
The Word and Creation

The Incarnation was not the novel presence of God in creation

For this reason the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God came to our realm; not that he was previously distant, for no part of creation is left deprived of him, but he fills the universe, being in union with his Father. But in his benevolence [lit. “philanthropy”] towards us he condescended to come and be made manifest.¹

The paradoxical presence of the Word

[In the Incarnation, the Word] was not enclosed in the body, nor was he in the body but nowhere else. Nor did he move the latter while the universe was deprived of his action and providence. But what is most wonderful is that, being the Word, he was not contained by anyone, but rather himself contained everything. And as he is in all creation, he is in essence outside the universe but in everything by his power, ordering everything and extending his providence over everything. And giving life to all, separately and together, he contains the universe and is not contained, but in his Father only he is complete in everything. So also being in a human body and giving it life himself, he accordingly gives life to everything, and was both in all and outside all. And although he was known by his body through his works, yet he was not invisible by his action on the universe.²

The Word imparts cosmic stability

Seeing that all created nature according to its own definition is in a state of flux and dissolution, therefore to prevent this happening and the universe dissolving back into nothing, after making everything by his own eternal Word and bringing creation into existence, [God] did not abandon it to be carried away and suffer through its own nature, lest it run the risk of returning to nothing. But being good, he governs and establishes the whole world through his Word who is himself God, in order that creation, illuminated by the leadership, providence, and ordering of the Word, may be able to remain firm, since it shares in the Word who is truly from the Father and is aided by him to exist, and lest it suffer what would happen, I mean a relapse into non-existence, if it were not protected by the Word. *‘For he is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, because through him and in him subsist all things, visible and invisible, and he is the head of the church’*,³ as the servants of the truth teach in the holy writings.⁴

¹ *DI* 8 (Thomson, p.151)

² *DI* 17 (Thomson, p.175)

³ Colossians 1:15-18

⁴ *CG* 41 (Thomson, p.115)

The life-giving harmonising Word

It is thus the omnipotent and perfectly holy Word of the Father himself who is present in all things and extends his power everywhere, illuminating all things visible and invisible, containing and enclosing them in himself; he leaves nothing deprived of his power, but gives life and protection to everything, everywhere, to each individually and to all together. The principles of all perceptible substance, the hot and cold, the moist and dry, he mixes together, ensuring that they do not oppose each other but produce a single euphonious harmony. Through him and his power fire does not fight with the cold, nor the moist with the dry; but these elements which by themselves are opposed, come together like friends and kin, give life to the visible world, and become the principles of existence for bodies. By obedience to this Word of God things on earth receive life and things in heaven subsist ... And lest I dwell too long by naming each visible entity, there is nothing existing or created which did not come into being and subsist in him and through him, as the theologian says: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him nothing was made.'*⁵

Just as a musician, tuning his lyre and skilfully combining the bass and the sharp notes, the middle and the others, produces a single melody, so the wisdom of God, holding the universe like a lyre, draws together the things in the air with those on earth, and those in heaven with those in the air, and combines the whole with the parts, linking them by his command and will, thus producing in beauty and harmony a single world and a single order within it, while he himself remains unmoved with the Father but by his intrinsic being moves everything as seems good to the Father.⁶

Creation testified to its creator on the cross

Nor did he cause creation itself to be silent, but, what is most amazing, even at his death - or rather at the victory over death, I mean the cross - the whole of creation was confessing that he who was known and suffered in the body was not simply a man, but the Son of God and Saviour of all. For the sun turned back, and the earth shook, and the mountains were rent, and all were terrified; and these things showed that Christ who was on the cross was God, and that the whole of creation was his handmaid and was witnessing in fear to the coming of her master. So in this way God the Word revealed himself to men through his works.⁷

⁵ John 1:1,3

⁶ CG 42 (Thomson, pp.115-7)

⁷ DI 19 (Thomson, p.181)