality, in that they are gathered together into the union; for from them Emmanuel is composed.

For the teacher cries aloud: “Cease from dividing the natures after the union!” However, this command that we should not divide the natures does not mean that we should affirm (as you yourselves affirm) that the two natures are united; but it means this - that we should affirm one incarnate nature, as [Cyril] himself says. For he declares as follows (just as he also asserts above when he says): “So just as everything is spoken of the one person - for one nature is recognized as existing after the union, namely that of the Word incarnate”. Thus these words “after the union” were said not with reference to distinction. It is not the case, as certain people supposed as a result of this, that before the union there were two realities of Christ<sup>317</sup>; for these words are the words of a drunken mind, and mere twaddle.

For indeed before the union and the incarnation, the Word was simple and incorporeal; but when, according to the Scripture, it pleased him to become flesh, that is, to be united to flesh which possessed a rational soul; then, from that conception, God the Word was incarnate and yielded himself for our sake to our composition in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible and as he himself alone knew. For we do not set up the human nature separately, in the manner of the foolish Nestorians, and then make God the Word dwell in it afterward. For this would constitute an indwelling, and not incarnation; with the

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<sup>317</sup> The human *hypostasis* of Christ did not exist prior to the union. When we speak of “two natures pre-union”, we refer to logical priority.

consequence that God would not be incarnate and made man, but rather there would be found a man inspired by God, a Christ. For indeed, when we examine things altogether, we know that the divinity is one thing and the humanity another, and that they are greatly distant from one another. But when we consider the divine union, that is to say, the incarnation as conceivable for us, we see that out of two, divinity and humanity which are perfect, is composed Emmanuel in a union which is indivisible. And this is what was meant by the holy Cyril: “Leave off from dividing the natures after the union”, that is, after we have affirmed the union.

END

## X

508-518 CE

### St. Severus of Antioch, *First and Second Letters to Count Oecumenius*

*E. W. Brooks, 'I. A Letter to Oecumenius the Count', in Severus of Antioch: A  
Collection of Letters from Numerous Syriac Manuscripts, Letters 1-61.*

#### **First Letter to Count Oecumenius.**

We also have in the God-inspired Scripture supplies of humility, and no lack of arguments to bring us down and help us to keep silence. If you, as if you were about to go up to Mt. Sinai, shrink from writing 'to such a man' (referring to me), and think fit to use David's words which he says to those who were urging him to take Saul's daughter in marriage, "Is it a small thing in your eyes that I should be son-in-law to the king?"<sup>318</sup>, while I am a poor man and inglorious, I also, when required to make answer to your question, make use of these words: "I am not a prophet, nor the son of prophets, but I am a shepherd, and a scraper of sycamore fruit"<sup>319</sup>, if it is not too much for me to say even this: for I am not worthy to tell the righteousness of God, and to take his covenant in my mouth. However, since the time of the present struggles does not allow silence, I accept an honorable defeat from you, and turn to the question. And in this I defeat you, since I show that you do not practice humility in a philosophic spirit. As to your statement that the holy old men called bold speech fire or warmth, I say this, that we must not use this method of speaking without discrimination, but there are occasions for using it and circumstances to which to apply it.

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<sup>318</sup> 1 Sam. 18:23.

<sup>319</sup> Amos 7:14.

Our Lord in the Gospels in many parables teaches us in the case of spiritual petitions to knock without ceasing and display a praiseworthy audacity. And the saying of the Proverbs also instructs us that “there is shame which brings sin, and there is shame which brings glory and grace”<sup>320</sup>. Know then, mighty man, [for I now return to make answer] that for us to anathematize those who speak of properties of natures (I mean the divinity and the humanity of which the one Christ consists) is not permissible. Flesh does not renounce its existence as flesh, even if it has become God's flesh, nor has the Word departed from his nature, even if he has been hypostatically united to flesh which possesses a rational and intelligent soul: but the difference also is preserved, and the propriety in the form of natural characteristics of the natures of which Emmanuel consists, since the flesh was not converted into the nature of the Word, nor was the Word changed into flesh. We mean in the matter of natural characteristics, and not that those which were naturally united are singly and individually separated and divided from one another: this is the assertion of those who cleave our one Lord Jesus Christ into two natures.

For, since the union in *hypostasis* is acknowledged, it follows that those which were united are not separated from one another: but there is one Son, and one nature of God the Word incarnate himself, as the holy Cyril also says in the work *Against Diodorus*: “Let him know therefore that the body which was born at Bethlehem, even if it is not the same as the Word from God and the Father (I mean in natural characteristics), yet nevertheless became his, not anyone else's separate from the Son: and there is recognized to be one Son and Christ and Lord and Word who took flesh”. Those therefore who confess one incarnate nature of God the Word, and do not confuse the elements of which he consists, recognize also the propriety<sup>321</sup> of those that were joined in union (and a property is that which exists in the form of a manifestation of natural differences), and not that we should ascribe the acts of the humanity only to the human nature, and impute

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<sup>320</sup> Prov. 26:11.

<sup>321</sup> While the choice for the term ‘propriety’ may seem unfitting, given that it stems from the Lat. *proprietas*, it is fitting. St. Severus's point here is that Miaphysitism acknowledges the qualitative difference of the properties of the natures post-union, and does not confuse them.

again those of the divinity separately to God the Word, but they recognize the difference only, not admitting a division: for the principle of union does not admit of division.

Hear what the holy and wise doctor Cyril says in the second book of the work against the blasphemies of Nestorius: “For between divinity and humanity I also allow that there is great distinction and distance. For the things which have been named on the principle of manner of existence are clearly different, and in no point like one another. But, when the mystery in Christ is introduced among us, the principle of union is not oblivious of difference, but rejects division, not by mixing or commingling the natures with one another, but that, after the Word of God has partaken of flesh and blood, he is even so understood and named as one Son”. But, if Emmanuel is one, consisting of divinity and humanity which have a perfect reality according to their own principle, and the hypostatic union without confusion shows the difference of those which have been joined in one in the *oikonomic* union, but rejects division, both the elements which naturally belong to the humanity have come to belong to the very divinity of the Word, and those which belong to the Word himself have come to belong to the very humanity which he *hypostatically* united to him.

On this subject we will again adduce the sacred words of Cyril. In the *Prosphonetikon* to the religious king Theodosius he spoke as follows: “As therefore it came to belong to the humanity to be the only One, because it had been united to the Word in an *oikonomic* union, so it came to belong to the Word to be 'the firstborn among many brethren', because of the union with flesh”. Gregory the Theologian also, in the Letter to Cledonius, wrote words which agree with him as follows: “As the natures are mingled, so also are the appellations; and they run into one another on the principle of coalescence”. Do not let the term 'mingle' disturb you: for he used it very clearly and without danger with the intention of denoting the primary union: for, where there is a union of something incorporeal with a body, no danger anywhere arises from mingling. For this is manifestly a quality of fluid bodies, to be confounded together by intertwining, and, so to speak, come out of

their nature.<sup>322</sup> We therefore anathematize not those who confess the properties of the natures of which the one Christ consists, but those who separate the properties, and apportion them to each nature apart.

When the one Christ has once been divided (and he is divided by the fact that they speak of two natures after the union), with the natures which have been cut asunder into a duality and separated into a distinct diversity go the operations and properties which are the offspring of this division, as the words of Leo's impious letter state in what he said: "For each of the forms effects in partnership with the other that which belongs to itself, the Word doing that which belongs to the Word, and the body performing the things which belong to the body". Against these things it is well to set the much-honored words of the holy Cyril, which refute impiety. In the *Scholia* about the coal he speaks as follows: "Nevertheless we may see in the coal as in a figure that God the Word was united to the humanity, but has not cast off being that which he is, but rather changed what had been assumed or united into his glory and operation. For, as fire when it takes hold of wood and is introduced into it, prevails over it, and does not make it cease being wood, but rather changes it into the appearance and force of fire, and performs all its own acts in it, and is already reckoned as one with it, so understand in the case of Christ also. For, since God was ineffably united with humanity, he has preserved it as what we say it is, and he himself also has remained what he was. But, after he has once been united, he is reckoned as one with it, appropriating its qualities to himself, but he himself also carried on the operation of his nature in it".

If, then, the Word changed the humanity which he had hypostatically united to him, not into his nature, for he remained that which he was, but into his glory and operation, and things which manifestly belong to the flesh have come to belong to the Word himself, how shall we allow that each of the forms performs its own acts? But we must

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<sup>322</sup> Here the Doctor, as well as St. Gregory, draws from the Stoic / Neo-Platonic theories of mixture (*krasis*), in which an incorporeal (or relatively incorporeal) active participle is said to "mingle" or "blend" with a material passive participle, activating it and operating through it. Within classical metaphysics, the soul and the body was a common analogy for the manner of *krasis*.

anathematize those who confine the one Christ in two natures and say that each of the natures performs its own acts. Between the things performed and done by the one Christ the difference is great. Some of them are acts befitting the divinity, while others are human. For instance, to walk and travel in bodily form upon the earth is without contention human; but to bestow on those who are maimed in the feet and cannot walk upon the ground at all the power of walking like sound persons is God-befitting. Yet the one Incarnate Word performed the latter and the former, and the one nature did not perform the one, and the other the other; nor, because the things performed are different, shall we on this account rightly define two natures or forms as operating.<sup>323</sup> Again the *Tome of Leo* says: “For each of the natures preserves its own property without diminution”, distributing the properties to the two natures severally, as one who divides the one and only Christ into two natures. For the property of the natures of which Emmanuel consists, which is shown in the natural characteristics, continues constant and fixed, as the holy Cyril also says in the *Second Letter to Succensus*: “But, while each of them both remains and is perceived in the property which is. by nature, according to the principle which has just been enunciated by us, the ineffable and incomprehensible union has shown us one nature of the Son, yet, as I have said, an incarnate nature”.

But God the Word did not permit his flesh in all things to undergo the passions proper to it, in order that its property might be preserved undiminished, as the impious disputer said. For observe what the wise doctor Cyril says, in answer to the objections made by Theodoret, in the *Defense of the Tenth Anathema*: “When the lowness arising from the emptying seems hard to you, wonder greatly at the love of the Son toward us. For, what you say is a mean thing, this he did voluntarily for your sake. He wept in human fashion, that he might take away your weeping. He feared by dispensation, inasmuch as he sometimes permitted his flesh to undergo the passions proper to it, that he might make us valiant”. If he sometimes permitted his flesh by *oikonomia* to

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<sup>323</sup> As the (Pseudo-)Areopagite puts it, the one *theandric* (divine-human) energy / operation of the Incarnate Word. While Christ performs acts befitting both the divinity and the humanity, the natures do not perform what befits each - as if they are subjects, *contra* Leo - but the one Christ does.



undergo the passions proper to it, he did not preserve its propriety undiminished: for in many instances it is seen not to have undergone the things which manifestly belong to its nature; for it was united to the Word, the Creator of nature. The Word therefore who had become incarnate walked upon the sea, and after his death under the wound of the lance caused a stream of salvation to well forth from his side: again, after the Resurrection, he came in while the doors were shut, and appeared to the disciples in the house; whom he also allowed to touch him, showing that his flesh was tangible and solid, and of one essence with us, and was also superior to corruption; and thereby he subverted the theory of phantasy. It belongs therefore to those who part the one Christ into two natures and dissolve the unity to say, “For each of the natures preserves its property unimpaired”.

But those who believe that, after God the Word had been hypostatically united to flesh that possessed an intelligent soul, he performed all his own acts in it, and changed it not into his nature (far be it!), but into his glory and operation, no longer seek the things that manifestly belong to the flesh without diminution, to which flesh the things that manifestly belong by nature to the Godhead have come to belong by reason of the union. But, if they senselessly divide it from God the Word by speaking of two natures after the union, it then walks in its own ways following its nature, and preserves its properties undiminished on the principle of the impious men. But these things are not so (for how could they be?), but indeed very different: for union rejects division, as the holy Cyril said: “For, though it is said that he hungered and thirsted, and slept and grew weary after a journey, and wept and feared, these things did not happen to him just as they do to us in accordance with compulsory ordinances of nature; but he himself voluntarily permitted his flesh to walk according to the laws of nature, for he sometimes allowed it even to undergo its own passions”. For from Cyril's words, as from a sacred anchor, I do not depart. And the same statement is made by Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus also in the *Sermon on Baptism*: “For he is purity itself, and did not need purification; but he is purified for you; just as for you, he put on a garb of flesh, while he is fleshless: and he would have run no danger at all from putting off baptism; for he himself was a warden of passion to

himself". Accordingly, then, he was a warden to himself of hungering as well as of being tired after a journey, and of accepting the other human passions, such as do not fall under sin, in order to display the Incarnation truly and without phantasy.

Of what we have said this is the sum; that we must anathematize those who divide the one Christ: and they divide him by speaking of two natures after the union, and consequently apportioning the operations and properties between the natures. Accordingly, good doctrine is contained in the — of the serene king: for it anathematizes those who divide the one Son who was hypostatically united to flesh into two natures, and the operations and properties of the same two natures: for thus also says the impious Theodoret: "How does he range under impiety those who divide the properties of the natures of God who is before the ages and of the man who was assumed in the last days?" I have written these things though I am poor in intellect and praise the greatness of your God-loving understanding; and because, as you are wise, I give you an opportunity to attain wiser results. Forgive me that on account of the lack of leisure caused by the present struggles I have been late in writing. Greet your honored consort, who is a partner and a helper in the affairs of God.

