

The Christology of the Seven Ecumenical Councils

Prepared by Gaylin R. Schmeling

I. The History of the Great Church Council

In the Early Church there was always tension between the schools of Alexandria and Antioch. This was true also in regard to their Christology. The Alexandrian school stressed the unity of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, and the true divinity of His person. The Antiochian school stressed the duality in Christ and the humanity of His person. How could one preserve the unity in Christ and at the same time confess the duality that He is both true God (John 20:28) and true man (I Timothy 2:5) in one person (Romans 9:5)? If the Son was God of the same substance as the Father as confessed at Nicaea in 325, how do the human and divine relate to each other in the person of Christ? How can one speak of Christ as both fully divine and fully human as the Scripture teaches? This was the burning question in the early church.

Nestorius, an Antiochian, was elected patriarch of Constantinople in 428. When he reached the city he was particularly offended by the title *Theotokos* or Mother of God which was being used for the Virgin Mary. He so separated the human and divine in Christ that he was not willing to speak of the child born of Mary as God and her as the Mother of God. He so separated the natures in Christ that He was virtually two persons. This teaching tore Christ apart and made His redemptive work of no effect since Christ had to be both God and man in one person to be the Savior. Nestorius was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and banished to Syria and later Egypt. The bishops who supported him formed the Nestorian church, the historic Church of Persia which exists to the present, named The Church of the East and of the Assyrians.

The man most responsible for the fall of Nestorius was Cyril of Alexandria (375-444). He became bishop of the city in 412. He was a ruthless defender of the truth and to be his enemy was not pleasant. When Cyril heard of the Nestorian sermons which forbid that the virgin be called the *Theotokos*, he flew into a rage. How dare they suggest that the infant Jesus was not divine! At the Council of Nicaea Christ's divinity had been determined to be timeless. As far as Cyril was concerned, Nestorius had proved himself a heretic and he spent his time seeing that he was condemned. While his main purpose was theological, it also raised the prestige of Alexandria to have the patriarch of Constantinople accused of heresy.

Cyril's doctrine of Christ's person was sound and biblical. As Athanasius before him, his Christological argument was fundamentally about salvation. In order to be the Savior, Christ had to be divine. Thus he emphasized Christ's divinity. Cyril's great contribution was that he maintained a true personal union in Christ, with a real communication of attributes. Thus there is a divine Savior and not merely a good man in whom God dwelled like the prophets only in a greater degree. The latter was the direction of the Antiochians.

In opposition to Antioch, Cyril of Alexandria stressed the deity in Christ and the unity of His person, because salvation could be given and accomplished by God alone. His purpose was clearly soteriological. Only a divine Savior could win our salvation. He spoke of the "one incarnate nature of God the Logos" to emphasize that Christ was truly God. In statements like this one he equated nature and hypostasis or person which lead to unclarity. The Antiochian theologians believed that he was confusing and mixing the human and divine in Christ. This

was especially true when Eutyches, an aged abbot in Constantinople associated with the Alexandrian school, was rehabilitated by the Robber Synod of 449, even though he confessed that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union one nature. (Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, p. 23).

The decisions of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 known as the Fourth Ecumenical Council clarified the imprecise terminology of Cyril. The terms "nature" and "person" should not be used synonymously. The fathers at Chalcedon made use of a statement on the person of Christ by Leo the bishop of Rome known as Leo's *Tome*, the same Leo who in 452 single-handedly persuaded Attila the Hun not to sack Rome. They declared, "We confess one and the same Jesus Christ, the Son and Lord only-begotten, in two natures without mixture without change (against the one-nature doctrine), without division without separation (against Nestorius)." Thus the extreme views of the Alexandrian school and the Antiochian school were rejected.

Many followers of Cyril felt that Chalcedon had not fully rejected the teachings of the Antiochian school. The Cyrillian formula, "one single incarnate nature of the God-Word" represented for them the only proper Christological terminology. They were willing to say that the one combined nature of Christ came "out of two natures," but they were not willing to say that Christ always has two natures. The fears of these Monophysites (one nature) increased when after the council, Theodoret of Cyrus, an Antiochian and friend of Nestorius, dominated the Chalcedonian intellectual scene. Had the true meaning of Chalcedon been clearly enunciated, the Monophysite Schism may not have occurred.

