

The Central Doctrine

Part II

Critique of the Historical Godhead

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“The farther back you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see.”

-Winston Churchill

Preface

Looking at the historical Godhead and its development leaves one feeling rather perplexed. Most of the effort here is supplied with the hope of unpacking the complex formula and understanding the components for which it is made. Authoritatively considered a mystery¹ ultimately, the Central Doctrine loosens scriptural bonds to the extent of eisegetic soteriology, or an unbiblical conclusion regarding salvation.

What we have is not a historicity of church councils quelling heretical outbreaks since the Central Doctrines first inception, presumably decades after the Messiah's death, rather we have a selective and refined account² of councils whose decisions have been solicited to remedially support, among other things, a Central Doctrine in need of proper progressive theoretical treatment/development due to former decisions of councils coupled with reveling factions that promote equivocal concepts that lie relatively unaddressed and perpetually incomplete. The Universal Church took for itself a small and select group of ecumenical councils whose decisions were sympathetic to orthodoxy and canonized them, a feature owed to the accurate vision naturally available to everyone: hindsight. Between the years 253 and 431 A.D., a span of one-hundred seventy-eight years, there occurred, on average,

1 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith".⁵⁶ The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin".⁵⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part One, The Profession of Faith, Section Two, The Profession of Christian Faith, Chapter One, I Believe in God the Father, Article I, "I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth" Paragraph 2., The Father, 234

2 for there were more than twenty-one church councils held

nearly one church council for every year.³ Let us remember that orthodoxy clings to only three of these councils recognizing each as one of twenty-one Ecumenical Church Councils. What needs to be stated plainly here is that post-Nicene councils like the Third Council of Sirmium in 357 where the tenants of Arianism were reinstated are solid examples of the policy rescission held by these councils. The least motivated historical onlooker should find the conflict of the deity of the Messiah, or more concisely, resolving the origination of the logos and determining whether he is not a creature to consist of same substance *homoousios* or similar substance *homoiousios* as the Father, to have occurred between non-Jews some three centuries after his death. Proponents privy to this historical development and evolution of the Central Doctrine are reluctant to embrace the idea that the revelatory dispensation of it originated completely and succinctly at the start of the Church Age, unless of course the revelation occurred over the course of five centuries. They remain sincere to true historical integrity rightly abandoning this position for the more mystifying task of finding origin of a doctrine where it simply does not exist and has never been explicitly taught. The approach is warranted with *implicit* measure secured not from contextual reasoning but a transcending ‘comprehensive’ method, thereby incorporating extra-biblical knowledge into the Central Doctrine recognized as having esoteric value and revelation induced by genuine faith. These enlightened advocates continue indelibly to the point of promoting associated soteriological risks inherent in failing to accept standardized theological doctrines, the risk of course is immeasurably dire and subject to *acceptance* that is theoretically elucidated or blind.

A fair glance at some of the perceived heresies will hopefully broaden historical perspective and reflect intricacies that apparently

³Wisconsin Lutheran College, Early Christian Councils, www.fourthcentury.com/councils-and-creeds

developed progressively within the Godhead. It seems as though the development of the doctrine of the Trinity could have actually fallen prey to the infection of heresy through the course of decisions made by ecumenical councils. The First Council of Ephesus (431) demonstrated wonderful ambivalence in their decision regarding proper Christology initially selecting title for the second member of the Trinity ordained by Nestorius to be Christotokos over the no less controversial term Theotokos. This reversal of decisions by the council fails to contribute to the short-sighted contention that the formulation of the Trinity was established at the time of the Apostolic Fathers and the decisions of subsequent ecumenical councils centuries later were only eradicating heresy that surfaced regarding its details. What's more, while the theoretically deft maneuvering by the historical ecumenical councils profited greater definition within the Godhead and all its subtleties i.e. the distinction of separate *persons* within the *being* of the Godhead, whether the second *person* of the Trinity has two *wills* or one or the less conclusive argument of eternal sonship that is deliberated to this day, it has also clearly forefended the ability for theological redresses not unlike Kenosis to be inserted into the developing Central Doctrine to balance or correct deficiencies within the formulation. Kenosis, though it was presented as an argument to rectify the seeming ineptitude of the divine nature placated by the second member of the Trinity explicit in certain parts of the Scriptures, for all accounts and purposes, became a fair testimony of the hyper-constraints that bound the formulation of the Central Doctrine as we have understood it then, and continue to do so today.

What becomes more disconcerting is the pretentious manner in which these and other doctrines like it predominately undermine fundamental patterns and principles squarely established from the very beginning in Scripture. More precisely, the Nation of Israel (NOI)

apparently never received the confidence of the Eternal Being to comprehend His *persons* fully despite having been chosen to carry the oracles, instructions and implied auspices super-natural or otherwise disposed by the Eternal One. The Central Doctrine, though it took centuries to develop, undermines the integrity of Scripture ultimately to the point of unholy deception. For if the Central Doctrine were exegetically extrapolated in the Hebrew Scriptures, the NOI remained theologically ignorant to the point of self-deception. Remarkably, the New Testament writers also failed to provide a working formula of the Central Doctrine leaving themselves and their work open to warranted criticism. Trinitarian scholars openly admit this as does anyone with a working knowledge of Post-Apostolic church history.

Trinitarians are required to operate within a fixed pattern that was prescribed by the minds of men whose job it was to convene and settle disputes which arose through the centuries within the *Universal Church*.

Author's Note:

The terms 'Universal Church' and the 'Catholic Church' will be recognized as synonymous much like it is generally held historically from A.D. 325 till around A.D. 1054 until the first major schism appeared: Eastern Orthodoxy. The use of the term 'orthodoxy' or any variations of it will refer to its general meaning: orthos=true, doxa=belief. To maintain a strict interpretation of the form will prove too trifling, for if we cling to Lutheran orthodoxy as having been established anytime before the 'Book of Concord' was written in 1580 then we would be undermining historical integrity. When we recognize its founder, Martin Luther, to have articulated the tenants of Lutheran orthodoxy while simultaneously maintaining Eastern orthodoxy and Roman Catholic orthodoxy regarding the virgin birth of the second person of the Trinity we remain in accord, despite the origination of Lutheran orthodoxy some thirty-four years after the progenitor's death. However, when we consider the general placement of Mary and her role in 'Lutheran' orthodoxy we shall find incongruency as will be articulated later.

Sabellianism and **Modalism** (195-400) are fairly congruent terms to describe the modes in which God, or the *being* of God, operates. The *being* of God expresses, not Himself, rather Itself as God in different characters exclusively in each mode, the mode of the Father, the mode of the Son and naturally the Spirit also. The term *being* here is defined as clearly as postmodern Trinitarians employ the term; therefore, *being* is

what makes something what it is. ⁴ This term is used to stimulate an awareness of an evolved lexical propriety. Modalism excites the phenomena of *being* to surface in three distinct *persons* temporarily, only to return originally to its source acting substantively within the realm of monism or the reality of substance that consists of one basic substance. While Modalism adheres readily to monism it provides no room for the distinction of *persons* in the divine *nature*. This means that the Sonship has become merely temporary matter ⁵ dissolved or received back into personal union with the Father, presumably upon his ascension to heaven. Essentially, this rhetoric reduces the Godhead into one *person* in three *functions*, leading us to the idea that the one *person*, God, or God the Father, died on the cross, perceived rightly as heretical in the West as '**Patripassianism**.' (a third century by-product of Modalism which suggests that the Father suffered and died on the cross.) Therefore, God *could not* die for the sins of the humanity. It, the *being*, is immortal. Patripassianism essentially denies the full humanity of the Messiah conceding Scriptural error.⁶ If the being of God could not die, then could any portion, i.e. the *nature* or *will*, of its *being* suffer dissolution, or death?