## **Second Letter to Oecumenius.**

I wonder how it is that your God-loving magnificence has picked up again from the beginning the contention that had been put to silence. While confessing Emmanuel to be of two natures, to suppose the elements of which he consists of, to be commonalities encompassing many *hypostases* (this is what is meant by the characteristic of a commonality) is a thing that is very abominable and inept, and one that confirms the charge falsely disseminated against us by the impious<sup>324</sup>: for we are found to be imagining two natures before the union according to their account; for there would be the whole of humanity and of course the divinity also, even before the Incarnation

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<sup>324</sup> It is logically and metaphysically absurd to theorize the united natures as universals (i.e. essences): for the effective implication of such is that the divine essence encompassing the Three united with the human essence / mankind. More on this below.

of the Word. And these matters would need further conversation by word of mouth, not written words in a letter, which are subject to considerations of brevity, and bring danger to the writer, wherever any unusual name or unelaborated phrase is inserted in the document.

You know what words that lead to rocks you have used in your recent composition, and, though admitting that you do this as a concession, you have still done it. But to us, who by ordinance from above and mercy have attained to this priestly office, it does not bring honor to take such ill expressions in our mouth and consign them to writing: for it is written, “The lips of a priest will guard knowledge, and they will ask law from his mouth”<sup>325</sup>. Wherefore Paul also, who was taken up to the third heaven, and heard ineffable words, knowing the difficulty of words of this kind, urged the believers to make earnest and constant prayer that speech might be granted him with eloquence. Since then these things are so, and we decline to employ a multitude of words, which as a rule do not escape sin, I will use shortness of speech to your wisdom and knowledge, and ask you a very easy question.

Do you call the flesh possessing an intelligent soul, which God the Word voluntarily united to himself hypostatically without any change, a particular or a commonality, that is one soul-possessing *hypostasis*, or the whole human commonality? It is manifest that, if you wish to give a right-minded answer, you will say one soul-possessing body. Accordingly, we say that from it and the *hypostasis* of God the Word the ineffable union was made: for the whole of the Godhead and the whole of humanity in general were not joined in an essential union, but individual *hypostases* [did]. And the holy and wise Cyril plainly witnesses to us in that in the Third Chapter or Anathema he spoke thus: “Whoever divides the one Christ into hypostases after the union, associating them in association of honor or of authority only, and not rather in junction of natural union, let him be anathema”. And again in the *Scholia* the same says: “Hence we shall learn that the hypostases have remained without confusion”. Accordingly, the natural union was not of commonalities, but of *hypostases* of which Emmanuel was composed.

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<sup>325</sup> Mal. 2:7.

And do not think that *hypostases* in all cases have a distinct person assigned to them, so that we should be thought, like the impious Nestorius, to speak of a union of persons, and to run counter to the God-inspired words of the holy Cyril, who in the *Second Letter to Nestorius* speaks thus: “But that it should be so will in no way help the right principle of faith, even if some men spread about a union of persons. For the Scripture did not say that God the Word united to himself the person of a man, but that he became flesh”. When *hypostases* subsist by individual subsistence<sup>326</sup>, as for instance, those of Peter and of Paul, whom the authority of the apostleship united, then there will be a union of persons and a brotherly association, not a natural union of one *hypostasis* made up out of two that is free from confusion. For this is what those who adhere to the foul doctrines of Nestorius are convicted of saying with regard to the divine Incarnation also. They first make the babe exist by himself separately, so that a distinct person is even assigned to him, and then by attaching God the Word to him impiously introduce a union of persons into the faith. This Gregory the Theologian also rejected by saying in the great *Letter to Cledonius*: “Whoever says that the man was formed, and God afterward crept in, is condemned: for this is not a birth of God, but an escape from birth”.

But, when *hypostases* do not subsist in individual subsistence, as also in the case of the man among us, I mean him who is composed of soul and body, but are without confusion recognized in union and composition, being distinguished by the intellect only and displaying one *hypostasis* made out of two, such a union none will be so uninstructed as to call one of persons. Though the hypostasis of God the Word existed before, or rather was before all ages and times, being eternally with God both the Father and the Holy Spirit, yet still the flesh possessing an intelligent soul which he united to him did not exist before the union with him, nor was a distinct person assigned to it. And the great Athanasius bears witness, who in the *Letter to the*

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<sup>326</sup> A person (*prosopon*) is simply the identity / lit. “name” of a rational, self-subsistent concretely existing particular (*hypostasis*). Therefore when the Fathers confess a union of *hypostases*, they do not imply a union of *persons*, but rather merely the genuine union of particular realities and not abstract forms.

*King Jovinian* says: “As soon as there is flesh, there is at once flesh of God the Word; and, as soon as there is soul-possessing and rational flesh, there is at once soul-possessing rational flesh of God the Word: for in him also it acquired subsistence”. And the holy Cyril also testifies, addressing the impious Diodorus as follows: “My excellent man, I say that you are shooting forth unlearned words much affected with what is abhorrent. For the holy body was from Mary, but still at the very beginning of its concretion or subsistence in the womb it was made holy, as the body of Christ, and no one can see any time at which it was not his, but rather simple as you say and the same as this flesh of other men”.

Following these God-inspired words of the holy fathers, and confessing our Lord Jesus Christ to be of two natures, regard the distinct *hypostases* themselves of which Emmanuel was composed, and the natural union of these, and do not go up to commonalities and essences, of the whole of the Godhead and mankind in general: for it is manifest that the whole of the Godhead is seen in the Trinity, and humanity in general draws the mind to the whole human race.<sup>327</sup> How therefore is it anything but ridiculous and impious for us to say that the Trinity was united in *hypostasis* to the race of mankind, when the holy Scriptures say more plainly than a trumpet, “The Word became flesh and dwelt in us”<sup>328</sup>, that is that one of the three *hypostases* who was rationally and hypostatically united to soul-possessing flesh?

But neither do we deny, as we have also written in other letters on different occasions, that we often find men designating hypostases by the name of essence. Hence, Gregory the Theologian named hypostatic union “union in essence” in the *Letter to Cledonius* which we have just mentioned, speaking thus: “Whoever says that he worked by grace as in a prophet, but not that he was united and fashioned together with him in essence, may he be bereft of the excellent operation, or rather may he be full of the contrary”. And the wise Cyril

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<sup>327</sup> Essence (*ousia*) can either be concrete, or abstract: the united natures of Christ can be neither, for the divinity and the humanity united in Christ are neither universals encompassing the respective particulars (e.g. mankind), nor abstract sets of properties theorized in the mind. Therefore, we rightly say alongside the Fathers that the united natures are *hypostases* - particulars.

<sup>328</sup> John 1:14.

in the *Second Letter to Succensus* calls the humanity which was hypostatically united to God the Word 'essence', saying: "For, if after saying 'one nature of the Word' we had stopped and not added 'incarnate', but set the *oikonomia* as it were outside, they would perhaps in a way have a plausible argument when they pretend to ask, 'Where is the perfection in manhood?' or 'How was the essence after our model made up?' But, since the perfection in humanity and the characteristic of our essence has been introduced by the fact that we said 'incarnate', let them be silent, since they have leaned upon the staff of a reed". But saying that Emmanuel, is from two essence also, as we confess him to be from two natures, even if one understand the essences as *hypostases*, we avoid, as a thing that is unscientific, and has not been stated in so many words by any of the God-clad fathers: for in such matters we must avoid novelty, even if it has some religiousness about it, and with the psalmist-prophet be preserved in the tent of caution, and be hidden by grace from on high, even from the contention of tongues.

These things we have written in epistolary style, though we are in the midst of many troubles, and of many tens of thousands of kinds of cares. But it rests with your truth-loving and God-loving soul to inform us by letter if you have given up the doubts, and if what we have written appeared to have been well stated, know that the religious deacon Anatolius has abandoned this opinion, and, though late, has thanked us.

END

## XI

512–518 CE

St. Severus of Antioch, *Letters to Maron and the Emesenes*

E. W. Brooks, 'VI. Letter to Maron' & 'XXV. The Letter that was written by him to the Emesenes', in *Severus of Antioch: A Collection of Letters from Numerous Syriac Manuscripts, Letters 1-61*.

### Letter to Maron (Fragments).

Enough has, I think, been said about essence and *hypostasis*. But the term 'nature' is sometimes taken in place of essence, sometimes in place of *hypostasis*.<sup>329</sup> For even the whole of mankind we call comprehensively 'nature', as it is indeed written: "For all natures of beasts and of birds, and of reptiles and of things that are in the water are subjected and are made subject to human nature"<sup>330</sup>. And again we speak of one nature in reference to a single man, Paul, for example, or Peter, or maybe James. Where therefore we name all mankind one nature, we use the name 'nature' generically in place of essence; but, where we say that there is one nature of Paul, the name 'nature' is employed in place of individual *hypostasis*.

So also we call the Holy Trinity one nature, employing the term 'nature' in place of the common designation 'essence'; as Gregory the Theologian the bishop of Nazianzus also said in the *Sermon on the Holy Pentecost*: "Confess the Trinity to be of one Godhead, my friends; or, if you like, of one nature; and we will ask for you from the Spirit the expression 'God'". But, when we say "one incarnate nature of God the Word", as Athanasius the proponent of the Truth and the

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<sup>329</sup> 'Nature' (*physis*) is a contronym, i.e. it can refer to opposite things (common and individual). The Chalcedonian misunderstanding that, by confessing the Incarnate Word to be "one nature" the Miaphysites believe in a hybrid divine-human *ousia*, stems from a confusion of the patristic usage of 'nature'.

<sup>330</sup> Jam. 3:7.

Apostolic Faith said in the books on the Incarnation of the Word, we use 'nature' in place of particular designation, denoting the one *hypostasis* of the Word himself, like that of Peter also or of Paul, or of any other single man.

Wherefore also, when we say 'one nature which became incarnate', we do not say it absolutely, but by adding "one nature of the Word himself", [we] clearly denote the one *hypostasis*. But the very men who blasphemously call the one Christ two natures use the name 'nature' in place of particular designation, saying that the Word of God is one nature, and the man as they say from Mary another.<sup>331</sup> For they do not reach such a height of fatuity as to say that they are using the name 'natures' in place of common designation, I mean in the same sense as essence: for, if the Holy Trinity is one nature, and all mankind one nature, in the same sense as anything which is shown to be so on this principle, the Holy Trinity will be found (to say an absurd thing) to have become incarnate in all mankind, that is the human race.

...

But the Holy Scriptures instruct us otherwise, teaching us that God the Word one only of the three hypostases became incarnate and humanized. For "the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us"<sup>332</sup>.

...

But, when you hear these things, you will perhaps say that we ought not to have spoken of the difference between the natures from which Emmanuel is, lest we ourselves be found to be repeating and using the same expression as these proud men. Accordingly, let us also refrain from confessing the union, because they also profess to speak of a union which consists in an association of honor; and, because they speak of two natures after the union, let us also not say that the union was made from two natures, rejecting even the very mention of natures, like silly children, who tremble at terrifying alarms that are fictitious and invented, as if they were truth, and flee to their mothers'

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<sup>331</sup> Here we find a brief description of the infamous 'Severian Dilemma': by confessing that there are "two natures" in Christ post-union, and that these two natures are not universals, the Chalcedonians have thereby admitted that there are two *hypostases* after the union.

<sup>332</sup> John 1:14.



bosoms. If on account of the blasphemies contained in the opinions of those men we yield to them words and names which establish the truth, together with the sound of the words the great mystery of religion goes from us. But, if we be right-minded, we shall both religiously hold to the words and cast out the foul opinions as evil speaking.

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You see that we must also confess the difference between the natures from which the one Christ is, and avoid the cutting into two, and extol one Son and Christ, and one incarnate nature of God the Word.

### **Letter to the Emesenes**

To the devout presbyters and orthodox deacons, and to the rest who compose the holy order of the clergy, and to the magnificent and Christ-loving magistrates of the city, and to all the people of the holy church, Severus greeting in our Lord.

To those who are not wise in their mind or are otherwise without intelligence, and are lacking in true instruction, the holy Scripture gives the proper rule and place, in order that their emptiness of mind and lack of instruction may be turned to wisdom: for indeed it commands those who are such both to learn and to ask, or to be silent altogether; for the holy book of Proverbs somewhere said: "To the fool who asks wisdom shall be reckoned: but, when a man makes himself silent, he is thought to be wise"<sup>333</sup>. But the man who keeps this rule it raises and advances, and incites to learn things that are of use and profit, and it says, "Give your heart to wisdom, and prepare your ears for words of understanding"<sup>334</sup>. I am surprised therefore that the brother whom you mention (out of tenderness for his soul I do not mention his name) did not know his own measure, and, besides not knowing originally the subject on which he was talking, neglected this legally established and salutary rule; and, when he ought to have bent an ear of understanding to those who are wiser than he is, he on the

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<sup>333</sup> Prov. 27:28.

<sup>334</sup> Prov. 28:12.

contrary threatened to take the ignorance that is in him to the city of Alexandria, like an invincible warrior, who is able to overcome and take captive all that meet him, and sell them where he likes.

Therefore, I have both accepted your wisdom in the Lord, which is worthy of the Church and very honorable, and your patience, which is such as befits Christians, and have crowned them also with a decree of many praises, since in accordance with the apostolic model you both received and admonished him as your member and brother, and brought forward the teachings of the holy Fathers. And, whereas you once and twice secretly and openly refuted and corrected him on the points on which he spoke without knowledge, and he was again involved in the same errors, and you behaved like doctors and churchmen, and on all sides seek to gain his salvation, and by actual deeds show that you look to the apostolic commandment which commands, "Let everything be done decently and in order"<sup>335</sup>. But he, though he was thought worthy to receive so much attention, had no mercy on his soul, and did not restrain himself so as to show moderation and humility, I expressed blame and at the same time showed mercy and still show mercy, since ignorance is free from danger, for a man is not blamed because he does not know. He is trying to bring upon himself the sin that does not deserve forgiveness, in that he does not yield to those who are wise among the brethren, or seek from wiser men a cure for his ignorance by desire to learn, but pettily searches into things that are unknown and uncertain, and does his best to find men to share his opinions, in order that he may seem to be saying something when he is saying nothing that is sound.