In the century after Chalcedon questions arose concerning the hypostasis of the union in Christ. Was it, or was it not, the hypostasis of the pre-existent Logos? This question was answered using the enhypostasia terminology of Leontius of Byzantium (d. 544) which means "subsisting in something else." The human nature in Christ does not subsist in itself and according to itself, in its own personality, but subsists in another, namely in the hypostasis of the pre-existent Logos. Because the Logos assumed the human nature into himself, the hypostasis of the personal union in Christ is the hypostasis of the Logos. This definition indicated that Chalcedon was indeed in uniformity with Cyrillian thought for the Chalcedonian duality did not suppress the unity of the subject in Christ, which subject was the pre-existing Logos. This should have satisfied the Monophysite camp had it not been that their leading theologians like Severus of Antioch had become entrenched in one nature terminology. The Chalcedonians could indeed say "God suffered in the flesh" for one from the Trinity suffered in His assumed human flesh according to the communication of attributes.

Justinian, the greatest emperor of this period, ascended the throne in 527. There is no doubt that Justinian had great political aspirations and that those aspirations effected his theology. He wanted to reunite the religious factions in his empire and extend the empire. In addition to this, Justinian's beautiful wife, Theodora, leaned in the direction of the Greens, the Monophysite party in the capital, while Justinian was a Blue of the Chalcedonian party. There was continual agitation between the two parties in Constantinople. At times riots broke out between the Greens and Blues in the Hippodrome that could remind one of Monday night football. Theodora was continually pushing Justinian to heal the breach with the Monophysites. However, he was also a great theologian. He knew that Chalcedonian Christology was basically Cyrillian, but this fact was being blurred by the writings of Antiochian theologians which Monophysites understood as the real meaning of Chalcedon. To promote the Cyrillian intent of Chalcedon, the Council of Constantinople (553) was called together where the writings of three prominent Antiochian theologians (the Three Chapters) were rejected. The Three Chapters

included all the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the writings of Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa which attacked Cyril of Alexandria. The Council also proclaimed that the Cyrillian expression "one incarnate nature" must not be understood otherwise than as a synonym of one hypostasis.

In the time of Maximus the Confessor (580-622) controversy arose concerning the energies and wills in Christ. For Maximus, energy and will were virtually synonymous. Energy is the concrete manifestation of nature. To say that Christ has one will would have been a confusion of the natures. Then Christ would not have been truly human, for energy and will indicate the reality of the human nature. Christ had to be totally and completely human and totally and completely divine to be the Savior. The Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680-681 accepted the doctrine of two wills in Christ, rejecting the Monothelite (one will) view. It should be noted that this wasn't only a condemnation of the Monophysite view in another form, Monothelitism. It was also a rejection of the extreme Antiochian school because Nestorians spoke of a single will in Christ (Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, Vol. 2, pp. 69ff).

The last major controversy concerning Christology in the Eastern Church was related to the Iconoclastic Crisis in the 8th century. The Eastern emperors were fighting for the very existence of the Christian empire against Islam. In this conflict their sensitivity ever increased to the reproaches of idolatry hurled at Byzantine Christians by the Moslems, who presented themselves as the representatives of a purer religion. As a result, the Eastern emperors forbid the use of images. The Iconoclasts used this theological basis for the rejection of images: if the image represents the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of his divinity, it implies a Nestorian Christology and separates in Christ God from man; if, on the contrary, the iconographer pretends to represent Christ in the individual fullness of His divinity and His humanity, he assumes that the divinity itself can be circumscribed, which is absurd, or else that it lives in a state of confusion with the humanity, a view which nears Monophysitism (Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, p. 180).

The Orthodox leaders like John of Damascus (675-749) responded to the Iconoclasts on the basis of the incarnation. If the Logos assumed a total and complete human nature, that human nature could surely be represented in picture form. To deny that Christ could be portrayed in an icon was to deny that Christ was true man, a part of history. The iconographers made no pretense of representing the divinity in Christ, but they did picture the Divine Logos in His assumed flesh. The Iconoclastic view revealed a notion of deification in the humanity of Christ which suppressed the reality of the human nature and tended toward Monophysitism. The Council of Nicaea in 787 upheld the Orthodox teachings concerning images, declaring the reverencing of pictures and images of divine realities legitimate.