Nestorianism (431) pronounced that Jesus is two distinct *persons* claiming two *natures* to actually constitute two *persons*. Again, we can see a common difficulty of understanding terms to describe proper Christology with the use of an ambiguous word, *nature*. Nestorius suffered from an indelible persistence that even some Protestants could appreciate. For Nestorius, Theotokos or God-bearer was a title for the holy virgin that seemed to him concisely inapplicable for an accurate understanding which would warrant a proper Christology. The title God-

⁴ Dr. James White

⁵ cf. Greg. Nys. *cont. Sabell.* in Mai's *Coll. Nov. Vett. Scriptt.* t. viii. pt. ii. p. 4

⁶ 1John 4:2,3 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

bearer completely ignores Mary's role as a mother not to the divine *nature*, but rather the human *nature* of the Christ. In another sense the title over-esteems her role since the Holy Ghost conceived the Son. God was never conceived, at least the divine *nature* always existed, it was never born. Therefore, the holy virgin birthed the humanity of the Messiah, not his divinity, and should be considered the Christ-bearer, most aptly. Plainly a loaded question, but, "What part of her humanity could secure her son's divinity?", or as Calvinists put it, 'the finite cannot contain the infinite'. (Utilizing undefiled logic, Calvin's assertion, though it's original intention was used to deny any real presence in a sacrament instead of highlighting the implication as it was employed by the Messiah, deserves general consideration). A fair argument indeed if one considers the gravity of a pre-existent divine *nature* clouded with immortality. Could it be that the virgin mother was found to be void of common properties that might distinguish her human-ness, her human *nature*? Was she in fact found to be without sin, highlighting yet another complimentary flawless human *nature*? This is not the appropriate time to extenuate the approximation divinity has to a perfect human *nature*, but it will be maintained here, anyhow, that the holy mother finds no place within the Trinitarian formula proper. What will be considered is the logical placement of Mariology.

It is interesting to note the patent dissociation shared by a majority of Protestant churches today with the early fifth century term Theotokos. What is ironic is the fact that the original reformers, whom the Protestants greatly esteem, embraced readily the doctrine of Mariology. Again, these persons of renown, Calvin, Luther and Zwingli etc. were reformers and not acting as theological profligates of secession from the Universal Church. They dutifully maintained the doctrine of Mariology prescribed by the Catholic Church holding to Mariology and other pillars

of orthodoxy like it, sinlessness of the Virgin and her perpetual virginity, infant baptism etc.

This condition might be better identified as the reluctance to embrace selective forms of thought which have naturally developed within the evolutionary process of dispensation, identified as a form of *schismatic negationism*. The evolving doctrines have been severely limited in their logical pattern of growth. Take the dispensation of the incarnation of Christ established historically at the Council of Nicea 325 when the Messiah had been identified not as the son of God but rather as God the Son. Another progressive step in this process of dispensation would be that Mary was in fact the mother of God, or in the Greek, Theotokos meaning literally 'God bearer,' officially credited at the Council of Ephesus 431. Notably this is one year after the death of Augustine who is touted by Albert C. Outler, Ph.D., D.D. to have been at once 'the last true patristic father' and the 'first medieval father of Western Christianity.' It is Augustine who plainly defended the perpetual virginity of the blessed mother of Jesus 'conceived as virgin, gave birth as virgin and stayed virgin forever, De Sacra Virginitate 18, and 'because of her virginity, is full of grace, De Sacra Virginitate, 6, 6, 191, despite straightforward evidence in Scripture identifying the Messiah as having many siblings in Matthew 13:55,56 and again in Mark 6:3 with reference to James the brother of the Lord in Galatians 1:19. While Augustine's defense of the blessed mother's perpetual virginity does not suggest he developed the doctrine of Mariology, he certainly made no effort to discourage a scripturally inaccurate portrayal of Mary the 'Mother of God.' Even in Psalms 69:8 we read prophesy of the Messiah who was to be alien to the children of his mother. To be sure it would become a complicated matter to suggest that Augustine operated in the Spirit whilst drumming the roll of perpetual virginity of the blessed mother despite the face of declared scriptural relevancy otherwise. His doctrines,

though they are ripe with pagan ascription, have been promulgated as fit by staunch supporters, both Catholic and Protestant.

We have the incarnation of the Christ providing a doctrinal basis for Mariology, the adoration of Mary the Mother of God. It was not until the sixteenth century when the undertow of Protestantism began to surface and with it a developing tide of religious angst that heightened the swelling distrust of orthodoxy among religious philosophers and monks to the point of theological secession. What should warrant consideration is the fact that this lapse of time between measures would span a little over millennia. Why had so much time elapsed before anyone would blow the whistle on Mary worship or excessive veneration of Mary i.e. Mariolatry? Ordination of any dispensation for one-thousand years does require a second look eventually, at least some Protestant reformers thought so. But it would seem that Protestants would eventually embrace orthodoxy up to a point and fashion a 'scriptural' precursor that would yield dissent to the molded fashion or dispensation of the day. It does make sense to declare Mary the Mother of God after having established Jesus to be God. The question remains why Theotokos was not considered heresy by reformers in the sixteenth century since its inception, the middle of the fifth century. This prolonged acquiesce demonstrates the cavalier attitude towards the order of the day and in all fairness we must realize the length of silence to be rather cumbersome. Why wait a thousand years before speaking up and was there a considerable threat attached to those who demur, to those whose voice cries out heresy, to those who love truth more than their very own lives? What, if anything, does this credit orthodoxy for those centuries but religious despotism? If there were potential reformers that existed before the sixteenth century they either possessed enough common sense to value their own life above truth and kept silent or remained selfless and sacrificed their soul on the alter of truth leaving a

putrid stain for all to see on the hands of the orthodox machine with its agencies furnished by the blood of the martyrs. The purpose for rhetoric of this sort is intended to flush out relative indifferences that exist today within religious circles. History has already warranted the value that most men have placed on their own souls and how much emphasis is placed on doctrines held by despots of varying complexity.

Now, returning to the natural progressive step relating to the incarnation of Christ we find that the development of Theotokos was met by a millennial wall of silence. Martyrdom first broke this silence in Paris, France, April 22, 1529 with the death of Louis de Berquin, a humble yet zealous evangelist of forty years. Berquin was the first in France to place his life beneath the value of the Gospel. Judged as he was to take issue with the doctrines of Rome, Berquin found refuge in the light of the Gospel and for this he was declared a heretic. If Berquin were to submit to recantation he was to undergo ritualistic steps of humiliation. With shaved head carrying a lighted candle, Berquin was to publicly perform penance in front of the Church of Notre Dame to God and the Glorious Mother, the Virgin. Afterwards his tongue was to be pierced and Berquin was to be put in prison for life without ink and paper to write or book to read. Berquin was charged with refusing to give proper title to the Blessed Virgin and invoke her name above, or in place of, the Holy Spirit. Unsatisfied with the option of denying his deep-seeded conviction while being bound the remainder of his earthly life to the uncompromising domination of orthodox regime he embraced the solace and freedom granted in the mortal persecution that lay in wait at the stake.

Shifting our attention ever so slightly northeast nearly the same period of time we find a contemporary reformer of Berquin. Martin Luther, the great German Protestant Reformer (1483-1546), is held in high esteem by many Protestants throughout the centuries for his historical

issuance of the ninety-five theses (1517) which served as a source of antagonism for standard orthodoxy that endorsed, among other things, the sale of indulgences. Heightened by his proactive unorthodox stance, Luther also sets about by reclaiming the Holy Scriptures to be infallible over the Pope. This of course lends itself to the familiar solution that Luther adopted for salvation: God's *grace and faith* in His Son. Small wonder is given to the stronghold that religious avarices may have held over the course of many centuries regarding salvation. From a Protestant perspective, an argument could be made for the damnation of an undisclosed amount of souls for an indefinite length of time while endorsing the embellishing sacraments espoused by orthodoxy prior to the Great Reformation. Recognized as a complete severance from the Catholic Church, the Reformation, if given a full view, will be identified more concisely as a splinter. The term severance would imply clear separation from a part, while splinter would connote a breakage, but not necessarily detached from the source, for if the Reformation could supply complete detachment from orthodox it would not have continued, among other doctrines, endorsement of Mariolatry. Connoting the marks of a Lutheran today we find noticeable dissimilarities in comparison to their esteemed progenitor who in fact was not trying to abandon the church but rather reform it. While it is quite possible that this fervent Augustinian Monk minted the phrase 'Sola Scriptura,' or 'Scripture Only,' some are left in marvelous wonder as to how *effectual* the veneration of Mary was to Reformers or would be Protestants of Luther's day. Mariolatry remains an autonomous rubric woven into the very fabric of Protestant consciousness; it (the excessive veneration of the Virgin) is tied so closely and repetitively to the pattern of orthodoxy that it was innocently overlooked by some of the Reformers themselves. As a matter of evidence, the perpetual virginity of Mary who was admitted to be without original sin fell demonstrably from the works of many Reformers. Tying this link closely to a portion of their unorthodox posture should

remind us of just how influential Mariology really was. Reverend Ganss dutifully balances the historical account:

'The very confessions and very formularies of faith give the most positive and direct evidence that the Blessed Virgin once occupied an exalted position in their teachings; and, furthermore, that modern Protestantism is untrue to the tradition of its founders, -that it antagonizes and subverts its very charters of existence.'⁷

Luther remained unhesitant to acknowledge Mary's perpetual virginity while clarifying his perceived scriptural ambiguity, we read,

Christ, our Savior, was the real and natural fruit of Mary's virginal womb . . . This was without the cooperation of a man, and she remained a virgin after that.⁸

Christ . . . was the only Son of Mary, and the Virgin Mary bore no children besides Him . . . I am inclined to agree with those who declare that 'brothers' really mean 'cousins' here, for Holy Writ and the Jews always call cousins brothers.⁹

A contemporary Reformer of Luther, Ulrich Zwingli with a resonant voice capitulates,

I firmly believe that Mary, according to the words of the gospel as a pure Virgin brought forth for us the Son of God and in childbirth and after childbirth forever remained a pure, intact Virgin."¹⁰

'Interdum Scriptura' might have been a more appropriate shibboleth for Luther whose pronouncements ironically continue to suffer exclusive

⁷ Mariolatry: New Phases of an Old Fallacy, Reverend Henry George Ganss, 1897

⁸ Luther's Works, eds. Jaroslav Pelikan (vols. 1-30) & Helmut T. Lehmann (vols. 31-55), St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House (vols. 1-30); Philadelphia: Fortress Press (vols. 31-55), 1955, v.22:23 / Sermons on John, chaps. 1-4 (1539)

⁹ Pelikan, *ibid.*, v.22:214-15 / Sermons on John, chaps. 1-4 (1539)

¹⁰ Ulrich Zwingli, *Zwingli Opera*, Corpus Reformatorum, Volume 1, 424

Protestant suppression, intrepid pronouncements characterizing the sinless-ness of the Blessed Mother.

"It is a sweet and pious belief that the infusion of Mary's soul was effected without original sin; so that in the very infusion of her soul she was also purified from original sin and adorned with God's gifts, receiving a pure soul infused by God; thus from the first moment she began to live she was free from all sin" ¹¹

Today, Protestants fail to realize it is much too irrational to dismiss Theotokos after having embraced the mysterious and extra-biblical doctrine of the Trinity which formulated the Messiah to be God.

To this purpose, Theotokos has been delineated to provide an historical context in which ideas within the church have evolved over the course of time. To a greater degree, Mariology developed naturally from the summation of church councils and ecumenical creeds which have supplanted a remedial Christology. What is plain is not far from wonder. How did veneration of the saints soon develop from such a time as this? Whether this is stated rhetorically or from a sincere curiosity, the process continues to unfold; the matter for evolution of theological doctrines remains apparent when close attention is paid.

Sola Scriptura, though it was an honest cry, was bandied about primarily as a euphemism to subvert a limited percentage of the Catholic Church's doctrines and not necessarily as genuflection towards an objective meaning of the phrase.

¹¹ Martin Luther's Sermon "On the Day of the Conception of the Mother of God," 1527

Returning once again to the heretical doctrine of Nestorius we find the Council of Chalcedon to have heightened awareness of the controversy by offering this abbreviated statement:

The Symbol of Chalcedon, which was the written statement of the council, basically affirmed four things: 1) Christ is True God 2) He is True Man 3) He is one person 4) The divine and human in Christ must remain distinct.¹²

Statements like this might serve only to mystify the second *person* of the Trinity blurring the meaning of words. Christ is true God and he is true man, but they must remain distinct within the *person*. What is more, there are three *persons*, each possessing one solitary *will*, each identified as separate and distinct from one another, each fully God in themselves thereby advancing the meaning of three *persons* in one *being* into obscurity. The Council of Chalcedon blurred the meaning of two separate and distinct *natures* into one dichotomized *person*. Although this scarce explanation of the incarnation serves as an example of Christ's earthly presence it does not, however, explicate what becomes of the formula, this configuration, at his death. **Patripassianism** would not admittedly allow the first *person* of the Trinity to suffer death, elucidating a heretical form of **Modalism** which suggests that there is no distinction in the *persons* of the Trinity. Within Modalism, this heretical form allows the *person*, whom the second member of the Trinity occupies, to remain indistinct to (an)other member(s). Are we to assume that what has remained distinct within the second *person* while he was alive *became* indistinct upon his death? We should take caution here to explore what it is that actually suffered death, for if the second member of the Trinity employs the divine *will*, the only *will* singularly available to all three *persons* of the Trinity, yet remains distinct in *person*, we are therefore obliged to consider exactly what part, what aspect, of the Trinity had

¹² Reformed Christology: Modern Nestorianism? Justin Cloute

actually suffered death. For if the second *person*, who is intimately attached to the divine *will* and *nature*, died, then a portion of the divine *will* and *nature* suffered death along with him, the second *person* of the Trinity. Mind you the divinity of the second *person* does not have his own *will*, but shares it equally with the other *members* of the *being*.

So, what died at the crucifixion, humanity and/or divinity, and did one *person* continue to remain distinctly one *person* during and after his death? At this point we know that reason shall not ever be satisfied, but know that men have done their best to remediate the inefficiency of It's Word, that is the Being's Word (scripture.) Further, if divinity, if divine *nature/will* suffered death, how then could it, divine *nature*, be described as brandishing the properties of immortality?

Monophysitism (581-583) mono (one) physite (nature) errantly failed to recognize two *natures* in one *person*; hence Monophysites refused to consolidate *nature* into *person*. Their error lies in the fact that they were comfortable with the idea that two *natures* of the Messiah equated to two *persons*. Unquestionably, adherence to this formula limited their conception of human *nature* without *personality*.¹³ Hence, the idea of two *natures* inevitably led to two *personalities*, and therefore two Sons of God. Monophysitism should have fallen into obscurity given the fact of minimal historical relevancy, but consideration has been drawn to the effect that the Messiah is to be counted as **one** of three distinct *persons* in the *being* of the Godhead thereby canceling out any exclusivity or individual portion to which the definition of *nature* might have. The meaning of the word *nature* here does not connote a separate *person*.

¹³ History of the Church, Vol. III, Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity.

Failure to consolidate two *natures* into one *person* would inevitably produce **two** *persons* within the second member, *person*, of the Trinity. Let us not forget what we are discussing; redemption for humanity hangs on the human-ness, human *nature*, of the Messiah. Nowhere in scripture does it say that the divine-ness, divine *nature*, of the Messiah was an acceptable sacrifice or that **it**, the other *nature*, the divine *nature*, of the second *person* of the Trinity, (I employ the neuter pronoun **it** to distinguish properties of *nature* from *person* because, simply, two *natures* are not two *persons*, but two *persons* are to be, considered here at least, identified as distinct individuals. As this is self-evident, when I speak of the *nature* of a rock, I am relating to the rocks' properties, despite being comprised of its own essence. So, describing the rocks shape, consistency and color I am identifying different characteristics. If I consider the longevity of a particular rock then I would refer to its formation, life and subsequent transformation proper. I would not, however, consider, when speaking of the rocks longevity that it, longevity, *is* the rock any more than I would consider the *longevity* of a person to be the actual person.) died, on the contrary, it does say that the man died and that he bore the sins on his own body. Nearly blasphemous is the concept that God had to die, or that the divine *nature* had to be sacrificed so that mankind could be saved; humanity could not be saved by human-ness of the Messiah, yet the entire race of humankind could be subjected to inherited sin since the beginning of time from one man, Adam?! The scripture does reconcile this inconstancy properly through the second Adam.¹⁴ "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" Romans 5:19

¹⁴ The second Adam is highlighted in the first part of this essay

Monotheletism (629) mono (one) thelema (will) was committed to heresy in the sixth century for stating that the Christ, despite having two distinct *natures*, divine and human, continued as one *person* in the Godhead with one *will*. The error lie not in scriptural reasoning but in improper configuration of the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, for the *being* of the Godhead completely occupied one *will*, that is, all three *persons* occupy one *will* and the human *nature of the second person* occupies a separate *will*. Thusly, two *wills* operate particularly within one *person* yet three *persons* together employ one *will*. Stated emphatically, three *persons* distinctly utilize one single *will*, all the while two separate *natures* and two separate *wills* operate within the second *person* of the Trinity. At which point did we leave logic and rationality behind? The *persons* which are separate and distinct from each other occupy one thing, one *being*, that is, three *who's* in one *what*. Inside one of the *who's*, one of the *persons*, are two separate and distinct *natures* and two separate and distinct *wills*. So, *who*, or *what* is in charge and *when*?

