
The Mediation of Christ

The (natural) Son makes us sons by grace

Those who have attained adoption as sons of God through faith in Christ are baptized not into anything belonging to the created order but into the Holy Trinity itself, through the mediation of the Word, who on the one hand joined what is human to himself by means of the flesh that was united to him, and on the other was joined by nature to him who had begotten him, since he was by nature God. Thus what is servile [i.e. our humanity] rises up to the level of sonship through participation in him who is Son in reality, called and, as it were, promoted to the rank which the Son possesses by nature. That is why we are called offspring of God and are such, for we have experienced a rebirth by faith through the Spirit.¹

Christ is raised up by his Divinity and drawn down by his self-emptying

For [Christ] is God who has become man, occupying, as it were a middle position by an ineffable and indescribable union, since he has neither left the sphere of the truly divine nor has he entirely abandoned that of the human. For his ineffable generation from God the Father raises him up, in that he is Word and Only-begotten, to the divine essence and to the glory that naturally accompanies it, while his self-emptying draws him down somewhat to our world.

Not that this self-emptying is sufficient to overwhelm by force, so to speak, him who with the Father is king of the universe, for the Only-begotten is never forced against his will. Rather, it was of his own accord, out of his love for us, that he accepted the self-emptying and persevered with it. That is to say, he humiliated himself voluntarily, not as a result of any compulsion.

For he would have been convicted of not having undergone the suffering of his humiliation willingly, if there had been anyone at all powerful enough to have had an advantage over him and with the ability to order him to undergo this against his will. Therefore he humbled himself willingly for our sake. For we ourselves would never have been called sons by grace and gods (cf. Ps. 82:6) if the Only-begotten had not undergone humiliation for us and on our behalf.²

How to understand the self-emptying of the Word (Phil. 2:6-8)

We worship One Lord Jesus Christ, for the Word born of God and the man born completely of the holy virgin, come together in unity. We do not exclude him from the terms of the divinity because of the flesh, nor do we reduce him to the level of a simple man because of his likeness to us. This is how you should think that the Word born of God willingly underwent his voluntary self-emptying; and this is how he humbled himself, assuming the form of a slave, even though in his own nature he is free.³

¹ *Commentary on John* 1.9 (Russell, pp.102-3)

² *Commentary on John* 11.9 (Russell, pp.125-6)

³ *Letter to the Monks* 17 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.255)

The Union of Natures & The Eucharist

The Word-united flesh of Christ was life-giving during his earthly ministry and is life-giving now via the Eucharist

After the Incarnation [Christ's humanity and the Word] are not divisible, except insofar as one knows that the Word that came from the Father and the temple that came from the Virgin are not identical in nature. For the body is not consubstantial with the Word that is from God. But they are one in their coming together and in the ineffable way in which they are combined. And if the flesh of the Saviour became life-giving, seeing that it was united with that which is Life by nature, i.e. the Word that is from God, when we taste of it we have that life within ourselves, since we too are united with the flesh of the Saviour in the same way as that flesh is united with the Word that dwells within it.

That is also why when he raises the dead the Saviour is seen to be operating not by word alone, nor by commands such as befit God, but he firmly insisted on using his holy flesh as a kind of co-worker, that he might show it to be capable of giving life and already made one with him. For it really was his own body and not that of another. Thus when he raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, saying, 'Child, arise' (Lk. 8:54), he took her by the hand, as Scripture records. While giving life as God by his all-powerful command, he also gives life by the touch of his holy flesh, demonstrating through both that the operation was a single and cognate one.

