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CHALCEDONIAN ANTHROPOLOGY:
A PROPOSAL FOR THE EXTENSION OF CHRIST'S PERSON-
NATURE CONSTITUTION

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CHALCEDONIAN ANTHROPOLOGY:
A PROPOSAL FOR THE EXTENSION OF CHRIST'S PERSON-
NATURE CONSTITUTION

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To Darla,

My wife and testimony to God's abundant grace.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
PREFACE.....	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Ontology in Christian Anthropology	2
Past: Substance Dualism	3
Present: Dualism-Physicalism Debate	8
Future? Christological Anthropology	17
Thesis	22
Background	25
Method	27
Summary of the Argument	30
Conclusion	32
2. CHRISTOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE	34
Biblical Warrant	35
The Christ	38
The Image of God	45
The Redeemer of God	50
Epistemological Warrant	55
Christological Methodology	57

Chapter	Page
Theological Retrieval of Tradition	76
Christocentric Humanity	87
3. CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY: EXTENSION OF THE PERSON-NATURE DISTINCTION	89
Historical Warrant	90
Pre-Chalcedonian Ontology: Nicene Trinitarianism	94
One Divine Nature	96
Divine Person-Nature Distinction	105
Chalcedonian Ontology: Person-Nature Christology	119
Word-Man Incarnation	121
Person-Nature Being	133
The Chalcedonian Definition	148
Christological Extension of Orthodox Ontology	156
4. PRO-CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY: CLARIFICATION OF THE PERSON-NATURE DISTINCTION	160
Person of the Natures	163
Leontian Clarification	165
Conciliar Affirmation	177
Person Acting through His Natures	183
Maximian Dyothelitism	188
Conciliar Ratification	203
Christological Clarification of Orthodox Ontology	208
5. CHALCEDONIAN ANTHROPOLOGY: THE PERSON-NATURE ONTOLOGY OF MAN	211
Orthodoxy: Christ's Human Ontology	214
Chalcedonian Authority Revisited	216
Excursus on Chalcedonian Authority and Ontology	221
Christological Analysis	227

Chapter	Page
Extension: Christology to Anthropology	255
Chalcedonian Analogy Revisited	256
Anthropological Implications	261
6. HUMAN PERSON-NATURE BEING: CLARIFICATION AND CONCLUSION.....	274
Human Person-Nature Constitution.....	275
Human Person and the Incarnation	284
Conclusion	296
BIBLIOGRAPHY	302

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ALSS* Hans Lietzmann, *Apollinaris Von Laodicea und Seine Schule; Texte und Untersuchungen*, Hildesheim, Germany: G. Olms, 1970).
- ANF* Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*
- CCT* *Christ in Christian Tradition*
- DLGT* Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*
- DTIB* *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*
- JETS* *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
- NDBT* *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*
- NPNF¹* Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 1*
- NPNF²* Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Series 2*
- PG* Jacques-Paul Mignes, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*. 162 vols. (Paris: 1857-86)
- PL* Jacques-Paul Mignes, ed., *Patrologia Latina*. 217 vols. (Paris: 1844-64)
- PRRD* Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*

PREFACE

“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable” (Ps 145:3). In writing this dissertation and reflecting on the whole of my PhD studies, the Lord has reminded me of his greatness through his varied means of grace over the past few years. He was gracious to make me a pastor-elder in a church that had a deep desire to build itself up in the faith. He extended his grace through that church’s encouragement to pursue a PhD in systematic theology as a suitable means for serving the church’s knowledge of God and joyful obedience to Christ. He has also been gracious in his abundant provision along the way, enabling me to focus on that pursuit with the love, support, and guidance of so many who have become so dear to me.

I first want to thank Stephen Wellum, my supervisor, committee chair, and friend, who has inspired and guided me through my studies and this dissertation. He has instilled in me a deep conviction to “think God’s thoughts after him” by “making warranted theological conclusions” from “reading Scripture on its own terms.” He has given generously of his time, knowledge, wisdom, and experience to instruct me in doing theology well for God’s glory in the worship and witness of the church. Moreover, he has modeled these things in public and in private with consistent excellence. In fact, this dissertation is born out of our many conversations that amounted to an unofficial but most valuable independent study. I also want to thank the other members of my committee. Gregg Allison and Michael Haykin have invested their time and expertise to strengthen this dissertation in significant ways (all remaining weaknesses are my responsibility and opportunity for improvement). I also want to express my gratitude to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and its commitment to achieving excellence in theological education led by academic shepherds with the highest view of Scripture

and the deepest love for Christ.

I want to thank my colleagues who helped shape my studies and dissertation efforts. Every seminar and colloquium presented opportunities to think through the issues that would culminate in my thesis. I received constructive feedback on research papers that helped me argue for warranted theological conclusions with clarity and precision. In that regard, I especially want to thank Garrick Bailey, Darron Chapman, and John Michael LaRue, whose insights helped me pose the right questions to pursue the right answers in developing this dissertation. Special thanks go to John Wind for his sharp mind and steadfast friendship by which he has challenged and encouraged me since my first seminar. For their encouragement and care, I am grateful to the family and leadership at Clifton Baptist Church, who loved me and my wife so well during our three years in Louisville.

Most of all, to my wonderful wife Darla, I want to express an almost inexpressible order of gratitude and thanksgiving. During a season of life that has seen the lighter and darker sides of God's providence, she has loved and served me with wisdom, strength, beauty, grace, and much patience. Without her, neither my PhD studies nor this dissertation would have been profitable, or even possible.

Finally, above all these horizontal acknowledgments, my heart abounds with thanksgiving toward the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the fountain of all grace and the focus of all praise. I pray that by his grace, this dissertation might aid the worship and witness of the church in proclaiming the excellencies of the Lord until he returns in glory.

Michael A. Wilkinson

Bozeman, Montana

December 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What are we? Who are we? How ought we to be? These are the three perennial questions in Christian anthropology.¹ Each question has its own significance. Yet the answers are mutually informative. One question, however, holds at least ontological priority over the others. *What* are we? That is, *what* is the metaphysical makeup of man? For the church, the *who* question of our identity and the *how* question of our activity might seem more immediately relevant. Moreover, it is true that Scripture calls us not just to be, but to be as a certain people in a certain way. Even humanity itself, being made in the image of God, has a God-given identity and vocation. However, this dissertation addresses the *what* question of our existence to understand the ontological basis for the rest. The identity and calling of mankind in general and the church in particular are grounded in God's design of human being. God made man in his image to represent him throughout creation. After the fall of man, God is renewing a people in the image of his Son. Image bearing, then, is central to the biblical presentation of salvation. And image bearing, it would seem, requires a certain ontologically capable constitution. In that case, answering the *what* question of our existence according to Scripture provides a theologically determined ontological basis for the gospel. Thus, answering the *what* question also aids the church's delight in and proclamation of God's glory in the gospel.

The search for a theological understanding of human ontology is not new. The church has always carefully considered the significance of defining humanity, especially

¹ See David H. Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 1:2–3.

with regard to issues in Christology and soteriology. Even so, the church has not agreed upon a formulation on par with the ontology of Christ in those doctrinal areas. Moreover, rather than moving toward agreement, the scholarship indicates a certain level of anthropological confusion. This dissertation seeks to address that confusion by approaching human ontology through Christology. The current conversation in Christian anthropology centers on attempts to find a philosophically satisfying ontology of man in his experience of embodied subjectivity.² As a departure from the debate, this dissertation is concerned with defining the ontology of man by starting with the biblical presentation of Christ as *the* man and working within the church's historical formulation of his humanity.³

Ontology in Christian Anthropology

A new proposal in Christian anthropology should begin with an overview that situates the model within the church's ongoing efforts to understand human ontology according to the biblical presentation. Accordingly, this section provides a brief three-part summary: (1) a look at the past to understand the tradition; (2) a look at the present commitments and claims in the debate regarding human constitution; and (3) a look at the future promise of a Christocentric conviction in the church's answer to the *what* question of human ontology.

² Almost all scholars agree that Scripture presents two aspects of humanity. The objective element accounts for the observable existence and activity of embodiment. The subjective element accounts for the unobservable phenomena that accompany this life. As will be seen, scholars disagree in their attempts at defining the ontological location(s) involved in such embodied subjectivity.

³ Throughout this dissertation, unless indicated or the context demands otherwise, "man" and "mankind" are used in the generic sense of *anthropos* and refer to all human beings, male and female. So "ontology of man" refers to the ontology of all human beings; the divine Son's incarnation as a man indicates that he became a human being; "Christ the man" refers to Christ as a human being; "Christ *the* man" and "the man *par excellence*" refer to his existence and status as the true, ideal, and paradigmatic human being. This usage does not deny the theological significance of issues related to being male and being female, or the fact that Christ in particular is a male. While important, however, such issues lie beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Past: Substance Dualism

The years of church history and academic theology have seen no shortage of interest in and answers to the question of human ontology. But (or therefore) the years also have seen no official orthodoxy in human ontology. One model of humanity, however, has enjoyed a dominance of position and influence: before the seventeenth century, no other model posed a real challenge to substance dualism's answer that a human being is a soul–body composite.⁴ In its basic form, substance dualism holds that humanity is composed of an immaterial soul and a material body. The soul is the conscious personal part that is the seat of the human self and is responsible for non-corporeal capacities and activity (e.g., self-awareness, thinking, emotions); the body is the impersonal organism that is responsible for corporeal capacities and activity (e.g., limbs, breathing, sense perception).⁵ A brief survey will demonstrate that some form of this dualism characterizes the church's traditional understanding of man's metaphysical makeup.

From the early church into the medieval church, the body-soul composition of man came into a dominant position in the West. In the fifth century, Augustine taught a two-substance dualism in which the human "I," identified with the immaterial soul that

⁴ John W. Cooper, "Scripture and Philosophy on the Unity of Body and Soul: An Integrative Method for Theological Anthropology," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, ed. Joshua Ryan Farris and Charles Taliaferro (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 35. Two universal events in particular have kept the issue of humanity's metaphysical makeup in the forefront of the Christian concern with a biblical worldview: death and final resurrection. More specifically, the central concern is to make sense of the Bible's indication of a personal consciousness through death and a personal continuation in the resurrection of the dead. Beginning with the early fathers, the church has known a diversity of opinion on specific matters related to the "intermediate state" between death and resurrection and the nature and function of the resurrection body compared to the earthly body. Regarding the full human ontology in death and resurrection, however, church history has witnessed the prevailing assumption that the human constitution is separable. At death, the conscious personal part continues while the impersonal organism disintegrates; in resurrection, the impersonal organism is raised and rejoined with the personal conscious part.

⁵ Charles Taliaferro, "Substance Dualism: A Defense," in *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, ed. Jonathan Loose, Angus J. L. Menuge, and J. P. Moreland (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 43–60.

bears the image and knowledge of God, rules over the actions of the material body.⁶ Augustine maintained the unity of the soul and body and affirmed the goodness of both.⁷ His emphasis on substance dualism, however, went on to exert a peerless influence on the church's doctrine of man for over a millennium. In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224–1274) modified the Augustinian framework with the Aristotelian concepts of form (*hyle*) and matter (*morphe*). According to Thomistic hylomorphism, a human being is the product of a soul (substantial form) that gives existence and life to a natural body (proximate matter), forming it into a whole with human-specific properties and governing all spiritual (thinking, willing, etc.) and bodily (sensing and movement) activity.⁸ In this sense, hylomorphism blurred the relation between the soul and the body.⁹ However, the model was sufficiently dualist in its ontology that it did not challenge the church's basic teaching that man is a composition of an immaterial soul and a material body.¹⁰

In the Reformation and post-Reformation periods, the classic Augustinian understanding of substance dualism was received and refined. In the sixteenth century,

⁶ See Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century I/11, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmond Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996), 1:27, 117–18.

⁷ See Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern City, 2000), 19.3.

⁸ See Thomas Aquinas and English Dominican Fathers, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1923), 2.57.1331, 2.68.1450; Aquinas, *Treatise on Human Nature: The Complete Text (Summa Theologiae I, Questions 75-102)*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2010), 29a.1.5. See also Gilles Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays*, Faith and Reason: Studies in Catholic Theology and Philosophy (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 210–29.

⁹ Scholars debate whether hylomorphism is strictly *substance* dualism. Chap. 5 engages more fully with Thomistic hylomorphism. For the purpose of the present survey, it will suffice to recognize that for Aquinas, the soul as a substantial form is an ontological entity distinct from the body that is substance-like enough that the soul exists and operates between death and resurrection.

¹⁰ See Edward Feser, "Aquinas on the Human Soul," in Loose, Menuge, and Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, 88–101.

John Calvin taught with biblical conviction and philosophical aptitude that the soul is an “incorporeal substance” that dwells in the body, animating its parts and ruling man’s earthly and spiritual duties.¹¹ At the height of Reformed Orthodox development, Francis Turretin explained that the soul and body are independent in operation and being. He reasoned that because mode of operation follows mode of being, and the soul’s main activity is spiritual and incorporeal while the body’s activity is earthly and corporeal, the soul and body exist in such a diverse manner that they are separable at death, with the soul subsisting and returning to God after the destruction of the body.¹² Bringing substance dualism into the twentieth century, Geerhardus Vos (1862–1949) taught with clarity and concision that Scripture presents man as a two-part constitution of an immaterial soul and a material body that remain distinct substances while forming a life-unity.¹³

Finally, it should be noted that as a philosopher in the Augustinian line, René Descartes set the paradigm for dualistic anthropology in the twenty-first century. Writing in the seventeenth century, Descartes determined the truth of the soul’s independent existence not from philosophy but from God’s revelation of the afterlife in Scripture.¹⁴ He then explained the relationship of the soul with the body in terms of “dualistic interactionism.”¹⁵ Since the soul and body can exist apart from one another, they exist as

¹¹ See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 1.xv.6, 166–68.

¹² See Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George M. Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1992), 1:464–70.

¹³ Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *Anthropology*, ed. and trans. Richard B. Gaffin (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), 1–2.

¹⁴ See Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, *A Brief History of the Soul* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 87–90.

¹⁵ See René Descartes, *Meditations, Objections, and Replies*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006); Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen Voss (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995).

different substances.¹⁶ Though the soul and body are constituted from different substances, they combine and communicate to constitute a human being.¹⁷ As an immaterial “thinking substance,” the soul interacts with the material “extended substance” of the body.¹⁸ This basic philosophical form of ontological duality with phenomenological unity continues as a core commitment in the contemporary defense of substance dualism.¹⁹

Perhaps the best way to conclude this survey of substance dualism’s dominance in the church is to quote from the enduring and widely influential *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646):

The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.²⁰

The two-substance composition of soul and body is the normal constitution of a human being, which is interrupted at death and reintegrated in resurrection.

In summary, church history indicates that for at least 1500 years, the Christian tradition has taught that the human being is an ontic duality of soul and body.²¹

¹⁶ Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur, 2nd rev. ed., Library of Liberal Arts 29 (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1961), 47–50; Descartes, *Meditations, Objections, and Replies*, 2.7.

¹⁷ Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 47–50; Descartes, *Meditations, Objections, and Replies*, 2.7.

¹⁸ Descartes, *Passions of the Soul*, 36–38; specifically, see arts. 31, 32, and 34.

¹⁹ John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 14–15.

²⁰ *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, in *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, ed. John H. Leith (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1982), 228.

²¹ In Joel Green’s opinion, the church has, until recently, “spoken with one voice; Christian tradition is practically univocal in its presumption of some form of anthropological dualism.” Joel B. Green, ed., *In Search of the Soul: Four Views of the Mind-Body Problem*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf &

Moreover, it teaches that this substance dualism is grounded in the biblical presentation that humans survive bodily death in the separation and continuation of the human soul. Considering the various articulations of substance dualism throughout the church's history, John Cooper concludes, "There must be enough of an ontological difference between the person or soul and the body that they are not only distinct from each other, but also separable at death."²² Furthermore, the final ontological hope for Christians is resurrection and eternal life as a renewed soul-body being.²³

Despite its historical favor, however, substance dualism was not the result of a deliberative consensus by the church. Rather, some form of substance dualism was the default teaching in the church. From the early centuries into the early twentieth century, the church consistently drew from Scripture the conclusion that man is a composite being of an immaterial soul and a material body. Yet in terms of an ecumenical council, substance dualism does not find direct support as the orthodox articulation of human ontology that rejects other formulations.²⁴ Dualism, then, is the *historical* tradition of the

Stock, 2010), 14. However, it should be noted that while the tradition states substance dualism in terms of a *dichotomy* between soul and body, the tradition is not monolithic in its ontological categories. For example, *trichotomy* posits that the human being is a composite of three ontologically distinct entities: spirit, soul, and body. However, the tripartite view of humanity does not receive attention in the present survey for two main reasons: (1) While some of the early church fathers (e.g., Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa) argued for a trichotomous constitution, it was not clear whether or how the spirit would belong to a different substance than the soul. From an ontological perspective, then, trichotomy did not challenge the claim of substance dualism that human beings are composed of a material substance (body) and an immaterial substance (soul and/or spirit). (2) The initial support for trichotomy waned into disregard after the Apollinarians (mis)used it to explain that in the incarnation, the Son assumed a whole body but only the lower part of the soul (*psyche* or animal soul); he did not assume the higher part of the human soul (the *nous*, mind, or spirit). Furthermore, in 451, the Chalcedonian fathers rejected this explanation of the incarnation, stating in the Definition that the Son became, "truly man, of a reasonable soul and body." According to Chalcedon, then, the human nature consists of a body and a complete soul that is possessed of mind or rationality. While a few Greek fathers held onto trichotomy, some explicitly repudiated it (e.g., Athanasius and Theodoret). With the Latin Church having always favored the dichotomy view, Augustine developed the human nature's body-soul composition into a dominant position in the West.

²² Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 1–2.

²³ See Joshua R. Farris, "Substance Dualism and Theological Anthropology: A Theological Argument for a Simple View of Persons," *Philosophy and Theology* 27, no. 1 (2015): 107–26.

²⁴ Some scholars argue that the Chalcedon Definition (451) assumes or implies a dualism in its

church, but not its *conciliar* tradition.

Present: Dualism-Physicalism Debate

Even during the dominance of substance dualism, the lack of official orthodoxy in anthropology provided an *opportunity* for challenges to the traditional formulation of human ontology. Moreover, the intellectual paradigm shifts inaugurated by the Enlightenment provided the *means* for conceptualizing alternatives.²⁵ These alternatives would then strengthen into rivals.²⁶ The transition from the Enlightenment to

confession that God the Son assumed “a rational soul and body” to become a man. However, Chalcedon and its progeny addressed human ontology in the context of Christology, not anthropology. It seems clear that the Chalcedonian fathers did not *directly* answer the question of what constitutes a *mere* human being. As will be discussed more fully in chap. 3, the Chalcedonian view of human nature itself was more assumed and applied than deliberated and developed. See Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 551–54. The particular context of Chalcedon, of course, does not limit its value and authority to Christology. Indeed, this dissertation leverages its insights and ecclesial authority to support a new model of human ontology. Rather, the point here is that the church has not seen itself as constrained to a particular ecumenical formulation of ontological constitution in anthropology as it has in Christology.

²⁵ Two alternatives appeared in the seventeenth century. First, Thomas Hobbes introduced *materialism*. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin, Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). He explained that “incorporeal substance” is an incoherent notion such that all creatures, including humanity, exist as wholly corporeal beings (307–19). All psychological experiences arise from the internal effects of the material brain processing information from the body’s material sense organs in contact with external material stimuli. Human beings do not exist between death and resurrection because an “intermediate state” is impossible under materialism (354–67). God will raise the material body with its “soul”-producing machinery into a permanent state (317–19). Second, Baruch Spinoza introduced a *dual-aspect monism*. See Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Oxford Philosophical Texts, ed. and trans. G. H. R. Parkinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Spinoza was determined to oppose the Cartesian soul–body dualism with a reconceptualization of all reality. Like Hobbes, Spinoza believed that humans are made of one substance. However, Spinoza’s monism went further to claim that all Reality exists as one absolute, fundamental substance of which man is a manifestation. Spinoza, *Ethics*, 21–46 (I, props. XIV–XXX). Unlike Hobbes, Spinoza argued that the human monism is not wholly corporeal because the absolute Monism possesses the properties of matter and spirit, each available to apprehension from a different perspective. A human being is a dual-aspect manifestation of the dual-aspect Monism, apprehended as soul according to the “immaterial” perspective and as body according to the “material” perspective. Human beings have an “afterlife” only in the mind of the Monism subsequent to a temporal, individual manifestation. Spinoza, *Ethics*, 375–81 (V, props. XXI–XXX).

²⁶ For a general discussion of dualism, materialism, and dual-aspect monism (see previous note) as they came into contemporary forms, see Keith Campbell, *Body and Mind*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). This discussion is instructive for understanding how ideas can be coopted into Christian theology in general and anthropology in particular. For example, it is obvious that Spinoza did not just challenge the biblical and anthropological tradition. He rejected the biblical worldview and worked within a rationalistic framework of philosophical first principles that presupposed an early form of pantheism. Even so, his conceptualization of humanity as one substance with an immaterial aspect

modernity brought a rationalistic epistemology and a naturalistic methodology.²⁷ And the church’s reaction to the implications for theology produced biblical–theological and scientific objections to substance dualism.²⁸ As a result, over the past five centuries, the challenges to traditional substance dualism have produced a prominent physicalist judgment in Christian anthropology.²⁹ Dualism has taken a defensive posture in response to the precipitous growth of alternative proposals.³⁰ In fact, the numbers might even seem to signal a consensus rejection of defining man in terms of material and immaterial substances.³¹ However, even granting the prolonged popularity of physicalist models,

and a material aspect became the prototype to forms of dual-aspect monism that are promoted in contemporary Christian anthropology.

²⁷ For an excellent discussion of the impact of Enlightenment thinking on theology in general and Christology in particular, see Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 35–104. Wellum identifies the roots of a contemporary confusion in Christology by tracing the epistemological and hermeneutical changes after the Reformation. In short, the Enlightenment, especially as it matured into modernity, presupposed a strictly rational epistemology and a corresponding historical-critical hermeneutic that combined for a potent challenge to orthodoxy and the traditional confessions of the early church that had extended into the Reformation and post-Reformation periods. As a work of theological retrieval with a narrow scope, this dissertation will largely pass over the epistemological and hermeneutical impact of modernity (and now postmodernity) on Christian anthropology. However, the Christological context of Wellum’s discussion provides helpful insights given this dissertation’s commitment to a form of Christological anthropology.

²⁸ The *biblical-theological challenge* to substance dualism came from the historical-critical hermeneutic that perceived in dualism an illegitimate Hellenization of biblical interpretation and theology, finding instead a “Hebraic holism” that eschews any dualistic development in the progressive revelation of the New Testament and corresponding theological conclusions. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 23–26. The *scientific challenge* to substance dualism came in the form of discoveries and developments in psychology and physiology that indicated a bilateral dependence between the mind/soul and the brain that seemed to remove the scientific rationale for an ontological distinction between the two (21–23).

²⁹ See R. Keith Loftin and Joshua R. Farris, eds., introduction to *Christian Physicalism? Philosophical Theological Criticisms* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018), viii–xix.

³⁰ See Loftin and Farris, introduction to *Christian Physicalism?*, viii–xix. According to one estimate, scholars in the last century have offered no less than 130 different views on the ontological makeup of man. Graham McFarlane, “Review of Niels Henrik Gregersen, *The Human Person in Science and Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2000),” *Science and Christian Belief* 14 (2002), 94–95. For a survey of the divergence in anthropology today, see Farris and Taliaferro, *Ashgate Research Companion*.

³¹ Some Christian philosophers believe that modern science has made all forms of substance dualism obsolete. For example, see Daniel C. Dennett, *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology* (Montgomery, VT: Bradford Books, 1978).

current developments represent not a shift in the tradition but a vigorous debate for its future.³²

To survey the present state of ontology in Christian anthropology, it will help to focus first on the central commitments and claims. More specifically, an overview should begin by sketching the general shape of the two competing theories in the current dualism–physicalism debate. A sketch is appropriate here for three reasons. First, the literature indicates that despite their differences, most historical and contemporary models of human ontology agree that two features dominate human existence: a corporeal aspect (physical/bodily) and an extra-corporeal aspect (spiritual/mental).³³ Second, the literature also indicates that the disagreements are grounded in the fundamentally different approaches taken to explain the reality and relationship between these two features.³⁴ At present, only two major theories are available: dualism and physicalism.³⁵ Third, in proposing a new model of human ontology, this dissertation uses the current debate as a point of departure.³⁶ Thus, an overview with a focus on central commitments and claims is sufficient to coordinate contemporary efforts in anthropology and the work ahead.

³² In fact, Kevin Corcoran opines that “the mind-body problem remains wide open.” Kevin Corcoran, ed., *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 11. For a discussion of the particular reasons, see his introduction.

³³ For a current survey of these models and trends, see Farris and Taliaferro, *Ashgate Research Companion*; see also Loose, Menuge, and Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*.

³⁴ See Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Guides for the Perplexed (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 69–72; see also Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology: Humans, Both Creaturely and Divine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 19–50.

³⁵ Most models either promote some form of substance dualism or reject it by providing a physicalist explanation of what dualism calls the “soul.” See Cooper, “Scripture and Philosophy on Unity,” 41.

³⁶ Chaps. 5 and 6 provide a brief critique of some representative models on the basis of an “orthodox ontology.”

A sketch starts at the edges, considering the four areas of consensus that establish certain philosophical boundaries. Most scholars in Christian anthropology agree on four propositions that create the intellectual space for debate:³⁷ (1) *Human beings are embodied beings*. Most biblical scholars agree that the relevant Old Testament and New Testament texts focus on the whole, psychophysical being of the human creature. (2) *Human beings have a real and operative mental life*. The inner dimension (e.g., consciousness, identity, and mental causation) is just as important as embodiment and cannot be reduced to identity with physical realities. (3) *Humanity should be understood in dialogue with science*.³⁸ Models should not operate in a theological vacuum but engage developments in the sciences while remaining consistent with internal ontological commitments. (4) *Human beings maintain personal identity through death and resurrection*. After physical death, models should provide an ontological basis for affirming the continuation of the same “person,” while the body decays and after it is raised.

Taken together, these propositions establish the boundaries of the debate by excluding radical forms of dualism and physicalism.³⁹ The current consensus excludes radically dualistic models (e.g., classic Cartesian dualism) that posit such a fundamental difference between material and immaterial substances that body and soul cannot relate according to the biblical presentation of humanity’s psychophysical unity.⁴⁰ The

³⁷ This analysis is taken from Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 69–72.

³⁸ For an overview of significant developments in the sciences, see Malcolm Jeeves, “Mind Reading and Soul Searching in the Twenty-First Century: The Scientific Evidence,” in *What about the Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology*, ed. Joel B. Green (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 13–30; see also David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*, Philosophy of Mind (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Chalmers, *The Character of Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For examples of theological anthropology’s engagement with the sciences, see Farris and Taliaferro, *Ashgate Research Companion*.

³⁹ See Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 72–91.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the problems raised by Cartesian dualism, see the section on “Debating Cartesian Dualism” in Loose, Menuge, and Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*,

intellectual boundaries also exclude *strictly* physical models (i.e., “strong” physicalism) that dismiss the inner (spiritual or mental) dimension, or explain it exhaustively in physical terms.⁴¹ Other physicalist models recognize that the mind/soul cannot be reduced to strictly physical features, but still do not ground the phenomena of the mind in a separate substance. Moreover, the consensus excludes strictly immaterial models that deny embodiment by conceptualizing humanity in terms of a purely spiritual (noncorporeal) being.⁴² Within this intellectual space, the current debate diverges along the ontological line between man as a material–immaterial being and man as a purely material being.

The current sketch can now identify the terms of the debate by describing the commitments that define the two major competing theories. Substance dualism affirms three basic concepts:⁴³ (1) *Human beings have both physical and mental aspects*. Almost all scholars affirm the physical reality of humanity (i.e., the body and its corporeal parts), which is self-evident by common observation. Substance dualists affirm the additional reality of a mental aspect (e.g., thoughts, intentions, and volitions), which they argue is both self-evident by common experience and philosophically plausible. (2) *The mental and physical aspects are equally fundamental*. One does not derive from or reduce to the other; they exist independently as basic constituents of humanity. (3) *The mental and physical aspects are ontologically distinct and functionally interdependent*. The soul and the body are ontologically separate and separable substances. And yet, the soul-substance

132–82.

⁴¹ For a critique of strong physicalism, see Keith Loftin, “Souls and Christian Eschatology: A Critique of Christian Physicalism,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 60, no. 2 (2018): 195–209.

⁴² Such theories, however, have few supporters in Christian anthropology; most contemporary scholars regard the denial of embodiment as biblically and theologically inadequate. Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 70.

⁴³ This analysis is taken from Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 72–74.

and the body-substance act directly upon one another.

In contrast, physicalism⁴⁴ affirms five basic concepts:⁴⁵ (1) *The universe is materially monistic and organized in a hierarchy*. While made of the same material matter, each layer of reality with its entities is ontologically distinct from and dependent upon the underlying layer(s) and entities.⁴⁶ (2) *Human beings are fundamentally material beings*. The commitment to ontological monism extends from the universe to humanity, rejecting any appeal to an immaterial or nonphysical substance in explaining the human constitution. (3) *The mental aspects of humanity resist description in purely nonmental terms*. The mind exists at a higher level than the body such that bodily terms remain insufficient in describing the reality and activities of the mind.⁴⁷ (4) *The mind is causally involved in physical events*. Even though the mind exists at a higher level than the body, and is thus ontologically distinct from it and dependent upon it, the mind does influence the body through “downward causation.” (5) *The mind is asymmetrically dependent upon the body*. While interdependent to a degree, the body exists as the more fundamental entity with a corresponding ontological and epistemological primacy (but not ultimacy).

With a sketch of the boundaries and terms of the debate, the survey can now

⁴⁴ The current consensus of the debate allows for a *weak* physicalism and rejects a *strong* physicalism. As mentioned above, the strong version equates the mental aspect of humanity with the physical aspect, explaining all activity of the “soul” in strictly physical terms. The weak physicalist theory of ontology, however, affirms the reality and irreducibility of mental aspects but without grounding the mind/soul in a separate substance from the body. Unless explained otherwise, the future use of “physicalism” in this dissertation will refer to the weak form.

⁴⁵ This analysis is taken from Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 79–83.

⁴⁶ See Jaegwon Kim, “The Non-Reductivist’s Troubles with Mental Causation,” in *Mental Causation*, ed. John Heil and Alfred Mele (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 189–210. More specifically, beginning with the most basic level (i.e., that which is observable in micro-physics), the entities of the universe ascend in complexity, with higher-level structures composed of lower-level entities but characterized by properties unique to the higher-level.

⁴⁷ “Unlike strong physicalism, weak physicalism contends that it is not only impracticable to talk about higher-level realities in lower-level terms but that something significantly new actually takes place on each level that makes it simply impossible to describe reductively these new levels of reality solely on the basis of the lower levels.” Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 80.

highlight the ontological categories used in the dualist and physicalist theories. More specifically, considering the ontological implications in life, death, and resurrection will help focus attention on the metaphysical classification used to define humanity in contemporary anthropology. Particular models of humanity that exemplify the dualist and physicalist approaches will be discussed briefly in conversation with the new model proposed in the last two chapters to come.⁴⁸ But the present survey is concerned with coordinating a new proposal with the central commitments and claims that have produced the current debate and divergence.

Dualists rely on two ontological categories: soul and body.⁴⁹ In keeping with the historical tradition, all models of substance dualism define man as a composite being of a particular immaterial soul-substance and a particular material body-substance.⁵⁰ In life, the soul-substance is responsible for immutable personal identity and non-corporeal properties and capacities; the body-substance is responsible for corporeal properties and capacities. But the different substances interrelate in a deep interdependency to function as a psychophysical unity according to the downward causation of the soul over the body. In death, these different substances separate, with the body experiencing decay while the

⁴⁸ Representative models will be discussed in chap. 5 as part of an historical-theological critique. Certain elements of those models provide insights and will be emphasized in chap. 6 as part of the formulation and defense of this dissertation's new model of humanity.

⁴⁹ This analysis is based on the foregoing claims of substance dualism and on Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 72–79; Taliaferro, “Substance Dualism,” 43–60; J. P. Moreland, “Substance Dualism and the Unity of Consciousness,” in Loose, Menuge, and Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, 184–207; Jonathan Loose, “Materialism Most Miserable: The Prospects for Dualist and Physicalist Accounts of Resurrection,” in Loose, Menuge, and Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, 470–87; William Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 34–66; see Farris, “Substance Dualism and Theological Anthropology,” 107–26.

⁵⁰ In addition to the reasons stated earlier, this portion of the survey does not treat trichotomy (spirit, soul, and body) as a contemporary example of substance dualism because that view finds little discussion in biblical and theological studies and only rare support. For example, see John C. Garrison, *The Psychology of the Spirit: A Contemporary System of Biblical Psychology* (n.p.: Xlibris, 2001). However, trichotomy's additional category of spirit as distinct from soul will provide an opportunity for constructive reflection in the formulation of this dissertation's new model of humanity in chap. 5.

soul continues its existence and identity. In the resurrection, the same soul-substance and body-substance are rejoined in a glorified psychophysical unity. Within these parameters, dualists differ mainly in their explanation of the relationship between soul and body: *how* the soul-substance comes into existence and *how* it interacts with the body-substance.

Physicalists rely on the same two ontological categories of soul (mind)⁵¹ and body, but conceptualize them differently.⁵² In contrast to substance dualism, physicalist models define man as an entirely material substance that generates higher “mental” functions. They reject the need for an immaterial soul by insisting that material substance alone can explain the existence and activity of the “mind.” In life, the mental activity is the experiential locus of personal identity. However, the existence and activity of the mind are entirely dependent upon the physiology of the body in general and the brain in particular, generating a single psychophysical unit of mutual causation. In death, the mind/soul does not separate from the body as a different substance but experiences a truncated existence that is still able to maintain personal identity. In the resurrection, the renewed body provides the sole ontological ground for a renewed mind/soul, generating a glorified psychophysical unit. Within these parameters, physicalists differ mainly in their explanation of the relationship between the mind and the body: *how* the mental states or functions come into existence and *how* they interact with the one body-substance.

In this debate, then, a metaphysical line sets dualists and physicalists in ontological opposition. They *fundamentally disagree* on the number of substances involved in the constitution of humanity. The debate “continues to be shaped primarily by

⁵¹ As in the dualism–physicalism debate, this dissertation uses *soul* and *mind* interchangeably. However, later chapters discuss the mind as a particular capacity of the soul.

⁵² This analysis is based on the foregoing claims of physicalism and on Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 79–91; Kevin Corcoran, “Why Should a Christian Embrace Materialism (about Human Persons)?” in Loose, Menuge, and Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, 285–95; Nancey Murphy, “For Nonreductive Physicalism,” in Loose, Menuge, and Moreland, *Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*, 317–27; Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 68–178.

whether one affirms some form of *dualism*, according to which humans are composed of two distinct substances, or *physicalism*, in which the human is viewed as an entirely physical entity.”⁵³ However, they *functionally agree* on the categories involved in the constitution of humanity. Within their respective commitments, dualist and physicalists each use soul/mind and body to describe man’s basic existence and experience. Thus, despite the divergence of the core commitments and claims that have produced the current debate, the two major approaches in anthropology employ the same ontological categories to define human being in ontologically incompatible models. Ultimately, then, the debate centers on the best way to conceive of the soul and body in themselves and in their relation that constitutes an individual human. Dualists posit a psychophysical unity (not unit) of soul and body grounded in the union of an immaterial substance and a material substance. Physicalists posit a psychophysical unit (not just unity) of soul and body grounded in a single, material substance.

Given the terms of the debate, it seems unlikely that either one of the current contenders will prevail. First, it seems doubtful that the debate will be resolved at the level of biblical interpretation, “because the Bible just does not seem concerned with presenting a rigorous account of human ontology.”⁵⁴ Second, it seems unlikely that either side will overcome the pre-commitments of the other when both sides employ the same ontological categories. The terms of the debate have resulted in a clear divergence regarding the number and kind of substances involved, but an unclear determination of how the same categories of soul and body can adjudicate the divergence. Thus, the proliferation of models continues in search of a philosophically satisfying conceptualization of the “mind-body problem” as *the* answer to human ontology, producing a bewildering array of ever

⁵³ Cortez, *Theological Anthropology Guide*, 72.

⁵⁴ Cortez, *Theological Anthropology Guide*, 93. This issue will be discussed in chap. 3, along with an important but underappreciated aspect of the biblical presentation of humanity.

more subtle and speculative solutions.⁵⁵ Moreover, the terms of the debate seem to produce a problematic inconsistency and asymmetry at the intersection of anthropology, Christology, and soteriology, which will be explored at the end of this dissertation.

The current state of ontology in Christian anthropology amounts to a stalemate that is moving sideways. The dualist and physicalist approaches to human ontology seem incapable of overcoming their opponent's fundamental objections to provide a central model for a foundational orthodoxy. In Marc Cortez's estimation, the pre-commitments and terms of the debate "continue to generate heated debate among Christian thinkers and are unlikely to be resolved in the near future. Indeed, at this point in the conversation, it is difficult to picture what a resolution to this issue would even look like."⁵⁶

Future? Christological Anthropology

Despite the interest and activity in the present debate regarding human ontology, it remains a debate, and a seemingly intractable one. However, it is important to recognize that the dualist-physicalist terms of the debate have been established by the default teachings of the church and the physicalist reactions against it. The tradition of dualism is historical, not conciliar. And the opposition by physicalism is philosophical, not categorical. In other words, the terms of the debate are self-imposed and the focus on the "mind-body problem" is self-limiting. Within the current paradigm, Christian anthropology is generating a lot of discussion but also a lot of confusion. Moreover, this confusion impedes the church's unified witness to the ontology of the human being. A Christological anthropology, however, holds promise for these areas by starting with a pre-commitment outside of the current debate.

The recent literature in theological anthropology shows a broad and general

⁵⁵ For examples, see Jaworski, *Philosophy of Mind*, 68–355.

⁵⁶ Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 97.

consensus that our thoughts about humanity should be guided by the humanity of Christ.⁵⁷ In 2005, for example, the World Council of Churches (WCC) produced a study document by its Commission on Faith and Order for the purpose of “articulat[ing] what the churches can say together about what it means to be a human being.”⁵⁸ The first of ten common affirmations urged by the WCC focuses theological anthropology on Jesus Christ: “All human beings are created in the image of God and Jesus Christ is the one in whom true humanity is perfectly realized.”⁵⁹ Moreover, recent theological anthropologies take Jesus to represent “true humanity,”⁶⁰ the “archetype of humanity,”⁶¹ and God’s revelation of “what human nature is intended to be.”⁶² Given the breadth of this basic commitment to Jesus Christ as a guide to anthropology, David Kelsey summarizes the consensus in his conviction that our understanding of humanity “is shaped in some way by [our] beliefs about Jesus Christ and God’s relation to him.”⁶³ An overall orientation to Christ “is ultimately what qualifies theological answers to proposed anthropological

⁵⁷ Much of my thoughts here on Christological anthropology come from reflecting on Cortez’s work in Marc Cortez, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016).

⁵⁸ World Council of Churches (WCC), *Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology: A Faith and Order Study Document*, Faith and Order Paper, no. 199 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005).

⁵⁹ WCC, *Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology*, 22. The WCC defines theological anthropology as “a theologically informed view of humanity (from the Greek anthropos, human being)” (2). The WCC is clear that the mandate for its study “called for reflection on theological anthropology through the lens of contemporary contexts and experiences,” which are then brought “into dialogue with the Bible and with Christian theology, to point towards a serious and relevant contemporary theological anthropology” (3). While it seems that the WCC’s theological presuppositions are in tension with and likely contradictory to a high view of Scripture (as maintained in this dissertation), the point here is that there is a broad consensus regarding the centrality of Christ for anthropology.

⁶⁰ Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997), 18.

⁶¹ Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person*, *Contemporary Greek Theologians* 5 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997), 33.

⁶² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 532.

⁶³ Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence*, 8.

questions as authentically Christian theological anthropology.”⁶⁴ In short, the current theological climate seems conducive to a Christ-centered anthropology.⁶⁵

Even with a general commitment to Jesus as the revelation of true humanity, however, theological conviction must move into theological method. As Marc Cortez rightly recognizes, “it is one thing to claim *that* Jesus is the perfect realization of true humanity in whom we see the revelation of what it means to be human; it is something else entirely to explain *what that means* and *how it should be done*.”⁶⁶ A Christologically grounded anthropology must claim more than agreement with the established belief of Christian orthodoxy that Jesus himself is fully (though not merely) human. A *theological* anthropology that is properly Christian will agree that Christ and Christology are significant to our understanding of humanity. Yet such an anthropology understands humanity in broadly theological categories with reference to Christology for additional insights.⁶⁷ By contrast, what makes an anthropology specifically *Christological* is the claim that Jesus *reveals and determines* what is most fundamental to being fully and truly

⁶⁴ Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence*, 8–9.

⁶⁵ Cortez places this “Christocentric turn” within the context of an otherwise pervasively modern approach to anthropology. He says, “The significance of this christological shift in understanding the human person cannot be overstated. Indeed, a growing number of Christian theologians locate modernity’s inability to understand human nature in the fundamentally misguided attempt to derive a complete picture of the human person independently of the perspective provided by the person of Jesus Christ. Such an attempt is necessarily flawed, according to these theologians, because only Jesus Christ reveals who and what human persons truly are.” Marc Cortez, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies: An Exercise in Christological Anthropology and Its Significance for the Mind/Body Debate* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 4.

⁶⁶ Cortez, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective*, 20. Some theologians reject the plausibility and even possibility that one human being in his own historical situatedness can fully reveal what it means to be human. For a discussion of the objection and some responses, see Marc Cortez, “The Madness in Our Method: Christology as the Necessary Starting Point for Theological Anthropology,” in Farris and Taliaferro, *Ashgate Research Companion*, 15–26.

⁶⁷ Marc Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in the Light of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 20.

human.⁶⁸ Thus, the categories of Christology play a necessary and unique role in understanding all things human. The theological affirmation that Jesus is *the* man entails the epistemological affirmation that Jesus *reveals* true humanity and requires a methodology that guides the church's movement from *the* man to *all* mankind.

Concerning methodology, Cortez promotes a comprehensive Christological anthropology conducted within a robust Christological framework.⁶⁹ After some preliminary efforts, his most recent work focuses specifically on “providing resources for developing comprehensively christological anthropologies today.”⁷⁰ To set up his point that the centrality of Christ means more than *ad hoc* appeal to him at certain points in anthropological investigation, Cortez identifies two basic approaches. A *minimal* Christological anthropology uses the categories of Christology to warrant *important* claims about being human that *go beyond the usual areas* of ethics and the image of God.⁷¹ Going further, a *comprehensive* Christological anthropology uses the categories of Christology to warrant *ultimate* claims about being human that include *all anthropological data*.⁷² A minimal approach (see John Calvin) understands humanity with first reference to Christ at key points.⁷³ A comprehensive approach (see Karl Barth) contends that “anthropology must be ‘christologically determined’ from beginning to

⁶⁸ Cortez, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective*, 20–22.

⁶⁹ Cortez is perhaps the leading scholar currently writing in the area. See Cortez, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies*; Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*; Cortez, “The Madness in Our Method”; Cortez, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective*; Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*.

⁷⁰ Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 21.

⁷¹ Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 21.

⁷² Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 21.

⁷³ Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 21.

end.”⁷⁴ A minimal approach is Christological in orientation. A comprehensive approach is Christological in order and outcome.

Based on this distinction, Cortez makes a convincing biblical–theological case for *why* and *how* Christology should not just inform but direct our understanding of humanity. The details lie beyond the present survey and will be taken up in the next chapter.⁷⁵ But in short, Cortez develops a framework of principles that guides a comprehensive Christological anthropology in one direction: the claims we make about the man Jesus Christ determine the claims we make about all mankind.⁷⁶ Such a robust Christological anthropology must avoid collapsing anthropology into Christology. However, a basic Christocentric conviction and sound principles of methodology should provide paradigm-shifting insights into how the church understands humanity and bears witness to Christ.

Regarding ontology in particular, a comprehensive Christological anthropology would make Christ himself the determinative factor. The categories of Christology would warrant the claims we make about the metaphysical makeup of man. In that case, the current debate in Christian anthropology could break from the confines of the soul/mind–body problem. Rather than making sense of man only in terms of soul and body and debating their material and/or immaterial substance, the conversation would begin with a richer theological tradition that has deeper biblical and conciliar roots. As discussed below, a robust Christological anthropology promises to provide

⁷⁴ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 13 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956), 1.2, 12, quoted in Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 21. For Cortez’s historical description of different Christological visions and emphases in the anthropologies of Gregory of Nyssa, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth, John Zizioulas, and James Cone, see Cortez, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective*.

⁷⁵ Chap. 2 discusses and applies Christological principles to anthropology.

⁷⁶ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 167–89.

better theological resources for understanding human ontology.

Having surveyed the current approach to human constitution in Christian anthropology, a simple but significant observation arises. The current anthropological confusion calls for change in the terms of the debate. And Christological anthropology has the potential to break the stalemate between dualist and physicalist theories.

Thesis

This dissertation shares the central concern and conviction of Christological anthropology. Beliefs about humanity must be grounded in the human being of Jesus. Thus, anthropology must be warranted by Christology. Moreover, this dissertation pursues a particular form of Christological anthropology as the means of departure from the current debate about human constitution. In contrast to a focus on humanity, the work ahead will begin with the man Jesus Christ. The current debate reduces human ontology to the soul–body problem with two divergent approaches and a proliferation of individual answers. This dissertation looks to the human ontology of Christ to form a consistent and coherent model for all humanity. Contemporary anthropology seeks a philosophically satisfying conceptualization of man in terms of a particular soul/mind and body. The Christological anthropology pursued here retrieves the church’s conciliar definition of the Son’s assumption of a human nature to have theologically faithful terms for defining all mankind. In short, this dissertation applies the constitution of Christ *the man (par excellence)* to the constitution of *mere man (par ordinaire)*.

Before getting to the thesis, it is important to recognize that the categories of ontology change significantly when leaving the doctrines of God and Christ and entering the doctrine of man. In the fourth and fifth centuries, the church formulated a person–nature distinction (hereafter, “orthodox ontology”) to explain the biblical presentation of

unity and diversity in God and in God incarnate.⁷⁷ These terms and their meaning and significance will be treated fully in the coming chapters. Here it will suffice to recognize that in orthodoxy ontology, *person* refers to the category of *hypostasis*; *nature* refers to the category of *physis/ousia*. Regarding the divine being of God, *hypostasis* indicates each of the three persons, the Father, Son, and Spirit; *physis/ousia* indicates the one divine nature. Regarding the divine-human being of Christ, *hypostasis* indicates the person of the Son; *physis/ousia* indicates each of his divine and human natures. Moreover, as stated in the Chalcedonian Definition, the human nature consists of a particular human soul and body. According to these terms, God is three persons in one nature; Christ is one person in two natures. In that sense, both God and the God-man are person-nature beings.

However, in anthropology, *person* does not refer to a *hypostasis* as an ontological category in a distinct relationship with the ontological category of nature/*physis/ousia*. Rather, a person is (1) an individual human (body and soul), (2) the soul, or (3) a specific aspect, capacity, or function of the soul, such as psychological/personality traits or a center of consciousness, knowledge, will, and/or action.⁷⁸ In this sense, anthropology tends to conflate the two categories of orthodox ontology. The human nature (soul/mind and body) simply is or becomes a human person.

⁷⁷ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:249–344.

⁷⁸ See Gerald L. Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 130–33; Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 399–400, 425. In just the last few decades, the literature in theological anthropology has seen a sharp increase in the discussion of “personhood.” For example, see John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Contemporary Greek Theologians 4 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985); Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. Paul McPartlan (New York: T & T Clark, 2006); see also Edward Russell, “Reconsidering Relational Anthropology: A Critical Assessment of John Zizioulas’s Theological Anthropology,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5, no. 2 (July 2003): 168–86; Douglas H. Knight, ed., *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007). However, the conceptualization of personhood in anthropology seems to diverge from the category of *hypostasis* in orthodoxy ontology. Even when informed by reference to the divine persons, the person or personhood of man remains confined to human nature, usually the soul or an aspect of it.

As discussed above, both dualist and physicalist approaches limit their models to the existence and relationship of soul and body. In terms of the person-nature distinction of orthodox ontology, this means that anthropology is concerned only with the human nature. The current debate uses only one category from orthodox ontology to define human being. While orthodox Christology defines the man *par excellence* as a person-nature being, Christian anthropology defines man *par ordinaire* as a soul–body being.

Departing from this conflation and confusion, the work ahead will maintain the categories of orthodox ontology in anthropology. More specifically, this dissertation extends the same person-nature distinction and constitution from God through Christ to all mankind. Coming to the thesis, this dissertation argues for a new model of human constitution in terms of orthodox ontology: man is a person/*hypostasis*–nature being. Conceptually, the chapters ahead argue for a warranted extension of Chalcedonian Christology into theological anthropology. The metaphysical significance of the man Jesus Christ and the ministerial authority of the Chalcedonian Definition warrant the anthropological extension of Christ’s person-nature constitution.⁷⁹ More technically, this dissertation argues that the *divine hypostasis*–human *physis/ousia* constitution of Christ provides the analogical ontology of all mankind: the human creature is a *human hypostasis* subsisting in a human *physis/ousia*.

In short, this dissertation argues for a Chalcedonian anthropology in which the incarnate ontology of the God-man reveals the irreducible ontology of mere man. To be sure, merely human ontology is not identical (univocal) to the unique constitution that resulted from the incarnation of the divine Son. The divine Son’s assumption of humanity is a *sui generis* union of both sides of the Creator–creature distinction (without violation)

⁷⁹ Scripture is the *norma normans* (norming norm) and the *principium theologiae* (principle of theology). Scripture alone is the first-order, *magisterial* authority for Christian doctrine. All tradition, then, has a derived and *ministerial* authority depending on its fidelity to Scripture. For a helpful discussion of the role of tradition in the context of Christological method, see Oliver Crisp, *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 17–20.

in which a *divine* person came to subsist in a *human* nature. However, the argument to follow will demonstrate that this metaphysical peculiarity does not prevent the man Jesus Christ from serving as the ontological paradigm for all humanity. Rather than changing ontological categories, Christian anthropology should recognize an analogical symmetry between anthropology and Christology, such as the one between God and the God-man. The *divine* persons–*divine* nature constitution of the Trinity finds its analogue in the *divine* person–*human* nature constitution of the man Jesus Christ. This Christological ontology should find its anthropological analogue in a *human* person–*human* nature constitution.

Background

My interest in Christological anthropology is rooted in a larger Christological conviction that I came to share with my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Stephen Wellum. Christ is the center of revelation and redemption and, thus, he must be the center of the church’s worship and witness. The force of biblical Christocentrism is both centripetal and centrifugal. The biblical presentation draws the church in to find its deepest identity and allegiance in Christ, the one in whom God’s self-revelation and plan of salvation find their coordinated climax. Furthermore, the storyline of Scripture pushes the church out into the world with its *raison d’être* in the proclamation of Christ as the Lord of Glory. Given this divine design, all lines of inquiry into God’s relation to and purposes for his creation run through Christ and unfold according to his unique identity and lordship. Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) has given this theological conviction its best expression in his magisterial *Reformed Dogmatics*: “The doctrine of Christ is not the starting point, but it certainly is the central point of the whole system of dogmatics. All other dogmas either prepare for it or are inferred from it. In it, as the heart of dogmatics, pulses the whole of

the religious-ethical life of Christianity.”⁸⁰ Thus, the church must be especially careful in Christology and faithful to Scripture in considering the Christological import for all of our theological conclusions.

This concern for Christocentric dogmatics sharpened over my course work in the PhD program. I had the privilege of helping Dr. Wellum edit his excellent contribution to the Foundations of Evangelical Theology series, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*.⁸¹ Working closely with his contemporary articulation of orthodox Christology helped me to see more clearly that the identity of Christ decisively shapes the most distinct doctrines of the historical Christian faith. But it also showed me an opportunity in anthropology. In particular, I committed to a doctrinal inquiry regarding the ontological implications of Christocentrism for all mankind, given that “historic Christianity teaches that we cannot fully understand who we are apart from the identity of Christ as the Son and true image of God, his incarnation into our humanity.”⁸²

In Dr. Wellum’s Christology seminar, I explored the impeccability of Christ as a man, according to his human ontology. In a seminar on Protestant scholasticism with Dr. Shawn Wright, I examined the Reformed Orthodox understanding of Christ’s human ontology in his role as the penal substitute for human beings. And in an independent study with Dr. Wright on issues in Reformed Orthodoxy, I considered the metaphysical weight borne by the human soul as the ontological point connecting anthropology (image of God), Christology (incarnation), and soteriology (substitutionary atonement). In the

⁸⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 274.

⁸¹ “Given the importance of the person of Christ and Christology, this work aims to articulate a contemporary orthodox Christology that equips the church for edification in Christ and proclamation of the name of Christ. Orthodox Christology remains the most faithful to the biblical presentation of Christ and the most coherent theological formulation of his identity and significance. Such a classic Christology, however, must be articulated amid a new cultural disposition toward Christ and defended against current challenges born out of confusion regarding the identity of Christ.” Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 28.

⁸² Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 27.

attendant research and writing for all of these studies, I became convinced of two propositions: (1) The divine person of the Son, as the acting subject of the man Jesus Christ, is essential (not accidental) to his existence as a fully human being, and (2) the lack of a corresponding human person as the acting subject of mere man presents an ontological asymmetry that creates an incoherence in Christ's incarnational-substitutionary-redemptive representation of his people.

Finally, formulating a Christocentric human ontology came into focus in an independent study in theological anthropology with Dr. Wellum. In the research paper for that study, I explored the application of Christ's human ontology to all mankind according to the Chalcedonian Definition. If Jesus is the man *par excellence*, then might his human constitution stand as the paradigm for man *par ordinaire*? And if the Definition provides the orthodox ontology of God the Son incarnate, then might his own divine person-human nature being reveal a creaturely analogue? In *God the Son Incarnate*, Dr. Wellum briefly comments on the ontological continuity and discontinuity of the incarnation compared to humanity in general: "Keeping the person-nature distinction, we can say that, as the analogue of the divine persons, a human person is a particular active subject that subsists in an individual human body-soul composite (i.e., distinguished from others of the same kind.)"⁸³ This dissertation seeks to expound on the biblical-historical-theological grounds for this analogy of being, expanding a comment in Christology into an ontological proposal in anthropology.

Method

The Chalcedonian anthropology proposed herein develops under two headings: theological presuppositions and theological argumentation.

⁸³ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 427. In our conversations, this issue came up numerous times, both for its provision of Christological consistency and theological clarity and coherence, and for its lack of recognition in popular and academic literature.

The argument ahead rests on three main presuppositions.⁸⁴ The first presupposition is a biblical–theological judgment. As the man *par excellence*, Jesus Christ reveals all that it means to be truly human. He is the paradigm of the ideal human being. And this includes his human constitution. Thus, the constitution of Christ *the man* reveals the constitution of all mankind. Christ is ontologically determinative for man *par ordinaire*. The second presupposition is an ecclesial–theological judgment: Chalcedonian Christology provides the orthodox understanding of the divine Son’s incarnation as a man. In particular, the Chalcedonian Definition at the center of orthodox Christology provides the categories and formulation for the conception and confession of Christ as fully man. The Definition is the authoritative conclusion from Scripture regarding the constitution of the man *par excellence*. Third, it should be noted here that the proposal stage of the argument will rely on the Reformed Orthodox tradition and those who inherited it.⁸⁵ That tradition stands out for its faithfulness to the orthodox understanding of ontology in the doctrines of God and Christ, while still developing those doctrines through biblical insights and extra-biblical terminology.⁸⁶ Since orthodox ontology is a

⁸⁴ According to their nature, these presuppositions will not be defended. Rather, as certain kinds of theological judgments, they are developed throughout the upcoming proposal, giving shape to the construction of a Chalcedonian anthropology. For clarity, and in preparation for the different parts of the argument, the place of these presuppositional judgments is registered here in terms of their particular methodological function.

⁸⁵ Most historical theologians divide the era of Reformed Orthodoxy into three periods: early orthodoxy (ca. 1560–1620); high orthodoxy (ca. 1620–1700); and late orthodoxy (ca. 1700–1790). For a nearly exhaustive discussion and demonstration of the tradition’s contribution to theological clarity and precision, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 1987).

⁸⁶ At a crucial point in the post-Reformation development of doctrine, theologians in the Protestant tradition focused on the consolidation and preservation of the theological gains wrought in separation from Roman Catholicism. Within this movement, theologians in the Reformed branch of Protestantism pursued comprehensive theological coherence by constructing a system of doctrine that was first faithful to Scripture and then also consistent with good and necessary reason from Scripture. In this pursuit, the era of Reformed Orthodoxy produced a well-reasoned and detailed articulation of the faith that accounted for both the classical catholic doctrines along with the doctrinal developments that came out of the Reformation. For a discussion of the origin and characteristics of Reformed Orthodoxy, see Willem J. van Asselt, ed., *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, Reformed Historical-Theological Studies (Grand

linchpin for a Chalcedonian anthropology, the Reformed Orthodox and their heirs will make crucial dogmatic contributions for the move from Christology to anthropology.

Working from these presuppositional judgments, the proposal for a Chalcedonian anthropology will develop according to theological argumentation as an exercise in constructive theology.⁸⁷ First, the work focuses on biblical warrant for pursuing a Christological understanding of humanity. The presupposition that Christ is ontologically determinative for all mankind creates an initial conviction and direction. Specific justification from the biblical presentation of Christ as *the* man will add a biblical logic to *finding* an ontological parallel between him and the rest of humanity. Second, epistemological warrant addresses the question of how a knowledge of Christ can lead to a knowledge of man. In particular, a Chalcedonian anthropology needs to have good reason for *following* an ontological parallel between *the* man and mere man. The discussion in this area demonstrates that the epistemological answer lies within orthodox Christology. Third, historical warrant addresses the need to *understand* orthodox Christology before applying it to anthropology. It is presupposed here that Chalcedon gives the orthodox ontology of Christ. However, a precise analysis of the operative categories will be required to make correct inferences and avoid errors that would confuse rather than coordinate the constitutions of man and the God-man. Finally, based on the foregoing warrant, this dissertation makes a theological *conclusion* regarding human ontology. In particular, the work ahead should justify the analogical extension of a person-nature constitution from the man *par excellence* to man *par ordinaire*.

Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011).

⁸⁷ The form of constructive theology here is indebted to Wellum's form of argumentation in articulating a contemporary understanding of classical Christology in *God the Son Incarnate*.

Summary of the Argument

According to the foregoing method for a constructive anthropology, the chapters ahead can be summarized as follows.

Chapter 2 establishes *biblical warrant* for a Chalcedonian anthropology. Specifically, Christ's role as the revelation of true humanity and the redeemer of a new humanity will shed light on his human ontology. The biblical presentation of the man Jesus, including his roles as the Christ, *the* image of God, and the redeemer of a new humanity, require a certain ontology that necessarily corresponds with all mankind. In this way, Scripture points toward some kind of similitude where the ontological identities of *the* man and mere man intersect.

Chapter 2 also provides *epistemological warrant*. In keeping with the ontological authority of Christ the man, a basic Christocentric methodology can provide a sound means for pursuing a Christocentric definition of humanity. This requires a disciplined approach according to certain first principles that form a working methodology in Christological anthropology. Following this methodology keeps the epistemological and ontological centrality of Christ while accounting for both similarities and dissimilarities. In particular, beginning with the Chalcedonian Definition and its person-nature analogy between Christ's divine and human ontologies provides the authoritative categories for a Christological understanding of human constitution. In that regard, the early church's formation of Chalcedonian Christology provides an authoritative pattern for constructive dogmatics in that regard.

Chapters 3 and 4 pursue *historical warrant* for a precise understanding of Christ's person-nature ontology. As a unit, these chapters focus on the ontological distinction used to make sense of the biblical witness that Christ is both fully God and fully man. Each chapter looks at a different part of the doctrinal process by which the church formulated its confession of Christ as the God-man.

Chapter 3 first addresses the divine ontology of the eternal Son. The fourth-century controversies forced the church to establish an orthodox ontology by which it confessed that there is only one God and yet three who are God. To make this confession coherent, the church developed the person-nature distinction to explain that there are three divine persons who are God, and these share the single-same divine nature as the one God. Chapter 3 then demonstrates how the fifth-century church extended this same person-nature ontology to confess that the incarnate Son is the Christ, the God-man. The eternal Son became a man by assuming a human nature distinct from his divine nature. After this incarnation, the Son is now and forever one *hypostasis* in two *physeis*.

Chapter 4 discusses how the church clarified what it means that Christ is such a one person-two natures being. The work of a pro-Chalcedonian tradition affirmed and strengthened the person-nature distinction and then addressed particular issues regarding the ontology of Christ. By its climax in the seventh century, the defense and development of the Chalcedonian logic demonstrated how the person-nature distinction in Christ leads to a person-nature constitution and a person-nature function of Christ, both as God and as a man. Regarding his human ontology in particular, the church could make the coherent confession that Christ is a divine person subsisting in and acting through a body-soul nature.

Chapter 5 presents a Chalcedonian model of human constitution as a warranted theological conclusion. The first section analyzes the established orthodoxy of Christ's person-nature ontology as the man *par excellence*. The second section extends that person-nature ontology to man *par ordinaire*. Both sections end with key terms that enable a formal definition of a person-nature constitution in Christology compared with anthropology.

Chapter 6 then makes some clarifications and adjustments to account for differences between divine and human persons. Certain objections can be anticipated, and addressing them will help defend a human person-nature constitution and register it

among the major models in contemporary anthropology. The dissertation concludes with a brief look at the promise of a Chalcedonian anthropology and the work needed to realize it.

Conclusion

The task of systematic theology is to apply all of Scripture to all of life.⁸⁸ To accomplish this task, one must make conclusions from Scripture because the texts do not *directly* answer all the questions that arise from the church's life of worship and witness and its defense of the faith.⁸⁹ The church, however, is not free in making these theological conclusions but remains bound to the written revelation of God himself and chastened by the witness of previous generations. Yet each generation must continue the work of theology. The church exists to proclaim the glory of God who brought it out of darkness and into his marvelous light. But the church's proclamation is always situated: all that it does and says is done and said in a certain culture at a particular time in church history. While this situatedness does not change the truth that the church proclaims, it does present particular needs and challenges to its proclamation. And this applies equally to the definition of human being as it does to the church's confession of the incarnate being of the Son and the divine being of the Trinity.

The church is obligated by God to attend carefully and faithfully to his written word. It is obligated by love for others to demonstrate how the church can know the truths it proclaims. And the church is obligated by wisdom to heed its own tradition to avoid errors and improve where possible. Moreover, these obligations create the need for particular kinds

⁸⁸ See John M. Frame, *A Theology of Lordship*, vol. 1, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1987), 76–88.

⁸⁹ “Systematic theology takes the biblical data from biblical theology and formulates them for application to every area of life. Living in the world and resisting the world requires the church to move beyond theological description to theological formulation that meets the needs of discipleship in the faith and defense of the faith. The task of applying Scripture, then, requires *constructive* and *apologetic* work.” Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 106.

of warrant: theological conclusions should be grounded in faithful biblical theology, sound epistemological reasoning, and careful historical theology. As a constructive work in Christological anthropology that retrieves the Chalcedonian ontology of Christ for application in a new model of human ontology, this dissertation proceeds accordingly.

CHAPTER 2

CHRISTOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

A Chalcedonian approach to Christological anthropology promises to provide better resources for understanding human ontology. Chapter 1 pointed to three primary reasons: (1) the biblical presentation of humanity climaxes in Christ; (2) the early church councils provide a foundational consensus regarding the humanity of Christ; (3) doctrinal development in Christology provides clear linguistic–conceptual categories that can be applied to make warranted conclusions regarding the ontology of all humanity. Moreover, this path from Christology into anthropology follows the way of sound theological method, moving (1) from biblical and epistemological warrant (2) through historical warrant (3) to warranted theological conclusions. Beginning here and building in the chapters ahead, the pursuit of a Chalcedonian anthropology takes the shape of an argument. Each chapter contributes to the specific kind of warrant under consideration. In the end, these discussions should support a particular proposal for the basic constitution of man.

This chapter focuses on biblical and epistemological warrant. In the first section, a brief consideration of Christ’s identity in the biblical presentation of his mission of redemption establishes a fundamental premise that grounds a Christological understanding of human ontology. In the second section, the discussion turns to methodology and a concern for the principles and patterns that contribute to a well-reasoned account of how we can know human ontology from a careful consideration of Christ the man.

Biblical Warrant

A Christological approach to understanding humanity should begin with a clear biblical rationale. The doctrine of Christology does not determine anthropology. Rather, as the primary and ultimate source for the church's teaching and doctrine, Scripture provides the magisterial means for right knowledge of *all* it addresses, including all mankind *whom* it addresses. Yet, as Stephen Wellum observes, "All Christians want to be biblical in handling the Scriptures. However, what counts as 'biblical' does not enjoy the kind of consensus we might expect and even assume."¹ In that case, it will help to clarify that the discussion of biblical warrant here affirms that the Bible is the inerrant word of God himself and thus must be read on its own terms.² At a

¹ Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 109.

² The understanding, articulation, and adherence to such "biblical" theology is indebted to Wellum's work in this area. For fully developed discussions, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 111–46; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 21–37, 81–108, 591–652. For particular aspects of reading the Bible on its own terms, see John M. Frame, *A Theology of Lordship*, vol. 4, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010), 47–70 (defense of the orthodox doctrine of Scripture); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Exegesis and Hermeneutics," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, IVP Reference Collection (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 52–64 (biblical theology as a hermeneutical discipline); Brian S. Rosner, "Biblical Theology," in Alexander and Rosner, *NDBT*, 3–11; Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2014), 3–18 (nature and method of biblical theology); Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15 (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2003), 15–43 (interpretive storyline of Scripture); Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 259–311 (horizons of biblical interpretation determined by Scripture); Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 29–233 (interpretive structure of redemptive history); Dan G. McCartney, "Ecce Homo: The Coming of the Kingdom as the Restoration of Human Viceregency," *Westminster Theological Journal* 56, no. 1 (1994): 1–21 (interpretive significance of kingdom framework); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 194–203 (interpretive strategy corresponding to nature of Scripture); D. A. Carson, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," in Alexander and Rosner, *NDBT*, 89–103; Daniel J. Treier, "Typology," in Alexander and Rosner, *NDBT*, 823–27; Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical TYPOS Structures*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 397–408.

However, it should be noted that "biblical theology" has a different meaning and method in the hands of different scholars. See Edward W. Klink and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012).

minimum, this includes the authoritative structure of the Bible's self-presentation: a unified story of God working out his single plan to glorify himself in the salvation of humanity across four major epochs and through six distinct but interrelated covenants made by him.³ Moreover, this self-revelation of God through Spirit-inspired men unfolds progressively and typologically according to divine promises in the earlier covenants, their fulfillment in the new covenant in Christ, and the consummation of the entire divine plan at his return.⁴ These basic "biblical" terms govern the following discussion of Christ's identity and the implications for anthropology.

Such a high view and disciplined reading of Scripture leads to an anthropology "from above" in two ways. First, in general, theologizing "from above" is the process of beginning with Scripture as God's own words to his church that we might know him, his creation, and his works in it.⁵ In this sense, the pursuit of biblical warrant here starts with Scripture to have a truly "biblical" anthropology. Second, the biblical presupposition that Christ is *the* man also provides an anthropology "from above." The Son of God has

³ These epochs and covenants correlate as follows: Adamic/creation covenant in the epoch of creation; Noahic/preservative covenant in the epoch of the fall; Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants in the epoch of redemption; new covenant in Christ in the epoch of redemption and stretching into the eternal epoch of consummation. The development and progression of the covenants move the plotline of Scripture from one epoch into the next. In terms of a broad outline, God covenants with Adam to fill the earth and bless all creation through him under certain conditions, and then covenants with and through Noah to preserve creation after Adam's sin leads to its corruption. God covenants with Abraham to fill the earth and bless all nations through Abraham's offspring, and then covenants with and through Moses to make Abraham's descendants (Israel) his people and give them a place to worship him alone under his Law. Even as the people fail to keep God's Law under the "old covenant" with Israel, God covenants with David to bless him as king and to bless not only the people of Israel through him but ultimately all the nations by his offspring who will reign in righteousness forever. After a long line of failed kings and their deaths, God fulfills the covenants in the epoch of redemption by a "new covenant" in Christ, who is *the* descendant of David, *the* Israelite, and *the* offspring of Abraham. For a detailed discussion of how the biblical covenants form the interpretive structure of Scripture and examples of its significance, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*. For an excellent treatment of how this covenantal progression provides the authoritative identification of Christ, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 113–46.

⁴ For a helpful full-length treatment of the interconnection and progression of the biblical covenants as a biblical theology, see Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *Biblical Theology*, 3 vols. (Wooster, OH: Weaver, 2014).

⁵ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 86–87.

become the man *par excellence* to reveal all that it means to be truly and perfectly human, which includes his basic ontology *as a man*. According to its storyline, covenantal progression, and typological development, Scripture reveals that the Son became the man Jesus Christ to fulfill God's purposes for all mankind.⁶ In that sense, the man "from heaven" defines the ideal human being on earth, which begins with being a human.⁷ God's word from heaven and his man from heaven reveal with accuracy and authority what it means to be fully human according to God's own design and purposes.

In other words, the biblical rationale for a Christological anthropology is grounded in the biblical presentation of Christ himself. More specifically, the biblical warrant for looking to his human ontology to understand our own comes from his biblical identity as Christ the man. Yet this identity also entails two particular roles in the plotline of Scripture that can shed more light on possible ontological implications for the rest of mankind. Christ is the full and final image of God in man and he is the redeemer of God sent to atone for sinful man. The full meaning and significance of the *imago Dei* and the atonement have their own issues and histories of interpretation and debate.⁸ The purpose

⁶ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 217–30; Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 380–400; Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 95–96.

⁷ It should be noted that a biblical theology of mere man's constitution that works from Eden and the Adamic covenant through and into the new covenant in Christ is an important part of a robust and comprehensive anthropology in general and ontology in particular. The presupposition that Christ is ontologically definitive of all mankind assumes some of this work and functions as a theological conclusion from it. As mentioned in chap. 6, a complete exegetical study and biblical theology of mere man will need its own treatment to test and complement the Christological anthropology presented in this dissertation. However, focusing on that work alone and not considering the ontological implications of Christology for anthropology has contributed to the impasse in the current dualism–physicalism debate. Rather than a deficiency, then, this dissertation's presupposition that Christ's human ontology defines our ontology takes a departure from the debate to advance beyond it.