Kenosis was introduced by Gottfried Thomasius (1802 - 1875), a German Lutheran theologian. Kenosis is derived from the Greek meaning 'to empty.' There is little question what it is that this heretical scheme is purposing to *empty*. Some Trinitarians have approximated the second *person* of the Trinity to have voluntarily relinquished his divine *station/nature* perhaps in order to *adequately* occupy the flesh. A relatively new heresy which has already suffered a host of predicaments, this fallacy offers to the Central Doctrine a new voracity for old heresies, many of which have been concisely highlighted by adepts of subsequent theological ratiocinations.

The Kenotic Theory was expounded upon in the lectures of A. B Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, (1876) which 'enabled theologians to

recognize the limitations of Jesus,'¹⁵ a retention of the three 'omni's' relegated by critics of Trinitarianism: omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. Thomasius understood this void to be reticent in the formal configuration of the doctrine of the Trinity; the humanity of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels fails to incorporate a full incarnation leaving him evidently dispossessed of attributes that are unequivocally identified as divine. How could the divine *nature* and *will* of Christ, remember he possessed two *natures* and two *wills* (human and divine), not have been employed when Jesus admitted plainly that he was unaware of when he would return in Matthew 24:36 and what of the dormancy shown by the divine *nature* in Jesus when he was tempted? James 1:13 explicitly states that God cannot be tempted. Reviewing omnipotence in the God-man, Jesus refused to accept responsibility for the miraculous works when he charged this activity to have rested solely on the first *person* of the Trinity. John 14:10 clearly shows the Father to have been liable for the works in him (the Son). We should address briefly the immortality of God (1 Timothy 1:17) contrasted with the indispensable sacrifice of the unspotted Lamb (the Son) through his death. Thomasius realized these Christological conundrums to be in need of proper remediation and rightfully so for the theoretical boundaries of the formation of the Godhead within the doctrine of the Trinity have been stretched and tested since their inception. What has been spelled out in ecumenical creeds and theological speculation throughout centuries has proved at least two fixed conclusions: orthodoxy and heresy. The judgments pronounced and adopted by councils, as tenacious as they sometimes are, progressively defined properties of the Godhead. These definitions have captivated the formula and provide little room for terminological movement to explain extraordinary behavior exhibited by the second *person* of the Trinity. Heretical schemes keep explanations of this

¹⁵ Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth: Summary of Christian Doctrine Based on Biblical Revelation*

behavior at bay and compel a dismissal of the theory of Kenosis, which can be identified as nothing less than a sincere attempt to reconcile this problem within the Central Doctrine. Thomasius could not tamper with fixed points established antecedently by church councils. *Communicatio Idiomatum* and *Docetism* collectively limit intellectual range of movement within Kenosis. C. Stephen Evans elaborates on this restriction with penetrating acuity.

“...if the Son of God retains his maximal mode of divine being in the state of humiliation (the ‘extra Catholicum’), the humanity of Christ is threatened by a docetic depreciation, and his-by all Gospel appearances-unitive consciousness is endangered by a certain duplicity of person where the divine always ‘surpasses,’ ‘hovers above,’ or ‘lies beyond or behind’ the humanity producing ‘two-fold mode of being a double life, a doubled consciousness’ (46-7). Such a position, he asserts, ‘threatens to annul even the truth of the Incarnation’ (54). But on the other hand, any Lutheran dickering with *communicatio idiomatum* of the *genus majesticum* will not do either. Though perhaps retaining the unity of the person (which Thomasius considers the genius of Lutheran Christology), there is such a docetic *appreciation* of Christ’s humanity that it can no longer in any real sense of the word be appreciated as such. Any supposition of the full actuality of divine attributes makes a chimera of the human experience and development of the historic Jesus.”¹⁶

A greater respect for Thomasius’ attempt at reconciliation has been found wanting within the Trinitarian camp. When the divine and human properties apparently failed to communicate *prudently* within the second *person* of the Trinity it produced an intellectual irritation in the minds of some men. *Communicatio Idiomatum* does a fine job at explaining a percentage of the behavior exhibited by the Messiah within the confines of orthodox Trinitarian parameters, but this does not explain all the apparent deficiencies which should have otherwise concretely stabilized divinity within the second *person* of the Trinity, a systemic condition that

¹⁶ C. Stephen Evans, *Exploring Kenotic Christology: the self-emptying of God*

may never be solved logically without the aid of mystery. Levi Leonard Paine understands the crux of this ‘unhistorical and unscientific violation of logical and psychological laws’ to be a sustainer of theological dogmas.

‘...to put it psychologically, that there is in Christ a complete human nature, and yet with no distinct human personality, or, still again, to on another side its contradictory character, that the God-man, Jesus Christ, is both omniscient and ignorant, omnipotent and not omnipotent, eternal and temporal, eternally begotten and begotten in time, a Son of God and a son of man, having God as his Father in one way, and Joseph as his father, or at least Mary as his mother, in another way.’¹⁷

Distinguished biblical scholar and author F. F. Bruce recognized that “first-century Christians did not share the intellectual problem involved for many today in ‘combining heavenly pre-existence with a human genetical inheritance.’ Montefiore, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 106.”¹⁸ But Philippians 2:6, in context, encourages us to be of the same mind, which was in Christ. So, how can we, as followers of Christ, cooperate with the humanity, human *nature*, within us and allow our divine *nature* to relax? Maybe we need to voluntarily suppress this divine mind in us. (Philippians 2:5) Furthermore, it is absurd to reflect on the manner in which Trinitarians apply this passage to serve their doctrine in two distinct ways. The first absurdity finds itself neatly formatted as an effort to bolster the Trinitarian perspective that is distributed imprudently within the pages of the Holy Scriptures. Trinitarian commentators and theologians have attempted to capitalize on several opportunities to forge or deliberately rework original text as an attempt to serve their purpose,

¹⁷ Levi Leonard Paine, *A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism, and Its Outcome in the New Christology*, *The New Christology*

¹⁸ F. F. Bruce, *Philippians*, § *The Christ Hymn Phil. 2:6-11*

some of which can be considered desperate and far reaching. Augustine's Tractate 105.3 serves as a definitive product of this tampering.¹⁹ Unwittingly, through the phraseology inserted by the translators of Philippians 2:6 in the Authorized King James Version of the scriptures they had successfully spawned yet another heretical doctrine effectually relating to the divine *nature* of the second *person* of the Trinity. Orthodoxy would never reconcile Kenosis in the Central Doctrine, further, unlike some Trinitarian exponents, scholars of the Trinity explicate the apparent deficiency of the divine *nature* within the second *person* of the Trinity that the doctrine of the Kenosis creates. Bruce argues that "[h]e 'emptied himself' or 'divested himself' specifically in that **he took the very nature of a servant** (lit., 'the form of a slave'). This does not mean that he exchanged the nature (or form) of God for the nature (or form) of a servant: it means that he displayed the nature (or form) of God *in* the nature (or form) of a servant."²⁰ Brackets added. To evidence this, Bruce continues by highlighting John 13:3-5 and what took place with the washing of feet by the Messiah at the Last Supper.