... If by the touch of his holy flesh he gives life to that which has decayed, how shall we not profit more richly from the life-giving Eucharist when we taste it? For it will certainly transform those who partake of it and endow them with its own proper good, that is, immortality.¹

The Eucharist is an insertion of the "glowing ember" of immortality

Although death which sprang upon us because of the Fall (cf. 1 Pet.5:8), forces the human body towards unavoidable decay, nevertheless if Christ comes to be in us through his own flesh, we shall certainly rise. For it is not credible, or rather, it is impossible that he should not endow with life those in whom comes to dwell. It is as if one took a glowing ember and thrust it into a large pile of straw in order to preserve the vital nucleus of the fire. In the same way our Lord Jesus Christ hides away life within us by means of his own flesh, and inserts immortality into us, like some vital nucleus that destroys every trace of corruption in us.²

¹ *Commentary on John 4.2* (Russell, pp.115-6)

² *Commentary on John 4.2* (Russell, pp.117-8)

Eucharistic implications of the union of natures

We proclaim the death according to the flesh of the Only begotten Son of God, and confess the return to life from the dead of Jesus Christ, and his ascension into heaven, and thus we perform in the churches an unbloody worship, and in this way approach mystical blessings and are sanctified, becoming participants in the holy flesh and the precious blood of Christ the Saviour of us all.

We do not receive this as ordinary flesh, God forbid, or as the flesh of a man sanctified and conjoined to the Word in a unity of dignity, or as the flesh of someone who enjoys a divine indwelling. No, we receive it as truly the life-giving and very-flesh of the Word himself. As God he is by nature life and since he became one with his own flesh he revealed it as life-giving.

So even if he should say to us: ‘Amen, Amen I say to you, If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood’ (Jn.6.53), we must not consider this as if it were the flesh of any man like us (for how could the flesh of a man be life-giving from its own nature?) but rather that it has truly become the personal flesh of him who for our sakes became, and was called, the Son of Man.³

Christ’s *very own* holy and life-giving body is transformative for us

Is it not wicked and shocking to try to take away from God the Word his birth from a woman according to the flesh? For how could his body possibly give life to us if it were not the very own body of him who is Life? And how could it be that the “blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7) if it was in reality only that of an ordinary man subject to sin? And how has “God the Father sent his Son born of a woman, born subject to the law” (Gal 4:4)? Or how has “he condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 8:3)?

To condemn sin does not belong to someone with a nature like ours, under the tyranny of sin, an ordinary man. But insofar as it became the body of the one who knew no transgression, how rightly it could shake off the tyranny of sin to enjoy all the personal riches of the Word who is ineffably united with it in a manner beyond all description. Thus it is a holy and life-giving thing, full of divine energy. And we too are transformed in Christ, the first-fruits, to be above corruption and sin. What the blessed Paul says is true: “Just as we bore the image of the earthly, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor 15:49) that is to say, of Christ.⁴

³ *Third Letter to Nestorius* 7 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, pp.270-1)

⁴ *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, pp.60-1)

Cyril's Defence

Cyril's understanding of the Incarnation

We do not say that the nature of the Word was changed and became flesh, nor that he was transformed into a perfect man of soul and body. We say, rather, that the Word, in an ineffable and incomprehensible manner, ineffably united to himself flesh animated with a rational soul, and thus became man and was called the Son of Man...

While the natures that were brought together into this true unity were different, nonetheless there is One Christ and Son from out of both. This did not involve the negation of the difference of natures, rather that the Godhead and manhood by their ineffable and indescribable consilience into unity achieved One Lord and Christ and Son for us.

For this reason, even though he existed and was begotten of the Father from before all ages, he is also said to have been begotten from a woman according to the flesh. This does not mean that his divine nature received the beginning of its existence in the holy virgin or that it necessarily needed a second generation for its own sake after its generation from the Father. It is completely foolish and stupid to say that He who exists before all ages and is coeternal with the Father stood in need of a second beginning of existence.