II. The Christology of Chalcedon

What was the Christology of Chalcedon? It was a synthesis between Cyrillian (Alexandrian) and Antiochian Christology with Cyrillian thought predominating. Meyendorff writes, "Thus, an attempt has been made to sustain the view that so-called neo-Chalcedonian Christology, proclaimed as official orthodoxy during the reign of Justinian and symbolized by the condemnation of the Three Chapters at the Council of 553; was not a simple concession to Monophysitism but a fundamental option, rooted in basic theological and anthropological presuppositions" (Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, p. 209). This view is not upheld by individuals such as Sellers who writes, "Moreover, it seems true to say that the Fifth

General Council 'erred' when it declared against the Three Chapters" (Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon a Historical and Doctrinal Survey*, p. 328). Sellers believes that here the proper synthesis between Alexandrian and Antiochian thought was upset. After a long history of rivalry between Alexandria and Antioch, the Antiochian school suffered its greatest blow. Its doctrine had been condemned by a council of the church.

I maintain that the basic premise of Meyendorff is correct. By confessing that the hypostasis of Christ was the hypostasis of the pre-existent Logos, the neo-Chalcedonians showed themselves to be in conformity with Cyril before the Council of 553. Cyrillian Christology was not the outcome of a compromise at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, it was the true intent of Chalcedon.

There is no doubt that Justinian's political ambitions played into the Fifth Ecumenical Council. He wanted reunion with the Monophysites. Yet, far more could have been done if that was the only intent of the council. The council would not have had to criticize the one incarnate nature terminology of Cyril. This certainly did not endear the Monophysites who had made one nature in Christ virtually their watchword. The Three Chapters had to be condemned because these writers were blurring the Cyrillian understanding of Chalcedon.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council of 680-681 should not be perceived as a counter-balance to the Cyrillian Christology of the Council of 553. This council spoke against the Monothelite view that was close to Monophysitism. It declared there was not one will in Christ, but two. This did not in any way reject the theology of Cyril. Rather, it was in line with Cyril of Alexandria for it condemned the one will terminology of his greatest antagonist, Nestorius. This council condemned Monothelitism, but confessed the teaching of Cyril.

Likewise, the Iconoclastic Crisis maintained the Cyrillian synthesis. The Council of Nicaea in 787 did not side with the Monophysite views of the Iconoclasts. It upheld the incarnational theology of Cyril and all the early fathers. Because the Logos assumed a total and complete human nature for our salvation, that human nature could be represented in picture form. If a picture of the assumed nature of the Logos was not possible, then the incarnation was not a reality.

Part of the modern disfavor with the neo-Chalcedonian Cyrillian synthesis results from the branch of Christianity which rejects it. The Reformed tradition centering in Calvin and Zwingli officially accepts Chalcedonian Christology, but in practice they do not uphold it. Calvin held that the finite is not capable of the infinite (*finitum non est capax infiniti*). With this axiom the Reformed have never been able to fathom the true unity of the personal union in Christ emphasized in Cyrillian Christology. This means that in Reformed theology, by philosophical definition, the human nature of Christ cannot embrace the divine nature. Thus, their Christology tends toward Nestorianism and they advocate the rehabilitation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius and the other representatives of the Antiochene Christology.

In contradistinction to Lutheranism, the Reformed do not maintain in practice the communication of attributes (1. Genus Idiomaticum, 2. Genus Maiestaticum, 3. Genus Apotelesmaticum [See *Addendum 2*]). Because the finite is not capable of the infinite, they categorically deny that the divine attributes of the Logos (such as omnipresence) are communicated to the assumed human nature as is taught in the Genus Maiestaticum. They deny that the blessed bread and wine in the Sacrament are the vivifying flesh and blood of the Son of God. Chemnitz in defense of Lutheranism quotes the fathers of Ephesus (431) as saying: "The flesh of Christ on account of the union with the divine nature, which is life itself, is made

life-giving or a life-giver and it thus has the authority or power to give life, and this authority it exercises in the action of the Lord's Supper in the believers" (Chemnitz, *De Duabus*, 474). The Christology of Lutheranism and the Seven Ecumenical Councils borders on Monophysitism for the Reformed and thus they reveal their hidden Nestorianism.