The conclusion of the matter has found itself neatly parceled in the following words "All forms of classical orthodoxy either explicitly reject or reject in principle Kenotic Theology. This is because God must be affirmed to be changeless; any concept of the incarnation that would imply change would mean that God would cease to be God."²¹

So when Jesus responded to the Unitarian monotheist stating the first commandment, 'Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord,' are we to assume that the Messiah was employing the subordinative human

¹⁹ 'And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.' The proper order of the words is, 'That they may know You and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent, as the only true God.' Saint Augustine, Tractate 105.3. This tampering directly affects the scriptural understanding of soteriology.

²⁰ F. F. Bruce, Philippians, § The Christ Hymn Phil. 2:6-11

²¹ EDT, 601

will within the second *person*? For if the superordinate divine *will* were employed he would have wasted little time extrapolating the idea that he divinely hypostatized the first commandment. We should know that the Trinitarian Godhead communicated rather inefficiently the nature and composition of It's deity amidst the pages of It's word.

“The communion of natures is that most intimate participation (*koinwnia*) and combination (*sunduasiß*) of the divine nature of the *logoß* and of the assumed human nature, by which the *logoß*, through a most intimate and profound perichoresis, so permeates, perfect, inhabits, and appropriates to Himself the human nature that is personally united to Him, that from both, mutually intercommunicating, there arises the one incommunicable subject, viz., one person.” As, however, in the act of union, the divine nature is regarded as the active one, and the divine *logoß* as that which assumed the human nature, so the intercommunion of the two natures must be so understood as that, between the two natures, the active movement proceeds from the divine nature, and it is this that permeates the human.²²

Docetism first surfaced in a letter by Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (190-203) to the Church at Rhossos,²³ where troubles had arisen about the public reading of the apocryphal Gospel of Peter. Evidently a product of Gnosticism, a generic term used to describe various religious and intellectual sects that operated in and around the infancy of the church, which crept up beyond the congregation, docetism from the Greek *dokesis*, literally means an ‘appearance’ suggesting that the Christ only seemed to be human but did not actually suffer or leave any footprints in the sand as he walked seaside. Docetism like polytheism is one of the easiest heresies for the promulgators of the doctrine of the Trinity to fall in to. For Trinitarians to maintain divinity in the second person in the Godhead they inadvertently fail to maintain the humanity of Christ thereby upholding an improper Christology. Although Kenotic Theory

²² Schmid's *Doctrinal Theology* §33 continuation, par. 1

²³ New Advent, Catholic Encyclopedia, Docetae

was originally developed to solve a portion of these problems inherent in the formation of the Trinity known to be orthodox for centuries, Docetism remains a pitfall for the unenlightened. ‘Most lay Trinitarians are unconsciously docetic, since they cannot understand the mechanics of the hypostatic union and find it much easier to believe that Jesus is simply God appearing in the form of man ("In fact, popular supranaturalistic Christology has always been predominantly docetic", J. A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, SCM Press, 1963, p.65).’²⁴

The End of the Rainbow: Communicatio Idiomatum

‘Communicatio Idiomatum,’ or communication of properties, is where we find the tapering mist located at the end of the rainbow. The Communicatio Idiomatum is based on the oneness of *person* subsisting in the two *natures* of Jesus Christ.²⁵ Here we will find an exclusive *communication* between the two *natures* within the second *person* of the Trinity.

Developed by late sixteenth-century reformers to determine the omnipresence of the glorified Messiah within the Lord’s Supper, controversy arose as to the process by which the human *nature* communicates with the divine *nature*. Within the context of Communicatio Idiomatum Christ possessed all the attributes of both *natures*, human and divine, but nevertheless the *natures* remained distinct.²⁶ This heralds a simple explanation of the communication of properties indeed. Provided one was in search of tedious and torture-some extenuation of the details surrounding Communicatio Idiomatum

²⁴ Evangelion, Christadelphian.org, Forums, The Kenosis of Christ, Kenosis

²⁵ New Advent, Catholic Encyclopedia, Communicatio Idiomatum

²⁶ VIII. The Scholastic Lutheran Christology

they might gather enough patience that would fit in suitcases to satisfy a journey half-way around the world and back. One could only pray he possessed the strength and endurance to withstand such an excursion, the effort is scantily repaid. In ‘*Doctrinal Theology*’ §33 *continuation* of §32 ‘Of the Personal Union,’ Heinrich Schmid puts to task of discovering water where there is none. Travelers given to extremely arid climates will find the atmosphere here quite comfortable. Schmid’s *Doctrinal Theology* §33 *continuation* is an exhaustive depiction of *Communicatio Idiomatum* that contains over 12,500 words voluminously stretched over nineteen pages. Despite all the wrenching and writhing Schmid finally confesses rather surreptitiously to the awkward grasp the divine merit holds; this grip of course is purported to be too powerful to release amidst the death of Christ,

Thus, the shedding of Christ’s blood is an operation of the human nature, for only the human nature [can] shed blood; the ***infinite merit*** which belongs to this blood is an operation of the divine nature. But the atonement for our sins, which has been wrought by means of the shed blood only in view of the fact that both natures have contributed their part thereto, the human nature by shedding it, and the divine nature by giving to the blood its infinite merit, is the work (apotelesma) of both natures.²⁷ brackets added

Thusly, the price of the human *nature*’s blood could only be qualified by the divine *nature*’s merit at death.

This essential distinction of the blood of the Messiah becomes slightly conflated through the depiction granted in the death of the Christ. We shall blend the divine *nature*, wholly immortal due to the sheer magnitude of divinity that the *nature* of God the Father and God the Spirit clench within this *nature* which the second *person* of the Trinity shares, with the human *nature*. We shall also blend the *communication*

²⁷ Citation graciously provided by Christian Classics Ethereal Library

that the second *person's* human *nature* shares with its divine *nature* to the point of death; both *natures*, however, remain distinct and unblended in this effect through the process of death. Excitedly, we have two movements that happen at this point of death. The first momentarily exercises the death of the *nature* of the Father and the Holy Spirit which the second *person* of the Trinity shares. How could it be called a sacrifice if it, the divinely merited blood, was not freely given? Did the divine merit, or the *quality*, exist in the blood before it even had a chance to dry one moment after the Messiah died? At first and last glance this deduction solidly appears contradictory as it should; here we find logic running still further away from rationality. There remains a second by-product of this argument identified as a stigma further granted by this *absurd unscriptural deduction*: Essential Divine Atonement. Not only has the divine *nature* of the *being* of the Trinity become mortal, but the **man-**dated atonement for the sins of humanity require a divine sacrifice, both assertions equally void of scriptural explication. The sacrifice of divine blood, how can this be?

Infinite Merit: A Scriptural Void

Earlier when we highlighted a small portion of Heinrich Schmid's work entitled '*Doctrinal Theology §33 continuation*' we could see that he clearly identified two operations which governed the *quality* and *function* of the blood of the Messiah. The two operations were directly related to the two *natures* respectively and both are quite becoming in their performance. The letting of blood was a *function* of the human *nature* while the divine *nature* provided the *quality* within blood that was let, assumedly to the point of death. Together, *function* and *quality* of the blood with the aid of both *natures* provided the ***infinite merit*** required to save all of humanity or just a portion of it for all third-point Calvinists

out there. This is a very remarkable deduction considering that *infinite merit* is found nowhere in the scriptures and must be eisegetically devised. What is determined in the scripture regarding atonement lies juxtaposed to *infinite merit* and is found to be of no divine consequence.

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh and we cannot overlook this scriptural fact, nor could Trinitarians.

1 John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

2 John 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

In the following verses we find that the Messiah was fashioned as a man and made a little lower than the angels who also bore our sins on his physical body.

1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Hebrews 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Romans 5:15 But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is by one man, Jesus Christ*, hath abounded unto many.

Quality of the blood of the Messiah is pronounced in his humanity in the scriptures.