⁸ For a recent treatment of the basic issues regarding the *imago Dei*, see Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology: Humans, Both Creaturely and Divine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 79–108. Also see Jonathan Mark Threlfall, "The Doctrine of the Imago Dei: The Biblical Data for an Abductive Argument for the Christian Faith," *JETS* 62, no. 3 (September 2019): 543–61. To see the theological landscape in the atonement debate, see Adam J. Johnson, ed., *T & T Clark Companion*

here is not to treat those issues or enter those debates. Rather, the discussions below all seek to make the same point: the theological identities of the man Jesus *entails* a minimum ontological constitution and *implies* a similitude with all mankind.

Considering the biblical presentation of the Christ and his part in revealing true humanity and redeeming a new humanity will provide biblical justification for extending his incarnational ontology into anthropology.

The Christ

As part of its revelatory function, Scripture often correlates theological identity with ontological identity. In this context, a theological identity is the one given by a theological reading of Scripture.⁹ When the terms of Scripture are followed, it becomes clear that particular individuals (and places, events, and institutions) have a peculiar set of characteristics by which they perform a certain role or function in the unfolding drama of redemption.¹⁰ In this sense, God himself assigns theological identities to accomplish his plans for all creation and reveal his glory in it. Moreover, Scripture often presents a

to Atonement (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017); James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds., *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006). Also see Derek Tidball, David Hilborn and Justin Thacker, *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

⁹ As used here, theological reading/interpretation is synonymous with reading the Bible on its own terms. In this sense, Wellum provides a concise definition: “A theological interpretation of Scripture focuses on what God has revealed to be true and significant by allowing the textual features of Scripture to determine the meaning of every reading.” Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 95. It should be noted, however, that in the larger academic community, the “theological interpretation of Scripture” is a hermeneutical discipline that is advocated, debated, and criticized. The reason for the diversity and divergence is that while it has become widely popular, the advocates of TIS do not all agree on the nature, method, purpose, or goal of such reading. See Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); D. Christopher Spinks, *The Bible and the Crisis of Meaning: Debates on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (London: T & T Clark, 2007); Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al., eds., *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK, 2005).

¹⁰ This sense of theological identity is drawn from a theological reading of Scripture and in part from Vanhoozer’s theodramatic model of interpreting Scripture and doing theology. See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 1–36.

significant character as bearing a certain ontological identity that is directly related to that individual's theological identity.¹¹ There is something in their metaphysical makeup that enables them to be the characters identified by Scripture and succeed in that role and function as required by their part. As the preeminent example, Scripture identifies God as Yahweh, the Creator of all things and the Covenant Lord of all the earth.¹² And Scripture progressively reveals that this God is a triunity of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, each of whom accomplishes the work of God as God.¹³ It is precisely because God is this Trinity that his creation and lordship result in perfect love, joy, and peace for his people in covenant fellowship, a reflection of what he has enjoyed in himself for eternity. It would seem, then, that a central task in reading Scripture is to rightly (“biblically”) identify theological and ontological identities in their correlation.

Turning to Jesus, the biblical correlation of his theological and ontological identities is both significant in redemptive history and instructive in anthropology. Jesus comes at the terminal position of the biblical storyline. By the time of his arrival, the plot that began with creation and the creation covenant has developed into a pregnant pause awaiting the fulfillment of God's plan and all of his promises in a new creation and new covenant. Furthermore, by this time, the development of the biblical storyline has indicated that *God himself* will act sovereignly and unilaterally to save a people for

¹¹ Cf. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 30–31. In his Christology, Bauckham treats ontology and function under the unified concept of identity. Similarly, the present distinction between theological identity and ontological identity does not separate the two but recognizes Scripture's pattern of correlation. In that sense, the theological significance of an individual and his ontological characteristics are the two aspects of biblical identity.

¹² For more on the theological identification of God as the “Covenant Lord,” see John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 1–115; Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2013), 14–33.

¹³ The details of this ontological identity and its significance for both Christology and anthropology will be discussed in detail in chaps. 5 and 6.

himself and that *the Christ* will redeem them from their sins.¹⁴ According to the concepts and categories of Scripture developed across its epochal shifts and through its covenantal progression, the only hope for sinful humanity is in God alone *and* in his promised man, the Messiah. What seems like a paradox is the glorious truth that God would become this man. More specifically, God the Son became the man Jesus to take up the title and theological identity of Christ and fulfill the divine plan for saving mankind.¹⁵ The theological identity of Jesus as the Christ and his ontological identity as both God and man are not only correlated but are also mutually entailed in the biblical presentation of the gospel. Taking a closer look at these identities will begin to build a biblical foundation for recognizing the anthropological importance of their essential connection.

The overall biblical presentation of Christ's theological and ontological identities can be summarized under four headings. As summaries, of course, these parts do not capture the details or even the scope of the incarnate Son's life and ministry. Rather, these four headings provide a simple but faithful mechanism for quickly recognizing that, as the Christ, Jesus fulfilled certain roles as man and as God. *Birth*: As man (and a "son of man"), Christ was born "of woman" and in the "likeness of men" to save his people from their sins.¹⁶ Yet as God, all things were created through this Son

¹⁴ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 138–48.

¹⁵ As Wellum explains, "Christ is a title, not a personal name. Calling Jesus 'the Christ' or referring to him as 'Christ Jesus' does reveal him as the man promised to appear as God's Messiah for the salvation of God's people. Understood according to the storyline coming out of the Old Testament, however, using the title Christ indicates that this man would also be divine. And other titles function similarly to present these two parts to Jesus's identity: e.g., Son, Son of Man, even Son of God." Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 199. See Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 434, 544–48.

¹⁶ As man, Christ was born "of woman" in that he developed in a woman's womb and came into the world from there just as every other human being. Moreover, in the covenantal unfolding of God's plan of salvation, Christ was born "of woman" to fulfill God's promise that he would bring forth an "offspring" of Eve to reverse the curse of Satan's dominion and restore the righteous rule of mankind over creation and under God. Thus, Christ was also "born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (see Gen 3:15; Matt 1:21; Gal 4:4-5; Phil 2:7). For this interpretation see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 144–45; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's*

before he came into his own creation and continued to uphold all of his creation.¹⁷

Baptism: As the beloved Son, Christ physically and spiritually identified with the plight of sinful humanity and their need for redemption; and he embraced his role as *the* man to overcome Satan’s temptations in preparation to bring righteousness among men.¹⁸ As the divine Son, he inaugurated the kingdom of God himself through his own sovereign and saving rule.¹⁹ *Life and ministry:* As prophet, priest, and king, Christ succeeded chronologically and exceeded typologically many men who taught the word of God,

Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 73–85.

¹⁷ As God, the Word who would “[become] flesh and [dwell] among us (John 1:14) was “in the beginning with God” and “all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:2-3). This one who would become incarnate is “the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14). Even after his incarnation, this Son “is the image of the invisible God For by him all things were created . . . and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:15-17) as he “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3). For the identity of the Son as God, see Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008); D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1991), 111–18; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 256–70; Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity and John’s Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 24 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 28–50.

¹⁸ As man, Christ physically and spiritually identified with the plight of sinful humanity, receiving the “baptism of repentance” (Acts 13:24) and coming “up from the water” (Matt 3:16) to hear the affirmation of the Father that he is the “beloved Son” (Matt 3:17) appointed to bring justice and righteousness among men as the promised Messiah anointed with the Spirit. For the humanity of Christ in his baptism, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 172–73; Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 149–77; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 45–52.

¹⁹ As God, Christ fulfilled the role of the beloved Son in a unique way, as the divine Son-King who would inaugurate the kingdom of God himself through his own sovereign and saving rule over all creation. David Wells concludes, “Even at his baptism and the beginning of his earthly ministry, Jesus self-identified as *God* the Son incarnate, the one *man* [emphasis added] anointed to do what only God can do.” David F. Wells, *The Person of Christ: A Biblical and Historical Analysis of the Incarnation*, Foundations for Faith (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1984), 39. For the deity of Christ in his baptism, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 151–52; see also R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 119–21. For an instructive link between Christ’s baptism and his transfiguration that sheds further light on his personal inauguration of God’s kingdom, see Robert L. Reymond, *Jesus, Divine Messiah: The New Testament Witness* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1990), 316–25.

offered sacrifices to God, and ruled under God.²⁰ As the Covenant Lord, he brought the kingdom of God in his own authoritative teaching and commandments, in the forgiveness of sins by divine decree, and in the exercise of divine power over all creation.²¹ *Death and resurrection*: As the last Adam, Christ represented a covenant people in a life of

²⁰ As man, Christ “was made lower than the angels” (Heb 2:9), “being born in the likeness of men” (Phil 2:7) and raised up “from [his] brothers” as one “made like his brothers in every respect” (Heb 2:17), who in the “days of his flesh . . . offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears” to God and “learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb 5:7–8). He became the “last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45; cf. Rom 5:14) and “the [incarnate] image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15, 2:9) who was “faithful over God’s house as a son” (Heb 3:6). Even as the typological climax of all these human roles, Christ fulfilled them as a man. For the humanity of Christ in his life and ministry, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 152–55. Regarding the humanity of Christ’s priestly service, Donald Macleod concludes, “Nevertheless, there is real change. . . . He experiences life in a human body and in a human soul. He experiences human pain and human temptations. He suffers poverty and loneliness and humiliation. He tastes death. . . . Before and apart from the incarnation, God knew such things by observation. But observation, even when it is that of omniscience, falls short of personal experience. That is what the incarnation made possible for God: real, personal experience of being human.” Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 186.

²¹ As God, Christ’s words and works fulfilled the canonical teachings of God with his own authority, interpretation, and significance (see Matt 5:17; Mark 1:15). He exercised the authority and power of God himself through miracles, judgment, and the forgiveness of sins (see Mark 1:27; Luke 4:6; John 19:11). And he inaugurated the kingdom of God himself (see Matt 3:2; Mark 1:15). In all of this divine work, Jesus “[upheld] the universe by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3) as the “[eternal] image of the invisible God, the firstborn [in rank and authority] of all creation [because] by [means of] him all things were created” (Col 1:15–16). Through a virgin birth of divine power (see Isa 7:14; Luke 1:26–33), the Son of God, “who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be [used for his own advantage]” (Phil 2:6) but became a man such that “in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9) and the incarnate Son presents “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (Heb 1:3). For the deity of Christ in his life and ministry, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 189–208. Regarding Christ’s possession of the “form of God” and his *kenosis* (emptying) to take “the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men,” it should be noted that such is possible only for one who had personal preexistence before the intentional and informed decision to become incarnate. See Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 325; Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-Existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 25. For the exegetical issues and arguments demonstrating that the incarnational *kenosis* of Christ involved a temporary *krypsis* (hiddenness) of his God-equal glory, and not a loss of his divine nature or attributes, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 174–76; Peter O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 205–32; Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 375–93. For the interpretation of Phil 2:6 as the preexistent Son not using his equality with God for his own advantage, see Roy W. Hoover, “The *Harpagmos* Enigma: A Philological Solution,” *Harvard Theological Review* 64, no. 1 (1971): 95–119; see also N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991); O’Brien, *Philippians*, 211–16; but see John Cochrane O’Neill, “Hoover on *Harpagmos* Reviewed, with a Modest Proposal concerning Philippians 2:6,” *Harvard Theological Review* 81, no. 4 (October 1988): 445–49.

obedience to God, in his sacrificial death for the propitiation of their sins, and in his resurrection for their justification and eternal life as a new humanity that ultimately will be enthroned over creation as God’s viceregent.²² As the Creator-King, he had authority to lay down his life and take it up again; and he will raise all the dead to judge all mankind from the throne of God.²³

This pattern and presentation of Scripture identifies Christ as God and man according to his inherent deity and his assumed humanity. In fact, as Wellum observes, Christ’s disciples made this same conclusion based on the roles he performed and the works he accomplished: “The apostles placed what Jesus did and who Jesus said he was within the epochal-covenantal storyline of Scripture and identified him as the Son of God come as a man to do what only God can do and all that God requires of man.”²⁴

²² As man, Christ willingly and perfectly obeyed God the Father throughout his life and “being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death” (Phil 2:8) so that his “flesh and blood” death (Heb 2:14) might help the “offspring of Abraham” (Heb 2:16) by “making propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb 2:17) as the “one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). “Being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit” (1 Pet 3:18), Jesus lamented his God-forsakenness on the cross (Matt 27:46) and still committed his spirit into the Father’s hands (Luke 23:46). After three days of death, God raised him to new life in the flesh, in which Jesus appeared to chosen witnesses and commanded them to bear witness to the significance of his resurrection from the dead (see Acts 10:40–43; 1 Cor 15:4–8, 20–21). For the humanity of Christ in his death and resurrection, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 225–30; see also McCartney, “*Ecce Homo*,” 1–21; David Peterson, ed., *The Word became Flesh: Evangelicals and the Incarnation* (Carlisle, PA: Paternoster, 2003), 91–93 (Christ as the man of faith); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification*, Five Solas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 124–32 (Christ the man and justification); Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1223–24 (Christ the man as “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”); Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1994), 239–54 (the resurrection body in Christ).

²³ As God, Christ had authority to lay down his life and take it up again (John 10:18) because in the same way as God the Father, “the Son also [has] life in himself” and to judge who among mankind will receive “the resurrection of life” and who will receive “the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:25–29). He will execute this judgment from the throne of God, on which he sits as the King over all creation, and from which he reconciles God and man through the forgiveness of sins (see Mark 2:5–12; Luke 5:20–26; Eph 1:20–23). For the deity of Christ in his death and resurrection, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 192–208; see also Bauckham, *Jesus and God of Israel*, 170, 230–31 (Christ and God’s throne and judgment); Harris, *Jesus as God*, 205–28 (Christ and God’s throne).

²⁴ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 188.

According to an ontological *priority*, Christ is the *eternal* Son. He has always been God the Son; he became a man “when the fullness of time had come” (Gal 4:4). Yet this incarnation did not alter or abridge his deity, as Scripture demonstrates by identifying him with divine attributes, authority, titles, works, and worship.²⁵ At the same time, according to an ontological *promise*, Christ is the *incarnate* Son. The Son fulfilled God’s promise to bring forth a man who would redeem a people for himself as one who is like them in every way (except sin). His deity did not prevent or limit his incarnation into our humanity. Rather, Scripture presents Christ as developing physically and spiritually, living as a righteous man in constant and perfect obedience to God, offering himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for other men, and then providing the pattern of a righteous life for a redeemed humanity.²⁶ In short, both full deity and full humanity are essential to the very being of the one whom Scripture identifies as the Christ. Contrary to any attempt to separate his theological and ontological identities, Scripture insists that his accomplishments are a function of *who* he is (the Christ), which is tied to *what* he is

²⁵ Summarizing this biblical presentation, Murray Harris observes, “Not only are the deeds and words of Jesus the deeds and words of God—the nature of Jesus is the nature of God. By nature, as well as by action, Jesus is God.” Murray J. Harris, *Three Crucial Questions about Jesus*, Three Crucial Questions (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 101. Perhaps the most convincing presentation of Christ’s ontological equality with God is the fact that Christ himself claims the honor and glory of God for himself (see John 5:22-23). In that regard, D. A. Carson argues, “The Jews were right in detecting that Jesus was ‘making himself equal with God’ (vv. 17-18). But this does not diminish God. Indeed, the glorification of the Son is precisely what glorifies the Father, just as in Philippians 2:9-11, where at the name of *Jesus* every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, and all this is to the glory of God the Father. Because of the unique relation between the Father and the Son, the God who declares ‘I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another’ (Is. 42:8; cf. Is. 48:11) is not compromised or diminished when divine honours crown the head of the Son.” Carson, *Gospel according to John*, 254–55. For an excellent discussion, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 189–208; see also Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 881–96; Gerald L. Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 183–212.

²⁶ As Wellum concludes, “The Bible presents the incarnation as true and as the voluntary action of the Son to become like us in our humanity in every respect, having a human body, soul, and psychology.” Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 217. For a detailed discussion of Christ’s humanity as presented in Scripture, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 209–45.

(divine and human).²⁷

Looking from this “biblical” Christology toward anthropology invites the consideration of an ontological parallel. If the incarnate Son really is a man, then it seems biblically reasonable that all mankind should share a similar ontological identity. In this regard, it is crucial to recognize that at every point in his theological identity as the Christ, God the Son (not the Father or Spirit) existed and acted as the man Jesus. The Son is the subject of all his human accomplishments and experiences, not his “flesh.” In that case, a *human* subject who is not identical with the flesh becomes a legitimate inquiry. The next two chapters will seek to understand this distinction between subject and flesh with greater detail and clarity in orthodox Christology before going into anthropology. Here it is sufficient to appreciate the biblical warrant for finding a similarity in the ontological identity of the Christ as a man and the rest of mankind he came to identify with, serve, renew, rule over, and ultimately judge. Moreover, this similarity would seem to strengthen where the Christ is recognized as *the* man, but also where his theological identity intersects with mere man.

The Image of God

One locus where the theological identities of Christ and man intersect is in the *imago Dei*. Scripture tells us plainly that “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him” (Gen 1:27). In fact, man alone among God’s creatures was made in God’s image. After God brought forth all living creatures in the sea and on the earth “according to their kinds” (Gen 1:21-25), God created man in his own divine image and likeness (Gen 1:26). Even after the fall into sin and corruption, mankind continues to

²⁷ Cf. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 169–70. Wellum observes that the Christology of the New Testament “holds together the ontology and function of Jesus to bear witness to his deity and humanity as complementary and necessary to understanding his identity” (170). Wellum’s reference to *function* coincides with *theological identity* as used in the present discussion. As noted above, theological identity includes the role or function played by a given biblical character.

bear God's image (see Gen 5:1-3, 9:6). And when Christ the man came to rescue mankind from its sin and corruption, he came as "the image of the invisible God . . . in [whom] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col 1:15; cf. Heb 1:3). In short, Scripture identifies both mankind and the man Jesus Christ as the only characters in its storyline who bear God's image. The church has consistently confessed these twin truths. But it has not done so with a unified definition of the *imago Dei* in man or *the man*.

Three models have prevailed in the church's attempt to understand the *imago Dei*. The structural model identifies the image with an individual or set of features, properties, or capacities.²⁸ This particular structure sets humanity apart from all other creatures. In its traditional dominance, this view has singled out rationality (faculty of the mind) and volition (faculty of the will) as the most likely capacities for bearing God's image.²⁹ The relational model locates the *imago* in the interpersonal relationships between God and man and among mankind.³⁰ Here, it is God's moral address to humanity and its ability to respond that separates it from other creatures. In fact, this ability or capacity for such relationship often provides a basis for different combinations of the structural and relational views. Finally, the functional model finds the *imago Dei* in man's performance of his God-given purpose.³¹ This purpose is usually identified broadly with dominion, especially given the juxtaposition of man's original creation and God's blessing and command to have dominion over all other creatures (Gen 1:26-30).

²⁸ See Farris, *Introduction to Theological Anthropology*, 84–87.

²⁹ In general, the rationale used to determine the feature or faculty in man that bears the image of God looks to the communicable attributes of God. Among those divine attributes that find a creaturely likeness in humanity and not in other creatures, the powers of reason and self-determination stand out. Some exponents have added conscience as a capacity that resembles God and not animals in moral knowledge. See Farris, *Introduction to Theological Anthropology*, 85.

³⁰ See Farris, *Introduction to Theological Anthropology*, 87–88.

³¹ See Farris, *Introduction to Theological Anthropology*, 88–89.

The goal here is not to defend or critique these models or construct a new one, but to highlight their ontological ground.³² Each view has some merit. But none of these models can stand without some *thing* to support them.³³ By definition, the structural model points directly to a particular feature of some entity. The relational and functional models each presuppose one or more such features. The relational image found in certain interpersonal relationships can only move from concept to reality if actual entities are involved. Moreover, as noted above, each entity must have a structural feature that enables it to relate to others, a feature that is grounded in some ontological reality. Similarly, the functional model requires actual human beings and relies on some structural capacities to exercise dominion. In short, features of humanity and the human activity of relating and ruling all require some ontological foundation in a concrete entity. The nature and content of the *imago Dei* in man must, at a minimum, have recourse to a particular ontology.³⁴

On this account, the theological identity of man as made in the image of God entails an ontological identity. The chapters ahead will pursue the content of this identity. But here it is important to recognize that the constitution of humanity must enable it to represent God on the earth, regardless of the nature and purpose of that representation. In

³² For helpful discussions regarding some of the issues involved in understanding the *imago Dei*, see Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); Nonna Verna Harrison, *God's Many-Splendored Image: Theological Anthropology for Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

³³ See J. P. Moreland, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei: Human Persons and the Failure of Naturalism*, Veritas (London: SCM, 2009), 4. Regarding the relational and functional approaches, Moreland states, "It should be obvious that either approach presupposes the ontological understanding." Both relations and functional relations depend upon what sort of entities are relating and functioning.

³⁴ See Farris, *Introduction to Theological Anthropology*, 89; see also Joshua R. Farris, "An Immaterial Substance View: Imago Dei in Creation and Redemption," *Heythrop Journal* 58, no. 1 (January 2017): 108–23. It should be noted that this ontological principle holds true for any other model of the *imago Dei* outside the predominant ones considered here.

this sense, the *imago Dei* at least includes an *ontological image* as its foundation.

Whatever else it means for man to be made in the image of God, man is ontologically capable of imaging God.

Moreover, it is important to see the *imago Dei* in its canonical context.³⁵ Far beyond the creation account, Scripture presents the *imago Dei* as a “*metatype* that stretches across the metanarrative . . . and takes up [two] other types along the way.”³⁶ First, the *imago* gathers sonship into its biblical meaning and significance. The representational core of imaging that was created in Adam was passed into his lineage when Adam “fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image” (Gen 5:3).³⁷ And this representational aspect of sonship increases from creation and fall into the epoch of redemption through covenantal progression and typological increase. Specifically, in its role as the people of God who will represent him and his rule under the Mosaic/“old” covenant, Israel is identified as God’s “firstborn son” (Exod 4:22; cf. Hos 11:1). In their role as representing God’s kingship over his people, and ultimately the whole earth, the Davidic kings are given the promise that God will be their father and they will be his sons (2 Sam 7:14ff; cf. Ps 89:26-27). Second, the *imago Dei* reaches from the first to the last Adam. In particular, Paul divides all humanity under the representative headship of either

³⁵ Farris agrees that the “wider context in which to situate ‘image’ is its covenantal context.” Farris, *Introduction to Theological Anthropology*, 81. He correctly observes that “the *imago Dei* comes up in every phase of the biblical-theological narrative” (92). However, his consideration of that narrative is limited to the three transitions between the biblical epochs: creation to fall; fall to redemption; redemption to glory (92–94). While epochal considerations are necessary, it is the covenantal progression and typological development that provide the fundamental meaning and significance to the image of God in man.

³⁶ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 117.

³⁷ See Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 58–59. Dempster argues, “By juxtaposing the divine creation of Adam in the image of God and the subsequent human creation of Seth in the image of Adam, the transmission of the image of God through this genealogical line is implied, as well as the link between sonship and the image of God. As Seth is a son of Adam, so Adam is a son of God. Language is being stretched here, as a literal son of God is certainly not in view, but nevertheless the writer uses an analogy to make a point.”

“the first man Adam” or “the last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45; cf. Rom 5:14). To be *Adam*, then, is to be a special case of the image–sonship of God. In this sense, bearing the Adamic image centers on representing mankind before God and representing God’s sovereign rule over his people and his creation as his head vice-regent.

At the end of these integrated typological trajectories, Christ the man stands as the true image-son-Adam of God. Christ is *the* Son of God (Matt 17:5; Acts 13:33; Heb 5:1-5), *the* promised Davidic King (Heb 1:2-13, 5:5; cf. Acts 13:33; Rom 1:3-4), and the head of a *new* covenant (Luke 22:17-20; Heb 8:8-13, 9:11-15, 12:22-24; cf. 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6) in which God will manifest the fullness of his plan for the righteous rule of all mankind. The true meaning of sonship, kingship, and headship is found in Christ alone. And this makes sense of Paul’s insistence that Christ is the *true* image of God.³⁸ For Paul, while Adam was the first historical instance of humanity, Christ is the archetype for all humanity. The glory of God is seen in the glory of Christ because Christ is the image of God in its fullness (2 Cor 4:4-6; cf. Heb 1:3).³⁹ Christ is the preeminent image of God in all creation because all things were created through Christ (Col 1:15-17).⁴⁰ In short, “Paul presents Jesus as the revelation of the telos of human existence precisely because he is the *protos* of humanity . . . the true image of God.”⁴¹ Even though he came later in history, Christ was the model for humanity from the beginning. Although he came in “the fullness of time” when the divine Son became incarnate, “[Christ] is the one who bears the archetypal divine image, after whose image the rest of humanity is fashioned.”⁴² As

³⁸ This does not mean that Adam bore a false image. He truly did bear the divine image, but in a typological fashion. The coming of Christ brought the antitypical fulfillment.

³⁹ See Jason S. Maston, “Christ or Adam: The Ground for Understanding Humanity,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11, no. 2 (2017): 290.

⁴⁰ See Maston, “Christ or Adam,” 290.

⁴¹ Maston, “Christ or Adam,” 293.

⁴² Oliver Crisp, “A Christological Model of the Imago Dei,” in *The Ashgate Research*

the image-son-Adam of God, Christ is the *paradigmatic* image of God in man.

Returning to the ontological image, then, we can add good biblical reason for finding its paradigm in Christ. As discussed in the section above, being *the* man and the Christ places the human ontology of Jesus in a paradigmatic position regarding mere man. This position is then strengthened where our theological identities intersect in the *imago Dei*. From a strictly chronological perspective, the image of God in man begins with the creation of the first humans. From a canonical perspective, however, Christ is the true image of God and the model for all those made in that same image. And this opens the possibility of a significant parallel in our ontological identities. As with the *imago Dei* in general, representing God in sonship, kingship, and covenantal headship as a man would seem to require a particular ontological constitution of Christ.⁴³ If he is the *paradigmatic* image in its fullness, then it seems warranted to look to his human constitution for the *ontological* image in all humanity.

The Redeemer of God

Another locus to consider for an ontological connection between Christ and humanity is his role as the Redeemer of humanity. In fact, this particular theological identity is integrated into the others through the storyline of Scripture. From the beginning, God has purposed to redeem a people for himself. Immediately after the first sin of man, God promised to restore humanity from its rebellion. As the first man, Adam represented all mankind such that his rebellion corrupted his entire posterity. Every man and woman thereafter was born in the image of Adam, which is a corrupted image of

Companion to Theological Anthropology, ed. Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro, Ashgate Research Companion (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 224. Chap. 5 will develop this insight by describing the eternal Son as the essential image (by his divine nature) and the incarnate Son as the analogical image (by assumption of a human nature).

⁴³ In this sense, a biblical argument can be made for combining the structural, relational, and functional models by placing the *imago Dei* in the storyline of Scripture.

God.⁴⁴ However, Adam's original sin was met with God's original plan of salvation. In time, God would provide another Adam who would restore the image of God in man and return humanity to its place of righteous dominion over the earth.⁴⁵ At the center of this plan stands the Christ who would provide the required remedy. He would become sin for a sinful humanity, providing in himself a penal substitutionary sacrifice.⁴⁶ The biblical presentation is clear that this theological identity of the Redeemer is unique to Christ. While humanity does not share in this role, however, the atonement provided by Christ the Redeemer creates a crucial ontological intersection of ontological identities. The potential and importance of this connection become clear through a focused look at the development of atonement from the old covenant with Israel to the new covenant in Christ.⁴⁷

Under the old covenant, God provided a system of sacrifices that would enable Israel to live in his presence. When God first delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery to be

⁴⁴ See Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 82–85; Hughes, *The True Image*, 71–210.

⁴⁵ See Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 85–91; Hughes, *The True Image*, 211–414.

⁴⁶ This discussion assumes the traditional explanation of biblical atonement as penal and substitutionary. On this account, Christ substituted himself in the place of his people under the holy judgment of God, thereby bearing the just penalty of death for sin, removing the guilt of sin, and propitiating the wrath of God against sin in the flesh. For an excellent defense of penal substitutionary atonement, see Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity, 2007); see also Donald Macleod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014). For a detailed treatment of atonement in Scripture and in church history, see Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III, *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004). For a concise treatment of the major issues in the debate regarding the atonement, see Tidball, Hilborn, and Thacker, *The Atonement Debate*. For current efforts in constructive theology centered on the atonement, see Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders, eds., *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, Los Angeles Theology Conference (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

⁴⁷ A full "biblical" treatment of atonement would trace the entire biblical presentation from the first promise of restoration (*proto-euangelion*), through the relevant epochal-covenantal developments, and into the final fulfillment in Christ. And significant exegetical work would come into play at specific points along the way. However, the climactic shift from the old covenant to the new covenant will suffice for the present purpose of highlighting a necessary ontological connection between the Redeemer and the redeemed.

his own “holy nation” (Exod 19:6), he delivered them through judgment against idolatry (Exod 12:12), in which his people had participated (see Ezek 20:4–10). The exclusive exception of Israel from this judgment in the death of every firstborn in the land was tied to the Passover sacrifice of a spotless lamb (Exod 12:3–13).⁴⁸ The firstborn child in each Israelite home would be spared only if the blood of the lamb slaughtered by that family covered the doorposts of that house. After Israel’s deliverance, this Passover sacrifice was extended into the covenant Yahweh made through Moses to be present as Israel’s God (Exod 12:14-20), and there it expanded into an entire system of sacrifices (see Lev 1-7).⁴⁹ Yet a particular annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement represented the center and climax of God’s terms for restraining his wrath against Israel’s sin under the Mosaic covenant.⁵⁰ For Israel to live in God’s presence and not be destroyed, the sins of the people would have to be atoned for by a representative substitute (see Lev 16:1-34).⁵¹ In this case, the substitute was a goat. More specifically, two goats formed one sacrificial object to signify the two main aspects of atonement.⁵² The first goat was slaughtered and burned on the altar as a sin offering (Lev 16:15–19). The second goat was sent into a wilderness exile away from the covenant presence of God after receiving “all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins” by Aaron’s confession over the goat’s head (Lev 16:20-22). The slaughtered goat represented the punishment of sin and propitiation of God’s wrath; the scapegoat represented the removal

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the penal and substitutionary elements, see Emile Nicole, “It Is the Blood that Makes Atonement for One’s Life,” in Hill and James, *The Glory of the Atonement*, 35–50.

⁴⁹ See Nicole, “It Is the Blood,” 35–50; Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 163.

⁵⁰ See Nicole, “It Is the Blood,” 35–50; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 42–52.

⁵¹ See Nicole, “It Is the Blood,” 35–50; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 42–52.

⁵² See Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 48–50.

and forgiveness of sins in God's mercy and kindness.⁵³ Together, these two goats demonstrated more completely what was first indicated in the Passover lamb: covenant life with God requires atonement for a sinful people through a sacrificial substitute that bears the penalty of sin and removes the guilt of sin.

Under the new covenant, Christ the Redeemer became the typological fulfillment of penal substitutionary atonement.⁵⁴ The old covenant sacrifices, including those on the Day of Atonement, were temporary and typological by God's own design. Those sacrifices were sufficient for the specific covenantal purpose of God restraining his wrath against the sinful people of Israel for a time.⁵⁵ However, in accomplishing that purpose, those sacrifices provided a constant reminder that the means for true atonement was not among them but on the horizon of God's promise.⁵⁶ Simply put, animals cannot atone for humanity, "for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:3-4). The penal substitutionary sacrifice of animals was grounded in and pointed to the greater sacrifice and atonement accomplished by Christ, the Redeemer of sinful humanity (see Heb 9:1-28). In that sense, Christ's ministry of redemption and

⁵³ Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 48–50.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that this typological trajectory is picked up by the Suffering Servant of Isa 42:1-9, 1–13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12. In particular, the Suffering Servant would be the one to atone for the sins of Israel to deliver them from its bondage and bring restoration. See J. Alan Grove, "For He Bears the Sins of Many," in Hill and James, *The Glory of the Atonement*, 61–89; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, vol. 2, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986); Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 11, no. 2 (2007): 20–47. This is yet another theological identity that Christ assumed and a role he fulfilled in his death and resurrection that inaugurated the new covenant promised in the old covenant for God's true covenant people.

⁵⁵ This does not mean that the restraint of God's wrath was the only purpose of the old covenant sacrifices. But that purpose was central to the other aspects of the divine plan of salvation working through God's covenant with the nation of Israel. For an excellent and near comprehensive discussion of God's plan and purposes working through the old covenant, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 129–587.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of Christ's typological fulfillment of the old covenant sacrifices and sacrificial system, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 141–45.

reconciliation in the new covenant is better than the old covenant precisely because the Redeemer is a *man* (see Heb 8:6-7). God finally and fully forgives sin through the penal substitutionary sacrifice of God the Son *incarnate*. The Son became “like his brothers in every respect [except sin] . . . to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb 2:14-18). It was the Son’s incarnation into our humanity that made him ontologically capable of our redemption, such that “by a single offering [as a sacrifice for sin], he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Heb 10:1-14). It is true that the qualitative perfection of Christ’s sacrifice involved the purity and value of his life as the divine Son incarnate.⁵⁷ However, the emphasis here is on his human being, which also grounded the ultimate effectiveness of Christ’s penal substitutionary atonement for his people.⁵⁸

The point that emerges from this covenantal development is simple but significant: true atonement requires ontological correspondence. As with the theological identities of the Christ and the *imago Dei*, it seems biblically reasonable that being the Redeemer entails a certain ontology that bears some similitude with humanity. To redeem a sinful humanity—to sacrifice himself for particular human beings who bear the guilt of sin and deserve the penalty of sin—Christ had to be an ontologically capable substitute. In his active obedience in life and his passive obedience in death, Christ represented humanity with sufficient ontological correspondence that his righteousness and atoning death are imputed to his people. In short, there is a necessary ontological connection between the constitution of the Redeemer and the constitution of the redeemed.

Taken individually and as a whole, the biblical presentations considered above should provide sufficient biblical warrant for pursuing a Christological understanding of

⁵⁷ Bray, *God Is Love*, 585–92.

⁵⁸ As Bray observes, “Jesus paid the price for our sins in a way that no lamb or other animal could ever have done. By becoming a man, Jesus took every part of our nature and therefore everything in us that is prone to sin or affected by it. He did not bear our sin in the abstract but in a way that corresponds to every aspect of our being.” Bray, *God Is Love*, 587.

human ontology. As *the* man, Christ is truly human and defines true humanity. As *the* image of God, Christ is the full revelation of the ontological ground for bearing the *imago Dei* in humanity. And as the Redeemer, Christ the man substituted himself for sinful humanity in his self-sacrifice with such a correspondence in human being that his death actually atones for their sin. Thus, the key theological identities of the man *par excellence* entail some ontological identity with man *par ordinaire*. To that extent, the human ontology of Christ should ground and guide the formulation of human constitution in anthropology. The section below will address the methodological issues for such a “definition” of mere man.

Epistemological Warrant

In general, epistemological warrant in the work of theology amounts to a well-reasoned account of *how* we can know God and know about him and his creation.⁵⁹ In particular, doctrinal formulation should be supported by a sound epistemological foundation and framework.⁶⁰ This becomes especially significant when the differences between theological proposals can be traced to divergent plausibility structures and

⁵⁹ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 33.

⁶⁰ The focus and limits of this dissertation prevent a full statement on the epistemological issues involved in any attempt to make anthropological conclusions, especially those related to ontology. Rather, the sections below assume the basic evangelical positions in epistemology. As it relates to issues of ontology in anthropology, these evangelical assumptions begin with the Creator-creature distinction. Scripture makes an absolute, categorical distinction between the Creator God and everything else, which exists as his creation. In this sense, God is wholly transcendent in being from all creation, including humanity. Yet by his free and sovereign will, God is also intimately immanent with his creation without crossing the categorical divide that prevents creaturely being from having an ontological part in the divine being. Building on this foundation, a classic evangelical epistemology then includes the objective reality of both the visible realm of our direct experience and an invisible or spiritual realm; the accessibility of truth regarding both realms; and the unchangeable nature of that objective truth. For a discussion of theological epistemology, see John M. Frame, *A Theology of Lordship*, vol. 1, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1987); Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Esther L. Meek, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011); Martin Westerholm, *The Ordering of the Christian Mind: Karl Barth and Theological Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

different views of Scripture. For example, many of the heterodox Christologies that emerged after the nineteenth-century embrace of Enlightenment presuppositions are grounded in a principled naturalism that diverges from a biblical worldview and its revelational epistemology.⁶¹ Yet epistemological warrant is also important when charting new theological territory through more constructive efforts within orthodoxy. This is true here, where this dissertation is proposing a theological definition of humanity that is grounded in the formulations of orthodox Christology, which itself is grounded in the orthodox view of Scripture. In that case, the most immediate issues of epistemological warrant for the work ahead relate to methodological concerns that accompany any extension of insights from one doctrinal area into another.

In pursuit of a well-reasoned account of how Christology can and should guide ontological formulation in anthropology, the sections below will address the need for sound first principles and authoritative patterns. The first section discusses some essential elements to avoid fundamental errors when extending Christ's human ontology into the constitution of all humanity. The identities and connections discussed above provide a biblical basis for pursuing some ontological similitude. However, obvious dissimilarities between the divine Son incarnate and mere man require a methodological framework that enables an analogical approach to any metaphysical move from Christology to anthropology. In that regard, the first section also points to an authoritative pattern for such an extension in the Chalcedonian Definition. The second section then continues the discussion of authoritative patterns by focusing on the dogmatic nature of theological retrieval and the early church's practice. Together, these two sections should provide a sound foundation and framework for how we can know the ontological constitution of man from the ontological constitution of the God-man.

⁶¹ For an excellent discussion of the confusion in contemporary Christology and its epistemological roots, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 35–104.

Christological Methodology

Epistemological warrant for a Christological understanding of humanity requires a working methodology that treats Christ's human ontology as both paradigmatic and unique. By biblical presupposition, Christ *the man* is determinative of all that it means to be truly human. And the biblical presentation of Christ indicates that this determination includes at least a basic ontological correspondence. However, the biblical presentation also clarifies that Christ is unique in certain aspects of his theological and ontological identities. He is God the Son incarnate. So any anthropological extension of his human constitution, while fundamentally ontological, will be necessarily analogical. Since Christ is divine and human, even a Christological anthropology cannot move univocally from Christ the man to all mankind. The employment of Christological categories to help make conclusions regarding the constitution of mere man must recognize and maintain both (1) the similarities that make Christ "like his brothers in every respect," and (2) the dissimilarities that make him not just preeminent as *the man*, but *sui generis* as the God-man. In short, a properly Christological method will apply Christ's human ontology to anthropology without collapsing humanity into Christology.

Some first principles. As discussed in chapter 1, recent trends indicate that Christian anthropology has a promising future in Christological anthropology. However, that discussion also agreed with Marc Cortez that Christological anthropology must move beyond theological conviction to theological methodology. In his words, "it is one thing to claim that Jesus is the perfect realization of true humanity in whom we see the revelation of what it means to be human; it is something else entirely to explain what that means and how it should be done."⁶² Regarding ontology in particular, Cortez finds that methodology is severely undertreated in Christological anthropology:

⁶² Marc Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in*

While contemporary theological anthropology is marked in many ways by a commitment to viewing the human person christologically, the same cannot be said for its considerations of human ontology. Although one finds occasional assertions to the effect that Christology, especially a particular view of the incarnation, supports some anthropological ontology, one rarely encounters any sustained attempt to think through the implications of this Christological framework for understanding human ontology.⁶³

The current literature indicates no significant interest in answering the constitutional question of human ontology by primary reference to the incarnational ontology of Christ. More specifically, the orthodox ontology of Christ formulated at the Council of Chalcedon is not treated as a paradigm for human constitution beyond the recognition that the Son assumed a human nature like ours.⁶⁴ Among scholars committed to grounding their thoughts on our humanity in the humanity of Christ, locating and moving along ontological waypoints finds little attention.

Cortez himself, however, does provide some first principles for thinking Christologically about all mankind. He argues for a “comprehensive Christological anthropology” in which the categories of Christology warrant ultimate claims about being human that include all anthropological data. And to promote such a Christocentric understanding of humanity, Cortez offers a set of theses for actually doing Christological anthropology.⁶⁵ Rather than establishing a particular method or model, his theses

the Light of Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 20.

⁶³ Marc Cortez, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies: An Exercise in Christological Anthropology and Its Significance for the Mind/Body Debate* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 5.

⁶⁴ For recent examples of doing generic Christological anthropology without the consistent application of a specific and robust Christological framework, see the articles in Farris and Taliaferro, *Ashgate Research Companion*. The first article is an exception, where Cortez argues that “we can still maintain the long-standing intuition that Christology alone provides the proper ground for theological anthropology, provided that we offer a more robust methodological account of how Christology and anthropology should be related.” Marc Cortez, “The Madness in Our Method: Christology as the Necessary Starting Point for Theological Anthropology,” in Farris and Taliaferro, *Ashgate Research Companion*, 15–26.

⁶⁵ Cortez offers his theses as “guidance for how to view humanity through the lens of Jesus Christ.” Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 168.

represent core claims of a robust Christological anthropology that frame a Christological vision of humanity to address issues in theological anthropology.⁶⁶ A brief examination of these first principles will help inform at least a working method for the Christological work ahead that will ultimately address the ontological issue in anthropology. More specifically, Cortez's theses can be discussed under three categories according to their role in supporting a comprehensive Christological anthropology: foundational theses (1–4); framework theses (5–7); functional theses (8–11). These groupings will also facilitate a brief engagement in support of a Chalcedonian approach.

The *foundational theses* describe what makes an anthropology specifically Christological rather than more generically theological: the epistemological and ontological centrality of Christ.⁶⁷ Since these first principles articulate particular aspects of this dissertation's basic presupposition, it will suffice to list them here with a few comments. *Thesis one*: The man Jesus Christ is "the unique revelation of what it means to be truly human."⁶⁸ *Thesis two*: Jesus is epistemologically central because "his humanity is ontologically fundamental for the existence of all other humans."⁶⁹ At his creation, the Edenic Adam was provisionally perfect in his humanity. But Christ reveals something still more about all humanity in his coming as the true image of God in man, such that

⁶⁶ Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 189. Cortez argues the theological basis for his theses in chaps. 1–4, lists his theses and expounds on each one in chap. 5, and then applies his Christological framework to three case studies in anthropology in chaps. 6–8. The current discussion relies on the epistemological, biblical, and historical–theological support developed throughout this dissertation, judges Cortez's methodological guidelines to be consistent therewith, and engages them for methodological insights.

⁶⁷ See the discussion in chap. 1, s.v. "Future? Christological Anthropology."

⁶⁸ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 169–71. Cortez supports this thesis by considering the New Testament identification of Jesus as the true *anthropos* (John 19–20), the second Adam (1 Cor 15), the true *imago Dei* (Col 1:15), and the paradigmatic human (Heb 1–2). He concludes that Jesus is "the only one in whom we see what it truly means to be human."

⁶⁹ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 171–72. As Cortez explains, "Without an ontological foundation, the epistemological claim of the first thesis would hang in midair" (171).

“we should view the humanity of Jesus itself as the eternal paradigm.”⁷⁰ *Thesis three*: The epistemological and ontological centrality of Christ’s humanity “means that Christological anthropology is inherently teleological.”⁷¹ Simply put, the post-creation arrival of Jesus as the true man means that the divine *telos* of all humanity is found in his new humanity. This does not mean that there is no knowledge of humanity outside of Christ. Rather, Christ represents the fullness of God’s design for humanity in its representation of him in creation. *Thesis four*: The ontological centrality of Christ “does not result in either soteriological universalism or anthropological exclusivism.”⁷² Salvation is related to but not coterminous with the paradigmatic humanity of Christ. In other words, the incarnation itself does not save all humanity, and those outside of Christ are not less than human. In short, being basically human is a matter of creation, not re-

⁷⁰ Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 172. It should be noted that Cortez weighs the material nature of the *imago Dei* in its representation of the divine presence against the ability of God the Son to bear that image without incarnation. On that account, the eternal Son cannot serve as the paradigm of humanity. However, as seen above, the canonical and typological account of the *imago Dei* picks up the category of sonship and Christ’s theological identity as *the* Son, which is grounded in his ontological identity as the *eternal* Son. In that case, it seems better to recognize that Christ is both the eternal and the incarnational image of God. Wellum concludes that Christ “knowingly and intentionally identified himself as the divine Son of God and the eternal *imago Dei*. In the same way, he also identified himself as the incarnational *imago Dei* and the man who would fulfill all of God’s covenant promises as his true Son-King and the last Adam.” Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 187. Moreover, as will be discussed in chap. 5, the incarnational image of God in Christ is *the* analogical image of God in man.

⁷¹ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 173–74. In general, “eschatological consummation involves the idea that God always intended some kind of movement from creation to new creation in which the latter state was not simply a return to the former” (173). While not unique to Christological anthropology, eschatological consummation is inherent to the conviction that Jesus is the unique revelation of true humanity. In support of this thesis, Cortez considers an issue at the center of the nature–grace debate: whether eschatological consummation is intrinsic or extrinsic to the definition of humanity (35–67). The intrinsic view holds that all humanity has one proper *telos*, which is the pre-creational design of God for an eschatological state of man. The extrinsic view argues that to maintain the gratuity of grace and the intelligibility of all humanity, one must distinguish between “what humanity is in creation (nature) and what humanity becomes through eschatological consummation (grace)” (51). The debate itself is significant and far-reaching. For the present purpose, it will suffice to agree with Cortez that “If we take seriously the claims of the first two theses, however, it becomes difficult to think that there is any value in speculating about a hypothetical form of humanity in which we are not ontologically and epistemologically grounded in Jesus. Instead, to be human simply is to be related to Jesus in these ways” (174).

⁷² See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 174–77.

creation.

The *framework theses* build on this foundation to address the connection between Christological truths and anthropological truths. *Thesis five*: The centrality of Christ “entails that ultimate truths about the human person must be grounded in Christology.”⁷³ This claim follows directly from the first and second theses.⁷⁴ Important truths describe particular experiences of being human (e.g., education and marital status); ultimate truths define the universal existence of the human being. In determining what truths qualify as universal, Cortez cautions that the list must be “the outworking of christological anthropology, not its starting point.”⁷⁵ The centrality of Christ means that we cannot predetermine what is anthropologically ultimate and then consider a consistency or correlation with Christology. Rather, Christ himself determines what is anthropologically ultimate for subsequent consideration in anthropology. *Thesis six*: Truths about humanity grounded in Christology “provide an interpretive framework for understanding other anthropological truths.”⁷⁶ Rather than limiting other sources, the centrality of Christ prioritizes his revelation in Scripture and provides a Christ-shaped lens for viewing humanity without rejecting all other sources of important anthropological truths. Other disciplines (theological and non-theological) can partially but legitimately contribute to a true knowledge of humanity. But the ultimate meaning of humanity cannot be known apart from humanity’s telos in Christ. *Thesis seven*: The centrality of Christ requires paying “close attention to the concrete particularities of

⁷³ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 177–79.

⁷⁴ Cortez explains, “If Jesus is the only one who is both epistemologically and ontologically fundamental for humanity, then our truth claims about what it means to be human must somehow be grounded in Christology.” Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 177.

⁷⁵ Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 178.

⁷⁶ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 179–81.

Jesus's existence."⁷⁷ Christological anthropology is not centered upon an abstract idea about humanity or Jesus. Rather, the paradigm of true humanity is the historical human existence of the incarnate Son as revealed in the full biblical presentation⁷⁸ and later theological conclusions, especially including the Christological developments in the early church.⁷⁹

The *functional theses* then address some issues that arise in moving from Christology to anthropology. *Thesis eight*: Focusing on the particularities of Christ affirms "both the continuity and the discontinuity between Jesus and other humans."⁸⁰ The fullness of Christ's human existence and experience presumes a significant continuity with our human existence and experience, placing the burden of proof on those who deny that he experienced "something that seems likely to be a normal aspect of human experience."⁸¹ However, the uniqueness of the "hypostatic union of deity and humanity" necessarily complicates and limits the content of continuity and requires careful attention.⁸² *Thesis nine*: Due to the dissimilarities, "there can be no direct move

⁷⁷ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 181–83.

⁷⁸ Cortez places primary focus on the life of Jesus in the gospels. However, he also places the Jesus of the gospels within the context of the rest of the New Testament and the Old Testament.

⁷⁹ "If we understand those later developments as the church's best attempts at understanding Jesus, and if christological anthropology takes this same person as the starting point for understanding humanity, then it would be foolish to ignore these later reflections." Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 182–83.

⁸⁰ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 183–84.

⁸¹ Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 183. Cortez does not address the tension between a "normal aspect of human experience," which seems to require an abstract judgment, and the claim of thesis five that universal truths about humanity must be "the outworking of christological anthropology, not its starting point." He might intend a distinction between *normal aspects* and *universal truths* that needs to be clarified. However, it seems that the best solution is to define "normal aspects" as those aspects of existence and experience that Scripture presents as common to all humanity (generally true), but not necessarily universal to every individual. This definition prioritizes the magisterial authority and dogmatic centrality of Scripture and accords with the definition of "ultimate truths" as reserved for the aspects that constitute the universal existence and experience of humanity, which are defined first by reference to the man Jesus Christ.

⁸² See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 183–84. Cortez identifies three categories

from Christology to anthropology.”⁸³ Christological anthropology must confront the “scandal of particularity.”⁸⁴ While focusing on the specifics of Christ’s humanity, movement into anthropology must not import “existing anthropological intuitions” by relying on inadequate continuity or by making a particularizing feature (e.g., maleness) into a universal category (e.g., sexuality).⁸⁵ *Thesis ten*: Christological anthropology must be “robustly pneumatological and Trinitarian.”⁸⁶ A focus on the particularities of Christ’s existence and experience necessarily includes the defining significance of being sent by the Father to become a man and being empowered by the Spirit as a man. *Thesis eleven*: The humanity of Christ “primarily reveals what it means to be truly human in the midst

of discontinuity: the particularizing features that made Jesus a distinct individual (e.g., ethnicity, gender geography); his sinlessness in living a human life; and his deity in human form. Regarding the distinction between *particular* features and *particularizing* features, see note 85. Regarding Christ’s sinlessness, see note 97.

⁸³ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 184–86.

⁸⁴ Cortez is concerned here with the move from the specific to the universal: “How do we generate truth claims about humanity in general in the midst of all this particularity?” Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 184. While he does not outline steps for making the move, Cortez does list three mistakes that must be avoided: downplaying the details of Christ’s life; moving directly from particularizing features of his life to claims about humanity in general; and resolving the dilemma through principlizing the particulars. For the historical significance of the “scandal of particularity” in theology, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 55–57; Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology: From the Enlightenment to Pannenberg* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 55–57.

⁸⁵ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 185–86. For clarity, “particularizing features” need to be distinguished from the “particular features” of Jesus’s life. Christological anthropology begins with a focus on the *particular* features of Jesus as human, meaning the concrete, specific facts about him in contrast to abstractions from specific facts. However, Christological anthropology must guard against the universalization of *particularizing* features, meaning the concrete facts that define Jesus as a *particular kind* of human (e.g., one who is male, from Galilee, educated, and unmarried).

⁸⁶ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 186–87. A common concern with Christocentric theology in general and Christological anthropology in particular is that they downplay the importance of the Trinity and/or the Spirit for understanding humanity. Cortez observes, however, that a proper focus on Christ as the incarnate Son includes a discussion of the Father and the Spirit: “a christocentric approach to theology should result in *emphasizing* rather than *minimizing* both pneumatology and the Trinity.” Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 186; see also Marc Cortez, “What Does It Mean to Call Karl Barth a ‘Christocentric’ Theologian?,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 2 (2007): 127–43.

of a fallen world.”⁸⁷ Simply put, Christological anthropology must account for the effects of sin.

With these first principles in hand, their guidance for a comprehensive Christological anthropology can now be applied to a more specific Chalcedonian approach. Some theses will have more immediate significance and influence than others. But working through the three categories as a whole will help lay a foundation and build a framework for starting with the human ontology of Christ formulated at Chalcedon and moving into anthropology. This process should provide the basic structure for thinking through and proposing a model of mere man grounded in the orthodox ontology of *the* man.

To begin, the foundational theses confirm that a truly Christological anthropology should start with the ontological categories of Christology. Neither humanity in general nor the Edenic Adam provide a paradigm for all mankind. That role belongs to Christ alone. Applied to the specific issue of ontological constitution, this means that the metaphysical makeup of Christ the man provides the unique and complete revelation of human being, as opposed to some other kind (e.g., angel or animal). Providing the paradigmatic ontology for all mankind, however, does not save all humanity. The effects of sin have an ontological component. And as seen above, the accomplishment of salvation in Christ requires a certain ontological correspondence. However, the application of salvation is not a matter of ontological similitude. Salvation is a personal dynamic in which a sinful human being is elected for and called into covenant love and loyalty before God through faith in Christ.⁸⁸ The point here is that the basic ontological constitution of Christ the man reveals the basic ontological constitution

⁸⁷ See Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology*, 187–88.

⁸⁸ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 322–23.

of every member of mankind without qualification. On that account, the categories and content of Christology should provide the categories and content for anthropology. A Chalcedonian anthropology should begin with and build upon this foundation.

Accordingly, the framework theses discussed above put the Chalcedonian Definition of Christ's human ontology at the center of Christological anthropology. Beyond an *important* truth of being human, ontological constitution is an *ultimate* truth that defines the universal existence of human beings. Since the ontological constitution of Christ the man is paradigmatic for all mankind, his being is the starting point. Rather than starting with a predetermined anthropology, Christology provides the ontological categories for understanding all humanity. In that regard, as discussed below, the church has already provided the ontological basis for a Christological anthropology. In the Chalcedonian Definition, the church has developed from Scripture a particular formulation for what it means to say that the Son became a man. Moreover, as discussed at length in the chapters ahead, this Chalcedonian confession regarding the end result of the incarnation provides the *orthodox categories* for the human constitution of Christ, which in turn should provide the ontological first principles for all humanity. Although the Definition of Chalcedon makes theological use of philosophical categories, its terms and concepts were designed to pay close attention to the concrete particularities of Christ's existence, both as fully God and as fully man. This means that while other sources may have legitimate input and influence, the ontological constitution of man should be determined first and foremost from the actual existence of Christ as *the* man. In that regard, the Definition confesses not only *that* the Son became incarnate, but also *what* makes him the historical man Jesus Christ. In short, the Chalcedonian Definition should provide the interpretive framework for understanding all the data regarding the existence of man.

Finally, the functional theses for a Christological anthropology help ensure that

a Chalcedonian approach recognizes both continuity and discontinuity. It is true that the fullness and paradigmatic role of Christ's humanity entails a significant similitude. But the uniqueness of his constitution as the God-man imposes certain limitations on a move from Christology to anthropology. In particular, as Chalcedon makes clear, the divine Son remains fully God even as he becomes fully man. Moreover, due to the Creator-creature distinction revealed and insisted upon in Scripture and throughout church history, deity cannot become part of humanity through any kind of ontological admixture or synthesis. It is crucial, then, that a Chalcedonian consideration of humanity take care to recognize the divine aspects of Christ's ontology that cannot constitute a part of the universal existence of a human being. In particular, the Son's *eternal* relationship with the Father and the Spirit must remain *unique* to Christ the man. As discussed in the work ahead, while every human being has a relationship with each member of the Trinity, the incarnate Son alone is God in relation to the Father and the Spirit. However, these eternal relations and the divine nature of Christ do not prevent his genuinely human experience of a sinful world. So a Chalcedonian anthropology must account for the paradigmatic nature of Christ's human ontology without denying the reality of sin and its effects on humanity.

A brief look at Barth's Christological anthropology will add some emphasis and balance regarding continuity and discontinuity and suggest a way forward. Barth is one of the few theologians in church history to develop an anthropology by intentionally, explicitly, and consistently looking at the man Jesus Christ.⁸⁹ In his deeply Christocentric understanding of man, he employed a two-step process.⁹⁰ The first part can be called

⁸⁹ According to Ray Anderson, "Karl Barth, more than any other theologian of the church, including the Reformers, has developed a comprehensive theological anthropology by beginning with the humanity of Jesus Christ as both crucified and resurrected." Ray S. Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 18.

⁹⁰ Following Barth's general process does not entail agreement with or reliance upon the peculiar presuppositions underlying some of his reasoning from Christology to anthropology. For example,

Christological analysis. Based on the presupposition of a fundamental likeness between the humanity of Christ and our own humanity, the first objective is to discern the truth about Christ as a man. For Barth, the man Jesus is ontologically definitive for all mankind: Jesus is “the one Archimedean point given us beyond humanity, and, therefore, the one possibility of discovering the ontological determination of man.”⁹¹ A true understanding of human beings, then, depends upon a Christological interpretation of human beings.⁹² Accordingly, Barth begins all of his anthropological thought with a clear consideration of Christ’s ontology as a man, anticipating clear implications due to the ontological connection with all mankind.⁹³ The second part of Barth’s process can be called *anthropological inference*. Along with the ontological likeness, Barth also presupposes a fundamental dislikeness between the humanity of Christ and our own humanity. He reasoned that Christ as a man has a unique relationship with God, which results in three exclusive privileges: Christ’s humanity is the original, ours is a copy; his humanity is sinless, ours is sinful; and his humanity reveals true humanity, ours distorts

in his Christological reasoning about humanity, which produces six observations and corresponding inferences, Barth relied on his own reformulation of the doctrine of election in which Christ is both the electing God and the elected man. For a discussion, see Cortez, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies*, 30–38. Unless otherwise indicated, this dissertation does not rely on the presuppositions or substance of Barth’s Christological anthropology. Rather, the focus here is on Barth’s process of reasoning.

⁹¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956), 3:2.132.

⁹² Barth urges that we “must form and maintain the conviction that the presupposition given us in and with the human nature of Jesus is exhaustive and superior to all other presuppositions . . .” Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3:2.43.

⁹³ It should be noted that this conviction does not contradict Barth’s rejection of the Catholic *analogia entis*. First, his material critique was aimed at the specific formulation of the analogy introduced by Erich Przywara. Second, Barth was amenable to some kind of analogy between God and man that did not diminish the transcendence of God or the gratuity of his gracious relationship with his creation. Third, Barth “solved” the issue of analogy by locating it in the continually gracious determination of God to relate to man in the election of Christ. For a discussion, see Bruce L. McCormack, “Karl Barth’s Version of an ‘Analogy of Being’: A Dialectical No and Yes to Roman Catholicism,” in *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or the Wisdom of God?*, ed. Thomas Joseph White (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 88–104.

it.⁹⁴ This dislikeness, however, does not contradict or diminish the ontological likeness between Christ's humanity and our humanity. As Barth explains, the dislikeness "implies a different status but *not a different constitution* [emphasis added] of His human nature from ours."⁹⁵ The dislikeness, then, does not remove the likeness; however, it does require a proper inference to move from Christology to anthropology.⁹⁶

In light of the foregoing engagement and consultation, the basic rules for a Chalcedonian anthropology can be formed into a working methodology. Using the theses discussed above as a template, a specifically Chalcedonian approach to a Christological understanding of man can be stated in three principles. *Foundational principle*: Christ's ontological constitution as a man is the paradigm for all mankind. While they are important considerations regarding the condition of his being human, the particular experiences of Christ in a sinful world do not affect the constitution of his human being.⁹⁷ At all times, the man Jesus Christ is not just the ultimate human; he is the archetype of humanity and the Archimedean point from which it can be defined accurately. *Framework principle*: The Chalcedonian Definition and its Christology provide the categories for defining the ontological constitution of all mankind. The full divine-human constitution of Christ creates significant discontinuities with a merely human being. This

⁹⁴ See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3:2.53.

⁹⁵ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3:2.53.

⁹⁶ Unfortunately, Barth does not explain *how* to make this ontological inference; he simply does it.

⁹⁷ It should be noted that this dissertation assumes that the Son was incarnated into our human nature but not our sin nature. The body and soul of Christ were certainly affected by sin *in the world* through weakness and temptation. Yet, Christ neither had nor experienced sin *in himself*. As Macleod finds regarding Christ's complete humanity, "Nowhere in the structure of his being was there any sin. Satan had no foot-hold in him. There was no lust. There was no affinity with sin. There was no proclivity to sin. There was no possibility of temptation from within. In no respect was he fallen and in no respect was his nature corrupt." Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, 222. For a helpful analysis of the issue, see Kelly M. Kopic, "The Son's Assumption of a Human Nature: A Call for Clarity," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 2 (July 2001): 154–66.

dissimilarity, however, does not overcome the fundamental similitude. And the asymmetry inherent in the *divine* Son's representation and revelation of true humanity should not remove the epistemological and ontological centrality of Christ for anthropology. Rather, the Chalcedonian categories for the constitution of Christ as a man are the same categories that should determine the constitution of every man. *Functional principle*: The Chalcedonian ontology of Christ the man extends analogically into anthropology. While the deity of Christ does not prevent the extension, it does preclude a univocal move. An analysis of ontological propositions in Christology will yield clear implications that can be extended into anthropology. However, such inferences must make analogical adjustments as required to avoid ontological confusion and maintain the Creator–creature distinction.

Such a principled methodology should provide a sound epistemological basis for the Chalcedonian anthropology developed and proposed in the chapters ahead. Its success, of course, will depend upon a clear and consistent application of its parts and particulars. In that regard, the Chalcedonian Definition plays a central role in the Chalcedonian determination of humanity. Given its significance, the next discussion will present the Definition's basic structure and categories to prepare the way for a deeper investigation of its terms and concepts.

A Chalcedonian analogy. In 451, in response to certain debates within the church, the Council of Chalcedon produced a formal statement of the Son's incarnation into our humanity. This Definition provided not a comprehensive explanation of the mystery, but a conciliar confession of its reality and truth. This confession, however, did more than simply state that the Son became a man or repeat the scriptural witness. By necessity and design at that point in church history, the Definition provided a basis for the church's unity in the faith by making a theological conclusion from Scripture in terms and concepts that demonstrated its objective coherence. Moreover, these terms and concepts

were employed in a particular pattern according to their meaning and significance. As will be developed in the chapters ahead, the church employed its own Trinitarian categories to describe the constitution of God the Son incarnate. In doing so, it relied on a dogmatic analogy between the divine and human ontologies of Christ.⁹⁸ In short, based on the biblical presentation that Christ is both fully God and fully man, the church described the human existence of Christ in terms of his divine existence.

In one sense, the Chalcedonian analogy stands near the beginning of a long tradition of analogical reasoning in the church. In between the epistemological poles of univocity and equivocity, analogy has enabled the coherent recognition of both similarity and dissimilarity in making biblical conclusions.⁹⁹ For example, as seen above, it is analogically true that man is made in God's image because the biblical presentation points to significant resemblances (similarity). However, Scripture also declares that there is none like God (dissimilarity). In the same analogical sense, the church has taught that the "communicable" attributes of God are represented in humanity (similarity) while

⁹⁸ To be clear, the Definition's analogy is mainly theological and functional, not philosophical and speculative. The Chalcedonian fathers did not debate the philosophical acceptability of a divine-human analogy before concluding that the Son's full humanity should be confessed according to the same ontological categories as his full deity. However, as the chapters ahead will make clear, the analogy is no less deliberate and no less ontological.

⁹⁹ In general and as used here, univocity and equivocity describe the epistemological relationship between two things. A univocal relationship establishes an identity in which two separate things represent the exact same kind of thing. An equivocal relationship expresses the opposite: two things are so different that they cannot be compared meaningfully. The epistemological relationship also has implications for predication. In a univocal relationship, a term is applied to the two separate things in exactly the same way. In an equivocal relationship, a term cannot be applied to the two things in the same or even a similar way. In between univocity and equivocity lies the epistemological relationship of analogy. An analogical relationship expresses a fundamental or particular similarity between two separate things without equating them in every way. This means that a term can be applied to the two things in a meaningful way according to the shared similarity while not imposing or ignoring dissimilarities. For the classic use of analogy in theology in general and predication in particular, see Thomas Aquinas and English Dominican Fathers, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1923), 1.3, 1.21–22, 1.24–29, 1.32–36, 2.6, 2.11, 2.15; Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, trans. Daniel J. Sullivan and English Dominican Fathers, Great Books of the Western World 19–20 (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 1.4.3, 1.12.12, 1.13.1–5, 1.13.5, 1.29.

the “incommunicable” attributes are not (dissimilarity).¹⁰⁰ Analogy also enables the confession that God the Son incarnate is like us in every way because he is fully man (similarity) and that he is still fully God because the incarnation did not change his deity (dissimilarity).¹⁰¹ Analogical reasoning, then, is an integral part of biblical reasoning.

In contrast, however, a specific analogy of being (*analogia entis*) between the Creator and his creation became a major point of disagreement in the church’s theologizing. Since the twentieth century, Catholic and Protestant theologians continue to examine the possibility and implications (positive and negative) in the “*analogia entis* debate.”¹⁰² The issues and positions of the debate cannot be treated here. But in general, the arguments for and against the *analogia entis* focus ultimately on the acceptability of a

¹⁰⁰ See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 156–81 (incommunicable attributes), 185–221 (communicable attributes). But cf. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 231–32. Frame argues that Scripture does not authorize a scheme for classifying the attributes of God, and that “no attributes of God are entirely incommunicable, for we are his image in a comprehensive sense.” Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 233–81. In contrast, Frame presents the attributes of God according to his “lordship classification” (control, authority, presence), which arises from Scripture’s own themes and emphases. See Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 233–81. Even with a more “biblical” account of the divine attributes, however, the point made here remains: analogy provides a coherent means for confessing both similarity and dissimilarity.

¹⁰¹ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 433–42. Wellum discusses both the metaphysics and the economy of the incarnation to trace how God the Son incarnate is both fully man (like us) and still fully God (unlike us).

¹⁰² From a philosophical perspective, the debate can be schematized as opposite approaches to the Creator–creature distinction and relation. On one side, Aquinas articulated what became the classical use of analogy in theology. The basic Thomistic *analogia entis* can be summarized as an ontological similitude of the divine in the creature caused by the Creator’s design and act of communicating his infinite excellencies in creaturely perfections. See note 99. For example, while both God and creatures exist, God has his being from himself (his essence is his existence) and creatures have their being from God. God and creatures are both good, but God is goodness according to his unique mode of existence, while creatures have a derivative goodness from participation in God’s goodness. On the other side, Barth rejected the possibility of an internal ontological similitude between Creator and creature, one that resides in the creature. See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1; II/1; III/1; III/2; IV/1; IV/3. From a historical perspective, the *analogia entis* debate entered its formal stage upon Przywara’s introduction of a more philosophically sophisticated version within Roman Catholicism, Barth’s “Reformed” critique of it, and the subsequent attempts at both criticism and *rapprochement* between Catholic theologians (e.g., Hans Urs von Balthasar and John R. Betz) and Protestant theologians (e.g., Bruce D. Marshall and Bruce L. McCormack). For a historical, philosophical, and theological discussion of the debate and its central issues, see White, *The Analogy of Being*.

real, ontological similarity between the infinite and truly transcendent Creator and his finite and thoroughly immanent creation.¹⁰³ The dividing line falls along the feasibility of an ontological similitude in the existence of God and man that goes beyond mere reason to identify an extramental reality.¹⁰⁴ At its core, the question of the *analogia entis* debate is whether a real analogy of being can exist between God and his human creature without violating the Creator–creature distinction. Such a real analogy would mean that an ontological similarity exists somewhere in between univocity of being (pantheism) and equivocity of being (extreme deism).¹⁰⁵ Univocity of being would entail a univocal theology that would predicate things of God and of creatures in exactly the same sense, removing God’s transcendence and reducing him to anthropomorphisms. Equivocity of being would entail an equivocal theology that would deny that human language can say anything true or meaningful about God, removing God’s immanence and reducing his self-revelation to unintelligibility. A real analogy of being would lie in between the two, admitting an ontological similitude in the existence of God and man, while requiring an analogical adjustment to maintain God’s transcendence and immanence in the Creator–creature distinction.

As a departure from the *analogia entis* debate, the following discussion suggests a conciliar path forward. The complex philosophical and metaphysical issues in the debate deserve continued attention in the academic literature. However, the discussion here suggests that the Chalcedonian Definition already contains theological and ontological resources for maintaining the absolute, categorical difference between Creator and creature (ontological dissimilarity), while identifying a real divine-human

¹⁰³ See White, *The Analogy of Being*, 1–26.

¹⁰⁴ See White, *The Analogy of Being*, 1–26.

¹⁰⁵ Univocity of being would identify God and creation (including man) as the exact same thing or kind of thing. Equivocity of being would deny any ontological correspondence or connection.

“analogy of being” (ontological similitude). More specifically, the Definition describes the eternal Son and the incarnate Son in terms of a person-nature distinction. The relevant portion of the confession states:

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 [coessential] 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 Christ¹⁰⁶

The work ahead will examine the Definition in detail, including how to understand *person* and *nature* in their distinction and relation. The purpose here is simply to recognize the basic structure of the Chalcedonian analogy according to its central terminology. In that regard, it can be seen that the person-nature analogy works in two directions: according to the Godhead and according to the manhood of Christ.

To see the structure of the analogy more clearly, it will help to identify the subject and object of the incarnation. The Definition addresses the one who became incarnate as “one and the same Son” at the beginning, “one Person and Subsistence” in the middle, and “one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word” at the end. The person (*hypostasis*, *prosopon*, *subsistence*) of the Son, then, is the one subject about whom the rest of the Definition makes certain predications. And those predications are made either “according to the Godhead” or “according to the manhood,” which the

¹⁰⁶ J. N. D. Kelly, “The Chalcedonian Definition,” in *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 339–40.

Definition identifies as two distinct yet inseparable natures (*physeis*).¹⁰⁷ Moreover, because the Definition addresses what the eternal Son accomplished in his in-time incarnation, the manhood or human nature becomes the object of the event. According to his divine nature, the Son is “consubstantial with the Father” and “begotten before all ages of the Father.” It is only “in these latter days” that the Son has become “truly man, of a rational soul and body,” “consubstantial with us according to the manhood.” The person of the Son and his divine nature are eternal. The object of the eternal Son’s incarnation is his temporal human nature. It is this eternal–temporal, person-nature distinction that reveals a particular analogy of being. The person of the Son shares the eternal divine nature with the Father; the person of the Son also shares a human nature like the rest of humanity. According to his divine ontology (what makes him God), Christ is a person-nature being; according to his human ontology (what makes him man), Christ is also a person-nature being.