But the other things which he said without knowledge he has with difficulty come to honor by silence, in that he assented to the passages from the holy fathers that were brought before him; and he was reduced to one passage, the words used by the holy Cyril in the second book against the blasphemies of Nestorius, which are as follows: "For, because the Word who is from God the Father took flesh and came forth as a man like us, he would not for this reason be also termed a double thing. For he is one, and not without flesh, who

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<sup>335</sup> 1 Cor. 16:40.

in his own nature is without flesh and blood". After you had quoted to him the words used by the Doctor, he persisted and said that after his own Resurrection we must confess that God the Word is without flesh, inasmuch as he put off that which was without variation and without separation hypostatically united to him, a thing that is beyond all impiety and profanity, so that everyone who has natural (I will not say, spiritual) intelligence must wonder if a fact which is so universally admitted has ever been made a subject of contention, and has passed the lips of anyone who has duly believed in our one Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

If he were skilled in divine doctrine, he should have [to omit everything else], considered the anathemas of Gregory the Theologian, who in the great *Letter to Cledonius* which begins, "I wonder what this innovation is", clearly lays down these principles in it, "if anyone says that the flesh was now laid down by him, and the Godhead is stripped of a body, and does not confess that he both is and will come with the thing assumed itself, may he not see the glory of his coming. For where is the body now, except with him who assumed it? For it has not been laid up in the sun, as the silly tale of the Manicheans goes, in order that he may be honored through the object of contempt, or diffused and dissolved in the air, like the nature of a voice and the wafting of a smell, and the course of lightning that does not stand still. But what becomes of the fact that he was actually touched after the Resurrection, or that he will again some time be seen by those who pierced him? For the divinity by itself is invisible. But he will come with the body, according to my account, and such as he was seen by, or was shown to, the disciples on the mount, inasmuch as the Godhead easily overcomes the flesh".

Who, that reads these words resplendent with truth, and flashing with the rays of the Holy Spirit, will dare to say that the Word of God, who was made man immutably and without any phantasy, is without flesh after the inexplicable and incomprehensible union? Accordingly, it is clear that you also have not gone beyond what is fitting in opposing the precipitous error of that man and saying in order to remove him from this error, "The words used by the Doctor about the Word of God, 'In his own nature he is without flesh and blood', refer to the

time before the Incarnation". Indeed, since he himself said that 'he is one, and not without flesh', how can it be anything but wholly unreasonable, and presumptuous and irreverent, for us to gainsay this, and contend that he is without flesh? But the words which he went on to add, 'who in his own nature is without flesh and blood', plainly introduce this thought, that in his own nature, that is in the divinity, he has no association with flesh and blood.

[Christ] did not take the flesh into the fullness of his own divine nature and mix it with it, nor did he mingle it with his own divinity, but that in the *oikonomic* assumption we might understand him to be not without flesh, Emmanuel being wonderfully composed and consisting of two elements, the divinity and the humanity: but even so he preserved the absence of mixture in the divine essence, and did not change the essence of the divinity into the nature of flesh. And that this is so I bring as a witness to the accuracy of his doctrines the Doctor himself, who by the activity of the Holy Spirit is an accurate doctor. In the *First Letter to Succensus*, when certain men had advanced a similar objection, he expressed himself thus: "Since I found in the memorial an assertion of this kind stated, that since the Resurrection the holy body of Christ the Savior of us all has passed into the nature of the divinity, so as to be all Godhead only, I thought it right to speak against this also". And thereupon, after he has above in a brief compass gone through all the statement of the *oikonomia* of the Incarnation, he brings against it this argument: "It is impossible for a body taken from earth to endure the change into the divine nature. And, if not, we bring against the Godhead the charge that it is as a thing that is made and as a thing that has taken into it something that is not its by nature".

See! How plainly he denies that the divinity of the Word has taken anything into its essence which is not its by nature, though we confess that flesh possessing an intelligent soul was assumed by God the Word, and he united this to him hypostatically, but not so that anything should be added to his divine essence, as if it were deficient (for he is truly complete in everything), but that from the unmixed union of the Incarnation, and the composition out of two elements, the divinity and the humanity, Emmanuel should be made up, who in one

*hypostasis* is ineffably composite; not simple, but composite<sup>336</sup>: as the soul of a man like us, which by nature is bodiless and rational, which is naturally intertwined with the body, remains in its suprasensual and bodiless nature, but by reason of the composition with the body makes up one composite animal, man. Accordingly, the assumption of the body makes no addition to the essence of the soul, but makes up the composite animal, as it is reasonable to understand with regard to the concept of Emmanuel also.

The Word did not take the flesh intelligently possessed of a soul in order to complete his being God, as we have said, but that one *hypostasis* might be wonderfully and immutably made up out of two elements, the divinity, we mean, and the humanity, and the one incarnate nature of the Word himself, and one person: for the Word of God, according to the saying of Paul the Apostle, partook of blood and flesh after our pattern<sup>337</sup>. And that this is so the approved Cyril further shows in the letter to Valerian bishop of Iconium, who wrote as follows: “For God and man did not come together, as they say, and make up one Christ; but, as I have already said, the Word, being God, partook of blood and flesh like us, in order that he may be known to be God who was incarnated, and who took our flesh, and made this his, because, as the man who was composed of soul and body is known to be one, so also now he is acknowledged to be one Son and Lord. For one nature and *hypostasis* of a man is acknowledged, though he is known to be made of diverse and heterogeneous elements: for the body is truly different in nature from the soul; but it belongs to it, and with it makes up the hypostasis of the one man. And in mental conception and in theory the difference of the things that have been named is not obscure, but by combination and concurrence that cannot be cut asunder one animal, man, is made up. The Word

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<sup>336</sup> It is the divine-human *hypostasis* of the Incarnate Word (“Emmanuel”) that is described as ‘composite’, not his divine: for Maximus the Chalcedonian, while attempting to believe in both (a) the Incarnate Word being composite and (b) the union being a mere union of *natures* and not *hypostases* (so as to not end up with Miaphysitism), ended up with a God who is created and composite, since now there is only a divine *hypostasis* incorporating the created human nature, thereby becoming created and composite (which Maximus himself admits!).

<sup>337</sup> Heb. 11:14.

therefore, the Only-One of God, did not come forth as man by taking a man, but, though his birth from the Father is ineffable, he became man by forming a man for himself through the Holy Spirit which is of one essence with him. Accordingly, he is known to be one, though in the concept which is according to reason his own body is different in nature from himself. Let it therefore be everywhere acknowledged that he was not without soul, but that he was possessed of an intelligent soul”.

Similarly, also in the second book against the blasphemies of Nestorius, he clearly teaches that the assumption of flesh did not pass into the divinity of the Word, but that the Word of God remained in his own nature, and apart from flesh, but by the immutable combination with flesh it was wisely and beyond all reason and understanding brought about that one Christ should be marvelously made up, for he speaks thus: “Accordingly confess one, not dividing the natures, while you know and understand that to flesh belongs one principle, and to Godhead that which befits it only. For we do not say that the flesh of the Word became Godhead, but rather that it is divine as being his. For, as the flesh of a man is called his, on what ground is it not right for us also to call that of the Word divine?”

And again further on: “If therefore, he is a wise and intelligent man at all, he should say that the body is from a woman, but confess besides that by being combined in hypostatic union with the Word it has made up one Christ and one Son, and one Lord, who being the same is God and man”. The expressions therefore that are used by this genuine and very accurate Father, “for he is one, and not without flesh”, and, “he who in his own nature is apart from flesh and blood”, demonstrate this, as is plain from what we have demonstrated, that in the *oikonomic* conjunction he is not without flesh: for he is one composed of two elements, the divinity and the humanity, which have a perfect existence in their own domain<sup>338</sup>; but in his own nature he is known to be apart from flesh and blood, and without a body; not that he mingled flesh with the nature or with the essence of the divinity, but

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<sup>338</sup> That is to say, the properties and qualities of the elements are not interchanged. In other words, the united *natures* remain as they are *naturally*, without an essential mixture or confusion.

that he kept the divinity sublime and pure and unmixed, in the characteristics of its own incorporeal character, as also he did not change the humanity which was hypostatically united to him, but kept it free and without change in its own characteristics.

Wherefore also one may see that Nestorius and those who, like Jews, hold his opinions wish to reject the absence of change of the hypostatic union, and to put confusion into the minds of the believers, while they are everywhere making this charge, that we confess that the body was changed into the divine essence, and thereby hold one incarnate nature of God the Word, and they say that they themselves only, the wretched, unhappy men, keep the divinity of the holy Trinity unmixed and pure, by confessing that the man from Mary, as they themselves say, in loving mercy was conjoined to God the Word and shares with him in sonship and divine authority, and by this self-created scruple they make the Trinity a quaternity. And for this reason the wise Cyril shows Nestorius also, who was their leader in this fatuity, speaking thus: "Therefore God the Word is named Christ also, because he has the eternal conjunction with Christ, and God the Word cannot do anything without the humanity: for he knows the coalescence exactly, not with the divinity, as the new wise men among the doctors say". And the same man of small intellect weaves the same charge, and in the treatise entitled 'Against the Theopaschites or Cyrillians', which he composed in the form of question and answer, speaks thus:

The Theopaschite says: 'And how can we be accused of the composition of the Dyophysites, we who call Christ one incarnate nature of God?'

The Orthodox<sup>339</sup> says: 'Your own refutation, which you think is a defense, itself refutes. For you have confessed that one nature is prepared for Christ, from incorporeality and a body, and a hypostasis with one nature of the incarnation of the Godhead. But this is the confusion of those who have two natures, that

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<sup>339</sup> That is, the Dyophysite. Nestorius (who is quoted by St. Severus above) considered other dyophysites including Pope Leo I and the pro-Chalcedon bishops to be confessing the same faith as him, as is evident from his letters.

the natures themselves are deprived of the hypostases which they severally possess, that are confounded with one another'.

And again farther on in the same treatise:

The Theopaschite says: 'What do you think of an eggshell (?) of water that has been poured into the sea?'

The Orthodox says: 'What else except that the unstable addition of the water has disappeared in the great volume of the sea?'

The Theopaschite says: 'Something similar happened also to the flesh: for do not think that the Godhead is smaller than the sea in relation to the flesh as compared with the shifting character of the eggshell'.

The Orthodox says: 'By *shifting character*, do you mean a kind of instability, or the change of that which was swallowed up into that which swallowed it up?'

The Theopaschite says: 'The change of the essence of the body into the Godhead'.

The Orthodox says: 'The nature of the body remaining, or being dissolved into non-existence?'

The Theopaschite says: 'The flesh passing into the nature of the Godhead instead of the essence of flesh'.

While very vainly putting together such reasons against the right confession of the Incarnations, as I said before, reasons which contend against God, and saying that a man should be worshiped with the Trinity, Nestorius and those who think with him state of themselves that they preserve the unity of nature of the three hypostases unmixed, in that they do not confess that God the Word was hypostatically united to flesh possessing an intelligent soul, and call the union that is so far above nature and immutable and wonderful mingling. Wherefore also Dorotheus, who became bishop of Marcianopolis, and belonged to the same Jewish company and party, presented a petition to Marcian's own self at the very beginning of his reign, and found fault with the position held by the bishops, and



the sound opinion of the holy Churches; and he speaks thus: “Therefore, merciful kings, in consideration of their so ridiculous, that is lamentable, opinions, renew the firm maintenance of the connaturality while it is possible, while there is time, by recalling Nestorius from exile, and join together the people of Christ who are divided, lest, as I pray may not happen, the past be repeated”.

The holy Cyril therefore, having exposed such old people's fables and Jewish tales in every part of his writings, in the *First Letter to Succensus* also, which I mentioned above, said thus: “But it is impossible for a body taken from earth to endure the change into the divine nature; for it cannot be done. And, if not, we speak of the divinity as a thing that is made, and as a thing that has taken into it something that is not its by nature. For on the score of impropriety it is equal for us to say that the body was changed into the nature of divinity, and also the other thing too that the Word was changed into the nature of flesh. For, as this is impossible (for he is invariable and immutable), so also is the other. For it is not among possibilities that any created thing can pass into the essence or nature of divinity. But the body too is a created thing. Accordingly, we say that Christ's body is divine, because it is also God's body, and resplendent with ineffable glory, incorruptible, holy, life-giving: but, that it was changed into the nature of Godhead, none of the holy Fathers has either thought or said, nor do we ourselves so hold”. This fact therefore according to the expression of the Doctor, that the body of the Word is resplendent with ineffable glory, incorruptible and holy and life-giving, Gregory the Theologian also in the demonstration contained in the *Letter to Cledonius* demonstrated by saying that the divinity overcame the Incarnation.

Accordingly, the flesh remained flesh, even after the God-befitting Resurrection and Ascension, but adorned with divine and ineffable glory, and with all the excellencies that befit God; and it is divine as something that is the body of God, and it was not changed into the essence of the divinity. It is in this meaning that the expression of the Doctor with which we are now concerned also should rightly be understood that God the Word is one and not without flesh: for he is incarnate by hypostatic union in flesh possessing an intelligent soul

(but in his own nature he is without flesh and blood), that is, without mixture with what he possesses in his essence and nature, that is the bodiless and immutable and incomprehensible divinity. As for what you say at the end that the man who easily follows illusions (?) and shifts his ground widely said on the advice of certain persons, that we must think of the Word of God in the infinity of his divine essence without flesh, is very foolish and senseless. Even though the Word of God is infinite, the whole of him was united to the flesh that was received from the holy Virgin, the God-bearer and Ever-Virgin Mary, even the very person of the Word and not a partial operation as in the prophets. How then is it anything but ridiculous for us to say that he who was in the actual divine *hypostasis* wholly united to a body naturally as well as miraculously is without flesh, even in the greatness of his infinite divinity? For “there is no limit to his greatness”, as David said<sup>340</sup>, and he fills everything, and is above everything, and cannot be comprised by anyone.