1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1 Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

1 Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Revelation 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Now, the humanity, or the flesh, of the Messiah is stated in the scriptures to be the common dominator for the composition of his person, the sacrifice provided and the equation of atonement of sins. The quality of the blood associated with this person is congruent to his composition: human. There is no hint of explicating the sacrifice of the Messiah with his blood to be divine in essence or in need of it. From this explicit deduction, the exegetical deduction provided by scripture, we shall conclude that those who argue in favor of *infinite merit* do so under the guise of false assumptions fraught with implicit assertions that remain scripturally ungrounded. Yet it is there, the insistence that the blood, being a requisite for the atonement of mankind, of the Messiah had an essential quality: *infinite merit* provided by the divine *nature*. Religious theoreticians have dichotomized the second *person* of the Trinity into two distinct and separate *wills* and *natures*, so why not divide his blood also. They have fundamentally expatiated the monotheistic meaning and definition of one God to the extent of quasi-polytheism by relinquishing his title from a person, an infinite and exclusive person, to a form. He became a *what* and the composition of this *what* became some things, but these things are not distinctly and absolutely *who's* for fear of dejection of being labeled closet polytheists struggling to maintain belief in a sovereign *thing*. This has gone on for some time to the point where the Central Doctrine has now become a central quandary impotent even of a palpable theoretical spine and void of scriptural exegesis.

Eisegetic Soteriology

We have very clearly remonstrated with a negative reflection many parts of the central mystery. By recognizing the depleted aspects of this doctrine we can gain a fair depiction of what it could never be. In effort to polarize this portrayal we should highlight what it pronounces

definitively. For when we recognize the graphic of heresy articulated throughout the ages by orthodoxy, simultaneously we validate what it is. It is this validation that we want to recover. After all, with an accurate knowledge of the Godhead we should preserve a genuine salvation for the believer, right?

Getting to the point, we will find that the God we serve is declared a *substance* void of personality. Shortly, our God is a *thing*, not a *person*. *Personality* shall come into play through the indentured proliferation, or a multiplication of parts bound by orthodoxy, i.e. ecumenical decisions and formulation of creeds, of *persons* that occupy the *substance* which can now be described as three *participations* occupying one *formation*. Congenially speaking, we have three *who's* in one *what*, thank you James White. Now this one *thing* has three *persons* which are completely distinct from one another to the point that their *persons* can not be blended or merged. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit and the Spirit is not the Father and there shall not be any confounding of the three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet these three are one. Are you with me so far? This mixture has a slight chance of becoming blurred. Continuing, the *persons* collectively occupy one *nature* and one *will*. That is the three divine *persons* by definition share immortality. To describe the quality of immortality on this level with finite minds seems desperately far reaching and insufficient in its approach, and to describe something which it can not truly understand or experience leaves it in a bit of a quandary. How is a man to explain immortality except with terms that he knows and understands? It would be like trying to explain life as we know it with a perfect mind. It simply has not been done nor can it be because man's mind is fallible. Now compound this scenario with the idea that someone could live in a perfect world, whatever that may be, and that that someone had a perfect mind which could postulate and

explain this perfect world in terms that were palpable and understood. At this point would it be unrealistic to consider that it would take a perfect mind to understand and interpret what this perfect mind has analyzed of this perfect world? The information from this perfect mind would have, in one form or another, found to be incoherent to a mind that is imperfect. What we are getting at here is the idea that immortality contemplated by a mortal is deficient in some degree to its musing. So to explain the divine *nature* and *will* of the three *persons* of the Trinity with an imperfect and mortal mind appears rather inadequate and in need of infinite intelligence, infinite mind. Nonetheless, the matter of Trinitarian configuration has been pressed on by finite intelligence to the point of *reductio ad absurdum*, or a reduction to the absurd. A *reductio ad absurdum* is a form of argument in which a proposition is disproved by following its implications logically to an absurd consequence.²⁸ Collectively, we have one *being* that is occupied by three infinite quasi-*persons* who share mutually one *will* and one *nature*. We employ the term *quasi* here as an essential service to protect the Central Doctrine from exploding into unadulterated polytheism, which is found to be blasphemous in the scriptures. One of these quasi-*persons*, the second member, who employs the one divine *nature* and one divine *will* also employs another separate and distinct human *nature* and human *will*. These divine and human *wills* and *natures* of the second quasi-*persons*, though they are distinct and separate, remain attached through the communication of properties within the context of *Communicatio Idiomatum*. Standing on the edge of this communication we not only dichotomize the second *person* into the divine and human qualities, but his blood also. The (human?) blood of the second member is divided successively into function and value, that is, attributes which are divine and human. *Infinite merit* attaches itself to the divine *nature* and secures

²⁸ Nicholas Rescher. "Reductio ad absurdum". *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved 21 July 09.

the value of which all immortal *persons* of the Trinity occupy thereby providing a character to the blood of the human *nature* something that it essentially lacks in quality in effort to secure atonement for humanity, to whatever degree. Here the absurd reduction lies fully exposed and atonement for mankind is therefore deduced to a theoretical conclusion void of scriptural exegesis: *infinite merit*, provided by the divine *nature*, can only be offered as a sacrifice freely given by the second *person* at death.

The Central Mystery

ineffable:

incapable of being expressed into words

mystery:

religious truth that one can know only by revelation and cannot fully understand

enigma:

something not understood or beyond understanding

The fact remains that the union of the Godhead and the manhood in Christ is a profound mystery. To human reason it is a logically insoluble, mind-boggling enigma. Human reason rebels against the thought that the infinite God could take up his residence in a finite human body. Calvinists have always insisted that the finite cannot contain the infinite (*finitum non est capax infiniti*). That is sound logic, to be sure, but not sound theology.²⁹

²⁹ 'The Practical Application of the Doctrine of the Two Natures of Christ' by Wilbert R. Gawrisch 1984

To be sure, men of antiquity have employed astonishing rhetoric to describe the formation of the Trinity with reason, with the use of their mind, and the best conclusion admittedly, by many esteemed scholars and great minds, is that this particular formula of the Trinity remains a profound mystery, a mind-boggling enigma. Incredibly, we now have a God who is mysterious and has become a mind-boggling enigma. Let us make-way for the esteemed *mind* to entertain this mystery verbatim,

The Blessed Trinity is the mystery of mysteries...³⁰

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith"³¹

"There is no subject where error is more dangerous, research more laborious, and discovery more fruitful than the oneness of the Trinity (*unitas Trinitatis*) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit"³²

Here is a mystery, the stupendous mystery of the Christian religion, the ineffable mystery of three persons in one God. We cannot define it. Every human attempt at definition involves it in deeper mystery. The arithmetic of heaven is beyond us. Yet this is no more mysterious and inexplicable than the Trinity of our own nature; body, soul, and spirit; and no man has ever shown that it involved a contradiction or in any way conflicted with the testimony of our senses or with demonstrated truth; and we must accept it by the power of a simple faith, or rush into tritheism on the one hand or unitarianism on the other.³³

What is tiring is the thought that for every one reference cited here by leading Trinitarians there are literally hundreds of quotes to concede in

³⁰ Matthias Joseph Scheeben

³¹ The Catechism of the Catholic Church on the Trinity

³² De Trinitate, 1.3.5. Augustine

³³ Frederick Dunlison Power

so many words equal gluttons of logic defiled, scorned by rationality to the point of enigmatic revelry, typifying arguably to the point of mental exhaustion a God that is not entirely known to them. Shall this God, depicted by creedal formulation, scurry around in this stunning perplexity, shall He be called the God of ineffable mystery? Witness the product that took centuries to develop from the minds of men who fashioned a creed now considered orthodox, the Chalcedonian Creed of 451,

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

The part which remains unexplained, unanswered and which defiles logic is how could *they* have even **known** the God who they worshipped in the Greek Scriptures? Not only could they be completely familiar with what they worshipped to the point of understanding, but contrast their knowledge of the God they worshipped with the mysteriousness of the God that pagans worshipped to the point that it, or he, remained unknown. How could these first-century 'Christians' be completely aware

of *who* they worshipped. Maybe we should tremble and shake at their supernatural insight. For what took centuries to develop and suffer refashion-ment by highly skilled theoreticians these humble first-century Hebrews perceived innocently.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

John 4:22

The Temptation of God and the God of Temptation

Consider that when we highlight the *person* who upon receiving Holy Spirit through baptism was led immediately away into the wilderness, a duration which comprised at least forty days recalling his fast, is regarded by orthodoxy to have been God. It is here, in the wilderness, where God is directly propositioned by the ruler of this present world,³⁴ the Prince of the Air.³⁵ The question is whether the ruler of the world knew exactly who he was addressing. The King James Version identifies the person whom the devil was addressing as the Son of God, but would the context of the dialogue suggest the Christ to be God or man? Did the devil perceive Jesus to be God? It should be fairly evident from the posture of the questions, yes even the answers given by the Messiah who the devil knew him to be, much less who Jesus professed himself to be.