On this account, the Chalcedonian analogy can be stated formally as follows: the Definition identifies the Lord Jesus Christ as God and as man *according to a person-nature analogy of being*. The two “sides” do not signify a univocity of being because the divine and human natures are, by definition, fundamentally dissimilar. As will be discussed in the historical work ahead, the disanalogy between divine and human includes not just the eternal–temporal distinction of the natures but also the complete range of implications drawn from the Creator–creature distinction. Thus, any discussion and application of this analogy requires careful attention and analogical adjustment. Yet the two sides of the analogy do not signify an equivocity of being because a similar person-nature constitution identifies both the divine being and the human being of Christ.

¹⁰⁷ As will be demonstrated in chap. 4, the Chalcedonian fathers made certain metaphysical decisions in their theological use of *prosopon/hypostasis/subsistence* and *physis/ousia* to articulate their ontological conclusion regarding the divine Son’s incarnation into our humanity. Again, the focus here is on the basic form of the Definition’s analogy created by the use of distinct categories.

The exact same person is involved: the *hypostasis* of the Son. And while the divine and human natures are dissimilar, each is a *physis* (*ousia*). The person-nature *constitution* of being, then, functions as an *analogy* of being that lies in between univocity and equivocality, confessing an ontological similitude between Christ as God and Christ as man. The Definition relies on the same categories of person and nature on both sides of its analogy to make sense of Christ being fully God and fully man.

Moreover, it is important to recognize that the Definition's dogmatic analogy of being follows the epistemological pattern of Scripture. In his theological identity as God, Christ bears the ontological identity of being one of the divine persons of the Trinity who share the divine nature. In his theological identity as Christ the man, this same person has a human nature. In short, before and after the incarnation, the Son has the ontological constitution that qualifies him for his divine-human roles in the biblical storyline and that enables him to accomplish all of the related works in the divine plan of salvation. Thus, the Chalcedonian analogy is not the result of some generic deduction or merely abstract reasoning. As will be discussed and developed at length in the chapters ahead, the Definition's person-nature analogy is grounded in the larger biblical epistemology that has produced in the church a warranted theological conclusion and coherent confession that Christ is fully God and fully man.

A brief summary of the epistemological warrant to this point will help consolidate the gains and prepare for more in the next section. According to the framework principle for a Chalcedonian anthropology, the Chalcedonian Definition and its Christology provide the categories for the ontological constitution of all mankind. And as seen above, those categories are person and nature. It is the person-nature constitution of Christ *the man* that determines and defines the constitution of mere man. Under the functional principle, then, the Chalcedonian analogy invites and governs the analogical extension of such a person-nature constitution into anthropology. Just as the divine

ontology of the eternal Son was used to describe the human ontology of the incarnate Son, that same analogy of being should be extended to all humanity.¹⁰⁸ Such an extension would accord with and give content to the intersection of ontological identities indicated by the biblical presentation of Christ in fulfilling certain theological identities as a man. In short, Christ the man is a person-nature human being, he bears the ontological image of God in a person-nature constitution, and he redeems sinful humanity as a person-nature substitute for human atonement.

With these first principles and the biblical–epistemological authority of Chalcedonian Christology in place, the section below continues the discussion of authoritative patterns for a Chalcedonian anthropology.

Theological Retrieval of Tradition

Reliance upon tradition (like Chalcedonianism) in doctrinal formation can raise the issue of its authority and relation to Scripture. For centuries, the question of tradition’s status and usefulness has been answered negatively within Protestantism, largely through distrust and disengagement. However, recent efforts have begun to move toward a circumspect but serious appreciation of tradition and theological engagement with it.¹⁰⁹ For some, this engagement—or theological retrieval of tradition—is the hope of a future for the church that is both anchored in ancient tradition and renewed by it for theological flourishing. Still, others see it as a harbinger of decline in a fascination with the old and obscure that will distract the church from the clear and central doctrines of the faith. Either way, most see theological retrieval as a contemporary movement that

¹⁰⁸ Some recent scholarship has raised the question of how to understand the meaning and significance of the Chalcedonian Definition (e.g., linguistically, metaphorically, or literally). Chap. 5 will address this issue regarding anthropological application of Chalcedon and its Christology.

¹⁰⁹ For a brief survey of these movements, see Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 4–12; see also Gavin Ortlund, *Theological Retrieval for Evangelicals: Why We Need Our Past to Have a Future* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019).

explores the roots and branches of Christian tradition with the expectation (warranted or not) that it will yield better fruit in the church today. As indicated from the beginning, theological retrieval is a critical component in the current project, including the central position of the Definition and its Christology. Given the current debate, and to add some epistemological warrant in this area, the discussions below will address the nature and purpose of retrieval and how it should be practiced.

A dogmatic framework. Beyond a renewed passion for historical theology, the church will need to ground its interaction with the past in sound first principles. An ungrounded and uncritical approach, even with the best intentions, can do more harm than good. However, a sober and sound application of theological categories to prolegomenal issues can help the church leverage its theological heritage and maximize its theological efforts. In this regard, Michael Allen and Scott Swain have presented a principled approach to theological retrieval that is grounded in orthodoxy and designed to lead the church into theological renewal. More specifically, their program of retrieval is derived from their own retrieval and application of the “principles of classical Reformed Orthodox prolegomena” in constructing a “salutary framework within which a Reformed dogmatics of retrieval might be developed.”¹¹⁰ Looking at the elements of this dogmatic framework will place both retrieval in general and retrieval of Chalcedonian Christology within the economy of God’s grace. From there, the rationale for relying on this tradition for doctrinal formulation in anthropology will become more clear.

The program of retrieval presented by Allen and Swain is produced from the convergence of four *principia*. First, “the Spirit [with the Father and the Son] is the ontological principle (*principium essendi*) of theology.”¹¹¹ Since God alone has divine

¹¹⁰ Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 13.

¹¹¹ Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 31–32.

self-knowledge, he alone can be the source of knowledge about God and about his creation, his purposes for it, and his plans within it. Within the undivided work of the Trinity, the Spirit unfolds divine self-knowledge in “two moments of divine self-manifestation.”¹¹² Second, in the external moment (i.e., inspiration), “the Spirit produces Holy Scripture, the external cognitive principle of the church’s theology (*principium cognoscendi externum*).”¹¹³ Due to the purpose of God and the didactic potency of the Spirit’s mission,¹¹⁴ the textual form of the prophetic-apostolic witness provides the sole, inerrant, and sufficient material source of the church’s theology.¹¹⁵ Third, in the internal moment of divine self-manifestation (i.e., illumination), “the Spirit [himself] is the internal cognitive principle of the church’s theology (*principium cognoscendi internum*).”¹¹⁶ The Spirit enables the church to receive and rightly respond to his inspired word. The Spirit-given Scriptures are the source of theology; the Spirit-enabled response of the church is the goal of theology.¹¹⁷ Fourth, from these main *principia*, Allen and

¹¹² Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 32. Among the three divine persons, the Spirit “searches everything, even the depths of God” (1 Cor. 2:10) in his unique work within the divine plan that reveals the wisdom and power of God for salvation in Christ Jesus, the Lord of glory (see 1 Cor. 1:8-2:16). Allen and Swain observe, “The deep source of the church’s theology is the Spirit’s unique and unfathomable divine self-knowledge.” Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 21–32.

¹¹³ Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 32. For further discussion of inspiration, see Joel Beeke and Paul M. Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, Reformed Experiential Systematic Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 1:325–33; Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 59–78.

¹¹⁴ See Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 28–31. The Spirit’s eternal procession from the Son means that he receives from the eternal Son what he declares to the disciples of the incarnate Son. The Spirit’s temporal mission of inspiration “is nothing other than the extension and expression of his internal relation to the Father and the Son usward, an embracing of temporal creatures within his eternal movement and energy” (28–29).

¹¹⁵ Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 35; see John B. Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason*, T & T Clark Theology (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 18.

¹¹⁶ Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 32. For further discussion of illumination, see Webster, *The Domain of the Word*, 50–64.

¹¹⁷ See Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 32–36. Scripture is the supreme material source of theology; but it is not the goal of theology. The external form is first inspired by the Spirit and then illumined by the same Spirit in the understanding of the church. In the temporal mission of the Spirit,

Swain make the good and necessary conclusion that, “Tradition is the temporally extended, socially mediated activity of renewed reason: theology’s *principium elicitive*, or elicitive principle.”¹¹⁸ Renewed in Christ, reason is the Spirit-guided capacity to elicit or draw conclusions from the infallible source of Scripture by the unfailing tutelage of the Spirit, thereby actively and intelligently engaging in covenant fellowship with God.¹¹⁹ Thus, “everything that the Spirit does *in* us to illumine Holy Scripture, he does *by* us, by the instrumentality of created [and renewed] reason in its social and historical expression.”¹²⁰ In this sense, theological tradition is essentially pneumatological.

In summary, the first three theological *principia* establish the relationship between the Triune God who reveals himself, the textual form of that self-revelation that climaxes in Christ, and the Spirit who uses that textual revelation to teach the church of Christ. The fourth *principium* identifies the ecclesiological manifestation of divine teaching. Within this framework, we can now register a dogmatic definition of church

his identity as divine teacher corresponds first to a creaturely text that is written and then to a creaturely community that is taught. Allen and Swain quote Herman Bavinck here as an heir of Reformed Orthodoxy who articulates with clarity and concision the positive relation between Scripture and tradition rooted in the distinction between that which is Spirit-given as the source and that which is Spirit-enabled as the goal: “After Jesus completed his work, he sent forth the Holy Spirit who, while adding nothing new to the revelation, still guides the church into the truth (John 16:12–15) until it passes through all its diversity and arrives at the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph 3:18, 19; 4:13). In this sense, there is a good, true, and glorious tradition. It is the method by which the Holy Spirit causes the truth of Scripture to pass into the consciousness and life of the church.” Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, *Prolegomena*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 493–94.

¹¹⁸ Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 36. For further discussion on the role of reason in theology, see Webster, *The Domain of the Word*, 115–32.

¹¹⁹ See Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 36–38. God gave reason to his human creatures to enable his image-bearers to actively and intelligently fellowship with him in covenant love. Reason is defiled in the fall of humanity under the regime of sin, making it naturally alienated from the Spirit as divine teacher and fruitless in the knowledge of God. However, reason is also renewed in Christ. The supernatural sanctification of new humanity raises and restores reason to function again within the economy of divine teaching. Renewed reason’s vocation is to *abide* in the prophetic-apostolic teaching *through* disciplined study of Scripture *under* the Spirit’s teaching *within* the community of Spirit-filled saints.

¹²⁰ Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 37.

tradition.

According to a Reformed Orthodox program of retrieval, a dogmatic definition of tradition emerges in four points related to God’s self-revelation. First, regarding *Scripture* itself, tradition is grounded in the written word of God, dependent upon its inerrant revelation and submissive to its magisterial authority.¹²¹ Second, regarding *reflection* on Scripture, tradition is the process whereby the church reasons into a fuller knowledge of God.¹²² This process is the “good, true, and glorious tradition,” described by Herman Bavinck as “the method by which the Holy Spirit causes the truth of Scripture to pass into the consciousness and life of the church.”¹²³ In this dynamic sense, tradition is the theological task authorized by Christ and enabled by his Spirit.¹²⁴ Third, regarding the *result* of reflecting on Scripture, tradition is the product of the Spirit’s work as teacher in the church of Christ.¹²⁵ The processes of tradition (e.g., preaching, teaching, and liturgy) lead to the products of tradition (e.g., creeds, confessions, and commentaries).

¹²¹ Christ himself, the only *magister* over his church, exercises his magisterial authority through the Spirit-inspired Scriptures to build up his church. See Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 90. *Sola Scriptura* produces a negative correlate: theological tradition in the church remains accountable to and measured by Holy Scripture, which is the supreme and sufficient foundation for the theological task given to the church.

¹²² Tradition is the church’s renewed reasoning from Scripture as its derivative dominical activity. Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 43. In this sense, *Sola Scriptura* also produces a positive correlate: theological tradition includes the processes and products that constitute the intellectual sanctification and stature of the church (see Eph 4:12–13) (42–44). Doctrine in general and creeds in particular represent the authorized activity and artifacts of the church in its obedience to its call to Christiformity.

¹²³ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:493–94.

¹²⁴ The goal of written revelation is not mere repetition but renewal of the heart and mind. That renewal comes not through mere meditation on Scripture but ultimately through reasoning from the Scriptures under the direction of the Lord and the didactic potency of the Holy Spirit.

¹²⁵ Tradition is the divine-human effect of the Spirit’s work as teacher in the church. See Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 42–46. The processes of tradition are the proper work of the church and the “true and proper effects of [the Spirit’s] pedagogical grace” (43–44). The church’s theological tradition—its renewed reasoning from Scripture—stands among the Spirit’s *principiata* as he teaches the church to think and live according to the Scriptures (43–44).

These are the two aspects of the same theological task given to the church by Christ to be accomplished by the pedagogical grace of his Spirit. In this sense, the teachings of the church are a divine-human phenomenon. Thus, fourth, regarding the *status* of the results of reflecting on Scripture, tradition bears genuine ecclesial authority as a necessary instrument in God's plan of revelation and redemption.¹²⁶

It should be emphasized that to benefit from both Scripture and tradition, retrieval must recognize their respective natures and authority. As the two moments of divine self-disclosure, inspiration and illumination represent two different modes and purposes of revelation. In the *completed* work of *inspiration*, the Spirit superintended the concurrent process of *inscripturation* to produce the *fixed and inerrant* words of God in written human words that bear *divine* authority. In the *ongoing* process of *illumination*, the Spirit superintends the concurrent process of *traditioning* to produce *progressive intellectual renewal* in the church and its written witness that bears *ecclesial* authority. A principled retrieval will maintain this distinction: the inspired Scriptures are inerrant and infallible as the source of theology; the illuminated tradition of the church is imperfect and fallible as the goal of theology.¹²⁷ In this sense, the ministerial authority of tradition serves under the magisterial authority of Scripture. Yet it is crucial to recognize that the imperfection of illumination marks not an insufficiency in the Spirit's ministry but his progressive design for the church's intellectual sanctification. Thus, the ministerial authority of tradition is grounded not in the work of the church but in the work of the Spirit through the church.

In general, then, contemporary constructive theology should retrieve the best resources of tradition because such engagement maximizes the work of the Spirit. By the

¹²⁶ See Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 84–85.

¹²⁷ See Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 44–46.

Spirit's presence and teaching, the renewed reason of the church provides both *instrument* and *evidence* in the Lord's ongoing work of doctrinal sanctification.¹²⁸ As the process of traditioning progresses in the church, the tradition produced becomes a part of the ongoing Spirit-led process for further faithful reasoning from the Scriptures. This means that "active deference to creedal and confessional documents as authorities—secondary, derivative authorities, subject to Scripture's absolute judgment, but authorities nonetheless—opens up theological discourse rather than closing it down."¹²⁹ As the activity of renewed reason, theological tradition elicits proper conclusions from Scripture; as the artifact, tradition aids the church's ongoing work of theological reasoning, reflection, and formulation. Understood within the economy of God's gracious edification of his people, the church's theological tradition should help guide contemporary theological conclusions from the Scriptures.

In a particular application, active deference to Chalcedonian Christology should open up theological discourse in Christological anthropology. As seen above, the Definition relies on a person-nature analogy between Christ's divine and human ontologies to make sense of his incarnation. In the proper context of doctrinal formulation, this analogy is both a *result* and a *means* of God's gracious work to bring the truth of Scripture into the conscious life of the church. Moreover, it seems that if an ecumenical conclusion regarding the constitution of Christ as a man implies a particular constitution of all mankind, then God's gracious work of edification and the resulting dogmatic authority should extend in some measure from Christology into anthropology.¹³⁰ The model of humanity proposed herein claims that Chalcedon implies a

¹²⁸ For a discussion of theology as an aspect of sanctification in the renewal of reason, see John Webster, *Holiness* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 8–30.

¹²⁹ Donald Wood, "Some Comments on Moral Realism and Scriptural Authority," *European Journal of Theology* 18 (2009): 152.

¹³⁰ Lucas Stamps articulates a similar principle: "if it turns out that the ecumenical councils of

person-nature view of man precisely because a person-nature constitution is integral to the confession that Christ is fully man.¹³¹ And in that case, the church is not only warranted but wise to attend to the implications of Christ's person-nature ontology for anthropology. In fact, the chapters ahead will demonstrate that it is this restriction to the ontological categories of orthodox Christology that can renew the pursuit of human ontology through a Chalcedonian approach.

These principles of retrieval are good and necessary to provide a dogmatic framework and some epistemological warrant for relying on tradition. That authority and warrant can be strengthened by a consideration of how a principled retrieval has been practiced successfully in the church.

the church either teach or imply a particular view of human constitution and if that view is integrally related to the Trinitarian and Christological conclusions of those councils, then such a view should be afforded a great deal of deference by contemporary theologians." R. Lucas Stamps, "A Chalcedonian Argument against Cartesian Dualism," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 55. Stamps relies on the authority of Chalcedon and its ontological categories to critique the Cartesian conception of humanity. As discussed in chap. 6, however, Stamps ultimately comes short of the person-nature model of Chalcedonian anthropology proposed herein.

¹³¹ It should be noted that while the church's creedal tradition is a general ecclesial authority, this authority increases for ecumenical councils, such as Chalcedon, where the conclusions from Scripture represent the historic church's unified witness to a unique and central event of the Christian faith. A dogmatic approach to tradition and retrieval helps reveal the significance of the typical taxonomy employed in the Protestant practice of theology: (1) Scripture; (2) creeds from ecumenical councils; (3) confessional statements; and (4) theological opinions from teachers of the church. Doing theology in accordance with *sola Scriptura* recognizes levels in ecclesial authority. The benefit of such a taxonomy is not merely ranking the sources for doing theology today, but also determining deference when retrieving theology from the past. The rank indicates the revelatory mode of the authority and its relative position in the pedagogical economy of the Spirit. Scripture ranks first as the inerrant *norma normans* and demands the church's submission in all of its traditioning. Among the *norma normata* of tradition, creeds deserve the most deference due to the providential efficacy of illumination during the first centuries of traditioning, which produced the central orthodoxies of the church. Thereafter, different groups defer to their traditional confessions as accurate and helpful summaries of the faith. Furthermore, learned *theologoumena* in each tradition can help the church understand and articulate various issues, deserving respect without requiring affirmation. For a concise and clear order of tradition in theological method, see Oliver Crisp, *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 17–20; see also Gregg R. Allison, "The Corpus Theologicum of the Church and Presumptive Authority," in *Revisioning, Renewing, Rediscovering the Triune Center: Essays in Honor of Stanley J. Grenz*, ed. Derek J. Tidball, Brian S. Harris, and Jason S. Sexton (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

The early church pattern. Although theological retrieval is a current trend in doctrinal formulation, it is not new in the church. The church has always looked to the past to see the best way forward. To some degree, every generation has stood on the shoulders of those before them, relying on the theological insights of one tradition or another to remain faithful to the apostolic tradition and the teachings of Scripture. Throughout church history, some form of theological retrieval has been the norm.¹³² Rather than hearing the early church discuss and define retrieval, however, we see its practice. The early church did not need to contemplate the nature and importance of theological retrieval. In the first centuries, retrieval was a theological instinct, not the product of deliberation. In that case, attending to some of the church's first efforts in applying its own tradition can help guide the present constructive project. In short, "retrieving theological retrieval" from the early church will provide an authoritative pattern for the work of retrieval in the chapters ahead. Following this pattern will culminate in a particular proposal for an anthropology grounded in the Chalcedonian tradition.

The following discussion sketches the early church's pattern of Christological formation for two reasons. First, it is perhaps most instructive to learn from the church's practice of retrieval during some of its most important theological work. In that case, the Christological debates that threatened the unity of the faith at the heart of the faith should highlight the church's best efforts in preserving the faith through doctrinal development. Second, as discussed above, this dissertation seeks to apply the Chalcedonian tradition to anthropology. Insights gained from the formation of Chalcedonian Christology should be immediately applicable to this endeavor. As noted, the following discussion will present a

¹³² Even with the Reformation cry of "*Sola Scriptura!*" ringing in their ears and resounding in their hearts and minds, the Reformed Orthodox did not invent a system of Protestant theology but constructed it, building on the foundation of Scripture and within an orthodox framework inherited from the medieval and early churches. While the Reformers and their heirs rightly disagreed with the Roman view of some central doctrines, which disagreement would solidify in the *solas*, they agreed with and relied upon a larger theological framework, including Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy.

sketch. Chapters 4 and 5 in particular will explore the church's pattern and practice in full. The contours will suffice here to advance a *prima facie* case for *how* a Chalcedonian anthropology should follow the early church in theological retrieval for doctrinal development.

In the fourth century, the church found itself in need of a new vocabulary to confess the biblical presentation of God. The church would eventually come to that confession by means of a particular linguistic–conceptual distinction to articulate the unity and diversity required by Scripture with coherence. Almost all parties agreed on the canonical contents of Scripture and made their arguments from Scripture. Moreover, they generally agreed that God is a “differentiated unity.” But the parties did not agree on the basis for this oneness and threeness in God. And they often employed the same or similar terms to communicate disparate and even diverging concepts. Beginning with the Creed of Nicaea (325) and then developing its doctrine of God in the pro-Nicene tradition, the church came to confess that God is three *hypostases* (person) in one *ousia* (nature). Thus, the Trinitarian orthodoxy of the fourth century was grounded in the person-nature distinction.¹³³

In the fifth century, the church would extend that same person-nature distinction into Christology. The church again faced the need for doctrinal clarity and precision, this time regarding the divinity and humanity of Christ. Rather than look for a new linguistic–conceptual apparatus, however, the church relied on its own orthodox ontology of God to confess the constitution of the God-man. Beginning with the

¹³³ Establishing the person-nature distinction, of course, was much more complex. In fact, the issues and terms would continue to be refined in the medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation periods. But the point here is that when faced with confusion and heresy, the church worked with the best tools available to form a linguistic–conceptual apparatus of orthodoxy—an apparatus capable of formulating a doctrine of the Trinity that is faithful to the Bible's own terms, clear enough to aid the church's worship and witness, and precise enough to cut off heresies that would harm it. For a history of this development, see Stephen R. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012).

Chalcedonian Definition (451), the church affirmed and adopted Nicene Trinitarianism and adapted it to confess that God the Son became a man. The Chalcedonian tradition thus established Christological orthodoxy on the basis of the one person of Christ having a divine nature and a human nature.¹³⁴ As before, the process involved many disputes and disputants, with each group bringing its own concepts and terms freighted with different metaphysical meaning and theological significance. However, one thing was different: the church had established the orthodox ontology of the one who would become incarnate. This one person among three in the divine nature would become one person with two natures.

Moreover, in the face of challenges in the succeeding centuries, the church defended and clarified its person-nature Christology. In particular, when anti-Chalcedonian groups challenged the meaning and coherence of the Definition's concepts and logic, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition answered by working within those concepts and according to that logic to demonstrate the superiority of confessing Christ as one *hypostasis* (person) in two *ousiai* (natures). This development not only supported the basic sense of orthodox ontology in Christology, it also explored the constructive capacity of its categories by making deeper connections regarding the person-nature constitution and function in the divine-human life of Christ. Thus, by working within its own Trinitarian framework, the early church was able to make metaphysical sense in Christology and answer the theological questions of its time.

Even in this sketch, the basic pattern of the early church's theological retrieval becomes clear: establish and extend orthodoxy and then clarify its new application. By

¹³⁴ Chalcedon was not immediately accepted by all groups, and it was never accepted universally by all in the church. However, it did become the orthodox standard of Christology in the church based on the Definition's person-nature distinction and its development. For a history of this development, see Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd rev. ed., 2 vols. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975).

this practice, the church remained anchored in Scripture and consistent with its ecumenical conclusions, while constructing contemporary formulations as needed. When faced with confusion and new theological issues, the church did not abandon its tradition but adapted it from confession of God to confession of the God-man. Rather than innovate, the church remained committed to its orthodox ontology *as the means by which* it could make the best sense of God the Son's incarnation into our humanity according to the Scriptures.

Accordingly, the work ahead will follow the early church's pattern to develop a Chalcedonian anthropology. In fact, as will become clear, a Chalcedonian approach to humanity relies on the same extension of the person-nature distinction that was made from Trinitarianism to Chalcedonian Christology. After that extension of orthodox ontology, some basic clarifications will be offered to make good metaphysical sense of a person-nature constitution in its new anthropological context.

Bringing together the first principles for a Christological anthropology and a principled retrieval of tradition should provide sufficient epistemological warrant to proceed. Based on the theological identity of the incarnate Son as God, the early church extended his ontological identity as God into his ontological identity as man. Based on the theological identity of Christ as *the* man, the Chalcedonian proposal ahead will extend his ontological identity as the paradigmatic *anthropos* to the ontological identity of all mankind. A part of Chalcedon's ministerial authority is the genuine ecclesial authority borne by its pattern of retrieval that moved from the orthodox ontology of God to the orthodox ontology of the God-man. A Chalcedonian anthropology will rely on this same authority to move from the orthodox human ontology of the man Jesus Christ to a Christological understanding of all humanity.

Christocentric Humanity

A Chalcedonian anthropology seeks to ground all human ontology in the

human ontology of Christ. The *biblical warrant* for this pursuit lies in the fundamental premise that the theological identity and work of Christ as a man requires an ontological correspondence with all mankind. Specifically, being the Christ, *the* image of God in man, and the redeemer of God for all humanity entails a certain ontology *as a man*. Moreover, because these roles intersect with all mankind, it makes good biblical sense that a constitutional similitude should be found with *the* man who fulfills them all. Furthermore, the *epistemological warrant* for a Christological understanding of human ontology is found in the centrality of Christ for all things human. As the revelation of true humanity, the historical man Jesus Christ stands as the Archimedean point from which we can know universal truths in anthropology. This includes the most basic truth of man's ontological constitution. The ontological identity of Christ the man should define the ontological identity of all mankind. And the church has already determined the categories of Christ's human constitution with genuine ecclesial authority that justifies a consideration of those categories in the constitution of all humanity. In the Chalcedonian analogy, the person-nature distinction that describes the eternal Son's existence as God also describes the incarnate Son's existence as a man. Accordingly, it makes good epistemological sense to look at extending the person-nature constitution of the man *par excellence* of Christology into man *par ordinaire* in anthropology. While such a move must recognize a certain divine-human asymmetry, making analogical adjustments to merely human ontology should produce a truly Christocentric definition of man.

The next step in the argument for such a Chalcedonian anthropology is establishing historical warrant. Specifically, the next two chapters will develop a proper understanding of the person-nature distinction at the core of orthodox Christology and the authoritative pattern by which the church developed it. This framework will prepare the way for the analogical extension of the person-nature distinction into anthropology.

CHAPTER 3

CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY: EXTENSION OF THE PERSON-NATURE DISTINCTION

Thus far, the argument for a Chalcedonian anthropology has established the biblical and epistemological centrality of Christ for understanding human beings. His ontological identity *as a man* enables Christ to both fulfill God's purposes for humanity and reveal true humanity. His human ontology corresponds with all mankind to the extent required by his theological identity in Scripture. And this ontological correspondence and centrality point to his particular human constitution as the key for determining the ontological identity of all other human beings. On its face, the Chalcedonian Definition presents the Son's incarnation as the Christ in terms of a person-nature distinction or framework. The same person is God according to his divine nature, and man according to his human nature. Given the paradigmatic position of Christ as *the man*, this means that his person-nature constitution should have immediate implications for the constitution of *mere man*. In other words, according to the first principles of Christological anthropology, the person-nature ontology of the man Jesus Christ provides an interpretive framework for the rest of mankind.

This chapter and the next address the historical warrant for Chalcedonian anthropology. What does it mean that Christ is one person in two natures? What exactly is the *human* ontology of Christ? The discussions below focus on the orthodox formulation of the Son's incarnation into our humanity, which began at Chalcedon and developed into the seventh century. Rather than a full exercise in historical theology, this concentrated exploration seeks to understand the basic ontological structure used to confess what it means that the divine Son became a man. If the man *par excellence* is

ontologically determinative for man *par ordinaire*, then the incarnate ontology of the Son should direct the church's understanding of what constitutes a human being. If the Chalcedonian tradition provides the orthodox ontology of Christ, then it is Chalcedonian ontology in particular that should provide that direction. The person-nature constitution of Christ must be understood clearly before it can be applied carefully in anthropology.

Historical Warrant

In general, theological conclusions should be made in conversation with the church's tradition. This does not mean that tradition governs doctrine such that there is no room for genuine development. And tradition must remain open to correction by Scripture. Even so, the church's reflection on Scripture in the past can provide good reason for attending to it in the present. Moreover, this regard rises to active guidance where a tradition is recognized by the church as the orthodox statement in a particular area. The contemporary church bears the burden of proof if it wants to say something different from orthodoxy. Rather than an obstacle, however, orthodoxy should be seen as valuable constraints that can lead to constructive results. As discussed in the previous chapter, tradition should open up theological dialogue as new issues and concerns arise.

In particular, the present pursuit of a Chalcedonian anthropology relies on orthodox Christology. More specifically, according to a principal presupposition here, the Definition and the Christology that developed from it provide the authoritative foundation and framework for a biblical doctrine of Christ.¹ As will be discussed below,

¹ This presupposition does not deny the significant challenges to Chalcedonian Christology from the fifth century up to the present. These challenges in the early church form the context for understanding the development of pro-Chalcedonian Christology in general and the person-nature distinction in particular. For discussion of contemporary challenges to orthodox Christology in the Chalcedonian tradition, see Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 35–77, 355–419. Still, it is important to note that these are challenges to orthodoxy, not alternative views of orthodoxy. This dissertation affirms the historic confession that Christ is one person in two natures as both the minimum for what the church must say and the model for what else the church may say about the divine Son's

the contours and content of this Chalcedonian Christology are found in a recognizable pro-Chalcedonian tradition that interpreted, defended, and clarified the person-nature ontology of Christ.² Focusing on the constitution of Christ, the person-nature analogy of being at the core of the Definition provides the authoritative categories for understanding what makes Christ God and what makes him a man. Thus, it makes good historical sense to examine such Chalcedonian ontology if it is to provide active guidance in a Chalcedonian understanding of all mankind.

Before getting to the historical work, two related presuppositions need comment. First, the metaphysical language of the Chalcedonian tradition is “biblical.” Using terms outside the Bible is not only acceptable, it is often necessary in the church’s call to make theological conclusions from Scripture that are both faithful to its teachings and meaningful in a contemporary articulation of the faith that meets the challenges of the day.³ Moreover, these “extra-biblical” terms, like *hypostasis*⁴ and *ousia*, become “biblical” when they accord with and elucidate the Bible’s own concepts and categories. In fact, the pattern of terminological development in the church has been to shape concepts from the culture until they serve the proclamation of Scripture. And this pattern

incarnation into our humanity.

² For the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, see *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 443–557; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 310–43; Gerald Bray, *God Has Spoken: A History of Christian Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 211–402; Donald Fairbairn and Ryan M. Reeves, *The Story of Creeds and Confessions: Tracing the Development of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 80–108.

³ For an excellent discussion and demonstration of this methodology, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*.

⁴ Different forms of the Greek term *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) appear in Scripture in five locations: 2 Cor 9:4, 11:17; Heb 1:3, 3:14, 11:1. In all but one of these, it is translated as “confidence” because *hypostasis* is used there in the sense of a firmness of resolve. Only Heb 1:3 uses *hypostasis* in its basic ontological sense of an underlying reality or substance, usually translated as “nature.” See Peter O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 55. As will be discussed, however, the church would make a theological modification to *hypostasis* to refer to something just as real but distinct from mere substance or nature.

holds true in the development of the person-nature distinction to confess the revelation that the divine Son became a fully human being while remaining fully God. Throughout the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, the church would continue to develop complementary concepts and terms to demonstrate the coherence of Chalcedonian logic and extend its “biblical” ontology into new areas as needed.

Second, the meaning and significance of Chalcedonian ontology are best determined by tracing its development through the most significant issues. The integrated group of terms and concepts that developed over time came to function as a unified linguistic-conceptual device for understanding and communicating the mystery of the incarnation. To understand this apparatus and its parts requires careful attention to the forces that prompted a doctrinal response from the church and the reasons for its particular formulations.⁵ In what is known as the positive side of heresy,⁶ the (ultimately) unorthodox alternatives created the challenges and controversies in which the church forged its language of orthodoxy. In response to unbiblical ways of thinking and talking about the unity and diversity of divinity and humanity in Christ, the church developed its unique confession that the God-man accomplished our salvation as one person who possesses and works through two distinct natures. So the logic and language of the pro-Chalcedonian tradition are best retrieved by exploration of the Christological debates and issues in their own context.

⁵ In his retrieval of Nicene Trinitarianism, Khaled Anatolios begins with the premise that “if we wish to understand trinitarian doctrine, we must observe how it came to be formulated in the councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) and how such formulations were interpreted in the immediate aftermath of these councils.” Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 1. Without endorsing or adopting the particular way Anatolios works out his retrieval of Trinitarianism, the historical work in this chapter and the next rely on the same basic premise for retrieving the meaning and significance of Chalcedonian Christology. In that sense, the historical work here “traces the logic whereby [Christological] doctrine developed in order to find resources for contemporary appropriation of this doctrine.” Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 1.

⁶ See Harold O. J. Brown, *Heresies: The Image of Christ in the Mirror of Heresy and Orthodoxy from the Apostles to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 1–5.

Given these presuppositions, the rest of this chapter and the next will retrieve the person-nature ontology of Christ by working through its most significant developments in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition.⁷ According to the purpose of providing historical warrant for the coming anthropological application, this retrieval will be limited to a proper understanding of the person-nature distinction that the church used to confess the incarnation of the divine Son into our humanity. This means that the historical work ahead will forego many details in the conciliar development of orthodox Christology. Yet this also means that the specific developments discussed will have a more direct impact on understanding the basic ontological structure of Chalcedonian Christology. The historical discussions in this chapter and the next will not be comprehensive, but they will be sufficient to give good historical reason for extending the person-nature ontology of the man Jesus Christ to a person-nature ontology for all humanity.⁸

This focused historical work has three goals: (1) understanding the ontological framework by which the church came to confess that the incarnate Son is fully God and fully man; (2) recognizing what made other Christological ontologies problematic and insufficient; and (3) identifying the pattern by which the early church formulated orthodox Christological ontology. Identifying the early church's pattern of Christological formulation will ground the continuation of that same pattern in anthropological formulation. Understanding what it means ontologically that the divine Son became the man *par excellence* will ground the application of that ontology to man *par ordinaire*. Recognizing why certain paradigms and formulations were rejected in the debates over

⁷ The historical work here will trace mainly the developments in the East because that is where the most significant controversies arose and the most formative responses were made. However, the discussion will indicate adoption in and assistance from the West as appropriate.

⁸ It is crucial to recall from chap. 1 that, to appreciate the Trinitarian and Christological significance of *person*, the psychological and existential emphases of modernity must be set aside. In the development of the person-nature distinction, *person* was used as an ontological category.

the divine-human ontology of Christ will help avoid some of those same errors in proposing a merely human ontology.

The discussion below will first examine how the church used the person-nature distinction to establish Trinitarian ontology prior to Chalcedon. Then the discussion will trace the church's extension of that same person-nature distinction to confess Christological ontology in the Chalcedonian Definition. The next chapter will examine how the church developed the person-nature ontology of Christ in a pro-Chalcedonian tradition that clarified what it means that the Son is and acts as a fully human being.⁹ As a whole, these chapters provide the ontological content and framework for the final chapter's Christological analysis and anthropological inferences.

Pre-Chalcedonian Ontology: Nicene Trinitarianism

The Council of Chalcedon (451) convened to produce an orthodox statement on the end result of the incarnation. A number of heresies threatened the unity of the church's proclamation of Christ by attacking either his full divinity or his full humanity. So the bishops who gathered at Chalcedon needed to produce a conciliar formula on the ontology of Christ that expressed how one Christ possesses both natures in their full integrity.¹⁰ The majority of bishops at Chalcedon were not inclined to introduce a theological *novum* into the church's confession. They believed that the prior councils provided a sufficient expression of the faith for the unity of the church.¹¹ The amount and depth of the disunity in the growing Christological confusion would push the Chalcedonian fathers to say more than prior creeds. But they took steps to make clear that

⁹ The pattern of this historical examination is indebted to the development of orthodox Christology through the early church in Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 255–348.

¹⁰ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:543–45.

¹¹ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:543; Kelly, *Early Church Doctrines*, 339.

they were beginning with and working within the theological framework developed in the fourth century.

In particular, the Definition of Chalcedon begins by affirming the substantial sufficiency and pre-eminence of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) for the church's formulation of the faith. Explaining the need to protect the church from false doctrine, the bishops declared:

And this have we done with one unanimous consent, driving away erroneous doctrines and renewing the unerring faith of the Fathers, publishing to all men the Creed of [the 318 bishops at Nicaea], and to their number adding, as their peers, the [150 bishops at Constantinople] who have received the same summary of religion . . . and ratified the same faith. Moreover, observing the order and every form relating to the faith . . . the exposition of the right and blameless faith made by the [318 bishops] assembled at Nice . . . shall be pre-eminent; and that those things shall be of force also, which were decreed by the [150 bishops] at Constantinople, for the uprooting of the heresies which had then sprung up, and for the confirmation of the same Catholic and Apostolic Faith of ours.¹²

After quoting Nicaea and Constantinople, the Chalcedonian fathers referred to them together as the “wise and salutary formula of divine grace [which] suffice for the perfect knowledge and confirmation of religion; for it teaches the perfect [doctrine] concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and sets forth the Incarnation of the Lord to them that faithfully receive it.”¹³ Any clarification regarding the Son's incarnation would have to accord with the church's existing confession regarding his relationship to the Father and the Spirit.

In short, the faith formulated at Nicaea and ratified at Constantinople produced a “Nicene” doctrine of the Trinity that controlled the doctrine of Christ. Before they presented their formula, the bishops made it clear that the ontology of God the Son incarnate would be framed by the orthodox ontology of Nicene Trinitarianism.¹⁴ As Alois

¹² “The Chalcedonian Definition,” in Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 339–40.

¹³ “The Chalcedonian Definition,” 339–40.

¹⁴ Considering the developments up to Chalcedon and the preamble of the Definition itself, Grillmeier concludes, “We can trace quite clearly in the Chalcedonian Definition the wish of the Fathers to

Grillmeier explains, the ontology of the incarnation depends on Nicene metaphysics because that formulation “stresses more strongly than its ancient predecessors the consubstantiality of the Son (Logos) with the Father and his Godhead, and then goes on to predicate the incarnation . . . of just this Son.”¹⁵ Prior to the Christological issues of the fifth century, the fourth-century heresies had pressed the church into the confession that Christ is fully divine because the Son is consubstantial with the Father, and this essential equality between Father and Son was extended to the Spirit. As such, the conciliar orthodoxy at the threshold of Chalcedon taught that God is three divine persons sharing one divine nature.

By affirming this Nicene Trinitarianism, the Chalcedonian fathers adopted a theological-metaphysical framework that first requires attention before an exploration of the Definition itself can proceed.

One Divine Nature

In the fourth century, the church found itself in need of a new vocabulary to protect the unity of its witness in faithfulness to Scripture. How is God simultaneously one and three? The great Shema of Scripture was taken seriously, both religiously and metaphysically. There is only one true and living God. And this metaphysically one God is the one covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who accomplishes his plan of redemption through his Messiah-Christ by his Holy Spirit. Yet this biblical presentation means that, in some way, three are God. Father, Son, and Spirit each bears the name of God and does the work of God in creation, providence, and salvation. However, a broad

take the Nicene framework as their starting point.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:552. The preamble is followed by the full text of the Creed of Nicaea (325) and its development and clarification in the “Nicene Creed” of Constantinople (381). As discussed below, that pro-Nicene tradition provides the Trinitarian ontology used in the Definition to explain the divine Son’s incarnation into our humanity.

¹⁵ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:443.

agreement *that* this pattern is true would not suffice. In the Trinitarian controversy of the fourth century, Christian practice would press the church to clarify *how* it is true that there is one God and that three are God.

Theologians of the second and third centuries had given the church a basic but ultimately insufficient Trinitarian grammar for its worship and witness.¹⁶ Simply put, “the conceptual and linguistic resources did not exist to distinguish between *the way* God is one and *the way* [emphasis added] he is three.”¹⁷ The church’s liturgical practices (e.g., baptism, worship, and prayer), and even its early apologetics, lacked the ontological depth, conceptual clarity, and terminological agreement that would prevent unbiblical proposals regarding the relation and respective status of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which would have disastrous soteriological implications. In particular, the church struggled to integrate some of its central beliefs from Scripture: the primacy of the one God, the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ; and the sufficiency of his mediation between God and sinful man.¹⁸ This meant that the church struggled to conceptualize and articulate the unity of the one God along with the distinction that would make sense of God the Son’s incarnation for our salvation. Nothing short of the Trinitarian and Christological bases for the gospel was at stake. The church’s struggle would expose its doctrine and the gospel to unbiblical challenges, requiring a creedal response that moved the church’s confession of God and the God-man toward clarity and coherence.

¹⁶ See especially, Irenaeus (c. 130-202) and his *Against Heresies*; Tertullian (c. 160-230) and his *Against Praxeas*; Origen (c. 185-254) and his *On First Principles*; see also Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 90–107; Stephen R. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 56–81. Anatolios observes, “The church of the fourth century inherited a tradition of trinitarian discourse that was pervasively embedded in its worship and proclamation, even if it was lacking in conceptual definition.” Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 15.

¹⁷ Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 109.

¹⁸ For a helpful list of common theological and doctrinal elements shared at the threshold of Nicaea by those who would develop Nicene Trinitarianism, see Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 36–37.

Leading up to the Council of Nicaea (325), it was Arianism that presented the greatest threat to the church's biblical confession of God.¹⁹ The Arian teaching can be summarized in five propositions.²⁰ First, there is one God, who is eternal and uncreated, who we now call Father. Second, this God became Father when he created the Son/Logos out of nonexistence as a personal, divine instrument of material creation. Third, this Son is finite and mutable and as such became incarnate by taking a human body (not soul or mind). Fourth, this Son, before and after incarnation, has only a moral unity with God, and that only so long as he freely chooses to do so. Fifth, this moral unity never rises to the level of ontological unity because the Son began as a creature and so remains both distinct and different from God. Thus, this Son (much less the Spirit) bears the name of God and does the work of God only by analogy. He is divine but not equal to God. This incarnate Son is enfleshed but not a man like us in every way; he is able to obey God but not redeem sinners. In short, the Arian scheme of unity and distinction was coherent but unbiblical. Its conceptual power could take control of the church's confession, corrupting its worship and witness.

In fact, Arianism created such disagreement and dissent that Emperor Constantine I summoned the first ecumenical council of the early church to address the issue.²¹ At the Council of Nicaea (325), Constantine presided over a process aimed at bringing unity to the church regarding (*inter alia*) the deity of the Son and his

¹⁹ For recent historical and theological analysis of Arianism, see Robert C. Gregg, *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments: Papers from the Ninth International Conference on Patristic Studies*, Patristic Monograph 11 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006).

²⁰ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 111–14.

²¹ For a helpful discussion of the influences and impulses, in Scripture and in the Christianization of the Roman Empire, that led to the need for and acceptance of councils and creeds, see Donald Fairbairn and Ryan M. Reeves, *The Story of Creeds and Confessions: Tracing the Development of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 19–47.

relationship to the Father.²² Delegates from every region of the Roman Empire came to represent, if not the fullness, at least the expanse of Christendom, spanning from east to west. Even so, the Arians were so confident in the persuasiveness of their view that they presented their own statement of the faith regarding the Father and his blessed but inferior Son.²³ The clear denial of the Son's deity, however, was so offensive to the clear teachings of Scripture that all but a small minority of the 318 bishops roundly rejected it.²⁴

In responding to Arianism, the Nicene bishops crafted a creed for the church to confess belief in the one God, the true Father, and in his one true and unique Son, who became incarnate for the salvation of sinners.

We believe in one God Father Almighty maker of all things, seen and unseen:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten [*gennētos*] as only-begotten of the Father [or begotten of the Father, only-begotten], that is of the substance [*ousia*] of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made [*agenētos*], consubstantial [*homoousios*] with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and became man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say, "There was a time when he did not exist," and "Before being begotten he did not exist," and that he came into being from non-existence, or who allege that the Son of God is of another *hypostasis* or substance [*ousia*], or who is alterable or changeable, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church condemns.²⁵

²² For a concise overview see Fairbairn and Reeves, *Story of Creeds and Confessions*, 48–79.

²³ See Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 89.

²⁴ See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 89.

²⁵ "The Creed of Nicaea," in R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 163. The bracketed Greek terms (transliterated for convenience) have been added for emphasis and reference in the following discussion.

Four key affirmations will highlight how the creed conceives of the Son's deity in relation to the Father. Given the purpose of this chapter, it is crucial to note that even in the fourth century Trinitarian controversy, the church recognized the necessary connection between the ontology of God and the ontology of Christ.

First, the Son is "begotten as only-begotten of the Father." In a way that is both unexplained and unlike any other, the Son comes from the Father. The creed specifically condemns any interpretation that would see this activity as a movement from potentiality to actuality. The Son did not come into being from non-existence. Rather, the Son shares an *eternal* relationship with the Father. The Father has always existed as Father to the Son; the Son has always existed as Son to the Father. Moreover, the creed affirms that this Father-Son relationship is unique. The Son is the only-begotten (*monogenēs*) of the Father.²⁶

Second, this means that the Son is "of the [*ousia*] of the Father." The creed provides an explicit and exegetical comment (*toutéstin*, "that is to say") to make clear that "begotten as only-begotten of the Father" means that the Son shares the substance of the Father. To clarify what it means to share the substance of the Father, the creed continues with four descriptive phrases: "God of God"; "Light of Light"; "true God of true God"; and "begotten not made." The Arians accepted that all creatures are "from the Father" and placed the Son among the created things of God. The creed's affirmation that

²⁶ A full discussion of the precise meaning of *monogenēs* in the creed is beyond the scope of this work. As discussed immediately below, however, the creed itself provides the basic context for understanding what is unique about the Father-Son relationship, which concerns the Son's nature (*ousia*). Moreover, it should be noted that, in keeping with the creedal tradition of the early church, the bishops at Nicaea would have used *monogenēs* based on its use in John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (ESV). For an explanation that *monogenēs* in that context is an indication of kinship ("one-of-a-kind"), not origin ("only-begotten"), see D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1996), 30–31; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1991), 128, 111–39. For the argument that *monogenēs* identifies Christ as unique because he is the "one-of-a-kind Son, God [in himself], see Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 24 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 76–79; see also Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 204n48.

the Son is from the Father, then, was true but insufficient to combat this false teaching. So the bishops had to innovate to explicate the sense of Scripture they were communicating.²⁷ They used the extrabiblical term *ousia* to say that the Son is begotten of the Father with the exact same divine characteristics or attributes.²⁸ The Arians agreed that as God, the Father is unbegotten (*agennētos*) and uncreated/eternal (*agenētos*). However, they claimed that the Son was both begotten (*gennētos*) and created (*genētos*).²⁹ Directly contradicting this claim, the creed explained that while the Son is begotten (*gennētos*), he is not created (*agenētos*).³⁰ The Son is not a creature; he is “true God” like the Father because the Son shares in the substance of the Father.

Third, therefore, the Son is “consubstantial [*homoousios*] with the Father.” In the fifth and climactic phrase describing what it means to share the substance of the Father, the creed states that the Son is *consubstantial* with the Father. Making maximal use of their innovative yet faithful employment of *ousia*, the bishops constructed a term to declare that the Son’s essence is the same as the Father’s essence.³¹ It was axiomatic that a creature is essentially different from the Creator. So the Arians argued that the Son’s creatureliness, his humanity, prevented him from sharing the same essence with the

²⁷ Writing only a few decades after Nicaea, Athanasius explained that the bishops were forced into the innovative use of extrabiblical terms because biblical language alone was insufficient to combat heresies that used the same biblical language. See Athanasius, *On the Decrees of the Synod of Nicaea*, 19–21 (PG 25:447–54). All references to Athanasius’s writings in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) are indebted to interaction with Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 231–47; Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 127–45; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:308–28; Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 100–178; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 90–186.

²⁸ See Fairbairn and Reeves, *Story of Creeds and Confessions*, 60–61.

²⁹ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:267–68; see also Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 282.

³⁰ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:267–68; see also Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 282.

³¹ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 116–17.

Father.³² Thus, by saying that the Son and the Father are *homoousios*, the creed was “to place on record once and for all that the being of the Son is identical to the being of the Father.”³³ The Son’s eternal and unique relationship to the Father of begottenness means that the Son does not bear a creaturely, analogical likeness to him but shares the exact same divine essence of the Father. The Son “is indivisible from the *substance* [emphasis added] of the Father.”³⁴ Whatever the Father is as God, the Son is likewise.³⁵ Again, the Son is not a creature but “true God,” just like the Father, precisely because the Son shares fully in the indivisible substance/essence/nature of the Father.

Fourth, it is *this* Son “who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and became man.” The one who has eternally shared in the divine essence with the Father is the one who became a man by taking on flesh.³⁶ Rather than adjudicating an academic dispute, the Nicene bishops were confronted with the need to confess belief in a truly divine Savior who can indeed save humanity because he did, in fact, take humanity upon himself.³⁷ The soteriological purpose of the incarnation guided their conclusion from the biblical presentation of Christ: his deity must be *homoousios* with the Father for his humanity to be capable of reconciliation between God and man.³⁸ In short, the biblical confession of Christ’s mediation required a certain extrabiblical formulation of his metaphysical makeup.

³² See Fairbairn and Reeves, *Story of Creeds and Confessions*, 62.

³³ Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 120.

³⁴ Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 116.

³⁵ See Fairbairn and Reeves, *Story of Creeds and Confessions*, 61.

³⁶ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 116–17.

³⁷ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 282.

³⁸ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 116–17.

The Creed of Nicaea's main achievement was to affirm the Son's full deity in such a way that it maintained the unity of the Godhead and enabled the Son's incarnation into our humanity. The Arian challenge required the church to reject a creaturely ontology of the Son without ambiguity. The creed clarified that the Son is truly and essentially God while denying that there is more than the one true God. Moreover, this affirmation of the Son's full deity had immediate implications for the church's broader need to integrate its belief in the one true God along with its belief that the divine Son alone became incarnate. It was the Son, not the Father (or the Spirit), who became a man, yet without losing his consubstantiality with the Father. Thus, the church's initial credal response to the Trinitarian issue of how God is simultaneously one and three was to ground the Son's deity in the nature he shares with the Father. With its confession of an incarnation by the Son who is *homoousios* with the Father, Nicaea strongly implied a unity-in-distinction within the Godhead.

However, the linguistic limitations of the time meant that Nicaea would create a certain ambiguity regarding deity and distinction. The church came to realize that "the deepest questions which face Christianity cannot be answered in purely biblical language, because the questions are about the meaning of biblical language itself."³⁹ In that regard, the Nicene bishops put *ousia* to good use in affirming the Father and the Son are *homoousios*. But such extrabiblical terms come with their own semantic range, which can create confusion and the need for intentional disambiguation. In this case, *ousia* at the time was capable of signifying a generic, even materialistic nature, whereby the creed would affirm that the Father and the Son share a common essence but not necessarily the

³⁹ Hanson, introduction to *Search for Christian Doctrine*, xxi; see also Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 111. For a discussion of the struggle with biblical language in the larger Arian controversy, see Robert C. Gregg, ed., *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 1–129; Bertrand de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, Studies in Historical Theology 1 (Still River, MA: St. Bede's, 1982), 87–91.

same one.⁴⁰ That meaning would separate the Father from the Son, destroying their unity as the one true God. Yet *ousia* could also refer to an individual nature. Such use would strengthen the claim that the Father and the Son share an indivisible nature, but it also could imply that they are the same individual.⁴¹ The latter meaning would affirm a modalistic view of God, whereby the Father and the Son (and the Spirit) merely appear as different subjects at different times, eradicating any real distinction between them. The church had always defended the oneness of God, and it had wrestled against modalism since the late second century. However, in its concluding anathema, the creed used *ousia* as an interchangeable synonym with *hypostasis*,⁴² a Greek term which generally meant “realization turning into appearance.” The resulting confusion would enable different interpretations from divergent conceptions regarding the deity, unity, and distinction of the Father, Son, and Spirit.⁴³

Despite the terminological development and theological advancement at Nicaea, the church needed further clarification in its confession of the Trinity. Are the

⁴⁰ See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 94–95.

⁴¹ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 116–17. Fairbairn notes that Nicaea intended “to emphasize the full equality and identity between the Son and the Father, but the word [*homoousios*] turned out to be problematic because some feared that it might indicate that Father and Son were a single person. Donald Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 45–46.

⁴² Hanson, *Search for Christian Doctrine*, 182; see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 283. For a recent study tracing back to the Synod of Antioch (268) the church’s interchangeable use of *ousia* and *hypostasis* to denote the individual entity rather than the common essence of the Father and Son, see Dragoş Andrei Giulea, “Antioch 268 and Its Legacy in the Fourth-Century Theological Debates,” *Harvard Theological Review* 111, no. 2 (April 2018): 192–215.

⁴³ As Grillmeier observes, “Thus it was also easy even for the Arians to talk of ‘three (separate) hypostases.’ We can already guess how difficult it would be for the Nicenes to take over talk of ‘three hypostases.’ For Nicaea itself had understood ‘*hypostasis*’ and ‘*ousia*’ synonymously, and thus had entered upon a quite different course. Only after this synonymity had been abandoned was a signpost erected, pointing to the linguistic distinction between where unity was to be sought in God and where there was difference.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:272. For the semantic range of *ousia* and its interchangeability with *hypostasis* at certain points, see also Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 133–56, 160–61.

Father, Son, and Spirit truly distinct from one another? Do they share the single-same nature or the same nature in a generic sense? As Wellum observes, “It was not until after Nicaea that this use of the language [*hypostasis* and *ousia*] was clarified so that *homoousios* underscored the fact that all three [distinct] persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, subsist in or possess the same, identical divine nature as the one true and living God.”⁴⁴ This clarification would come through the person-nature distinction developed in the pro-Nicene tradition.

Divine Person-Nature Distinction

The Father and the Son are consubstantial; they share the exact same divine essence. But does *homoousios* signify their unity in one substance or their equality of substance?⁴⁵ How or in what way? How should the church conceive of the Spirit’s relation to and status with the Father and the Son? Is there an actual Trinity or just the appearance of one? If Father, Son, and Spirit are three individuals, how are they one God? Nicaea was the necessary first step on the way to a coherent and orthodox formulation of the church’s confession of the one triune God. However, its formulation of divine consubstantiality created the need to address divine distinction within the Godhead.

Post-Nicene confusion. At least five groups continued the controversy in the decades after Nicaea.⁴⁶ The different rationales for affirming or rejecting *homoousios* between the Father and the Son provided the immediate context for the church’s

⁴⁴ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 283.

⁴⁵ Letham suggests that the ambiguity might not have been accidental. “However, we lack knowledge of the detailed discussions and backstage politicking at Nicaea, and so definitive conclusions are precluded.” Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 118. See Margerie, *Christian Trinity in History*, 90–100.

⁴⁶ This classification is not meant to deny the “labyrinthian complexities” of this period. See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 122. Rather, the five groups are identified according to a basic posture toward the Nicene use of *homoousios*, without reducing each group to its general response.

development of the person-nature distinction. Beginning with these positions will help focus on the meaning and significance of separating *hypostasis* and *ousia* so that each may accomplish different theological purposes.

The *miahypostatic* group of theologians, led by Marcellus of Ancyra, accepted *homoousios* as a confirmation of modalism.⁴⁷ For them, God is one *hypostasis* who is one *ousia*. The two terms are basically equivalent. God is absolutely, ontologically one. The Son is only a word or Logos of God, so really the same thing as God. Thus, *homoousios* meant the Father and Son are “of identical being.” Under the *miahypostatic* reading, Nicaea affirmed a modalistic view of the Trinity in its condemnation of those who would allege that “the Son of God is of another hypostasis or ousia” of the Father. God, who is the Father, is one *hypostasis-ousia*; the Son is the word of this God, not a distinct individual or subject from the Father.

The *anomoean* party rejected *homoousios* because it made a man consubstantial with God.⁴⁸ They took the broad teachings of the Arians to an extreme position regarding the status of Christ.⁴⁹ Rather than consubstantial (*homoousios*), they argued that the substance or nature of the Son is utterly unlike (*anomoios*) that of the Father. The Son is merely the created agent of creation, who is like the Father only in that operation, not in substance. The Holy Spirit is the highest creature of the Son’s creation.

The *homoiousian* party agreed that *homoousios* identified the Father and Son and, therefore, rejected it in favor of a formulation that would maintain their distinction.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 122.

⁴⁸ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 123.

⁴⁹ As Letham observes, “The creed [of Nicaea] did not end the Arian crisis—it confirmed its existence.” Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 118. For an extended analysis, see Thomas A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism*, 2 vols., Patristic Monograph 8 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1979).

⁵⁰ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 124–25; see also Hanson, *Search for Christian Doctrine*, 368–70. Letham notes that there is no evidence that those who shared this response to the Nicene *homoousios* actually used the term *homoiousios*. Nonetheless, the term is an apt description of the common

Avoiding the Arianism of the *anomoean* party and the modalism they suspected of Nicaea, this group argued that the Son is of similar or like substance (*homoiousios*) as the Father. The Son is truly distinct from the Father, being eternally generated by the Father; yet he is neither a creature nor confused with the Father. Rather, the Son is like the Father in both full deity and personal distinction. To hold deity and distinction together clearly and coherently, the *homoiousians* began the process of conceptual and terminological development needed to make proper sense of Nicaea.⁵¹

The *homoian* Arians rejected *homoousios* as an extra-biblical term and its implication that the creaturely Son would share in the divine Father's nature.⁵² Conceptually, they held to a position midway between the *homoiousians* and the *anomoeans*.⁵³ The Son was created from the Father's will, not the divine nature. The Father created all other things *ex nihilo*, so the Son is the most excellent creature and like the Father in creative power.⁵⁴ However, as a creature, he is unlike the Father who alone is divine by nature. The Son remains not just distinct but separate from and radically subordinate to the Father, and the Spirit is radically subordinate to the Son. So the Spirit worships the Son, and the Son worships the Father.

The *homoousian* party insisted that the Son shares the identical, single-same nature as the Father while remaining distinct from the Father.⁵⁵ They would have

belief that the Father and the Son share a similar (*homoi*) nature, not the same (*homo*) nature.

⁵¹ The *homoiousians* agreed with the sense of Nicaea (which was not modalistic) but disagreed with the terms used to communicate that sense.

⁵² See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 125–26; see also Hanson, *Search for Christian Doctrine*, 559–74.

⁵³ This group avoided using *ousia* out of a doctrinaire attitude that tended to reject extrabiblical terms in favor of simple (even simplistic) proof texts from Scripture. However, the substance of the group's doctrine can still be explained and coordinated with the other groups in reference to *homoousios*.

⁵⁴ At the time, it was not unusual to entertain varying degrees of deity.

⁵⁵ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 123–24.

conciliar success with *homoousios* at Constantinople (381) by guarding against a modalistic interpretation. But that success would require further linguistic–conceptual development that would allow this group to clearly and coherently define both the substantial unity and the actual distinction of the Father, Son, and Spirit.⁵⁶

As the discussion turns from confusion to clarification, it is important to note that the reactions to Nicene consubstantiality reveal three layers of disagreement. On the surface, the *terminological* disagreement focused on the propriety and adequacy of *homoousios*. Below the surface, the *conceptual* disagreement centered on how to conceive the relation and status of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Ultimately, the *biblical* disagreement came to whether Scripture reveals that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one God even in their distinction from one another.⁵⁷ The development to come, then, was not a purely linguistic concern, but a matter of clearly stating a coherent philosophical framework for rightly understanding the unity and distinction of the Father, Son, and Spirit presented in Scripture. While not purely a matter of terms, however, the complex process was exacerbated by the fact that “people holding different views were using the same words as those who opposed them, but, unawares, giving them different meanings from those applied to them by their opponents.”⁵⁸ The church would need to work through terminological and conceptual confusion down to its biblical conclusions then back up to terminological clarity.

Leading up to the conciliar clarification at Constantinople (381), a pro-Nicene tradition would develop the best way to conceptualize and confess the mystery of the

⁵⁶ It should be noted that Basil of Caesarea (discussed later) began as a *homoiousian* but united that party with the *homoousians* as the conceptual strength of “homoousios” was sharpened over time.

⁵⁷ Many disputes and disputants arose as different groups used different concepts and terms to explain the biblical presentation of God. All parties agreed that there is one God. Almost all parties agreed on the canonical contents of Scripture and made their arguments from Scripture. Moreover, they generally confessed that God is a “differentiated unity.” But the parties did not agree on the basis for this unity and distinction. See Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 30–31.

⁵⁸ Hanson, *Search for Christian Doctrine*, 181.

triune God revealed in the Scriptures. The most significant contributions came from Athanasius (c. 295-373), the bishop of Alexandria, and from Basil of Caesarea (330-379), Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329-389), and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-395), the three great Cappadocian fathers of orthodox Trinitarianism.

Pro-Nicene foundation. Athanasius was not alone in defending the truth of Nicaea, but “we can hardly exaggerate his contribution to the refinement and crystallization of Trinitarian dogma.”⁵⁹ In the process of directly refuting modalism and varieties of Arianism, Athanasius made two particularly significant contributions to the eventual orthodox statement of the Trinity.⁶⁰

First, Athanasius grounded the full deity of the Son and the Spirit in their identical being with the Father. The Son’s oneness with the Father is exemplified in his eternal begottenness from the Father.⁶¹ The Father is himself both eternal and eternally the Father of the Son.⁶² The Son is eternally the Son of the Father, and thus is eternal himself.⁶³ In short, the Father’s eternal generation of the Son means that the Son is proper to the substance or essence of the Father; it could not be otherwise.⁶⁴ The Son, then, is essentially “whole God” (*holos theou*).⁶⁵ In this way, Athanasius argued that Nicaea’s

⁵⁹ Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 127.

⁶⁰ This focused analysis follows Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 127–45. For a broader consideration of how Athanasian Trinitarianism is coordinated within his entire theology, see Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, Routledge Early Church Monographs (London: Routledge, 1998); Frances M. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 69–83.

⁶¹ See Athanasius, *On the Decrees* 20 (PG 25:449–54); Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 2.57 (PG 26:68–69).

⁶² See Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1.21, 34 (PG 26:56–57, 81–84).

⁶³ See Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1.21, 34 (PG 26:56–57, 81–84).

⁶⁴ See Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1.29 (PG 26:72–73).

⁶⁵ See Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 3.6 (PG 26:333–34).

homoousios necessarily signified that the Father and the Son share an identity of being.⁶⁶ The Son is all that the Father is except for being the Father. Moreover, Athanasius argued from the Spirit's work and relationship to the Son that the two cannot be separated.⁶⁷ Thus, as the Son is proper to the being of the Father, the Spirit is proper to the being of the Son.⁶⁸ Nicaea's *homoousios*, now clarified as identity of being, was extended to the Father–Son–Spirit relationship.

Second, Athanasius recognized both the actual distinction and the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father is the Father of another, the Son; the Spirit is the Spirit of another, that same Son. These are eternal and real relations.⁶⁹ Yet divine relations must be understood analogically. The divine essence is not material and so did not divide, as with human beings, producing three divine beings. Rather, the three who are divine are of one divine being.⁷⁰ The Father, Son, and Spirit indwell one another such that they share the single-same nature without degrees.⁷¹ The Son and the Spirit are neither part of God the Father, nor do they possess less than his deity. Each is “whole of the whole” (*holos holou*) and, therefore, whole God (*holos theou*). The Father, Son, and Spirit are the one true God, not three beings or the one God named differently three times. Thus, even though we can distinguish the works of the Father, Son, and Spirit in creation and salvation, theirs is an inseparable involvement in one divine work.⁷² The

⁶⁶ See Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 138.

⁶⁷ See Athanasius, *Serapion* 1.20–21 (PG 26:576–81).

⁶⁸ See Athanasius, *Serapion* 1.14, 16–33; 1.27–28 (PG 26:564–65, 593–96).

⁶⁹ See Athanasius, *Serapion* 1.20–21, 1.25 (PG 26:576–81, 588–89).

⁷⁰ See Athanasius, *Serapion* 1.14 (PG 26:564–65).

⁷¹ See Athanasius, *Serapion* 1.33, 3.5–6 (PG 26:605–8, 632–33).

⁷² See Athanasius, *Serapion* 1.20, 28, 30 (PG 26:576–80, 593–600).

three members of the Godhead are distinct yet indivisible in the one being and work of God.

As a pro-Nicene theologian, Athanasius provided the church with the basic conceptual apparatus for understanding and confessing the one Triune God. He defended the doctrinal need to affirm the oneness of God, the actual distinction of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and their divine consubstantiality. To do so, Athanasius worked from the saving acts of God to construct an ontological framework of God's being in three who are God. In doing so, it is important to note that Athanasius saw the Godhead not as a generic being, but as the personal and active God who reveals and names himself as "possessing the coinherent relations of the three persons, in indivisible oneness and identity of being, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."⁷³ God is one and three are God, consubstantially, coequally, coinherently, and coeternally.⁷⁴ What remained was to refine the Trinitarian framework and clarify its terms.

Pro-Nicene framework. The Cappadocian fathers provided the final conceptual and terminological tools needed for the church to confess its Trinitarian orthodoxy. Among their many contributions, Basil, G. Nazianzus, and G. Nyssa developed the Nicene doctrine in two particular ways that would prove decisive in the orthodox statement of divine ontology.⁷⁵

First, the Cappadocians formally separated *ousia* and *hypostasis* to serve different theological purposes. Nicaea used *ousia* and *hypostasis* as interchangeable equivalents that referred to the substance shared by the Father and the Son, affirming

⁷³ Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 145.

⁷⁴ Letham rightly recognizes the magnitude of the Athanasian accomplishment: "His elaborations of the full deity of the Son and the Spirit in the one being of God, and of the relations of the three in their mutual coinherence, were quantum advances in understanding and huge milestones on the path to a more accurate view of the Trinity." Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 145.

⁷⁵ This analysis follows Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 146–65.

their consubstantiality but creating confusion regarding their actual distinction.⁷⁶ At that time, the church did not have a commonly agreed way of indicating the proper and distinct existence of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Building on the Athanasian framework of coinherent relations within a consubstantial existence, the church would again need to pursue clarification through innovation. The Cappadocians recognized this need and sought the required ontological distinction by a terminological distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. In fact, Basil was willing to accept the innovative use of *homoousios* at Nicaea to confess the substantial oneness of God only if accompanied and conditioned by the innovative use of *hypostasis* to designate the threeness of God.⁷⁷ He insisted on a clear and coherent way of confessing both the true oneness in being of God and the real threeness of God.⁷⁸

So the Cappadocians made a person-nature distinction to speak of God in different respects. God is a numerically one *ousia* or nature; God is a numerical trinity of *hypostases* or persons.⁷⁹ Distinguishing between what the divine persons share and what makes them unique, “*ousia* has the same relation to *hypostasis* as the common has to the particular.”⁸⁰ As Gregory of Nyssa argued, because hypostatic existence—self-standing existence or life—is integral to divine perfection, and the Father, Son, and Spirit are not different perfections (tritheism) but differentiations within the one perfect *ousia*, each of them is a *hypostasis*.⁸¹ There is only one divine being, the singular divine essence or

⁷⁶ See Hanson, *Search for Christian Doctrine*, 190.

⁷⁷ See Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* 5.7 (PG 32:77–81). All references to Basil’s writings in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) are indebted to interaction with Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 146–66; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:367–77; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 187–221.

⁷⁸ “It is not enough to count differences in the Persons [*prosopa*]. It is necessary also to confess that each Person [*prosopon*] exists in a true *hypostasis*.” Basil, *Letters* 210.5 (PG 32:773–77).

⁷⁹ See Basil, *Letters* 38, in *NPNF*², 8:137–41.

⁸⁰ Basil, *Letters* 214.4 (PG 32:789).

⁸¹ See Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Orations* 1 (PG 46); see also Anatolios, *Retrieving*

nature, which “is identical with God, and subsists in and only in the three Persons,” who are “distinct, yet they cannot be separated from the godhead or from one another.”⁸² God is one *ousia* in three *hypostases*. In the divine being, there are three “whos” (ἄλλος) and one “what” (ἄλλο).⁸³

Second, the Cappadocians clarified how the three divine persons relate to their one divine nature and to each other. Each divine person fully possesses the one divine nature such that he is “God when considered in himself.”⁸⁴ Thus, each person equally possesses the exact same divine attributes.⁸⁵ Yet each person is truly distinct from the others in his relation to them. Only the Father is unbegotten; only the Son is begotten; only the Spirit proceeds.⁸⁶ Moreover, “These properties affect their relations, not the one identical *ousia*.”⁸⁷ Each divine person is all that the others are except in their unique relations to one another.⁸⁸ The one *ousia* is the substance of God with all the divine attributes. The divine *ousia* exists in full measure in each of the three *hypostases*. The three *hypostases* of God are the divine persons who relate eternally and distinctly as

Nicaea, 218. Anatolios notes that the Spirit was accorded the same “divine dignity of hypostatic existence” as the Father and the Son. That is, each of the three hypostases self-subsists.

⁸² Brown, *Heresies*, 146.

⁸³ ἄλλος is masculine; ἄλλο is neuter.

⁸⁴ Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 40.41 (PG 36:417). All references to Gregory Nazianzen’s writings in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) are indebted to interaction with Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 146–66; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:367–77; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 244–50.

⁸⁵ See Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 31.7–10; 39.11–13 (PG 36:140–44, 345–49).

⁸⁶ See Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 31.7–10; 39.11–13 (PG 36:140–44, 345–49).

⁸⁷ Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 162.

⁸⁸ See Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 31.7–10; 39.11–13 (PG 36:140–44, 345–49). For example, the Son is all that the Father is except being the one who begets the Son. As Donald Fairbairn explains, “The Son is begotten by the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father. . . . That is to say, the relation between the Son and the Father is not identical to the relation between the Spirit and the Father, even though all three persons possess identical characteristics.” Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity*, 53.

