

IV. DOCTRINE OF CHRIST: CHRIST'S PERSON

A. Introduction

B. Scriptural Data

1. Deity of Jesus

2. Humanity of Jesus

C. Systematic Summary

1. Historical Survey

a. One-nature (Monophysite) vs. two-nature (Dyophysite) Christology

i. Alexandrian Christology: Apollinarius, Athanasius

ii. Antiochean Christology: Theodore of Mopsuestia,
Nestorius

b. Council of Chalcedon

We. . . 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 soul and body; consubstantial [*homoousios*] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial [*homoousios*] with us according to the manhood, like us in all things except 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 [*theotokos*], according to the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means taken away because of the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person [*prosopon*] and one Subsistence [*hypostasis*], not divided or separated into two Persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

The famous series of four adjectives *asynchytos, atreptos, adiairetos, achoristos* (**without confusion, without change, without division, without separation**) serve as a reminder that the **two natures of Christ** must be kept distinct and that the **unity of his person** must not be compromised. The first two adjectives are aimed at the Alexandrian tendency to blend the two natures together as a result of the Incarnation; the last two are directed at the Antiochean failure to achieve a real union of the two natures so that they are "divided or separated into two Persons." As result of Chalcedon, it has become an imperative of orthodox Christology that we must neither "**confuse the natures** nor **divide the person**" of Christ.

c. Kenotic Christology

Kenoticism represents a distinctively non-Chalcedonian approach to Christology, since it holds that the Logos in becoming incarnate changed in his nature. This fact raises the question as to whether Kenoticism does not in fact amount to a denial of the deity of the incarnate Christ. Baillie demands,

Does Christianity, then, teach that God changed into a Man? . . . That at a certain point of time, God. . . was transformed into a human being for a period of about thirty years? It is hardly necessary to say that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation means nothing like that. . . . it would be grotesque to suggest that the Incarnation has anything in common with the *metamorphoses* of ancient pagan mythology the deity and humanity of Christ are not merely successive stages . . . as if He had first been God, then Man, then after the days of His flesh were past, God again, with manhood left behind.¹

The question raised by kenotic Christology is the content of the divine nature, that is to say, which properties are essential to deity. Baillie holds that any change in God is a **substantial change** from deity. But it is exactly at this point that Kenoticists question the traditional doctrine.

2. Apologetic Significance

a. The Problem

b. A Proposed Solution

1. *We postulate with Chalcedon that in Christ there is one person who exemplifies two distinct and complete natures, one human and one divine.*

¹ D. M. Baillie, *God Was In Christ* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 82.

2. We agree with Apollinarius that the Logos was the rational soul of Jesus of Nazareth.

3. We postulate that the divine aspects of Jesus' personality were largely subliminal during his state of humiliation.