Let it be known that the fourth chapter of both books of the gospels Matthew and Luke detail the account of the temptation of Christ. The devil asks three questions reiterated in each book; however the order of them is different. What is indicative of the questions posed by the devil

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:4

³⁵ Ephesians 2:2

is not whether Jesus is God, but rather whether he is the *Son* of God. Two out of three times in scripture, that is twice in Matthew, the devil questions the validity of his station at the beginning of each query respectively, that of his son-ship. Assumedly, we must infer from this stance that Jesus might have held some reservation as to the awareness of his self-identity. This would lead us to believe that the man Jesus might have harbored a capacity for some self-doubt, otherwise, how could this temptation be considered legitimate?

Now, it is assumed that the human *nature* of the second *person* of the Trinity was to have become directly affected by these temptations. The irreconcilable dissociation of two *natures* and *wills* exhibited by the second *person* of the Trinity in the scripture is a problem which prompts despondency by the readers of the word of God. Could the Creator have been more inefficient in his manner of revealing the doctrine of the Trinity in the Greek scriptures? There was no hint that the station of son-ship was unequivocally divine in his terse response to the Adversary where at least two substantive assumptions lie. When provided the best opportunity to govern the kingdoms of the world through one subordinate act of worship to the ruler of even this present world we find the Messiah denying his own deity furnishing distinction between himself and the LORD God. Secondly, silence by the son of God on the issue of his own deity coupled with the clarification of who essentially deserves true worship makes his self-awareness appear disheveled. This sort of behavior, the inability to identify one's true identity, might be better understood through the lens of modern psychiatric diagnosis. Make no mistake, the question is not whether the son of God suffered from a psychiatric condition, rather whether the doctrine of the Trinity portrays the second *person* of the Trinity to exhibit signs of this mental illness.

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is defined as the presence of two or more distinct identities or personal states.³⁶ Victims of the disorder exhibit behavior where each personality ‘recurrently takes control of the person’s’ conduct. Symptoms include an ‘inability to recall personal information’ that is not related directly to ‘substance abuse’ or to ‘general medical conditions.’ Questions of his diagnosis proper will be left to the professionals within this field of medicine, however, doubt remains as to whether the Messiah has positively secured the nature of his divinity through the discourse with the Adversary. Notably, Jesus was face to face with arguably the greatest opponent he would ever confront yet we find him accepting his station of son-ship and chiding the devil on who deserves true worship. It should not be assumed here indecently by Trinitarians that we are patronizing a general posture that the Messiah was either mad, bad or God, rather, it shall be acknowledged that inherent in the Central Doctrine we find behavior of the divine *nature* of the second *person* of the Trinity where he remains unaware of his revisit to the earth, of who touched the hem of his garment and who will be at his right or left hand when he is seated on the throne, to be wanting. Though the omniscience of the Messiah proved to be wearing thin, most likely due to the limited capacity in which his human *nature* operates, though no fault of his own, we find him relatively subject to a lack of knowledge which is not characteristic of an all-knowing *being*. The allusion here is the uncertainty surrounding the essential and supportive doctrine of the Trinity: the *full* incarnation. Having complete access to the *will* and *nature* of God, an inherent quality that is persistently espoused by Trinitarians, we find the second person of the Trinity complacent in his station as God the Son.

³⁶ Psych Central, Dissociative Identity Disorder, (Symptoms of)

Are we to assume this to be the first time for the Great Tempter was to have allured God? The book of Job chronicles the account of the Adversary, Ha-Satan, meeting with the purported triune God. Verse six of the first chapter states, 'Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.' Welcoming into the presence of the LORD are the sons of God and without much reservation Trinitarians might consider the absence of the second *person* of the Trinity here to be virtually absurd. The organization of their very ground of being, or ontological hypostases expressed as essential in the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, would not permit this. Amidst this company we find Satan making an appearance at the divine court. A dialogue ensues between the LORD and Satan over the idea of whether a righteous man's faith in God is depreciable by the conversion of earthly blessings into a state of desolation. God concedes one righteous man fit for the challenge, Job, and Satan responds to the proposition with fierce adversity and Job is systematically stripped of all his worldly possessions, familial bonds and physical welfare. A portion of the agency responsible for authorizing this debacle can be extraneously identified as the second member of the Trinity, God the Son eternally generated as three *persons* in one *being* who all share one will. How could Ha-Satan not have known?

Here it will be assumed God the Son was actively present and it will be contended that the Adversary formalized his acquaintance with all of them, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To ignore the familiarity of Satan with the second *person* of the Trinity would incite an incredible deficiency of logic within the Trinitarian camp. Looking forward to Satan's temptation of Christ one should not be left with any reasonable doubt that would suggest these two parties were unacquainted. When considering the deity of Jesus it would be an insipid joke for the Great Deceiver to not have recognized the Godhead in the Christ, and it would

be equally fallacious for God to respond to questions with such bandaging acuity. What would be the purpose of asking God if he is the Son of God unless he is known to be delusional? Or perhaps, as the word of God indicates, Jesus is not God, rather the prophesied Messiah, the second Adam and the Son of God all of which are titles explicitly expressed in the scriptures.

We read in 1 Corinthians viii 6 who the one and only true God is, distinguishing unambiguously the Father from the one Lord Jesus Christ. No great marvel established here, yet if we return to the scripture quoted by the Adversary in Psalms xci 11 The Father gives angels charge over thee (the son.) A couple of verses back in Psalms xci we find who it is that possess the authority to give charge over the angels. Strong's Concordance identifies the LORD as Yahveh, the self-existent or eternal, this Yahveh is the one whom should not be tempted. This self-existent eternal Yahveh was not once recognized in both Gospel accounts of the temptation by either participants in the dialogue, the Adversary failed to acknowledge his Creator in the Messiah and the Messiah never let on that he is Yahveh; a subtly deceptive portrayal of the 'temptation in the wilderness.' At the very least, it remains one of the many inefficient passages in Scripture highlighting the deity and who occupies its station.

Palpable Exegetical Reasoning

To say that we must look at scripture 'collectively' from segmented clips, ambiguous and disconnected texts to derive the doctrine of the Trinity *while simultaneously ignoring* as many contradictory verses and countless passages that convey unequivocally clear and direct meanings is much like developing a 'comprehensive' view of the American Civil War of 1865 from a variety of snippets from newspaper articles of the day; creating a central theme using this method creates a sense of wonder

and mystery by many who review numerous historical accounts and fail to ignore major underlying themes supported by particular incidents and eyewitness testimony surrounding the developmental process of the war. What compounds this mystery is the sedulous *assertion*, unmarked by any authoritative text, that undying belief in this 'comprehensive' view must be maintained to secure a proper understanding of the war; we should mention that authentication of every Patriotic fiber you possess hangs on this interpretation. Nonetheless, there are religious profligates who maintain the theory that, when taken as a whole, scripture supports the doctrine of the Trinity, yet it is not explicitly taught as such anywhere in its covers. It shall be held that legitimate scriptural doctrines must be articulated by clear contextual reading and not from unclear ambiguous passages void of context.