Father, Son, and Spirit, each divine subject (ἄλλος) equally possessing the divine nature (ἄλλο) and completely indwelling one another.⁸⁹

As with Athanasius, the Cappadocians insisted that God is not a generic being to be analyzed and categorized.⁹⁰ He is the one true God who works creation and salvation according to his will, yet as the consubstantial Father, Son, and Spirit, who work not through cooperation but coinherence. Also, as with Athanasius, the Cappadocians balanced the priority of meaning over terms, with the ability of those terms to preserve the meaning.⁹¹ The reality of God governs the terms we use to speak rightly of him.⁹² And this can allow a flexibility in words to the extent that the intended affirmation is acceptable.⁹³ However, the conceptual capacity of some words will make them more appropriate than others for clearly speaking rightly of God. In fact, in demonstration of such terminological realism at the Council of Alexandria (362), Athanasius agreed that the theological redeployment of *ousia* and *hypostasis* by the

⁸⁹ This distinction does not result in separation. Catherine Mowry LaCugna points out that, for the Cappadocians, “the divine *ousia* exists *hypostatically*, and there is no *ousia* apart from the *hypostases*. To exist as God is to be the Father who begets the Son and breathes forth the Spirit. . . . [the reality of relations of origin] makes it impossible to think of a divine person ‘unto itself,’ disconnected either from other persons or from the divine essence, [such that] it is impossible to think of the divine essence in itself or by itself.” Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 69–70. However, as seen below and in the next chapter, the person-nature distinction will develop in Trinitarianism and Christology with sufficient clarity and content to affirm that person is not identical with nature, and a person can experience incarnation while the nature (and other persons) do not.

⁹⁰ He does not belong to a generic category of being, but transcends them all as the *sui generis* infinite perfection of being.

⁹¹ As Anatolios observes, “Linguistic frameworks demarcating unity and distinction are not the inner shrine of the meaning of trinitarian doctrine but a set of logical regulators that safeguard the contents of that meaning. The proper signification of *hypostasis-ousia* and kindred language is not to be found in its references to abstract logical categories of unity and difference but in its connections with the scriptural, liturgical, and soteriological conceptions and performances of how Father, Son, and Spirit are each fully God and together one God.” Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 212.

⁹² “For terms do not disparage his nature; rather that nature draws to itself those terms and changes them. For terms are not prior to essences, but essences are first, and terms second.” Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 2.3–4 (PG 26:151–56).

⁹³ See Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 1.34 (PG 26:81–84); Athanasius, *To the Antiochenes* 5–8 (PG 26:799–806).

Cappadocians could be used with orthodox signification, thereby stabilizing Nicene ontology.⁹⁴

As pro-Nicene theologians, the Cappadocians helped explicate the creed in ways that brought its biblical fidelity into a confessional cogency. Scripture reveals that God is one, and that there are three who are God. The church could now confess the simultaneous oneness of God in *ousia*-nature and the threeness of God in *hypostases*-persons, without confusion or contradiction.⁹⁵

Pro-Nicene orthodoxy. By the time of Constantinople (381), the pro-Nicene tradition would be (re)formulated more clearly around the basic ontological structure of the person-nature distinction. The consideration of a few key texts will make this clear.

In February of 380, Emperor Theodosius (347-395) issued an edict insisting on the profession of the “Nicene” faith. Significantly, the decree defined orthodoxy not by simple reference to Nicaea but by “outlining a basic logic of belief in the Trinity,”⁹⁶ by which “we shall believe in the single deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty and of the Holy Trinity.”⁹⁷ In adopting the pro-Nicene tradition, Theodosius structured his articulation around a single Godhead of three distinct

⁹⁴ See Athanasius, *To the Antiochenes* 5–8 (PG 26:799–806); see also Hanson, *Search for Christian Doctrine*, 644–45; see also G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 219–34.

⁹⁵ It should be clear that the developing person-nature distinction did not enable belief in the Trinity from Scripture but the coherent confession of that belief and the rejection of false teaching in the church’s developing context. As Anatolios recognizes, “But, of course, *hypostasis-ousia* language and other terms denoting unity and distinction did not make it possible to believe that God is triune nor even to concretely conceptualize that belief. They were simply *a posteriori* logical-linguistic maneuvers that followed upon the belief concerning Father, Son, and Spirit that each is fully God and together they are one God.” Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 212.

⁹⁶ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 251.

⁹⁷ *Code of Theodosius* 16.1.2, in Clyde Pharr and Mary Brown Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels, and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, Corpus of Roman Law 1 (Union, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2001), 440.

but equal subjects. The term *Trinity* was now a regular part of the Nicene faith. And in January of 381, Theodosius issued another decree in which he prohibited the assembly of “heretics” by identifying “a defender of the Nicene faith” as “that man who esteems . . . the undivided substance of the incorrupt Trinity, that substance which those of the orthodox faith call, employing a Greek word, *ousia*.”⁹⁸ The orthodox understanding of God’s threeness was to be grounded in a numerically singular substance.⁹⁹

Later in 381, Theodosius convened a council at Constantinople to unite the church in a confession of the Trinity on the basis of the Nicene faith by modifying the Creed of Nicaea.¹⁰⁰ Like the first creed, this Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (“Nicene Creed”) confessed belief in “one God, the Father Almighty” and in “one Lord Jesus Christ” who is “Son of God,” “begotten of God,” and “very God of very God,” being “consubstantial with the Father.”¹⁰¹ The original affirmation that the Father and Son are *homoousios* remained, but the preceding developments had clarified that consubstantiality referred to the mutual sharing of the single-same, undivided divine substance. Moreover, unlike the first creed, this pro-Nicene creed abandoned the use of *hypostasis* as an equivalent of *ousia*, removing the previous impediment to a clear understanding that consubstantiality does not destroy personal distinction. The new confession also clarified the deity of the Spirit: he is “Lord and Life-giver”; he “proceeds

⁹⁸ *Code of Theodosius* 16.5.6.2, in Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, 451.

⁹⁹ A third decree from Theodosius in 382 commands the surrender of churches to bishops who “affirm the concept of the Trinity by the assertion of three persons and the unity of the Divinity” *Code of Theodosius* 16.1.3, in Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, 440. Ayres observes, “It is the interpretation of Son and Spirit as ‘within’ the one divine existence that actually constitutes the key marker of orthodox identity in all three of these texts.” Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 252.

¹⁰⁰ For a full account of the council, including the ecclesiological politics, see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 253–60; Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 167–83.

¹⁰¹ “The Creed of Nicaea,” in Hanson, *Search for Christian Doctrine*, 816. The omission of “from the substance [*ousia*] of the Father” was not an abandonment of consubstantiality, but most likely the result of adopting a liturgical formula in use at the time. Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 172–73.

from the Father”; and he “is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son.” Although the Spirit is not called *homoousios* with the Father or the Son, “all that goes with that term is present, either explicitly or by direct entailment.”¹⁰² Thus, there are three, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are coordinated under the divine name, in the divine act of creation, and in glory, placing them “unequivocally in the category of what is God.”¹⁰³

Finally, in 382, the conciliar letter that went out from Constantinople brought together the main elements of pro-Nicene ontology:

[Nicaea] is the faith of our baptism; it is the faith that teaches us to believe in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. According to this faith there is one Godhead (θεότης), Power (δυνάμις), and Substance (ουσία) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; the dignity being equal, and the majesty being equal in three perfect hypostases (ὑπόστασεις), i.e. three perfect persons (πρόσωπα). Thus there is no room for the heresy of Sabellius by the confusion of the hypostases, i.e. the destruction of the personal properties (ιδιοτήτες); thus the blasphemy of the Eunomians, of the Arians, and of the Pneumatomachi is nullified, which divides the substance (ουσία), the nature (φύσις), and the godhead (θεότης), and superimposes onto the uncreated consubstantial [ὁμοούσιος] and coeternal Trinity a separate nature, created, and of a different substance.¹⁰⁴

There is one divine substance; there are three divine persons. The substance is not divided into the persons; the persons are not conflated into one another. Thus, the Nicene faith taught that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one consubstantial Trinity. It is important to note that this letter was sent by some of the same bishops who had helped formulate the pro-Nicene creed at Constantinople. The purpose of the letter was to offer “a definition of Trinitarian orthodoxy intended to be compatible with western statements.”¹⁰⁵ To that end, the definition allowed synonyms to recognize and

¹⁰² Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 173.

¹⁰³ Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 174.

¹⁰⁴ Theodoret, “Synodical Letter from the Council of Constantinople,” in *NPNF*², 3:138. The bracketed Greek terms have been added for emphasis and reference in the following discussion.

¹⁰⁵ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 258.

circumscribe the two most basic aspects of divine ontology: *ousia* and *physis* (and *theotis*) affirm and refer to the one divine substance; *hypostases* and *prosopa* (and *idiotites*) affirm and refer to the three divine persons. In communicating and confessing the Nicene faith, “variety in terminology is not of concern as long as the logic embedded in such terminologies is preserved.”¹⁰⁶ While generous in the pursuit of unity and flexible in certain terms, however, the church carefully chose specific terms and rejected others to present a clear and coherent formula for confessing the Trinity. Trinitarian orthodoxy was to be understood according to the person-nature distinction.

The reach of this person-nature ontology of God from the East to the West can be observed in Augustine’s pro-Nicene Trinitarianism.¹⁰⁷ As the preeminent representative of Latin theology in the fourth and fifth centuries, Augustine (354-430) refuted the *homoian* Arians in the West by teaching that there is “one God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit . . . equal and co-eternal and of one nature . . . an inseparable trinity, yet . . . a trinity . . . in inseparable union . . . distinctively and in mutual relation to each other . . . presenting the three to our attention separately . . . but in no wise separated.”¹⁰⁸ The Father, Son, and Spirit are three distinct persons (*persona*) who share the single divine nature (*natura*). The true distinction of persons does not create divisions because the divine being of God is simple, not subject to the limitations and imperfections of his creation. Augustine insisted,

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Trinity, but they are only one God; not that the divinity, which they have in common, is a sort of fourth person, but that the Godhead is ineffably and inseparably a Trinity . . . the Father and the Son and

¹⁰⁶ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 258.

¹⁰⁷ For a full discussion of Augustine’s “Trinitarian grammar,” see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 364–83. For a presentation of Augustine as a Latin pro-Nicene in basic agreement with the Greek pro-Nicenes, see Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 184–200.

¹⁰⁸ Augustine, *Letters* 169, in *NPNF*¹, 1:540.

the Holy Spirit are one God, while remaining a Trinity . . . the Trinity is of one substance and [the] essence is nothing other than the Trinity itself.¹⁰⁹

Thus, the persons are inseparable, both ontologically and operationally. They are consubstantial, being of the single-same substance (*substantia*) or essence (*essentia*). Also, because God has one will, one power, one majesty, each person participates distinctly but equally in the one work of God. As with their counterparts in the East, the pro-Nicenes of the West contemplated and spoke of God as the ineffable “I am,” both according to the one eternal nature and simultaneously according to the three eternal, consubstantial, and coequal persons. Each person is God in relation to the divine nature; in relation to each other, they are Father, Son, and Spirit.¹¹⁰

Going into the fifth century, then, the church had established the orthodox ontology of the Trinity according to a particular person-nature distinction. The Scriptures required the *biblical* conclusion and confession that God is one, and that there are three who are God. The church recognized the need for a *conceptual* distinction between the way God is one and the way he is three. And the church developed the *terminological* solution in a new theological use of *ousia* and *hypostasis*, which began at Nicaea and continued in the work of a pro-Nicene tradition. In short, at the threshold of Chalcedon, Nicene Trinitarianism affirmed that God is three persons (*hypostases, prosopa*) in one nature (substance, *ousia, physis*).

Chalcedonian Ontology: Person-Nature Christology

At this point, it is crucial to recall that the Chalcedon Definition indicates that its Christological formulation is framed in terms of Nicene Trinitarianism. As the Definition continues into its affirmations regarding the constitution of Christ, it becomes

¹⁰⁹ Augustine, *Letters* 120.

¹¹⁰ See Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 179–96, 235–41.

clear that the 520 bishops¹¹¹ at Chalcedon intentionally extend the person-nature ontology of the Nicene faith.¹¹² The Definition confesses Jesus Christ as the same Son and *hypostasis*, who is truly God, being *homoousios* with the Father and eternally begotten of the Father. Through the incarnation, the Son remained a distinct divine person who continues to share the one divine nature (*ousia/physis*) with the Father (and the Spirit). After the incarnation, the Son has a human ontology alongside his divine ontology. But what is the relationship between the two? How can deity and humanity coexist in one individual? Did the divine nature take into itself a human nature? Did the two natures change to accommodate one another? Or did they come together to form one divine-human nature? If distinct, do the divine and human natures have only one person, or does each have its own person, one divine and one human? Or is the person of Christ an ontological result of combining the divine and human natures? Ultimately, the careful application of the person-nature distinction would answer these questions.

Yet, extending Trinitarian ontology into Christology did not come without controversy and debate. In its pro-Nicene doctrine, the church developed the person-nature distinction with sufficient clarity to address the basic Trinitarian issues at hand and define an orthodox ontology of God as a person-nature being. However, that construction did not fully anticipate specific Christological questions. The singular divine *ousia*-nature is simple, being immaterial and having no parts or composition.¹¹³ Even so, the divine

¹¹¹ A letter from the council to Pope Leo spoke of 520 bishops. Pope Leo later indicated there were approximately 600 bishops. Two centuries later, the Third Council of Constantinople referenced 630 bishops at Chalcedon, which likely included representative of those who were absent. It should be noted that even the most conservative figure made Chalcedon the largest gathering of bishops in its day, and subsequent councils rarely surpassed it.

¹¹² In their presentation of how Christian doctrine developed through the early church creeds and confessions, Fairbairn and Reeves position the chapter on “The Chalcedonian Definition” as “Explaining the Nicene Creed.” Instead of producing a new creed, the bishops at Chalcedon responded to controversy over the divine Son’s incarnation “by repeating both the Creed of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed and issuing a definition explaining and developing the faith of Nicaea with more specificity about the incarnate Son.” Fairbairn and Reeves, *Story of Creeds and Confessions*, 81.

¹¹³ The doctrine of divine simplicity would develop along with the person-nature distinction to

nature comes into some kind of union with humanity in Christ. The *hypostasis*-person of the Son fully subsists in the divine nature and coinheres with the Father and the Spirit, yet he comes into some kind of union with humanity in Christ. As in the Trinitarian controversy of the fourth century, the fifth-century debates in Christology would see various groups within the church struggle through the same three layers of disagreement. As before, the church would need to work out a *conceptual* apparatus for its *biblical* conclusions and articulate those conclusions and concepts with *terminological* clarity. In the process, the church would use its orthodox ontology to accomplish its overall task of demonstrating that the incarnation of the divine Son into our humanity is mysterious yet coherent.

For the purpose of understanding the church's application of the person-nature distinction, it will help to highlight three main aspects of the Christological debates: the available paradigms for conceptualizing the incarnation; some inadequate attempts to formulate the incarnation; and the Caledonian Definition of the incarnation.

Word-Man Incarnation

The pro-Nicene tradition had articulated and defended the ontological distinction and deity of the Son. In its focus on certain Trinitarian concerns, however, the church had not yet confronted some significant Christological issues. Specifically, disputes had arisen regarding how to affirm the full humanity of the incarnate Son while maintaining his full deity. The fact of the incarnation revealed that the Son is God and is also distinct from the Father and the Spirit. The implications of this life within the

make clear that such distinction did not create parts in the being of God. The affirmation of God's simplicity first arose regarding the divine attributes to clarify that God is identical with his attributes and not the sum total of them. The principle of divine simplicity would then also apply to affirm three divine persons sharing the one divine nature without dividing or diminishing the being of God. Chaps. 5 and 6 will discuss divine simplicity in the process of applying the person-nature distinction to anthropology. But the current historical warrant remains focused on the person-nature distinction itself and references divine simplicity only as appropriate for understanding or clarifying the extension of Trinitarian ontology into Christology.

Godhead had forced the church to formulate a biblical, coherent, and clear confession of divine unity and diversity. Moreover, the theological development of *ousia* and *hypostasis* helped conceptualize and articulate the proper relationship between the divine person(s) and the divine nature. However, now the church needed to focus on the ontological reality of the incarnation itself. How does the Son, who is consubstantially God, become incarnate such that he is still God and is now “like us in every way, except sin”? What is the relationship between divinity and humanity in Christ? In short, what does it mean that the divine Son is a man? In the debates about the incarnation leading up to Chalcedon, two paradigms prevailed.¹¹⁴

Deficiency of a Word-flesh incarnation. The Word-flesh (*Logos-sarx*) paradigm of the incarnation posited that the Son of God entered a union with a human body of flesh but without a human soul. As early as the third century, some forms of Christology saw the presence of the Logos and the presence of a soul as mutually exclusive. For example, Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-339) displaced the human soul with the divine Logos; otherwise, he argued, Christ would have been capable of mere human obedience only, which would not be sufficient for the salvation of mere men.¹¹⁵ However, this confinement to a Word-flesh incarnation created a tension in Christ’s ontology that

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of common but inaccurate division between the “schools” at Alexandria and Antioch, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 293–97.

¹¹⁵ For Eusebius, the Logos is divine and distinct from the Father and comes to dwell in the flesh. Christ simply is this *Logos-sarx* union. But here the Logos takes the place of the soul in Christ so that he is not a mere man but transcends the “usual, universal human nature.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:183. Rather, the saving acts of Christ are performed purely by the Logos *qua* Logos, with only passive involvement of the flesh. However, under this scheme, the result of trying to maintain the divinity of the Logos in union with only a body of flesh denies the full humanity of Christ. Moreover, without a proper person-nature distinction, a *substantial* union of the Word and the flesh comes close to “making this *Logos-sarx* synthesis into a *mythical* being, which hovers between divinity and the created world” (1:183). Even though Eusebius stressed the difference between the “Son” proceeding from the Father and the “body which was assumed” in the incarnation, his confinement to the *Logos-sarx* paradigm caused him to conceive of Christ as a new whole: the Son of God is the eternal Logos; the Son of Man is the sarx of Christ animated by the Logos (see 1:184); see also Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 139–40.

minimized and even negated his humanity in favor of his divinity. Coming into the fifth century, the tension pulled the other way as the Arians used the Word-flesh paradigm to bring Christ ontologically closer to creation.¹¹⁶ The Arians argued that one who is consubstantial with the Father could not enter into a union with the flesh because that conjunction would bring creation (a human body) and change into the divine being of God.¹¹⁷ So for them, the incarnation proved that the Word of God is a creation of God. While ontologically inferior to God, however, the Word in the flesh is also not a complete man because the human soul has been displaced by the Logos.¹¹⁸ The incarnation produced one composite nature of Logos and flesh. Here again, a *Logos-sarx* incarnation created more problems than it solved.

Leading up to Chalcedon, however, it was the Apollinarian version of the Word-flesh paradigm that posed the greatest threat to the church's biblical confession of Christ. As the bishop of Laodicea (c. 360-375), a contemporary of the Cappadocians, Apollinarius (c. 310-390) defended the genuine distinction of the Son from the Father and the full deity of Christ according to the Nicene faith of his day. Thus, he was an open opponent of Arianism and Sabellianism. Apollinarius affirmed that there is one Christ, the Son incarnate, who is both God and man. However, his adoption of a *Logos-sarx*

¹¹⁶ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:238–48. The Arian version of a Word-flesh incarnation also placed the Logos in union with a human body at the expense of a human soul. Like the Eusebian version, the Arians were concerned to have a substantial union as the only means by which the Word from heaven could become truly incarnate. The Arians, however, used the substantial nature of the *Logos-sarx* conjunction to argue against the divinity of the Logos.

¹¹⁷ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:247–48.

¹¹⁸ The Arian incarnation entailed the Logos becoming the life-principle of the flesh, leaving no room for the soul. In fact, for them, “if he also had a soul, the impulses from God and from the soul would necessarily have conflicted. For each of the two is self-determining and strives toward different activities.” Franz Diekamp, *Doctrina Patrum De Incarnatione Verbi* (Munster, 1907), 615, quoted in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:245. Rather, in the incarnation, the Logos entered into a physical union with a body of flesh in such a way that a composition occurred between the two and produced one entity. See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:247.

incarnation led Apollinarius to ground the unity and diversity of Christ in a deficient ontological principle, resulting in the “mutilation of the humanity of Christ.”¹¹⁹

A brief analysis of the Apollinarian incarnation will demonstrate particular deficiencies in the Word-flesh paradigm that highlight the need for a Word-man incarnation grounded in the person-nature distinction.

For Apollinarius, the God-man is a “σύνθεσις ἀνθρωποειδής.”¹²⁰ The incarnate Son is a compound unity in human form. It would be soteriologically insufficient for God to dwell in a man. Rather, a true and full incarnation required that “the Logos joins himself to a human, fleshly nature to form a substantial unity and through this union constitutes a human being, i.e. a being of body and spirit.”¹²¹ Apollinarius here interpreted the incarnation in terms of his anthropological framework: a substantial synthesis of body and soul. In fact, the only difference between mere man and the “heavenly man” was that the divine Logos rather than a human soul joined with a human body. “A *physis* [complete being] is made up of the two parts, as the Logos with his divine perfection contributes a partial energy to the whole. This is also the case with the ordinary man, who is made up of two incomplete parts which produce one *physis* and display it under one name [of man].”¹²² In every man, two earthly elements (soul and body) make up the whole human being as an integral unity (*physis*). In Christ, the

¹¹⁹ Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 15. As with most scholars, Bathrellos recognizes that Apollinarius intended to defend the divinity and unity of Christ as the “God-man.” But his solution resulted in the loss of an equally necessary part of a biblical Christology: “The main concerns of Apollinarius’s Christology were two: first, to secure the ontological unity of Christ, and second, to secure the ethical unity by denying his actual or potential sinfulness. Both concerns were perfectly legitimate, despite the fact that he tried to serve them by mutilating the humanity of Christ.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 11.

¹²⁰ See Apollinarius, *Ad Dionysium I*, in *ALSS*, 259–60. All references to the works of Apollinarius in *ALSS* rely in part on interaction with Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 10–16, and Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:329–40.

¹²¹ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:331.

¹²² Apollinarius, *Union of Flesh and Deity in Christ 5*, in *ALSS*, 185–93.

heavenly element (Logos) and the earthly element (body) combine as the two parts of the whole.

The simplicity of this symmetry between the soul–body composition of man and the Logos-flesh composition of Christ gave Apollinarianism a *prima facie* coherence that was logically satisfying on the surface. As the developing person-nature distinction within pro-Nicene theology would show, however, the Word-flesh paradigm is not capable of producing a Christological formulation that accords with the biblical teaching that Christ is fully man.

The Apollinarian understanding of the incarnation was ultimately grounded in a concept of *physis* marked by what Grillmeier calls a “vitalistic dynamism.”¹²³ Every man has a “νοῦς αὐτοκίνητος.” This self-moving mind is the ontological principle of self-determination, and such self-determination is the decisive element of *physis*. For Apollinarius, the concept of *physis* “can only apply to something which is an αὐτοκίνητον, which contains the power which gives it life, which can be regarded as the real source of life in any sphere of being.”¹²⁴ In every man, the human *pneuma* (spirit/soul) contains the human *nous* (mind/intellect), which is self-determining (αὐτοκίνητος).¹²⁵ As such, the human *pneuma-nous* is the ontological principle responsible for creating a vital and dynamic union with a human body, which union is a *physis*. The body alone is not a *physis* because it does not have within it the source of life and energy. In short, every *pneuma-nous* that combines with flesh creates a *physis* called man. And for Apollinarius, the same applied for Christ as a man with one exception: Christ is a body of flesh animated by a *divine pneuma-nous*, the Logos himself.¹²⁶ Christ is the one *physis* who is

¹²³ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:336.

¹²⁴ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:334.

¹²⁵ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:334–35; see also Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 327–28.

¹²⁶ See Brown, *Heresies*, 164. As Brown describes it, “Christ, like all other humans, was a

the God-man precisely and only because the *divine pneuma-nous* of the Logos created a vital and dynamic union with a human body.

Moreover, to maintain the integral unity of Christ as one man, Apollinarius insisted on a *mia physis* formulation. Introducing a second *physis* would destroy the unity of Christ in two ways. First, a duality of *physeis* would create an ontological division. *Physis* is the “self-determining, self-active being” (ζῶον αὐτοκίνητον, αὐτενέργητον), a natural unity (ἔνωσις φυσική) of *pneuma-nous* and flesh, which is a man.¹²⁷ Thus, two *physeis* would mean two men under the one name of Christ.¹²⁸ Second, a duality of *physeis* would create an ethical division. *Physis* necessarily entails the presence of a *nous*, which is the ontological principle of self-determination. Thus, two *physeis* would mean two sources of life and direction in Christ, leading to division and even opposition to the will of God in the God-man, who is to be the source of man’s salvation. The Word-flesh paradigm, then, must insist on a Christ of *mia physis* to have ontological and ethical unity. And this requirement necessarily excludes the presence of a human *pneuma-nous*.

As his anthropology developed from dichotomous to trichotomous, Apollinarius would develop his Christology to include the presence of a lower, animal soul (ψυχή).¹²⁹ In the substantial unity created by the Logos in his incarnation, however, the animal soul is responsible only for basic appetites (e.g., hunger for food) *entailed*

body of flesh animated and formed by a nous, but with the significant difference that the Nous of Christ was not a human spirit but the divine Logos.”

¹²⁷ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:334.

¹²⁸ Moreover, Apollinarius applied the well-known maxim that “two complete entities cannot become one.” See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:332. If the Word-flesh union provided the two parts of the whole Christ, then there is no metaphysical room for the union of the flesh with a human soul.

¹²⁹ Whereas the dichotomist affirms only a body and soul, the trichotomist defines human beings as comprised of body, soul, and spirit. Apollinarius came to his own trichotomist position from an overly literal interpretation of John 1:14, “the Word became flesh,” where the Logos assumed a mere body of flesh and bones. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 297n32.

with human *physis*, not the self-determination of the *nous* that *creates* human *physis*. So even in its most mature form, the Apollinarian incarnation required the Logos to be “ensouled in the flesh of Christ,” replacing the human *nous* and becoming the life-giving and life-directing principle of a body with an animal soul, having “complete control over all life *qua* Logos.”¹³⁰ Christ is still a compound *mia physis* of the Logos and *some* humanity.

Finally, it is instructive to see how Apollinarius integrated the concepts of *ousia* and *hypostasis* into a Word-flesh incarnation. From beginning to end, Christ is a σύνθεσις ζωτική. The substantial and vital union of the Logos with flesh created a composite Christ who is one *physis*. This *physis* is a complete, composite *ousia*, the flesh joined to the Logos as his organ or instrument, which the Logos fully possesses, inhabits, enlivens, and directs. As Grillmeier summarizes, “The God-man, then, is *one physis, one ousia*, because *one* life-giving power, which completely permeates the flesh, goes out from the Logos and unites the two in a living and functional unity.”¹³¹ With *physis* and *ousia* working as near-equivalents to express ontological *content*, Apollinarius used *hypostasis* (and *prosopon*) to express ontological *appearance*. The incarnate Logos is one *hypostasis* or person because there is “a substantial unity of one subject,”¹³² who is Christ. The union of Logos and flesh created a unified “ὑποκείμενον.”¹³³ This unified subject is the whole “person” of Christ who dwelt in the world and acted as the Redeemer of the world.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:333.

¹³¹ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:336.

¹³² Apollinarius, *Ad Julian*, frag. 151, in *ALSS*, 247–48.

¹³³ Apollinarius, *Ad Julian*, frag. 151, in *ALSS*, 247–48.

¹³⁴ With this understanding, Apollinarius argued, “Holy scripture makes no difference between the Logos and his flesh, but the same (αὐτός) is one *physis*, one *hypostasis*, one power (ἐνέργεια), one *prosopon*, fully God and fully man.” Apollinarius, *Ad Diodorum*, frag. 145, in *ALSS*, 242. Here it should be noted that even in the ontological appearance of a singular, *mia hypostasis*, this unified subject is grounded

The foregoing discussion demonstrates both the logical conclusion and ontological deficiencies of the Word-flesh paradigm that was epitomized in the Apollinarian incarnation. It is important to recognize that Apollinarius was concerned to defend the truth of the incarnate Son's unity, deity, and humanity. In particular, Apollinarius defended the Nicene faith of his day and sought to align his Christology with its orthodoxy. He rightly recognized the soteriological significance that there is one Christ who is the mediator between God and man and that this Christ must be the God-man who is both divine and human. His Christological intentions and goals were orthodox. While he attempted a "Nicene" Christology, however, Apollinarius did not apply the Nicene ontology developed according to the person-nature distinction. Three observations will help focus on the implications.

First, Apollinarius conformed his Christology to his anthropology and created a Christ who is less than human. He began with an ontological definition of man as a composition of body and soul in which the *pneuma* with its *nous* is responsible for the vital and dynamic union with the flesh. He then extended this definition of man to the definition of Christ. The Logos took the place of a human *pneuma-nous* in the composition of the man Jesus Christ so that Apollinarius could speak of Christ as the God-man. But he could do this only by "mutilating" Christ's humanity, a graphic description that rightly points to the inhuman result. The replacement of the rational soul by the Logos would mean that Christ does not have the ontological capacity to know, will, love, suffer, pity, have compassion, and endure and overcome all temptations *as a*

in the vital, dynamic, substantial unity of the *mia physis* created by the Logos becoming the determining principle of human flesh. Grillmeier demonstrates this by observing that Epiphanius's refutation provides a reproduction of Apollinarius's Christological argument for the unity of *hypostasis* grounded in the vital dynamism created by the Logos: "Man is a *hypostasis* by virtue of his *νοῦς*, which is the principle of life. His animal soul (*ψυχὴ*) and his body have their *hypostasis* in and through this *νοῦς*. If then the Word as divine *νοῦς* and divine *πνεῦμα* has taken a human *νοῦς*, there are two hypostases in Christ, which is impossible. If, on the other hand, he took only a body and an animal soul, then they are necessarily *hypostatized* in him and Christ is only a single *hypostasis*." Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:339.

man. With only a lower soul limited to the most basic appetites, Christ would experience life *as an animal*. Consequently, such an insensate condition would render Christ essentially incapable of fully human obedience to God and a fully human life and death on behalf of sinful humanity. It is true that Christ must be more than merely human because he is simultaneously divine. But the Apollinarian Christ is less than merely human. The thing that results from the “incarnation” of the Logos under Apollinarianism can neither feel nor meet the deepest and distinctly human need of salvation.

Second, Apollinarius created Trinitarian and Christological confusion by grounding the unity of Christ in the incarnation of the Son rather than in the Son himself. His fundamental concern was to have a substantial or natural unity achieved by the Logos in his union with flesh. While he recognized the parts involved, Apollinarius focused on describing the whole being (*physis*) of the incarnate Logos. So there is one substance and one subject who is the whole composite Christ because there is one substantial unity of Logos and flesh. All unity is located in the Word-flesh union. The unity is the union. However, reducing personal unity to substantial unity destroys the person-nature distinction required to confess that there are three who are each fully God, and that there is now one of them who is both fully God and fully man. The personal subject of the Apollinarian Christ is not the Logos but the unity of Logos and flesh. The subject is the created *physis*, not the eternal Son. The Son loses his personal distinction as a divine person when he becomes a compound part of a *mia physis* other than the Godhead, i.e. the new *ousia* that is Christ. Moreover, if the *mia physis* of Christ is grounded in the self-determination of its divine *Nous*, then either the Son is the only divine person who is an *αὐτοκίνητον*, or there are three who are *αὐτοκίνητος* and thus three divine *physeis*. In short, the Apollinarian incarnation entails either the depersonalization of the Son or the multiplication of God.

Third, Apollinarius was confined to ontological categories that were incapable of formulating a biblical Christology that accords with Nicene Trinitarianism. In its

fourth century development of orthodox ontology to describe the being of God, the church came to use *ousia/physis* to indicate the divine substance with all of its divine attributes.¹³⁵ And the church separated *hypostasis* from *ousia* for the specific purpose of using *hypostasis* to indicate the three divine subjects who subsist in and act through the divine *ousia*. Thus, the whole being of God was not the divine *ousia* but the three divine *hypostases* subsisting in the divine *physis*. While this person-nature distinction was developing in the pro-Nicene tradition, however, Apollinarius used these terms differently in Christology. According to Trinitarian ontology, Apollinarius conflated his Christological person and nature to the one category of *ousia/physis*. Rather than *hypostasis* subsisting in *ousia*, there is one *ousia* of ontological content that is one *hypostasis* in its ontological appearance. With such an absolute unity of nature, it becomes almost impossible to distinguish between divine and human properties, being unable to relate some of them to the Logos and some of them to the flesh.¹³⁶

Apollinarius affirmed the *biblical conclusion* that Christ is fully God and fully man. However, at the *conceptual level*, the presentation of the incarnation according to a Word-flesh paradigm caused a person-nature conflation that created doctrinal incoherence and an ultimately unbiblical Christology. This conflation of ontological categories was accompanied by a *terminological divergence* from Trinitarianism and confusion in Christological formulation. As Grillmeier observes, the Apollinarian meaning and use of *physis* and *hypostasis* “can only occur within a Christology with the explicit and exclusive Logos-sarx framework.”¹³⁷ Although it required controversy to see it, the Word-flesh paradigm is conceptually incompatible with a biblical and deeply

¹³⁵ See Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity*, 97–120.

¹³⁶ See Jean Galot, *Who Is Christ? A Theology of the Incarnation*, trans. M. Angeline Bouchard (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1981), 232.

¹³⁷ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:335.

coherent Christology, precisely because it does not make the necessary person-nature distinction.

Affirmation of a Word-man incarnation. Based on this brief examination, it becomes apparent why the church would reject not only Apollinarianism but also a Word-flesh incarnation. As Gregory of Nazianzus critiqued it during its rise, Apollinarianism vitiates both the humanity of Christ and the salvation of humanity in Christ.¹³⁸ In his famous statement that encapsulated the church’s position, Gregory insisted, “that which He has not assumed He has not healed If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of Him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole.”¹³⁹ If a complete human soul is not assumed by the Son in the incarnation, then the incarnate Son cannot redeem the soul of man and cannot save sinners.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Scripture demands that the church confess both the mystery of God as Trinity and the mystery of Christ as the God-man, without inconsistency or incoherence. Because the Son, who is personally distinct from and consubstantial with the Father, is the same Son who becomes incarnate, then the church would need to use the same ontological categories in both Trinitarianism and Christology.

To these ends, leading up to Chalcedon, the church affirmed the Word-man (*Logos-anthropos*) paradigm of the incarnation. The specifics of this alternative conceptualization will be demonstrated in the upcoming discussion of Christ’s person-nature being. It will suffice here to recognize that only a Word-man incarnation can

¹³⁸ See Gregory Nazianzen, “To Cleodius the Priest against Apollinarius,” *Epistle 101*, in *NPNF²*, vol. 7.

¹³⁹ See Gregory Nazianzen, “To Cleodius the Priest against Apollinarius.”

¹⁴⁰ Bray summarizes the problem: “In other words, an incomplete humanity in Christ entailed an incomplete salvation for us, and an incomplete salvation was no salvation at all.” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 330.

support a biblical and coherent confession that the Word of God became a man.¹⁴¹ The Word did not become part of a human nature without a (complete) human soul. Rather, by assuming human flesh—body and soul—the Word of God became a fully human being, like us in every way. In short, the Son did not assume parts of a man but became a whole man such that he lived a fully human life and died a fully human death. For the divine Son to come and accomplish his mission and ministry, he must have the ontological capacities of all mankind. The purpose of the incarnation was not for the Son to imitate man as much as possible but for him to become *anthropos* so that man might imitate him. The incarnation must provide the Son with the ability to know, will, love, suffer, pity, have compassion, and endure and overcome all temptations *as a man*. Ultimately, as the incarnate Son, Christ must offer to God a life and death of perfect obedience as a perfect human being on our behalf.

The church would continue to defend the deity, humanity, and unity of Christ as the one mediator between God and man. What needed to change was not these orthodox intentions but the means of achieving an orthodox result. The Word-flesh paradigm was guided by anthropology and tied to a one-nature framework that led inevitably to impermissible ontological results, including the depersonalization of the Son and the dehumanization of Christ. Confining the incarnation to the category of nature as a whole being (*physis*) presented a conflated ontology that was incapable of making clear and necessary distinctions in the divine-human being of Christ. The solution would come in the church's affirmation of a Word-man incarnation of the Son grounded in his divine ontology.

In particular, as pro-Nicene ontology developed into Trinitarian orthodoxy, the person-nature distinction became available for use in Christology.¹⁴² Going into the fifth

¹⁴¹ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 296–97.

¹⁴² For a discussion of the initial advantage held by Apollinarius in theological framework and

century, the same redeployment of *hypostasis* and *ousia* that enabled the confession that God is three persons in one nature would enable the confession that Christ is one person in two natures. This distinction would make metaphysical sense of how the eternal Word could become a man by assuming a complete human nature without any change in his distinct personhood or the divine nature. Rather than starting with a certain anthropology and then extending it into Christology, the church would take up its orthodox ontology and extend the person-nature distinction from God to the God-man.

The use of the person-nature distinction in a Word-man incarnation, however, did not escape its own controversy. Once again, the particular disagreements hold the key to understanding the ontological accomplishment of Chalcedon.

Person-Nature Being

In the struggle to conceptualize the ultimate mystery of God the Son becoming a man, the church eventually recognized the need to distinguish between dimensions or levels of being. This distinction began with the pro-Nicene disambiguation of *hypostasis* from *ousia*. Person and nature are neither separate beings nor identical metaphysical realities. In the divine being, rather, *hypostasis* and *ousia* are different ontological categories that correspond to the who and the what of God: there are three *hypostases* who are God and there is one *ousia* that is God. However, extending this person-nature ontology into Christology involved obvious discontinuities between divine and human being that raised questions regarding its application. Leading up to Chalcedon, as Grillmeier observes, “The chief concern is to make clear the levels on which unity and distinction are to be sought in Christ. The important complexities of this period are a result of the difficulty in separating these two levels.”¹⁴³ In Trinitarian ontology, *ousia*

terminology that then gave way to the Word-man paradigm as it took over and redefined the concepts, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:345–47.

¹⁴³ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:347.

was the location of unity and *hypostasis* was the location of distinction. In Christology, unity and distinction would need to exchange metaphysical locations.

Even though the church insisted on a Word-man incarnation, the paradigm itself did not answer the question of unity and distinction in Christ. The *Word-man* incarnation would need to be formulated properly in terms of a *person-nature* incarnation. Before getting to the Chalcedonian Definition, the consideration of two inadequate attempts will help interpret the Definition's meaning and significance. Nestorius of Constantinople (c. 386-c.450) worked from a Word-man paradigm, and Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444) worked into it. But they employed person and nature in different ways to explain the unity and diversity in Christ, neither of which found approval at Chalcedon. Examining these particular formulations will help highlight what the Definition means by confessing that Christ is "one Person" who is "acknowledged in two natures."

Nestorius and the distinction of natures. More than any theologian before him, Nestorius pursued a Christological method that located unity and distinction at different ontological levels.¹⁴⁴ Beginning with the Antiochene tradition of a Word-man incarnation, Nestorius used a novel person-nature distinction to find "the unity on the level of the *prosopon* and the distinction on the level of the natures."¹⁴⁵ Reversing the Trinitarian formula, he argued for one "person" of Christ and two natures: "as in the Trinity, there one *ousia* of three *prosopa*, but three *prosopa* of one *ousia*; here one *prosopon* of two *ousiai* and two *ousiai* of one *prosopon*."¹⁴⁶ While his methodological

¹⁴⁴ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:444.

¹⁴⁵ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:444.

¹⁴⁶ Nestorius, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, trans. G. R. Driver and Leonard Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 247.

insight was correct, however, and he intended to work within the Nicene faith, Nestorius struggled to account for a substantial unity of subject in Christ.¹⁴⁷

Nestorius's main concern was to secure the distinction and fullness of Christ's two natures. The distinction between the divine and human natures was absolute, and each remained in its fullness and original integrity after the incarnation.¹⁴⁸ Any confusion at the level of the natures would risk a reduction in, and thus loss of Christ's deity (Arianism) or his humanity (Apollinarianism).¹⁴⁹ To protect the Godhead and the manhood, Nestorius insisted on two complete natures. For him, a nature (*physis*) was the basis of concrete being (*ens concretum*, as opposed to abstract or unreal).¹⁵⁰ *Ousia* was the essence or essential content of a nature. A nature became recognizable and distinguished from other natures according to its *prosopon*, i.e. the set of characteristics or properties that identify its individuality. Thus, "the 'natural prosopon' is the complex of the properties, the differences and the characteristics by which a nature is differentiated, limited and finally determined."¹⁵¹ Moreover, the status of *natura completa* remained contingent upon the persistence and preservation of the natural *prosopon*. So Nestorius argued for two concrete and complete natures (*duo physeis*) in

¹⁴⁷ The purpose here is to elucidate the meaning of the Chalcedonian Definition by examining its context of theological debate. The examination of Nestorius does not so much contrast the teaching of Nestorianism with Chalcedon but follows Nestorius's particular methodology and Christological formulations that contributed to the entire tradition from which the bishops would draw for their conciliar conclusion. In fact, Grillmeier and others have concluded that Nestorius himself was not a Nestorian. For Grillmeier's examination of the Nestorius question, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:447–472; for his discussion and conclusion that Nestorius had the correct method but the wrong starting point and thus came to an insufficient solution for the unity in Christ, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:501–19.

¹⁴⁸ See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 347.

¹⁴⁹ See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 347.

¹⁵⁰ See Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 313–16. For Nestorius, *physis* connotes "not simply a collection of qualities in the abstract, but the concrete character of a thing." Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 313.

¹⁵¹ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:507.

Christ: the divine nature existing according to the divine *ousia* with its natural *prosopon*; the human nature existing according to a human *ousia* (body and soul) with its own natural *prosopon*. These individual and complete natures formed the principle of differentiation in Christ.

Along with the diversity of natures in his *duo physeis* formula, Nestorius argued for a certain kind of unity in Christ. He was aware of the Christological and soteriological problems created by two individual and complete natures. If not properly united, each nature would become its own subject, one human and the other divine. The result would create a mere man, separating this Jesus from God the Word. Such a man could never become the God-man for our salvation, but could only be adopted by God as his Son for our imperfect imitation.¹⁵² However, on the other side of this heresy, Nestorius also wanted to avoid the suffering of the impassible Word of God. For him, the divine Word could not be the subject of the God-man's passion. To formulate the unity he needed, Nestorius proposed his "*prosopon* of union." In the incarnation, each *physis* in Christ continued in its own reality and integrity, each retaining its "natural *prosopon*." Yet from this union, a single *prosopon* arose that was common to them both: "one *prosopon* which belongs to the natures and to [their] *prosopa*."¹⁵³ This "common *prosopon*" was the God-man, Jesus Christ. There are not two Sons but one, the unique *prosopon* of Christ. When Christ suffered, the common *prosopon* suffered, but not the natural *prosopon* of the Word.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² For the soteriological deficiencies of "adoptionism" as a heresy rejected in the fourth and fifth centuries, see James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 12–64; Robert L. Reymond, *Jesus, Divine Messiah: The New Testament Witness* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1990), 77–81.

¹⁵³ Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 246.

¹⁵⁴ Nestorius also conceived of a "*prosopon* of the economy," in which he could predicate both human and divine attributes to Christ, who united both natures in his single *prosopon*. However, as Kelly observes, this cross-predication remained conceptual: "[he allowed] a certain interchange of predicates, describing 'the man' as God and God the Word as man, so long as it was clearly understood that this was

Locating the unity of Christ in the *prosopon* of union, however, brought severe criticism. As the principal of duality, *prosopon* functioned according to its technical meaning on the level of nature, referring to all that gave the nature its outward indication of individuality. Thus, the natural *prosopon* was ontologically dependent upon the concrete reality of the underlying *physis*. In an attempt to find unity at a different level than nature, Nestorius relied on the ordinary sense of *prosopon* as “an individual considered from the point of view of his outward aspect or form.”¹⁵⁵ Cyril of Alexandria complained that this kind of unity could not provide a substantial, ontic unity of the divine and human in Christ. To him, the formation of one *prosopon* from the divine and human *prosopa* was merely external, something peripheral to the natures. In fact, Cyril argued that such a “union” was really only a “loose” and voluntary conjunction of deity and humanity.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, such an external union would achieve only a moral and accidental unity in which Christ would be called God merely in name only. “The divine name, divine honour and worship is lent to him on the basis of grace” due to a community of will and action between God and the mere man Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁷

The ultimate point of Cyril’s criticism was that Nestorius appeared to place a created subject in Christ alongside the divine Logos. Grillmeier captures the predicament: “Between the two, Logos and man, there is only the bond of mutual love, whereas each

done *ὁμωνύμως*, i.e. as a mere matter of words.” Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 316. Like the *prosopon* of union, the *prosopon* of the economy could not overcome the real and ultimately unavoidable problems with unity in Nestorian Christology.

¹⁵⁵ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 315. Nestorius refers to Christ as the “common *prosopon* of the divinity and the humanity.” Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 219.

¹⁵⁶ Most scholars acknowledge that Nestorius used “union” but preferred “conjunction” (*συνάφεια*) to describe the relationship between the divine and human natures after the incarnation. However, Grillmeier urges that the conjunction was no less substantial for Nestorius. See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:513–17.

¹⁵⁷ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:513.

of the two natures is fully independent.”¹⁵⁸ For Cyril, the incarnation of the eternal Son must involve an ontological union with humanity, not a separate human.

Nestorius defended his *prosopon* of union in Christ by appealing to “mutual compensation” and “mutual compenetration” of the divine and human natures. He explicitly denied that the man Jesus was an economic Son apart from the Logos, who is the eternal Son.¹⁵⁹ Rather, the distinct natures formed a *unitas ontica* because each of the natures appropriated the *prosopon* of the other nature.¹⁶⁰ The divine and human essences or natures exchange not themselves in confusion but their characteristics in representation. In a divine taking that was a creative act and a kenotic veiling, the Godhead made the manhood its temple such that the Godhead may work as a human *prosopon* (e.g., in his servanthood and suffering) and the manhood may present itself as the divine *prosopon* (e.g., the state of exaltation). In addition to this mutual compensation, Nestorius argued that the incarnation involved the mutual compenetration of the natures. He posited a Christological interpenetration as an analogy to the Trinitarian *perichoresis*: “Confess then the taker as he took and the taken as he was taken, wherein [each is] one and in another, and wherein [there is] one and not two, after the same manner as the manner of the Trinity.”¹⁶¹ In this way, Nestorius grounded the substantial unity of Christ in the coinherence of the divine and human natures, which formed the single *prosopon* of union.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:515.

¹⁵⁹ See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 346.

¹⁶⁰ Nestorius argued, “But in the *prosopa* of the union, the one in the other, neither by diminution nor by suppression nor by confusion in this ‘one’ conceived, but by taking and by giving and by use of the union of the one with the other, the *prosopa* give one another, but not the *ousiai*.” Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 252.

¹⁶¹ Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 207.

¹⁶² On the basis of the arguments from mutual compensation and compenetration, Grillmeier concludes, “It is impossible to deny that Nestorius in all seriousness seeks a substantial unity (a *unitas ontica*) in Christ.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:517.

Nestorius's defense of his peculiar Christological ontology, however, proved unsuccessful. He tried to make the unity in Christ as close as possible without destroying the duality of the natures. But his attempt to maintain the ongoing differentiation of the natures in an *ontic* unity of mutual compensation and compenetration was not able to escape the implication of a merely external union and a separation of subjects in Christ. Although he insisted on a real compensation and interpenetration of natures, Nestorius technically could involve only the natural *prosopon* in the union. By his own definition, the divine and human *prosopa* were not the *ousiai* or *physeis* themselves but their identifying characteristics. These characteristics, not the natures, were shared in such a way that they became a unity on a generic level of *prosopon*.¹⁶³ It is this generic, common representation that is the one Christ.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, even a truly substantial union through the *perichoresis* of natures could only produce or form the *prosopon* of Christ. Such a creation is either not a subjective Son and agent of his own actions, or, if he is, this Christ is a second, economic Son who is distinct from the eternal Son.

Cyril and the unity of person. In his own Christological ontology, Cyril began with the eternal Son as the principle of unity in Christ. It was the divine Logos who became incarnate. For Cyril, the focus of the incarnation remained on *this* Son to see *him* as the Christ, “one nature of the God-Logos incarnate” (*μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη*).¹⁶⁵ He argued that this *mia physis* formula was necessary to ensure that

¹⁶³ Regarding the relationship between the natural *prosopa* and the *prosopon* of union, Kelly observes that Nestorius “seems to suggest that “the ‘*prosopon* of union’ or ‘common *prosopon*’ is not identical with either the *prosopon* of the Word or the *prosopon* of the humanity, but that it results from the coalescence, coming together or union of the two natures or *ousiai*.” Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 315.

¹⁶⁴ “The difficulty seems to have been that he could not make the *logos* the subject of the incarnate Christ’s *human* nature because he was already the subject of his divinity.” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 346.

¹⁶⁵ See Cyril, *Contra Nestorius* 2 (PG 76, 85A); Cyril, *Epistle 40* (PG 85, 77); see also Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 319; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:481–82. All references to Cyril’s writings in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) are indebted to interaction with Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 24–

“after the union, one nature is understood, the enfleshed nature of the Word.”¹⁶⁶ Cyril first adopted his one-nature formula under the misapprehension that it was used and sanctioned by Athanasius, even if it also was used by Apollinarius. The formula did fit the Alexandrian tradition of a Word-flesh paradigm. Yet, as Cyril came to see the soteriological and metaphysical necessity of Christ’s human soul, he modified the meaning of *mia physis* such that his use of it would affirm a Word-man incarnation of the Son.¹⁶⁷ Christ is a person-nature being: the eternal, divine *Logos* enfleshed as a man in a human body and rational soul.

Cyril’s main concern was to secure the theological and metaphysical unity of subject in Christ. Both before and after the incarnation, there is one *physis* of the Son. For Cyril, *physis* or nature refers primarily to the essence of a thing, but it includes the notion of actuation and life-force.¹⁶⁸ When brought into actual, individualized existence, a *physis* becomes a *hypostasis*. So these terms elaborate on each other to refer to a living, individual, existent substance. A *hypostasis* is a real, complete, and individualized nature. In Cyril’s Christological formula, the nature is first the divine substance that is

27; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:473–83; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 317–23.

¹⁶⁶ See Cyril, *Contra Nestorius* 2 (PG 76, 85A; Cyril, *Epistle 40* (PG 85, 77); see also Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 319; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:481–82.

¹⁶⁷ In its Apollinarian usage, the *mia physis* formula failed to account for the human soul. In that case, the humanity assumed was not a complete nature. Distinguishing his own understanding of *mia physis*, Cyril recognized that, “he who says that the Lord suffered only in the flesh (i.e. and not in the soul) makes the suffering irrational and not endured by the will; but if anyone says that he suffered with rational soul, so that the suffering was of free will, there is no objection to saying that he suffered in his human nature. But if this is true, how are we not to grant that the two natures exist without separation after the union.” Cyril, *Second Letter to Succensus*, quoted in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:475. As Grillmeier indicates, the place of the human soul in his Christology should have led Cyril to abandon the *mia physis* formula. Either Christ has two natures or the whole human psychology of Christ and the redemptive act accomplished by his soul will be lost.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:475. Even though he maintained a one-nature Christology, however, Cyril modified it to include a rational soul and insisted that God the *Logos* became a complete man. See Cyril, *Oration to Dominas* 31 (PG 76, 1228C).

¹⁶⁸ See Cyril, *Epistle 46* (PG 77, 241); see also Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 344.

hypostatized in the God-Logos. The Logos is a *hypostasis* in his individual bearing of the real and complete divine nature. And this same Logos then became incarnate, meaning that “the human nature of Christ has its hypostasis, i.e. its ground of existence and being, in the Logos.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, Cyril argued for a “*hypostatic* union” of the Godhead and the manhood in the person of Christ. He did not deny the distinction between the Godhead and the manhood. Rather, he confessed that Jesus is fully God and fully man without any ontological confusion of deity and humanity. His *mia physis* formula, rather, was meant to ground the unity of Christ in the single subject of the divine Logos who became incarnate, allowing the deity and humanity to be distinguished from one another while preventing their division.¹⁷⁰

Despite the depth of his insight into the source and subject of the incarnation, however, Cyril’s formulation brought confusion and criticism. In their debate, Nestorius objected that Cyril’s *mia physis* formula entailed some kind of mixture or confusion of the divine and human natures.¹⁷¹ Cyril argued for a *hypostatic* union, but Nestorius used *physis-hypostasis* at the level of nature to secure ontological distinction in Christ. In Nestorian Christology, *hypostasis* coincided with the complete divine nature *and* the complete human nature. So Nestorius could not allow a natural union of *hypostases* because the union would make one, concrete, individual “thing” where there must be two, the divine and human natures in their full integrity. Cyril’s formulation would be acceptable only if “*hypostasis*” meant the *prosoyon* of Nestorian ontology, i.e. the formal

¹⁶⁹ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:482.

¹⁷⁰ As Grillmeier notes, this understanding necessarily leads to the idea of a unity of person, even if Cyril is not sufficiently clear in his language and formula: “From all this, then, it is clear that Cyril in fact transfers the unity in Christ into the ‘*personal*’ realm while ascribing a duality to the *natures*.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:482.

¹⁷¹ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 313–14; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:508–9.

appearance of the nature. In short, Nestorian Christology demanded that Cyril's "hypostatic union" refer to the "prosopon of union."

Cyril attempted to demonstrate that the *mia physis* and *hypostatic* union of Christ included the essential distinction between his deity and his humanity. Cyril could never allow the humanity of Christ to be a *physis* when he used the term without qualification. Yet with his affirmation of the rational soul as the natural life-force of the flesh and the "natural principle of suffering" in Christ, Cyril could acknowledge in a limited sense that the humanity was a nature in itself.¹⁷² Having its own characteristics and integrity, the human nature in Christ is different in kind and essentially distinct from the divine nature. Cyril even confessed that Christ has come to us "εἰς δύο μὲν φύσεις" and taught that "there is one and the same Jesus Christ, acknowledging at the same time the distinction of the natures and preserving them unconfused from each other."¹⁷³ So he could accept a *duo physeis* formula. Contrary to Nestorius's real division of the natures, however, Cyril would admit two natures only as an intellectual act of analysis.¹⁷⁴ In theory, a two-natures formula was capable of articulating a distinction without creating a substantial division and two subjects in Christ. However, the *duo physeis* tendency to separate the natures and lose the substantial and subjective unity caused Cyril to insist on the *mia physis* formula.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 344. Cyril's affirmation of Christ's rational soul was concomitant with his rejection of the Apollinarian *mia physis* rooted in the Logos's substitution for the rational soul. Also, whereas Nestorius conceived of the *prosopon* of union to avoid the suffering of the divine Logos, Cyril came to identify the principle of suffering as the rational soul in Christ. See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:475.

¹⁷³ Cyril, *On Leviticus* (PG 69, 576B).

¹⁷⁴ See Cyril, *Epistle 45* (PG 77, 232); see also Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:479–80; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 321.

¹⁷⁵ For a summary of Cyril's Christology according to his twelve anathemas against Nestorius, see Cyril, *Epistle 17 (Third Epistle to Nestorius)*; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 324–25; Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 350–51.

Yet the Cyrillian formula did not prevail. Cyril tried to make the deity and the humanity of Christ as real, full, and distinct as possible without destroying their unity in the Logos. Rather than beginning with the two natures and trying to join them into a substantial unity, Cyril insisted that Christology should start with the one *physis* of the Logos and then recognize his existence in two stages or phases. Thus, the incarnation was the act of the Son as a *hypostatization* of the divine nature, who then also *hypostatized* the humanity made for him, bringing it into the existence of the Logos himself. In that sense, Cyril's *hypostatic* union "simply conveyed that the nature or hypostasis of the Word, that is, the concrete being of the Word, being truly united to human nature, without any change or confusion, is understood to be, and is, one Christ."¹⁷⁶ Even so, Cyril's refusal to abandon his *mia physis* formula required him to relegate the human "nature" to a logical category. For him, the focus remained on the whole being and life of the "enfleshed Logos." But forcing the humanity of Christ into the one nature of the Logos prevented Cyril from clearly articulating and securing the ontological reality and depth of the Son's human being. Conceptually, the humanity of Christ remained a new feature or set of characteristics of the God-Logos.

One person in two natures. The *duo physeis* of Nestorius and the *mia physis* of Cyril framed the Christological debate leading up to Chalcedon. Both conceived of Christ in terms of a person-nature being, but each formula had a particular strength and weakness that mirrored and reversed the other formula. At Chalcedon, the council would need to find a way through the debate to confess the biblical teaching of the incarnation with conceptual coherence and terminological clarity.

Nestorius had the better formula for the diversity in Christ but struggled with his unity. His *duo physis* clearly articulated that the human nature was a complete

¹⁷⁶ See Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 320.

metaphysical reality with its own integrity alongside the divine nature. Underlying the formula, Nestorius had the deeper philosophical insight in finding diversity at a different level than unity. However, compared to *physis*, the *prosopon* of union was metaphysically weak and unable to bear the weight of a substantial unity and a single subject in Christ.¹⁷⁷ The Nestorian *prosopon* was able to serve the real and complete appearance of the natures. Stretching it into a common *prosopon* over both the divine and human natures, however, resulted in a “thin” veneer that was incapable of sustaining the ontological weight of a personal agent and acting subject.¹⁷⁸ The *prosopon* of union also misidentified the subject of the union.¹⁷⁹ Rather than the eternal Son of the Father, the “who” of Christ was the *prosopon* created by the union of the divine and human natures.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, Nestorian ontology ultimately multiplied the subjects. While he denied “two Sons,” Nestorius consistently identified Christ with the human nature and refused to identify him with the Logos, suggesting that Christ is a second personal subject alongside the Logos.¹⁸¹ In the end, Nestorius’s two-natures formula kept him focused on the individual natures and prevented him from identifying the ontological principle of unity as the divine person of the Son.

¹⁷⁷ Bathrellos observes that Nestorian ontology places “the real ontology of a being on the side of nature rather than on that of person.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 19.

¹⁷⁸ As Bray concludes, “The weakness of his position was that the meaning he attached to *prosôpon* was not strong enough to bear the weight the he put on it because it was only the external manifestation of some underlying reality and not the agent that shaped and determined that reality.” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 347.

¹⁷⁹ Bray notes, “The *logos* was not the *prosôpon* of the incarnate Christ, but he contributed to its makeup.” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 347. Grillmeier agrees: “This one *prosopon* is the result of the union of God and man and not of itself the way or the means to it.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:511.

¹⁸⁰ As Bray observes, Nestorius and “Nestorianism” insisted that “Christ was the sum total of the two natures joined together, without specifying who or what joined them.” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 346.

¹⁸¹ See Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 144, 146, 252.

Cyril had the better formula for the unity in Christ but struggled with his diversity. His *mia physis* clearly articulated that the eternal, divine Logos is now incarnate. Underlying the formula, Cyril had the deeper theological insight to identify the subject of Christ as the Logos. The one who was before the incarnation is the same one who has become incarnate. But the philosophical principle of unity was not sufficiently distinguished from the principle of diversity. Cyril affirmed two “natures” after the union. Yet he remained unable to present a clear conceptual basis for demonstrating that the human nature was just as complete and substantial as the divine nature. The Cyrillian *physis* was able to serve the real and complete substance of the divine Logos. Squeezing the human “nature” into this one *physis*, however, required a “light” essence that was incapable of grounding the ontological weight of Christ’s humanity. In the end, Cyril’s one-nature formula kept him focused on the whole being of the incarnate Logos, which prevented him from identifying the ontological principle of diversity as the natures themselves. The individual substances are separate but not separated.

As an unwelcome interjection on the decennial eve of Chalcedon, Eutyches (380-456) popularized an extreme form of Cyril’s *mia physis* formula. In a series of lectures on Christology in Constantinople, Eutyches taught that the incarnation involved not the assumption of a human nature but its complete absorption into the divine nature, resulting in some kind of divine-human composite. Cyril’s *mia-physitism* placed Christ’s humanity within the “one nature of the God-Logos incarnate,” but without confusing the divinity and the humanity. In contrast, Eutyches argued for a *mono-physitism* that merged the humanity into a synthesis with the divinity. Contrary to Cyril’s qualified acknowledgment of a human nature in Christ, Eutyches insisted that the end of the incarnation was a unique nature that had been purely divine but is now a mixture of divinity and humanity. The divine Word brought a human nature into his own nature, transforming his *physis* into a coalescence of the divinity and humanity beyond their original integrity. Both Cyril and Eutyches argued for a body and a complete soul in

Christ, contrary to Apollinarianism. However, Eutyches employed the same Word-flesh paradigm as Apollinarius, thereby regressing into the same ontological and soteriological problems. The Eutychian amalgam would be neither truly God nor truly man, and such a Christ could neither be like us nor redeem us.¹⁸²

In the midst of this Christological confusion, the Chalcedonian fathers would need to affirm the strengths and overcome the weaknesses in the major arguments made at the time. The council, however, could not simply merge the two-natures formula of Nestorius with the Cyrillian focus on the Logos as the one subject throughout the incarnation. Each of those strengths entailed a particular weakness that was built into its respective ontological framework. Specifically, both Word-man Christologies made an insufficient distinction between person (*hypostasis-prosopon*) and nature (*ousia-physis*), which prevented them from maintaining both the personal unity and the natural diversity in Christ.

Although they conceived of Christ in terms of a person-nature being, Nestorius and Cyril used the concepts of *hypostasis*, *prosopon*, *physis*, and *ousia* in divergence from the pro-Nicene tradition. In accord with the Trinitarian logic of the Nicene faith, Nestorius attempted to find the unity and diversity in Christ at different levels. His *prosopon* of union or common *prosopon*, however, remained rooted in the relationship between the natures at the level of ἄλλο and never really rose to the level of ἄλλος, at

¹⁸² Despite Eutyches's censure at a local synod in 448, Eutychian monophysitism became a significant threat to the church's ability to formulate a biblical and coherent Christology. Flavian, the bishop of Constantinople, closed the proceedings against Eutyches with a confession that he intended as an affirmation that Christ has a divine nature and a human nature after the incarnation: "We acknowledge that Christ is *from two natures* [emphasis added] after the incarnation, in one *hypostasis* and one *prosopon* confessing one Christ, one Son, one Lord." Eduard Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1914), 2: 1.1.114, quoted in Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:524. Flavian's formula was self-explanatory, as 'after the incarnation' was added to the words 'from two natures.' It therefore meant the same as 'in two natures.'" Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:524. However, twisting the formula to their advantage, Eutyches and his followers used "from two natures" as part of a slogan to spread their teaching that *from two natures*, the union *produced one* nature.

least not without creating two “whos” in Christ.¹⁸³ Following the Nicene confession that the Son is an eternal person of the Trinity, Cyril began with the Logos and attempted to distinguish between the “personal” and the “natural” to account for the addition of humanity without altering the divinity of the Son. However, his integration of the humanity into the one real *physis* was unable to account for a truly substantial human nature alongside the divine nature at the level of ἄλλο. In short, Nestorian Christology provided only two “whats” with no real “who,” or two “whats” and two “whos”; Cyrillian Christology provided one “who,” but only one “what.”

Even after affirming a Word-man incarnation, the church struggled to make metaphysical sense of Christ’s deity and humanity. Nestorius and Cyril agreed with the *biblical conclusion* that the one Christ is fully God and fully man. Their *conceptual frameworks*, however, could not ground both the unity and the distinction in Christ with equal sufficiency and coherence. Moreover, their Christologies were weakened further by *terminological disagreement* and confusion. In particular, their formulas revealed not only different ontologies but also the inability of either one to begin with the Son’s divine ontology and extend it consistently to his human ontology. Only a Christological extension of Trinitarian ontology could make sense of how Christ is one and how he is two.

As stated above, then, the chief concern at Chalcedon would be “to make clear the levels on which unity and distinction are to be sought in Christ.”¹⁸⁴ Based on this

¹⁸³ This analysis results from the most charitable reading of Nestorius’s own claims. He rejected “two Sons” in Christ. In that case, the *prosopon* of union could not be a “who” without creating a contradiction. More than once, Nestorius wrote that Christ is “in two natures” and “one *prosopon* in two *ousiai*.” Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 170, 233, 236. Yet this additional *prosopon* was the result of the compensation and compenetration of the natural *prosopa*. At best, this *prosopon* of union seems to be a single supervenient appearance of the natures, not a truly different level of metaphysical reality. The common *prosopon* would have to remain at the level of “what.”

¹⁸⁴ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:347. The immediate aim was to condemn “Nestorianism” and monophysitism, including a Eutychean interpretation of Cyrillian Christology. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 29. The teaching of Nestorius had been taken to its logical and

distinction, the church would be able to formulate the incarnation in terms of one person (hypostasis, “who,” ἄλλος) in two natures (*ousiai*, “whats,” ἄλλο). The final discussion below will examine the meaning and significance of the person-nature distinction as the church extended it from the eternal Son to the incarnate Son.

The Chalcedonian Definition

Leading up to Chalcedon, the crux of the Christological problem was how to confess and comprehend the unity and diversity in Christ. With the affirmation of a Word-man incarnation, the issue shifted from recognizing the fullness of his deity and humanity to conceptualizing the *manner* of their union.¹⁸⁵ In 451, the answer came through a Christological extension of Trinitarianism’s person-nature ontology to form a conciliar Definition of the divine Son’s incarnation into our humanity.¹⁸⁶

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 [*homoousios*] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial [*homoousios*] 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 [*theotokos*], according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures [*en duo*

unacceptable conclusion by his followers, who held that Christ must have two *hypostases*, one person for each nature: the divine Logos and the assumed man. Most orthodox theologians of the time, and almost all the bishops to gather at Chalcedon, considered Cyril to be the supreme Christological authority. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 29. But the Eutychian modification had to be overcome. And unlike Cyril, some of his followers maintained the inadequate “one incarnate nature” as the shibboleth of orthodox Christology. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 28. Even so, as Grillmeier recognizes, the underlying issue was placing unity and distinction at different ontological levels, which none of the Christologies at the time were able to do.

¹⁸⁵ “It is no longer felt most important, as in the fourth century, to stress the full realities in the person of Christ, whether of the true Godhead or of the perfect manhood. It is now the *manner* of the union that comes more decisively into the foreground. The discussion therefore no longer takes place over the ‘Logos’ and the ‘man’ in Christ, and as a result it is no longer expressed in terms of Logos-sarx and Logos-anthropos. For the full Godhead and full manhood of Christ are acknowledged on both sides. The chief concern is with the relationship of the one to the other.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:445.

¹⁸⁶ “We can trace quite clearly in the Chalcedonian Definition the wish of the Fathers to take the Nicene framework as their starting point.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:552.

physeis], inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of the natures [*physeis*] being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature [*physis*] being preserved, and concurring in one Person [*prosoyon*] and one Subsistence [*hypostasis*], not parted or divided into two persons [*prosopa*], 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.¹⁸⁷

In this Definition, the council provided what had become necessary for the coherence of the church's confession: "a dogmatic formula which made it possible to express the unity and the distinction in Christ in clear terms."¹⁸⁸ Rather than adopt and modify a Nestorian or Cyrillian Christology, the council would extend divine ontology into the divine-human ontology of the incarnate Son. By this time, the church had developed its confession of God's triunity into a coherent account of his person-nature being. Three divine persons/*hypostases/prosopa* at one level share the one divine nature/*physis/ousia* at a different level of existence. The divine persons are neither an appearance of nor supervenience upon the divine substance but have their own real existence in the divine nature. Beginning with one of those divine persons, the Chalcedonian Definition would explain that the Son now has both a divine nature and an equally real and distinct human nature.

With a focus on the person-nature distinction, four propositions capture the ontological accomplishment at Chalcedon. Each proposition can be seen in the text of the Definition understood in light of the Trinitarian and Christological debates and developments discussed above.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, the Definition owes much of its

¹⁸⁷ "The Chalcedonian Definition," in Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 339–40. The bracketed Greek terms (transliterated for convenience) have been added for emphasis and reference in the following discussion.

¹⁸⁸ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:541.

¹⁸⁹ The resulting Definition is "a mosaic of excerpts" from five principal documents produced during the debates leading up to the council. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 340. The principal documents are Cyril of Alexandria's two Letters, Pope Leo's *Tome*, the Symbol of Union, and Flavian's profession of faith at the Standing Synod. For a discussion of these documents and their use in the Definition, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:443–550. "Here, as in almost no other formula

conceptualization and formulation to the *Tome* of Pope Leo I, which brought a Western influence and clarity to the discussion otherwise dominated by Eastern efforts.¹⁹⁰ The theology of Leo's *Tome*, then, can also shed light on the Definition's person-nature formulation of Christ.

First, the Definition made a clear distinction between the ontological levels of person and nature. Christ is both singular and twofold, but according to different metaphysical realities. The eternal Son is now "to be acknowledged in two natures [*en duo physeis*] . . . concurring in one Person [*prosopon*] and one Subsistence [*hypostasis*]." In this formulation, the council intentionally adopted the person-nature distinction of the Nicene faith lauded as pre-eminent earlier in the Definition. In the divine ontology, that distinction separated *hypostasis* from *ousia* (essence) for the purpose of using *hypostasis* to indicate the three distinct, self-existing subjects who subsist in the single-same *physis/ousia* they share. The council formally initiated an extension of this same distinction into Christology by moving *prosopon* (person) from the appearance of the nature into an equivalent of *hypostasis*, which is the subject and agent of the nature.¹⁹¹ In

from the early councils, all the important centres of church life and all the trends of contemporary theology, Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople and Antioch, have contributed towards the framing of a common expression of faith." Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:544. Given the current purpose, this discussion will focus on two aspects of the Definition's final form: the metaphysical framework and how it is applied to the specific ontology of God the Son incarnate.

¹⁹⁰ As Bray concludes, "The Council of Chalcedon sought to resolve the apparently interminable Christological debates by adopting an approach that was essentially Alexandrian in conception but that was clothed in the language and terminology of Antioch. It achieved this by adapting the doctrine of the Roman church as expounded by Leo, who approached the question from an independent angle." Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 360. For a discussion of this Western influence, see R. V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: SPCK, 1953). Regarding the main point, "Leo's insistence that the person of Christ was the deciding factor that kept the two natures in their proper place was too attractive an idea for the majority of the bishops at the council to ignore it. In essence, it was Leo's Christology that won the day, and his *Tome* became (and to a large extent has remained) the definitive interpretation of what Chalcedon intended to say." Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 361.

¹⁹¹ Bray explains that the Definition uses *prosopon* "not as the conjunction (*synapheia*) of two natures but as 'person' in the Roman way. This made the word equivalent to *hypostasis*, which for generations had been used in the East to distinguish the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from each other." Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 362. This use of *prosopon* indicates that "the council accepted that the principle of unity was to be found in the eternal Son of God who was the agent of the incarnation . . ." Bray, *God Has*

the divine-human ontology of Christ, one self-existing subject at the level of *hypostasis/prosopon*/person subsists in the two *physeis/ousiai*/natures, which he possesses at a different level of metaphysical reality.¹⁹² The person and natures of Christ are inseparable but exist at different ontological levels.