III. Soteriology and Christology

The Christological controversies of the church were not idle philosophical speculation without rhyme and reason. Christology is vital because it has soteriological significance. We confess in the Nicene Creed that He "for us men and our salvation. . .was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man." He was made man for our salvation. This is the purpose of the incarnation and Christology. Athanasius said, "God became man in order that man might become God in him" (*De Incarn.*, 54). Again Gregory Nazianzen wrote, "What is not assumed is not healed, and what is united to God is saved" (Ep. 101, *Ad Cledonium*; NPNF, Vol. VII, p. 440). God became as we are partaking in our flesh made from dust so that through unity with His divinity He must conquer all our foes and make us partakers in His divine glory, eternal life with Him. Athanasius and the other fathers based this salvific theme on a number of passages from Scripture (II Corinthians 3:18, 8:9; Galatians 3:26,4:7; John 17:23; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2; Psalms 82:1-6; Genesis 1:26), but first and foremost on II Peter 1:4, "By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

In the incarnation He took upon Himself our dying flesh enduring all our woes to raise us to His divine life, as the sons of God with an eternal existence. He partook in our suffering, death, and hell so that we may partake in His glory, life, and heaven, a wonderful exchange (*Der fröhliche Wechsel*). That heavenly treasure, won for all through His incarnation culminating in His great passion, was announced and offered to all by His glorious resurrection in a forensic act of justification. The whole world was declared the innocent sons of God. Through the open tomb God declared the whole world righteous in His Son. This joyful exchange was based on His incarnation, death, and resurrection. God's Son became flesh so that men might be God's sons. Christ was made sin in order that man might be forgiven by divine grace (WA 8:126, 21-32).

This treasure won on the cross and announced to all in the resurrection is brought to the individual personally through the means of grace, Word and Sacraments, and is received by faith in the Savior which is worked through the same means of grace (Romans 10:17; Titus 3:5; Matthew 26:28). When faith is worked in the believer's heart, he stands justified (declared righteous by faith alone) before God and through the means of grace the Spirit begins to conform us to the divine. "In his 1525 Lenten Postil, Luther writes 'Through faith we become gods and partakers of the divine nature and name.' For Luther, man's being like God, his theosis, thus also belongs to sanctification" (*And Every Tongue Confess*, p. 191). Again he writes, "Through faith we become gods and partake in the divine nature and name as it says in Psalm 82:6, 'I have indeed said you are gods and all together children of the Most High'" (St. L. 11:481; Lenker, *Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. II, p. 73-74).

In Baptism, He comes to us personally, causing us to participate in the divine. Christ was born of woman so that we could be reborn as the sons and daughters of God through the water and the Spirit (John 3:5, Titus 3:5). We were brought into fellowship and communion with the Triune God being incorporated into the body of Christ (Matthew 28:19). St. Paul says, "For you

are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). This passage shows that we are the sons of God through faith worked in Baptism. If we are the sons of God then we are indeed partakers in the divine prepared to live the divine life in the new heaven and the new earth. All that the first Adam lost in the fall the second Adam restored in Himself and more. He made us partakers in divine life and glory. Baptism is indeed paradise regained.

This divine life brought forth in Baptism and daily renewed through repentance and faith can only be nourished and strengthened in this present vale of tears through the heavenly manna, the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacrament of Christ's Blood and Body. Through these means of grace we have union and communion with Christ.

The Word who became incarnate and dwelt among men for our salvation is now incarnate in the bread and the wine to give us His divine life. He who once became flesh now gives us his flesh so that we may be as He is. Jesus says, "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him ... so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 5:54-57). While this passage does not speak specifically of Christ's flesh and blood in the Supper, its promise certainly applies to all places where He is present for us with His blessings and, therefore, it applies to worthy participation in the Holy Sacrament. The Supper gives us Christ's vivifying flesh so we may have divine life. We who became sons of God in Baptism are continually being nourished by His body and blood. Thus the Sacrament is the viaticum, "the medicine of immortality," which is the food preparing us for eternal life. Concerning this Luther writes, "So, when we eat Christ's flesh physically and spiritually, the food is so powerful that it transforms us into itself and out of fleshly, sinful, mortal men makes spiritual, holy, living men. This we are already, though in a hidden manner in faith and hope; the fact is not yet manifest, but we shall experience it on the Last Day" (LW 37, 101). Again he says: "Similarly, the mouth, the throat, the body, which eats Christ's body, will also have its benefit in that it will live forever and arise on the Last Day to eternal salvation. This is the secret power and benefit which flows from the body of Christ in the Supper into our body, for it must be useful, and cannot be present in vain. Therefore it must bestow life and salvation upon our bodies, as is its nature" (LW 37, 134; also see 37, 132). Chemnitz likewise uses this theosis theme:

Therefore, in order that we might be able to lay hold on Christ more intimately and retain Him more firmly, not only did He Himself assume our nature but He also restored it again for us by distributing His body and blood to us in the Supper, so that by this connection with His humanity, which has been assumed from us and is again communicated back to us, He might draw us into communion and union with the deity itself. (Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, 188)

Because in the Eucharist we receive the body of Christ which has been given for us, and blood of the New Testament which has been shed for the remission of sins, who will deny that believers there receive the whole treasury of the benefits of Christ? For they receive that through which sins are remitted by which death is abolished, by which life is communicated to us, by which Christ unites us to Himself as members, so that He is in us and we are in Him. Hilary says beautifully: "When these things have been taken and drunk, they bring about both that Christ is in us and that we are in Him." Cyril says: "When in the mystical benediction we eat the flesh of Christ in faith, we have from it life in ourselves, being joined to that flesh which has been made life, so that not only does the soul ascend through the Holy Spirit into a blessed life, but also this earthly body is

restored by this food to immortality, to be resurrected on the last day." Therefore we receive in the Eucharist the most certain and most excellent pledge of our reconciliation with God, of the forgiveness of sins, of immortality and future glorification ... Beautiful is that statement of Ignatius, which is found in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he calls the Eucharist *pharmakon athanasias, antidoton tou mee apothanein, alla zeen en theo dia Iesou Christou, katharterion alexikakon*, that is, "a medicine of immortality, an antidote, that we may not die but live in God through Jesus Christ, a cleansing remedy through warding off and driving out evils" (Chemnitz, *Examen* 2, 233-234).

Addendum 1

A Summary of the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Ancient Church

1. Nicea I. 325

- A. Arius vs. Athanasius. Arius said that there once was when the second person of the Trinity was not. Athanasius responded that since salvation was a divine act, salvation had to be accomplished by the Divine.
- B. There were **three results** of this council. They are the first edition of the Nicene Creed, the term *homoousios* (ὁμοούσιος) or same substance, and the condemnation of Arius.

2. Constantinople I. 381

- A. The Cappadocian fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa were the leaders.
- B. There were **four results** of this council. The first result was the distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις. The second result was the reaffirmation and addition to the Nicene now the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The third result was the deity of the Holy Spirit was affirmed against Macedonianism (pneumatomachian). The fourth result was the condemnation of Apollinarianism or the teaching that Christ did not have a human soul.

3. Ephesus 431

- A. The location of Ephesus is significant since this is where Mary lived with John and died according to tradition.
- B. Nestorius vs. Cyril of Alexandria. Cyril started the council before the theologians from Antioch arrived.
- C. There were **three results** from this council. The first result was that Nestorius was condemned. The second result was that *theotokos* (θεοτόκος) or that Mary was the bearer of God was confirmed as orthodox. The third result was that Pelagianism was condemned.

4. Chalcedon 451

- A. Council and Pope Leo vs. Eutyches
- B. At this council Cyrillian thought dominated but Antiochian terms were used. Christ was confessed as having two natures (human and divine) in one person. There were **three outcomes**. Leo's *Tome* was affirmed. Eutyches was condemned. The following terms were implemented: Against Eutyches unconfused (ἀσυγχύτως) and unchangeable (ἀτρέπτως). Against Nestorius indivisible (ἀδιαίρετως) and inseparable (ἀχωρίστως).

5. Constantinople II. 553

- A. Council (Cyrillian predominance) vs. Dioscurus and the Three Chapters.
- B. This council maintains a Cyrillian Christology with Antiochian terms. There were **four results** of this council. First, the three chapters: Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa, were all condemned. Second, Dioscurus is condemned and Eutyches was recondemned. Third, Leontius of Byzantium's *enhypostasis* or the teaching that the human nature of Christ has no subsistence in itself is affirmed as well as *anhypostasis* or the teaching that the human nature has no personality of its own. Fourth, "the one nature of the Logos" can be used if understood correctly.

6. Constantinople III. 680

- A. The Patriarch Sergius and Pope Honorius vs. Maximus the Confessor.
- B. There were **two outcomes** of this council. First, the teaching that Christ has two wills was affirmed and monothelitism was condemned. Second, Pope Honorius was condemned.