And the subtlety of the mystery cannot be explored by reason and intellect, how the whole of him was in flesh, and the whole of him is in all things and the whole of him is superior to all things and he himself is Ruler of all in infinity. But, that we believe that the very *hypostasis* of God the Word became incarnate, according to the Apostolic Tradition of the church that has been handed down from of old, it is superfluous for us to demonstrate by testimonies to those who have once believed in the Gospel, when John who was divine in words beyond the evangelists said, “The Word became flesh and came to dwell in us”<sup>341</sup>. However, since there is a doubt about it, and in order that we may close the doors against all contention, on this point too, let the words of the Father himself, I mean the holy Cyril, come to our assistance, who in the Defense of the Second Chapter addressed to Theodoret the Deceiver wrote thus: “Since Nestorius therefore everywhere eliminates the birth in flesh, and introduces among us a union of authority only, and says that a man was conjoined to God, who is honored by identity of name of sonship, in contending against his propositions we were compelled to say that the hypostatic union

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<sup>340</sup> Psal. 144:3.

<sup>341</sup> John 1:14.

took place, in which expression the word 'hypostatic' denotes nothing else except this only, that the nature itself or his *hypostasis*, which is the Word himself, after it has been united to human nature without variation and confusion, as we have often said, is recognized as one Christ [and] is so, the same God and man”.

After the same fashion in the *Scholia* also he comes forward with the same words as follows: “For in him dwelt all the fullness of the divinity bodily, that is not by assumption simply, like light that shines, or fire that imparts its heat [to] the objects near it, but, if we may so say, that the divine and incontaminable nature itself by a true union as I have said made the temple from the Virgin a dwelling-place for that which he is recognized to be. For thus Christ Jesus is recognized to be one”. But, that the whole of him was in a body, and was hypostatically united to it, him of whom all things were divinely full, he himself confirms by his own words. For it is written in the Gospel of John also that he said to Nicodemus, “No man hath gone up to heaven, except him who came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven”<sup>342</sup>; though he did not come down from heaven in that he became man, for he did not bring the flesh down from heaven, but he received it from the holy Virgin, flesh that is of our race, and of our nature. Nor again, when he was speaking to Nicodemus, was he corporeally in heaven; but incorporeally, in that he is God, heaven and earth and what is above heaven were perpetually full of him.

And in the eighth section of the second of the books against Julian the Great in demon-worship, which were written by him in defense of the Christian religion, the Doctor shows how the Word of God, while he is all in all, was hypostatically united to the flesh derived from the holy Mary, and, beyond every creature, filled all things by reception from him (in a suprasensual sense, nothing is empty of him), though the infinity of his greatness surpasses and soars above all things that exist with a great space between (how great it is impossible to say): by whom according to the words of Isaiah, “all the nations have been reckoned as a drop from a pot, and as the sand of a balance”. But the holy Cyril again speaks thus: “He has become, as I said, in the likeness

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<sup>342</sup> John 3:13.

of men, as it is written, and in our human appearance truly. Nevertheless, we did not say that he who cannot be comprised was confined, nor that he was enclosed in the limits of the body. For it is utterly silly and complete folly to say anything of the kind of him who is by nature and in truth God. For, while he is one and the only Son, and completely above all human phantasy, the whole of him is in virtue of a gift in every man, and in each [one] by presence, not being divided nor cleft asunder, but [above] everything by nature, and in everything as God. But in that all-pure and holy body, 'all the fullness of the divinity bodily has come to dwell', as it is written<sup>343</sup>. And he was as in his own flesh, but still even so he filled all things from him”.

And in the treatise addressed to the Queens the opening words of which are, “Those who administer the divine and heavenly preaching”, he explains the meaning of the statement that the Word of God and all the fullness of the divinity came to dwell in flesh as written by Paul in this way: “But we believe that the Word became flesh, not by way of removal or change, but rather that he came to dwell in us, and, to speak correctly, made the body that was in truth united to him, possessing an intelligent soul, his own temple. And the divine Paul, declaring the indwelling of the Word in the holy flesh, or the true union, said that in him all the fullness of the divinity came to dwell, not so much by way of assumption or presence, or by way of a gift of grace, but bodily, that is in essence; as in the case of a man also it is said [that] his spirit dwells in him, though it is not something different from him”. How then shall we say [that] he who is wholly in everything by way of gift, and in each man in presence (for he receives all things from him and they depend upon his presence), and who further also is in everything and is nowhere cleft asunder or divided, and further is wholly in the all-holy flesh in essence, and so is united to it, after the fashion in which the soul of a man like us is united to its own body, how shall we say that he is without his own flesh, because he filled all these things with the gift of himself, he who is infinite, and is wholly in everything? But to inquire into such a marvelous subject is a piece of utter foolishness: for glorious things are sealed by faith only.

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<sup>343</sup> Col. 2:9.

In the other Treatise addressed to the religious virgin Queens, Arcadia and Marina, which begins, “The world's boast”, the same wise Cyril inserted a demonstration from the holy John who became bishop of Constantinople<sup>344</sup>, who spoke about the *Theotokos* Mary, and about the birth of God the Word, as follows: “And instead of a sun she contained without confining the Sun of righteousness. And do not ask how: for, where God wills, the order of nature is defeated. For he willed, he was able, he came down, and he saved. All things run into one for God. Today he who is, is born, and he who is became that which he was not. For, being God, he became man, not by departing from being God; for he did not become man by departure from divinity, nor did he become God by growth from man: but, being the Word, he became flesh on account of suffering, while he remained invariable in his nature”. And he adds to these things: “He who sits upon a lofty and high throne is laid in a manger. He who is intangible and simple and bodiless is grasped by human hands. He who cuts asunder the bonds of sin is wrapped in swaddling-clothes”. And the saintly Proclus who became bishop of the same city<sup>345</sup> in the Exposition which he delivered in the church of Anthimus on the feast of the Resurrection spoke to the same effect as follows: “The heaven cries, 'He who became man, who was crucified in flesh, is God: for as God he caused me to incline and came down'. The sun also cries, 'He who was crucified in flesh is my Lord: for I in fear of the light of the Godhead held-back my rays'. The earth also cries, 'He who clothed himself in a body, who was crucified in flesh, is the Creator: for, though I embraced his flesh in a manger, yet I did not confine the might of his Godhead’”.

It would have been possible to add other things also which are like these and resemble them, but it is superfluous to add to what has been so wisely said, and make the discussion inordinately long. But I pray your holy assembly and lawful Church to be of the same mind, as the Apostle said, and conform to the same rule, and, if any disputed point

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<sup>344</sup> Though St. Cyril's uncle, Pope St. Theophilus of Alexandria, presided over the Synod of Oak in 403 to depose St. John Chrysostom (for largely political and unjust reasons), St. Cyril himself appears to have admired the latter.

<sup>345</sup> That is, Constantinople.

arises, not make this a cause of strife and division, and of useless contentions, but lovingly join with one another in the inquiry. But, if any of you has anything to say, let him speak with humble mind, as the words of God, as Peter the Chosen Apostle gave admonition<sup>346</sup>. If anything also needs further explanation, you must not act hastily, nor be in a hurry, but await the proper time, and bring it before the saintly bishops, and accept the healing that they shall apply. As for the brother who gave occasion for this dispute, since we have written these few words, receive him lovingly, and strengthen him, and acknowledge him as your member. And, whether he is one man, or many who were associated with him in this dispute or ignorance, act in the same way towards them: for concerning those who are such the Apostle commands us and says, at one time, “him that is weak in the faith bring near to you”<sup>347</sup>, and at another, “and reckon them not as enemies, but admonish them as brothers”<sup>348</sup>. It is not because they made inquiries, or because they were ignorant that they are blameworthy; on the contrary they would actually have been praised, if they had discussed the point with humility, and not with haste and confusion, and with a desire to add to ignorance; for this is what prevented them from being received in regard to the discussion which they raised. However, now that we have written so much, let love vanquish everything, and let not these distressing matters come even into remembrance: for ‘love’ also, as it is written, “covers a multitude of sins”<sup>349</sup>; which love may the God of love and the lawgiver Christ also strengthen in you.

*The signature.*

May you be made perfect in the Lord, being sound, and living in the Spirit, and remembering me, our religious and Christ-loving brothers.

END

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<sup>346</sup> 1 Pet. 4:11.

<sup>347</sup> Rom. 14:1.

<sup>348</sup> 2 Thess. 3:5.

<sup>349</sup> 1 Pet. 4:8.

## XII

551-552 CE / ca. 560 CE

John Philoponus, *Letter to Justinian*

*A. Sanda, Opuscula Monophysitica Ioannis Philoponi, 123-40.*

*Uwe Michael Lang, tr. 'Philoponus' Letter to Justinian', in John Philoponus and the Fifth Ecumenical Council.*

When Stephen, the true servant of your God-fearing dominion, made known to me, O Emperor, friend of humanity, that your tranquility has ordered that my despicable self should come to the God-fearing feet of the general lord of us all after God, and that I should be held worthy of your philanthropic sight and adoration, your God-fearing serenity, which is directed to everyone - for this is very appropriate to the regal office that is made to resemble God - was strengthening myself, so that I hastened that all this benefit should be mine. On the other hand, old age and great frailty of the body have necessarily caused great fatigue, in that it was impossible that I should easily undertake the labor of journeys such as these, and all the more in the time of winter. Again Stephen, the servant of your dominion, friend of humanity, has been urging and pressing strongly that I should extend the petition for the sake of the common peace of humanity. But this seems to me very awesome, even more than the first [i.e. being summoned to Constantinople], if I should dare speak in paper and ink to him who has been entrusted with the reins of the whole world by our Lord Christ. On the other hand, while I have considered that we have been commanded to speak even to God, the maker of everything, always through prayers and supplications, I have said: what therefore is disgraceful in it, but rather, how should it not belong to those things that are very pressing, if we should extend the supplications even to the great Emperor, who is like God in love of humanity, we who are always in need of his tranquility?

2. These [considerations] have convinced me that I should dare to write and even more so since I know the intention of your gentle majesty, namely to make haste to unite those who want to revere God because of the Incarnation of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who protects your life for the sake of the pure faith in him. For who of the kings from aforetime, who have accepted the mystery of Christ, has proclaimed the fear of God in him so openly as your Christ-loving majesty teaches all days, that he is the Son of God and the Word, the Creator of everything, who is God from eternity together with God the Father, he who begot him; he who is beyond the ages and through whom even God the Father made the universe, this one who in the end of days became man, when he became flesh by the Holy Spirit and by the God-bearer and ever-virgin Mary, that flesh which is consubstantial with us, which has a rational and intellectual soul that is also consubstantial with our soul, while his divinity was not changed into flesh nor again his holy flesh into the divinity, he who was crucified in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, and tasted death for our sake out of his will and rose from the dead after three days and ascended into heaven.

He is one of the venerable and consubstantial Trinity. Who has so put to shame the anthropolatry of the impious Nestorius, in words as well as in deeds, as your invincible dominion, and has driven away every heresy", to speak simply? For these reasons, God has crowned your head with victory over all the barbarians. "For those who praise me I praise", and [for them I] preserve great honor and send the same kingdom of heaven after this one here. For the unity of the holy Church of God, that which agrees with your teachings that have been pronounced, I say that it will come about through your own care after [that of] God, God-fearing lord, if you should deem worthy of correction the phrase that is under suspicion. For there is much that does not agree with your upright and God-pleasing thought, which has divided the Church of God until this day, and it will never be united, unless this will be proscribed. That to say of Christ "two natures" is in conflict with the right thoughts and teachings of your dominion that have been stated previously, [this] is evident from that which we will say in brief from this point onwards.



For how should the union of the divine and the human nature, out of which our Lord Christ has been accomplished, be properly said of him or believed, unless those that have been united, have emerged as truly one, evidently unchanged and unconfused, while one of them has not turned into the nature of the other, in the same way as man, who is out of soul and body, is also one nature, while neither the incorporeal soul has been changed into body, nor the body into the incorporeal substance of the soul. For if the union is not only a participation in honor or only the proximity between the persons, as it pleases Nestorius, but [a union] of the natures that are united in their *hypostasis*, as your God-fearing dominion teaches, also Christ, who has been composed out of these [natures], should then necessarily be of one composite nature.

For it, while the honors and persons are united, according to Nestorius, and not the natures and hypostases themselves, nonetheless Nestorius says that one honor and one person has emerged for the two natures, how should those who confess a hypostatic union of the natures themselves, not necessarily confess one nature and hypostasis for him who is united out of the two. But how should it be said that these natures have been united in the composition, while that one that has been accomplished as a result of the composition is removed? For "unity" is derived from "one", just as "whiteness" from "white". Therefore, just as then that which has been whitened has become white, when it has participated in whiteness, and the body that has received life has become a living being, so also that which has been united out of something, when it has participated in unity, has become one by all means. Since, conversely, if the one is divided, it does not remain any longer, having become two in number because of the division. For how is it possible that even when the natures have not been united, they should be two in that which they are, and when they have been united, again they should remain two?<sup>350</sup> For so, they have remained, when they are divided. For what is there that could be much more evident and more certain to those who do not seek to argue in vain, than the fact that it is not at all justified to

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<sup>350</sup> If there is numerical duality post-union, then there is no "union" at all, for the "one" - the product of the union - should remain to be one.

act such for those who speak about God and the truth, while fearing God, him who looks into the depth of our mind.