Second, the Definition provided the framework for identifying the divine person of the Son as the ontological principle of unity that grounds the subjective singularity of Christ. Through repetition, the council insisted that the one who became incarnate is “one and the same Son,” “the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood,” “one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten,” who after the incarnation is still “one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

In his *Tome*, Leo had explained, “He who became man in the form of a servant is he who in the form of God created man,” such that “one and the same [Word] is truly Son of God and truly son of man.”¹⁹³ There is one Christ, not as a result of the incarnation (contra Nestorius), but because the eternal person of the Son acted as the agent of his own incarnation into our humanity (with Cyril).¹⁹⁴ The distinct person of the Son (contra modalism), who is “begotten [not made] before all ages of the Father,” is the same divine Son who became incarnate (contra Arianism) by being “born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood.” Mary was *Theotokos* (with Cyril

Spoken, 362. “The Nicene concern is again taken up . . . that it is one and the same Logos who dwells with the Father and ‘who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate and was made man.’” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:546.

¹⁹² In assessing Leo’s Christological formula, including the *Tome of Flavian*, Grillmeier concludes, “Thus the unity of Christ is of one ‘person,’ while the duality is one of ‘substance’ or of ‘nature.’” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:538.

¹⁹³ Pope Leo, *Epistle 28 (Tome)*, in *NPNF*², 14:255–56.

¹⁹⁴ “The person of Christ does not first come into being from the concurrence of Godhead and manhood or of the two natures but is already present in the person of the pre-existent Logos.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:552.

and contra Nestorius) precisely because the one in her womb was the divine person of the Son, now incarnate.¹⁹⁵ When Leo had addressed this “twofold nativity” of Christ, he stated that the incarnation “took nothing from, and added nothing to that divine and eternal birth.”¹⁹⁶ The birth of the pre-existent Son into our humanity did not alter his divine person or the divine nature but added (*hypostatized*) a human nature (not a person) to his own prior personal subsistence.¹⁹⁷ In this sense, “properly speaking the one who was ‘made known in two natures’ was not so much ‘Christ’ as the ‘divine Word.’”¹⁹⁸ According to Chalcedon and its extension of Nicene ontology, at least by proper implication, the “person” of Christ refers to the eternal, divine person of the Son (who is now incarnate) before it refers to the whole concrete being of the God-man.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Cyril and Chalcedon referred to Mary as *Theotokos* (“God-bearer”) to affirm that in her womb was present for a time both the human nature of Christ and the divine Logos who assumed it. The complete incarnation of God the Son occurred there. In contrast, Nestorius affirmed that Mary bore only the human nature of Christ with its own *prosopon*, which was independent (if not separate) from the divine nature and its *prosopon*. Thus, Nestorius would not use *Theotokos* but urged that Mary was *Christotokos* (“Christ-bearer”). For more on the debate, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 301–2.

¹⁹⁶ Pope Leo, *Epistle 28 (Tome)*, 256. “Leo’s exposition of the problem was deceptively and disarmingly simple. He started from the creedal statement [of the 381 Nicene Creed] that, ‘We believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.’ The two natures derive from this dual origin and coexist in tension with one another in the incarnate Christ. The principle of their union does not lie in some kind of conjunction, nor is it to be ascribed to an assumption of the flesh by God. Instead, it is located in the person of the Son.” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 361.

¹⁹⁷ Grillmeier observes that in his *Tome*, Leo “shows that he who becomes man is the Son of the Father who has already existed from eternity and is thus pre-existent as a person. A new person does not come into being when the human nature is taken, nor does this result in two persons.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:532.

¹⁹⁸ David Coffey, “The Theandric Nature of Christ,” *Theological Studies* 60, no. 3 (September 1999): 405.

¹⁹⁹ For more on this distinction, see the discussion below regarding the need to explicitly identify the divine *hypostasis* of the Son before incarnation with the same *hypostasis* in Christ after the incarnation.

It should be noted that Grillmeier displays a tension on this point in his analysis of Chalcedon and Chalcedonian development. In discussing the sixth-century development, he recalls that “the Definition of Chalcedon did not attempt any speculative explanation of where in the one Christ the one *hypostasis* is realized, and under the assumptions at that time could not have aspired to this.” Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, pt. 1, *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)*, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 277. Even though the council started with the pre-existent Son as the one who became incarnate, “the concept of the ‘one

Third, the Definition identified nature as the ontological principle of duality that grounds the integrity and fullness of Christ's deity and humanity. Through incarnation, the single-same person of the Son is now "to be acknowledged in two natures [*en duo physeis*], inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of the natures [*physeis*] being by no means taken away by the union."

In his *Tome*, Leo had stated that the "unity of person is to be understood in both natures," which meant that the person of the Son now subsists simultaneously in both a divine nature and a human nature.²⁰⁰ In Christ, there are not two distinct persons or separate Sons (contra "Nestorianism"), but two natures, each of which is a substance in its own right that retains its natural integrity (with Nestorius).²⁰¹ The council rejected the formula "out of two natures" (ἐκ δύο φύσεις) to deny that the natures had merged into any kind of amalgam (contra Eutyches) or *tertium quid* (contra monophysitism).²⁰² The

hypostasis' was not applied to this but to the final form of him who had assumed flesh and in the 'one *hypostasis*' let the two natures be recognized." Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:277. Yet before this, when he reflects on and analyzes the accomplishment of Chalcedon and the Definition itself, Grillmeier affirms that, in explicit accord with the Nicene faith, "Chalcedon leaves no doubt that the one Logos is the subject of both the human and the divine predicates. . . . The *person* of Christ does not first come into being from the concurrence of Godhead and manhood or of the two natures but is already present in the *person* [emphasis added] of the pre-existent Logos." Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:552.

To avoid speculation and self-contradiction, it seems the best explanation for this tension is to interpret it in light of Grillmeier's previous insistence that Chalcedon was primarily dogmatic and not technical or philosophical. See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:544–50. He maintains this emphasis in his later comment regarding the location of *hypostasis* in Christ, where he recalls that the council did not attempt any "speculative explanation" and could not have done so under the working assumptions at that time. Rather than denying that the council extended the Nicene distinction between person and nature to the incarnation of the Son, Grillmeier likely means that at that time, the distinction itself did not yet have the quality or full explanatory power of a formal philosophical concept. In *that* sense, *hypostasis* did not yet refer to the pre-existent Logos but to the incarnate Logos. For more on this point, see the discussion below regarding pro-Chalcedonian clarification that the eternal person of the Son is the person and personal subject in Christ.

²⁰⁰ Pope Leo, *Epistle 28 (Tome)*, 256.

²⁰¹ From Leo's perspective in his *Tome*, "The idea that there were two natures before the incarnation but only one afterwards must be rejected, because the natures are just as real and internally coherent in the incarnate Christ as they were (or in the case of the humanity would have been) independently of him." Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 361.

²⁰² Eutychean monophysitism would have denied, whether coherently or not, that the mixing of natures resulted in a "third substance." Rather, the divinity completely absorbed the humanity. But later

council adopted “*in two natures*” (έν δύο φύσεις) to affirm that in addition to the divine nature, the Son had a distinct human nature *after* the union.²⁰³

Leo also had insisted that the incarnation occurred “without detriment therefore to the properties of either nature or substance which then came together in one person For both natures retain their own proper character without loss.”²⁰⁴ The Definition then made this same point by using four adverbs that describe the relationship between the natures in union. The union neither confused (*asynchytos*) nor changed (*atreptos*) the natures (contra Eutyches and monophysitism); yet it neither separated (*adihairetos*) nor divided (*achoristos*) the natures (contra Nestorius and “Nestorianism”). Moreover, both natures are real and complete. In his divine nature, the Son is “perfect in Godhead,” being “*homoousios* with the Father according to the Godhead.” In his human nature, the same Son is “perfect in manhood,” having both “a rational soul and body” (contra Apollinarianism) such that he is “*homoousios* with us according to the Manhood” (contra docetism). Extending the person-nature distinction of the Nicene faith allowed Chalcedon to apply a two-fold consubstantiality to Christ without separating his unity.

monophysitism urged that the mixture did produce a *tertium quid*, which was neither fully divine nor fully human. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 303.

²⁰³ Leo urged the έν δύο φύσεις formula and rejected έκ δύο φύσεις because of its use by the Eutychians to teach that “out of” two natures (pre-incarnation) arose the one nature (post-incarnation) of Christ. See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 354–55. Flavian (and Cyril before him) used the έκ δύο formula to guard against the division of Christ that might come with a Nestorian interpretation of έν δύο φύσεις. See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:533. Grillmeier observes, “As understood by Cyril and Flavian, however, this [έκ δύο] formula is not meant to imply a temporal succession, i.e. first of all a separate and independent existence of the two natures by themselves and then their dissolution in a unity. The formula έκ δύο φύσεις εις on the one hand acknowledges the reality of the two natures of Christ and on the other hand lays decisive stress on the state of oneness.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:533. However, after succeeding Cyril in Alexandria in 444, Dioscorus denied any notion of two natures in Christ. And he used the έκ δύο formula to rehabilitate Eutyches and affirm his monophysitism at the notorious and unorthodox Second Council of Ephesus (Robber Synod, *latrocinium Ephesinum*) in 449. See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 354–56. In 451, the Chalcedonian fathers rejected Dioscorus and monophysitism and approved Leo’s two-natures interpretation by unanimously adopting his έν δύο formula. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 29.

²⁰⁴ See Pope Leo, *Epistle 28 (Tome)*, 256.

Fourth, the Definition clarified that the person of the Son is the subject of both his natures. The natures were “not parted or divided into two persons [*prosopa*], but [are *hypostatized* in] one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

In marking the concrete distinction between the natures, Leo had made each an economic principle. Yet, for him, the Godhead and the Manhood were each a source or principle of activity not as a person but as a nature that has retained its own integrity and capacities.²⁰⁵ “For each form does what is proper to it with the co-operation of the other. . . . One [*unum*] of them sparkles with miracles, the other [*aliud*] succumbs to injuries.”²⁰⁶ As emphasized in the use of the neuter *unum* and *aliud* for the natures, their distinction as principles of action did not raise them to the level of a personal acting subject.²⁰⁷ Rather, Leo had insisted that the eternal, divine Word was the person of the Son who took on a distinct, substantial, and fully human nature without that nature becoming another person.²⁰⁸ The Definition then addressed the issue directly, both by denying (contra “Nestorianism”) that the human nature had or became a *hypostasis* other than the person of the Son and by affirming (with Cyril) that the Son *hypostatized* the humanity made for him by bringing it into his own personal existence.

In summary, the Chalcedonian Christ is a person-nature being according to a God-man extension of the church’s orthodox ontology. According to Trinitarian logic,

²⁰⁵ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:535. Contrary to the Cyrillian perspective of unity in the person that dared not speak of a duality in Christ, Leo “boldly speaks of the duality of the natures and the principles of action (the *forma*). Each of the two natures in Christ remains true to the laws of its being.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:535.

²⁰⁶ Pope Leo, *Epistle 28 (Tome)*, 256.

²⁰⁷ Rather than intending a Nestorian separation of subject, Leo was struggling against the Eutychian confusion of natures and “really wants only to accentuate the distinction of the natural principles of the actions (the *principia quo*, as they are later termed). This difference is not removed by the unity of person.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:536.

²⁰⁸ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:536; Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 361.

God is three persons subsisting in one nature. The persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit share the single-same divine nature. According to Chalcedonian logic, Christ is one person subsisting in two natures. As a result of a Word-man incarnation, one of the divine persons—the Word and Son of God—now subsists in both the divine nature and a human nature as the God-man Jesus Christ. The same divine personal subject (*ἄλλος*) is “truly God and truly man” according to each nature (*ἄλλο*). The Son is truly and consubstantially God as he subsists in the divine nature; he is truly and consubstantially man as he subsists in a human nature, which consists of both a body and a complete soul. The divine person of the Son became a man by assuming and giving full existence to a body-soul nature as his own.

Christological Extension of Orthodox Ontology

The historical work in this chapter has traced the development of Christological orthodoxy up to the Chalcedonian Definition in 451. In particular, the discussion has demonstrated the significance of the person-nature distinction for confessing that *and* how the one Christ is both fully God and fully man. Controversies arose and various proposals often made an unbiblical presentation of Christ, mutilating his humanity, misplacing his unity, and making it impossible for him to accomplish his work of redemption. In response to this Christological confusion, the church constructed a biblical doctrine by pursuing a Christology “from above,” looking to Scripture (from God) and the Son’s deity (as God) to make sense of his incarnation as a man. Moreover, by tracing the extension of the person-nature distinction from Nicene Trinitarianism to Chalcedonian Christology, a pattern has emerged by which the church formed a coherent doctrine of this incarnation.

The formation of the church’s fifth-century Christology followed a two-step process with three layers of concern and development. This does not mean that the councils and individual theologians followed a known paradigm or even formally

established one over those early centuries. As demonstrated above, however, a clear pattern of doctrinal formulation did emerge. An outline of that process here will also summarize the church's confession of the orthodox ontology of Christ at Chalcedon.

In the first step, the church *established the orthodoxy of a person-nature ontology*. The Chalcedonian Definition indicates that the bishops formulated the incarnation of God the Son within the framework established by the earlier pro-Nicene tradition. In the fourth-century debates, the church was firm in the *biblical conclusion* that there is one God and that the Father, Son, and Spirit are each God. But the church struggled with how to conceive and speak about the divine being. Ultimately, the church recognized the need for a *conceptual framework* that distinguished between the way God is one and the way he is three. That need was answered by the introduction of an ontological distinction between two levels of being. To make effective use of this distinction, the church settled on a *terminological formulation* enabled by an innovative separation and theological redeployment of *hypostasis* and *ousia*. At the threshold of Chalcedon, the orthodox ontology of God confessed that the Father, Son, and Spirit are each a distinct person (*hypostasis*) who shares the single-same divine nature (*ousia*) with the other divine persons.

In the second step of forming its Christology, the church *extended the orthodox ontology* of God to the ontology of the God-man. The Chalcedonian Definition demonstrates that the bishops intentionally extended the person-nature distinction from the pro-Nicene tradition to explain the way Christ is one and the way he is two. The church was again unwavering in its conviction of the proper *biblical conclusion*: there is one Christ, and he is simultaneously fully God and fully man. However, the church struggled with how to conceive and speak about the divine-human being of the incarnate Son.

For its *conceptual framework*, the church affirmed a Word-man incarnation and applied the person-nature distinction to explain the unity, deity, and humanity of

Christ. Apollinarianism showed that a Word-flesh paradigm is not capable of protecting the full humanity of Christ precisely because it is not capable of making the necessary ontological distinction to have unity at one level and duality at another level. His anthropological model that worked on one level, the nature level, did not have the metaphysical room for both a complete human soul and the divine Son. So the church adopted a Word-man paradigm to confess that the Son did not assume part of humanity but became a whole man by assuming a body and a rational, self-determining soul. Moreover, to make metaphysical sense of how the Son could become a man and remain divine, the church began with the divine ontology of Christ according to the pro-Nicene tradition and then explained that he added his humanity at the level of nature, not person. Both Nestorius and Cyril demonstrated that a Word-man incarnation is incoherent without the proper person-nature distinction. Rather than adopt and modify a Nestorian or Cyrillian Christology, the church extended the person-nature ontology of God the Son to define his incarnation. Beginning with the eternal Son, the church explained that the same person now has both a divine nature and an equally real and distinct human nature.

In its *terminological formulation*, the church explained that Christ is one *hypostasis/prosopon* in two *physeis/ousiai*. Extending the person-nature being of the eternal Son to the incarnate Son required the consistent application of terms. Again, Nestorius and Cyril demonstrated the problem with using Nicene terminology without its Nicene meaning. *Hypostasis/prosopon* must refer to an ontological reality in itself, not the appearance of one. The mere appearance of a natural substance at the level of ἄλλο cannot signify an ontological subject at the level of ἄλλος. At the same time, *ousia/physis* must be applied in the same way to the divine and human natures. Otherwise, the human nature will not have the same reality and fullness as the divine nature. Thus, to affirm both the personal unity and natural diversity of Christ with biblical fidelity and conceptual coherence, the church confessed that just as God is three *hypostases* in one *ousia*, Christ is (one of those) *hypostases* in the divine *ousia* and now also in a distinct

human *ousia*. The *hypostasis* (person) of the Son is *homoousios* (consubstantial) with God according to his divine *ousia* (nature) and *homoousios* with man according to his human *ousia*.

In short, Chalcedonian Christology was grounded in the orthodox Trinitarian ontology of the time. Rather than construct a different conceptual framework and terminology, the church extended the person-nature ontology of God to demonstrate the coherence of the biblical conclusion that God the Son became a man. This innovative yet faithful and logical application of two levels of being maintained a proper consistency between Trinitarianism and Christology, even as it reversed the location of ontological unity and distinction. For the same reason that God is three-in-one, Christ is one-in-two: God and the God-man are both person-nature beings.

Yet controversy would press the early church for greater coherence and clarity. In response, the church would take a third step in the formation of its Christological orthodoxy by developing its concepts and terms as needed to address specific challenges to Chalcedonianism. In particular, the church would need to demonstrate the coherence of Chalcedonian logic by developing the person-nature distinction and constitution of Christ. The next chapter traces this work into its seventh-century climax.

CHAPTER 4

PRO-CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY: CLARIFICATION OF THE PERSON- NATURE DISTINCTION

The last chapter traced the formation of orthodox Christology from the fourth century to its conciliar formulation at Chalcedon in 451. The Chalcedonian accomplishment of locating unity and diversity in Christ at two levels of being cannot be overstated. The unification and coherence of the church's proclamation of the faith rested on reconciling its confession of "one Christ" with its belief that he is both "fully God" and "fully man."¹ To address this need, the council grounded the mystery of Christ in the mystery of God by extending the person-nature ontology of God into the ontology of the God-man.² This Christological application of Trinitarian ontology would then provide a framework of orthodoxy for all future contemplation and confession of the incarnation. As Gerald Bray recognizes,

The long-term theological significance of the Chalcedonian Definition was that it shifted the terms of discussion from a nature-based understanding of the incarnate Christ to one that started with the intentions of the divine person. All talk of a connection of natures or of a transfer of properties from one nature to the other was transformed by a new paradigm, one in which the divine person of the *Logos*, the Son of God, took on a second (human) nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary,

¹ "Chalcedon sought to discover the solution of just *one* disputed question: *how* the confession of the '*one Christ*' may be reconciled with belief in the '*true God and true man*,' '*perfect in Godhead*, '*perfect in manhood*.'" Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 544–45.

² "The importance of Chalcedon in both historical and theological terms can hardly be overestimated. By introducing into Christology the terminology which had been used in the fourth century to denote unity and distinction in God, [Chalcedon] brought about a helpful integration of 'theology' and 'economy.'" Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 29.

becoming its defining identity (*hypostasis*) and acting in and through it in exactly the same way as he already acted in and through his divinity.³

In short, the Definition's person-nature ontology would become orthodox ontology in Christology.

This Chalcedonian orthodoxy, however, would emerge over centuries of defense and development. The Definition did not answer all Christological issues. Chalcedon established that Christ is a person-nature being. Yet the council intended to provide a *primarily* dogmatic solution, not precise philosophical concepts with exact and technical definitions.⁴ The confession of Christ in terms of the person-nature distinction was served by metaphysics, not determined by it. But this does not mean that the Definition is *merely* dogmatic. The person-nature distinction was used precisely because the church had developed the terms and concepts to indicate *ontological realities*. While it did not provide a comprehensive Christology, the application of orthodox ontology to Christ did create parameters for further reflection.⁵ The initial linguistic–conceptual limitations of a person-nature incarnation had the advantage of securing broader agreement and stimulating greater depth in doctrinal development. However, these same constraints raised questions regarding the person-nature constitution and function of Christ that a pro-Chalcedonian tradition would have to answer.

³ Gerald Bray, *God Has Spoken: A History of Christian Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 362–63.

⁴ “There is no attempt at a philosophical definition or speculative analysis! In theological method Chalcedon is no different from any of the earlier councils. Even if abstract concepts find their way in, the theological method here consists only in ‘listening to’ the proven witness of the Christian faith. True, the formulas are carefully developed, but only in connection with an already formed tradition. The work of the Fathers of Chalcedon is really ‘dogmatic.’ Moreover, their grasp of the content of their expressions is more intuitive than speculative. They produce formulas as witnesses to the Word and not as scholars. None of them could even have given a [technical–philosophical] definition of the concepts with which they had now expressed christological dogma.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:545.

⁵ See Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 310–11. As Grillmeier observes, “It is not the task of councils to produce metaphysics, but to serve the church’s proclamation of revelation. The formula of the council [of Chalcedon] states only the bare essentials of what was needed to resolve the difficulties of the time, which were, of course, the result of a long development.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:550–51.

In a two-step process, the church had *established* an orthodox ontology of God and then *extended* that person-nature ontology to the God-man. The church would now need to add a third step to *clarify* the concepts and terms used in a person-nature Christology. The church would need to demonstrate the coherence of Chalcedonian logic in the constitution and function of Christ as a person-nature man.

The most significant parts of that pro-Chalcedonian development climaxed in the seventh century. Continuing the historical work from the last chapter, the discussion below will focus on just two areas to help highlight what it means that the person-nature Son became the person-nature man Jesus Christ: (1) the ontological location of the person of Christ and (2) the relationship between the person and the human nature of Christ. On the development of Chalcedon in these areas, Alois Grillmeier observes,

Thus, the Chalcedonian picture of Christ, too, is drawn in the light of [the pre-existent person] of the Logos. But now the features of Christ's manhood are depicted with unmistakable clearness, even though only in outline. It will be the task of later developments . . . to let the "fullness of Christ" shine out even through the sober language of Chalcedon. [The Definition framed efforts] to think further into the completeness of the human nature of Christ and its capacity for action. All future discussion on the will, knowledge and consciousness of Christ belong in the end to that area of christological problems which was marked out by Chalcedon.⁶

In its advancement of the Chalcedonian logic and language, the church would develop the person-nature ontology into a complete and coherent confession that the divine person of the Son both is and acts as a fully human being according to his fully human nature.

The three goals for this historical work remain the same from the previous chapter: (1) understanding the ontological framework by which the church confessed that God the Son incarnate is fully God and fully man; (2) recognizing what made other Christological ontologies problematic and insufficient; and (3) identifying the pattern by which the early church formulated orthodox Christological ontology. As stated before, these two chapters will provide the basic method, framework, and boundaries for the

⁶ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:552–53.

ontological move from the man *par excellence* to man *par ordinaire* in the last two chapters.

The first section below will discuss how the church clarified the relationship between person and nature in Chalcedonian Christology. The second section will examine how the church developed a Chalcedonian approach to the person-nature constitution and function of Christ.⁷

Person of the Natures

The Definition explicitly grounded the unity of Christ in the person (*hypostasis*) and not in the natures (*ousiai*). Moreover, the Definition provided (at least) the framework for identifying the divine *hypostasis* of the Son as the same *hypostasis* who is now incarnate as the Christ. This identification, however, was not explicit. When the rest of the Chalcedonian logic is considered properly, the conclusion seems plain and inescapable that the pre-existent person of the Son is the personal subject of the incarnate Son. But nearly three centuries of challenges, responses, and refinement on this particular point demonstrate that Chalcedonian Christology needed to be more precise regarding the ontological location of the “one Person [*prosopon*] and one Subsistence [*hypostasis*].” Related to this issue, the pro-Chalcedonian theologians had to answer one main question from their challengers: Why is the human nature of Christ not a *hypostasis* itself alongside the eternal *hypostasis* of the Son? Answering that question would lead to more specific issues and areas of Christological development.

As a movement of different groups, anti-Chalcedonianism challenged the basic logic of the Definition, which was grounded in the person-nature distinction. For

⁷ It should be noted that the historical work in this chapter relies heavily on Grillmeier as arguably the foremost authority on the development of orthodox Christology. His magnum opus, the multi-volume *Christ in Christian Tradition*, remains unrivaled in its comprehensive and detailed account of the historical, theological, political, and philosophical aspects in the church’s reflection on Scripture and confession regarding the identity of Christ.

example, the Nestorians rejected any understanding of the Chalcedonian distinction between *hypostasis* and *ousia/physis* that would lose the unique *hypostasis* of the human nature. Any “*mia hypostasis*” had to be the appearance of the “common *prosopon*” created by the union of the divine and human natures. They would not accept the Definition’s semantic relocation of *prosopon* to share a personal subject/agent sense of *hypostasis*.⁸ According to their understanding, the Nestorians argued that since the humanity of Christ is a complete nature with individual characteristics, then it must be a *hypostasis* alongside the Logos. The Severans also rejected the distinction between *hypostasis* and *ousia/physis*, but for the purpose of avoiding the Nestorian addition of another person. Following the teaching of Severus of Antioch, they took up Cyril’s *mia physis* formula, but without his nuanced framework.⁹ While Cyril was willing to accept a certain sense of two natures in Christ, the Severans refused any sense of *hypostasis* that would place it at a different level of existence from *physis/ousia*.¹⁰ According to a kind of Cyrillian fundamentalism, the Severans sought Christological unity and diversity on the same level, the level of nature, which avoided a second *hypostasis* but locked them in a contradiction.¹¹

In significant part, the strength of these challenges to Chalcedonian Christology grew out of the weakness of the Cappadocian distinction between person and nature. The Cappadocians were largely responsible for the separation of *hypostasis* from *physis/ousia* that the church needed to distinguish between the three persons on one level

⁸ See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 353.

⁹ For a detailed discussion of Severus, his Christology, and its influence, see Pauline Allen, C. T. R. Hayward, and Severus of Antioch, *Severus of Antioch*, Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2004); Roberta C. Bondi, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug*, Oxford Theological Monographs (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 9–56.

¹⁰ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 30–33.

¹¹ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 33.

and the one nature on another level within the divine ontology. This terminological separation made an ontological distinction between the “who” and the “what” of God, but the Cappadocians did not develop the concept of person any further.¹² Their main contribution in this regard was to establish that *hypostasis* refers to the individual person constituted by its particularizing characteristics, while *ousia* refers to the common nature shared by the persons. As Grillmeier observes, however, “Although they make it clear in their analysis that the Unity and Trinity in the Godhead are to be sought on different ‘levels,’ their doctrine of hypostasis or person is incomplete. In fact, they almost completely neglect the ‘personal’ element.”¹³ The Cappadocian distinction between person and nature was necessary to establish the orthodoxy of pro-Nicene Trinitarianism. However, even at Chalcedon and in its Definition, the person-nature distinction—especially the concept of *hypostasis*—needed further development for its extension into Christology.¹⁴

Leontian Clarification

The most immediate and effective responses to anti-Chalcedonianism came from Leontius of Byzantium (485-543) and Leontius of Jerusalem (c. 600).¹⁵

¹² See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:367–77.

¹³ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:375.

¹⁴ As Bathrellos recognizes, “Admittedly, by attributing a human nature but not a second—human—person/*hypostasis* to Christ, Chalcedon had drawn a distinction between person/*hypostasis* and nature/essence at the level of economy [incarnation]; but the inevitable question as to what this distinction consists in remained. Undoubtedly, the orthodoxy of Chalcedon was conditional upon a satisfactory response to this question.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 34–35.

¹⁵ Most scholars agree that these Leontioi are two different historical figures who produced different theological works. For a concise discussion of the distinct contribution of each theologian and his works, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 39–54. For an extended discussion regarding L. Byzantium, see Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, pt. 2, *The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 2:2.181–229; see also Brian E. Daley, ed., *Leontius of Byzantium: Complete Works*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). For an extended discussion regarding L. Jerusalem, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.276–312; see also Patrick T. R. Gray, ed., *Leontius of Jerusalem: Against the Monophysites*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

L.Byzantium began to work out the logic and language of Chalcedon with the application of formal definitions that opened the way for reasoned arguments. L.Jerusalem continued and improved upon his predecessor's work through greater conceptual clarity and linguistic innovation.

Sharper person-nature distinction. L.Byzantium sharpened the person-nature distinction in Christology to demonstrate that the fullness of a human nature did not create an additional person. Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians agreed that every nature must have a *hypostasis*.¹⁶ On this basis, the Nestorians argued that there must be two *hypostases* in Christ, one for each nature. To avoid this conclusion, the Severans insisted that Christ cannot have a human nature alongside his divine nature, but only human properties taken up by the divine nature. L.Byzantium, however, grounded his Christology in a deeper appreciation of the person-nature distinction in its extension from God to the God-man. Anti-Chalcedonians demanded that the mystery of Christ required a circumscribed (*horos*) account of being (*logos*) that was unique to the incarnation.¹⁷ But L.Byzantium insisted that *hypostasis* and *ousia* had to retain the same definition for God (*theologia*) and for the incarnation of the Son (*oikonomia*), even if application to the latter is analogical.¹⁸ For God and for the God-man, nature exists, but only *hypostasis* exists in itself.¹⁹ Building on and

2006). For the previous view that misidentified the two Leontioi as one and the same writer, see Friedrich Loofs, *Leontius von Byzanz und die Gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der Griechischen Kirche*, vol. 3, bks. 1–2, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig, Germany: J. C. Hinrichs, 1904); see also R. V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: SPCK, 1953), 308–20.

¹⁶ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 34–35.

¹⁷ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.193.

¹⁸ See L.Byzantium, *Epilyseis* (PG 86, 1921CD), in Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium*, 269–312. All references to L.Byzantium's writings in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) are indebted to interaction with Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 41–54.

¹⁹ See L.Byzantium, *Contra Nestorianos and Eutychianos* (PG 86, 1280A) in Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium*, 284.

moving beyond the Cappadocians, L.Byzantium formalized a tradition that grounded existence in the person: “the ontological foundation of being is not nature but person. Nature does not exist except in a hypostasis.”²⁰ Moreover, nature is an existing thing (*ἄλλο*), but only *hypostasis* is a personal subject (*ἄλλος*).²¹ Person is always a *who* and never a *what*; nature is always a *what* and never a *who*.

With these definitions and emphases in place, L.Byzantium explained that the incarnation did not create a new person *alongside* the Logos because the human nature never existed *apart from* the Logos. The anti-Chalcedonians argued that since every nature has a *hypostasis*, the Definition’s second, human nature entailed a second, human *hypostasis*.²² Of course, the parties used the argument to different ends. The Nestorians urged that the “one Hypostasis” of Chalcedon should be interpreted as one shared by the divine and human *hypostases*. The Severans rightly rejected a second person in Christ but solved the problem by rejecting the status of the human nature as a complete *physis/ousia* distinct from the divine nature and the divine *hypostasis* of the Logos. Bypassing this false dichotomy, L.Byzantium argued that the creation of a human nature required neither incorporation into the one nature of the incarnate Logos nor existence in a created *hypostasis*. Contrary to the assumption that each nature must have a unique and separate *hypostasis*, L.Byzantium explained that the human nature of Christ has the same *hypostasis* as the divine nature. As a distinct nature, the humanity of Christ is *enhypostatos* in the Logos.²³ The human nature was immediately brought into the eternal

²⁰ Kenneth Paul Wesche, “The Christology of Leontius of Jerusalem: Monophysite or Chalcedonian?,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1987): 82. Wesche points out that this “fundamental” understanding of the ontology of *hypostasis* is affirmed by both Leontioi. See L.Byzantium, *Contra Nestorianos and Eutychianos* (PG 86, 1280A); L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1572D); see also John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 76–77.

²¹ See L.Byzantium, *Epilyseis* (PG 86, 1917BC, 1945AD).

²² See L.Byzantium, *Contra Nestorianos and Eutychianos* (PG 86, 1277BC).

²³ In this early context, *anhypostatos* was the opposite of *enhypostatos*. While *enhypostatos*

hypostatic existence of the Logos such that there was no moment in which the nature could have existed in or as another person. In short, the object of the incarnation was a human nature and not a *hypostatic* human being.

Personal identity and union. Building on and beyond L.Byzantium’s work, L.Jerusalem was faced with defending and developing three primary issues in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition. The anti-Chalcedonian challenges to the person-nature distinction in the incarnation required direct answers to questions of personal identity, the location of the union, and the manner of the union. In providing these answers, L.Jerusalem would help demonstrate the coherence of the person-nature relationship confessed in the Definition and lay the groundwork for more specific developments in the person-nature constitution and function of Christ.

Regarding personal identity, L.Jerusalem explicitly identified the *hypostasis* in Christology as the divine Logos. The two Leontioi agreed that the person-nature distinction is grounded in an entitative relationship, in which *hypostasis* has ontological priority. They also agreed on the subjective aspect of *hypostasis*.²⁴ Without abandoning the basic Cappadocian definition, the Leontioi brought *hypostasis* into sharper relief in its

signified possession of (*εν-*) reality as a *hypostasis*, *anhypostatos* signified the absence of (*αυ-*) such complete, self-existence. See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.194–98; Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 43. The anti-Chalcedonians insisted that “there is no *anhypostatos* nature.” See L.Byzantium, *Contra Nestorians and Eutychianos* (PG 86, 1277BC). As discussed above, this claim was made either to argue for an independent human *hypostasis* or to argue against the two natures of Chalcedon that would lead to such a result. While he seemingly agreed with this claim (at least *arguendo*), L.Byzantium rejected the Nestorian and Severan arguments by locating the *anhypostatos* of the complete human *physis/ousia* in the pre-existent Logos. As discussed below, however, L.Jerusalem would develop the *an-anhypostatos* distinction in a different direction to demonstrate better the explanatory power of Chalcedon’s one-person, two-natures formula.

²⁴ See L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorians* (PG 86, 1529C–1532B). All references to L.Jerusalem’s writings in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) are indebted to interaction with Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 45–54. According to Kenneth Wesche, the principal meaning of *hypostasis* in L.Byzantium’s Christology is the real, underlying subject (*ὑποκείμενον πρᾶγμα*). Wesche, “Christology of L.Jerusalem,” 73. Building on his predecessor, L.Jerusalem sharpened the definition of *hypostasis* to include an emphasis on “a subject with irrevocable individualization, a τὸδε τι, thus an utterly determined, unrepeatable subject.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.281.

distinction from *physis/ousia*.²⁵ However, in his focus on the end result of the incarnation, the first Leontius consistently attributed the human nature and human actions and experiences to “Christ.”²⁶ While he never denied that the *hypostasis* of Christ is a divine person of the Trinity, L.Byzantium also never made that positive identification explicit. In his later response to the anti-Chalcedonians, L.Jerusalem directly addressed this deficiency: the person of Christ is the eternal, divine person (*hypostasis, prosopon*) of the Logos, now in a human nature.²⁷ The pre-existent *hypostasis* of the Logos is the subject of the incarnation who assumed the human nature created for him.²⁸ Before the incarnation, the Logos was a *one-nature* person; after the incarnation the same Logos is a *two-nature* person.²⁹ “There is thus complete identity of the *prosopon*, of the person, of the subject before and after the incarnation.”³⁰ First and foremost, the one *hypostasis* of Christ is identical with the pre-existent Logos who is now incarnate.³¹

²⁵ See Wesche, “Christology of L.Jerusalem,” 73.

²⁶ See Brian E. Daley, “Origenism of Leontius of Byzantium,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 27, no. 2 (October 1976): 360; see also Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 44–45.

²⁷ L.Jerusalem wrote: “ἐν ἔστι τό πρόσωπον Χριστοῦ, ὃ ἔστιν ἐκ μιᾶς φύσεως ἐν πρόσωπον τοῦ Λόγου.” L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1592BC). Grillmeier paraphrases L.Jerusalem on this point: “With ‘Christ’ a second *prosopon* is not added. *Prosopa* are not united, but the *natures* are united into the *prosopon*. Thus there remains the one *prosopon*, which the pre-existent Logos has, which at the same time is also the one *prosopon* of Christ, that is, of the Logos united with the humanity.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.279.

²⁸ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.279; see also Uwe Michael Lang, “Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos: Church Fathers, Protestant Orthodoxy and Karl Barth,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 49, no. 2 (October 1998): 640–48.

²⁹ See L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1593C); see also Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.279.

³⁰ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.279.

³¹ It should be noted that L.Jerusalem used *hypostasis* differently when identifying the “person” of the Son versus referencing the “whole person” of Christ. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 46–47. These different uses and their implications will be discussed below regarding the subsequent pro-Chalcedonian contributions made by Maximus the Confessor.

L.Jerusalem also advanced the Chalcedonian logic of one person in two natures by addressing the *location* of union and diversity in Christ. For the first time in Christology, L.Jerusalem distinguished clearly between a synthesis according to nature and a union according to *hypostasis*.³² The Apollinarian Christology of the fourth century argued that Christ is one because he is a compound *mia physis* of Word and flesh.³³ The Nestorian Christology of the fifth and sixth centuries argued that Christ is one because the exchange and interpenetration of the natures created a common *prosopic* appearance.³⁴ The Cyrillian-Severan Christology of the same period argued that Christ is one because he is the same *mia physis* of the eternal Logos, whose whole, concrete, *hypostatic* being is now enfleshed.³⁵ These Christologies conceived of the divine-human *henosis* (unity; oneness) at one ontological level, finding unity in a natural synthesis (Apollinarius), a natural compensation (Nestorius), or a natural union of distinct features (Cyril and Severus). Coming into the seventh century after Chalcedon, L.Jerusalem framed *henosis* in terms of the Definition's person-nature distinction: the *person* of Christ is identical with the divine *person* of the Son (not the divine nature); the humanity of Christ is a fully substantial and distinct *nature* alongside the divine nature.³⁶ The natures remain distinct even as they are united in the person.

³² See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 381.

³³ Apollinarius grounded the unity of Christ in a substantial and vital union of the Logos with flesh, which created a composite Christ who is one *physis* and appeared as one *hypostasis*.

³⁴ Nestorius grounded the unity of Christ in (1) the mutual compensation of the natures in which one appropriated the *prosopon* or external characteristics of the other; and (2) the mutual compenetration or *perichoresis* of the natures, which together caused the natures to appear as one "*prosopon* of union."

³⁵ Cyril and Severus both grounded the unity of Christ in a "*hypostatic* union" in which humanity was added without confusion to the Logos's individual *hypostatization* of the divine *physis*. As discussed previously, the Cyrillian-Severan *mia physis* differs from the Apollinarian formula by affirming the complete soul of Christ (rather than its replacement by the Logos) and the pre-existence of the *physis* of the Logos that is now incarnate.

³⁶ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 46–49.

On this basis, in his *Canon of Orthodoxy*, L.Jerusalem argued for the God-man's personal union and natural distinction at different ontological levels:

We know of one *hypostasis* which is also common to both [natures], which pre-existed the *ousia* of the human being, being previously proper to the Word in the common *ousia* of the divinity. [This one *hypostasis*] created the nature [*physis*] of the *kyriakos anthropos* for itself, and embraced it and took it together with its own [divine] nature [*physis*]. At the same time it began to be a *hypostasis* of the nature of the flesh. . . . Therefore it is necessary to understand correctly that the nature of the Logos is common with the Father and the Spirit, but the *hypostasis* is individual with regard both to the Father and the Spirit and to all human beings And . . . that this flesh . . . has a commonality with ours with respect to nature, and is common to all who come from Adam, but with respect to the *hypostasis* it is individual with regard to us and the Father and the Spirit, being common only with the Word.³⁷

L.Jerusalem clarified the location of union by Christological application of the person-nature ontology from orthodox Trinitarianism. He approached the incarnation according to the person-nature levels of ontology. The unity of Christ is explicitly and firmly located in the pre-existent person of the Son. *Henosis* happened not at the level of nature, but at the level of person, where the Son has his relationship with the Father and the Spirit. Moreover, by explicating such a *hypostatic henosis*—his version of the *hypostatic* union—L.Jerusalem also provided a more precise location for Christ's divine and human consubstantiality. Christ is *homoousios* with the Father and Spirit, just as he is *homoousios* with mankind, each at the level of nature, not person. The person of the Son remains constant, even as he shares the single-same nature with the rest of the divine persons and also shares the same nature as the rest of mankind. Just as he possesses the divine nature, the person of the Son embraced our human nature in his incarnation.

At the same time, L.Jerusalem clarified the Definition's logic by addressing the *manner* of union in Christ. The Nestorians and Severans of his day argued (to different ends) that a double *homoousios* must equal two *hypostases*, meaning two

³⁷ L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1568C).

subsistences. This assumption was based on a one-to-one correspondence between *hypostasis* and *physis/ousia* (nature), in which *hypostasis* is not the foundation but the final form of a nature and all of its properties.³⁸ In short, they argued that *hypostasis* is a “living nature” constituted by all parts that have combined into a whole and complete nature.³⁹ The Nestorians affirmed this outcome in Christ and criticized those who rejected it. The Severans rejected it and accused L.Jerusalem of teaching it. In his reply, L.Jerusalem relied on the proper distinction between *hypostasis* and *physis/ousia* to explain that the double *homoousios* of Christ means two natures, but not necessarily two *hypostases*.⁴⁰ Rather than the product of natures and properties, *hypostasis* is the underlying reality and subject *in which* those things come together:

The union is of natures in the hypostasis, that is to say, there is a union of one nature with the other, but from these natures there has not been produced a composite nature, since they are not united by confusion, nor is there a union of hypostaseis since the union is not of hypostaseis. But the properties of the hypostasis of the Logos have become more composite, since it accumulates more properties in itself along with its own simple properties after the incarnation, which proves that neither his nature nor his hypostasis is composite or mutable.⁴¹

In this case, the assumption of a second, human nature neither altered the *hypostasis* of the Son, nor added a *hypostasis* beside him. That original and eternal *hypostasis* remained immutable and simple in itself while providing the foundation for the human nature’s existence.⁴² Precisely because *hypostasis* is the foundation and nature is not, the assumption of a human nature into the *hypostasis* of the Son makes good metaphysical sense of the incarnation according to the terms of the Chalcedonian Definition.

³⁸ See Wesche, “Christology of L.Jerusalem,” 78.

³⁹ See L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1420B, 1432A).

⁴⁰ See Wesche, “Christology of L.Jerusalem,” 78–80.

⁴¹ L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1420B, 1485D).

⁴² See Wesche, “Christology of L.Jerusalem,” 79–80.

To solidify the proper distinction and relation between *hypostasis* and nature in Christology, L. Jerusalem took the opportunity to formalize and expand the concepts and terminology surrounding the ontology of subsistence.⁴³ As discussed previously, a nature may exist, but only a *hypostasis* exists by itself. That is, by definition, only a *hypostasis* subsists or is a subsistence. Beginning with this concept, L. Jerusalem created a constellation of neologisms to reach into the richness of Chalcedon's *henosis* of two natures in one person.⁴⁴ He formalized the verbal aspect of *enhypostasis* to explain that the assumption of an *anhypostatic* human nature caused it to "subsist in" (ἐνυποστάναι) the *hypostasis* of the Logos.⁴⁵ The human nature never had its "own subsistence" (ἰδιουπόστατος) but always had its "subsistence in another" (ἑτερουπόστατος), the *hypostasis* of the pre-existent Logos.⁴⁶ In this sense, the eternal person of the Son "personalized" (προσωποποιεῖν) the human nature.⁴⁷ This does not mean that the two natures are "different *hypostases*" (ἑτερουποστατα) beside one another.⁴⁸ Rather, the

⁴³ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.282–93.

⁴⁴ The summary here is indebted to Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.282–86.

⁴⁵ See L. Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1561BC, 1768C). Some argue that the use of *enhypostasis* to mean *insubsistence* is a much later Protestant invention. See LeRon F. Shults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology: After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 140–62. But as shown here, the concept was in use within the pro-Chalcedonian tradition at least by the seventh century. And this use of *enhypostasis* was developed further by John of Damascus (675–749) before being picked up by the Reformers and later in Reformed Orthodoxy. See Lang, "Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos," 630–57; Dennis M. Ferrara, "'Hypostatized in the Logos': Leontius of Byzantium, Leontius of Jerusalem and the Unfinished Business of the Council of Chalcedon," *Louvain Studies* 22, no. 4 (1997): 311–27. For implications related to the specific development of *enhypostasia* in Christology, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 321–24.

⁴⁶ See L. Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1556A, 1568A).

⁴⁷ See L. Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1540D).

⁴⁸ See L. Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1561C).

human nature now “subsists together” (συνυποστάναι) with the divine nature in God the Son incarnate.⁴⁹

In summary, L.Jerusalem used linguistic-conceptual amplification to clarify and solidify the coherence of Chalcedon at its weakest point. In fact, he specifically wrote his *Canon* as the orthodox interpretation of the Chalcedonian Definition, “after the theologians have become conscious of the task of distinguishing more sharply between *physis* [*ousia*] and *hypostasis*, and of locating in the Logos-subject the concept of *hypostasis* which has now been worked out.”⁵⁰ It should be noted that L.Jerusalem did at times refer to Christ himself as the *hypostasis*.⁵¹ This usage, however, remains secondary and he seems to have carefully limited those occasions to a discussion of the divine and human natures *existing in* the *hypostasis* of Christ.⁵² For L.Jerusalem, as would be clarified further by Maximus the Confessor, the primary identification of the *hypostasis* in Christology was the eternal Son, in whom the divine and human natures are joined.⁵³ Four points will help highlight this advancement in understanding the person-nature ontology at the center of orthodox Christology.

First, according to an ontological priority, the person of Christ is the eternal person of the Son. The “one Person [*prosopon*] and one Subsistence [*hypostasis*]” of the Chalcedonian Definition is identical with the Son who is “begotten before all ages of the Father.”⁵⁴ It is true, as discussed further below, that *hypostasis* may at times refer to the

⁴⁹ See L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1761AB).

⁵⁰ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.288.

⁵¹ For example, see L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1540CD, 1541D, 1544A).

⁵² This observation is indebted to Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 48n177.

⁵³ For example, see L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1524B, 1548C, 1552D, 1553D, 1584D, 1585A, 1761B).

⁵⁴ “The Chalcedonian Definition,” in J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 339–40.

whole end result of the incarnation. However, L.Jerusalem's *hypostatic henosis* demonstrated that the Definition's primary referent for *hypostasis* is the person of the Son who subsisted in the divine nature before the incarnation.

Second, *this* eternal *hypostasis*—the person of the Son—is the only person and Son in Christology. The Son before incarnation is “the same Son, only begotten” after he (the person of the Son) was “in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God [*theotokos*].”⁵⁵ L.Jerusalem's expansion of *enhyposstasis* gave conceptual depth and definitional precision to *why* the human nature did not become a new *hypostasis*. The natures were not “parted or divided into two persons” to produce different *hypostases* alongside one another. In Christ, the human nature remains unconfused, unchanged, undivided, and inseparable without adding a created person to the eternal person of the Son.

Third, the person of the Son is the person of his divine and human natures. The same *hypostasis* who eternally subsists in the divine nature is now “to be acknowledged in two natures . . . the distinction of the natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person.”⁵⁶ In his *Canon*, L.Jerusalem explained that the Word as a *hypostasis* created the human nature to possess it as his own just as he possesses the divine nature.⁵⁷ Such *hypostatic* possession of two distinct *ousiai*, as Demetrios Bathrellos notes, holds together the unique identity of the eternal Son and the fullness of his divine and human natures:

The human nature is not swallowed up in the face of the sovereignty of God the Logos and/or for the sake of unity, as happened with Apollinarius and the

⁵⁵ “Chalcedonian Definition.”

⁵⁶ “Chalcedonian Definition.”

⁵⁷ L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1568C).

monophysites; nor is it reduced to a set of attributes of the divinity, as with Severus [and Cyril]. On the other hand, it is made unmistakably clear that the divine Logos is the *unique* (in sharp contrast to Nestorianism) *and unaltered* person in Christology, who now has a human nature united to him and to his divine nature.⁵⁸

It is through possession of the divine and human natures that the single-same person of the Son is consubstantial with the Father and with mankind. For the Son to be “*homoousios* with the Father according to the Godhead, and *homoousios* with us according to the Manhood”⁵⁹ means that the Son as a *hypostasis* subsists in both the divine nature and a human nature.

Fourth, the person of the Son became the “dominical man” when he came to subsist in a complete human nature. The divine Son is now “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.”⁶⁰ When considering the result of the incarnation in his *Canon*, L.Jerusalem specified that the human nature that was created and assumed by the Son is the “nature [*physis*] of the *kyriakos anthropos*.”⁶¹ L.Jerusalem used this term to refer to the comprehensive (divine and human) lordship of Christ Jesus.⁶² This dominical man came into being through the Son’s *hypostatic henosis* of the eternal divine nature and the created human nature. More specifically, when the person of the Son *hypostatized* the particular human body and soul he created, embracing this nature as his own, the eternal Son became the historical Christ Jesus who is Lord and Savior. Through his

⁵⁸ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 48.

⁵⁹ “Chalcedonian Definition.”

⁶⁰ “Chalcedonian Definition.”

⁶¹ L.Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* (PG 86, 1568C).

⁶² For an examination of this usage and other usages with different emphases, see Alois Grillmeier, “Jesus Christ, the Kyriakos Anthrōpos,” *Theological Studies* 38, no. 2 (1977): 275–93.

subsistence in a human nature, the person of the Son is now “in all things like unto us, without sin,” having become the *kyriakos anthropos* “for us and for our salvation.”⁶³

Throughout the late fifth and early sixth centuries, the Leontioi’s work demonstrated the coherence of Chalcedonian logic by addressing its central feature. Extension of the person-nature distinction was the greatest strength of the Definition’s Christological achievement. Finding unity at the level of person and diversity at the level of nature provided the ontological framework for a coherent confession that Christ is the God-man. Yet the person-nature distinction also became the Definition’s greatest weakness due to underdevelopment at the time. By making a sharper distinction between person and nature and bringing greater precision to the concepts, the Leontioi, especially L.Jerusalem, were able to make more metaphysical sense of Trinitarian ontology in Christology.

Conciliar Affirmation

In the middle of the sixth century, the Leontian development of the person-nature distinction gained conciliar status at the Second Council of Constantinople (553).⁶⁴

⁶³ It should be noted that becoming the dominical man through incarnation into our humanity did not accomplish salvation in the person-nature constitution of the incarnate Son. The human nature assumed is like all other human natures (except sin). Yet the human nature of Christ is a particular nature. As Wesche explains, “The term ‘particular nature,’ then, is understood in terms of the particularity of the *hypostasis*. In the particular *hypostasis*, the common nature exists and becomes particular, that is to say it becomes the intimate possession of the particular *hypostasis*.” Wesche, “Christology of L.Jerusalem,” 82. In other words, as Donald Macleod concludes, “His humanity is that of Everyman. But he is not Everyman. He is the man, Christ Jesus; and the only humanity united to him hypostatically is his own.” Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 202. The particularity of Christ’s human nature does not separate it from our nature in kind. But the commonality of our natures does not lead to a common or vicarious soteriology efficiently caused by the assumption of our humanity.

⁶⁴ See John Meyendorff for the conclusion that Constantinople II “essentially ratified the Christology of Leontius of Jerusalem.” Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, 80. For a concise summary of the council’s consolidation of the Leontian advances in Christology, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 54–56. For the historical and political circumstances that make Constantinople II one of the most controversial councils of the early church, see Grillmeier, 2:2.411–438. It should be noted that the political motivations and maneuverings of the major parties do not invalidate the theological achievements of Constantinople II, especially when seen along the consistent trajectory of doctrinal development from the first pro-Chalcedonian clarifications to the standardization of orthodox Christology in the medieval,

Chalcedon and its Definition remained “the supreme and incontrovertible Christological authority.”⁶⁵ Along with the Leontioi and the other pro-Chalcedonian theologians, however, the bishops at Constantinople II recognized the need to refute errors and answer questions that persisted, with particular concern for the Definition’s logic of one person in two natures.⁶⁶ With such a focus, the Christology of Constantinople II in its Canons can be stated in accord with the four points that summarize L.Jerusalem’s contribution.⁶⁷

First, according to an ontological priority, the person of Christ is identical with the second person of the Trinity. The *hypostasis* of the Son is one of the “three subsistences or Persons” who all share the single-same nature as the “consubstantial Trinity.”⁶⁸ As such, “the Word of God is united with the flesh *hypostatically*,” meaning that “one of the Holy Trinity has been made man.”⁶⁹ In this sense, the “one *hypostasis*” of Chalcedon does not refer to Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is not a new person created by the incarnation: “the Holy Trinity has not been increased by the addition of another

Reformation, and post-Reformation eras. In short, Constantinople II is a significant step in the outworking of Chalcedonian logic and its culmination in a recognizable and coherent final form.

⁶⁵ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 54–55.

⁶⁶ Grillmeier concludes that one of the most significant contributions by Constantinople II was its confirmation and vindication of Chalcedonian Christology: “at the Fifth Ecumenical Council [of Constantinople], Chalcedon received those hermeneutical aids which confirmed it as the greatest theological event in the whole Church after Nicaea. . . . It is only from Chalcedon that the Council of 553 drew its christological content” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.475.

⁶⁷ See “The Capitula of the Council,” in *NPNF*², 14:312–16. The Canons are stated in the *form* of anathemas. At the same time, these “negative” statements contain “positive” *content* regarding Christology. In general, Canons I-V address the unique unity of person; Canons VI-X address the diversity and fullness of natures; Canons XI-XIV address the anathema of specific theologians and works. The council is not a mere confirmation and restatement of Leontian Christology. The council of 553 addressed the theological bases for rejecting prevailing Christological heresies, especially Apollinarianism, Eutychian monophysitism, and Nestorianism. Yet, without risk of reductionism, some of the most significant affirmations of Constantinople II can be arranged according to the most significant achievements by L.Jerusalem. For a fuller analysis of the Christology of Constantinople II, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.438–62.

⁶⁸ See Canon I, *NPNF*², 14:312.

⁶⁹ See Canon V, *NPNF*², 14:312–13.

person or *hypostasis*.”⁷⁰ Rather, one of the persons of the Trinity became a man through incarnation, which was the *hypostatic* assumption of a human nature.⁷¹

Second, as a person of the Trinity, the person of the Son is the only person and Son in Christology. The person of the Son does not stand alongside the person of Christ. The Word became incarnate and was made man, not as “one person in another [person],” but as one person in another (additional) nature.⁷² The *hypostatic* union of Chalcedon was not “only according to grace or energy, or dignity, or equality of honour, or authority, or relation, or effect, or power, or according to good pleasure,” or any other basis that would necessitate or imply a second person who would be a second Son.⁷³ The union is strictly ontological and personal: “the union of God the Word is made with the flesh [which is] animated by a reasonable and living soul, and . . . such union is made synthetically [i.e. compositionally] and *hypostatically*, and . . . therefore there is only one Person, to wit: our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Holy Trinity.”⁷⁴ Christ is identified with the Trinity precisely and only because one of the Trinity became the man Christ Jesus. The person of the Son before the incarnation is the person of Christ after the incarnation.

Third, the person of the Son fully possesses his divine and human natures. Whereas the Father and the Spirit subsist in one nature, the Son has an ontological relationship with two natures. As the second *hypostasis* of the Trinity, “the Word of God

⁷⁰ See Canon V, 14:312–13.

⁷¹ “The incarnation consists in the union (of the ensouled flesh) with this one subject *secundum subsistentiam* [according to subsistence or *hypostasis*], so that it [the human nature] receives in it [the one subject] for the first time subsistence and existence.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.449.

⁷² See Canon III, *NPNF*², 14:312. The Word and the human nature “are not distinguished as God-Logos (born of the Father) and as ‘Christ’ (born of the woman).” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.446. Rather, through the assumption of a human nature, the Word “became flesh and a human being.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.446.

⁷³ See Canon IV, *NPNF*², 14:312.

⁷⁴ See Canon IV, 14:312.

has two nativities, the one from all eternity of the Father, without time and without body; the other in these last days, coming down from heaven and being made flesh.”⁷⁵ The person of the Son subsists in the divine nature according to an eternal birth; the same person subsists in a human nature according to a temporal birth. In this sense, Chalcedon gave Mary the title, “Mother of God” (θεοτόκον), because the Son—not the Father, the Spirit, or the divine nature—was “in these last days made flesh and born of her.”⁷⁶ Mary is not “the mother of a man (ἀνθρωποτόκον) or the Mother of Christ (Χριστοτόκον)”⁷⁷ in the incarnation event because she did not bear a human being for the union.⁷⁸ Mary provided an *ousia*, i.e., “the flesh animated by a reasonable and living soul,”⁷⁹ which the second person of the Trinity came to possess fully in the virgin womb.

Moreover, the divine and human natures remain distinct after the incarnation. The *hypostatic* union of Chalcedon brought the eternal divine nature and the created human nature alongside one another as the two natures of the incarnate Son. The location of this *henosis* was at the level of person, not the level of nature.⁸⁰ Specifically, there was a union “in which neither the nature of the Word was changed into that of the flesh, nor that of the flesh into that of the Word, for each [the divinity and the humanity] remained

⁷⁵ See Canon IV, 14:312.

⁷⁶ See Canon VI, *NPNF*², 14:313.

⁷⁷ See Canon VI, 14:313.

⁷⁸ Canon VI anathematizes anyone who believes “that [Mary] bare only a simple man and that God the word was not incarnate of her, but that the incarnation of God the Word resulted only from the fact that he united himself to that man who was born [of her].” In other words, Constantinople II affirmed that the eternal person of the Son came to the womb of Mary to assume there the human nature created for him.

⁷⁹ See Canon IV, 14:312.

⁸⁰ It should be noted that Canon VIII does allow Cyril’s “one incarnate nature of God the Word.” However, as Bathrellos notes, it does so “only with the proviso that the Cyrillian formula be interpreted on the basis of, and in the light of, Chalcedon. In this way, the formula was rendered virtually equivalent to the Chalcedonian formula ‘one *hypostasis*—two natures.’” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 55; see also Grillmeier, 2:2.450–51.

what it was by nature, the union being *hypostatic*.⁸¹ The Chalcedonian confession that the Son is revealed “in two natures” refers to “a difference of the natures of which an ineffable union is unconfusedly made.”⁸² The incarnation of the Son did not result in any kind of natural mixture or confusion, “but rather each [nature] remaining what it was, we understand that the Word was united to the flesh.”⁸³ Before the incarnation, the person of the Son subsisted in one nature; after the incarnation, the person of the Son fully possesses and thereby unites two fully distinct natures.

Fourth, the person of the Son became a man through subsistence in a human nature. Constantinople II repeatedly interpreted the incarnation as an act of the second *hypostasis* of the Trinity, in which he was “made man” or “made flesh.”⁸⁴ Each time, the canon clearly stated or necessarily implied that the person of the Son assumed a human nature to become the man Jesus Christ. For example, addressing what it means that “the Word of God is united with the flesh *hypostatically*,” the council explained that “one of the Holy Trinity has been made man.”⁸⁵ Again, when the man Jesus Christ suffered on

⁸¹ See Canon VII, *NPNF*², 14:313.

⁸² See Canon VII, 14:313. It should be noted that in considering “God the Word made man,” Canon VII states that one should “content himself with taking in a theoretical manner [*theoria*] the difference of the natures which compose him, which difference is not destroyed by the union between them, for one is composed of the two and the two are in one.” Rather than weakening the distinction between divinity and humanity, however, Grillmeier explains that the concept of *theoria* here “was intended to exclude the *real* separation or *idiohypostasis* of Christ’s humanity.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.458. Constantinople II clearly affirms the unity and distinction of the divine and human natures. “Hence we should not relate the ‘pure *theoria*’ to a nature unity and in this way succumb to a [*mia physis* mixture]. It is only a new way of rejecting the teaching of two *hypostases*.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.458.

⁸³ See Canon VIII, *NPNF*², 14:313–14.

⁸⁴ See Canons II, III, V, VI, VII, IX, *NPNF*², 14:312–14.

⁸⁵ See Canon V, 14:312–13; see also Canon IX, *NPNF*², 14:314, which explains that Christ is not the object of a second act of worship because he is “God the Word made man, together with his flesh . . .” The whole Christ is the object of undivided worship precisely because the divine *hypostasis* became a man by assuming a human nature.

the cross, it was one of the Holy Trinity who suffered in the flesh.⁸⁶ From eternity, the Son is *homoousios* with the Father *as God*, i.e. according to the Godhead or divine nature.⁸⁷ Since the incarnation, this second *hypostasis* of the Trinity is also *homoousios* with us *as a man*, i.e., according to his Manhood.⁸⁸

Considered as a whole, the work of the Leontioi and the canons of Constantinople II provided the necessary validation and logical continuation for Chalcedonian Christology.⁸⁹ L.Byzantium and L.Jerusalem worked within the Definition's person-nature ontology to work out its meaning and significance with greater depth and coherence. As the conciliar culmination of the Leontian advancements, Constantinople II consolidated much of their work, but in a common anathematic form that named and rejected particular heresies to clarify the orthodox confession of the incarnation. In such negative statements, the canons of 553 could not be expected to provide direct answers to specific questions regarding the person-nature distinction. Notwithstanding their *form*, however, the positive *content* of the canons provided a refined understanding of Chalcedon. As Grillmeier concludes,

With regard to the basic formula "one *hypostasis* or person in two natures," the canons of 553 belonged to strict Chalcedonianism . . . the use and application of the main concepts were clearer and more unambiguous than at Chalcedon. The one *hypostasis* or *subsistentia* [subsistence] as such was anchored in the pre-existent Logos; to him, as the ultimate subject, Christ's human nature was united *sub ratione subsistentiae* [by reason of or according to subsistence]; the assumption into this one *hypostasis* of the human nature which did not exist in itself was formally the event of the incarnation or, seen from above, the self-communication of this Logos hypostatically to the ensouled flesh, by the Logos creating this flesh for himself.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ See Canon X, *NPNF*², 14:314.

⁸⁷ See Canon VIII, 14:313–14.

⁸⁸ See Canon VIII, 14:313–14.

⁸⁹ See Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.456.

⁹⁰ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.456.

The one *hypostasis* of Chalcedon is, first and foremost, the second person of the Trinity. This divine person is the person and acting subject of Christ. The two complete and distinct natures of Chalcedon are the eternal divine nature and a created human nature. The acknowledgement of two natures in the Definition is grounded in the *enhypostasis* of each nature in the person of the Son. The dual *homoousios* in the Definition is due to this same dual *enhypostasis*. Divine consubstantiality means that the person of the Son has full ontological possession of the divine nature. Human consubstantiality means that the person of the Son has full possession of a human nature, which is a rational soul and body, (“ensouled flesh”). In short, the divine person of the Son is the ultimate acting subject of the incarnation, which was a divine act of the Son in which he became a man by creating and subsisting in a human nature.

By the mid-sixth century, the church had sharpened and strengthened the person-nature *distinction* that had been extended from the divine being of God into the divine-human being of the God-man. Going into the seventh century, the church would need to address with greater precision the person-nature *constitution* and *function* in Chalcedonian Christology.

Person Acting through His Natures

The pro-Chalcedonian tradition of the fifth and sixth centuries helped to close the gap between confession and concept in Christology. In particular, the church defended and clarified what it means that the God-man is a person-nature being through specific developments in the person-nature distinction. Providing some answers regarding the person-nature distinction in Christology, however, brought some new questions. The pro-Chalcedonians distinguished more clearly both between the person of the Son (Logos) and his divine and human natures and between the natures themselves.⁹¹ The Son

⁹¹ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 57.

became incarnate, not the divine nature. The divine nature remained separate and unchanged in its union alongside the human nature assumed by the Son. And the human nature lacked nothing of the humanity through which the divine Son became a fully human being. However, now that the incarnation is complete and the Son is both God and man, should the church distinguish between the Son as God and the Son as a man? Does this God-man act as God or man without also acting as the other? Is the salvation of mankind the result of one work or two by the incarnate one who is both divine and human?

In the seventh century, these issues and the interdependence of Christological constitution and function came to the foreground in the monothelite controversy.⁹² The question of whether Christ has one will (monothelitism) or two wills (dyothelitism) had overriding soteriological concerns. But the underlying issues were ontological. In short, Christ's identity and activity as Redeemer require genuine human obedience to the Father, yet such obedience requires the genuinely human capacity to will in accord with the will of the Father. From an ontological perspective, then, salvation rests on the Son's possession of a genuinely human will for genuine human obedience.⁹³

To assure the obedience of Christ, monothelitism argued for the complete subordination or assimilation of his human activity to the divine will.⁹⁴ In general, the

⁹² For a concise discussion of the "will" debate's importance for Christology, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 338–40. For a basic sketch of the controversy's historical development and theological background, see Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 384–93; Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 60–66, 89–97. The discussion below focuses on the issues directly related to the development of the person-nature distinction in the defense of Chalcedonian Christology and the demonstration of its dyothelitism. For the broader scope of the controversy, see Kallistos Ware, "Christian Theology in the East, 600–1453," in *A History of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1978), 87–90; Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 277–80; Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 1996), 3–18; Aidan Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel: Maximus the Confessor in Modern Scholarship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019), 1–14.

⁹³ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 339–40; Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 97–98.

⁹⁴ For a synopsis of the various positions, and his short refutation of them, see Maximus, *Dispute at Bizya* (PG 90, 141A–144A). All references to L. Jerusalem's writings in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG)

monothelites insisted on the unity of Christ located in the Logos as the one subject who wills, and on the sinlessness of his willing.⁹⁵ The human nature assumed by the Logos remains distinct but does not act apart from the Logos. In this sense, their teaching accorded with the pro-Chalcedonian tradition that the pre-existent person of the Son is the person and subject of his *two natures*. However, the monothelites went further and argued that *two wills* in Christ would destroy this unity and perfect obedience. For them, a second, human will would necessarily involve not just duality but opposition against the divine will.⁹⁶ Moreover, a second will would risk a second person or one who wills, reintroducing the errors of Nestorianism.⁹⁷ Thus, monothelitism taught that Christ has only one will, the divine will.⁹⁸ And this will results in one energy (*energeia*) or operation of Christ, which is either divine or theandric (divine and human).⁹⁹ All the divine-like and human-like works of Christ have the same source in the divine will of the enfleshed Logos.

are indebted to interaction with Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 45–54.

⁹⁵ The following overview is indebted to the extended interaction with and analysis of monothelite proponents and works by Bathrellos. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 69–98.

⁹⁶ For example, Sergius of Constantinople (565–638) argued that a human will would ultimately contradict one another, either because he conflated difference and contrariety, or he believed that natural difference entailed moral contrariety. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 75. Maximus simply pointed out that it is sin, not mere difference, that causes conflict or contradiction between the divine and human wills. See Thomas A. Watts, “Two Wills in Christ? Contemporary Objections Considered in the Light of a Critical Examination of Maximus the Confessor’s *Disputation with Pyrrhus*,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 71, no. 2 (2009): 460.

⁹⁷ For example, Paul of Constantinople (d. 653) related the will to the person and thereby rejected a second, human will as part of Christ’s human nature because a second will entailed two “willers” in Christ. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 82–83.

⁹⁸ For example, Pope Honorius (585–638) argued that in Gethsemane, Christ’s prayer did not express a different will from the Father. That prayer was merely a part Christ’s teaching that man should conform his will to the Father’s will. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 77.

⁹⁹ For example, Sergius argued that “the intellectually ensouled flesh [of Christ] never performed its natural movement . . . but only when and in the manner and in the measure in which God the Logos willed.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 73–74.

Despite orthodox intentions, the monothelite arguments and presuppositions moved in the unorthodox direction of compromising the humanity of Christ.¹⁰⁰ More specifically, monothelitism threatened to return the church to a Word-flesh incarnation and an Apollinarian Christ.¹⁰¹ The Word-flesh paradigm of the fourth and early fifth centuries posited that the Son of God came into union with a human body but without a human soul. In his particular version, Apollinarius held that the divine Logos and the earthly flesh of the incarnation combined as two parts of the whole Christ. Whereas mere man is a single composite *physis* or nature of body and soul, the Logos replaced the self-determining *nous* of the soul that is responsible for its vital and dynamic union with the flesh. Under Apollinarianism, such a *mia physis* God-man ensured that the “whole of man’s salvation rests on the fact that an invincible, divine Nous . . . an inalienable will and a divine power, is ensouled in the flesh of Christ, thus making it sinless.”¹⁰² Despite the appearance of a surface symmetry, however, the Apollinarian Christ was mostly God and only partially human for lack of a human *nous*.

Similarly, the monothelite Christ of the seventh century would be fully God but less than merely human for lack of a human *will*. In general, the monothelites

¹⁰⁰ The secondary literature demonstrates a substantial disagreement regarding the origins and orthodoxy of seventh-century monothelitism. In his own work, Bathrellos concludes that “the assessment of the Christology of the monothelites cannot but be negative.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 69–98. Through a careful and near comprehensive analysis of the primary sources, Bathrellos argues persuasively that monothelitism defended the subjective unity and sinless obedience of Christ “at the expense of the integrity of the humanity of Christ. The suppression, or even negation, of the human will [in Eastern and ancient thought] . . . found expression in the Christology of the monothelites too.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 98.

¹⁰¹ Kallistos Ware makes a convincing demonstration that seventh-century monothelitism was a resurgence of the heretical positions taught by Apollinarius. Ware, “Christian Theology in East,” 181–225. After studying the two systems, Bathrellos concludes, “One is truly amazed at the similarities between Apollinarianism and monothelitism. Not only the theology and the argumentation, but even the very wording of some Apollinarian passages, are strikingly similar to some monothelite passages, as if passages of the Apollinarians had been inserted in the texts of the monothelites.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 96.

¹⁰² Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:333.

clarified that their affirmation of only one will did not deny the existence of a human nature, including a human soul. Some would even allow a human energy, as long as such activity was always and only directed by the divine will. Regarding a human will, however, monothelitism taken as a whole relied on three basic metaphysical maneuvers to explain how it was absent from the man Jesus Christ.¹⁰³ First, the ontological connection between essence and energy, which made all operations flow out of a particular nature, was limited to the divine being (theology) and denied in the incarnation (economy). Thus, the presence of a human nature in Christ did not necessarily mean human activity according to a human will. Second, the monothelites often argued that will is located in the person, not in the nature. Third, some monothelites taught more particularly that the soul of Christ acquired the divine will of the Logos. Based on such treatment of Christ's person-nature ontology, "monothelites argued that neither Jesus's human soul nor his body ever acted except by the divine will of the Son."¹⁰⁴

As with Apollinarianism before it, monothelitism was incapable of conceptualizing the being and obedience of Christ without compromising his full humanity. Apollinarius intended to defend the Nicene faith of his time but conflated the developing distinction between person and nature into a *mia physis* Christology. Being confined to the level of nature and insisting on one *nous* per *physis*, Apollinarianism could allow only the divine *Nous* of the Logos to give life and direction to the humanity of Christ. For monothelitism, most of its proponents were pro-Chalcedonian and intended to work within the Definition, including an affirmation of the person-nature distinction.¹⁰⁵ But the monothelites tended to blur these ontological categories in the constitution and

¹⁰³ This analysis summarizes the work of Bathrellos regarding the approach taken by the most significant monothelites of the seventh century. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 69–98.