7. Nicea II. 787

- A. Emperor vs. Germanus of Constantinople, Theodore the Studite, John of Damascus.
- B. Icons serve as a means of grace for the East. In addition by venerating the type in the icon, your veneration funnels back into the archetype which is God. Ergo one prays through icons and saints not to icons and saints. The veneration (προσκυπέω) of icons was permitted (not statues in the East) but only God could receive worship or adoration (λατρεία).

*Addendum 2***The Summary of the Three Genera****A. The first Genus of Communication of Attributes (*Genus Idiomaticum*)**

- 1) The first genus, the Genus Idiomaticum consists in this: Because the divine and human natures of Christ constitute one Person, the attributes, belonging essentially to only one nature are always ascribed to the whole Person, but the divine attributes according to the divine nature, and the human attributes according to the human nature (Pieper, II, p. 143; see also FC SD VIII, 36f., Trigl. p. 1027; *De Duabus*, p. 83).
- 2) According to I Cor. 2:8: “They crucified the Lord of Glory”; Acts 3:15: “And [ye] killed the Prince of Life”; Heb. 13:8: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever”; John 8:58: “Before Abraham was, I am,” etc. In all these and similar passages peculiarities of either nature are ascribed to the whole person.

B. The Second Genus of the Communication of Attributes (*Genus Maiestaticum*)

- 1) Concerning the second genus Lutherans teach in the hypostatic union, while nothing is added to or taken away from the divine nature in itself, yet, because of the hypostatic union with the deity, countless supernatural qualities and qualities which are even contrary to the common condition of human nature, are given and communicated to Christ’s human nature (M. Chemnitz, *De Duabus*, p. 6, 83; see also Pieper, II, p. 220; FC SD VIII, 50-52, Trigl. 1031).
- 2) When Scripture states, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” (Col. 2:9) it teaches by these words that the Son of God, with all the abundance of His divine essence and of His divine attributes, without any deduction whatsoever (“all the fullness of the Godhead”), is united with His human nature.
- 3) Whenever divine attributes are given to Christ in time such as Matthew 28:19: “All power is given to me in heaven and on earth,” this is proof of the second genus. If this passage refers to the divine nature, Christ is not fully God at the incarnation.

C. The Third Genus of the Communication of Attributes (*Genus Apotelesmaticum*)

- 1) The third genus, the Genus Apotelesmaticum consists in this: All official acts which Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King has performed and still performs for the salvation of men, He performs according to both natures, by each doing what is proper to not by itself and apart from the other nature, but in constant communion with the other, in one undivided theanthropic action (Pieper, II, p. 247; see also FC SD VII, 46, 47, Trigl., p. 1031; *De Duabus*, p. 83).
- 2) Passages such as I John 3:8: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested [4:2: come in the flesh], that He might destroy the works of the devil,” refers to all divine works by which the Son of God became, and still is, the Savior of all men. But all these divine works are executed through the assumed flesh or human nature. The human nature of Christ therefore is the divinely chosen organ, or instrument, for the divine work of redemption in all its parts (Pieper, II, p. 249; see Mueller 285).

- 3) The passage I John 1:7: "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sin," may be used in connection with all three genera.
 - a) Genus Idiomaticum: The blood is not merely the blood of the human nature, but the blood of the person who is God (His Son).
 - b) Genus Maiestaticum: The human blood has the divine power of cleansing from sin.
 - c) Genus Apotelesmaticum: The blood referring to the human nature and His Son referring to the divine natures are cooperating in one salvific, theanthropic act, to cleanse us from all sin (Pieper, II, pp. 250-251).

Summary of the Three Genera

Human

Personal Union

Divine

Genus Idiomaticum
Attributes of either nature ascribed to attributes according to the divine according to the human nature.