Nonetheless, because the Word hypostatically united human reality to himself, 'for us and for our salvation', and came forth of a woman, this is why he is said to have been begotten in a fleshly manner. The Word did not subsequently descend upon an ordinary man previously born of the holy virgin, but he is made one from his mother's womb, and thus is said to have undergone a fleshly birth in so far as he appropriated to himself the birth of his own flesh.¹

Mary as *Theotokos* ("Mother of God") – A traditional concept

I was completely amazed that certain people should be in any doubt as to whether the holy virgin ought to be called the Mother of God or not. For if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, then how is the holy virgin who bore him not the Mother of God? The divine disciples handed on this faith to us even if they did not make mention of the term. We have been taught to think this way by the holy Fathers.

Our Father Athanasius ... composed a book for us concerning the holy and consubstantial trinity where, throughout the third discourse, he calls the holy virgin the Mother of God... the exact words are these: 'This, then, is the purpose and essential meaning of the divine scripture, as we have said many times, that it contains a two-fold statement about the Saviour; firstly that he is eternally God, and that he is the Son being the Word, the Radiance, and the Wisdom of the Father, and secondly that later for our sake he took flesh from the virgin Mary the Mother of God and so became man' (*Contra Arianos* 3.29).²

¹ *Second Letter to Nestorius* 3-4 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, pp.263-4)

² *Letter to the Monks* 4 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.247)

Cyril's Christological explanation of the Nicene Creed

We follow in every respect the confessions of the holy Fathers³ which they made with the Holy Spirit speaking in them. By following the path in which they understood these things we come, as it were, along the Royal Road, and we declare that the Only Begotten Word of God himself, who was begotten of the very essence of the Father, the true God of true God, the light of light, he through whom all things in heaven or on earth were made, himself came down for the sake of our salvation and lowered himself into a self-emptying, and was incarnated and made man. That is, taking flesh from the holy virgin and making it his very own from his mother, he underwent a human birth and came forth as man from a woman.

This did not mean he abandoned what he was, for even when he came as man in the assumption of flesh and blood even so he remained what he was, that is God in nature and in truth. We do not say that the flesh was changed into the nature of Godhead, nor indeed that the ineffable nature of God the Word was converted into the nature of flesh, for he is entirely unchangeable and immutable, and in accordance with the scriptures he abides ever the same (Heb.13.8; Mal.3.6). Even when he is seen as a baby in swaddling bands still at the breast of the virgin who bore him, even so as God he filled the whole creation and was enthroned with his Father, because deity is without quantity or size and accepts no limitations.⁴

The recapitulatory effects of the “birth of God”

Since the holy virgin gave birth in the flesh to God hypostatically united to flesh, for this reason we say that she is the ‘Mother of God’. This does not mean that the Word’s nature took the beginning of its existence from the flesh, for he ‘was in the beginning’ and ‘the Word was God, and the Word was with God’ (Jn. 1.1) and he is the maker of the ages, coeternal with the Father and maker of all things. As we have said before, it means rather that he hypostatically united the human condition to himself and underwent a fleshly birth from her womb.

He had no natural need, or external necessity, of a temporal birth in these last times of this age, but he did this so that he might bless the very beginning of our own coming into being, and that since a woman had given birth to him as united to the flesh, from that point onwards the curse upon our whole race should cease that drives our earthly bodies to death. He did it to annul that sentence: ‘In sorrow shall you bring forth children’ (Gen.3.16), and also to demonstrate the truth of the prophet’s words: ‘Death swallowed us up in its power, but God wiped every tear from every face’ (Is. 25.8 LXX). This is why we say that in the economy⁵ he himself blessed marriage, and being invited went to Cana of Galilee with the holy apostles (Jn.2.1f).⁶

³ A reference to those who met at the Council of Nicaea, 325 AD

⁴ *Third Letter to Nestorius* 3 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.268)

⁵ Economy = arrangement or plan. Cyril is speaking of the “economy of salvation”.