But your God-fearing dominion has already thought and taught this with much understanding, (namely) one composite *hypostasis* of our Lord Christ, and it has even confessed of the same Christ that he is composite. If then that one *hypostasis* of Christ is composite, which is the same as to say that Christ is composed out of different natures or hypostases - for there is no difference - there is necessarily also one composite nature of Christ, if the nature of each individual and the hypostasis is the same, which is also said by the doctors themselves. Nonetheless, the following is clear: The holy and venerable Trinity is said and believed by us to be consubstantial, and there are divine utterances and evident proofs for this. Nothing, however, is consubstantial with itself, by all means one is consubstantial with another one or with others, such as also Peter and Paul and all men are consubstantial with one another.<sup>351</sup>

For the definition Paul receives as man, which is "rational mortal living being", this also each single man receives. Likewise with each single hypostasis of the Holy Trinity: it is consubstantial with the two remaining ones. For that which is the substance of God, this is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in that each one of them is God. For this reason, then, it is evident that each single *hypostasis* is nothing else apart from its nature that is in each one of them. This shall also be examined in another way. Your divine dominion also acknowledges and has taught, with fear of God, along with the holy Fathers, one incarnate nature of God the Word. For not the entire Holy Trinity has become incarnate, but only the Son of God and Word. To say that one nature of the Trinity, that of the Word, has

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<sup>351</sup> Philoponus is making the argument here that since each One of the Trinity is consubstantial with the other Two, each One is the divine nature in a particular manner, and therefore can be described as "nature" individually. While this is to be interpreted in an orthodox fashion here, Philoponus's specific formulation soon after led him to Tritheism - confessing three divine natures - and for this reason, he was condemned by both Orthodox and Chalcedonians.

become incarnate, means the one that is defined as being [the nature] of God the Word.<sup>352</sup>

When he who confesses [this] distinguishes the nature of the Father and of the Spirit, it is evident that he refers to each one of the three hypostases also as nature. While this is the case and has been seen clearly, therefore it is obvious to everyone, as I think, that if someone says that there is one composite hypostasis for our Lord Christ, he must necessarily also confess one composite nature of him who is composite. For the nature of each individual and the *hypostasis* have been seen to be the same. And if we should speak of two natures of Christ, by all means, we must also speak of two hypostases of him, which is as it were an offshoot of Paul of Samosata, whose blasphemy Nestorius, the uprooter of your dominion, inherited.

And how is it possible, they say, that the one nature should be the nature of the divinity and of the humanity? It is not at all possible, I say, together with him who hesitates. But neither is it among things possible that the substantial *hypostasis* of God and of man is one. For if there is one composite *hypostasis* of Christ, as your God-fearing dominion also rightly taught, how should this be the *hypostasis* of the simple divinity, that [hypostasis] which is not simple, but composite. Therefore, as that composite *hypostasis* of Christ is not the *hypostasis* of his divinity on its own and again [neither] the *hypostasis* of his animate flesh on its own, but that of him who has been composed out of both of them, our Lord Christ, so neither is the composite nature that of his divinity on its own and again [neither] that of his humanity on its own, but that of Christ, who has been composed out of both of them, that very [nature] which has been shown to be the same as the *hypostasis*.<sup>353</sup> What therefore is the fear that, while we are confident to confess one composite hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should be afraid of confessing that there is one composite nature of him? For

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<sup>352</sup> When we say that the Divine united with the flesh, we are referring to the divine *ousia* as modified / individuated by the hypostatic property of filiation: that is, the *hypostasis* of the Son. The intrinsic connection between the universal and particular modes of *being*, as well as the notion of combining the commonality with the particular to produce the concept of the *hypostasis*, are both major features of the Cappadocian metaphysical system.

<sup>353</sup> See footnote 336.

whether someone should speak of *hypostasis* or nature of Christ, he is not speaking of anything else than our Lord Christ himself.

But what do they bring up again along with these things? They speak of "one *hypostasis* of Christ, because his animate flesh has not subsisted prior to the union with the Word, for in it, it has assumed subsistence". What then? The nature of the flesh that has been united to the Word, has it subsisted prior to its union with him, since they say that there are two natures of Christ? But this is blasphemy and at the same time without reason. This is such that it pleases the impious Paul of Samosata and Nestorius. In so far as they posit that there is a nature without a hypostasis [ανυποστατος] before the union, that is the same as saying that it is before the union and is not.

"But we say that there are two natures, the universal divinity and the universal humanity". Yet we have already said before that neither the universal nature of men nor the universal divinity have come into union, but that only the nature of God the Word has united itself to the animate flesh that has been taken from the God-bearer. For your serenity has rightly taught this that what is not limited is also without *hypostasis* [ανυποστατος]. Of such kind is that which is called universal, and it is obvious that it cannot be composed with anything. For how [should] that which does not even have an existence of its own but is conceived only in thought [ἐν θεωρίᾳ] (be composed with anything)?<sup>354</sup> Thus only the nature of the animate flesh that has been assumed from the God-bearer is united to God the Word, while it has not subsisted prior to the union with him. For "Wisdom has built herself a house".

If therefore these universals are not united, then it is impossible that we should speak of those two universal natures of Christ. For thus they would speak of two undefined hypostases. For as of the nature, so of every *hypostasis* there is a common formula [λόγος]. But if the natures that have come together in a composition are particular, those

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<sup>354</sup> Philoponus's nominalism is present here, as he considers only the abstract mode or aspect of *ousia*. We may speak of the *ousia* as existent or concrete insofar as it encompasses the particulars belonging to it: otherwise, it doesn't exist on its own as a distinct thing besides its particulars.

out of which Christ is, either, since the nature has not subsisted prior to the flesh that has been united to the Word, but has been created as being in the Word himself, they should also affirm one nature of Christ, just as [one] *hypostasis*, or, at the same time, along with the natures they should also openly affirm two hypostases, in the manner of Nestorius.<sup>355</sup> Therefore, while they have affirmed one *hypostasis* of Christ in such a loose way and have not been heard to say that it is composite, but (have affirmed) his two natures after the union, and not only this, but they have also anathematized indiscriminately those who have affirmed the one nature of Christ. It is manifest that by this invention they have flattered both sides deceitfully, namely those who teach the [doctrines] of Nestorius by the phrase "two natures", and those who [adhere] to the holy Fathers, as also your piety has agreed, by the phrase "one *hypostasis*", though even thus one could not fail to notice the fact that they have departed from both (sides).

But perhaps someone might have said, while in some sort of silence being inclined towards fear of God, that to say "two natures of Christ" very clearly belongs to those things that divide, the phrase "in two natures", however, not so, since also a whole is usually said (to be) in parts among the ancients. But the one who said that does not realize that the ancients say that a whole is in parts only in those cases in which the parts of the whole are spatially separate from one another, even if they are not separate from the whole, such as of a man the so-called quasi-parts, flesh, bones, nerves etc., and the organic [parts], which are made up of those, head, hands, feet and the interior ones, liver, heart, kidneys and the other organs. But in the case of those that are not spatially separate from one another, those out of which a composite is, but all penetrate one another, such as soul and body - for the soul penetrates the whole body - no one who knows how to employ accurate terminology would ever have said that man is in soul and in body, but rather out of soul and body. And concerning the four elements out of which the body is composed, none of the experts would say publicly that flesh or bones are in the four elements, but rather out of the four elements, nor are fire and water in matter and

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<sup>355</sup> See footnote 331.

form, but rather out of matter and form. For the form of each of those two as a whole penetrates the three-dimensional extension.

It is likewise in the case of artifacts. A house is said to consist in stones and in pieces of wood and in things of such sort, or in walls and in roofs and in doors and in things of such sort, for these are parts of the house that have been said to be spatially separate from one another. A bronze statue is out of bronze and a human shape and not in them. For the form that resembles a man is not spatially separate from the bronze. It is likewise also with all other things. However, in the case of those parts that are separate in the whole, "out of them" is rightly said, as with the things a house is composed of, I mean out of stones and pieces of wood, and "in them", as I have said, since the whole consists in the parts that are separate from one another. Of those things that are not divisible, but penetrate the whole, they use only the phrase "out of them" and never the phrase "in them". If therefore the divinity of our Lord Christ has penetrated his whole holy flesh, just as the rational soul [penetrates] the whole body, and each of them does not exist as a part on its own, such as in man head and hands, then it is not possible to say of Christ "in two natures", as a whole in parts, rather out of two natures, namely the divinity and the humanity. All these things are on behalf of the aforesaid doubt.

Therefore, it is evident that those who have spoken of "two natures" of Christ and "in two natures", while they take these [phrases] as meaning the same, through each one of them introduce a division" of natures, as if someone might say that the person of the emperor is seen in each of his prefects, and henceforth they are known to have refused the [phrase] "out of two natures", which is indicative of composition. For this reason it is customary and dear both to Nestorius and to those who were educated by him to say "in two natures", but the phrase "out of two" is totally rejected. For the latter, as I have said, indicates composition, the former, however, division. Therefore, it has been seen that those who say "two natures" of Christ and "in two natures" through each one of these [phrases] introduce a division of natures. And it is very necessary for us to abstain from this [position], in that each one of these [phrases] contends with your God-fearing thoughts on Christ and with the teachings of the fathers. As for the testimonies

of the Doctors of Holy Church, which agree with this, since you, common lord and [lord] of everyone, know them accurately, and, so to speak, have already interpreted them to all men, it is superfluous for us to recall them.

I have written these few things out of many, while I have collected [them] from the teaching of your dominion and of the holy Fathers, from which we have shown to you, my God-fearing lord, the pious faith and the accuracy of terminology - by the means of which we have explicated our thoughts. It is for the invincible dominion of your Christ-loving majesty alone, o serene lord - may the great God Christ, whom you fear with charity, preserve great honor and the heavenly viatica for you after the good old age, for your departure to God - to cast out of the Church of Christ the expression "two natures", which has been the cause of stumbling and of division for the Church of God, and the phrase "in two", which goes no less than the other with the implication of division, as they are dear to the advocates of Nestorius and the enemies of Christ, so that, when someone else will receive such a great gift from God, should not justifiably be proud. But to him who has restored the whole magnificent empire of the Romans God is going to grant also unity of the Church in the right or ancestral confession by all means, in the very wording of the confession of faith.

END

## XIII

ca. 560 CE / 581-582 CE

John Philoponus, *Treatise on Difference, Number,  
and Division*<sup>356</sup>

A. Sanda, *Opuscula Monophysitica Ioannis Philoponi*, 95-122.

*Independent Translation by iKan.*

1. Multiple investigations through discourses on divine doctrines have proliferated, generating heresies full of all blasphemies that lead souls astray. In response, those who led God's church in their times valiantly fought against these heresies. They refuted the errors found within them in various ways and wrote down a correct and immaculate confession of faith in their books. These books we ought to read attentively and resolve doubts arising in our time from the issues they had clearly addressed. We should not introduce distorted discourses and thoughts that contradict their teachings due to personal biases. Indeed, are not those found guilty who, in dogmatic discourses about the Holy Trinity, introduced a confession that multiplies essences? They believed they could substantiate this through the sayings of the Church Fathers. And not only those who, in exploring the mystery of Christ, profess the hypostatic union in name through the duality of natures or *hypostases*, but also those who strive to maintain an affective and fictitious union. They accept both the affective and the hypostatic union concerning the same one Lord and our God, Jesus Christ. They irrationally dare to defend and assert both, despite them being contradictory and absurdly undermine them. But also those who

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<sup>356</sup> Recent scholarship (Lang 2001) doubts the Philoponean origin of this text, and has instead proposed that the text was composed within an Alexandrian Miaphysite context, around the time when the heterodox Niobites emerged. Hence, both dates - one if the text is Philoponean, and the other if the text is non-Philoponean - have been provided above.



indeed commendably issue a correct and untainted confession and boast of maintaining it unadulterated, yet gather various doubts for its subversion, providing material for contradiction to those who wish to attack it. They argue that it is impossible to maintain the essential distinction of natures, which in our Savior Christ God converged together after an ineffable union, without also maintaining their number and division.

2. However, their objection is as follows: “In every case, they must choose one of two options, even unwillingly, either to admit the conversion of those who have come together in union — since those that do not maintain their essential difference are not immune to change — or, as they themselves assert, to concede the number along with the difference of these natures.<sup>357</sup> Thus, they can no longer profess the hypostatic union but only an affective and fictitious one.” Therefore, we initiate this inquiry in our discourse, considering not only the matter that composes it but also the elements that contribute to its composition and hypostatically unite for this purpose. We aim to find a way of resolving the objections raised, appropriately and suitably formulated, ensuring that what has been said by the holy Fathers remains unshaken and steadfast. Indeed, it is not fitting for us to weave dogmatic discourses from our own thoughts and from there demonstrate that their God-inspired doctrine is not perfect. Our zeal is not for the ostentation of words, but for the benefit and utility of those who wish to be enlightened by the same most wise doctrine. Furthermore, we believe that if we approach the matters presented in this discourse with a correct mindset and devoid of all deceit and passion, we will find many reasons within them that sufficiently aid us in the accurate consideration of these paternal dogmas.

Thus, we will not need to rely on external statements, but only on those uttered by them. For what we say, as I believe, will be useful in clearly distinguishing their statements and not confusing the ideas they implied. What this discourse primarily teaches is that it is necessary to pay attention to everything that is hypostatically united,

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<sup>357</sup> The opponent’s argument laid down here is that the Miaphysites should either admit a confusion of natures (and their properties), or confess duality since there is natural difference post-union. See below.

by appropriately emphasizing the modes of distinctions and the different meanings that emerge from them, as well as the connection of words and ideas. Then, the various applications of our mind to the subject and its orderly progression from one idea to another should also be considered, not only this but also the simple division and the theoretical consideration that arises from it, including the time involved and how much the ideas differ from the objects and from those words that are correctly used to signify them. And to put it briefly, we will attempt to present here all that which often the nexus of discourse gathers for a clear construction of inquiries. We who read diligently wish to accurately observe the rules that can be learned from it, so that when we read the books of the holy Fathers, we acquire the unerring knowledge of their minds. We can easily counter the attacks of opponents and also, as mentioned, clearly resolve the doubts of our brothers.