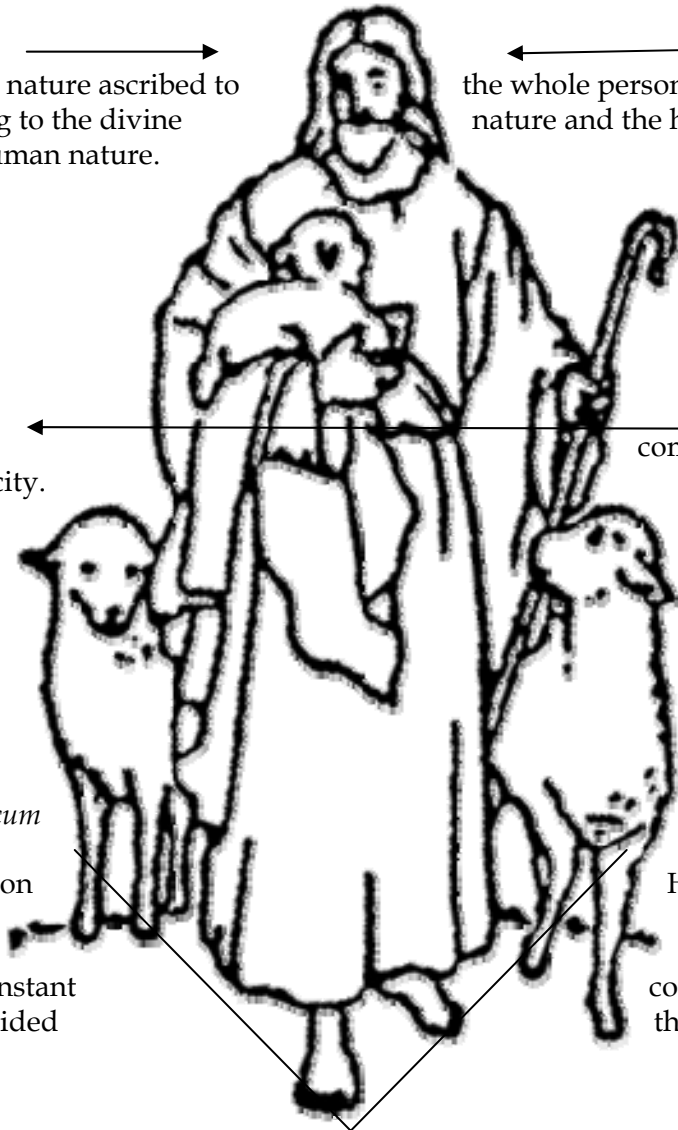
← the whole person but the divine nature and the human attributes

Genus Maiestaticum
Divine attributes nature. No reciprocity.

→ communicated to human

Genus Apotelesmaticum
All official acts as king for our salvation both natures by proper to it not the other, but in constant other, in one undivided

prophet, priest, and He performs according to each doing what is by itself and apart from communion with the theanthropic action.



The Work of Christ for our Salvation

Bibliography

- A Religious of C.S.M.V., translated and edited, *St. Athanasius on the Incarnation*, reprinted Great Britain: Lowe & Brydone Ltd, 1975.
- Chemnitz, Martin, *The Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II* (translated by Fred Kramer), St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1978.
- Chemnitz, Martin, *The Lord's Supper* (translated by J.A.O. Preus), St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1979.
- Chemnitz, Martin, *The Two Natures of Christ* (translated by J.A.O. Preus), St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1971.
- Davis, L.D., *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*, Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier Inc., 1987.
- Hardy, Edward R., editor, *Christology of the Later Fathers*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954.
- Krispin, Gerald S. and Jon D. Vieker, editors, *And Every Tongue Confess*, Chelsea, MI: BookCrafters, 1990.
- Lenker, John, editor, *Sermons of Martin Luther Vol. II*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983.
- Loeber, Christian, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Dogmatik*, St. Louis/Leipzig: Verlag von Fr. Dette.
- Mastrantonis, George, *Augsburg and Constantinople*, Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982.
- McGuckin, John A., *St. Cyril of Alexandria The Christological Controversy*, Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1994.
- Meyendorff, John, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987.
- Mueller, John Theodore, *Christian Dogmatics*, St. Louis: CPH, 1955.
- Perlikan, Jaroslav, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 2, The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Pieper, Frances, *Christian Dogmatics, Vol. II*, St. Louis: CPH, 1953.
- Schaff, Philip, D.D., LL.D. and Henry Wace, D.D., editors, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. VII*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994.
- Schaller, John, *Biblical Christology*, Milwaukee, WI: NPH, 1981.
- Sellers, R.V., D.D., *The Council of Chalcedon a Historical and Doctrinal Survey*, S.P.C.K., 1953.

Toon, Peter, *Yesterday, Today and Forever*, Swedesboro, NJ: Preservation Press, 1996.