¹⁰⁴ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 341.

¹⁰⁵ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 341.

function of Christ. Where the will belongs to nature in the divine being of God, it was relocated to person in the divine-human being of the God-man.¹⁰⁶ Yet this relocation did not result in two divine wills, one in the divine nature and one in the person of Christ. Rather, the one divine will became the one will of the incarnate Logos, the one will of Christ.

Regarding a human will, then, monothelitism was anti-Chalcedonian. Monothelites could not fully affirm the *duo physeis* Christology of the Definition and treated the one *hypostasis* of the Definition not as the eternal person of the Son but as the end result of the incarnation. “Christ has one will and one energy, because he is one and he wills and acts as one.”¹⁰⁷

Maximian Dyothelitism

In the debate regarding the will(s) of Christ, the ontology and central feature of Chalcedon were challenged yet again. In paraphrasing the monothelite Paul of Constantinople, Bathrellos frames the controversy in terms of the person-nature being of Christ:

The *Typos* [of the mid-seventh century] distinguishes between two different approaches to the problem of the wills and energies in Christ. Some people confess that Christ has one will, on the grounds that he is one person, who wills and acts without confusion and without division. Others confess two wills and two energies, because the natures of Christ and their qualities remain intact after the union; so Christ does divine and human works in accordance with his natures.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, the arguments by Pyrrhus (d. 654) that the will cannot be located in the nature. For sources see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 80–81; see also Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 69–89. It should be noted, however, that locating the divine will in Christ is made difficult because the monothelites usually failed to distinguish between the subjective, ontological, and objective aspects of the will and the act of willing. Such distinctions would become clear in the dyothelitism of Maximus discussed below.

¹⁰⁷ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 80. Bathrellos refers here to an argument by Pyrrhus found in Maximus’s *Disputation* with him, which provides a concise representative statement of the monothelite position. See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 289A, 340A).

¹⁰⁸ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 83. The *Typos* was commissioned by Emperor Constans II

The pro-Chalcedonian response to this challenge would need to develop still further what it means that the person of the Son is (constitution) and acts (function) *as a man* according to his human nature. The clearest and most effective defense of Chalcedonian logic in this regard would come from Maximus the Confessor (580-662).¹⁰⁹ His work would focus on a consistent application of person-nature ontology to the human being and activity of Christ and a more sophisticated understanding of the will.

Person-nature constitution. Regarding Christological constitution, Maximus distinguished between a personal and a compositional incarnation of the Son.¹¹⁰ Working within the Definition's person-nature ontology, Maximus rejected that Christ is a single composite nature.¹¹¹ Along with L. Jerusalem, he also clearly identified the *hypostasis* in Christ as the divine Logos.¹¹² Thus, the divine person of the Son continued to subsist in

in 647 or 648 in an attempt to restore peace in the church and in the empire during the monothelite controversy by restricting confession to the ecumenical councils of the day and forbidding the teaching of either one will or two wills. Most scholars agree that Paul of Constantinople wrote the *Typos* for the emperor.

¹⁰⁹ The following discussion focuses on the work of Maximus in developing the person-nature distinction in Chalcedonian Christology, and the related issues necessary to understand that development. For a discussion of the Confessor's larger theology, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, Communio (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003); Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); Joseph P. Farrell, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1989); Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel*; Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*; Torstein Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Edward T. Oakes, *Infinity Dwindled to Infancy: A Catholic and Evangelical Christology* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2011), 153–60.

¹¹⁰ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 105–7. This analysis is indebted to the insights provided by Bathrellos after careful examination of person/*hypostasis*, nature/essence, unity, and distinction in the works of Maximus. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 99–116. Bathrellos categorizes the Maximian use of *hypostasis* according to three different but interconnected aspects: personal, material, and formal. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 105–7, 114–15. Given the current focus on Christological constitution, the present analysis is limited to the personal and material aspects. To avoid confusion with the material (body) and immaterial (soul) dimensions of the human nature in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, “material” is replaced here by “composite,” but the meaning is the same.

¹¹¹ For examples, see Maximus, *Epistles* 12 (PG 91, 489A-C), and 13 (PG 516CD, 520C); see also Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 99–101.

¹¹² See Maximus, *Opuscula* 23 (PG 91, 264B) and 24 (PG 91, 268B); see also Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 103–5; Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 342–43; Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 390. Bray

the divine nature even as he came to subsist in a complete and distinct human nature. Yet, along with L. Jerusalem, Maximus could at times also speak of Christ as a single composite *hypostasis*.¹¹³ In this secondary sense, the divine and human natures are the two parts of the whole *hypostasis* who is Christ, the end result of the incarnation.¹¹⁴ To avoid contradictory claims and appreciate the significance of how Maximus contributed to understanding the constitution of Christ, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between personal and compositional incarnation.¹¹⁵ From the personal perspective, starting before the incarnation with the second person of the Trinity, Christ is a *divine hypostasis* subsisting in the divine nature, who would come to subsist in a human nature.¹¹⁶ From the compositional perspective, starting at the end of the incarnation, Christ is a *theandric hypostasis*, having a divine nature and a human nature as its component parts.¹¹⁷ The *personal hypostasis* is the *subject* of two natures; the *composite hypostasis* is the *sum* of both natures.

observes that, as he developed the identification of the *hypostasis* of Christ with the divine Son, “Maximus came to realize, to a degree that no one before him seems to have understood, that the controlling factor in the incarnation is the person or *hypostasis* of the *logos*, not his natures.” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 390.

¹¹³ For example, see Maximus, *Epistle 12* (PG 91, 492D–493A); see also Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 104–5. *Hypostasis* was used widely outside the Christological domain. But within Christology, especially in the development of Chalcedonian ontology, *hypostasis* was used to “signify either one undivided reality, or a person, or of course both.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 47.

¹¹⁴ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 105–6. It should be noted that a typical pro-Chalcedonian analogy for the incarnation was the union of body and soul in man. See Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 390. As stated in the Athanasian Creed, “For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.” While acknowledging a certain asymmetry regarding the eternality of the divine person and the temporality of the human person, Maximus himself made use of the analogy. See Maximus, *Epistle 12* (PG 91, 488A–C). Yet in light of the discussions here, it becomes clear that the analogy is not only imperfect but unhelpful to the extent it obscures the divine person of the Son as the one subject of Christ, both as God and as man.

¹¹⁵ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 105–7.

¹¹⁶ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 105–7.

¹¹⁷ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 105–7.

For Maximus, the personal *hypostasis* was primary. According to a personal incarnation, the divine person of the Son is the “I” of Christ and the ultimate ontological subject of his divine and human natures.¹¹⁸ Maximus made this clear by arguing from the definition of *hypostasis* and its ontological priority over nature. Maximus followed the Leontioi in describing the person-nature relationship in terms of their respective modes of being: “to nature pertains the common logos of being, but to hypostasis pertains also the logos of being by itself.”¹¹⁹ This means that a nature does not produce a person. Rather, person has the priority of self-subsistence in which nature comes into being. The “[human nature] came into being in the Logos and for (or because of) the Logos and became the flesh of the Logos by union.”¹²⁰ Moreover, Maximus worked with a strictly ontological notion of personhood in *hypostasis/prosopon*.¹²¹ So in expounding on the “subjective” aspect of person, Maximus dealt exclusively with the ontological “I” in Christ, not the modern concepts of the psychological or existential subject.¹²² In working out the constitution of Christ according to Chalcedonian ontology, Maximus clarified that the primary reference of the “one *Hypostasis*” was to the pre-existent person of the Son. This

¹¹⁸ As Bathrellos concludes, “On the ‘personal’ level, on the ‘who’ and ‘I’ level, the *hypostasis* in Christ is strictly identical with God the Logos.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 105. Bray concludes from Maximus’s work that, “Seen from the standpoint of the subject, or agent, of the incarnation, the *hypostasis* of Christ was the one divine *logos* who became a man.” Bray, *God the Son Incarnate*, 390.

¹¹⁹ See Maximus, *Opuscule 23* (PG 91, 264AB). For Maximus, and the Leontioi before him, person is not identical with mode of being or existence. Rather, person is made known through its own, unique mode of existence and distinguished from other persons. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 103. The significance of the difference and relation between person and mode will be discussed in chaps. 5 and 6. Here it suffices to say that person is the *who* of a being while mode is the *how* of that being.

¹²⁰ Maximus, *Epistle 15* (PG 91, 560C).

¹²¹ Bathrellos notes that “the patristic notion of personhood is strictly ontological.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 104. Hans Urs von Balthasar agrees that “*hypostasis* is a term of pure ontology.” Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 164. Thus, use of *hypostasis* for the person in patristic ontology “does not have to do with the existential domain in the modern sense, nor is it the unity of conscience.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 104.

¹²² See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 104.

divine person was the ultimate ontological subject who created a complete human nature for himself to subsist in it as the man Jesus Christ.

In the hands of Maximus, then, the person-nature *distinction* in Christ entails his person-nature *constitution* as a man. Maximus insisted that the proper distinction between the personal *hypostasis* and the nature is crucial for a proper understanding of Christological ontology.¹²³ This distinction is necessary for an orthodox understanding of Christ's personal unity and natural diversity. However, the logic of the person-nature distinction also extends further to define the constitution of the incarnate Son. It is legitimate to look at the end result from a compositional perspective (*hypostasis* as the sum of the natures) and identify the parts of Christ as his divine and human natures. In this sense, the Chalcedonian Christ is a theandric being composed of two natures. Yet, even then, a natural composition cannot be understood rightly apart from the personal incarnation of the eternal Son into our humanity. As a particular personal *hypostasis* and ontological subject of the Trinity (*hypostasis* as the subject of nature), the Son became a man by subsisting in a human nature alongside the divine nature. According to the ontological priority of self-subsistence (not just pre-existence), the incarnate Son is constituted as a man by the union of a divine person and a complete human nature.¹²⁴ In

¹²³ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 101.

¹²⁴ Constantinople II laid the foundation for this person-nature constitution of Christ. The divine and human natures did not combine into one composite nature of the divine Logos. Rather, as Canon IV explained, the union of the human nature with the pre-existent *hypostasis* of the Word took place according to "composition" or "subsistence" (*secundum compositionem sive secundum subsistentiam facta*). See Canon IV, 14:312; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 2:2.448. Subsistence does not offer an alternative to composition but defines it. The composition was that of person and nature. To avoid confusion with the Maximian concept of a compositional *hypostasis*, the person-nature "composition" of Canon IV should be understood as identical with the person-nature constitution described herein. The distinction between constitution and composition and its implications will receive more detailed treatment below and in chaps. 5 and 6. For immediate clarity, it will suffice to say that "constitution" is used here to refer to the makeup of Christ according to the two different ontological levels of person and nature. "Composition" refers to the fact that the whole Christ has two components at the nature level: the divine *physis/ousia* and the human *physis/ousia*.

this sense—the primary sense of Chalcedonian ontology—the man Jesus Christ is the person of the Son subsisting in a human body-soul nature.

Person-nature function. Moving from constitution to Christological function, Maximus explained that as the ultimate subject of Christ, the divine person of the Son was also the acting subject of his natures. He continued the Chalcedonian extension and development of orthodox ontology from Trinitarianism by explicating the differences between the personal and natural aspects of Christology. For Maximus (and all pro-Chalcedonians), person/*hypostasis* is identical with the *who* of being; nature is identical with the *what* of being.¹²⁵ Going further, he also clarified that mode of existence is the *how* of being.¹²⁶ Working within this framework, Maximus would provide greater coherence to Chalcedonian logic by demonstrating how the person of the Son acts as God and as man through his divine and human natures. Specifically, his work would focus on the *who*, *what*, and *how* of the will. The Maximian contribution can be examined in three parts.¹²⁷

First, Maximus clarified that the will is located in the nature, not in the personal *hypostasis*. In his response to monothelitism, Maximus developed the linguistic-

¹²⁵ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 103–4. While virtual synonyms in pro-Chalcedonian ontology, *person* was capable of more “personal” overtones than *hypostasis*. See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 102n18; Gerald L. Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 123–25. However, this nuance will not need to be explored for the present purpose of understanding the Maximian development of the person-nature distinction, constitution, and function of Christ. Moreover, Bray finds that “Maximus seems to have been the first theologian who clearly distinguishes between person and nature *in Christ* by saying that his ‘nature’ describes *what* he is whereas his person defines *who* he is [emphasis added].” Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 389; see Maximus, *Opusculum* 23 (PG 91, 265B). As discussed above, this distinction was made previously. But Bray is perhaps correct that it was not until the work of Maximus that the who-what distinction was aligned clearly with the person-nature distinction.

¹²⁶ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 103–4.

¹²⁷ For a helpful discussion of Maximus’s overall argument for dyothelitism over against monothelitism, which is laid out across his *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, see Watts, “Two Wills in Christ?”, 458–73; see also Maximus Confessor, *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of Our Father among the Saints, Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Joseph P. Farrell (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1990).

conceptual dimensions of the will to demonstrate the coherence of dyothelitism.¹²⁸ One of his most significant insights was to distinguish between faculty and object.¹²⁹ The will itself (θέλησις or θέλημα) is the *faculty* of a rational being by which that being is capable of willing; the *object* (θελητόν or θεληθέν) of the will is that which a rational being wills.¹³⁰ As rational beings, all human beings have the same faculty of will, even if they will different objects.¹³¹ As created and dependent beings, we do not share the divine faculty of will because we do not share the divine nature of the Creator, even though we might at times share the object of God’s will.¹³² With this faculty–object distinction, Maximus was able to extend the connection between nature and will from Trinitarian theology into Christology without creating ontological error or confusion. In the divine ontology, the θέλησις, along with all the other divine attributes, must be natural for the three divine persons to share the single-same faculty and objects.¹³³ A personal will would create in God either one person and one will, or three wills and three persons, which would destroy either the Trinity itself or the internal volitional unity of the divine

¹²⁸ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 118–28. For the understanding of the will in Hellenistic philosophy leading up to the seventh century, see Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity*, Sather Classical Lectures 48 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). Throughout this discussion, it is important to note that Maximus did not adopt the contemporary concepts of his time but developed them for a distinctly Christian understanding of the will according to the Chalcedonian logic of the Son’s incarnation into our humanity.

¹²⁹ See Watts, “Two Wills in Christ?,” 460–61. Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 391; Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 343. Maximus made a similar distinction between the capacity of seeing and the object seen (*Disputation with Pyrrhus* [PG 91, 292BD]), and between energy and the result of the energy (*Disputation with Pyrrhus* [PG 91, 341BD]).

¹³⁰ See Maximus, *Opuscule* 16 (PG 192B).

¹³¹ See Maximus, *Opuscule* 1 (PG 91, 21C–25C).

¹³² See Maximus, *Opuscule* 1 (PG 91, 21C–25C). This divine-human differentiation is grounded in the Creator-creature distinction recognized in Scripture and throughout the church’s history of reflecting on the Scriptures.

¹³³ See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 289D–292A); *Opuscule* 3 (PG 91, 52BC).

persons.¹³⁴ Therefore, since the incarnation did not add to the Trinity or change the person of the Son himself, the assumed human will must also be located at the level of nature (“natural will”).¹³⁵

For Maximus, then, the man Jesus Christ has a natural human will (θέλησις) that is different from the natural divine will (θέλησις). Yet as the God-man, his divine and human wills do share the same object (θελητόν).¹³⁶

Second, Maximus preserved the full humanity of Christ by insisting on a complete and self-determining human will. Just as the lack of a rational *nous* in the assumed humanity made the Apollinarian Christ less than human, the lack of a natural will would compromise Christ’s *homoousios* with the rest of mankind.¹³⁷ Maximus avoided a volitional version of Apollinarianism by first applying the person-nature distinction and locating both the human soul and its faculty of will in a distinct human nature.¹³⁸ He then explained that the human θέλησις has both a non-rational, instinctive

¹³⁴ See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 289D–292A); *Opuscula* 3 (PG 91, 52BC).

¹³⁵ See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 348C–349B). Based on the fact that the Logos was the same before and after the incarnation, Maximus rejected the monothelite position that the ontological connection between essence/nature and energy/will (which made all operations flow out of a particular nature) was limited to the divine being (theology) and denied in the incarnation (economy). See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 134; see also Watts, “Two Wills in Christ?,” 460.

¹³⁶ Against his monothelite opponents, “Maximus claimed that difference does not necessarily imply contrariety.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 132; see Maximus, *Opuscula* 16 (PG 91, 193CD); see also Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 391; Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 345–46. For mere, post-lapsarian humanity, having a sinful human nature means having a sinful natural will that is bent and actualized in opposition to God. But for Christ, the fully human and fully righteous man, the cause of rebellion was absent. Rather than disobedience, Christ was constituted *non posse peccare* because a divine person assumed a sinless human nature. See Maximus, *Opuscula* 4 (PG 91, 40A), 7 (PG 91, 81CD), and 20 (PG 91, 236D). As Bathrellos observes, “For him [Maximus], the Logos assumed our natural self-determining will and deified [sanctified] it. Thus, it is no longer a will subject to ignorance and deliberation, concupiscence and imperfection; it is not a will that can err, sin, and oppose God, but is steadily and unmistakably inclined to the good, moved and modelled by the Logos in accordance with the divine will for the fulfillment of our salvation.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 173.

¹³⁷ For the prior discussion regarding the arguments and errors of Apollinarianism, see chap. 3.

¹³⁸ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 128. Apollinarianism and other one-nature Christologies required some kind of divine-human compound or hybrid at the level of nature, which Maximus rejected. Rather, the two-nature logic of Chalcedon allowed Maximus to keep the divine and

dimension and a rational, self-determining dimension, both in mere man and in the God-man.¹³⁹ Similar to Apollinarius, Maximus identified the human soul as fundamentally *αὐτοκίνητος*, having the power of self-movement or self-direction.¹⁴⁰ More specifically for Maximus, man moves not by impulse or instinct as non-rational beings but according to his will in a “self-determining way.”¹⁴¹ He even identified the natural will with self-determination (*αὐτεξούσιος*).¹⁴² Unlike the Apollinarian incarnation, however, Maximus did not replace the natural human will or its predominant rational function with the divine. Such a replacement would have left Christ with either no human function or object of will, or merely a non-rational, instinctive will.¹⁴³ Neither would enable the human obedience necessary for the salvation of a disobedient mankind.¹⁴⁴ Rather, since every human nature has such a natural will, Maximus insisted that the human nature of Christ has an instinctive and self-determining will that is distinct from the natural divine will. In fact, such human self-determination of will is grounded in the nature of God.¹⁴⁵ Because God has a natural will that makes him pre-eminently self-determining, man

human natures and wills distinct while holding them together in unity at the level of person. For more on this issue, see the discussion regarding the need for a Word-man incarnation in chap. 3.

¹³⁹ See Maximus, *Opuscule* 16 (PG 196A); *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 288CD). As Bathrellos explains, “Maximus emphasizes the preponderance of the rational self-determining aspects of man’s will over those which are irrational-impulsive. The latter are not denied a place, but are subject to the former, because, despite the fact that the latter are expressed without a prior decision or permission of the rational willer, whether or not they will be satisfied depends ultimately on him [the rational willer].” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 126.

¹⁴⁰ See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 301BC); *Opuscule* 1 (PG 91, 20B); and *Ambigua* (PG 91, 1345D).

¹⁴¹ See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 293BC).

¹⁴² See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 201C, 304C); *Opuscule* 15 (PG 91, 153C–184C).

¹⁴³ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 128.

¹⁴⁴ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 130–31.

¹⁴⁵ See Watts, “Two Wills in Christ?,” 461.

made in God's image is likewise a self-determinative being according to his natural human will, which is copied after its divine archetype.¹⁴⁶ Accounting for the necessary divine-human differences, the point remains that, unlike irrational animals that are moved/led by impulse, God, man, and the God-man determine their actions by their will. This faculty of will is located respectively in the divine and human natures.

According to Maximus, the Son became a man by the "essential appropriation" of a complete human nature and natural will.¹⁴⁷ Only and precisely because of such an incarnation, Christ has the ontological capacity for the full range of human operations, including genuine human willing and obedience.¹⁴⁸

Third, Maximus explained that the personal *hypostasis* of the Son wills as a man through his natural human will. Beginning with the clear identification of the divine person of the Son as the ultimate subject of Christ, Maximus demonstrated that this same person must be the "willing subject" of his humanity.¹⁴⁹ The distinction between the faculty (θέλησις) and the object (θέλητόν) of will must be accompanied by their distinction from the mode of willing (πως θέλειν), which is the particular actualization of the faculty toward an object.¹⁵⁰ While the faculty or ability to will is located in the nature, Maximus located the *mode* or actualization of the will in the *person* because mode "belongs to hypostasis."¹⁵¹ That is, the person is the "willer," who gives a particular shape to the

¹⁴⁶ See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 324D–325A).

¹⁴⁷ See Watts, "Two Wills in Christ?," 467–68.

¹⁴⁸ Maximus drew the distinction between essential appropriation and relative appropriation to affirm that the incarnation involved the Son's essential or ontological possession of a human essence/nature and all of its faculties, while rejecting the argument of Pyrrhus that the appropriation was merely a consent to act in relation or proportion to human nature. See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 304A–305D); cf. Maximus, *Opuscula* 19 (PG 91, 220B–221A).

¹⁴⁹ See Maximus *Opuscula* 15 (PG 91, 157C); 16 (PG 91, 205C).

¹⁵⁰ For the mode of willing as distinct from the faculty and object of will, see Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 292D–293A); *Opuscula* 3 (PG 91, 48A).

¹⁵¹ "Therefore, the ever-existing ability to speak belongs to nature, but the mode of speaking

natural will through specific acts.¹⁵² With this clarification, Maximus was again able to extend Trinitarian ontology into Christology without creating ontological error or confusion, this time through the identification of person with acting subject. Along with the Father and the Spirit, the person of the Son is a willer of the divine will. Applying this ontological reality and rejecting the Nestorian addition of a second “person” in Christ, Maximus demonstrated that the divine person of the Son now incarnate is also the “personal willer” of his human will.¹⁵³ Focusing on Christ’s human ontology, this means that the person of the Son “possesses a self-determining human will in virtue of which he is able to will as man in a self-determining way, and thus to actualize the self-determining power of his human will.”¹⁵⁴ This does not mean that the self-determination (*αὐτεξούσιος*) of Christ’s human will is compromised by divine hegemony.¹⁵⁵ Rather than the divine *nature* directly controlling it, the divine *person* of the Son freely actualizes his natural human will to align with the object of the divine will.¹⁵⁶

In short, for Maximus, “the Logos as God willed by his divine will, and the same Logos as man obeyed the divine will by his human will.”¹⁵⁷ The personal

belongs to *hypostasis*, and the same goes for the ability to will and the [mode of] willing.” Maximus, *Opuscule 3* (PG 91, 48AB).

¹⁵² See Maximus, *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91, 292D–293B).

¹⁵³ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 344–45. In fact, Maximus argued that all actions *of* the nature are really actions *through* the nature and are referred back to the person. See Maximus, *Opuscule 16* (PG 91, 188BC, 200D). Reflecting on the relationship between the self-determining will, the objects of the will, and the direction of the personal willer, Bathrellos concludes that the dynamic “indicate[s] in a magnificent way both the active character of the powers of the soul and the role of the person as the subject of willing and acting who causes the efficient actualization of these powers towards a desired aim.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 188n74.

¹⁵⁴ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 169.

¹⁵⁵ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 168–69; Bray, *God Has Spoken*, 392.

¹⁵⁶ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 168–72.

¹⁵⁷ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 171.

hypostasis who wills *as God* through his natural divine will is the same personal *hypostasis* who simultaneously wills *as a man* through his natural human will.

Moreover, it is crucial to observe that a divine person acting through a human nature does not prevent those acts from being genuinely human acts. Maximus insisted that, “since the bearer of the human nature of Christ is a divine person, it is the person who forms and determines Christ’s *human* willing and *human* acting [emphasis added]. . . [because] the Logos (the divine person) moves and models his human will.”¹⁵⁸ The personal actualization of a natural will toward certain objects is how every human acts.¹⁵⁹ Maximus attributed to Christ the same willing procedure as all humanity, except for those elements that are present due to sin, i.e., deliberation (*gnome*) and choosing between good and evil (*proairesis*).¹⁶⁰ By acting through his human nature, the person of the Son wills as a man, but not as a mere man or a sinful man.

Pulling together these aspects of Christological function, Maximus saw Christ in Gethsemane as the provision and paradigm for genuine human obedience to God.¹⁶¹ The distinction between faculty and object helped explain how Christ’s *θελητόν* (object) to avoid death was different from the divine *θελητόν* that he suffer death, but still blameless in that it was consistent with the natural human impulse toward life.¹⁶² Since

¹⁵⁸ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 161; see Maximus *Opuscula* 1 (PG 91, 32A); 3 (PG 91, 45C).

¹⁵⁹ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 121–29.

¹⁶⁰ For a discussion of Maximus on the human willing procedure and Christ willing as a man, including the denial of *gnome* and *proairesis*, see Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 127–29, 148–62. For the issue of a *gnome* will in Christ, see Watts, “Two Wills in Christ?,” 468–71.

¹⁶¹ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 140–47. After comparing interpretations of the Gethsemane prayer prior to and during the monothelite controversy, Bathrellos concludes that Maximus’s pro-Chalcedonian dyothelitism allowed him to show convincingly that the entire garden scene reveals the humanity of Christ and his human will: “On the basis of this interpretation, Maximus argued that the Logos has assumed a human will, which he submitted to the will of the Father and thus offered us a perfect example of obedience for the sake of our salvation.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 147.

¹⁶² See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 147.

the *θέλησις* (faculty) is located in the nature, such an instinctive object was traced back to a natural human will.¹⁶³ For the same reason, the subsequent self-determined object of accepting a sacrificial death came from the same faculty of human nature.¹⁶⁴ So the request that the cup of wrath pass and then its reception were not “relative appropriations” of our will but the results of a natural human will ontologically distinct from the divine.¹⁶⁵

Thus, the question came to the subject of this natural will in Gethsemane, the one who actualized it toward the cross. Here the distinction between a personal and a compositional *hypostasis* explained that it was not Christ as a whole but the person of the Son who was the willing subject. As the personal willer, the personal *hypostasis* of the divine Son willed through his human nature to do the Father’s will.¹⁶⁶ The same ultimate, acting subject who prayed “let this cup pass from me” also prayed “not as I will, but as you will,” both through the Son’s natural human will. In fact, “Maximus was the first to point out in an unambiguous way that it is the Logos *as man* who addressed the Father in Gethsemane.”¹⁶⁷ The only way for Christ’s obedience to be salvific and exemplary was for it to be real *human* obedience. The incarnate Son succeeded precisely because the second person of the Trinity assumed and acted through a human nature and its natural will.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 126.

¹⁶⁴ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 126. It should be noted that Maximus’s emphasis on the preponderance of the rational, self-determining aspects of man’s will over its instinctive-impulsive aspects did not deny a place to the latter, “but [they] are subject to the former, because, despite the fact that the latter are expressed without a prior decision or permission of the rational willer, whether or not they will be satisfied depends ultimately on him.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 126.

¹⁶⁵ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 147.

¹⁶⁶ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 147, 171; Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 346–47.

¹⁶⁷ Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 146–47.

¹⁶⁸ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 347. Regarding the “soteriologically indispensable human obedience” of Christ, Bathrellos rightly observes that “Maximus’s claim that Christ obeyed the

Looking at his Christological contribution as a whole, we can now summarize with a Maximian maxim: the person-nature constitution of Christ grounds his person-nature function as God and as man. The monothelite-dyothelite debate did not question the Son's divine ontology. Proponents on both sides were orthodox Trinitarians in their agreement that the person of the Son subsists in and acts through the divine nature, just like the Father and the Spirit. Both sides were also Chalcedonian in their affirmation of a two-nature ontology for Christ. Beyond these general terms, however, the controversy focused on the constitution and function of the Son *incarnate*. The monothelites argued that a human will must be rejected to assure Christ's obedience to the divine will. Yet their metaphysical maneuvers proved incapable of conceptualizing the being and obedience of Christ without harming his full humanity. In response, Maximus demonstrated that, rather than causing a soteriological problem, Chalcedonian ontology in general and its dyothelitism in particular actually assure both the full humanity and the full human obedience of the one who assumed our humanity for us. The key was working out the Chalcedonian logic of one person in two natures with consistency and with greater philosophical clarity where needed, especially regarding the *who*, *what*, and *how* of Christ's volitional capacity and activity.

The person-nature *distinction* led Maximus to articulate the person-nature *constitution* of Christ as a man. The personal *hypostasis* is the ultimate subject and ontological "I" of the human nature, not because the person of the Son is divine and pre-existent, but because as a *hypostasis*, he self-subsists and provides existence for the nature. Thus, the *who* of the man Jesus Christ is the person of the Son; the *what* is a fully human nature, which includes a natural human will by ontological and soteriological

Father to the point of death, and in so doing offered us a perfect example to imitate by willing whatever God wills, makes sense only if this obedience of Christ to the Father was self-determiningly undertaken by him *as a man*. Only in this case can we be asked to imitate him by personally obeying the divine will of God, as Maximus urges us to do." Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 171.

necessity. Christ is constituted as a fully human being by the subsistence of a personal *hypostasis* in a human nature: *a person-in-nature ontology*.

Moreover, this person-nature *constitution* of Christ led Maximus to articulate the person-nature *function* of Christ as a man. Persons act, not natures.¹⁶⁹ So the personal *hypostasis* of the Son is also the personal agent of Christ. The ontological subject of Christ is the acting subject of the human nature. Accordingly, when the man Jesus acts, it is the person of the Son who acts through his human nature. These are genuinely human acts because they are accomplished through a genuinely human nature and natural will. These are also perfect human acts of obedience to the Father, not because the humanity is overcome by the divinity, but because the human will is capable of self-determination and the divine person of the Son actualizes that power only and always in alignment with the divine will. Thus, the *how* of the man Jesus Christ is personal direction of the natural will. Christ acts as a fully human being just as the rest of humanity: *a person-through-nature economy*.

In the seventh century, the Maximian defense of dyothelitism brought greater coherence and clarity to what it means that Christ is and acts as a man. Rather than departing from the Chalcedonian formulation, Maximus consistently applied the person-nature ontology of Christ to his human being and activity. Working with Christ as a person-nature human being gave Maximus greater insight regarding the interdependence of Christological constitution and function and enabled him to conceptualize and articulate a more sophisticated understanding of the will. Moreover, this development provided a more satisfying explanation of how Christ was able to *become a man* and *act as a man* for our salvation and imitation. The incarnate Son's human being and human obedience are grounded in his person-nature ontology.

¹⁶⁹ As described above, this principle does not deny that the human nature/will has some inherent movement toward life and other instinctive/impulsive objects of its non-rational aspects.

Conciliar Ratification

In 680, the church ratified the person-nature Christology and dyothelitism of Maximus at the Third Council of Constantinople. After affirming and reciting Chalcedon's Definition, the bishops at Constantinople III recognized the orthodoxy of two wills in Christ: "defining all this we likewise declare that in him are two natural wills and two natural operations indivisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably, inconfusedly, according to the teaching of the holy Fathers."¹⁷⁰ Using the same privatives by which Chalcedon recognized and distinguished between two natures, Constantinople III located a faculty of will in the divine and human natures of Christ. Moreover, each natural will has its own natural operation: "We glorify two natural operations indivisibly, immutably, inconfusedly, inseparably in the same, our Lord Jesus Christ our true God, that is to say a divine operation and a human operation" ¹⁷¹ In summarizing its confession, the council then placed its dyothelitism in the person-nature ontology of Chalcedon:

Preserving therefore the inconfusedness and indivisibility, we make briefly this whole confession, believing our Lord Jesus Christ to be one of the Trinity and after the incarnation our true God, we say that his two natures shone forth in his one subsistence in which he both performed the miracles and endured the sufferings through the whole of his economic conversation, and that not in appearance only but in very deed, and this by reason of the difference of nature which must be recognized in the same Person, for although joined together yet each nature wills and does the things proper to it and that indivisibly and inconfusedly. Wherefore we confess two wills and two operations, concurring most fitly in him for the salvation of the human race.¹⁷²

Applying the person-nature *distinction*, Christ is God the Son incarnate according to a person-nature *constitution* such that he acts according to a person-nature *function*, both as God and as man. After the incarnation, the divine Person (subsistence) has a human nature alongside his divine nature. Thus, he is a person-nature being as God and a person-

¹⁷⁰ "Third Council of Constantinople," in *NPNF*², 14:345.

¹⁷¹ "Third Council of Constantinople," 345.

¹⁷² "Third Council of Constantinople," 345–46.

nature being as a man. Christ is a fully human being according to a *person-in-nature ontology*. As such, the same person (“one of the Trinity” before and after the incarnation) wills and acts through each nature to perform works in keeping with its respective divinity (e.g., miracles) and humanity (e.g., suffering).

Constantinople III might seem to raise the natures of Christ to subjects of Christ, especially where it states that, “each nature wills and does the things proper to it.” However, there are four reasons to reject a “natural subject” and affirm the *person-through-nature economy* taught by Maximus.¹⁷³

First, the council intended to provide a Maximian resolution of the controversy to clearly affirm dyothelitism and reject monothelitism. Maximus grounded his Christological dyothelitism in Trinitarian orthodoxy, which locates the acting subject in the person and locates the will and all other attributes in the nature.¹⁷⁴ Regarding Christ’s human ontology, Maximus did speak of the natural will’s instinctive, non-rational orientation toward some general objects, and its resulting natural movement or operation without personal intervention.¹⁷⁵ Even so, such common, natural “willing” must be traced back to the personal *hypostasis*, i.e. to the person who subsists and bears the nature.¹⁷⁶ In short, where the nature can be said to “will and do what is proper to it” in this limited sense (e.g., impulse toward life and autonomic systems of the body), the personal *hypostasis* is still the ontological subject of those movements and the acting subject of the

¹⁷³ Wellum also argues that Constantinople III should be given a Maximian interpretation. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 345–46. As he points out, John of Damascus (675–749) also affirmed person as the acting subject over against nature. See also Richard Norris Jr., “Chalcedon Revisited: A Historical and Theological Reflection,” in *The New Perspectives on Historical Theology; Essays in Memory of John Meyendorff*, ed. Bradley Nassif (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 147–51.

¹⁷⁴ See Watts, “Two Wills in Christ?,” 478–80.

¹⁷⁵ See Maximus, *Opuscule 1* (PG 91, 12CD).

¹⁷⁶ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 188–89.

predominantly rational and self-determining aspects of human life.¹⁷⁷ The person is always the ultimate subject and agent of the nature.

Second, the council's use of Pope Leo's *Tome* focused on the relationship between the natures, not on the identification of the acting subject. It has been noted that the cause for some ambiguity in the council's articulation of Christological function is its reliance upon the *Tome*.¹⁷⁸ In fact, the council did rely on the *Tome* to affirm two "natural operations" according to the divine and human natures: "[Leo] most distinctly asserts as follows: 'For each form does in communion with the other what pertains properly to it, the Word, namely, doing that which pertains to the Word, and the flesh that which pertains to the flesh.'"¹⁷⁹ However, in its immediately following statement, the council demonstrated that it was concerned not with making the natures acting subjects but with rejecting a single composite nature: "For we will not admit one natural operation in God and in the creature, as we will not exalt into the divine essence what is created, nor will we bring down the glory of the divine nature to the place suited to the creature."¹⁸⁰ Leo himself was not addressing the acting subject in Christ but was struggling against the Eutychian confusion of natures, and was thus focused on accentuating the distinction of the natures as economic (not personal) principles of action.¹⁸¹ Moreover, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition leading up to Constantinople III accepted Leo's particular two-nature formula only as conformed to an identification of the divine Logos as the acting subject in Christ.¹⁸² In particular, in his understanding of Leo, Maximus never saw the

¹⁷⁷ For a similar discussion and conclusion, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 344–47.

¹⁷⁸ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 176–85; Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 345.

¹⁷⁹ "Third Council of Constantinople," 345.

¹⁸⁰ "Third Council of Constantinople," 345.

¹⁸¹ See Grillmeier, 1:530–39; see also the discussion of Leo's *Tome* in chap. 3.

¹⁸² Specifically, Leo's formula was accepted "only on the basis of its conformity with the Christology of Cyril [of Alexandria]." Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 187. For a discussion on how

natures rising to acting subjects alongside the person of the Son.¹⁸³ Maximus made it unmistakably clear that persons act, not natures.¹⁸⁴ The natures have the inherent power for action, but the person actualizes that power.¹⁸⁵

Third, the council grounded the work of Christ in the personal agency of the second person of the Trinity, not his natures. It was because they identified Christ as “one of the Trinity” that the bishops explained that “*his* two natures shone forth in *his* one subsistence in which *he* both performed the miracles and endured the sufferings . . . and this *by reason of the difference of nature* [emphasis added].”¹⁸⁶ The acting subject here is the divine person who now acts differently through and according to his different natures. These natures and these works belong ultimately to “the same Person,” i.e., the Definition’s “one prosopon-hypostasis,” who is the personal hypostasis of the Son. Only with the person-nature ontology of Chalcedon reaffirmed did the council continue to explain that, “although joined together yet each nature wills and does the things proper to it and that indivisibly and inconfusedly.”¹⁸⁷ As shown above, the natures did not suddenly (in the same sentence!) become acting subjects alongside the person of the Son. Rather,

Cyrrillian ontology began with the divine person of the Son as the acting subject of the incarnation, see chap. 3.

¹⁸³ See Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 182.

¹⁸⁴ As Bathrellos finds regarding the will in particular, “Maximus never expanded the formula of Leo so as to make the natures *subjects of willing* too. That is, nowhere does Maximus say that each nature *wills* and works in communion with the other. *For Maximus, the willing and acting subject in Christology is the person of the incarnate Logos.*” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 182.

¹⁸⁵ Bathrellos finds some tension but ultimately a beneficial complementarity between Maximus and Leo: “Maximus’s wording, which presents Christ as the subject of willing and acting, is preferable to the formula of Leo, and must condition the understanding of that formula. The latter, however, emphasizes more clearly the inherently active status of our nature. Thus, it can also be useful, provided that it is not understood as dividing or overshadowing the willing and acting person of the incarnate Logos, which Maximus rightly placed at the centre of his Christology.” Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ*, 189.

¹⁸⁶ “Third Council of Constantinople,” 346.

¹⁸⁷ “Third Council of Constantinople,” 346.

the concern was to emphasize that the difference in operations was due to a distinction of natures but without internal opposition. Again, as in orthodox Trinitarianism, the person is the ontological and acting subject of the nature in orthodox Christology.

Fourth, making each nature an acting subject would contradict the council's clear rejection of Nestorianism. Due to its central tenets and presuppositions, Nestorian ontology ultimately multiplied the subjects in Christ. An overemphasis on the independence of the natures and an inability to locate unity in the pre-existent person of the Son (Logos), Nestorianism inevitably led to the conclusion that the human nature introduced a second personal subject alongside the Logos.¹⁸⁸ Accordingly, Nestorianism was condemned in the fifth century at the First Council of Ephesus (431), based in large part on the writings of Cyril of Alexandria. In particular, regarding the "Incarnation of the Only-Begotten Son of God," Canon VII of Ephesus proscribed "the abominable and profane doctrines of Nestorius."¹⁸⁹ Faced with the possibility of two natural wills creating two subjects, the bishops of Constantinople III explicitly affirmed the Ephesian condemnation of Nestorian teachings and were keen to ensure that their dyothelitism aligned with Cyril's direct opposition to Nestorianism.¹⁹⁰ Thus, even admitting the need for greater clarity, it would be near non-sensical to read "each nature does and wills the things proper to it" as raising the natures to acting subjects.

The best interpretation of Constantinople III, then, is a conciliar articulation of the Maximian teaching that the person-nature distinction leads to the person-nature constitution of Christ and his person-nature function, both as God and as man.

¹⁸⁸ For a discussion on Nestorian ontology and its heretical deficiencies in Christology, see chap. 3.

¹⁸⁹ See "First Council of Ephesus," in *NPNF²*, 14:231; see also the "Twelve Anathemas" of Cyril against Nestorius, which were part of the official proceedings, in *NPNF²*, 14:206–18.

¹⁹⁰ "Third Council of Constantinople," 344–45.

In summary, looking at the work of Maximus in defense of dyothelitism shows a continuation of the pro-Chalcedonian pattern: extension of first principles from Trinitarian ontology to Christological ontology and clarification as required by specific issues. At the end of the seventh century, the result was a more complete and coherent understanding of what it means that the person-nature Son became a person-nature man.

Christological Clarification of Orthodox Ontology

The historical work in this chapter has traced the development of Christological orthodoxy from Chalcedon to Constantinople III. After 451, the church needed to demonstrate the coherence of Chalcedonian logic by developing the person-nature being of Christ to clarify what it means that the divine Son became a man. In response to the confusion regarding Christological constitution and function, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition continued the early church's pattern of doctrinal formation. As discussed in the last chapter, the formation of fifth-century Christology followed a two-step process with three layers of concern and development. In the first step, the church established the person-nature ontology of God. In the second step, the church extended the person-nature ontology of God to the ontology of the God-man. During each step, the church began with a biblical conclusion and proceeded to develop a conceptual framework and terminology that enabled a coherent confession.

In a third and final step, the church *clarified the person-nature ontology* as extended into Christology. According to its ongoing pattern, the church began with the same *biblical conclusion* that there is one Christ, and that he is simultaneously fully God and fully man. However, specific challenges forced the pro-Chalcedonian tradition to re-examine the weaknesses in its *conceptual framework* for confessing that Christ is one person in two natures. Groups like the Nestorians and the Severans rejected the Chalcedonian logic. Rather than reconceiving the incarnation, however, the church clarified the meaning and significance of Christ's person-nature ontology.

The church made a sharper distinction between the ontological realities of person and nature grounded in the priority of personal self-subsistence and natural dependence. This development allowed the church to identify the eternal person (ἄλλος) of the Son as the ultimate ontological subject of his natures (ἄλλο) and the ontological location of their union. And locating the union of natures in the person enabled the church to clearly explain that the ontological subject is also the acting subject of each nature. Moreover, through a more sophisticated conception of the will, the church explained that the divine person of the Son wills as God through the divine nature and obeys as man through his human nature. In short, as Maximus demonstrated so clearly, the person-nature distinction in Christ entails the person-nature constitution of Christ, which leads to the person-nature function of Christ.

With these conceptual clarifications, the church demonstrated a deeper and more coherent understanding of how Christ is and acts as *homoousios* with us. The person-nature distinction, constitution, and function of Christ apply equally to his divine and human ontologies. The divine person of the Son became the man Jesus Christ by assuming a body-soul nature; the divine person of the Son acts as a man by acting through his body-soul nature. In both ontology and economy, it is the person-nature being of Christ that makes him our brother and our redeemer.

Supporting the development of its conceptual framework, the church made advancements in its *terminological formulation* of the human being and actions of Christ. To articulate a sharper distinction between person and nature, the church developed a constellation of neologisms to reach into the richness of the Chalcedonian logic. This advancement focused on the *enhyposstasis* of the created *anhyposstatic* human nature by its assumption into the eternal *hyposstasis* of the Son. Such innovation articulated with greater clarity the relationship between person and nature at different ontological levels in Christ. Moreover, to support the conceptual development of the will and the willing process in both Christology and anthropology, the church distinguished between the

faculty (θέλησις), object (θελητόν), and mode (πῶς θέλειν) of the will. This terminological sophistication enabled a clearer understanding of what it means for the person of the Son to have a natural will like ours and to will like we do, except without sin.

This pro-Chalcedonian tradition climaxed in the seventh century, providing the foundation, framework, and basic content for orthodox Christology. Subsequent controversies and debates would challenge the church at different times. But the later centuries did not see the church depart from the person-nature ontology of Christ.

The early church formed its biblical, coherent, and clear doctrine of the divine Son's incarnation into our humanity by extending orthodoxy ontology from Trinitarianism into Christology. Based on the priority of the Son's divine ontology, the church conceptualized the Son's human ontology according to a person-nature distinction that entailed a person-nature constitution and function. Based on the priority of the incarnate Son's human ontology as the man *par excellence*, the last two chapters will propose a model of man *par ordinaire* according to the same person-nature distinction.

CHAPTER 5

CHALCEDONIAN ANTHROPOLOGY: THE PERSON-NATURE ONTOLOGY OF MAN

The argument for a Christocentric anthropology has come to the proposal stage. This dissertation has been pursuing the thesis that the ontology of the man Jesus Christ reveals the ontology of all mankind. More specifically, the person-nature constitution of Christ as *the* human being should find a certain correspondence in the person-nature constitution of every human being. The previous chapters addressed the epistemological, biblical, and historical warrant for the anthropological extension of Christ's human ontology. This chapter begins with a brief recapitulation of those discussions to orient how the rest of the chapter will propose a model of anthropology grounded in Christology.

Presupposing that Christ is ontologically determinative for all humanity, Chapter 2 established *biblical warrant* for considering the implications. Specifically, Christ's role as the revelation of true humanity and the redeemer of a new humanity shed light on his human ontology. First, as the Christ, Jesus is and acts as both fully God and fully man. Scripture is clear that the divine Son became the Christ to do all that God promised he himself would do, and all that God requires of man. Second, as *the* image of God, the divine Son brought the true *imago* into mankind through his incarnation into our humanity. Notwithstanding the different interpretations of the *imago Dei*, a certain ontological image must ground man's ability to represent God, both for *the* man and all mankind. Third, as the redeemer of God, Christ accomplished the planned redemption of a sinful people by fulfilling the old covenant sacrifices that pointed to *the* sacrifice. And again, this required a certain ontology. The sacrifice of animals could not redeem sinful

humanity precisely because they were members of the animal kind, not mankind. The sacrifice of Christ was perfect in every way, including, most basically, that he substituted himself *as a human being* for sinful human beings. In short, the biblical presentation points to an ontological correspondence between the ontological identities of the man *par excellence* and man *par ordinaire*.

Chapter 2 also provided *epistemological warrant* for considering the anthropological implications of Christ's human ontology. In keeping with the ontological authority of Christ the man, a basic Christocentric methodology can provide a sound means for pursuing a Christocentric definition of humanity. This requires a disciplined approach according to certain first principles that form a working methodology in Christological anthropology. The foundational principle provides that Christ's ontological constitution as a man is the paradigm for all mankind. According to the framework principle, the Chalcedonian Definition and its Christology provide the categories for defining the ontological constitution of all mankind. And under the functional principle, the Chalcedonian ontology of Christ the man extends analogically into anthropology. Following this methodology will maintain the epistemological and ontological centrality of Christ while accounting for both similarities and dissimilarities. In particular, beginning with the Chalcedonian Definition and its person-nature analogy between Christ's divine and human ontologies will provide the proper categories for a Christological understanding of anthropology. Yet differences between divine and human persons will require careful attention and certain ontological adjustments. Still, the Definition and its Christology do provide genuine authority for a dialogue between Christology and anthropology. And the early church's formation of Chalcedonian Christology provides an authoritative pattern for constructive dogmatics in that regard.

Presupposing that Chalcedonian Christology is orthodox Christology, chapters 3 and 4 pursued *historical warrant* for a precise understanding of Christ's person-nature ontology. As a unit, these chapters focused on the ontological distinction used to make

sense of the biblical witness that Christ is both fully God and fully man. Each chapter looked at a different part of the doctrinal process by which the church formulated its confession of Christ as the God-man.

Chapter 3 first addressed the divine ontology of the eternal Son. The fourth-century controversies forced the church to establish an orthodox ontology by which it confessed that there is only one God and yet three who are God. To make this confession coherent, the church developed the person-nature distinction to explain that there are three divine persons who are God, and these share the single-same divine nature as the one God. Chapter 3 then demonstrated how the fifth-century church extended this same person-nature ontology to confess that the incarnate Son is the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man. The eternal Son became a man by assuming a human nature distinct from his divine nature. After this incarnation, the Son is now and forever one *hypostasis* in two *ousiai/physeis*.

Chapter 4 picked up from there and discussed how the church clarified what it means that Christ is such a one person-two natures being. The work of a pro-Chalcedonian tradition affirmed and strengthened the person-nature distinction and then addressed particular issues regarding the ontology of Christ. By its climax in the seventh century, the defense and development of the Chalcedonian logic demonstrated how the person-nature distinction in Christ leads to a person-nature constitution and a person-nature function of Christ, both as God and as man. Regarding his human ontology in particular, the church could make the coherent confession that the man Jesus Christ is a divine person subsisting in and acting through a body-soul nature.

Moreover, chapters 3 and 4 have demonstrated that the early church engaged in a pattern of *theological retrieval* to formulate the orthodox ontology of Christ. When the fifth-century debates demanded a conciliar solution, the church reached back to its theological conclusions from the Trinitarian debates of the fourth century. Rather than conceptualize the incarnation in terms of a new paradigm of personal being, the church

started with the person-nature being of God to apprehend the person of the Son becoming a man. More specifically, the early church followed a three-step process of retrieval: (1) it recognized the orthodox ontology for making metaphysical sense of the divine being, (2) it extended that person-nature ontology to the divine-human ontology of Christ, and (3) it clarified certain implications for the person-nature being of Christ the man. Along the way, the church held fast to the biblical conclusion that Christ is fully God and fully man, and it developed the concepts and terminology needed to confess that conclusion with greater clarity and coherence.

Based on the foregoing warrant and pattern of theological retrieval, the discussion below presents Chalcedonian anthropology as a *warranted theological conclusion*. The first section analyzes the established orthodoxy of Christ's person-nature ontology as the man *par excellence*. The second section extends that person-nature ontology to man *par ordinaire*. The next chapter will then make some clarifications and adjustments to account for differences between divine and human persons. Certain objections can be anticipated, and addressing them will help defend a human person-nature constitution and register it among the major models in contemporary anthropology. In keeping with the early church pattern, each step in the process begins with a biblical conclusion and then works with the concepts and terminology needed to make the best metaphysical sense of a model of humanity grounded in the Chalcedonian Definition and its Christology.

Orthodoxy: Christ's Human Ontology

When formulating Christological ontology, the early church began with Trinitarian orthodoxy. The church recognized that before the Son became the man Jesus Christ, he was the eternal Son of the Father. The ontological implications of this truth would be formulated at Chalcedon in 451 and developed in subsequent centuries. But even at Nicaea in 325, the church confessed that the Son is consubstantially divine and

thus eternally divine with the Father. If *this* Son became incarnate, the church reasoned, then his divine constitution must have ontological priority over his incarnate constitution. That priority was demonstrated most clearly in the person-nature distinction, the Word-man paradigm of the incarnation, and the identification of the divine Son as the ultimate ontological and acting subject of his divine and human natures. The person of the Son (distinct from the Father, Spirit, and divine nature) became a complete man (rather than assuming a man or an incomplete human nature) by coming to, subsisting in, and acting through a human nature that consists of a body and a complete soul. In short, because the incarnation was an act of the eternal Son in relation to the Father and the Spirit, the church correctly applied the Son's divine ontology to his enfleshed ontology.

In the same way, when formulating ontology in anthropology, the church should begin with Christological orthodoxy. If the incarnate Son is *the* man, then his human constitution must have ontological priority in determining how we conceive of mere man's constitution. The orthodox definition of Christ's ontology, divine and human, is given to us in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, which climaxed in the seventh century. Regarding the focus of the previous historical work in support of a Chalcedonian anthropology, the Chalcedonian conception of Christ's person-nature constitution as a fully human being did not change substantively and was not challenged significantly from the Medieval church, through the Reformation, and into the eras of Reformed Orthodoxy. The tradition, however, did continue to defend and expand the logic of the Definition and its Christology, making some important refinements in the thirteenth century and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. So the entire pro-Chalcedonian tradition should guide an application of the Son's human ontology—what makes him both a *complete* man and *the* man—to understand our own basic ontological structure.

Chalcedonian Authority Revisited

This unfathomable mystery [of the incarnation] the Fathers of Chalcedon wanted to safeguard. Their ontological approach, taken in isolation, may seem to be very static, but behind all the “static” formulations there is a dynamic conception. Their real concern was to safeguard the message of the prologue of John’s Gospel: the Word that was in the beginning, that was with God, yes, that was God, became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:1, 14).¹

The primary purpose of Chalcedonian Christology was and is the faithful and coherent confession of who Christ is according to Scripture. As the previous *biblical* and *historical warrant* has demonstrated, however, that confession requires a certain ontological framework. In that regard, Chalcedonian ontology provides the necessary and faithful conclusion that Christ is a man according to a person-nature constitution. That was not a *universal* conclusion in the early church. But it became the *orthodox* conclusion of the church, both then and throughout church history.

Even so, new attempts to challenge Chalcedonian Christology have emerged in the modern period. Much of that criticism comes from a difference in presuppositions and theological first principles, which fall outside the scope of the current proposal.² Recently, however, some theologians have questioned the *purpose* of Chalcedon. The question is not whether the Definition is authoritative but what kind of authority it should have in the church. For example, Sarah Coakley identifies three current and influential answers: “(1) that the Definition is *linguistically regulatory* rather than ontological in intent; (2) that its language is rightly understood today as *metaphorical*; and (3) that its

¹ Klaas Runia, *The Present-Day Christological Debate* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 108–9.

² For example, see Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall, rev. ed., New Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963); John A. T. Robinson, *The Human Face of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973); Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith*, trans. Sierd Woudstra, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1986); Bruce L. McCormack, “Karl Barth’s Historicized Christology: Just How ‘Chalcedonian’ Is It?,” in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 201–34. For a full defense against the charge that classical, Chalcedonian Christology is incoherent, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 445–65.

purpose is to define the personal identity of Christ (as God-man) in a *literal* manner leaving as little room as possible for further ambiguity.”³

Without entering the full debate here, it is helpful to affirm four propositions regarding Chalcedonianism from the biblical presentation of Christ and the church’s process and pattern of doctrinal formulation. The ministerial authority of Chalcedon has been presupposed from the beginning of this dissertation and situated within the economy of God’s grace as a product of tradition that deserves active deference. Revisiting the authority of Chalcedon after its Christological ontology and orthodoxy has been investigated provides a better opportunity to appreciate its influence in a Chalcedonian anthropology.

First, the Chalcedonian Definition and its Christology have strong ministerial authority for shaping a Christological account of anthropology. Based on the biblical presentation of the divine Son becoming a man, the theological nature of the church’s confessions, and the church’s careful doctrinal formulation of the incarnation, the Definition itself deserves our full attention and adherence. At this point, however, it should be clear that the Definition does not stand alone. The council applied a previously developed ontology of the divine Son to answer specific questions regarding the Son’s “enfleshment.” Its internal logic was then worked out over centuries to demonstrate its coherency and explanatory power for understanding what it means that the divine Son became a man like us. Any analysis of the Definition must account for its reliance upon a particular pre-Chalcedonian ontology, i.e., the extension of Nicene Trinitarianism. And the best analysis of the Definition will recognize that the fullness of its strength is found

³ Sarah Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve and What Does it Not? Some Reflections on the Status and Meaning of the Chalcedonian ‘Definition,’” in *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O’Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144. After discussing the strengths and weaknesses in these options, Coakley offers a fourth view, which she characterizes as setting a boundary (*horos*) around what can and cannot be said about the incarnation. Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 159–63.

in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition that defended and developed its good and necessary implications into a robust and orthodox Christology. It is *that* Chalcedonian Christology, with the Definition at its core, that will help determine the current proposal for a Chalcedonian anthropology.

Second, the Definition is a definitively ontological statement regarding the basic constitution of Christ as God and as a man. The overriding concern for the council was to outline the principles for a faithful and unified proclamation of Christ, with a special interest in soteriology. Yet that general goal does not say everything about the Chalcedonian achievement. The Definition might have been *mainly* dogmatic, but it was not *merely* dogmatic. The *linguistic view* insists that the Definition requires the use of certain terms (*hypostasis* and *physis*) without any ontological content or commitments.⁴ Limiting the Definition to linguistic regulation on the church's understanding of the incarnation, however, is grounded in a failure to recognize that Chalcedon succeeded because the bishops made key ontological determinations. As the previous historical work has demonstrated, the theological labors and the result were inherently and explicitly ontological. The specific task at Chalcedon was to clearly state *how* the one Christ is both divine and human, God and man. And the immediate goal was to "make

⁴ For an example of this view, see Richard Norris Jr., "Chalcedon Revisited: A Historical and Theological Reflection," in *The New Perspectives on Historical Theology; Essays in Memory of John Meyendorff*, ed. Bradley Nassif (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 140–58. Norris argues that the bishops merely provided a linguistic paradigm to unite the church because, as non-professional theologians/philosophers, they wanted to avoid the ontological approaches taken by their opponents in the Christological debates, which "reified" the divine and human natures. Norris, "Chalcedon Revisited," 140–58. It should be noted that this view of the council appears to impose the anachronistic categories of lay and professional with equally anachronistic inferences. Moreover, as demonstrated in chap. 4, the bishops would have been intimately familiar with the "ontological" approaches taken in the debates, and some were proponents of one version or another. In particular, the bishops recognized that the problem was inherently ontological and that the solution needed to be explicitly ontological, not merely linguistic. The terminology used was not an end in itself. Rather, the terms were a means to the end of clearly confessing a biblical conclusion according to a conceptual paradigm grounded in an ontological distinction. In short, the linguistic view fails to consider or understand the early church's process of Christological formulation.

clear the [ontological] levels on which unity and distinction are to be sought in Christ.”⁵ Specifically, the person-nature confession of Christ as the God-man was grounded in the *a priori* person-nature being of God. The person-nature distinction was used precisely because the church had developed certain terms and concepts to indicate *distinct ontological realities*. Moreover, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition provided ontological answers to ontological questions. The Definition created significant disagreement at first, not because of a non-realist ambiguity, but because it made particular ontological claims in purely ontological terms.⁶ The development of those claims and terms then helped to clarify the ontological implications of a divine person subsisting in human nature. So the Definition and its Christology do regulate the church’s confession of Christ. But that regulation is grounded in particular ontological commitments.

Third, the Definition and its Christology provide sufficient definition and content for understanding the basic constitution of the incarnate Son. The bishops did not intend or attempt to “define” the incarnation through a speculative analysis of being. Their work remained the work of a church council, focusing on a formula whereby the church could make its biblical confession with clarity and coherence. A lack of philosophical precision, however, does not reduce the Definition to language, as argued in the *metaphorical view* of Chalcedon.⁷ In addition to making certain ontological

⁵ Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 1:347.

⁶ It is true that the Definition itself did not give philosophical precision to the concepts of *hypostasis* and *physis*. A lack of precision, however, does not mean a lack of ontological commitment. Chaps. 3 and 4 have demonstrated the exact opposite: the church established and extended the person-nature distinction as a strictly ontological matter. See Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 104.

⁷ For examples of this view, see John Hick, ed., *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM Press, 1977); Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate: Christology in a Pluralistic Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993).

commitments, the bishops also did the work of a church council by relying on previous councils and their theological entailments. And in this case, the pro-Nicene tradition provided a cognitive basis for understanding and talking about the reality of God's being. That cognitive basis, of course, did not claim to fully comprehend what is ultimately a mystery beyond our cognitive grasp. Yet the person-nature distinction did indicate specific and distinct ontological realities with at least enough content to affirm that a hypostasis is not the same thing as a *physis/ousia*, and that in the divine being there are three such persons who are not one another. It is *that realist* affirmation of two levels of being that Chalcedon extended to the human being of Christ.⁸ Moreover, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition sharpened the distinction between personal *hypostasis* and *physis/ousia* and identified the role of each in the constitution and function of Christ, both as God and as a man. Rather than a metaphorical recession from reality, the core of Chalcedon and its clarifications are irreducibly ontological.⁹

Yet, fourth, it is also important to note that Chalcedonian ontology is a chaste ontology. The history of the person-nature distinction does not warrant the *literal view* that a proper analytical reading of the Definition precludes any further discussion or development.¹⁰ In fact, the Definition required centuries of it to form a robust orthodoxy, and one that invites further Christological reflection.

⁸ It should be noted that affirming God's real being and articulating the ontological entailments of his revelation in Scripture does not mean that the Nicene tradition or its extension into the Chalcedonian tradition sought to reify God by placing him in the common category of being along with his creation. Rather, in its orthodox ontology, the church has uniformly recognized that God is *sui generis* and outside or beyond all categories of created being. See the discussion below regarding an analogy between divine and human being.

⁹ For an early critique of Hick's metaphorical approach to the incarnation, see Michael Green, *The Truth of God Incarnate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). For a critique of the pluralistic paradigm presupposed by that approach, see Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 43–46.

¹⁰ For examples among analytic philosophers who defend a "literal" incarnation of God the Son according to the Chalcedonian Definition and tradition, see Thomas Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); David Brown, *The Divine Trinity* (London: Duckworth, 1985).

These affirmations help identify the purpose of Chalcedon. The Definition and its Christology support the coherence of the biblical conclusion and confession that Christ is fully God and fully man by means of a basic but sufficient ontological distinction between person and nature. And this purpose helps to refine Chalcedon's authority: the Definition and its Christology invite and govern all Christological reflection according to the person-nature distinction (including its good and necessary implications) in its analogical correspondence with reality.

Chalcedonian orthodoxy, then, opens up theological discourse regarding a Christological understanding of human ontology. In fact, it creates the opportunity for *fruitful* reflection precisely because the Definition and its Christology provide the basic ontological concepts, content, and terminology for a *faithful* confession that Christ is a fully human being. And when combined with the ontological authority of the man *par excellence*, the ministerial authority of Chalcedon seems to create some ontological implications for the "definition" of man *par ordinaire*. The analysis below will look at the person-nature distinction and its entailments for the constitution and function of Christ to determine what we must say about *the* man Jesus Christ. Then the discussion will turn to anthropology using the same pattern and propositions to define mere man.

Excursus on Chalcedonian Authority and Ontology

A focused interaction with Coakley regarding the linguistic, metaphorical, and literal views of Chalcedon can shed more light on the accomplishment of the Definition and its Christology. This excursus is not intended to be a critique of Coakley. In fact, she makes some of the same points made above and offers insights that support a defense of Chalcedon against the limitations different views would place on it. In her own critique of the linguistic, metaphorical, and literal views, however, Coakley makes some observations and arguments that offer an opportunity for a more nuanced appreciation of Chalcedon. In particular, interacting with Coakley will highlight that what kind of

authority Chalcedon bears and the definite ontological content and clarity it brings to Christology, and to an anthropology grounded in Chalcedonian Christology.

Three points can be made through interaction with Coakley in her chapter “What Does Chalcedon Solve?” in *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium*. It should be noted that it is not clear whether Coakley limits her consideration of Chalcedon to the Definition itself, without reference to the pro-Chalcedonian tradition that immediately followed.¹¹ Yet it seems clear that the pro-Chalcedonian tradition defended and explained what the Definition meant (and means) and worked out many of its good and necessary implications. In that regard, then, the Definition and its Christology are inseparable. The following discussion will approach the issues raised accordingly, i.e., from the pro-Chalcedonian climax in the seventh century that presented a robust person-nature ontology of Christ.

First, Chalcedon provides not just a conceptual-linguistic apparatus, but one that indicates certain ontological realities. Coakley does critique and ultimately reject a “regulatory” reading of the Definition.¹² However, Coakley begins that critique by addressing where Richard Norris “appears . . . to be correct about several matters” in his linguistic view of Chalcedon.¹³ She agrees with Norris that person and nature are “relatively undefined” in the Definition, based on her view that the Definition’s pre-history “was an ambiguous one and the Definition does not clear up the ambiguity.”¹⁴ As chapter 3 has demonstrated, however, such a cursory conclusion fails to recognize the content of the pro-Nicene tradition that provided Chalcedon with its linguistic-conceptual apparatus. Coakley does eventually think that the Definition has to make some kind of

¹¹ See Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 159–63.

¹² See Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 149–52.

¹³ Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 147.

¹⁴ Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 148.

ontological commitment. But such a tepid acknowledgment belies the fact that the bishops explicitly started with the person-nature ontology of God, which distinguished between two levels of being. And they extended that same ontological distinction into the human ontology of Christ. Moreover, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition that defended and drew out the implications of the Definition's person-nature ontology further sharpened the distinction between *hypostasis* and *physis/ousia* and identified the role of each in the constitution and function of Christ, both as God and as man.

Coakley agrees with Norris that the Definition does not necessarily imply that the divine and human natures are distinct instances of the same kind and seems to leave the matter as an open-ended issue hidden in the “debates that preceded and succeeded Chalcedon.”¹⁵ Again, however, those debates answer the question quite clearly. In contrast to the Nestorian ontology that created a separation between the natures and the Cyrillian ontology that struggled to conceptualize the independent reality of the human nature, the council employed the person-nature distinction of Nicene Trinitarianism (and the axiomatic Creator–creature distinction) to insist that the divine Son assumed a distinct human nature that is just as real and complete of a substance as the divine nature.

Coakley also agrees with Norris that “the major achievement of Chalcedon is its ‘regulatory’ vocabulary.”¹⁶ As chapters 3 and 4 have demonstrated, however, the Chalcedonian accomplishment was not merely linguistic but irreducibly ontological. The terms *hypostasis* and *physis/ousia* and the one person–two natures formula were able to regulate the church's confession precisely because those terms expressed particular ontological concepts that made metaphysical sense of the divine Son (an ontological reality) subsisting in the divine nature (a distinct ontological reality) and also subsisting

¹⁵ Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 148.

¹⁶ Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 148.

in a human nature (a further distinct ontological reality). The coherence and explanatory power of that person-nature constitution would be clarified and developed into an ontological orthodoxy that has governed all Christological issues ever since.¹⁷

Thus, a significant aspect of Chalcedon's authority is grounded in its person-nature ontology. The *hypostasis* and *physis/ousia* of the Definition and its Christology govern what the church must say *about the ontological reality of the divine person of the Son subsisting in a real body-soul nature*. If the church had not made these ontological determinations and commitments, it could not have overcome the otherwise intractable division among different ontological conceptions and formulations. It is precisely because person and nature are not just words, but words that indicate two levels of being in God and in the God-man, that Chalcedon makes metaphysical sense of the incarnation and unifies the church's witness to that mystery.

Second, more particularly, Chalcedon provides sufficient ontological content to answer some of the most significant questions regarding the constitution of Christ as a man. Coakley correctly emphasizes that the Definition was not intended to provide "a full systematic account of Christology, and even less a complete and precise metaphysics of Christ's makeup."¹⁸ However, her suggestion that Chalcedon is a "transitional (though still normative) 'horizon'" does not go nearly far enough. She limits the Definition to a rather apophatic boundary marker for the incarnation, "providing an abstract rule of language (*physis* and *hypostasis*) for distinguishing duality and unity in Christ . . . but without any supposition that this linguistic regulation thereby *explains* or *grasps* the reality towards which it points."¹⁹ Even though she critiques the merely linguistic view proposed by Norris and others, Coakley herself fails to see in the Definition more than

¹⁷ See Gerald Bray, *God Has Spoken: A History of Christian Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 362–63.

¹⁸ Coakley, "What Does Chalcedon Solve?," 161.

¹⁹ Coakley, "What Does Chalcedon Solve?," 161.

the “ontological commitment” that its formula is a true statement regarding the historical Christ. In fact, she concludes that Chalcedon does not tell us (*inter alia*): what *hypostasis* means applied to Christ; how his two *physeis* relate; how many wills he has; whether the *hypostasis* is identical with the pre-existent Logos; whether *hypostasis* has the same meaning in the Christological and Trinitarian contexts.²⁰

As chapters 3 and 4 have demonstrated, however, the Chalcedonian bishops intentionally extended to Christ the person-nature constitution of God because it was God the Son (*hypostasis*) who became the Christ. It was this application of Trinitarian ontology (content, concepts, and terminology) that allowed the Definition to provide not just a formula, but a formula grounded in an ontological framework with ontological implications. Moreover, the application of Trinitarian ontology led to the subsequent debates and the defense and development of Chalcedon, which climaxed in the Maximian resolution to the monothelism controversy. And that pro-Chalcedonian tradition gave an explicit and consistent interpretation of the implicit parts of the Definition’s Christology, including: *hypostasis* applied to Christ means a subsistence that is (first and foremost) the ultimate and acting ontological subject of a nature; his two *physeis* relate as equally complete and distinct substances joined in the subsistence of the Son; Christ has two natural wills, one divine and the other human, each faculty located in its respective nature; the *hypostasis* of Christ is identical with the pre-existent Logos; *hypostasis* has the same primary meaning in the Christological and Trinitarian contexts.

Thus, Chalcedon has the authority to define some of the most significant aspects of Christ’s person-nature constitution as a human being. The person of the Son self-subsists at a different ontological level than his human nature, just as he does in relation to the divine nature. Yet the Son subsists so intimately in his own body and soul, as he does in the divine nature, that he is the one who is acting when the man Jesus Christ

²⁰ See Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 162.

acts. The person of the Son is the one who obeys the Father, suffers, dies, and rises again as a genuine and complete human being on behalf of sinful human beings. In that sense, while it does not answer everything, Chalcedonian Christology does answer the essential *who*, *what*, and *how* of the gospel.

Third, Chalcedon invites further exploration of the incarnation within a person-nature framework. Coakley sees a tendency in some analytic philosophers to defend the coherence and even necessity of the incarnation and Chalcedonianism in a way that answers too much and precludes further discussion.²¹ She helpfully points out that “literal” has a range of meaning and a “literal” incarnation should align with the fifth-century council’s intentions and expectations. And she is correct that the incarnation of the divine Son is not an empirical determination. The Son’s assumption of a human nature, rather, is a revelational conclusion. Yet her concern that “literal” will be transposed into a claim that the Definition uses *hypostasis* and *physis* in a univocal sense requires some nuance.²² Coakley again seems to reduce the Definition to a reluctant confession that is shrouded in ambiguity. It is true that the council thought highly of the Nicene Creed and its ability to encompass the faith. However, as chapters 3 and 4 have demonstrated, the debates and their ontological focus eventually forced the council to innovate by taking the person-nature being of God and extending it to the incarnation of the Son. And the pro-Chalcedonian tradition clarified that the *hypostasis* of the Son was indeed univocal in the Trinity and in Christ. Chalcedonianism always affirmed the Creator-creator distinction and therefore rejected a univocal sense of divine and human *physeis*. Yet the human is just as real and concrete as the divine nature. The difference between the divine and human natures is analogical, not ambiguous or equivocal. Against the notion that Chalcedonianism is lost to intentional imprecision or unavoidable

²¹ See Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 156–59.