3. Let us start from the objections posed by the adversaries themselves, which proceed in this manner: "Division, difference, and number mutually introduce each other. And if anyone concedes that after the union the difference of those elements, which in a single composite object, created through hypostatic union from multiple and diverse elements, are united together, then they must also add division and number. However, in the union, nothing prevents all these from being maintained. For saying 'in union' and 'after union' is not the same. We do not speak according to mere temporal distinction, but logically, as it is required that the elements that come together for the union are first, the union itself is in the middle, and afterward follows the perfected state of union."

Therefore, the one who opposes these views must investigate and seek how indeed the components precede and the composite follows. Is it as if one thing follows another? Not at all! Then how? Someone might ask, isn't one thing different from two? Against this, I argue that the efficiency of one is two. For our discussion is about things, not mere mathematical units. If indeed two separate entities had subsisted before the union, only 'one' resulting from them through moral

union<sup>358</sup> would be necessary. For in such cases, it is impossible to admit a hypostatic union on one hand, and on the other, that a moral and fictitious person is inherent in them and external to them. However, if they do not subsist separately beforehand but have come to exist through the making of one composite, either both or at least one of them, they are not in every respect other entities outside that composite. For if you remove the effect (the composite) for the sake of argument, you have evidently also removed the efficient causes (the components), as they do not have existence before it. And conversely, if you remove the efficient causes, you evidently also remove the effect. For an object is not simple and without parts, but consists of them. In cases where there is a moral union, nothing prevents the real objects from continuing to exist separately when they are dissolved from the moral union, because through the moral union, they do not relinquish their essence.

4. What, then, must we say, and how shall we resolve the matter? Indeed, our mind perceives difference in the composite formed by hypostatic union. While considering the resultant entity and its inherent subsistence, it conceptually divides and disassembles it into its composing elements, which cannot subsist separately. Then, turning back to the consideration of the union, it clearly finds that number and division, though connected, are expelled by the union. Yet, difference is nonetheless preserved even after the union, since the union is formed and composed of inconvertible elements that do not absolutely merge. Therefore, since a suitable and necessary order exists in all things, we too will strive to maintain this order in our subsequent discussions as much as possible.

5. This order teaches us that objects exist prior to our thoughts about them, whether one chooses to call them simple or composite. Then come the concepts we hold about them, followed by the names signifying them and the discourses that are formed. Objects, as they are naturally made, remain unchanged in their essence as long as they

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<sup>358</sup> Lat. *unionis moralis*. In the Antiochene (Nestorian) christological framework, there is merely a harmonious conjunction of willing between the divine Word and the assumed man, “Jesus”. It is contrasted with natural / hypostatic union, since the latter is *real* and physical, while the former is not.

exist, susceptible neither to increase nor decrease. Concepts, on the contrary, admit increase, decrease, and multiple alterations, insofar as they exist within us. For it's not only that different people may hold different concepts about the same object, but we also experience increase, decrease, and multiple diversities of concepts regarding the same objects. Hence, various opinions about the same matters are established, with one person perhaps choosing one opinion and another choosing a different one about the same matter. Sometimes it happens that the same person may accept one opinion about the same matter at one moment and another opinion at another moment, while the object itself remains unchanged, as it is in itself. Thus, when there is a single object that exists separately, multiple and diverse concepts about it are established within us at different times, and an order and succession appear among them, with some being first and others second.<sup>359</sup>

For example, the previously mentioned object exists first, like this man, who subsists in his own right. Our mind is naturally predisposed to deal with such matters. After it receives an impression from this object through the first motion, it grasps its concept, which is composite but not confused. Then it is led to the concept of the elements that contributed to its composition and receives an impression from them again, initially seeing their difference indefinitely, that is, not distinctly as soul and body, but simply as something composed of multiple and diverse elements. Then, admitting mental division again, it separately investigates the elements that have been mentally divided and now distinctly knows their difference, recognizing, for instance, that this is the soul and that is the body, and grasps their concepts separately and at different times. However, turning back to the same path, it moves away from the concepts that have been grasped separately, removing the mental division, it grasps the concept of natural union, and turning again to the same composite impression that was there from the beginning, it firmly stands, not forgetting the difference of the composing elements.

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<sup>359</sup> To briefly summarize: concepts / notions form within our intellect concerning objects that *really* exist, and names / designations are afterward brought about concerning these concepts, based on the objects or their powers.

This difference, even after the union, indicates their distinctiveness, preserving their unconfusion. After it has left behind the division as something that does not belong to the object itself, but rather as an intention (or perhaps a passion) of the mind concerning the object, or rather something found by the mind in relation to the consideration of the composite, it nonetheless strives to retain what has been conceived, as if the nature of the objects were such in themselves.

6. Therefore, just because our concepts change in all their states, by order and time, it doesn't mean that the object itself undergoes the same changes, allowing us to say that it was one way before, then it dissolved, and that the elements it consists of remain separately, with division strengthening within it. For what it possessed in essence by virtue of the initial bringing together of the components, it firmly maintains, unshaken, so that even its essential differences are always preserved. Either these components are posited as constitutive of it and exist as long as it is what results from them, or they do not exist and were never posited. But if they were posited, then they exist, and in the investigation of the composite, they indicate its multifaceted nature to us at the first encounter, spurring our mind to scrutinize and investigate them.

For our mind does not encounter objects as if blind, groping unexpectedly, nor does it grope this or that as a stranger brought in. Rather, the objects themselves are naturally suited to incite and attract it to their investigation, just as perceptible objects attract the senses to perceive them. But apart from the fact that the sense immediately receives perception to a certain extent, our mind itself is capable of being enlightened and forming concepts — this is what thinking is for it: moving from the composite to its components and then turning back from them to the composite itself is not a variation and change of the objects, as the discussion has proven, but an order and sequence of different concepts.<sup>360</sup> We should not, therefore, affix the passions of our mind to the objects themselves, but we must discard the division we have introduced, as said before, and return once more to the

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<sup>360</sup> The whole point of this order of conceptualization (*epinoia*) is to show that merely because the concepts have a mode and manner of emergence and succession does not imply that the object itself too passes through these stages.

composite and grasp it as we know objects to be from the beginning. In this way, we will neither be in oblivion of what is already known, nor will we again deny their essence through perverse effort voluntarily.

7. "And how, while preserving their differences, is it not required that the number of natures be conceded?" Because we speak of number as signifying discrete quantity. But those things that are distinguished by quantity either subsist separately in themselves, like Peter or Paul, or they are the composing parts of one, subsisting separately, like the soul and body of Peter, when they are evidently taken as divided by quantity. For not just any difference introduces number, but only division by quantity, since number is "a signifier of discrete quantity," yet not of the essential quality of objects, namely that which is the property of difference itself. Therefore, if quality and quantity are not the same and are not necessarily interconnected, one who speaks of difference is not compelled to count.

8. But if someone says that difference is of those things that differ, and that those things that differ must necessarily also be numbered, they err, as they ineptly shift from the quality and essence, which is founded in the nature of the object, to the quantity and division made of it, which is in composites according to reason. For it's required that all things that are counted in any way are divisible by quantity. However, it has been proven before that those things that are united hypostatically, especially when an incorporeal whole pervades the entire body completely and without diminution, as the soul relates to the body in our human nature, are not to be considered as divided or established in their own subsistence, but are to have the subsistence of one composite resulting from them and be one in number, as established in subsistence separately from all others, which are in quantity.<sup>361</sup> The components of it are then called two in number only when they are seen separately by thought at the time when all are separately investigated and numbered, and we know their mental

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<sup>361</sup> Since divisibility is a precondition for enumeration and countability, and in the union active and passive principles unite, the former permeating the latter wholly being incorporeal (and therefore indivisible), and do not subsist on their own but subsist as one composite, there is no basis for enumeration post-union.

division connected with the number through a new analysis by ourselves. However, the difference of such remained because of the unconfused union of the composite. For we do not say that their difference, like division and number, is the work of thought, nor did we form it when it was not, nor are we creators of objects at all, but as we see it through analysis, we recognize it, as previously stated.

9. However, lest the error of excessively approximating and somehow mingling the various concepts we hold about objects, particularly concerning composition and components, creeps in, it is absolutely necessary to weigh and accurately know both these concepts and their differences. It's also prudent to know that the elements contributing to the formation of one entity are considered by us in different ways: sometimes when they are simply examined in themselves, and other times as components of what is formed from them. Therefore, when we investigate them separately and individually, inquiring into their natural quality, we state what each is by nature, also recognizing their quantity. However, when we grasp them as united in *hypostasis* and efficient in the formation of one composite object resulting from them, we do not count them, although we recognize the difference in quality, since they are no longer understood separately. How is it possible to consider them both as divided and united in the same respect, or as separately and individually considered and then as components of what is formed from them? For division and considering them separately and individually immediately dissolves the union. However, hypostatic union and the significance of what results from it completely expel division, as the resulting composite nature is apprehended in its own right, existing separately from all others and for this reason, is declared to be one in number.

10. Nothing prevents us from approaching the matter differently for a fuller declaration of what has been said. Concerning any object that subsists in itself, many things are stated about it, but there is one entity that underlies all these predicates, both individually and collectively. The number of these predicates, or anything else incidentally adhering to them, is by no means asserted about the subject. For instance, a human is a rational, mortal being capable of understanding

and knowledge. But that one human is not four, nor is a human ever said to be of a "genus" or "constitutive difference" just because it happens that animality, rationality, and mortality are predicated in the manner of genus and differences.

11. Moreover, since without the conjunction of names and words it's impossible for truth or falsehood to appear; if someone states the name "human" separately, or "rational," or "mortal," they clearly state something, yet they neither affirm nor deny unless they add to each of these or all of them "was," "is," "will be," or another such expression, saying: A human is alive, rational, mortal, capable of understanding and knowledge. Therefore, whoever forms a discourse in this way, affirms, and whoever uses an opposite expression clearly denies that such things essentially belong to a human. It's clear that there are many such names and the resulting concepts are recognizable, but now all are used for one and the same object. However, these concepts can also be applied to many objects. For instance, if we say a horse is an animal, an angel is rational, and a human is capable of understanding and knowledge, we apply these names or the resulting recognizable concepts individually to multiple objects.

12. Furthermore, as previously demonstrated, we must admit that our expressions about composites are divided into three distinctions: when we speak about the components that come together in the union, about the nature of the union itself, or about the single entity formed from and by the union. When we speak about the components that come together in the union, we use mental division and investigate each component separately, attributing to each its proper grammatical expression (article), saying the soul is incorruptible and indivisible, and the body is corruptible and divisible.<sup>362</sup> Or we speak in this way. Or, when we speak about both together, using some expression in the dual or plural, we say such things are different in species and unequal in essence. However, when we inquire about the nature of the union itself, we define it in *hypostasis*. But when we speak about the single human being formed from them, we call the

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<sup>362</sup> Similarly, when we speak of the humanity being passible while the divinity remaining impassible, or the former being created while the latter being uncreated, we distinguish them *en theoria* (intellectively).



same being corruptible and incorruptible, divisible and indivisible, attaching to it in the singular that expression which introduces the meaning of one, clearly showing that we apply all names and diverse concepts recognizable from them affirmatively to this one subject.

Consequently, even after the union, we use them in such a way that it's clear we do not divide the subject with them nor add to it the number of elements from which it is formed. Therefore, different grammatical expressions are needed. We must set up our discourse in all these matters so that our words accurately distinguish, clearly and lucidly showing when we speak of one and when of many. Similarly, we say that different concepts recognizable from different names are consequently known through the object or through these names. We know how to accommodate expressions to these objects or names because our mind clearly receives an impression from them and proceeds to distinguish the words. And I think no one among humans would oppose this.

**13.** From this, it seems to me not to be rightly or cautiously said that after the union it's not permissible to say "in one and another." For if union makes one, and this one is said to be corruptible and incorruptible, it's clear that after the union, the term "in one or another" is necessarily used because we admit the phrase "is corruptible and incorruptible" about the same single composite object formed by the union, and we consider that this composite expression should be applied in the singular number. For it is impossible for the same thing in the same respect to both suffer corruption and be free from all corruption. So it is also with the expression "from two or more is one." If we concede that one results from many and accommodate an expression to it, it's clear we say this "after the union." For the effect of the union is one.

Therefore, just because different names are applied to multiple natures, when these same names are applied to one and the same, they are not indicative of multiple natures. For instance, a human is composed of a soul and body. And though there is one human and one nature, we nevertheless truthfully declare by applying each of the multiple names to it, saying the same is such and such. And just

because we say the same is such and such, it will never be said that the same is also different natures. Therefore, if we affirm the truth by saying the same is such and such, the difference of those that came together in its constitution is entirely preserved.

**14.** But it's not necessary to apply their number to it because neither is it possible to apply to the subject anything that occurs to the predicates accidentally, but only those things that essentially belong to them, as we said above. However, it is accidental to such as the soul and body, or rational and mortal, that they are two or that they are counted at all, as quantity is usually said to be an accidental essence. For the essence of the soul and body is not the same as their being two. Hence, the union indeed preserves the essence of the soul or body, not duality; for it does not bring about the removal or corruption of essence, but only takes away number and division. If someone says that even the quality of essence occurs accidentally, they overlook that "natural" and "essential" are added to quality, precisely in opposition to the quality that behaves like a mere accident. If the difference were not preserved, neither the number nor the different names would truthfully correspond to one because their number would not either.