To substantiate this claim and incite overwhelming wonder consider the less magnified doctrine of eating meat sacrificed to idols in the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians viii. Thirteen consecutive verses explicitly address the controversy, yes controversy, which affected the congregation of first-century believers. Paul should be admonished for the delicate manner in which he treated the situation, more concisely his sensitivity to the Holy Spirit 2 Peter i 19-21 from which all inspiration of the Scriptures were derived. Generally, Paul begins by addressing a concern which surrounds the touching of things sacrificed to idols which has a direct bearing on the conscience. The crux of his argument hinges on *correct knowledge* which is something he and assumedly other believers share on this particular issue. Interestingly, Paul uses as an example of correct knowledge of the one true God in this passage as God the Father v. 6. This analogy which Paul articulates clearly identifies the Lord Jesus Christ separate and distinct from the one God; he considers this also correct knowledge. Paul continues to develop the argument more specifically towards eating foods sacrificed to idols. Again, correct

knowledge remains fundamental to the conscience of the partaker who eats food sacrificed to idols knowing there is only one true God. This is contrasted with the man with incorrect knowledge who eats food sacrificed to idols considered genuine; thereby his conscience being weak becomes defiled. Paul then hastens that correct knowledge might offend those with a weak conscience. His argument comes full circle returning to the beginning reminding us that knowledge only puffs up; regard it as charity, consider it nothing lest you offend a brother weak in conscience. Paul goes as far as saying he will not eat meat as the world standeth if it offends a brother, v. 13. Paul's position regarding meat sacrificed to idols is unique in that he identifies a controversy that has surfaced in the early church with care and sensitivity treating the issue with fair concern. The relevancy of the issue at hand was urgent enough to require the attention of this prolific New Testament writer, one that did not go unnoticed. Contextually, Paul stayed on topic for a series of thirteen verses explicating the manner in which believers should use correct knowledge. Incidentally, when we concede the (in)significance of the topic Paul is explaining here regarding the consumption of meats sacrificed to idols in the eighth chapter of the first letter to the church at Corinth in comparison with the magnitude of the Central Doctrine there remains a disparaging amount of neglect on the part of, not only this author singularly, but also in a collective participation, all of the New Testament writers; nowhere in the entire scriptures is there even three consecutive verses highlighting a basic structure of the Trinity. Nonetheless, there is a palpable introduction, body and conclusion in this particular passage (1 Corinthians viii); this is not extraordinary writing mechanics, even with his progressive style of substantial and specific detail following a leading general topic. Paul even employs the use of analogy with the element of comparison/contrast, something that is a useful tool by conventional writing standards. Granted, there is no incredible writing method used by Paul or any other author of the New Testament, however,

it is interesting that every author has not only failed to provide a working thesis, quite unlike a poetical prologue impregnated with lyrical prose, for which even a general structure of the Central Doctrine that can be exegetically derived, nor do they provide any detail of minor disputes surrounding a singular complex unity of the one God in the Shema, eternal generation of the Son, ontological union of all persons of the Being of God or how the divine *nature* communicates with the human *nature* within the second *person* of the Trinity; these concepts did not exist in the first century, they remained products of an evolving Central Doctrine, one that took centuries to develop. Ironically, we do not have a complete orthodox Trinitarian doctrine without these and other extra-biblical exploits. Quite simply, there remains no controversy in the Greek Scriptures, the New Testament, where the author is explicitly addressing how the Messiah occupies the station of deity.

One of the reasons contemporary Trinitarian Apologists might become apprehensive when given every opportunity to grasp hold of the true historical and progressive depiction of how the Central Doctrine evolved is the Post-Apostolic and Ante-Nicene Fathers held in their works on the Trinity a theology that would be considered today as heretical, cult-like or unorthodox at the very least; themes like Binitarianism and Subordinationism coupled with Platonic nuances of created intermediary beings and logos creatures of immortal significance or otherwise is just a sample of speculative theology, Christology, of what persons like Philo, Tatian, Origen, Tertullian and a host of other Christian Platonists subscribed to. In effort to secure historical integrity we will consider the element of subordination within the godhead that originated outside the church by Greek philosophers in the next part of this series and we shall find out how Subordinationism was adopted by Christian Neo-Platonists and developed as a correlative of Logos philosophy by Philo of Alexandria. For pre-Nicene orthodox Christianity and Christian Platonism alike the

doctrine of subordinationism basically expired at the council of Nicea 325; this decision by the council, however, proved to be short-sighted, for the line of demarcation proved only to delineate an underdeveloped Trinitarian definition and doctrine. The council of Nicea identified Jesus to be of the same substance (homoousios) of the Father rendering the Son deity, yet they could not address whether the Christ had two natures or one, or whether the humanity of Jesus was completely separate and distinguishable from the divine nature, for these controversies did not exist and the terms for which positions that were established remained undefined. Lack of definition and clarity of the underdeveloped Central Doctrine left any 'Church Father' at grave risk to become future heretics or otherwise, not unlike Origen, whose works were formally condemned some three centuries later by another ecumenical council naturally because they were not deemed improper or heretical until progressive development of the godhead had evolved.

The Second Ecumenical Council or The First Council of Constantinople A.D. 381 confirmed that the Logos dwells in Jesus and established whether or not it takes the place of his human soul, also, whether he had one nature or two; both positions deal with the relational aspects of the second person of the Trinity which qualify a proper Christology. Apollinarius of Laodicea was subsequently condemned for maintaining that the Logos which dwells in Jesus takes the place of his soul and that it, the Logos, inevitably suffered and died on the cross. Another heretical conclusion drawn by Apollinarius was that Jesus possessed only one nature.

In effort to further expound upon the lack of definition and clarity of the underdeveloped Central Doctrine, consider that the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus June 26, 431 eventually affirmed the position postulated by Nestorius suggesting the use of *Christotokos*,

Christ-bearer, to correctly support the two natures in Jesus. This decision was overturned again more than two weeks later. The ambivalence of the council on the terms is manifest in the subsequent over-ruling of the decisions rightly crediting the fact that Church Fathers had not fully developed a proper Christology before the fifth century, owing to, inevitably, an underdeveloped Central Doctrine. Without a full and proper incarnation, a correct Christology, the second *person* of the Trinity is not adequately established and this diminishes the potential value that a more accurate doctrine might possess. Remember, Nestorius postulated that the two natures in the second person of the Trinity equated to two persons. Imagine the soteriological risk one assumes in not knowing accurately whether the second member of the godhead possessed one will or two. Furthermore, what posture could be more heretical than claiming the divine *nature* to be infused into the humanity, the human *nature*, of this second *person*?

Final Thoughts

The Central Doctrine has survived centuries of *heretical* scrutiny and refinement through ecumenical decisions. The Universal Church lays claim to this prodigious effort and to its theo-logical accoutrements: establishing Jesus as God the Son we in turn will find the Mother of God, Theotokos. We must recognize the woman who bore deity in her womb; this is a supernatural occurrence and should be given special attention. Considering the magnificent possibility where deity *infuses* with humanity leaves the mind to wonder. Essentially, we have a God-man to have walked the earth who was not only sinless, but every step he took, every word he spoke and every thought produced was a process or event that occurred in a state of perfect divinity, identifying the singular divine *will* and the singular divine *nature* that operated within the second

person of the *being* of God. When the Messiah is portrayed in such a light by the proper order since the first Nicene Council 325 A.D. it does not seem too irrational to qualify Mary as the Mother of God; yet another incongruent and oxymoronic usage of terms assuming God is immortal and necessarily without need of a mother. Still less fascinating is the particular meaning of Theotokos, literally God-bearer, thus initiating deep concern for her compatibility in a human state to bear the second *person* of the Godhead. Various attributes like sinlessness, perpetual virginity and intercessor towards the Father compliment her very unique position. With adoration of the Blessed Virgin given by the Reformers themselves concerting their efforts to bolster these doctrines naturally leaves their followers in a bit of a quandary. Protestantism has figured to rebuff some of these religious axioms to the extent of accepting only a portion of ecumenical decisions and rejecting others to an agonizing point. Protestants agree that the Christ did not have two separable *natures* in order to preserve the Central Doctrine, yet they have relinquished the blessed title held by the Queen of Heaven for more than millennia, thereby splitting this council's decisions. By whose authority and to what end; circumvention of established ecumenical decisions, the council of Ephesus 431, thereby redressing predominant theological dogma for the sake of authenticity? Today, Sola Scriptura is bandied about to split one council's decision in effort to justify their claim, considered a selective form of religious negationism, or historical revisionism. The intent of this paper is to identify the historical development of the Central Doctrine and pinpoint the work that was overlooked at the Reformation.

“Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened.”

-Winston Churchill