²² See Coakley, “What Does Chalcedon Solve?,” 158–59.

ambiguity, the Definition concludes its ontological statement of the incarnation by emphasizing just the opposite: “These things, therefore, having been expressed by us with the *greatest accuracy and attention* [emphasis added], the holy Ecumenical Synod defines that no one shall be suffered to bring forward a different faith.”²³

Thus, the authority and ontology of Chalcedon provide both boundaries and opportunities for constructive development. The person-nature constitution of Christ provides a definite minimum for what the church must say, but also a model for what else the church may say about the incarnation. And this applies to an anthropology grounded in the Chalcedonian incarnation. Such a Chalcedonian anthropology should begin with a proper, pro-Chalcedonian understanding of the divine person of the Son subsisting in and acting through a human nature. It should reject interpretations and conceptualizations in conflict with that tradition. And it should freely yet faithfully extend the same Chalcedonian sense of a person-nature distinction, constitution, and function into anthropology.

Christological Analysis

The goal of this section is to have discrete propositions for the incarnate ontology of Christ revealed in Scripture and formulated in the church’s deep reflection upon Scripture. A summary of the previous historical work would be informative but not particularly useful without an organization to identify connections between Christological and anthropological formulation.²⁴ It will also help to consider some later refinements in Chalcedonian Christology to help identify what exactly makes the incarnate Son a man.

²³ J. N. D. Kelly, “The Chalcedonian Definition,” in *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 339–40.

²⁴ The Christological analysis here will refer to certain parts of the Christological development in chaps. 3 and 4 where particularly significant to the proposition and points under consideration. At all times, the analysis is grounded in conclusions and insights drawn from historical work in those chapters.

In each proposition, the heirs of the Chalcedonian tradition will provide some helpful insights from their defense and application of the Definition's person-nature logic.²⁵

It is important to note that the analysis begins with the same *biblical conclusion* that governed the conciliar efforts at Chalcedon and the expository efforts thereafter: Christ is fully God and fully man. Moreover, the propositions will be drawn from the same *conceptual framework* used to make metaphysical sense of that conclusion in the development of the Definition and its Christology: the person-nature distinction. Finally, as with Chalcedon and the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, the propositions below will be guided by an overarching concern for Christ's mediation between God and man and the metaphysics needed to accomplish that mediation. In particular, each proposition will be shown to make the best biblical and ontological sense of Christ's identity and work as the image and redeemer of God.²⁶

Proposition one: the divine person of the Son is the ontological subject of the man Jesus Christ. Given its foundational importance, a precise understanding of the *person-nature distinction* in Christ should frame any analysis of his human ontology.²⁷ That distinction first enabled the church to confess how God is three-in-one and then enabled the confession that Christ is one-in-two. In both cases, it is crucial to emphasize that the person(s) and the nature(s) are distinct *because* they exist at two ontological

²⁵ See the discussion in chap. 1, s.v. "Method."

²⁶ See the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. "Biblical Warrant."

²⁷ Also, as Herman Bavinck warns, "It is precisely this distinction between nature and person, however, that encounters most resistance in both the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ and is therefore also the curse of most errors in both of these doctrines." Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 306.

levels.²⁸ Hypostasis is a metaphysical reality at the level of ἄλλος, having the unique property of subsistence, whereby a person does not depend upon another for existence. *Ousia/physis* is a metaphysical reality at the level of ἄλλο, having the property of insubsistence, whereby a nature has its existence in a hypostasis. Moreover, the person is always a *who* (subject), whereas the nature is always a *what* (substance).²⁹ Outside properly speculative theology, an actual hypostasis does not subsist without an *ousia*, and a concrete nature does not exist except in a person. Yet their inseparability does not entail a person-nature conflation. In fact, a unity-in-diversity that corresponds with reality and that grounds the basic coherence of Trinitarianism and Christology requires theology to keep person and nature at different ontological levels.

The focus of this first ontological proposition is one of the divine hypostases: the person of the Son who became a man. Before Chalcedon, Cyril of Alexandria had the correct theological instinct to consider the incarnation by beginning with the eternal Son who became incarnate. Chalcedon would correct Cyrillian ontology where it struggled to conceptualize the two distinct natures in the incarnate Son.³⁰ But that correction still began from the same location: the eternal personally distinct Son. Thereafter, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition kept this starting point and conceived of the incarnation as a divine act of the eternal Son. As a result of *this* incarnation, we should think of Christ primarily as “the second person of the Trinity who exists as a human being.”³¹ According

²⁸ See the discussion in chap. 3, s.v. “Person-Nature Distinction” and “Person-Nature Being,” and in chap. 4, s.v. “Person-Nature Constitution.”

²⁹ See Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:307. Bavinck explains: “The two natures, indeed, are and remain “one thing and [then] another” (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο), but not “one person and [then] another” (ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος).

³⁰ As Bavinck observes, Cyril “did not yet distinguish the words *προσωπον* (person), *ὕστασις* (substance), and *φύσις* (nature) as clearly as later theologians did.” Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:302.

³¹ Thomas Joseph White, *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 117.

to Maximus, this means that we must begin with a *personal* incarnation.³² In that sense, as Francis Turretin (1623–1687) later explained in Reformed Orthodoxy, the Son “communicated his own subsistence to the flesh *by assuming it into the unity of his own hypostasis* so that the flesh is not a hypostasis, but real [*enhypostatos*][emphasis added].”³³ That is, the incarnation occurred by the eternal Son assuming the human nature into his own hypostasis and sustaining its existence as his own nature. The primary sense of person in Christology, then, is the *personal hypostasis* of the divine Son, who is the subject of his two natures. However, from the early centuries to the present, pro-Chalcedonian theologians have, at times, introduced some ambiguity (not contradiction) by referring to the whole Christ (sum of his natures) as the person of Christ.³⁴

³² A *personal* incarnation is contrasted with a *compositional* incarnation, which begins with the end result of the incarnation and sees Christ as the combination of the divine and human natures. See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Person-Nature Constitution.”

³³ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George M. Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1992), 2:317. Turretin helpfully distinguished between the effective, transitive, and assumptive communication of *hypostasis*. An effective communication would create in the human nature another *hypostasis*. A transitive communication would transfer the Son’s own *hypostasis* into the human nature. Both of these are unorthodox because, in different ways, an effective and a transitive communication of *hypostasis* would result in a second personal subject alongside the divine person of the Son. According to orthodoxy, i.e., Chalcedonian Christology, the eternal Son *enhypostatized* the human nature by assuming and sustaining it in his own eternal *hypostasis*.

³⁴ For example, see John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, NPNF², 9:92B; Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2:312. Within the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, however, the occasional shift to speaking of the “whole person” of Christ should be read in light of the otherwise predominant explanation that the ultimate ontological subject of Christ is the *personal hypostasis* of the eternal, divine Son. For example, when he moved to address the Christ as a whole person, John Owen clarified that “when I speak of the constitution of the person of Christ, I intend not his person absolutely, as he is the eternal Son of God. He was truly, really, completely, a divine person from eternity, which is included in the notion of his being the Son, and so distinct from the Father, which is his complete personality. . . . But I speak of the person of Christ as unto the assumption of the substantial adjunct of the human nature, not to be a part whereof his person is composed, but as unto its subsistence therein by virtue of a substantial union.” John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2003), 1:8–10. Owen recognized that some “speak freely of the composition of the person of Christ in and by the two natures, the divine and human.” Owen, *Works*, 1:10. But given the propensity for such language to include the heresy of some change in the divine (person or nature), Owen urged clarity and consistency. See Owen, *Works*, 1:10–11. For an excellent example of carefully maintaining the ontological identity of the divine person of the Son throughout the work of Christology, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*.

Considering the incarnation as a divine mission of the Son will help solidify the ontological location of the divine person of the Son in Christology.³⁵ Incarnation means that a divine person comes to subsist in a human nature. The divine nature could not become incarnate because, as an *ousia*, it does not act and it cannot “subsist” in a human nature, which is another *ousia*. And neither the Father nor the Spirit comes to earth by subsistence in human nature.³⁶ Rather, the work of incarnation was the mission of the Son alone. In his approach to the incarnation and ultimate defense of Chalcedon,³⁷ Thomas Aquinas began with the divine mission of the Son who was sent by the Father.³⁸ Every divine mission (of the Son or the Spirit) is grounded in an eternal, internal relation (immanent procession) and results in a temporal, external (economic) relation between God and his creation.³⁹ Regarding incarnation, the mission is grounded in the Son’s

³⁵ For an extensive and excellent treatment of divine missions in general, see Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 360–412.

³⁶ The issue of whether the Father or the Spirit could have become incarnate lies outside the present concern to understand the basic ontological constitution of the Son’s incarnation. For a brief discussion that outlines the issue, see Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 390–91.

³⁷ See Joseph P. Wawrykow, “The Christology of Thomas Aquinas in Its Scholastic Context,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

³⁸ In fact, for Aquinas, all things and all theology begin with the Trinity and the divine mission of the Son sent by the Father and the mission of the Spirit sent by the Son. See Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences*, in *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. Ralph McInerny, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 52; see also Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11–12. Contemplation of divine procession and mission was apparent much earlier in the works of Athanasius and Augustine. But as Fred Sanders notes, Aquinas “integrated the missions–processions line of thought more explicitly into a coherent framework.” Fred Sanders, *The Triune God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 121. As evidenced in the Athanasian Creed (360), for example, the church had always confessed three persons in the one true God, “neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.” However, as the church worked out the logic of divine missions and processions as revealed in Scripture, it became clear that “what is revealed in the missions is the eternal reality that distinguishes the persons from each other: relations of origin.” Sanders, *The Triune God*, 121. For the Protestant reception of divine missions and processions, see August Twisten, “The Trinity,” *Bibliotheca Sacra and Theological Review* 4, no. 13 (February 1847): 25–68.

³⁹ See Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, trans. Daniel J. Sullivan and English Dominican Fathers, Great Books of the Western World 19–20 (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 1.43.2; see also Legge, *Trinitarian Christology of Aquinas*, 14–15. As Sanders explains, “Economic

eternal relation to the Father as the one who is uniquely begotten of the Father.⁴⁰ Based on that relation, the Father sent the Son to become Christ the man. These are not abstract notions but real subjects: one who begets and sends and the other who is begotten and is sent. A divine mission is “the sending of a divine person as really present in time according to a created effect.”⁴¹ The divine mission of incarnation is the sending of the divine person of the Son as really present in creation as the historical man Jesus Christ.

Moreover, the work of incarnation terminates uniquely upon the divine person of the Son. Trinitarian orthodoxy has consistently recognized that the *ad extra* works of God are inseparable (*opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*).⁴² Because the divine persons share the single-same divine nature, they have the single-same will, authority, and power.⁴³ As John Owen (1616–1683) explained, this means that “every person, therefore, is the author of every work of God, because each person is God, and the divine nature is the same undivided principle of all divine operations; and this ariseth from the unity of

sendings . . . make known eternal processions. And immanent processions . . . are extended or elongated into economic missions.” Sanders, *The Triune God*, 124. The distinct missions of the Son and the Spirit from the Father reveal their distinct processions from the Father. The Spirit proceeds from the Father by eternal spiration and is sent by the Father unto (*inter alia*) the sanctification of man. The Son proceeds from the Father by eternal generation and is sent by the Father unto incarnation as a man. For an extensive and excellent discussion of the divine processions, see Emery, *Trinitarian Theology of Aquinas*, 51–77.

⁴⁰ For an extended and helpful discussion of divine processions and relations in Aquinas, see Legge, *Trinitarian Christology of Aquinas*, 51–102.

⁴¹ Legge, *Trinitarian Christology of Aquinas*, 17.

⁴² For the archetypal formulation of the doctrine, see Augustine, *The Trinity* 1.2.7, 71. For a contemporary discussion and defense of inseparable operations as orthodox and indispensable, see Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: An Augustinian Assessment* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011); Kyle Claunch, “What God Hath Done Together: Defending the Historic Doctrine of the Inseparable Operations of the Inseparable Operations of the Trinity,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56 (December 2013): 781–800; see also Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming 2021).

⁴³ As Aquinas explained it, “Since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have the same power, just as the same essence, it is necessary that everything that God works in us as from an efficient cause would be at once from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Thomas Aquinas and English Dominican Fathers, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1923), 4.21.

the persons in the same essence.”⁴⁴ In that sense, the *ad extra* work of a divine mission is undivided: “a mission’s created effect is efficiently caused by all three divine persons, since the *principle* [emphasis original] of the divine action that causes it is the divine *nature* [emphasis added] that all three persons possess in common.”⁴⁵ So the divine nature is the *common principium* of God’s work in creation. And this applies to the incarnation. In the Son’s mission of assuming a human nature, “the Trinity [was] indivisibly active in that assumption.”⁴⁶ Yet the *ad intra* relation and distinction of the divine persons is preserved (*servato ordine et discrimine personarum*) in God’s *ad extra* works.⁴⁷ In fact, the *ad intra* reality entails a corresponding *ad extra* reality.⁴⁸ In each divine mission, the created effect “is also related to one particular divine person in his personal property *as a terminus*, so that the divine person who is sent in that effect is truly made present.”⁴⁹ In this sense, Turretin concluded that “the incarnation is a work not natural, but personal, terminating on the person, not the nature.”⁵⁰ So a divine person is the *unique terminus* of God’s work in creation. And again, this applies to the incarnation.

⁴⁴ Owen, *Works*, 3:93.

⁴⁵ Legge, *Trinitarian Christology of Aquinas*, 105.

⁴⁶ Tyler R. Wittman, “On the Unity of the Trinity’s External Works: Archaeology and Grammar,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 20, no. 3 (July 2018): 374.

⁴⁷ This is the second clause of the extended form of *opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*. For an explication of the need to keep the two clauses together to avoid misunderstanding and distortion, see Wittman, “On Unity of Trinity’s External Works,” 359–80.

⁴⁸ See Claunch, “What God Hath Done Together,” 790.

⁴⁹ Legge, *Trinitarian Christology Aquinas*, 1.30.1.2.

⁵⁰ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2:305. See also Owen, *Works*, 1:179. Owen explained how the Father and the Spirit were involved in the work of incarnation, while the work terminated on the Son alone: “(1) As unto authoritative designation, it was the act of the Father. Hence is he said to send ‘his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,’ Rom. 8: 3; Gal. 4: 4. (2) As unto the formation of the human nature, it was the peculiar act of the Spirit, Luke 1: 35. (3) As unto the term of the assumption, or the taking of our nature unto himself, it was the peculiar act of the person of the Son.” Owen, *Works*, 1:179.

The divine act of assuming a human nature terminated on the person of the Son alone as he alone took that nature into his own personal subsistence.⁵¹

Dominic Legge draws out the significance of personal terminus for identifying the personal subject in Chalcedonian Christology:

Christ *is* the Son because his human nature is assumed, according to being, into union that terminates in the person of the Son alone. . . . [according to] the surpassingly greater union according to *subsistence* and *being*: Jesus *is* the Son in his very being. This is the greatest possible mode by which a creature (namely, Christ's human nature) can be related to a single divine person, as a terminus according to the Son's "personal *esse*" [subsistent act of being].⁵²

Tracing the terminus of the divine mission of incarnation to the divine person of the Son provides a Trinitarian refinement of the hypostatic union. Before incarnation, the distinct person of the Son enjoyed *ad intra subsistence* in the divine nature with the Father and the Spirit. Being sent by the Father according to his filial relation, this same Son added to himself an *ad extra subsistence* in human nature. Through this divine mission of incarnation, the divine hypostasis of the Son became a man. And this is confirmed by the

⁵¹ See Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences* 1.30.1.2. Aquinas noted that there are two possible relations of creation to a divine person: *terminus* according to exemplar causality and *terminus* according to being. The former creates a likeness to the personal procession of the person. The latter is unique to the incarnation in which "the human nature is assumed into the being [esse] and unity of the divine person" (1.30.1.2).

⁵² Legge, *Trinitarian Christology of Aquinas*, 106. Legge helpfully explains that Aquinas is affirming the hypostatic union, not locating the union in the divine nature (see 106–11). Aquinas uses "esse" here to mean an "act of being," not a "thing called being." So when he says that the incarnation terminated in the "personal esse" of the Son, Aquinas points to the existence of the human nature in the pre-existent and self-subsistent person of the Son. He clearly and consistently located the incarnation in the *hypostasis* of the Son: "Since the human nature is joined to the Son of God hypostatically or personally . . . it follows . . . that person [of the Son] would now be said to subsist not only according to [his] divine nature, but also according to [his] human nature." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 3.17.2. In short, according to Trinitarian and Chalcedonian orthodoxy, Aquinas employed terminus to explain the incarnation of God the Son according to the person-nature distinction. The Reformed Orthodox (e.g., Girolamo Zanchi, 1516–1590; Amandus Polanus, 1562–1610; Owen; Turretin) largely followed the medieval scholastics in defending Chalcedonian Christology through a Trinitarian account of the incarnation that terminated uniquely on the person of the Son. See Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1987), 4:267–73. For a summary of the Reformed Orthodox appropriation of the terminology and theology of their predecessors, see Muller, *PRRD*, 4:167–95.

divine terminus of the incarnation. The human nature terminated in the personal hypostasis of the Son, who is ontologically prior to and now present in his own human nature. Thus, incarnation created a hypostatic union (not unity) of the human nature in the personal hypostasis of the Son, who is the subject and principle of the nature and the union.⁵³

This *hypostatic identity* of the eternal Son as the subject of the incarnate Son makes good *metaphysical sense* of the incarnation according to the person-nature distinction. Based on the entire Chalcedonian tradition, including some of its later refinements, it is now clear beyond all ambiguity that the personal hypostasis of the eternal Son is the ultimate ontological subject of the incarnate Son. The particular person of the Son alone is sent on the mission of incarnation; the incarnation terminates on the particular person of the Son alone. On this, even the medieval scholastics and the Reformed tradition agree.⁵⁴ Herman Bavinck summarizes the matter in one statement: “The Son increased [the human nature] within himself and, by creating, assumed it in himself.”⁵⁵ The eternal Son is the subject of his own incarnation as the man Jesus Christ. Moreover, he is the only ontological subject in Christ. As with the pro-Chalcedonians, the

⁵³ See Jean Galot, *Who Is Christ? A Theology of the Incarnation*, trans. M. Angeline Bouchard (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1981), 285–86.

⁵⁴ Beyond the substantive doctrines at the core of the break from Rome, the exact relationship between the Reformers and their medieval forebears is a subject of ongoing discussion and debate. However, regarding the actual use of medieval sources and methods and the *ad hoc* use of broadly catholic doctrine, “the Protestant Reformation thus becomes better understood as a kind of reformation rather than a rejection of school theology [i.e., medieval scholasticism].” Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen, eds., *Aquinas among the Protestants* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 39. This becomes even more clear in the post-Reformation era: “The Protestant orthodox were intent upon establishing systematically the normative, catholic character of institutionalized Protestantism, at time through the explicit use of those elements in patristic and medieval theology not at odds with the teachings of the Reformation.” Muller, *PRRD*, 1:37; see also Muller, *PRRD*, 4:167–89; Richard Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 79.

⁵⁵ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:307; see also Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Willard (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1992), 210.

heirs of that tradition demonstrated that the human nature did not come with a human subject but was immediately assumed into the person of the Son.⁵⁶ Considered (logically) apart from the divine person who assumed it, the human nature is *anhypostatic*, having no subsistence of its own. In reality, since the human nature was created for the divine Son's incarnation, he assumed it into his own hypostatic existence from the moment of its creation. In that sense, the human nature is *enhyposstatic*, having its subsistence only in the person of the Son. There is no ontological room for a Nestorian addition of a human subject in Christ. The eternal person of the Son assumed the *anhypostatic* nature created for him in the womb of the *Theotokos* such that it became an *enhyposstatic* nature in him.⁵⁷ And there is no ontological reason for a Eutychian confusion of natures or conflation of nature into person. Chalcedon and its progeny affirmed monosubjectivism while rejecting monophysitism.⁵⁸

The *hypostatic identity* of the eternal Son as the subject of the incarnate Son also makes good *biblical sense* of the promised God-man mediation. Due to the guilt and corruption of the first Adam, sinful humanity could not produce the Christ who would

⁵⁶ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Personal Identity and Union." For a detailed demonstration in Aquinas, see also Michael Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union* (2017; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 73–100. For instances of the Reformed Orthodox perspective, see Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics Set out and Illustrated from the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 416–19.

⁵⁷ As a supplement to the discussion in chap. 4, Muller provides a clear and concise definition for the meaning and significance of *an-enhyposstasis* distinction for Chalcedonian Christology: "[*enhyposstasis* means] having one's self-subsistence in the subsistence of another; usually applied to the human nature of Christ with reference to the identification of the 'person' or subsistence of Christ as the eternal person of the Word which has, in time, assumed a non-self-subsistent, or *anhypostatic*, human nature. The purpose of this formulation . . . is to safeguard the union of the two natures through affirmation of the oneness of Christ's person: the person is divine and not the sum of the two natures." Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), s.v. "*enhyposstasis*." The subsistence (personal *hypostasis*) of the Son assumed a human nature that was a substance without a subsistence apart from the Son.

⁵⁸ See Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 280–82.

reverse the covenant curse.⁵⁹ The Christ would have to bear the covenant curse without being subject to it himself. He would need to be a new Adam to start a new line of humanity. Therefore, the personal subject, the “I” of Christ, “did not descend from Adam but was the Son of the Father, chosen from eternity to be the head of a new covenant.”⁶⁰ Moreover, it was fitting that the one who is the eternal image of God should remake us in his own incarnate image; that the one who is eternally beloved of the Father should reconcile sinful man to the Father.⁶¹ In short, the eternal Son must be the subject of the incarnate Son to be ontologically capable—as a man—of providing new covenant headship and the perfected image of God to redeem sinful humanity and restore the *imago Dei* in a sanctified humanity.

According to this first ontological proposition, the personal *hypostasis* of the eternal, divine Son is “the *who*, the *subject*, the *person* of the incarnation”⁶² and of Christ the man.⁶³ The next propositions will build on this foundation.

Proposition two: the divine person of the Son subsists in a created body-soul nature (like ours) as the man Jesus Christ. It was necessary to establish so thoroughly that the divine person of the Son is the subject of Christ because that

⁵⁹ See the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. “Biblical Warrant.”

⁶⁰ Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:294; see also Bavinck, 3:305.

⁶¹ See Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:305; see also the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. “Biblical Warrant.”

⁶² Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 424. Wellum also provides an excellent discussion of the Son as the person of Christ in eternal trinitarian relation with the Father and the Spirit (see 424–33). He concludes (*inter alia*), “The Son alone became incarnate because it was fitting for his unique, filial mode of subsisting in the divine nature in relation to the Father and Spirit” (431).

⁶³ Regarding the theological and ontological identity of Christ, Scott Swain concludes, “Jesus is the Son living out in human form his eternal relationship with the Father in the Spirit for our saving benefit.” Scott R. Swain, *The God of the Gospel: Robert Jenson’s Trinitarian Theology*, Strategic Initiatives in Evangelical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 192.

ontological, hypostatic identity is the key to understanding the ontological composition of the incarnate Son. The analysis above began with the relationship between the personal *hypostasis* of the Son and the other divine persons in his divine mission of incarnation. The analysis here begins again with the personal *hypostasis* of the Son, but this time considers his relationship with the divine nature to then understand his relationship with his human nature. As Maximus demonstrated most clearly in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, the person-nature distinction entails the *person-nature constitution* of Christ as a man.⁶⁴

The divine person-nature distinction and relation is unique. To make metaphysical sense of the incarnation, Chalcedon appropriated the metaphysical framework developed in the pro-Nicene tradition to confess the triunity (tri-personality) of the one true God. Yet in the divine being, the person-nature distinction must be understood in keeping with God's divine simplicity. According to orthodox Trinitarianism, God's perfection of being means that he suffers no division or composition. As the Reformed Orthodox explained most clearly, God is "absolutely simple," meaning that he is purely one, not just in number but in constitution, having no parts or mixture.⁶⁵ God is absolutely free from any composition, whether essential or logical/rational. However, divine simplicity does not exclude all distinction or plurality, as long as those do not imply composition.⁶⁶ So the divine persons are distinct from the divine nature "not as things, but as modes of subsistence, not composing, but modifying

⁶⁴ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Person-Nature Constitution."

⁶⁵ See Edward Leigh, *A Treatise of Divinity: Consisting of Three Books* (London: W. Lee, 1646), 2:58. For an excellent discussion of divine simplicity as developed in Reformed scholasticism, see Muller, *PRRD*, 3:275–84.

⁶⁶ See Muller, *PRRD*, 3:278.

the divine essence.”⁶⁷ Each personal *hypostasis* is a *modus subsistendi* of the divine *substantia*:⁶⁸ “the persons do not divide the divine primary essence or substance but are instead distinct modes of subsistence within that essence.”⁶⁹ In short, then, *simplicity* refers properly to the divine nature; *trinity* refers properly to the divine persons.⁷⁰

Given the uniqueness of divine simplicity, it becomes obvious that the divine Son’s personal subsistence in a created human nature requires an ontological adjustment of the person-nature distinction. The divine being is *sui generis* in its absolute non-composition.⁷¹ This means that the personal *hypostasis* of the Son does not subsist in his human nature in the exact same way he subsists in the divine name. Yet the early and later pro-Chalcedonian tradition insisted that the divine Son assumed a human nature that is just as real, complete, and substantial as the divine nature, and that this assumption did

⁶⁷ Johannes Marckius, *Christianae Theologiae Medulla* 4.xxiv, quoted in Muller, *PRRD*, 3:282.

⁶⁸ It should be noted that *mode* here does not refer to the modes of appearance in the heretical teaching of modalism. Rather, the mode of each person expresses the relationship between that distinct person and the other two distinct persons of the Trinity, along with the relationship each has to the divine nature.

⁶⁹ Muller, *PRRD*, 4:195. As Turretin recognized, the Reformed Orthodox at times used different terms to distinguish between the persons and the nature. For example, even those who preferred a “real” distinction rejected a major distinction (*distinctionem realem majorem*) as between things or substances and accepted only a minor one (*distinctionem realem minorem*), which exists between a thing and the mode of a thing. See Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:278–80. But as Turretin quickly added, the orthodox meant largely the same thing, which is best captured by explaining that “the person may be said to differ from the essence not really (*realiter*), i.e., essentially (*essentialiter*) as a thing and a thing, but modally (*modaliter*)—as a mode from the thing (*modus a re*).” Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:278. See also Muller, *PRRD*, 4:189–91. It should be noted that simplicity requires a similar distinction between the attributes of the divine nature. For that discussion, see Muller, *PRRD*, 4:192–95; see also Heppel, *Reformed Dogmatic*, 57–60. Simplicity also requires the coinherence or perichoresis of the divine persons. For that discussion, see Muller, *PRRD*, 4:185–86; see also Oliver Crisp, “Trinitarian Action and Inseparable Operations: Some Historical and Dogmatic Reflections,” in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, Los Angeles Theology Conference 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).

⁷⁰ See Muller, *PRRD*, 3:283.

⁷¹ The absolute simplicity of God does not find analogy in creatures. However, as discussed further below, this does not mean that personal subsistence in a nature does not have a creaturely analogue.

not change the Son's divine person (or the divine nature).⁷² Just as he is not an attribute of the divine nature, the person of the Son is not an attribute of his human nature. He is, in both cases, a personal subsistence with a hypostatic relationship to a nature. And as a *hypostasis*, the Son gives personal existence to both his divine and human natures.⁷³ Still, divine subsistence in a created nature must account for the Creator–creature distinction.

To articulate this person-nature adjustment in Chalcedonian Christology, the Reformed Orthodox tradition provides a helpful taxis of *distinctios*. Among their efforts to have suitable terms for theology, the Reformed Orthodox recognized certain kinds of distinctions in a thing and between things.⁷⁴ The *distinctios* at issue here are the modal distinction demanded by divine simplicity and the real distinction excluded by it.⁷⁵ As seen above, the divine *distinctio modalis* is a distinction between a mode of subsistence and its substance or nature. They are inseparable but they are not coterminous. The *ad intra* modal distinction of God is sufficient for truly distinguishing person from nature while preserving the unity of God.⁷⁶ In contrast, there must be a real distinction between the divine person of the Son and the created human nature he assumed. The *distinctio realis* (or *essentialis*) refers to the distinction between independent things according to

⁷² See discussion in chap. 3, s.v. “Word-Man Incarnation.”

⁷³ See discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Personal Identity and Union.”

⁷⁴ See Muller, *PRRD*, 3:153–364; 4:143–244; see also Muller, *DLGT*, s.v. “*distinctio*.”

⁷⁵ In general, there are five such *distinctios*. Other than (1) the *distinctio modalis* and (2) the *distinctio realis* discussed here: (3) the *distinctio formalis* is a distinction not between two separate things but between formal aspects within the essence of just one thing (e.g., the intellect and will are not really separate but still distinguishable within the soul); (4) the *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae* refers to a distinction not between two things or within one thing but by analysis of a thing (i.e., a matter of reason and extramental reality grounded in the thing); (5) the *distinctio rationis ratiocinans* then makes a merely rational distinction, having no basis in a thing but used to further the process of cogitation.

⁷⁶ As a Puritan heir of Reformed Orthodoxy and the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, John Howe (1630–1705) explained that the level of distinction “cannot be less than is sufficient to sustain distinct predicates or attributes, [just as] it cannot be so great as to intrench on the unity of the Godhead.” John Howe, *The Whole Works of the Reverend John Howe*, ed. John Hunt (London: F. Westley, 1822), 4:306. See also Muller, *PRRD*, 4:282.

the real difference between their respective essences, such as between what is divine and what is human. Just as divine simplicity demands a modal distinction in Christ's divine ontology, the Creator-creature distinction demands a real distinction in his human ontology. And yet, the incarnation did not alter the ontological stature or status of the pre-incarnate Son. He remains a *hypostasis*, a personal subsistence even now in the flesh. In that case, the kind of distinction seems to determine the kind of subsistence. In his divine ontology, the person of the Son bears a *modal* distinction from the divine nature, and thus relates to it as a *mode* of subsistence (*modus subsistendi*). In his human ontology, the person of the Son bears a *real* distinction from his human nature, and thus relates to it as a *real* subsistence (*realis subsistendi*).

Moreover, recognizing a real distinction and subsistence in Christ enables a deeper appreciation of the hypostatic union developed in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition.⁷⁷ First, this real subsistence is the result of divine power. In the Son's mission of incarnation, the *assumption* of a human nature terminates on the Son alone. Yet the Father and the Spirit are intimately involved, even if neither actually assumed a human nature into his hypostatic self-subsistence. Similarly, the entire Trinity is involved in the undivided work of *sustaining* the hypostatic union of Christ that ensures the eternity of the divine Son's real subsistence in his really distinct human nature.⁷⁸

Second, the real distinction did not prevent the divine Son from fully possessing a human nature as his own. In his *Canon of Orthodoxy*, Leontius of Jerusalem clarified that *henosis* (union) is located at the level of person while *consubstantiality* is

⁷⁷ See discussion in chap. 3, s.v. "Person-Nature Being"; chap. 4, s.v. "Person of the Natures."

⁷⁸ It is not necessary to determine here whether the act of sustaining the hypostatic union terminates on the Son or the Spirit. The point is that, either way, the real subsistence of the divine person of the Son in his assumed human nature is an undivided act of God.

located at the level of nature.⁷⁹ Yet he also developed the ontology of subsistence to explain that the Son “personalized” (προσωποποιειν) the human nature by *enhypostatizing* it and causing it to “subsist in” (ἐνυποστάναι) his own divine *hypostasis*, such that the human nature now “subsists together” (συνυποστάναι) with the divine nature in God the Son incarnate.⁸⁰ This means that, despite the difference between real and modal distinctions, the person of the Son subsists truly and fully in his human nature as he does in the divine nature. As the Reformed Orthodox tradition later explained, the divine Son’s subsistence in his human nature is the highest and most intimate “union” of the Creator with his creation that still does not violate the Creator–creature distinction.⁸¹ In fact, the Son’s subsistence in his human nature results in the “fullest and highest” form of life for all humanity, which is conscious personal life akin to the life of the Son subsisting in the divine nature.⁸²

Third, the real distinction of the Son from his human nature and his real subsistence in it brought forth Christ the man. As Leontius also clarified in his *Canon*,

⁷⁹ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Personal Identity and Union.”

⁸⁰ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Personal Identity and Union.” The human nature never had its “own subsistence” (ιδιουπόστατος), but always had its “subsistence in another” (ἐτερουπόστατος) the *hypostasis* of the Son, placing the distinct divine and human natures in the same *hypostasis* without making them “different hypostases” (ἐτερουποστατα) beside one another.

⁸¹ For example, see Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:311–12; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:306; Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Christology*, ed. and trans. Richard B. Gaffin (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), 52. In typical clarity and concision, Vos taught that the incarnation is a “hypostatic union” (ὑποστατικῶς), as the result of which the human nature is borne by the divine person. Here, however, it must still be carefully noted that this is not that general divine capacity with which, by *providentia generalis* [general providence], the Son sustains all things, but a special sustaining that can be compared to nothing else.” Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:52.

⁸² In considering the Son’s subsistence in both his divine and human natures, Bavinck noted that the entire Reformed tradition “stressed that it was the *person* of the Son who became flesh—not the *substance* . . . but the *subsistence* . . . of the Son assumed our nature. The unity of the two natures, despite the sharp distinction between them, is unalterably anchored in the person. As it does in the doctrine of the Trinity, of humanity in the image of God, and of the covenants, so here in the doctrine of Christ as well, the Reformed idea of conscious personal life as the fullest and highest life comes dramatically to the fore.” Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:259.

and Constantinople II affirmed in its confession, the person of the Son became a man through subsistence in a human body with a human soul.⁸³ More specifically, when the person of the Son *enhyposatized* the particular human body and soul created for his incarnation, embracing that nature as his own, the eternal Son became the historical man Jesus Christ. Along with the entire pro-Chalcedonian tradition, Aquinas insisted that nothing changed in the Son's divine ontology.⁸⁴ The incarnation did not alter or add anything to the Son's personal subsistence as God.⁸⁵ However, Aquinas also insisted that a newness did arise from the assumption of a human nature: the Son's personal subsistence as a man.⁸⁶ And the Reformed Orthodox agreed that the existence and coming of the man Jesus Christ depended upon the personal assumption of a human nature by the eternal person of the Son.⁸⁷ In short, the divine Son's *enhyposatic* assumption of a particular *anhyposatic* human nature created the human being Jesus Christ.

This *person-nature constitution* of Christ the man makes good *metaphysical sense* of the incarnation according to the person-nature distinction. With the adoption of a Word-man incarnation by Chalcedon in 451, the issue shifted from the full humanity of Christ to how that full humanity relates to the divine person of the Son.⁸⁸ After the

⁸³ See the discussion at chap. 4, s.v. "Personal Identity and Union" and "Conciliar Affirmation."

⁸⁴ See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 3.17.2.

⁸⁵ See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 3.17.2.

⁸⁶ See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 3.17.2; see also Thomas G. Weinandy, *Jesus the Christ* (n.p.: Ex Fontibus, 2017), 95–97.

⁸⁷ For instances of the Reformed Orthodox perspective, see Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 421–24.

⁸⁸ See the discussion at chap. 3, s.v. "Person-Nature Being" and "The Chalcedonian Definition."

Definition's affirmation that the Son did not assume a man but became a man by assuming a "reasonable [rational] soul and body," the church focused on conceptualizing the person-nature union in Christ without harming his humanity, especially his human soul.⁸⁹ And it remains a significant part of Christological orthodoxy to recognize that the incarnate Son's consubstantiality with us consists in his possession of a real body and a complete soul. In particular, it is crucial to note that the body and soul comprise the human nature itself.⁹⁰ This means that the body-soul nature of Christ is an *ousia/physis/substance*, a metaphysical reality at the level of ἄλλο having its existence in the personal subsistence of the divine Son at the level of ἄλλος. Moreover, because the body-soul nature is a created nature, Christ's human ontology is a composite ontology. The divine Son's real distinction *from* and real subsistence *in* his human body and soul makes the person and the nature real parts of Christ's complete human constitution. Unlike a composite *hypostasis* that considers the whole Christ as the sum of his two natures (each a complete substance), losing or obscuring the personal subsistence of the Son, a composite human ontology maintains the proper person-nature distinction.⁹¹ In short, the major constituent parts of Christ as a man are (1) the divine personal *hypostasis* of the Son at one ontological level and (2) the human nature at a different ontological level, consisting of (a) a real body and (b) a real and complete soul. Consistent with the

⁸⁹ See the discussion at chap. 4.

⁹⁰ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 424.

⁹¹ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Person-Nature Constitution." The pro-Chalcedonian tradition recognized that the *hypostasis* in Christ is the divine person of the Son. In a secondary sense, the divine and human natures were sometimes considered as the two parts of the whole "composite *hypostasis*," who is Christ, the end result of the incarnation. Such a view looks at Christ according to a natural composition. Such a composite perspective cannot be understood rightly, however, apart from the personal incarnation of the eternal Son into our humanity. As a particular "personal *hypostasis*" and ontological subject of the Trinity, the Son became a man by subsisting in a human nature alongside the divine nature. Focusing on Christ's human ontology, the primary perspective of a personal incarnation by a divine personal *hypostasis* in a created human nature leads to a person-nature composition (alongside the unique non-composition of person and nature in his divine ontology).

pro-Chalcedonian tradition, such a person-nature composite provides a coherent ontology of the incarnation.⁹² it identifies the second person of the Trinity as the subject of his own incarnation and constitutes him as a man by his real subsistence in a complete human nature.

The *person-nature constitution* of Christ the man also makes good *biblical sense* of the promised God-man mediation. Redemption from the guilt and punishment of sin brought into the world by the first Adam required the substitutional sacrifice of the

⁹² The identification of this composite human ontology for the incarnate Son relies on the *distinctio realis* required by the Creator-creature distinction and the presupposition that the divine person assumed a particular, concrete human nature. While a full discussion and defense lies beyond this dissertation, this view has seen modern challenges, especially within analytic theology/philosophy. For recent examples, see Robin Le Poidevin, "Identity and the Composite Christ: An Incarnational Dilemma," *Religious Studies* 45, no. 2 (June 2009): 167–86; Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill, "Composition Models of the Incarnation: Unity and Unifying Relations," *Religious Studies* 46, no. 4 (December 2010): 469–88. Crisp provides a helpful summary and analysis of the different views in modern Christology regarding human nature. See Oliver Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 34–49. In general, there are two views. The concrete view states that Christ's human nature is a concrete particular (body and soul) distinct from the divine Word who became incarnate. The abstract view states that human nature is a property or set, the possession of which is necessary and sufficient for being human. Alongside these views, there are two models. The two-part Christology states that Christ is composed of the Word and a human body, with the Word either possessing the property of being a human soul or standing in a soul-relation to the body. The three-part Christology states that Christ is composed of the Word and a human nature, which itself is a body-soul composite. Each view can be combined with each model, giving four major options (without considering the overlap between views and models that can produce many variants). For a critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the views and models, see Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*, 50–71. For a defense of a concrete three-part Christology, see Oliver Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed: Exploring the Person and Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 97–118; see also William Hasker, "A Compositional Incarnation," *Religious Studies* 53, no. 4 (December 2017): 433–47. While helpful, it should be noted that such discussions of Christological ontology in analytic theology often confuse the person-nature distinction by conflating personal *hypostasis* (subject of natures) with composite *hypostasis* (sum of natures).

The concrete three-part Christology aligns with the person-nature constitution and composition of Christ described in this chapter. Analytic theology/philosophy is an important discipline with the potential for refining the coherence of Christology. However, it should be stressed that the present Christological analysis relies on the ministerial authority of the early and later pro-Chalcedonian tradition (specifically including Reformed Orthodoxy), which, as seen best in Maximus the Confessor's writings, affirms a concrete three-part Christology. See discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Maximian Dyothelitism"; see also Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*, 71. For a demonstration that the pro-Nicene tradition (from which Chalcedon explicitly formed its Definition according to the person-nature distinction) affirmed a concrete view of the divine nature, which entails a concrete view of the human nature assumed by the second person of the Trinity, see William Hasker, *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 62–67; see also Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 375–76.

last Adam.⁹³ The shedding of animal blood under the old covenant was insufficient (by design) precisely because it is ontologically impossible for animals to provide a substitute for human beings. Thus, as Turretin summarizes, to become the perfect sacrifice for sinful humanity, “the Son of God, the second person of the holy Trinity, join[ed] together with himself in unity of person, not a person, but a human nature; not by conversion and transmutation, but by assumption and sustentation, so that the Son of God was made the Son of man and our Mediator.”⁹⁴ As such a man and representative substitute, the “passive” obedience of the Son provided a sacrifice that actually atones for human sins. Moreover, it is important to recognize that such an *enhypostatic* incarnation is possible because God made man in his own image.⁹⁵ Whatever else the *imago Dei* in man might signify, that image entails a certain ontological constitution, one that has been revealed in the person-nature constitution of the incarnate Son who is *the* man. In that regard, the eternal Son is the essential image, the incarnate Son is the analogue to that essential image.⁹⁶ Being the essential image of God the Father in divine simplicity *ad intra*, the Son became the analogical image of God in man *ad extra* so that he could redeem and create a new humanity in the image of Christ. As with the divine hypostatic identity of Christ, then, the Son’s real hypostatic possession of a body-soul nature is required for effective mediation. The ontological capacity for redemption and restoration depends upon the divine Son’s person-nature constitution as the man Jesus Christ.

According to this second ontological proposition, the *who* of Christ is still the personal *hypostasis* of the divine Son. And we can now add that the body and soul he

⁹³ See the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. “The Redeemer of God.”

⁹⁴ Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:313.

⁹⁵ See the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. “The Image of God.”

⁹⁶ See Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:465.

assumed is “the *what*, the *object*, the *nature* of the incarnation”⁹⁷ and of Christ the man. As discussed above, these propositions and the composition of person and nature are indivisible due to the divine mission of the Son, the termination of a human nature upon him, and his integrative assumption and special sustentation of a body and soul according to the power and the inseparable operations of the Trinity.⁹⁸

Proposition three: the divine person of the Son is the acting subject of his human nature. In Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy, the church has consistently (if not always clearly) affirmed that persons act, not natures. The foregoing discussion of divine missions is a good demonstration of this axiom. The divine nature is the *common principium* of all God’s works. Yet it is always a divine person who acts through the divine nature. In every divine work, all three persons operate (inseparably but distinctively) through the identical divine capacities of their single-same nature, with the work terminating uniquely not on the nature, but on a particular person according to his relation to the others. In the mission of incarnation, the Father sent the Son, the Spirit created the human nature, and the Son assumed that nature through personal subsistence. As a result of that subsistence, the person of the Son is constituted as the man Jesus Christ. And so, as the incarnate Son, it is still the divine person of the Son who acts (or operates), not his human nature. As Maximus again demonstrated most clearly, the person-nature constitution of Christ as a man entails his *person-nature operation* as a man.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 424.

⁹⁸ The indivisibility of the person-nature constitution does not deny the separation of the body at his death. Even then, the human soul, which is part of the human nature, remained in the self-subsistence of the person of the Son as a human being.

⁹⁹ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Person-Nature Constitution.” Transposing “operation” for “function” makes sense given the consideration of divine operations and analogies in Christology.

More specifically, in his concern for the genuine human obedience of Christ, Maximus explained that the divine person of the Son wills as a man through his natural human will.¹⁰⁰ Accounting for divine simplicity discussed above, the divine nature has a faculty (capacity) of will. Accounting for the Creator-creature distinction, this faculty is also found in every human nature. And just as the divine will is directed toward certain objects in the undivided works of God, the human faculty of will can be directed (*mutatis mutandis*) toward its own objects. But in both cases, the natural will does not move on its own but is directed by the person of the Son. This person, the personal willer or willing subject, is the *who*, while the natural will (and the nature itself) is the *what* in the process of willing. While the faculty of the will is located in the nature, Maximus located the *how* or *mode* of willing in the person. Thus, the person gives a particular shape to the natural will by actualizing its capacity in one direction or another. Given this person-nature economy, Maximus made the pro-Chalcedonian conclusion that the person of the Son who wills as God through his natural divine will is the same person who simultaneously wills as a man through his natural human will.

An heir of Chalcedonian Christology and Reformed Orthodoxy, Geerhardus Vos (1862-1949) summarized this person-nature operation of Christ:

The two spheres in which the person of the Mediator moves lie next to each other; or rather, the one [divine nature] lies above the other [human nature]. But they do not merge together. Their unity lies solely in the person. . . . The person works through, in, and behind the fully human nature of the Mediator. The unity of the person is not merely verbal but answers to a reality. The human nature, though it has [the capacities of] self-consciousness and will and feeling, does not operate of itself but is at every moment the instrument of the person who bears it. . . . The *Logos* is the person for the human nature, the starting point for all its thoughts and emotions.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Person-nature function.”

¹⁰¹ Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:49–50. As Bavinck also explained, it was the divine person of the Son, “who as subject lived, thought, willed, acted, suffered, died, and so on in and through it with all its constituents, capacities, and energies. . . . It is always the same person, the same subject, the same ‘I,’ who

Based on such personal subsistence and action, Vos then insisted that, when it comes to the human ontology of Christ, “we are dealing here with a *communicatio [idiomatum] realis . . .* and not a *communicatio verbalis . . .* . . . The person really possesses both natures, and what belongs to the natures may accordingly also be attributed to the person.”¹⁰²

Following Vos, a brief consideration of the *communicatio idiomatum* in the Reformed and Reformed Orthodox traditions will help highlight the connection between person-nature subsistence and operation.¹⁰³ As with the earlier pro-Chalcedonian tradition, the Reformed understanding of the communication of attributes begins with God and then extends to the God-man.¹⁰⁴ First, the divine attributes belong fully and completely to each divine person because each of them fully and completely subsists in the single-same divine nature without division of it. The divine nature is wholly present in and possessed by each of the divine persons such that what is true of the nature applies to each person. Yet their personal attributes according to their relations of origin are incommunicable. For example, the Son’s eternal filiation (begottenness) is unique to him

lives and thinks, speaks and acts through the divine and the human nature.” Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:307.

¹⁰² Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:60. As Bavinck recognized, “Scripture ascribes all kinds of and very different predicates to Christ but always to one and the same subject, the one undivided ‘I’ who dwells in him and speaks out of him.” Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:302. Vos recognized three kinds/instances of *communicatio idiomatum* in the Reformed tradition: (1) the predicate applies directly to the divine person, not to one of the two natures; (2) the predicate applies directly to the divine nature but is attributed to the divine person; (3) the predicate applies directly to the human nature but is attributed to the divine person. See Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:61–62. Focusing on the basic human ontology of Christ limits the present discussion to the third kind of communication.

¹⁰³ The Reformed Christology also recognizes the communication of gifts (*communicatio gratianum*) and the common operations (*communicatio operationum*) as results of the divine Son’s incarnation into our humanity. For a discussion of these matters, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 324–28. Again, however, focusing on the basic human ontology of Christ limits the present discussion to the communication of attributes.

¹⁰⁴ The following is a general summary that relies on classic and contemporary sources. For a recent explication of the *communicatio idiomatum* in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Reformed Orthodoxy and contemporary Reformed Christology, see Andrew R. Hay, “A Personal Union: Reformed Christology and the Question of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*,” *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 2, no. 1 (2015): 1–18.

as a personal *hypostasis* and cannot be shared with the Father or the Spirit. Otherwise, one divine person would become the other or be mixed with him, destroying the distinction of persons in the Trinity. Then, through reduplication of the *communicatio idiomatum* in the incarnation, the attributes of Christ's human nature also belong fully and completely to the person of the Son.¹⁰⁵ The human nature is wholly present in and possessed by him because he personally subsists in that nature as its personal *hypostasis*. Yet the human and divine attributes are not shared across the natures because neither subsists in the other. So, for example, omnipotence is not communicated to the human nature, and ignorance is not communicated to the divine nature. Otherwise, one nature would become or be mixed with the other, destroying the distinction of natures in Christ. Moreover, the human attributes are not shared with the Father or the Spirit because neither of them subsists in the human nature along with the person of the Son. In short, person-*in*-nature subsistence entails person-*through*-nature operation, which results in the nature-*to*-person communication of attributes.

The *person-nature operation* of Christ the man makes good *metaphysical sense* of the incarnation according to the person-nature distinction. Focusing on his human ontology, the divine Son became a man and acts as a man by directing his entire human nature. As the ontological subject of the man Jesus Christ, the divine person of the Son is also the acting subject of his human nature. To be sure, this is not a mechanical operation, like a man's use of a tool or instrument. In that case, the tool does not communicate its attributes to the man. Rather, in Christ, the hypostatic union is so complete and intimate that the divine person not only exercises complete control over his

¹⁰⁵ Reduplication is the strategy used in orthodoxy Christology whereby all the attributes of the divine nature are predicated of the person of the Son, and then this process is reduplicated by attributing to the same person all that is true of the human nature. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 439–40; Michael Gorman, “Christological Consistency and the Reduplicative Qua,” *Journal of Analytic Theology* 2, no. 1 (May 8, 2014): 86–100.

human nature, but he also receives all that is true about that nature and experiences all things through it according to its faculties and capacities. It is important to note here that because the human nature remains distinct from the divine nature and retains its original and essential integrity, the divine Son's actualization of his human nature produces genuinely human acts.¹⁰⁶ As a personal *hypostasis*, the divine Son is the ascendant principle of all his human actions and the terminus of all his human attributes and experiences. As discussed above, a subsistence is a person, a hypostatic reality with self-existence at a metaphysical level distinct from nature. Yet as seen in the human ontology of Christ, subsistence is also an action whereby the person of the Son constantly provides existence to the human nature, lives a human life through that nature, and experiences a human life from that nature. Person is the "principle which"; nature is the "principle by which." Rather than presenting an obstacle, the real person-nature distinction and subsistence in Christ and his person-nature operation enables the divine Son to live a genuinely human life without violating the Creator-creature distinction.

This *person-nature operation* of Christ the man also makes good *biblical sense* of the promised God-man mediation. While the old covenant sacrificial system was inadequate, it did accomplish its function and purpose as designed by Israel's covenant God. The most important function was to signify the perfect sacrifice to come; the most important purpose was to prepare God's people for the Christ who would provide it.¹⁰⁷ In his person-nature constitution as the Christ, the divine Son could substitute himself for sinful humanity. But to be the perfect sacrifice, he would have to live a perfect life as a man under the old covenant to bring his people into his own, new covenant. And the person-through-nature operation of Christ ensured that the divine Son always obeyed the

¹⁰⁶ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Person-nature function."

¹⁰⁷ See the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. "The Redeemer of God."

divine will as a man.¹⁰⁸ Christ's "active" obedience as the Redeemer required genuine human obedience. The personal direction of his own human nature and natural will made the divine Son ontologically capable of perfect human obedience to the Father on behalf of his covenant people. The representative obedience of Christ is fully human obedience that can be imputed to a new humanity. Moreover, this person-nature operation of the man Jesus Christ provides an ontological ground for the imitation of Christ. While divine, the person of the Son acted as all humans act, by directing the full capacities of their body-soul nature.¹⁰⁹ In that sense, the only exception is that the Son directed his human nature without sin. Rather than presenting an obstacle to the *imitatio Christi*, the person-nature constitution and function of Christ makes it ontologically coherent.

According to this third ontological proposition, the *who* of Christ is still the personal *hypostasis* of the divine Son, and the body-soul nature he assumed is still the *what*. We can now identify the *how*, which is that the *who* operates through the *what*. But we should quickly add that this analysis does not divide Christ into so many disconnected parts. The opposite is true. As the discussions above demonstrate, the incarnate Son is a unified and whole human being according to his *ad extra* human ontology, just as the eternal Son is maximally unified and whole (absolute simplicity) according to his *ad intra* divine ontology.

Conclusion: the man *par excellence* is a person-nature being. Everything about the man Jesus Christ involves both the person of the Son and his human nature. Principally, he is the second person of the Trinity, a personal *hypostasis* who has become incarnate. Constitutionally, he is a divine person subsisting in his own human body-soul nature. Functionally, he is a divine person acting through his human nature. The

¹⁰⁸ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Person-nature function."

¹⁰⁹ See the discussion in chap. 4, "Person-nature function."

incarnation was not compelled upon the Son from creation. Incarnation was always a free act of the divine Son in accordance with the divine will and his filial relationship with the Father. And in the divine mission of incarnation, the person of the Son entered into a most intimate and inseparable union with a created and complete human nature to offer perfect human obedience to the Father in life and in death for sinful human beings. And it is *that* person-nature being (constitution and operation) that provided the Son with the ontological capacity to succeed in his mission of incarnation for the redemption of a new humanity and their conformity to the Christological image of God. In short, the person-nature being of Christ the man gives him the mediatorial ontology required for the work of redemption and Christiformity.¹¹⁰

With these Christological propositions and conclusion in view, a few *terminological considerations* deserve some attention. Based on the foregoing discussions, the following definitions can add some final clarity in Chalcedonian Christology and help formulate a contemporary orthodox definition of Christ's human ontology.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ It should be noted that this mediatorial ontology itself is not identical with the redemption of humanity. The person-nature being of Christ the man is not a "vicarious humanity" in that sense. Rather, it provides the ontological means for redeeming sinful humanity. As Donald Macleod explains, "Christ is true God, but he is not the whole godhead; and he is true man, but he is not the whole of humanity. . . . It is perfectly possible to be human and not be in Christ, because although the incarnation unites Christ to human nature it does not unite him to *me*. I become one with him only in the compound but yet single reality of covenant-election-calling-faith-repentance-sealing." Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 203. But cf. Thomas F. Torrance, "The Vicarious Humanity of Christ," in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed A.D. 381*, ed. Thomas F. Torrance (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981).

¹¹¹ For an excellent discussion of Christ's entire ontology and a contemporary formulation of orthodox Christology, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 421–44.

Person is the divine personal *hypostasis* of the Son, who is a first-level reality of being and an ontological and acting subject (*who* or “I”) of his natures.¹¹² This divine person is identical across his eternal and incarnate ontologies.

Nature is a substance, which is a second-level reality of being and an ontological object (*what* or thing) with attributes and capacities for action.¹¹³ The divine nature is an absolutely simple substance. The human nature is composed of a body and a complete soul.

Subsistence is first the person of the Son considered as an ontological subject who has self-existence; second, as an ontological action, subsistence is both the act of self-existence by the Son and the intimate and inseparable sustentation of his divine and human natures by which he gives actual existence to and experiences life through each nature. This definition applies to the Son first according to a modal subsistence (along with the Father and the Spirit) in relation to his divine nature, then also according to a real subsistence in relation to his human nature.

Person-nature constitution is the ontology of Christ considered according to different kinds of subsistence as an ontological action. Christ is fully God according to the modal subsistence of the divine person of the Son in the divine nature. Christ is fully man according to the real subsistence of the divine person of the Son in his human nature.

¹¹² Some contemporary attempts have been made to reconceptualize the divine persons, often in response to modern critiques in Christology and anthropology. For examples, see Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); Ronald J. Feenstra, “A Kenotic Christology of Divine Attributes,” in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, ed. C. Stephen Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); C. Stephen Evans, “Kenotic Christology and the Nature of God,” in Evans, *Exploring Kenotic Christology*. In supporting the classic definition of person in Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy, Wellum critiques its redefinition. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 395–420; see also Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 139–77, 418–19.

¹¹³ For changes in the definition of nature entailed in contemporary departures from Chalcedonian Christology, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 395–420.

Person-nature operation is the economy of Christ considered according to the divine person of the Son acting through his respective natures. Christ acts as God when the Son acts through his divine nature; he acts as a man when the Son acts through his human nature.

Person-nature being is the ontology and function of Christ considered as a whole, i.e. the divine person subsisting in his respective natures. This does not divide God the Son and Christ the man into separate beings. Rather, this definition recognizes that according to a divine person–divine nature constitution, Christ is God; yet he is simultaneously a human being according to a divine person–human nature constitution.

Use of these terms enables a formal statement of Christ’s orthodox human ontology: The man *par excellence* is a person–nature being, having a person-nature constitution in which the divine person of the Son sustains a real subsistence in a human nature, and acting according to a person-nature operation in which the same person of the Son directs his body and soul. The next section will propose what this ontological definition means for man *par ordinaire*.

Extension: Christology to Anthropology

In developing its Christology, Chalcedon first recognized the ontological and epistemological priority of the Son in divine ontology. It then extended the Son’s person-nature constitution to make Trinitarian sense of his existence as a man. In a parallel process, the present development of a Chalcedonian anthropology has started by recognizing the ontological and epistemological priority of the same Son’s human ontology. Following the Chalcedonian logic and pattern, the next step is to extend the person-nature constitution of *the* man to make Christological sense of all mankind. At its particular position in Christological development, the Chalcedonian Definition presented a relatively brief formulation of the Son’s person-nature ontology for the sake of the church’s consideration and confession. At a similar point of formulation in developing a

Chalcedonian anthropology, the propositions ahead will be stated briefly so that the proposal can be considered as a whole. The next chapter will continue the Chalcedonian pattern by clarifying some challenges to a merely human person-nature constitution.

Before looking at the ontological implications of Christ's human ontology for our own, it will help to revisit the mechanism that supports this metaphysical move.

Chalcedonian Analogy Revisited

Two presuppositions have grounded the previous work in preparation for the present Christological formulation of humanity. The ontological priority of Christ and the doctrinal authority of Chalcedon have combined to shape the historical pursuit of Christ's person-nature ontology to see its implications for a contemporary formulation in anthropology. As anticipated in chapter 2, we can now see that two person-nature ontologies intersect in the Chalcedonian Definition. The divine ontology of Christ is represented on one side of the Definition by the person of the Son subsisting in the divine nature; his human ontology is represented on the other side of the Definition in the same person subsisting in a human nature. Christ is the God-man, the unique theandric being in whom divinity and humanity exist without confusion or separation. Yet this union does not reduce Christ to the sum of his divine and human natures. While his natures are now joined intimately and eternally, that union must be located in the person of the Son because that is where each nature has its existence, i.e., in the self-subsistence of the second person of the Trinity.

More specifically, as chapters 3 and 4 have demonstrated, the Chalcedonian Definition relies on a functional analogy of being between the eternal Son and the incarnate Son.¹¹⁴ It should be emphasized again that the recognition of a Chalcedonian

¹¹⁴ Even at the time of Chalcedon, Pope Leo recognized this in his *Tome*: "The rhythm of his language swings to and fro like a pendulum, for the divine side to the human side, from the transcendence of God to the immanence of our earthly history. . . . One and the same is God and man, twofold in nature but one in person. This unity of person is the point on which the pendulum of Leo's diphysite approach

analogy does not enter the larger *analogia entis* debate.¹¹⁵ Rather, as the pro-Chalcedonian tradition explicated, and as the analysis above has highlighted, the Definition simply presupposes some analogy between God the Son and the man Jesus Christ.¹¹⁶ The Chalcedonian fathers did not debate the theological permissibility or philosophical adequacy of a “real” analogy of being between God and man before concluding that the Son’s full humanity should be confessed according to the same ontological categories of his full deity. But their Christological application of Trinitarian ontology was still informed, intentional, and ontological. In fact, the central feature that makes metaphysical sense of the incarnation is the person-nature being of Christ as both God and man. A person-nature distinction and constitution holds on both sides of the Definition. And according to Chalcedonian orthodoxy and the connection between mediation and metaphysics discussed above, that person-nature analogy grounds both the coherence and the effectiveness of the incarnation. The early church dogmatically but deliberately extended the person-nature ontology of the Trinity to Christ because one of the Trinity became the image and redeemer of God as a man.¹¹⁷ And as seen in the ontological propositions above, that man, who is *the* man, is a person-nature man.

swings. This ‘person’ in Christ is not a third element which only results from the union of the two natures.” Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:531.

¹¹⁵ See the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. “A Chalcedonian analogy.”

¹¹⁶ See White, *The Incarnate Lord*, 171–202. White argues there that the two-natures doctrine of Chalcedon implies an ontological similitude between the divine and human natures of Christ. The argument here extends that insight to include the person-nature distinction of Chalcedon, which implies an ontological similitude between the person-nature constitution of God the Son and the person-nature constitution of the man Jesus Christ.

¹¹⁷ Here it is helpful to consider White’s guidance regarding Scripture’s invitation to look through the revelation of the Son as a man to him as God: “because *in that revelation* he makes known to us who he is eternally, *therefore* we are permitted and invited to reflect upon the conditions of his existence as the true God and the ground of creation. We must pass from the visible mission of Christ in the flesh to the eternal procession of the Son that is truly revealed to us in that mission. That is to say, we must think analogically . . . of what it must be for the Word to be eternally one in nature with the Father and distinct in person, and this in real distinction from (but not separation from!) and with ontological priority to his human historical existence as Christ.” White, *The Incarnate Lord*, 211–12. White is arguing that supernatural revelation presupposes the possibility of a natural knowledge of God. Based on the theological

Now that the time has come to actually extend the Chalcedonian analogy from Christology into anthropology, a brief comment on the proper use of metaphysics will help clarify what is and what is not being attempted. Making theological conclusions from Scripture requires *extrabiblical* concepts and terms.¹¹⁸ This includes *metaphysical* concepts and terms employed to understand and teach the biblical presentation of God and his creation. While necessary, however, metaphysics never rules over revelation but always serves Scripture and the church’s theological formulations that are faithful to it. In principle, metaphysics is ministerial. Moreover, in practice, metaphysics is always mindful of Scripture’s inviolable distinction between the Creator and his creatures. While God chooses to relate most intimately with his creation, no creature can cross the ontological divide to share in the divine ontology. Thus, as demonstrated above in the difference between the *distinctio modalis* and *realis*, the Creator–creature distinction “necessitates an adjustment or refraction of any metaphysical concepts that we might use to describe God.”¹¹⁹ This principle and practice of metaphysics in the service of theology has been observed consistently in the entire Chalcedonian tradition and in all of Christian orthodoxy.¹²⁰

achievement and ministerial authority of Chalcedon and its Christology, this argument can be applied to thinking analogically between the eternal subsistence of the divine Son in the divine nature as God, and the Son’s distinct (but not separate!) temporal subsistence in a human nature as the man Jesus Christ.

¹¹⁸ See the discussion in chap. 3, s.v. “Biblical Warrant.”

¹¹⁹ Steven J. Duby, *God in Himself: Scripture, Metaphysics, and the Task of Christian Theology*, Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 216.

¹²⁰ It should be noted that some recent theological discussions have challenged and even rejected what is being called “substance metaphysics.” For example, see Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1:215–16, 2:39–40; Bruce L. McCormack, “The Actuality of God: Karl Barth in Conversation with Open Theism,” in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 185–244; Chris Tilling, *Paul’s Divine Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 34–47, 103–4. The primary concern of this critique is that use of metaphysical concepts in *theologia* and *economia* results in a reification of God that reduces his transcendence and eminence to a mere difference of degree from his creation. For a discussion of these concerns as misplaced and a defense of the good and often necessary role of metaphysics, especially at the intersection of the doctrine of God and the incarnation, see Duby, *God in Himself*, 188–291; see also J. P. Moreland, “How Christian Philosophers Can Serve Systematic

Accordingly, the following extension of the Chalcedonian analogy and statement of ontological propositions will maintain the proper use of metaphysics in theological formulation. In particular, making anthropological inferences from Christ's person-nature ontology does not affirm or entail that God and man share the same category of being. As Aquinas insisted, all creatures share in the *ens commune* (common being), but God does not precisely because he is not a creature and thus not a member of the *ens commune*.¹²¹ Rather, God's being (*ens*, an existent) is identical with his existence (*esse*, act of existing), whereas all creatures depend upon God for their being and existence. God "utterly transcends all that exists, all that is common to being, all that has being [outside of himself]."¹²² And yet, because God produces a likeness in what he creates, there is some analogy between the Creator and his creatures that "entails both an ontological foundation in the things themselves, and a propositional mode of signifying this reality that is characterized by analogical terms."¹²³ Due to God's operations in creation, we can speak of God truly by an analogical mode of speech. But due to his essential and infinite transcendence, these analogical terms do not belong to God properly, only the things signified by them, and even then in an eminent way that accords with God's excellence and existence outside the *ens commune*. In anthropology, then, all perfections of being belong to the Creator alone and find their creaturely analogues in man. All of our predications of God belong to man and find their divine terminus in the Creator, the reality of which surpasses the predications themselves. So any analogy of

Theologians and Biblical Scholars," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 2 (June 2020): 297–306.

¹²¹ Aquinas and Fathers, *Contra Gentiles* 1.25–26; Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.13.5.

¹²² See White, *The Lord Incarnate*, 186.

¹²³ White, *The Incarnate Lord*, 205. See discussion in chap. 2, s.v. "A Chalcedonian analogy."

being moves from God to man and can be indicated by man speaking analogously, which is to speak truthfully.

Finally, concerning a Chalcedonian analogy, we can now recognize a *de facto analogia entis* between God the Son and the man Jesus Christ. The Definition begins with the divine ontology of the Son and moves to his human ontology. The same Son is first “perfect in Godhead” before he is then “perfect in manhood”; first “very God,” then “very man”; first “consubstantial with the Father,” then “consubstantial with us.” And as the pro-Chalcedonian tradition clarified and the analysis above has emphasized, this movement pivots around the person of the Son. He is first fully God according to a person-nature constitution. This same Son is simultaneously fully man according to a person-nature constitution. The difference between his modal subsistence in the divine nature and his real subsistence in a human nature does not prevent the divine person of the Son from becoming a man. Rather, the *distinctio realis* preserves the Creator–creature distinction by keeping the divine person of the Son outside the *ens commune*, while his created human nature is a member of it alongside all other creatures. In fact, the kind of distinction and subsistence is the only difference between the two person-nature constitutions on either side of the Chalcedonian analogy. The eternal Son’s mission of incarnation involved the Trinitarian creation of a human nature for the Son’s subsistence, a subsistence that did not bring what is human into the divine being but brought forth the human being Jesus Christ. In short, the same person of the Son fully possesses each nature distinctly and is fully divine according to the one and fully man according to the other. In this sense, what is true of the Son’s divine being is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the Son’s human being.

Combining Chalcedon’s person-nature analogy with its dogmatic authority leads directly to a consideration of its implications for anthropology. Recall here that if an ecumenical council implies a particular view of human constitution, and if that view is integrally related to the council’s Trinitarian and Christological conclusions, then such a

view deserves active deference in contemporary anthropology.¹²⁴ The proposal ahead claims both, as developed and clarified in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition: the Definition implies a person-nature constitution of mere man precisely because it formulates a person-nature constitution of *the* man.

Anthropological Implications

The Chalcedonian analogy moves along a person-nature axis to present a Christological analogue of the divine being. Extending that axis further, the discussion now turns to formulating the anthropological analogue of Christ's human being. More specifically, according to the Definition's person-nature analogy, the propositions regarding Christ's fully human ontology will be extended into corresponding propositions regarding a merely human ontology.

Extending the ontology of Christ to all mankind relies on a development in the previous *biblical conclusion*. As fully man, the divine Son incarnate reveals all that it means to be human, which includes bearing the image of God. And in keeping with his ontological priority, the essential image of God has become *the* analogical image of God in man, revealing at least some ontological correspondence between God and man. But the *conceptual framework* remains the same. In fact, the person-nature distinction becomes just as vital to extending the human ontology of Christ as it was in establishing its orthodoxy. It is now evident that the Son's incarnate ontology reveals the person-nature image of God. The propositions below draw what are determined to be good and necessary inferences from the Christological propositions above. As with the Christological analysis above, the propositions regarding mere man will be guided by an overarching concern for Christ's mediation between God and man and the metaphysics

¹²⁴ See discussion in chap. 2, s.v. "Theological Retrieval of Tradition" and "A dogmatic framework."

needed to accomplish that mediation. Once again, these propositions will be shown to make good metaphysical and biblical sense.

It is crucial here to remain consistent with the early church's pattern of theological retrieval in Chalcedonian Christology. Prior to Chalcedon, Apollinarius conformed his Christology to his composite anthropology by replacing the human soul with the divine Logos.¹²⁵ This allowed Apollinarius to speak of Christ as the "God-man," but only at the expense of his complete humanity. Similarly, Nestorius saw Christ as the sum total of his two distinct natures by positing a "common prosopon" that was responsible for the unity of Christ.¹²⁶ But a prosopon (or *hypostasis*) that resulted from the union of natures was incapable of sustaining the ontological weight of a personal agent and acting subject, thereby obscuring the central place of the divine Son in his own human ontology. In both cases, the absence of a proper person-nature distinction led to an improper paradigm and starting point. In contrast, rather than beginning with the end result of the incarnation as a work of God, Chalcedon and its Christology started with the person who became incarnate. This perspective allowed the church to recognize the full reality of person and nature in Christ as it extended the person-nature analogy from God to the God-man. And so, rather than beginning with the end result of man as a creation of God, a Chalcedonian anthropology will start with the person in its further extension of the Definition's person-nature analogy.

¹²⁵ See the discussion in chap. 3, s.v. "Deficiency of a Word-flesh incarnation." Apollinarius began with an ontological definition of man as a composition of body and soul in which the *pneuma-nous* of the soul is responsible for the vital and dynamic union with the body of flesh. He then extended this definition of man to the definition of Christ, with the divine Logos taking the place of the soul, or the *pneuma-nous* of the soul, in the composition of the man Jesus Christ.

¹²⁶ See the discussion in chap. 3, s.v. "Nestorius and the distinction of natures." Nestorius began with the *duo physeis* of the whole Christ to make sense of the full and distinct reality of the divine and human natures. But his common prosopon, which was the prosopon of union formed by the *duo physeis* unit created by the incarnation, was a superficial reality that misidentified and ultimately multiplied the subject(s) in Christ.

Proposition one: a human person is the ontological subject of a mere man.

As established above, the primary sense of person in the human ontology of Christ is *personal hypostasis* that self-subsists as a first-level ontological reality in the *person-nature distinction*. The personal *hypostasis* of the divine Son is the subject of his own human nature and the principle of the union. Extending the Chalcedonian analogy, a person-nature ontology of mere man seems to require a human person who is a personal *hypostasis* and the subject of his own human nature. The person of the Son did not replace a part of his human nature and he is not incidental to his being as the man Jesus Christ. Thus, a human nature without a human person—one that self-subsists at an ontological level distinct from nature—would violate the integrity of the person-nature analogy. Just as the divine person is integral to *the* man as the ultimate ontological subject of the Chalcedonian Christ, a human person is indispensable to a Chalcedonian understanding of *mere* man.