**15.** When we use mental division, we say "rational" and "mortal." Firstly, even if we do not divide by reason, it is possible to say "rational" and "mortal." The difference, as I mentioned, is preserved even after the union. Secondly, even if we use mental division and say "rational" and "mortal," I argue that it's not sufficient to express the meaning of the discourse by simply saying "rational" and "mortal." Instead, it's absolutely necessary to say either the human being is rational and mortal, or for instance, the angel is rational, and the horse is mortal. For it has been proven that speaking about many objects and speaking about one and the same object are different things, and we use different terms in each case. Thirdly, therefore, we find the difference that is seen in these objects. They are, as I think, to be taken from different objects that subsist separately and are understood and known separately, and then from different objects that do not subsist separately but are understood and known separately in the manner of mental consideration, and again, others that neither subsist

separately nor are understood separately but are known and understood in conjunction, as they are components of one composite and are applied to that one, as the preceding discussion demonstrated. If, therefore, many names are applied to many objects, it's absolutely required that we take both the names and the objects either separately and distinctly apart from each other or as only divided by consideration — and they are also considered separately in this way.

**16.** If, however, many names are applied to one and only object, it's already clear beforehand that we use also different essential names for the constitutive differences of that object, as we cannot represent the nature of one composite object, also exhibiting the differences of those that constitute it, by one name. Nor does this mean, as said, that there will be many natures for that one nature, or because there are not many natures, many essential names will be inapplicable to that one. A clear proof of this assertion is what happens concerning objects not made of parts and entirely simple by nature. For whoever wanted to express the essence of one such object should use only one essential name, so that if they applied many names to it, they would seem incapable of clearly expressing the essence by one name alone and hence stray to those things that are accidental to the essence and the thing, expressing it by many and using multiple accidental names.

Therefore, it was rightly also said by us that we must apply many names and the resulting concepts to one and the same composite. For if many names were not applied to one and the same object, preserving its constitutive differences even after the union, but absolutely necessarily with the difference of names, the objects signified by them as separately constituted or as such separately known should be divided together: all composites would become unrecognizable and indistinguishable to us because of the variety in them, and how would we boast of knowing the simple if we had not yet reached the cognition of composites? Nor could we indicate them to our nearest ones. I go even further. Such supposition is absurd. Everything we cannot express by one name, we express by many different names and grammatical connections. For there is nothing that subsists in its own right and is composite, not even one, that does

not have many things that can be predicated of it, but for that reason, that one subject will never be called many subjects.

**17.** When we use mental division, we then intend to take what was previously predicated as subjects. Moreover, in such a case, we again predicate plurality as if about many subjects, placing each of their proper notions separately and sometimes calling each of them a "nature." However, the number of things that are predicated and all that do not make up the essences of these predicates are never said about the composite subject — essential notions of them, we rightly say, are verified about it — because of this reason, that the things that come into composition and their number are not the same. For when many things are hypostatically composed, they make one composite thing. But when many unities are merely gathered, they never make one unity in the proper sense. And indeed, when quantity is added to quantity, it is doubled or multiplied, but when thing with thing or nature with nature is hypostatically composed, it is never doubled, but makes one thing and one composite nature, which appears as such in the property of designation. And again: things can be united hypostatically, but discrete quantities and unities only through gathering. Indeed, it's absolutely necessary that they be gathered afterward, as much as they are quantities. Therefore, it is not possible to apply the number of the components of the thing that arises from it.

**18.** Essential reasons about the composite are necessarily predicated, especially if you profess an unconfused union, and rightly so. For it's not in the quality of composite things that quantity inheres, but, so to speak, in the bare things themselves. For nothing is more inherent in a human or a horse than that each of them is one in number, since whatever comes together in existents, however, as components, in the property of one subsistence, is naturally and necessarily put under one number, as previously mentioned. Therefore, the quantity of the components never transfers into the composite from the quality of the components, which is preserved even after the union. Nor does the numerical unity of the composite remove the difference in the quality of the components. While any quality is apprehended in its own appropriate way, it seems to carry some degree of gathering with the others. On the other hand, the division of the mind, which is done by

thought, as I said, does not fabricate objects but rather strives to consider the difference of the components along with their number. For it's not possible for our mind to touch different objects at one and the same time. Therefore, the hypostatic union is necessarily prior in order to mental division. After we apprehend it, namely the hypostatic, natural, and real union, while it still remains intact, we think of the division, while the composite clearly continues to be indivisible, as said above.

**19.** But why, someone might ask, do we attempt the impossible and admit division, which does not exist, as if it were? I am talking about what is possible in reaching the understanding of existing things. Do we not suffer the same when we render a definition of a thing? Because we cannot indicate it by one name, we take up many names. Our sight seems to suffer somewhat similarly when it encounters a large and compact object. Since it's not capable of encompassing the whole at one and immediately, it tries to apprehend it by several acts, so that the division is not in the object itself but in its apprehension. And again, while the sight cannot see itself—it's not capable of reflection on itself—with a mirror placed, it sees itself a little. I think no one would stray from the truth by saying that mental division is somewhat similar and analogous to a mirror. For it shows two things that subsist indivisibly as divided, yet only as long as that mental division considers the things from which the object consists. However, the perception through the mirror does not merely show the components of the object but, so to speak, presents that very thing through another sight. And just as the eye, if it were capable of seeing the image of what it is itself, would not need a mirror, so also our mind, if it could understand in one act what is diverse, would not think of any division concerning those things that exist indivisibly in themselves. Therefore, also the mobility of our mind concerning objects that subsist in the property of subsistence and separately, when it encounters a thing not composed of parts and simple, never applies mental division, because such things admit no division or duplication at all, nor is there anything that moves it to their division. However, when it encounters a composite, it institutes consideration as appropriate, as it is incited by the object itself.

And again, just as the eye does not suffer the same sensation when, for instance, it encounters white and black, but this contracts, the other dilates, so also our mind, to some extent, when it encounters simples, contracts in a certain way, not investigating nor using the analytical or resolute method a priori or mental division, not seeking difference in those where difference cannot be found, but stands and rests, grasping what it understood at the first encounter. But when it touches composites, it suffers the opposite. It is somewhat distracted, seeing variety in them and applies itself to inquiry, using a priori analysis or mental speculation, considering those things from which the apprehended by the mind is composed, and inquires what and how many come together in its constitution and what kind and mode their composition is. Then, turning again to what was first apprehended by the mind, it ceases from inquiry because it had already reached the understanding of what was to be inquired, not forgetting what was already understood, as said above, but considering them within the essence of the composite as its components, while it does not wander in vain but is clearly incited by the objects themselves to inquiry and investigation, sometimes taught to persist in it, sometimes to desist from it.

**20.** But in the union, they say, even the difference of the natures to be united is preserved; both the natures themselves and their number remain unconfused and undiminished in it. After the union, however, multiple natures cannot be said, nor differences of natures nor anything pertaining to them. For it's not the same to say "in the union" and "after the union," nor do we say "after the union" according to the opposition of mere temporal distinction, but "after the thought of the union." This distinction, therefore, is taken as a certain foundation in the entire inquiry. For indeed by its force, the adversary now says the difference of those to be united is preserved, but then it's not preserved.<sup>363</sup> To this, I say: Firstly, I don't remember anyone using it in this way, so that this mode of speaking, as if descending from more eminent men, was ever accepted. Besides, the absurdity adhering to it

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<sup>363</sup> The opponent's argument here is that there is difference as well as duality of the natures while considering the union, though there are neither duality as well as difference while considering the product of the union.

is very astonishing. For either, difference follows division and number, or it does not. If it follows, while the difference is preserved in the union, so is the division with the number. If it's preserved in the union, clearly also after the union. For what is not removed by the union is absolutely necessarily preserved also after the union, if it exists at all.

Therefore, opposites would be both in the union and after the union simultaneously and in the same respect, even introducing each other, which is very hard even to think about. For opposites are union and division. But if the difference is indeed preserved in the union, but division with number does not follow the difference, it's necessary for the same reason that the difference is preserved after the union, but not the division nor the number, which is true and very consistent, so that from it the distinction determining not the same to be "in the union" and "after the union" is superfluous and inconsequential. For what the union preserves, remains even after the union, and what it removes, clearly does not remain when it's removed.

**21.** Rejecting this distinction as foreign and alien to the presupposed hypothesis, we recall what we have said above: our mind is such that it transitions from one concept to another according to order and time, assuming these as preceding and those as following. However, a composite nature or an already constituted thing does not have first the components that come together in the union, then the union itself separately, and finally the perfect existence separately, nor that these precede and those follow in its existence. Instead, the original will of the Creator sufficed to establish the perfect nature of the composite. Just because a human is made of a soul and an organic body, these are not pre-existing in the human's existence for a long time, although the earth and the seed, which is not simply and immediately the human body itself, pre-exist, unless perhaps in potential and as material. Our mind, as often said, is what sets the order and sequence of concepts, positing this concept as first and another as following, and descending from the composite to the components, first forms the concept of the composite, then admits mental division, and after this considers those that come together in the union. And from these, the number also results. And from these, it ascends to the composite, removing the useful division it thought up and assumed for a moment, as well as the

corresponding number, while accepting the union that is real and natural, and turning again to the composite thing it was initially thinking about. And in these, indeed, observe the wondrous sequence of these concepts. For when it descends from the composite to the components and ascends from these again to the same composite and the differences it equally involves, it indeed considers the thing itself, but in no way does it shake the essence of the thing. For descending, it thinks of division, which was not actual, and ascending, it apprehends union, which is actual, with the composite itself remaining stable, assuming that the natural and hypostatic union remains.

**22.** While this remains so, as to admit no change whatsoever as long as the composite endures, it's clear that in that union and after it, the constitutive differences of the composite remain unchanged and undivided. For it is necessary to recognize the elements of the composite as constitutive and not divisive. Hence, we would not think correctly if we assumed they bring number or division to the composite. For how can those things that pertain to constitution and effectuation and generally to union carry with them division or discrete number when that "one" prevails, towards which they tend, and which is the culmination of their concurrence? But just because those that came together are not counted after the union, we should not assume that they lost the quality of their being. For then what results from them would transition into confusion or simplicity unless some form of composition were preserved. But the form of composition keeps the difference of those that came together, not division or number. For that would be the path or form of a novel solution.

Rather, just as, for example, white does not need black for its constitution, yet its sight becomes more splendid when compared with the opposite, and virtue, to exist, does not need vice, but is more clearly recognized in comparison with vice, and generally speaking, anything, when compared with its opposite, makes the knowledge of itself clearer: so I think also one and hypostatic union is not expressed by number or division, but on the contrary, it happens that these are more clearly known in comparison with number or division. And this is what I have often said: the composite does not include division or



discrete quantity, which is number, even though it includes the differences of those that came together. However, the knowledge of the union itself becomes more accurate for us through mental division of the intellect and through the number of those from which the composite is.

**23.** But to put it briefly, the state of the composite seems to be a certain middle ground, with two evils and deviation on either side; on one side is simplicity and confusion, on the other dissolution and plurality. Specifically, the composite, by the force of the union, departs from plurality towards one, but it does not transition into confusion and simplicity, just as someone might say that courage indeed departs from fear as from a certain relaxed state, but never deflects towards audacity; for the excess of firmness is audacity, disturbing the mind. Hence, as long as it is a composite, the composite does not admit division and number, for here division indicates dissolution, and number indicates plurality. Nor does it again remove the differences of those to be united. For such a thing would be simple or confused, where one, namely the simple, does not have difference in itself, and the other, namely the confused, has also lost the difference it had from those from which it is. But the composite indeed has the difference of those to be united in itself, but in no way number or division, just as neither confusion nor simplicity. It is accurately the middle ground between divided and non-variegated.

**24.** However, this can be made clearer and easier as follows: I consider an ordered distinction of four pairs of opposites. The first opposition is between the continuous and the discrete, the second between the constituted and the divided, the third between the composite and the dissolved, and the fourth between the unique and the multiple — for the multiple is opposed to the unique as number is to uniqueness. If we understand how to approach these four antitheses, perhaps we will more attentively grasp what was previously affirmed about the hypostatic union. The continuous and the discrete pertain to quantity and do not concern those investigating the essence and nature of things. However, more will be said about this later.

25. The constituted and the divided are reserved for natural differences. Some of these are called constitutive, others divisive. Therefore, if we seek the constitution of things, not division, we grasp constitutive differences and appropriately abstain from divisive ones. The third antithesis, that of composition and dissolution, seems to somewhat fall into the second, that of the constituted and the divided. If we make this distinction, we say the constituted is opposed to the divided — for some differences are constitutive, and others divisive or simple or dissolved. It's clearly one thing to dissolve again and another to divide. For a genus is divided into species, not dissolved into species, because it is not composed of species. Conversely, a species is not divided into a genus and differences but is dissolved into them, as it is composed of them. Again, if totality is said to be constituted from parts, it's also evidently said to be divided into parts. But if it's composed of parts, it's also rightly said to be dissolved into parts. Thus, the constituted differs from the composite, as the divided differs from the dissolved, and also through the partial opposition, the simple is opposed to the composite. The middle ground, as I said, is the composite between the simple and the dissolved, not the simple being opposite to the constituted but only what is discrete or divided. Indeed, some differences are called constitutive, others divisive.

Yet, even if here you say the constituted is the middle ground between the non-variegated and what is divided by differences, which is true, the non-variegated here does not mean the same as the simple — which is rather opposed to the composite — but the confused. For this is rightly opposed to what is divided by differences. So, to summarize, the composite is the middle ground between the simple and the dissolved, and the constituted is the middle ground between the confused and the divided. Therefore, since we say the composite and the constituted are what results from those hypostatically united, appropriately as a composite it will neither be simple nor dissolved, and as constituted, neither confused nor divided. For composition, as I often said, is the middle ground between simplicity and dissolution, just as constitution is the middle ground between confusion without differences and division, which comes from differences. Clearly, therefore, it's proven that one who says constitutive differences are

preserved even after the union does not introduce confusion or division, of which the former indeed removes differences, and the latter introduces divisive instead of constitutive ones.

**26.** Let's also consider how that fourth opposition stands, that of the unique and the multiple. As I said, the multiple is contrary to the one, and multiplicity is opposed to uniqueness. Therefore, if we assert that there was a real and natural union, it does not result in a plurality of natures and things, although the difference of those that came together is preserved.<sup>364</sup> But if there is no plurality, clearly there is no number, for the multitude limited is number and remains multitude, even when further limited. For by being limited, it does not lose the nature of multitude but, remaining multitude, takes on further limitation, which is not identical to uniqueness. For uniqueness far repels multitude, it is indeed opposed to it. But a boundary repels boundlessness, yet boundlessness is not the same as multitude, therefore neither are uniqueness and limitation. These, then, are the things we must say about those four oppositions, which clearly prove that one who says constitutive differences are preserved even after the union does not introduce division, dissolution, multitude, or number, just as neither any other measurement, confusion, difference, or simplicity, but remains in a just middle ground, as I said.

**27.** Regarding the discrete – for we promised to discuss this opposition too – it is distinguished as contrary to the continuous, as was mentioned. It's clear that this pertains to quantity. Hence, totality and non-totality, one and not-one, and similar notions indicating quantity, are called distinctions [προσδιαίρεσμοί]. Therefore, such terms or endings should not be forcibly applied to essence as essence. And if someone does apply them, they will find in this matter that division or distinction, along with number, falls into composites. For when there are two things that cut the discrete, number and speech, unless there is a number, there will be no speech [that cuts], for speech is something related to number, or insofar as it assumes affinity with the number being discussed here. However, distinction

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<sup>364</sup> The Leontian argument of difference implying duality, then, can be reversed: the concept of union naturally excludes multiplicity, and therefore union implies a production of one as opposed to a continuation of multiplicity.

[διάκρισις] or the discrete, if indeed they come down to the same thing, fall into division, dissolution, or into distinction [διαίρεσμός], about which we have already spoken previously. But if distinction [διάκρισις] is considered to be something other than these, it more likely signifies mental division, somewhat adjudicating those things that are united, just as the name itself indicates. For distinction [διάκρισις] or the discrete is division [διαίρεσις] or separation, which has a place in judgment. This, perhaps, is what those versed in theological matters call subtle division, which occurs in thought and mental representation, and is not an alteration of the thing itself but of the thought about the thing. How and when it should be applied is stated in the previous sections. And these matters stand so. From these, we also easily resolve other doubts, which we considered should be turned towards a perfect investigation of the thing itself.

**28.** “Why”, someone might ask, “is the natural quality and difference, which is in the entities to be united, preserved even after the union, but not quantity similarly preserved?” To this, I say: The quality of any of the entities to be united is a certain property. However, quantity and multitude are known to exist in the definite addition of one to another. For impassibility does not need passibility to be impassibility. Indeed, a property is inseparable from that to which it belongs. But one needs another one to be two. For even though one is divided into two, the whole is not counted within the parts [partial numbers], for then summarily there would be three, not two. However, we do not say one needs another to be two, as things that need each other are said to need each other. For the relationship does not make the number, but the gathering of distinct unities does. Therefore, in the composition that occurs in hypostasis, plurality, as something opposed, is pushed away because of the union. However, quality, as a property of each, is preserved because of immutability.

**29.** But perhaps someone might say: “Just as quality is the property of each of the entities to be united, so too is the ‘oneness’ of each of these entities. Therefore, just as quality is preserved after the union, so too should the ‘oneness’ of each of these entities be preserved.”

However, I argue: “oneness” is not something inseparable nor inherently a property of the parts, which is why we speak of unity in relation to the whole, not to the individual parts. Instead, we refer to the parts as belonging to one entity, although we are compelled to call them in the plural, saying they are parts and referring back to their original state or condition [κατάστασιν], which existed before the composition. Even if each part is referred to individually, they are not thereby also referred to as one and united, as if there were two. For this would corrupt the totality, which is expressed through unity and union. But if you were not affirming two, but the duality of parts, this again would be a discrete duality. Indeed, the gathering of unities makes duality into a number. However, gathering is not identical to unity. For a gathered multitude is not uniquely one in the proper sense, but terms like "collectively," "together," "mutually," "qualities," "with each other," and so forth are said to apply to things gathered, indicating a certain similarity [strictly] to union in itself, like a heap or a load that is grasped with a bundle.

Hence, about gathered things, you may say "one" and then "two," and afterward "three," "four," and so forth. However, for things that are hypostatically united, we do not say such things, but all is one, while we consider and pronounce that "all" as a resolution in the mind, and we say only one whole composite and constituted thing exists, to which clearly belong the constitutive differences, and the properties of those that are united. Hence, you may call both the differences and properties the same qualities, indeed properties of those things that are united, but constitutive differences of the composite.

**30.** But perhaps someone might say: “If we say that differences, even if constitutive, are preserved, then we must also allow that the entities that are differentiated by these differences are numerous just like the differences themselves. And again, if we say properties are preserved, it's clear the entities to which these properties belong also remain. Therefore, we affirm not only a multitude of properties and differences, but also of the very entities themselves, of which these are the forms.”

To this, we say: The plurality of such differences does not multiply the entities that are differentiated by them, for then they would no longer be constitutive [of the composite]. Indeed, we often refer to these differences and properties as separate, two, three, and many, and we do not fear to simultaneously declare them to be equal to each other and with each other. However, we do not allow that their division or number also transfers into the entities, of which they are properties. For this would be entirely and perfectly the effect of division and would make them to be considered not constitutive [of the composite] but merely divisive, not completing the fullness of one composite but, on the contrary, quickly dissolving the unity of totality, which is absolutely not permissible to say. Although we dissolve the composite through these [in the mind], we do this by running counter to composition, allowing the lesion of union as if simultaneously transferring the plurality from the differences themselves into the entities, of which those differences are

**31.** What then? Someone might say, “Have the entities, whose properties have remained, perished after the union?” We do not say that entities have perished, nor are they recognized in plurality. For what departs from the plurality of being by virtue of its composition does not thereby also transition to non-being and non-existence, but to union and one, which prevails in plurality. For if it is not the same thing to be and to be plural: what is not plurality is not entirely nothing nor does it lose its nature of being, although it discards plurality. And just because it does not lose its nature of being, it is not thereby also a plurality. For, as I said, essence and quantity are not the same, nor must the essence be endangered with quantity.

**32.** But again, our adversaries say: “Essence should not be endangered with quality either. Therefore, we should not say that quality is preserved.” But we say: Quality, as representing essence — for it is assumed to be natural and essential — when it is not preserved, rightly corrupts the essence of which it is also a representation. Plurality, however, does not pertain to such things, as has been proven. For in limited gathering, it is seen that when gathering disappears due to [the onset of strict] union, even the one [whole] being formed does not suffer anything in the essence [of the individual] things. To summarize:

Since the things from which the whole is made are multiple and have the nature of determinants, that is, they indicate quantity and quality along with the corresponding essence, in hypostatic concurrence what is essential to each of them [those being united] remains unchanged and uncorrupted after the union, and its expression, namely quality, is preserved. However, their plurality is rightly contracted. For not as if the union, which is opposed to plurality, has occurred, so also something else happens that fights with quality, so that they change into non-quality or a different quality when united, as happens, e.g., with things that are altered and confused. For plurality, so to speak, does not effect a variation or corruption of essence or quality, but subjects the plurality of parts under the dominion of totality for the just mode of hypostatic union. Therefore, the plurality of those being united is rightly pushed aside by the union, but the essence and the quality of the essence remain unchanged.

**33.** But the adversaries say: "If plurality is no longer there after the union, we should not say that multiple properties exist after the union." Against this, we say: We do not profess the union from the properties, but believe it to be made from the natures, preserving the plurality of properties, which are representative of one thing. We simultaneously say multiple properties exist, equal to each other and with each other, and that mere gathering of properties is present. However, what does not apply to any of those properties [that are present], but only to what is formed from the concurrence of those natures, no one should dare to affirm in the proper sense that the union of properties has occurred, as if one property were formed. For this would evidently introduce confusion. Just as we sometimes declare many properties about a simple nature, how can we predicate just one property about a composite? Therefore, if no one in the right religious sense affirms the union of properties or the gathering of natures but, on the contrary, the gathering of properties and the union of natures or rather from natures, we rightly say the plurality of properties or differences is preserved after the union. For they are such that only gather, but the plurality of natures is pushed aside by the union.

**34.** For this reason, the holy Fathers asserted the plurality of properties without limit, but not just two, which is also deemed worthy of admiration: plurality [of properties] is indeed affirmed, but not duality — because plurality, when affirmed, predisposes us to elevate our consideration to the properties without ever contemplating multiple natures or essences, while duality leads the listener to consider multiple natures, and rightly so. If someone first accepts what is true, namely that a certain uniqueness is the composite, they declare that all properties taken together are a sign of this uniqueness. However, if someone assumes that there are two natures of it after the union, they will evidently no longer say that the plurality of properties is the sign of that one composite thing. Instead, each nature will separately appropriate the plurality of its own properties, referring them to the corresponding uniqueness, for instance, these separately to divinity, those to humanity.

Consequently, from two unities, they will understand duality and a sort of association of natures, professing affective association instead of composition. This is why, when we say plurality is preserved, we adapt properties to this plurality. These are many, of which we do not profess union in the proper sense. However, when we affirm duality, we ourselves fall into error, transferring the term of duality from the plurality of properties to the very natures that the properties represent. It's not proper to demand the same respect for natures and properties since we say the union is made from natures, certainly not from properties. Clearly, properties are indicative of the natures from which the union was made, elevating our thought to them.

**35.** Furthermore, it should be said more clearly: Those things that form the definition or delineation of any entity — such are properties — we say are many and together and mutually equal and gathered, and there is no absurdity in this. However, the defined entity itself, which those properties strive to indicate and exhibit, is not two. Otherwise, it would escape us that it would be torn from itself and become a plurality instead of one, and what does not happen to the thing itself happens to the speech explaining and defining it. Because speech cannot immediately grasp the uniqueness of the thing and explain the thing, it wanders around it, gathering many properties



through which it can be more clearly recognized. Hence, definitions or delineations of one thing happen to be many, but this does not multiply the defined thing with its delineations. Rather, it is one in composition, even when stated twice or thrice.

The word "twice" indicates a mode [of apprehending], but not so that the thing itself becomes two. For this entity, because of its one essence, causes many properties to result from itself, which speech touches while circumscribing and explaining it. Often, indeed, speech indicates one word that defines the thing, but sometimes it also combines two or three about the same thing, because it is incapable of announcing and explaining the whole essence of the thing with one definition. The thing itself, which is from different natures, is clearly made one through composition. However, the definition or delineation, which proceeds from properties, while being reduced to a concise form, simultaneously indicates one and the non-confusion of the entities to be united.

**36.** To consider the summary of the entire discourse, we must distinguish as follows. When there are three things that are discussed, which are the entire focus of the inquiry, namely hypostasis, nature, and property: those who are not entirely weak affirm that the hypostasis is one, but those who abhor confusion affirm many properties, whereas with nature, one must either multiply it with the properties or assume it to be unique, just like the hypostasis. This is, indeed, the essence of the inquiry. I argue, therefore, that nature should be assumed to be unique, evidently composite, similar to the hypostasis. For nature has more in common with hypostasis than with properties. Therefore, we say the union was made from two natures or hypostases, but from two or three properties, absolutely no one. And the teachers of the church affirm nature and hypostasis incarnated, but no one has dared to say property incarnated.

And to briefly state what we also explained more accurately above: nature is the essence of a thing, as is also hypostasis. The same is constituted by nature and *hypostasis*, but the essence of anything is entirely one, even if externally composite, lest it be torn apart from itself and become two. However, properties or qualities are multiple,

which are found commonly and individually in all and each of the things from which [properties] speech describes the one essence of a thing. Therefore, appropriately, while one *hypostasis* is proclaimed and many properties are conceded to exist, nature participates in the uniqueness that is in the *hypostasis* and abhors the plurality that is in properties. For the thing that is made from natures or hypostases is composed into one *hypostasis* without confusion and clearly also constitutes a nature, acquiring a natural and hypostatic union. Speech is what describes it from the properties, which remained due to their non-confusion and non-commixture, while collectively not being taken into the composition of one property but indicating the one essence of the thing, which, as I said, is expressed no less by the name of nature than *hypostasis*.

37. Therefore, it has been clearly proven that from the beginning it was proposed that one who says the difference of those to be united is preserved after the union should not, therefore, admit that duality or division of natures is also preserved after the union. This, as a treatise, we have investigated according to our modest ability. Nothing prevents those who diligently and painstakingly scrutinize the traditions of the holy mysteries and strive with all their might to understand the accurate meaning of what has been uttered by them, from adhering to the observations indicated by us above, accepting the sense of their infallible minds without fraud and deceit, and firmly and without harm maintaining it in all respects. It is rightly required, according to the definitions and laws of those holy ones, that we also profess those things mystically signified by them to be beyond reason, and that this profession remains firm among us because they too, although they were so great, necessarily maintained the sequence of terminology in their teachings and professed in all places with a sincere mind that what was handed down is beyond reason.

Here ends the treatise on the difference, which is conceded to be preserved after the union, by John the Grammarian of Alexandria.

END



*Glory to the Triune God.*

*David P. George*

*Feast of Nativity - Dec. 25th, 2024.*