As a creaturely analogue, of course, a human person will need some ontological adjustments. Some of the more significant aspects will be discussed in the final chapter. Here it will suffice to say that such adjustments should maintain the Chalcedonian analogy since its purpose is to present the person of the Son *as a man*.¹²⁷ It is true that the hypostatic union in Christ's human ontology was formed by the divine work of God in the divine mission of the Son that caused a created human nature to terminate in the personal subsistence of the Son. In this sense, the divine person is both ontologically prior to and now present in a human nature by divine power and design. And it is true that a human person does not (necessarily) have an ontological priority born out of preexistence and subsequent union with a particular human nature. Yet we can

¹²⁷ Moreover, as explained further below, the lack of a person-nature ontology in mere man creates an ontological inconsistency that threatens the coherence of the Son's existence and mediatorial work as a man.

recall from the development of Chalcedonian Christology that the distinction of person from nature is grounded first in the self-subsistence of the Son, not in his pre-existence.¹²⁸ The fact that the Son is eternal and his human nature was created for him made it necessary to recognize the Son as the subject of his nature. But it is the Son's self-existence as a subsistence, not a substance, that provides the most basic distinction between person and nature, both in his divine and human ontologies. In that case, a human person is not a substance (like a nature) but a subsistence, one that is self-existent by God's power and design.

According to this first ontological proposition, a created, human, personal *hypostasis* is the *who*, the *subject*, the *person* of a mere man. As in the Christological analysis, the next propositions will build on this foundation in anthropology.

Proposition two: a created human person subsists in a created body-soul nature as a mere man. As with the Christological analysis above, the hypostatic identity of a human person is key to understanding the whole human composition. A person-nature distinction again entails a *person-nature constitution*, first in the Son's human ontology and now in our own metaphysical makeup. The man Jesus Christ is the divine person of the Son subsisting in a particular body-soul nature. In fact, the Son is consubstantial with us precisely because of such subsistence.¹²⁹ With a human person already extended from the Definition's person-nature axis, we may now complete the analogy by placing a particular body-soul nature in that personal *hypostasis*. In both cases, God creates a human nature and sustains its existence in a personal *hypostasis* to bring forth a man, which is *the* man in Christ and a *mere* man in the rest of mankind. In

¹²⁸ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Sharper person-nature distinction."

¹²⁹ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. "Personal identity and union."

both cases, God *enhypostatizes* an otherwise *anhypostatic* human nature with a personal *hypostasis*.

As with a human person, the creatureliness of the entire person-nature constitution in anthropology will require some ontological adjustments. While some of these will be taken up in the final chapter, we must here again say that such adjustments should maintain the Chalcedonian analogy that presents the person of the Son subsisting in a human nature *as a man*. Moreover, it seems that the analogy actually strengthens in some respects when extended into anthropology. In contrast to the modal distinction and subsistence required by divine simplicity, the divine person of the Son bears a real distinction from his human nature, and thus relates to it as a *real* subsistence. Even so, as seen above, the divine person is still a *personal* subsistence with a hypostatic relationship to a nature. Extending the person-nature axis of the Definition into anthropology results in the same relationship: a human person is a personal subsistence in whom a human nature has its existence. Yet according to the taxis of *distinctios*, the person-nature constitution of man maintains the same kind of real distinction and subsistence as in Christ's human ontology. As a subsistence, the human person self-exists at a different ontological level than the human nature, which is a substance. Moreover, the perseverance of the human person as the ontological subject beyond the death of the body would indicate that the human *hypostasis* is separable from at least part of the human nature. Such an account certainly leads to a compositional anthropology. But again, in light of the Christological analysis above, such a person-nature composition corresponds with the person-nature constitution of Christ the man.

According to this second ontological proposition, the created, human, personal *hypostasis* is still the *who*, the *subject*, the *person* of a mere man. It can now be added that the body and soul created for his constitution as a man is the *what*, the *object*, the *nature* of every human being. As in the person-nature constitution of Christ, these propositions and the composition of person and nature are indivisible, not as a result of

divine mission and terminus this time, but still due to divine power and the inseparable operations of the Trinity. God created a human nature for the divine Son to become the man *par excellence*. In his creation of man *par ordinaire*, God creates both the human nature and the human person.¹³⁰ Moreover, in the same creative act, God grants subsistence to the person and existence to the nature in the person. In this way, God himself creates and sustains *mere* man as the creaturely analogue to *the* man.

Proposition three: a human person is the acting subject of his human nature. Given the first two propositions, one can see that a person-nature constitution entails a *person-nature operation* in anthropology as it does in Christology. It is still true that persons act, not natures. Extending the Chalcedonian analogy to mere man maintains the roles of person and nature in *the* man. In both cases, the person works through, in, and behind the human nature. Perhaps most significantly, the personal *hypostasis* in mere man is still the personal “willer,” the willing subject, the *who*, while the nature is the location of the natural will and all other ontological faculties and capacities that enable a truly human life. Moreover, as with the divine Son’s incarnation, the human person so fully possesses the human nature that what belongs to the nature is attributed to the person, which provides a truly human existence and experience. As in Christology, person-*in*-nature subsistence in anthropology entails person-*through*-nature operation, which results in the nature-*to*-person communication of attributes. In fact, beyond accounting for the sinlessness of Christ as a man, the person-nature analogy is so close at this point that it seems to require no significant ontological adjustment.

¹³⁰ The issue of how and when God creates a human person is beyond the scope of the present focus on the basic ontological structure of man. However, it should be noted that the issue does not seem to present an obstacle to the existence of a human hypostasis as part of the human constitution, any more than the debate between creationism and traducianism questions the existence of the human soul. Rather, the issue in both cases is not *whether* but *from where*, not existence but origin.

According to this third ontological proposition, the created, human, personal *hypostasis* is still the *who* and ontological subject of mere man, and the *enhypostatized* body-soul nature is still the *what*. The Chalcedonian analogy can now be strengthened by identifying the *how*, which is that the *who* operates through the *what*. But as in Chalcedonian Christology, it should quickly be added that this extension beyond the Definition does not divide mere man into so many disconnected parts. The opposite is true again. The person-nature constitution of every human being is indivisible by God's own power and design.¹³¹ The discussion of holistic dualism will be taken up below. Each human being is a unified whole in creaturely analogy to the *ad extra* human ontology of the incarnate Son, which itself is an external analogy of the eternal Son's *ad intra* ontology.

Conclusion: man *par ordinaire* is a person-nature being. As with Christ *the* man, everything about mere man involves both a human person and a human nature. Principally, his metaphysical makeup begins with a personal *hypostasis* designed for subsistence in a nature. Constitutionally, mere man is a human person subsisting in his own body-soul nature. Functionally, he is a human person acting through his human nature. And it is *that* person-nature being (constitution and operation) that stands at the end of a consistent anthropological extension of the Chalcedonian analogy. To have a creaturely analogue to the man *par excellence*, God initiates and sustains the hypostatic union of a human person and a human nature, both created and complete, to form man *par ordinaire*.

What is true of the Son's human being is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of merely human being. In Chalcedon Christology, the person is identical in the Son's divine being

¹³¹ As in the Christological analysis, the indivisibility of the person-nature constitution does not deny the separation of the body at physical death. Even then, in keeping with the extension of Christ's person-nature being as a man, the human soul, which is part of the human nature, would remain in the self-subsistence of the human person.

and his human being, making the person the pivot point in the person-nature analogy. In a Chalcedonian anthropology, the human nature is identical (consubstantial) in the ontology of *the* man and mere man, making the nature the pivot point in the person-nature analogy. For mere man, then, the only difference in the analogy is God's creation of a human person in place of a pre-existent divine person, along with the appropriate ontological adjustments. In fact, when addressing merely human ontology, those adjustments will not need to account for the Creator-creature distinction in general or divine simplicity in particular. With that caveat, the *terminological considerations* from the Christological analysis above can be transposed for use in anthropology.

Person in Chalcedonian anthropology is a *created* personal *hypostasis* corresponding to the divine personal *hypostasis* in Chalcedonian Christology.¹³² But the human person is still a first-level reality of being and an ontological and acting subject (*who* or "I") of a nature. This ontological definition of person is consistent with Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy but differs radically from the psychological/experiential sense in historical and contemporary anthropology. In anthropology, "person" usually refers to (1) an individual human (body and soul), (2) the soul, or (3) a specific aspect, capacity, or function of the soul, such as psychological/personality traits or a center of consciousness, knowledge, will, and/or action.¹³³ Moreover, and more basically, this anthropological shift from Trinitarian and

¹³² This ontological definition of a human person, as should be clear by now, differs fundamentally from its classic and contemporary usage in anthropology. As indicated in earlier chapters and discussed in the final chapter, the anthropological use of person represents a departure from orthodox ontology. Returning to the orthodox definition by extending it into anthropology is one of the primary benefits of a new model of humanity proposed herein.

¹³³ See Gerald L. Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 130–31; Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 399–400, 425. See also Hasker, *Metaphysics and Tri-Personal God*, 19–25; Cornelius Plantinga Jr., "Social Trinity and Tritheism," in *Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement: Philosophical and Theological Essays*, Library of Religious Philosophy 1 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 22.

Christological usage disregards or conflates the distinction between person and nature as ontological realities at two different levels of being. For that reason, clarity and coherence in anthropology would be served best by limiting “person” to mean personal *hypostasis* in the ontological sense of the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, or at least qualifying any other use.¹³⁴ Personal *hypostasis* should be the primary sense of person, with any other secondary meanings clarified explicitly and consistently.

Nature in Chalcedonian anthropology is a created substance composed of a body and a rational soul, which is still a second-level reality of being and an ontological object (*what* or thing) with attributes and capacities for action. In particular, the human nature in anthropology is consubstantial and coterminous with the body-soul nature in Christology.

Subsistence in Chalcedonian anthropology is still considered first as an ontological subject who, as a person, has self-existence; second, as an ontological action, subsistence is both the act of self-existence by a person and the intimate and inseparable sustentation of a nature by a person, who gives that nature its actual existence and experiences life through it. The difference between a *divine* person subsisting in a human nature and a *human* person subsisting in a human nature is not the *kind* of subsistence (both are *realis*), but the *order* of subsistence. In the human ontology of Christ, subsistence as both subject and action are directly divine. That is, the divine persons are *immediately* responsible for the Son’s self-existence and the existence of a human nature in the Son’s own hypostatic reality. In merely human ontology, the subject and action of subsistence are dependent upon God. This means that the human person is not immediately responsible for his self-existence or the existence of his own human nature. Rather, God grants a derivative and analogous power of self-existence to the human

¹³⁴ For a brief discussion regarding modern difficulties with the term *person*, see Bray, *God Is Love*, 130–33.

person and the ability to provide existence to a human nature. Thus, God is *ultimately* responsible for designing, creating, and sustaining the entire merely human ontology.

Person-nature constitution in Chalcedonian anthropology is the entire ontology of a merely human being considered according to a real (not modal) distinction between person and nature. Such a real person-nature distinction exists in the human ontology of Christ in the absence of divine simplicity. So the merely human analogue of *the man's* person-nature constitution is nearly identical.

Person-nature operation in Chalcedonian anthropology is the economy of a merely human being considered according to the human person acting through his human nature. Again, due to the same person-through-nature economy found in Christ the man, the creaturely analogue needs little adjustment beyond the need to account for Christ's sinlessness as a man.

Person-nature being in Chalcedonian anthropology is the entire ontology and function of a merely human being considered as a whole, i.e., a human person subsisting in and acting through his human nature.

Using these terms enables a Chalcedonian definition of merely human ontology: Man *par ordinaire* is a person–nature being, having a person-nature constitution in which a human person sustains (by God's power) a real subsistence in a human nature, and acting according to a person-nature operation in which the human person directs his body and soul. In short, *mere man* is the person-nature analogue of *the man*.

Moreover, the alignment between such a Chalcedonian anthropology and Chalcedonian Christology can be tested at the intersection of metaphysics and mediation. To begin, as just demonstrated, the person-nature being of mankind appears to make good *metaphysical sense* according to a consistent extension of the Chalcedonian analogy. Because a personal *hypostasis* is integral to the definition of *the man*, a personal *hypostasis* should be accounted for in the definition of mere man. And the person must

subsist in and act through a body-soul nature on both sides of the person-nature analogy as extended into anthropology. Thus, a Chalcedonian model produces ontological symmetry in the basic constitution of Christ the man and the rest of mankind. Yet this person-nature model also produces an asymmetry at the person level to maintain the uniqueness of Christ as a man. As a divine person, the Son, even in his incarnation, enjoys all the perfections of God, including an ontologically superior relation to the other divine persons and the divine nature. This symmetry and asymmetry can co-exist because they are true in different respects. It is coherent to recognize unity and diversity in God as a Trinity and in Christ as the God-man because the predicates refer to different aspects of a person-nature ontology. Similarly, symmetry and asymmetry in a Chalcedonian anthropology refer to different aspects of the person-nature analogy. Symmetry resides in the basic ontological structure: person to person; nature to nature. Asymmetry exists in the difference between a *divine hypostasis* and a *human hypostasis*. A qualitative difference in *hypostatic* existence does not prevent a parallel in person-nature existence.

In contrast, contemporary anthropology appears to create an asymmetry with Christology in the basic structure of human constitution. Specifically, the predominant models lack a personal *hypostasis* in man to correspond with the personal *hypostasis* in Christ *the man*. One can recall here that models on both sides of the dualism-physicalism debate work at the nature level alone. In that sense, contemporary anthropology is focused on the human body and soul as presented in Scripture.¹³⁵ But according to orthodox Christology, the human body and soul comprise the human nature alone, which is only part of the human constitution of Christ. Regardless of presuppositions and methodology, the multiplying models in theological anthropology have this in common: they do not provide an ontological location for the ultimate, acting subject outside the categories of body and soul. And it is precisely here that a Chalcedonian anthropology

¹³⁵ See the discussion in chap. 1, s.v. “Dualism-Physicalism Debate.”

registers its contribution. Concerning the human nature, a Chalcedonian model agrees with other models to the extent they account for a particular body and soul in the constitution of a human being. But a person-nature model grounded in the constitution of Christ places the body-soul nature at one level of being and introduces a human *hypostasis* at a different level. This personal *hypostasis*—a self-subsisting ontological reality—provides the proper (Chalcedonian) ontological location for the human subject, who subsists in and acts through his human nature.

The person-nature being of mankind also appears to make good *biblical sense* of the mediation accomplished by the God-man. By summarizing parts of the Christological analysis above, four points of contact will demonstrate the coherence between Christ's mediatorial ontology and Chalcedonian anthropology. First, redemption requires the person-in-nature sacrifice of Christ the man on behalf of sinful man. It can now be added that this passive obedience of Christ corresponds with the person-in-nature guilt that condemns sinful humanity.¹³⁶ Second, redemption also requires the person-through-nature obedience of Christ the man to be imputed to sinful man. Additionally, now this genuine and perfect human obedience to the Father corresponds with the person-through-nature rebellion of sinful humanity against God. Third, positional sanctification involves the person-in-nature image of God perfected in man by Christ the man. It is fitting, then, that this restoration of the ontological *imago Dei* would remove the corruption of the person-in-nature image of fallen humanity. Fourth, progressive sanctification involves the person-through-nature life of Christ the man that provides the paradigm for redeemed humanity. And so it is fitting that the Christiformity of Christians would be accomplished in their person-through-nature sanctification. As with the

¹³⁶ It is important to recall here that a person acts through a nature and bears all that is true of the nature. In that case, without the sacrifice of Christ, every human person since the fall of Adam bears the guilt of corruption in a fallen human nature and compounds that guilt by acting through a fallen human nature.

metaphysical sense discussed above, it should be noted that the biblical sense supported by a Chalcedonian anthropology finds its strength in the introduction of a human person. A personal *hypostasis* in *mere* man provides the symmetry that is required by the Chalcedonian analogy and that corresponds with *the* man's mediatorial ontology. This symmetry cannot be found in contemporary models of anthropology that do not function within a proper person-nature framework.

The analysis and formulation above have culminated in the proposal of a particular model of humanity that is grounded in Chalcedonian Christology. This is not the only possible formulation. But a human person-nature constitution of *mere* man does consistently extend the orthodox human ontology of Christ *the* man according to the ministerial authority of the Chalcedonian Definition and its Christology. Chalcedonian Christology was defended and clarified over centuries. The next chapter will at least begin the development and clarification of a Chalcedonian anthropology.

CHAPTER 6

HUMAN PERSON-NATURE BEING: CLARIFICATION AND CONCLUSION

It should be expected that the extension of Christ's human ontology into anthropology will raise some issues and even some objections. This chapter anticipates what would appear to be the most immediate and significant objections: the possibility of a human *hypostasis* and its implications for the full humanity of Christ.¹ As will be seen, these objections are interrelated, the first being aimed at anthropology and the second at Christology. Responding to them will provide the opportunity to develop a better understanding and articulation of a Chalcedonian anthropology. Yet it is important to note these responses will continue to affirm the same *biblical conclusion* and employ the same *conceptual framework* that ground both the coherence of Chalcedon and the anthropological extension of its basic ontology: Christ is fully man and *the man* according to a person-nature constitution. Moreover, the following discussions continue to follow the biblical, epistemological, and historical warrant for the initial proposal of a person-nature constitution of mere man. The main purpose of this chapter is to take up the third step in the Chalcedonian church's patten of Christological formation. Identifying

¹ A more basic objection might be grounded in the fact that, in its extension of the person-nature distinction from Trinitarian orthodoxy to Christological orthodoxy, the early church did not extend it further into its definition of humanity. A basic response would simply recognize that the early church did not consider and reject the person-nature distinction in anthropology. And the church never made the constitution of man the subject of an ecumenical council. Rather, the conception of man as a particular body and soul was assumed at an early point, even before Nicaea and Chalcedon. Thereafter, it seems that neither the early church nor its successors up to the present (with a few exceptions as referenced herein) has considered directly the implications of a person-nature Christology for anthropology. The ministerial authority of Chalcedon and the pro-Chalcedonian tradition should have priority over an inherited, non-conciliar tradition in anthropology, especially where the good and necessary implications of orthodox Christology have a direct bearing on the understanding of humanity.

and addressing certain challenges to the extension of Christ's human ontology will begin to probe the applicability of Chalcedonian logic in anthropology.

At its particular point in the development of orthodoxy, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition defended and clarified the Definition and its Christology over centuries. That work involved numerous theologians, treatises, and church councils. At a parallel point, but in the span of a single chapter, the clarification of Chalcedonian anthropology here will be considerably less robust. This chapter is an opening effort, and the following discussions should be taken as the impetus for future work to test and expand the logic of a human person-nature ontology.

After these initial clarifications, this dissertation closes with a brief discussion of the promise of Chalcedonian anthropology and some indication of the work needed to realize it.

Human Person-Nature Constitution

The previous chapter pointed out that the distinguishing feature of a Chalcedonian anthropology is the introduction of a human person as a personal *hypostasis*. So it is fitting that this feature raises the most immediate concern. Can the divine persons have a hypostatic correspondence in mere human ontology?

The Sui Generis Objection: The person-in-nature constitution of the God-man is unique because personal *hypostasis* is unique to God.² The recognition of a personal

² A similar objection can be anticipated regarding the *operation* of mere man. The present discussion regarding constitution will have to suffice in this initial work. But from the historical work of chap. 4, especially the development by Maximus, three points can frame a coherent account: (1) as in Christ, all faculties and capacities for human action and experience are located in the human nature; (2) as in Christ, the person acts and experiences human life through these natural faculties and capacities; (3) if a *divine* person is this acting subject in Christ *the* man, then a *human* person is the acting subject in *mere* man. Beyond ontological adjustments needed to account for the sinlessness of Christ, even a basic framework shows that the issue with the person-through-nature operation of man is the same issue raised in the objection to his person-nature constitution, i.e., the possibility of a human person as a personal *hypostasis*.

hypostasis is purely the product of needing to confess the triunity of the one God within divine simplicity, neither of which applies to mere man.³ A limited analogy can be found between the divine and human persons that focuses on particularity and individuality of being. But there is a fundamental disanalogy.⁴ A divine person is an ontological reality that has an *internal* distinction from the divine nature within the concrete being of God. In contrast, a human person is the ontological reality of a concrete human nature in an *external* distinction from other beings. Any correspondence between the divine and human persons must remain superficial because, unlike the fundamental reality of a divine person, a human person does not subsist *in* a nature but *is* a particular human nature (body and soul).⁵

The Response: There is good reason to think that, rather than a fundamental disanalogy, divine and human persons share an ontological similitude grounded in a Creator-creature likeness that does not violate the Creator-creature distinction. This analogy of persons is an implicit part of the larger person-nature analogy extended from Chalcedonian Christology. But a closer look at person from a divine perspective can help clarify why a personal *hypostasis* is both possible and necessary to the constitution of every man, as it is for Christ the man. One can reach this clarity by considering (1) the Christological confusion created by the most common definition of human person and (2) the implications of a basic analogy between divine and human persons in the work of

³ Setting up his own response, Jean Galot states the objection in similar terms: “In their view, the Trinity is an exceptional case that is absolutely unique with God. It could not have any analogy in any other being. . . . In God person must be explained in terms of relation because there are three persons in a single nature. In man, in whom there is no need to make this harmonization, person must be explained in a different way and can be defined in terms of an absolute entity.” Jean Galot, *Who Is Christ? A Theology of the Incarnation*, trans. M. Angeline Bouchard (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1981), 301.

⁴ See Gilles Emery, *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*, trans. Matthew Levering, Thomistic Ressourcement 1 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 109.

⁵ See Emery, *The Trinity*, 105–9.

Jean Galot (1919-2008).⁶ The discussion will make a *prima facie* case for a human person as a distinct reality *in* a nature that must be included in *mere* human being.

First, defining the human person as a concrete human nature causes more Christological confusion than it provides anthropological answers.⁷ As discussed above, Chalcedonian Christology begins with the hypostatic identity of the divine Son who is united to a human nature through the most intimate subsistence in and sustentation of his own body-soul nature. This person-nature constitution ensures that the person of the Son is integral to the ontological definition of the man Jesus Christ. Moreover, the tradition insists that the person of the Son is the only person in Christ. Yet both of these orthodox affirmations are jeopardized by defining a human person as the “substantial unity of *this* body and *this* soul,” as does the common denominator across classical and contemporary models.⁸ If a particular body-soul nature simply is a human person, then it becomes difficult to explain how the complete human nature of Christ is not a human person

⁶ Jean Galot was a theologian and professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he focused on Christology. Galot is especially helpful in the clarification of a Chalcedonian anthropology for at least four reasons: (1) he works within the person-nature framework of Trinitarian and Chalcedonian orthodoxy; (2) he is clear and consistent with the terms and concepts; (3) he retrieves the resources of orthodoxy to develop the distinction within Christology and to develop its implications; (4) he gains a comprehensive perspective on person by considering both the person-nature distinction (how they differ) and the person-nature dynamic (how they relate).

⁷ Here it will help to recognize that this first objection shifts the definition of person from personal *hypostasis* to composite *hypostasis*. In that regard, the objection re-creates the confusion in the early church, which needed to be clarified in Chalcedonian Christology by carefully and consistently distinguishing between a precise and a more common use of *hypostasis*. See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Person-nature constitution.”

⁸ See the discussion in chap. 2, s.v. “Past: Substance Dualism” and “Present: Dualism-Physicalism Debate.” Representing the dominant tradition, Emery summarizes that, “the human person is composed of a soul and a body. The substantial unity of *this* body and *this* soul constitutes one human person.” Emery, *The Trinity*, 108. It should be noted, of course, that Emery (and often the church’s tradition) offers this definition of human person in distinction from a divine person for the very purpose of affirming Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy. As seen in the development of Christology, however, an orthodox intention does not guarantee an orthodox result. And as seen in the previous chapter, a Chalcedonian anthropology would suggest that the classic and contemporary models struggle to cohere with orthodoxy at the point of personal *hypostasis*, and that a person-nature ontology makes better metaphysical and biblical sense.

alongside the divine person of the Son.⁹ And if the incarnation is then presented as a special case in which the person of the Son is added to an individual substance that would otherwise be a human person,¹⁰ it becomes difficult to explain how the Son is not a mere accident or extremity of a body-soul nature. Regardless of how intimate his relation to the human nature might be, the Son would relate to it in a way that is not just unlike, but entirely foreign to a normal human being. In that case, the Chalcedonian sense of person-nature subsistence would be reoriented to the kind of external union of person and nature in Christ that the early church rejected.¹¹

Second, according to an analogical priority, the divine persons should define the basic ontological reality of a human person. In making metaphysical sense of the incarnation, as Galot insists, the definition of person must converge in Trinitarian and Christological formulations.¹² This convergence is demanded by the fact that one of the Trinity became a man such that the person is identical in the divine and human ontologies of Christ. Going further, however, Galot recognizes that this divine person must also “play the same role” as person in a merely human ontology.¹³ And rather than shifting to anthropology, he explains that the ideal person must be realized in the Creator first before it is then copied in his creation.¹⁴ In fact, Galot argues for a “fundamental analogy” between divine and human persons: “If man has been created in the image and likeness of

⁹ See Jean Galot, *The Person of Christ: A Theological Insight*, trans. M. Angeline Bouchard (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1981), 12.

¹⁰ See Oliver Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 83.

¹¹ See the discussion in chap. 3, s.v. “Person-Nature Being.”

¹² For his discussion of a contemporary divergence in approaches and his solution, see Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 289–94.

¹³ Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 302.

¹⁴ Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 301.

God, then his person as well as his nature bear a reflection of what exists in God. So we cannot claim that the human person must be defined in completely different terms from the divine person.”¹⁵ The Father, the Son, and the Spirit is each the equal plenitude of perfection as a person.¹⁶ Yet while their perfection and subsistence *in the single-same nature* is unique and unrepeatable in creation, the divine persons are still “the exemplary model from which all human exemplars derive, because of the resemblance of creatures with their Creator.”¹⁷ Thus, Galot urges that, “In his most fundamental reality, the human person cannot be different from a divine person.”¹⁸ The person in Christology and anthropology are not absolutely identical, but they are fundamentally analogous.¹⁹

Based on this fundamental analogy, it is now more evident that the definition of person begins in God, moves univocally into Christ, and then moves analogically into anthropology.²⁰ As established in the Christological analysis above, a divine person is a personal *hypostasis*, who is a first-level reality of being and an ontological and acting subject or “I” of the divine nature. In the incarnation, the divine person of the Son becomes the personal *hypostasis* of Christ. It is this divine person who is the ontological and acting subject of his human nature. And it is *this* definition of person that extends

¹⁵ Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 29.

¹⁶ Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 301–2.

¹⁷ Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 301.

¹⁸ Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 29.

¹⁹ Cf. Thomas G. Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship: Reconceiving the Trinity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 116–17.

²⁰ Lucas Stamps makes an astute observation at this point: “Chalcedon forges an analogical link between trinitarian personhood and human personhood, and the univocal core of the analogy is the incarnate Son himself.” R. Lucas Stamps, “A Chalcedonian Argument against Cartesian Dualism,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 55. As discussed in a note below regarding a Chalcedonian anthropology and hylomorphism, Stamps does not seem to extend the person-nature ontology of Christ as the man consistently to mere man. However, his identification of the “univocal core” is critical to making that metaphysical move.

into anthropology because the image of person is copied into mankind as part of the image of God in man. In fact, it is the personal *hypostasis* of the Son in particular who is the archetype of the human person. If person is part of *the* image of God in man, which is realized in the incarnate Son who is *the* man, there is warrant for concluding that the person of the Son is the pattern for the human person. Drawing on the prior discussion of divine missions, it can be said that the work of creating a human person terminates on the second person of the Trinity. And in that case, the human person is an ectypal reality who corresponds to the divine person of the incarnate Son.²¹ Thus, as defined in the previous chapter and developed here, a human person is a personal *hypostasis* who is a first-level reality of being and an ontological and acting subject or “I” of a human nature (a second-level reality of being).

The analogy also demonstrates that person is not a function of trinity or divine simplicity. It is true that the three divine persons bear a modal relation to the divine nature and are, in that sense, modes of subsisting. And this state represents the perfection of person. Yet if a human person is also a personal *hypostasis*, then person as an ontological reality is not defined only by a modal relationship to the divine nature. In fact, as Galot explains, person neither reduces to nor results from nature.²² Rather, the divine persons have their own reality independent from the divine nature regarding their source of existence.²³ Each person has a reality of its own that is not determined by the

²¹ See Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 426–27. After recognizing that orthodoxy has historically rejected a univocal relationship between the Creator and his creature but allowed a proper analogical comparison, Wellum recognizes, “Divine and human persons, then, are necessarily similar and necessarily dissimilar—there is continuity and discontinuity between these metaphysical realities” (426).

²² See Galot, *Who Is Christ*, 290, 299.

²³ See Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 290, 299. Galot locates this conclusion in the original and overriding purpose of Trinitarian doctrine: “to recognize the plenary reality of the three persons and the plenary reality of the divine essence by showing how they harmonize, without making them result from one another and without reducing them to one another.” Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 290.

divine nature. One can recall here the pro-Chalcedonian conclusion that a subsistence (person) is logically prior to a substance (nature).²⁴ Of course, the divine persons and nature are equally ultimate in the *sui generis* being of God. But the point here is that, while triunity and divine simplicity require the *recognition* of person in distinction from nature, they do not *produce* the person. The divine nature does not give rise to the divine persons but simply indicates the exemplary instance of person-nature distinction and subsistence. The divine nature is not responsible for the existence of the divine persons as subsistences, but as *modes* of subsistence. So the persons as *modi subsistendi* in the divine nature are persons *par excellence*, while a human person as *realis subsistendi* in a human nature is a person *par ordinaire*. According to its creaturely limitation in resembling the divine persons in triunity and divine simplicity, each human person subsists in only one human nature according to a real distinction that creates a composite ontology.²⁵ Moving from ontological simplicity to composition does not prevent the presence of a human person as a reality of its own, but only requires the proper adjustment from modal to real subsistence.²⁶

It should be stressed here that a divine-human person analogy is consistent with the Creator–creature distinction and the ministerial use of metaphysics discussed in the previous chapter. Even as he insists on a fundamental analogy, Galot recognizes that significant dissimilarities exist between the divine and human persons.²⁷ These deserve sustained attention for the further development of Chalcedonian anthropology. But for

²⁴ See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Sharper person-nature distinction.”

²⁵ As Stephen Wellum describes it, “Each human person subsists in its own concrete nature; no human person subsists in more than one concrete nature; and no human person shares the same concrete nature with another human person.” Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 426–27.

²⁶ See the discussion in chap. 5, s.v. “Chalcedonian Analogy Revisited.”

²⁷ See Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 28–30.

present purposes, the main differences can be categorized as hypostatic origin and union.²⁸ Unlike the divine persons' eternal and mutually definitive relations of origin, each human person is defined according to its relation to God as Creator. And unlike the eternal and equal union of the single-same divine nature in the three divine persons, each human person is confined to a single instance of a concrete human nature.²⁹ The ontological adjustment from the divine to human persons must account for these differences. However, the differences do not reach the basic ontological reality of person as a personal *hypostasis*.³⁰ In fact, the fundamental reality of the similitude means that there is an ontological foundation in the creature that can truly signify the ontological eminence in the Creator through the analogical use of *person* and *personal hypostasis*.

Although the terms and concepts begin with man and reach to God, the perfection of person resides in God and reflects into man. As Galot explains, "We receive the light that comes to us from God's word concerning the divine persons and we project it upon human persons, concluding that the latter are, in the image of the former, subsistent relations [distinguished from nature]."³¹ So the ontology of person that the church has developed to speak analogically but truly of God and the God-man is the same ontology of person that God uses to enlighten all mankind regarding their innermost

²⁸ See Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 30–35; Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 303–5.

²⁹ As Wellum describes this divine-human person difference, "Individual human beings, then, are identified by both the *principle of subsisting* (i.e., the person or that active subject of the nature) and the *principle of distinction* (i.e., a concrete human nature with *this* flesh, *these* bones, and *this* soul). All concrete human natures are the same *kind* of nature, but not the same *instance* of a human nature." Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 427. It should be noted here that Wellum does not employ the common definition of a human person. Rather, he defines a human *being* (not person) as *including* (not identical to) a concrete human nature.

³⁰ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 426–27.

³¹ Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 30.

reality.³² The human person is the creaturely analogue of the divine persons, one of whom became *the* man such that mere man can have a deeper appreciation for being made in God's image and being reconciled to him according to a person-nature constitution. In short, "Christ enlightens man on his own ontology by showing him the originality of the person, irreducible to nature."³³

Moreover, the fundamental analogy between divine and human persons reinforces the Chalcedonian analogy between divine and human being. As stated above, the Definition provides a *de facto* analogy of a person-nature constitution shared by the Son as God and the Son as man. While it is no less real and directive, the functional character of a conciliar analogy might seem to leave it vulnerable to theological and philosophical challenges yet to be made against it. More specifically, the analogy, and thus its extension into anthropology, might be most vulnerable at the point of person. The section below will take up such a challenge in greater detail. But here we can at least recognize the *prima facie* coherence of an ontological likeness of the divine persons created in human analogues. As the ontological subject of his natures, the divine person of the Son "must not . . . be considered as an external reality that is merely superimposed on Jesus' human nature."³⁴ For the same reason, a human person is the subsisting ontological subject of his human nature, not an optional or external component or aspect of the nature. Both person and nature are necessary to the constitutional definition of man in both Chalcedonian Christology and a Chalcedonian anthropology.

Given the foregoing, this initial response to the *sui generis* objection provides good reason to embrace a human person as the creaturely analogue to the divine person of the Son in his human ontology. Far from being unique to the Trinity and the God-man,

³² See Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 302.

³³ Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 11.

³⁴ Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 285.

person is a significant part of mere man being made in the ontological image of God and of *the* man. The formulation of Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy began with the human concept of person from human experience, but it has been refracted in the divine perfection and returns with greater significance and signification for human ontology. As Stephen Wellum concludes, “Keeping the person-nature distinction, we can say that, as the analogue of the divine persons, a human person is a particular active subject that subsists in an individuated human body-soul composite (i.e., distinguished from others of the same kind).”³⁵ In short, a human person is a personal *hypostasis* that subsists in (not as) a body-soul nature. Even though much more development remains, that conclusion appears to have at least *prima facie* warrant in light of the investigation and formulation of the previous chapters and the clarifications of this chapter.

With a human person situated firmly and now more clearly in the ontological constitution of man *par ordinaire*, it is time to consider whether such a feature creates ontological difficulties for the man *par excellence*.

Human Person and the Incarnation

The first objection was aimed at anthropology. Responding to it began by suggesting that defining the human person as a concrete human nature causes more Christological confusion than it provides anthropological answers. But does defining a human person as a personal *hypostasis* fare any better when the objection turns to Christology? As the early church recognized, a central “problem” in Christology is affirming the full humanity of Christ while denying a human subject in Christ. In that case, does the inclusion of a human person as a necessary part of mere humanity complicate the Christological problem? Or might a Chalcedonian anthropology make better metaphysical sense of Chalcedonian Christology?

³⁵ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 427.

The Incarnation Objection: A human person in the constitution of mere man would create two equally impossible options for orthodox Christology. If the Son assumed a human nature and a human person, then Christ is divided between two subjects. If the Son assumed only a human nature, then Christ is not a complete man for lack of a human person. To solve the original problem, the early church used the proper person-nature distinction to identify the divine Son as the principle of unity in Christ and his divine and human natures as the principle of diversity. In so doing, the pro-Chalcedonian tradition consistently rejected any Apollinarian ontology that would replace the soul with the divine Son, and any Nestorian ontology that would add a person alongside the divine Son. Specifically, Chalcedonian orthodoxy insists that the Son *enhyposatized* an otherwise *anhypostatic* but complete body-soul nature. Defining person the same in both Christology and anthropology would undermine this solution and exacerbate the problem. If a human person is a human subject who subsists in a human nature to constitute a human being, then only heretical options remain: either the Son replaced a necessary part of human being or a human subject stands alongside the Son in the human nature of Christ.

The Response: There is good reason to think that the fundamental analogy between divine and human persons includes a solution for maintaining the affirmations of orthodox Christology. As with the coherence of the person-nature distinction in general, the key to understanding the compatibility of a human person-nature constitution with an orthodox incarnation is the distinction between two levels of ontological reality. A closer look at the analogy presented by Galot can help re-sharpen the person-nature distinction to clarify how a human person in mere man's ontology does not endanger the full humanity of *the man's* ontology. To make a *prima facie* case, the discussion will focus on (1) removing an initial stumbling block for considering a consistent person-nature distinction in Christology and anthropology, and (2) a more precise definition of person and nature.

First, anthropology commonly fails to distinguish between person and nature due to an ambiguity formalized in perhaps the most influential definition from the fifth century. Shortly after Chalcedon, Boethius (447-524) defined person as “an individual substance of a rational nature.”³⁶ This definition identified three elements that could be applied to God, human beings, and angels: individuality, substance, and a nature endowed with intelligence and will.³⁷ While adjustments could be made to each element to make sense of a specific application, Galot rightly recognizes that the Boethian definition is grounded in the “universe of nature,” which struggles to think of person as a truly distinct reality.³⁸ And this creates a nearly intractable ambiguity. For example, individuality can apply to both nature and person. Rationality can be attributed to both nature (directly) and person (indirectly). But the most problematic aspect is most basic: it defines person as a particular kind of substance. As Galot observes, “By using the term ‘substance,’ an ambiguous translation of the Greek ‘hypostasis,’ [the Boethian definition] nurtures the confusion of person with nature.”³⁹

This ambiguity and confusion then also create a seemingly intractable problem in Christology. Why does the individual substance of Christ’s human nature with a rational soul not exist as a human person?⁴⁰ Moreover, the same ambiguity and confusion

³⁶ “*Persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia.*” Boethius, *Treatise against Eutyches and Nestorius*, trans. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1973), 93 (PL 64, col. 1343).

³⁷ See Gilles Emery, “The Dignity of Being a Substance: Person, Subsistence, and Nature,” *Nova et Vetera* 9, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 994–96.

³⁸ Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 10–11.

³⁹ Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 293.

⁴⁰ The Boethian influence shows itself in later formulations that define person in terms of substance, even as applied to God and the person of Christ. Without consistent and careful nuance, these formulations come close to confusing person and nature, almost making person an aspect of nature. For example, in his argument that person applies to both man and God, Aquinas states, “Person signifies a certain nature (*quaedam natura*) with a certain mode of existing (*quidam modus existendi*). Now, the nature which person includes in its signification is the most worthy (*dignissima*) of all natures, namely, the

prevent a clear distinction between person and nature in anthropology, which obscures or denies the fundamental analogy between divine and human persons. As discussed above, the common denominator across classical and contemporary models defines a human person as a concrete human nature, and “we are inclined to attribute an absolute substantiality to the person.”⁴¹ For both Christological and anthropological reasons, then, the Boethian definition of person (and its progeny) should be set aside.

In contrast, finding the fundamental feature of person that distinguishes it from nature must be found outside the universe of nature. If person is its own reality and does not reduce to or result from nature, then their distinction lies not so much in their relation to one another but in their order of being.

Second, then, recognizing “relational” and “absolute” orders of being can help make better metaphysical sense of the person-nature distinction. Galot begins with the classical understanding of person as the *one who acts* and the nature as *what it is* that acts.⁴² This is another way of saying that persons act through natures. The person is the principle who acts (*principium quod*); the nature is the principle by which one acts (*principium quo*).⁴³ Going further, however, Galot develops the ontological reasoning for

intellectual nature according to its genus; and likewise the mode of existing signified by person is the most worthy (*dignissimus*), namely, such that something be existing by itself (*per se existens*).” Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, trans. Lawrence Shapcote and English Dominican Fathers (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952), 108. While he elsewhere clearly identifies the person of the Son as a personal *hypostasis* distinct from the divine nature, one who accomplishes divine missions that terminate in him and not the divine nature, Aquinas reverts to a substantial sense of person in discussing its application to divine and human persons. See also Gilles Emery, “Dignity of Being a Substance,” 1001.

⁴¹ Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 293.

⁴² Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 285.

⁴³ We can recall here that Pope Leo recognized the person of Christ as the acting subject while defining his natures as economic principles without being persons. See the discussion in chap. 3, s.v. “The Chalcedonian Definition.” We can also recall that Maximus the Confessor recognized person in both Christ and man as the acting subject, while the nature is capable of self-determination when moved by the person. See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Person-nature function.”

this distinction. It is still true that person is a subsistence with self-existence at one ontological level, and nature is a substance at a different ontological level. But Galot helpfully describes these levels as two orders or principles of being.⁴⁴ Person is a reality of the relational order; nature is a reality of the absolute order.⁴⁵ The first order of being is described as relational because a person is a subsistent perfection oriented toward other

⁴⁴ See Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 297–300.

⁴⁵ For the sake of maintaining a focus on the basic implications of considering person and nature as belonging to different orders of being, some effort has been made in this discussion to minimize the immediate need for a more technical analysis of the ontology of person. That work is good and necessary, but it lies beyond the current proposal. However, it should be noted here that some would limit a relational definition of person to the divine being. As Emery states, “The constitution of a person by a relation remains the exclusive prerogative of the divine Trinity, because only in God does a relation ‘subsist.’ In a human being, a relation does not constitute the person. Rather, a relation is a determination of the person (an ‘accident’ added to substance).” Emery, *The Trinity*, 109. This objection is grounded in the orthodox conclusion that the divine persons are truly distinct, and yet they differ from one another only in the eternal order of their relations. See the discussion in chap. 5, s.v. “Christological Analysis.” Traditionally, the divine persons are defined according to their “opposition of relations.” For Emery (and others), this means that each divine person simply is the unique relation he has to the other divine persons. However, it is also crucial to remember that these persons are not abstract concepts but ontological realities. Each divine person is an actual entity; not merely relations but persons in relation. See Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 157–85. “The relations between the persons belong to who the persons actually are.” Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 461. In that sense, Galot’s relational and absolute orders of being demonstrate the complementarity of the concepts: a divine person is a *subsistence* in distinction from the divine substance and a *relation* in distinction from the other divine persons. Moreover, Galot employs the divine-human person analogy to extend this definition of person into anthropology: “According to the fundamental analogy, if, in God, what constitutes person is relation, then we must expect that relation likewise formally constitutes the human person. By reason of the fact that a divine person is a subsistent relation, we must conclude that the human person is also a subsistent relation, allowing of course for the vast gulf that separates infinite Being from creatures.” Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 29. Where Emery finds a severe disanalogy, Galot argues for a fundamental analogy that adjusts the emphasis onto subsistence in the case of human persons. He agrees that the *internal* opposition of relations in the divine being are unique due to the perfection of divine simplicity. But Galot insists that a human person is a subsistence in distinction from his nature and that God calls forth this creaturely analogue in its own *external* opposition of relations. See Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 303. Wellum also takes an approach that recognizes the *sui generis* aspect of a relation that subsists in God and yet finds in the human person a subsistence that relates to others. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 426–27. He does not refer to human persons as “subsistent relations.” However, he grounds that decision not in a departure from the fundamental analogy between divine and human persons (in which he agrees with Galot), but in a dissimilarity between divine and human subsistence due to the uniqueness of God’s tri-personality and divine simplicity. Simply put, while a human person is a *subsistence*, Wellum limits a subsistent *relation* to a metaphysical reality in the same concrete being, i.e., the triune being of God. Even so, he agrees that a human person can be in relation to other persons, human and divine, in other concrete beings. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 426–27.

persons or “I’s” or ontological subjects. The second order of being is described as absolute because any given nature is a substantial perfection of all that it means to be that kind of an ontological object. While they contribute to a whole concrete being, neither of these distinct orders contribute to the perfection of the other. To see this most clearly and preeminently, Galot points to these orders of being in the Trinity.⁴⁶ Father, Son, and Spirit each possess the plenitude of perfection as a person oriented toward the others. And each person has a unique relation to the others. For example, only the Father is unbegotten as a person, and only the Son is begotten as a person. Yet each person is fully God without sharing these personal attributes of the others. Rather, each person is fully God precisely and only because he fully possesses the substantial perfection of the divine nature, not the subsistent perfection of the other divine persons.⁴⁷ In this sense, the whole being of God can be described in terms of two orders of being that harmonize both the plenary reality of the divine persons and the plenary reality of the divine nature.⁴⁸

Following the ontological analogies discussed above, the relational and absolute orders of being can be extended into Christology and anthropology. In the person-nature constitution of the Chalcedonian analogy, the person of the Son does not contribute to the perfection of his natures. The Son is a subsistent perfection and his divine and human natures are each a substantial perfection. The person of the Son is fully God because he subsists fully in the divine nature without adding attributes to it. The same Son is also fully man because he subsists in a human nature, again without adding absolute attributes. Moreover, the fundamental analogy between divine and human persons and the consistent extension of the Chalcedonian analogy reveal that a human

⁴⁶ See Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 286–94.

⁴⁷ See Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 290, 294, 305.

⁴⁸ Of course, the relational and absolute perfections in the divine being must be understood to accord with divine simplicity and the perichoresis of the persons.

person is also a reality of the relational order subsisting in a human nature of the absolute order. As with the divine and human ontologies of Christ, person does not bring attributes into the absolute order in mere mankind. Rather, the human person remains an entity of the relational order with a subsistent perfection oriented toward other ontological subjects.⁴⁹ And the human nature is a substantial perfection of a body-soul kind. Thus, like the divine person of the Son, a human person is fully man by subsisting in such a human nature. In this way, the whole human being of *the* man and *mere* man can be described in terms of two orders of being that harmonize the distinct perfections of relational subsistence and absolute substance. Person and nature are each an irreducible principle of human being in Christology and anthropology.

In turn, finding two orders of being in Christology and anthropology helps demonstrate why a human person is not necessary for the Son's full incarnation. If a human person is found in the constitution of sinful man, then it might seem that a human person (along with human nature) would need to be assumed by the Son to complete his mediatorial ontology. It might seem necessary for God the Son to have a human person to be a human being, one who can bear the sin and guilt of other human beings. Because a human person is an ontological and acting subject, however, such a person cannot be present alongside the Son in Christ. So, Chalcedonian anthropology must account for the presence of a human person in mere man and its absence in *the* man without diminishing Christ's full humanity.⁵⁰ And here, the distinction between relational and absolute

⁴⁹ First and foremost, every human person is oriented toward the Father, Son, and Spirit as persons *par excellence* and the source of all created persons. This orientation is not salvific in itself. But just as sin has corrupted but not destroyed the image of God in man, so the analogical orientation of human persons to the divine persons is not annihilated by the fall of mankind. Human persons are also oriented toward other human persons in the sense that God has designed them for community. Such orientations have significant implications for understanding anthropology and other doctrines, including soteriology and ecclesiology. Those discussions, however, fall beyond the scope of the current ontological proposal.

⁵⁰ See Galot, *The Person of Christ*, 12; Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 292–93. Galot states the issue in terms of preserving the perfection of Christ's human nature: "This is a particularly delicate problem, since it requires us to determine the formal constituent of the person in such a way that when we affirm the

principles provides a coherent explanation. The constitution of a man requires both a person and a nature. However, since a human person does not contribute to the perfection of a human nature, the divine person of the Son can possess the human kind of substantial perfection by assuming only a body-soul nature.⁵¹ Moreover, the lack of a human person in this incarnation does not create a deficiency because the divine Son provides a surpassing perfection of the relational order. The relational subsistence of the archetype cannot lack a perfection of the ectype. The differences between divine and human persons certainly admit the preeminence of the Father, Son, and Spirit in their hypostatic origin and union. But these excellencies do not prevent the Son from “playing the same role” as person in a merely human being.⁵² In the fundamental analogy, a divine person is

absence of this constituent in Christ’s human nature we take away none of its perfection” (292–93). It should be noted that Galot’s articulation of the issue here does seem to introduce some ambiguity into the person-nature distinction he otherwise so carefully and thoroughly defines. Stating it this way without clarification might make the human person an aspect of the human nature. But as seen in his arguments herein, Galot insists at length that in both divine and human ontology, person has its own reality distinct from nature. So when he says that the absence of a human person “cannot involve any incompleteness or imperfection in the human nature [of Christ],” he is arguing against the common approach of defining the human person as an absolute being constituted by a body-soul nature.

⁵¹ Regarding the fullness of Christ’s humanity, the Chalcedonian tradition has argued that although the human nature assumed was *anhypostatic* (not having a separate existence from the Son), it was not imperfect. Rather, it was made perfect from the moment of its creation because the Son *enhypostatized* it. See the discussion in chap. 4, s.v. “Sharper person-nature distinction.” For example, Aquinas explained that, “The assumed [human] nature does not have its own proper personality, not because some perfection of human nature is wanting, but because something surpassing human nature is added, i.e. union to a divine person.” Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, trans. Daniel J. Sullivan and English Dominican Fathers, Great Books of the Western World 19–20 (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 3.4.2.2. However, it should be pointed out that such a defense was grounded in the common notion that a human “person” is a concrete human nature. In that case, the point is simply that the concretization of the human nature took place in the person of the Son, not in another. As discussed below, this argument seems insufficient when introducing into the constitution of man a human person that has a reality of its own at a different ontological level and order of being from nature. A proper response must address the presence of a human person as a personal *hypostasis*.

⁵² “If the person of the Word were totally different from human persons, he could not vivify and personalize a man’s nature.” Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 302. Cf. Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 117. Although he does not define man according to the person-nature distinction, Weinandy still insists that “in the Incarnation the Son is a divine subject or person in a way that is analogous to and compatible with our own dignity as persons or subjects. The Son, as a divine subject, may be more than we are as persons, but he is not less than we are as persons.” Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 117. This affirmation becomes more precise in a Chalcedonian anthropology that recognizes two levels or orders of being. The

incomparable in perfections to a human person, but not *incompatible* in its basic ontology. According to his substantial perfection in the possession of a human nature, Christ is *con*-substantial with man *par ordinaire*, having every common attribute and ontological faculty of the human kind. According to his subsistent perfection in the divine person of the Son, Christ is *supra*-subsistent as the man *par excellence*, having exemplary personhood. Far from limiting his humanity, the divine perfection of the Son enables him to live a perfectly human life through his human nature.⁵³

In short, just as the Son is fully God by subsisting in the divine nature without the other divine persons, he is fully man by subsisting in a human nature without a human person.

It is crucial here to recognize that these two orders of being maintain the traditional location of ontological faculties. Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy place the attributes related to action and experience in the nature. And this means that person is not identical with “personality.”⁵⁴ The personality of man is part of his entire psychology involving (*inter alia*) mind, will, affections, and self-consciousness, all

divine and human persons are analogous and compatible because they are both relational entities. The person of the Son is “more than we are as persons” because he is the plenitude of subsistent perfections.

⁵³ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 323. As Galot concludes, “The Son incurred no handicap by reason of his own divine personality in the development of his human life. He was unreservedly human. This explains the fact that he was like us in every way except sin. We can even assert that no man ever lived his human life as deeply and fully as he.” Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 273. Having only a divine person, there is only a divine “I” in Christ. The explanation just provided, however, demonstrates why the absence of a human “I” does not create a deficiency in Christ’s human being and experience. But cf. Weinandy, *The Father’s Spirit of Sonship*, 116–17. Weinandy argues, “The human ‘I’ of Jesus reveals the personhood or subjectivity of the eternal Son, for the Son’s identity is one with that ‘I’” (117). But he defines the human “I,” not as a personal *hypostasis* of the relational order, but as a concrete human nature according to the common definition in anthropology: “Jesus is a full human person in the contemporary sense, that is, possessing a human self-consciousness, with all its concomitant attributes” (116). Similar to his recognition of a divine-human analogy in the note above, Weinandy’s argument for a true and full incarnation by which the person of the Son takes up the “greatest human dignity” would be strengthened by a Chalcedonian anthropology that recognizes two levels or orders of being. The Son identifies himself with a human “I,” not by becoming a human “I,” but by assuming the place of a human “I” and living a fully human life as a fully (but not merely) human being.

⁵⁴ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 316–17.

located not in the subsistent perfection of the person but in the substantial perfection of the soul.⁵⁵ More specifically, then, the person is not identical with the soul. This is true in Christ the man and in his merely human analogues. The modern tendency to equate personhood with consciousness or mind contravenes this consensus, creating first a separation in the Godhead, and then also a seemingly intractable problem in the Son's incarnation.⁵⁶ Making a psychological faculty a personal attribute would mean that the Father, Son, and Spirit cannot share the single-same life and experience as the one true God. Each would have his own mind, will, consciousness, etc. Even if these were aligned at all times, that alignment would be accidental, and thus imperfect. Moreover, when the Son assumed a human nature and not a human person, he would have either foregone one or more psychological faculties, or those would be present in a human person alongside the Son. Rather than relocating any ontological attributes related to action or experience, these must remain at the absolute order of being for coherence in the person-nature ontologies of God and man.

Moreover, the relational and absolute orders of being reinforce why a human person must be defined as a personal hypostasis and not as a concrete human nature (or part of a human nature). Introducing a human person as its own reality distinct from

⁵⁵ See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 323.

⁵⁶ See Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Christology*, ed. and trans. Richard B. Gaffin (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), 45. As Wellum points out in the context of Christology, some distinguish between consciousness located in the nature and self-consciousness located in the person. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 323n39. Such an argument would give Christ a divine consciousness and a human consciousness, but only a divine self-consciousness. For example, see John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 2:138–39; see also Philip H. Eveson, “The Inner or Psychological Life of Christ,” in *The Forgotten Christ: Exploring the Majesty and Mystery of God Incarnate*, ed. Stephen Clark (Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2007), 60–61. This argument can accommodate the distinction between relational and absolute orders of being. The self-consciousness of a human person does not add to the substantial perfection of a human nature. And the self-consciousness of the divine Son would surpass a human self-consciousness but still allow the Son to see himself as a man, i.e., a person subsisting in a human nature. However, whether the distinction between consciousness and self-consciousness can accommodate Trinitarian orthodoxy would need further clarification, which is beyond the present discussion.

nature might appear to complicate the Christological problem. But thinking in terms of subsistent and substantial perfection indicates that the real problem lies with the common definition of man as a body-soul composite, i.e. an absolute reality. If person is confined to the absolute order (leaving aside its precise location), then it must contribute to the perfection of nature. Yet in that case, Christ would be an imperfect man for lacking a human person. Just as an Apollinarian Christology reduces the Lord's humanity by replacing the soul with the Logos, defining the human person as an absolute entity and replacing it with the divine person in Christ sacrifices his consubstantiality with the rest of mankind. Any absolute consideration of the human person results in an incomplete incarnation of the Son and a disastrous deficiency in his mediatorial ontology. In contrast, the relational consideration of the human person shows that it can be absent from the Son's incarnate ontology without affecting his subsistent or substantial perfection as a man. The human person of a Chalcedonian anthropology not only makes the best sense of the extended Chalcedonian analogy, but it also offers a further clarification in support of Chalcedonian Christology.

Given the foregoing, this initial response to the incarnation objection provides good reason why a human *hypostasis* in anthropology does not endanger the Son's humanity in Christology. Setting aside the definition of person in terms of a substance allows for a sharper reconsideration of person and nature as ontological realities of different orders. Throughout the previous historical work, Christological analysis, and Chalcedonian formulation of anthropology, coherence has demanded a consistent application of the person-nature distinction. Person and nature *should not be conflated conceptually* in Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy or in anthropology. By considering them as different orders of being, it can now be added that person and nature *cannot be conflated ontologically* because each has its own reality and self-contained perfections. Person subsists completely in nature to the point of possessing and directing

it.⁵⁷ However, person does not contribute to the substantial perfection of nature, and nature does not contribute to the subsistent perfection of person. This means that the Son can assume the substantial perfection of a human nature without the subsistent perfection of a human person. As the plenary perfection of person and the model of every human person, the Son supplies the surpassing subsistent perfection of his divine person, which makes him the human being who is ontologically capable of living and experiencing a human life and death for the redemption of sinful humanity. In short, because divine and human persons are both realities of the relational order, and human persons are analogues of the divine persons, Christ the man does not want for an ectypal person when the archetypal person of the Son is present.

Responding to both objections has provided the opportunity to develop a better understanding and articulation of a Chalcedonian anthropology. As pointed out in the conclusion below, much work remains. But the person-nature constitution of man *par ordinaire* in the image of Christ the man *par excellence* should be taken as a warranted conclusion at this point. Both divine and human persons are personal hypostases, who are ontological and acting subjects of the relational order of being with subsistent perfections. In both Christ the man and mere man, the human nature is a body-soul composite, which is an ontological object of the absolute order of being with substantial perfections, including all faculties for human life and experience. Being consubstantial, Christ the man and mere man share the same substantial perfection of a body-soul nature. Christ is the man *par excellence* because the divine person of the Son provides the subsistent perfection for his human being. His creaturely analogues are instances of man

⁵⁷ In accord with the pro-Chalcedonian tradition, Galot describes the person as the ascendant principle of the nature: “the person possesses the nature and quickens it with his relational being. The person is the subject of all the activities of the nature. The nature, for its part, is dominated, governed by the person, and belongs to the person. All the determinations, qualities and attributes of the nature are appropriated by the person.” Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 300. Yet even as the ascendant principle, person remains a relational principle of being that does not perfect the nature as the absolute principle of being.

par ordinaire because a human person provides the subsistent perfection for their human being.

Conclusion

Theological reformulation itself is not problematic; in fact, it is good and even necessary at times. But theological reformulation must always be warranted. One must have good reason—epistemological, biblical, ecclesiological, and/or theological reason—to say something different or differently than the church has confessed throughout history.⁵⁸

The purpose of this dissertation has been to pursue a Christocentric understanding of humanity. As a departure from the dualism-physicalism debate in contemporary anthropology, this dissertation started with the ontological priority of Christ the man and the ministerial authority of the Chalcedonian Definition. Based on the particular ontological analogy in the Definition between the divine and human being of Christ, the person-nature constitution of *the* man has been extended to *mere* man. This consistent extension of the person-nature distinction from God, through the God-man, to all mankind is grounded in the orthodoxy and pattern of theological retrieval provided by the early church. Because the Son is God, the early church extended his divine ontology into his incarnation. Because the Son is the revelation and paradigm of true humanity, a Chalcedonian anthropology extends his human ontology to all mankind. And this analogical extension has been defended and refined by considering some of the most immediate and significant objections. The result is a basic Chalcedonian anthropology that makes metaphysical and biblical sense of the mediatorial ontology of Christ required by Scripture and his mission of salvation. According to such a Chalcedonian definition of humanity, a human person subsists in and acts through a human nature of body and soul.

⁵⁸ Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 423.

This constitution is the creaturely analogue to the divine person of the Son subsisting in and acting through his human nature, and it corresponds to his person-nature sacrifice and sanctification of a new humanity. Such a Chalcedonian anthropology needs much work to continue its development. But a person-nature model of mere man offers much promise in anthropology and its intersection with other doctrines.

At this point, it will help to coordinate a Chalcedonian anthropology in contemporary anthropology. To be clear, the proposal made in this dissertation is a theological-conceptual departure from the current debate, not a disregard of its importance. However, the departure is fundamental in that it starts outside the presuppositions of dualism and physicalism.⁵⁹ And thus the result also represents a fundamental disagreement with the major models. Specifically, a human person as a personal *hypostasis* is not identical with the soul/mind of substance dualism, hylomorphism, emergentism, or physicalism.⁶⁰ In Chalcedonian anthropology, the person is a real subsistence with its own perfection and exists at its own order of being as the ontological and acting subject, *who*, or “I” in a human being. Person does not arise from, reduce to, or otherwise depend upon the body-soul nature. Thus, the person cannot be the soul, which is a part (alongside the body) of the *what* of human being that is the human nature, having a separate, substantial perfection at its own order of being. But substance dualism equates the “I” with soul and places it in the nature as an immaterial substance alongside the material body. The different versions of hylomorphism identify the soul as

⁵⁹ See the discussion in chap. 1, s.v. “Ontology in Christian Anthropology” and “Thesis.”

⁶⁰ Moreover, it should be noted that a human person also is not identical with the spirit in a trichotomy model of humanity. As noted in chap. 1, the lack of biblical and historical support for seeing man as a composite of spirit, soul, and body removes this model from further consideration or discussion. But in short, the spirit in the trichotomous view is distinct from the soul but still part of the human nature. It thus cannot support the ontological acting subject of person. And the model causes the same Apollinarian or Nestorian issue as substance dualism in Christology: either the spirit is replaced by the Son, who becomes an incomplete man; or the spirit is assumed by the person of the Son and the whole concrete nature constitutes a second subject.

a substantial form that shapes and animates the proximate matter of the body. And ultimately, they all define the human person as either identical with the soul or as a hylomorphic composite of soul and body. Despite a different conception of the soul (form, not substance) in its relationship with nature, hylomorphism still makes no ontological space for person as a personal *hypostasis*.⁶¹ For the same reason, emergent dualism cannot make room for the human person simply by having the soul “emerge” from a combination of complex features in the body. Finally, physicalism also violates

⁶¹ But cf. Stamps, “Chalcedonian Argument,” 57–66. Stamps argues that relying on Thomistic hylomorphism is the key to extending the person-nature distinction from Christology to anthropology. Yet, it is not always clear that Stamps is working with the Chalcedonian sense of person. In his analysis of the Definition, he does recognize that the person of the Son is the preexistent subject who assumes a human nature. In his consideration of Thomistic anthropology, however, he interchanges person, man, and human being. And by the end of this interchange, the ontological place of person in human ontology has become unclear. He even appears at times to think of (or interpret Aquinas as thinking of) person in the sense of a composite *hypostasis*, i.e., the complete human being composed of a soul and body. Stamps argues, “Thomas maintains that the person cannot be equated with either the soul or the body. It is a distinct conceptual category” (63). But in support, Stamps quotes a passage from the *Summa* that standing alone speaks of man as a soul-body composition: “man is not a mere soul, nor a mere body, but both soul and body.” Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.75.4., quoted in Stamps, “Chalcedonian Argument,” 63. He then quotes again from the same passage, which this time equates person with the human species: “Not every particular substance (*substantia*) is a *hypostasis* or a person (*persona*), but that which has the complete nature of its species . . . nor, likewise, is the soul alone so called, since it is a part of the human species” Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.75.4., quoted in Stamps, “Chalcedonian Argument,” 63. Aquinas is saying here that a soul without a body is not a person because a person is a substantial instantiation of a complete species, a soul-body composition in the case of human beings. And Stamps concludes similarly by equating person with human being: “A person has the ‘complete nature of its species,’ which, in the case of a human being, ordinarily includes . . . a body and a soul.” Stamps, “Chalcedonian Argument,” 63. Gilles Emery, on the other hand, states clearly and firmly that Aquinas sees a person as an individual human being that is a composite of soul and body: “Man is therefore a ‘composite’ of soul and body.” Gilles Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays*, Faith and Reason: Studies in Catholic Theology and Philosophy (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 217. In fact, Aquinas specifically uses *persona* (person) to refer to this soul-body composition: “The soul is a part of the human species; and so, although it may exist in a separate state, yet since it ever retains its natural aptitude to be united to the body, it cannot be called an individual substance, which is the *hypostasis* or first substance, as neither can the hand nor any other part of man; thus neither the definition nor the name of person belongs to it.” Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.29a.1.5; see Emery, *Trinity, Church, and Human Person*, 229. Aquinas here equates “human species,” “individual substance,” “*hypostasis*,” “first substance,” and “person.” For Aquinas, then, person refers to an individual substance and instance of the complete human species which is a particular human being or *hypostasis* composed of a soul and a body. Thus, while the soul in Thomistic hylomorphism is not a separate substance from the body but a self-subsistent form, it still cannot be identified with person without violating the divine-human person analogy. And the model makes no room for person as a personal *hypostasis* but defines person as a complete *hypostasis* of body and soul.

the ontological status of person by equating it with the human mind that arises from the material body as a feature of it or supervenience upon it.

According to the foregoing Chalcedonian critique, it seems that only Chalcedonian anthropology is sufficient for the task of presenting a Christological definition of humanity. According to their presuppositions, contemporary models cannot accommodate a human person as the creaturely analogue of the divine person of the Son, at least not without redefining and relocating person and destroying the fundamental analogy. Physicalism may contribute to a better appreciation of humanity's holism. But its features and presuppositions must be set aside to the extent they require a material constitution and reject an immaterial component in human ontology. According to orthodox ontology, the divine person of the Son is certainly immaterial *and* an integral component of his constitution as Christ the man. So a physicalist definition of humanity seems incapable of accounting for a personal hypostasis, in either *the* man or mere man.

On the other side of the debate, the dualist models would all seem to have some merit in accounting for the ontology of the body-soul nature. And due to its historical pedigree, perhaps substance dualism should be afforded some degree of ministerial authority at this point. In that case, as noted in the previous chapter, a person-nature model of mankind would be a necessary correction of and supplement to substance dualism, adding a personal *hypostasis* who subsists in a body-soul nature. However, it is crucial to recognize that Chalcedonian anthropology stands on its own biblical, epistemological, and historical warrant. Beginning with substance dualism will not produce the symmetry of a person-nature ontology in Christology and anthropology. That correspondence is grounded in the biblical, epistemological, and ontological centrality of Christ for all mankind, and in the authoritative analogy of being provided by the Chalcedonian Definition.

Moreover, a Chalcedonian approach holds promise beyond anthropology. Specifically, the introduction of a human person as the ontological subject who subsists

in and acts through a body-soul nature can bring greater doctrinal consistency, clarity, and coherence where anthropology intersects with other doctrines. This dissertation has already demonstrated this benefit at the intersection with Christology. But other intersections should be explored. For example, the person-nature constitution of man can help make better sense of the *imago Dei* and the *imitatio Christi* (as briefly discussed earlier). It can help strengthen the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement, because sin and guilt are forensic issues of person, not natures.⁶² As the acting subject, the person of the Son bears our sins, not his divine or human nature. Thus, the Son should bear the guilt of a human person as the acting subject of his human nature, rather than the guilt of the nature (or its soul). According to the same reasoning, a human person-nature constitution provides a more consistent and coherent framework for understanding sin, temptation, and obedience, including the compatibility of Christ's impeccability and our ability to look to him as our example.⁶³ And that person-nature framework also extends to making sense of ethical issues regarding life (e.g., abortion), the intermediate state of death (e.g., the issues of consciousness and continuity of identity), and the hope of glory in the life to come. In short, a person-nature analogue of Christ in man promises to open constructive dialogue at nearly every doctrinal intersection with anthropology.

⁶² See Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:39–42. Regarding the mediatorial ontology of Christ, Vos explains, “This one person, this one subject in Christ, is vested with all the legal relationships that are due the Mediator. . . . To Him, the person, the guilt of the elect was imputed, not to the human nature Everywhere a legal relationship is involved, we have to do with the person of the Mediator, the Son of God. For carrying out His functions as Mediator, both natures are certainly necessary, as has been shown abundantly above, but the legal capacity could only be provided for through the existence of these natures in the person” (3:41). Vos here clearly states that the human nature is not capable of sinning or bearing the guilt of sin. He does extend that principle to anthropology, but he does not extend the person-nature distinction. Instead, it is the human person as a concrete nature or “unfolding” of the nature that is guilty of sin. This is the common understanding at the intersection of anthropology and soteriology, which can be improved by recognizing the human person of a Chalcedonian anthropology.

⁶³ In short, recognizing a human *hypostasis* and locating Christ's impeccability in the person of the Son can help explain that he acts through a human nature just as human persons, and that his inability to sin is a result of his personal relationship with the Father, not the divine nature or a glorified human nature, which we do not have.

It should be noted that significant work remains to realize the promise of a Chalcedonian anthropology. This dissertation has been able to make an initial proposal. Yet part of the pattern for this proposal is an extended period of challenge and clarification. A human person-nature constitution must be tested rigorously and developed more completely. A short list of the immediately apparent areas includes: exposure to the full *analogia entis* debate; the o of a human person; considering the human person as fallen, redeemed, and glorified; and the role of the Spirit in human person-nature constitution and function. Moreover, further biblical work and exegetical analysis will confirm the inclusion of a human person in a biblical anthropology or identify weaknesses and a need for reformulation. The work ahead is significant. But the case for a Chalcedonian anthropology made here demonstrates that the work should be widely and richly rewarding.

At the end of this dissertation, and with a new model of humanity in view, this much has become clear: a promising future is open to theological anthropology grounded in a robust Christological anthropology that pursues a Christocentric humanity. As seen in the discussion above, a few scholars, namely Galot and Wellum, have recognized the need to define humanity in terms of a person-nature distinction. This dissertation is an attempt to provide the epistemological, biblical, and historical warrant for meeting that need in the theological conclusion that man *par ordinaire* is the person-nature analogue of the man *par excellence*. The hope is that the current proposal for a Chalcedonian anthropology will contribute to the church's ongoing need to read the Bible on its own terms and make "biblical" conclusions at the intersection of Christology and anthropology. The goal is to glorify God and exult in Christ by reflecting more deeply and faithfully on what it means to be made in and conformed to his person-nature image.

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ABSTRACT

CHALCEDONIAN ANTHROPOLOGY: A PROPOSAL FOR THE EXTENSION OF CHRIST'S PERSON- NATURE CONSTITUTION

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This dissertation argues for the extension of Christ's ontological constitution as *the* man to define the constitution of *all* mankind. In contrast to the predominant body-soul/mind models, this dissertation presents a person-nature model of humanity.

Chapter 1 introduces and analyzes the current debate in anthropology between models grounded in a dualist versus a physicalist understanding of the human soul and body. The debate, and its identification of person with the soul or human being, provide a point of departure for a new model of humanity grounded in the human ontology of Christ.

Chapter 2 provides biblical warrant for the new model by demonstrating that the presentation of Christ as the image and redeemer of God points to an ontological correspondence with all humanity. The chapter also provides epistemological warrant by framing a basic methodology and historical pattern for a metaphysical move from Christology to anthropology.

Chapter 3 provides historical warrant by tracing the early church's formation of an orthodox ontology grounded in a distinction between the ontological categories of person and nature. The Chalcedonian Definition extended the person-nature being of God to the divine-human being of God the Son incarnate, confessing that the Christ is one person in two natures.

Chapter 4 adds historical warrant by tracing the clarifications made in the pro-Chalcedonian tradition to demonstrate the coherence of Christ's person-nature constitution as a man. The divine person of the Son is and acts as a human being by subsisting in and acting through his human nature, which is composed of a body and complete soul.

Chapter 5 presents a Chalcedonian model of humanity as a warranted theological conclusion by analyzing Christ's orthodox ontology and extending it into anthropology via discrete ontological propositions, which define a human being as a human person subsisting in a body-soul nature. Drawing inferences and making adjustments as required demonstrates that man *par ordinaire* is a person-nature analogue of the man *par excellence*.

Chapter 6 provides an initial defense of a person-nature anthropology by addressing two objections. The dissertation concludes by discussing the promise of a Chalcedonian anthropology and the work needed to realize it.

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