⁶ *Third Letter to Nestorius* 11 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.273)

The Paradoxical Death of Christ

The paradox of the Incarnation – The Word remains transcendent in the Incarnation and the One who is Life suffers death

The Word of God who is born ineffably from the being of God the Father, has honoured our nature by taking up the human condition, but he did not thereby become alienated from his own transcendence but remained God even in his manhood. This is why we do not say that the temple born from the holy virgin (i.e. Christ's humanity) was assumed in the order of an instrument, but rather we follow in the faith of the sacred scriptures and the sayings of the saints and we maintain that the Word became flesh in the senses already exposed by us so often before.

He has laid down his life for us, for since his death was to be the salvation of the world he 'endured the cross, scorning the shame' (Heb.12.2) even though, as God, he was Life by nature. How can Life be said to die? It is because Life suffered death in its very own body that it might be revealed as life when it brought the body back to life again.¹

The Word suffers death in his "very own body"

Emmanuel ... was the Word in his own body born from a woman, and he gave it to death in due season, but he suffered nothing at all in his own nature for as such he is life and life-giver. Nonetheless he made the things of the flesh his own so that the suffering could be said to be his. The same is true of his rising up on behalf of all. Having died for the sake of all to redeem all that is under heaven with his own blood, and to acquire for God the Father all that is on the face of the earth...

He who alone was more worthy than all others laid down his life for the sake of all and for a short time, in an economy, allowed death to pull down his flesh. But then, as Life, he destroyed death, refusing to suffer anything contrary to his own nature; and he did this so that corruption should be weakened in the bodies of all and so that the dominion of death should be destroyed. 'For just as all men die in Adam, so all of us shall be made alive in Christ' (1 Cor. 15.22). For if he had not suffered for us as man he would not have achieved our salvation as God. So first of all he is said to have died as a man, but then to have come back to life again since he is God by nature.²

¹ *Letter to the Monks 23* (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.259)

² *Letter to the Monks 24-25* (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.260)

If “Word-flesh” did not die, death is not destroyed and we are not saved

If the Christ is neither true Son, nor God by nature, but merely a man like us and an instrument of the Godhead, then we are certainly not saved in God but rather saved by someone like us who died on our behalf and was raised again by external powers. But in that case how could death have been destroyed by Christ (1 Cor. 15.54)? Nonetheless I hear him clearly saying about his own life: ‘No one takes it from me for I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again’ (Jn.10.18).

For he who did not know death descended into death alongside us through his own flesh so that we too might rise up with him to life. And coming back to life he despoiled Hell, not as a man like us, but as God alongside us and for us in the flesh. Our nature is enriched with incorruptibility in him as the first, and death has been crushed since it launched a hostile attack against the body of Life itself. Just as death conquered in Adam, so was it ruined in Christ.³

The Word must have truly become flesh for the overthrow of death and abolition of sin to have occurred

In short, he took what was ours to be his very own so that we might have all that was his. “He was rich but he became poor for our sake, so that we might be enriched by his poverty” (2 Cor 8:9). When they say that the Word of God did not become flesh, or rather did not undergo birth from a woman according to the flesh, they bankrupt the economy of salvation, for if he who was rich did not impoverish himself, abasing himself to our condition out of tender love, then we have not gained his riches but are still in our poverty, still enslaved by sin and death, because the Word becoming flesh is the undoing and the abolition of all that fell upon human nature as our curse and punishment. If they so pull up the root of our salvation, and dislodge the cornerstone of our hope, how will anything else be left standing?

As I have said, if the Word has not become flesh then neither has the dominion of death been overthrown, and in no way has sin been abolished, and we are still held captive in the transgressions of the first man, Adam, deprived of any return to a better condition; a return which I would say has been gained by Christ the Saviour of us all.⁴

³ *Letter to the Monks* 26 (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, pp.260-1)

⁴ *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, pp.59-60)

The Paradoxical Suffering of the Unsuffering God

Cyril defends the simultaneous unsuffering-suffering of the Word of God

[The Nestorians] argue that to have to say that the same one suffers and does not suffer makes it seem like a fairy tale, and indeed verges on the incredible. For either, as God, he has not suffered at all, or alternatively, if he is said to have suffered, then how can he be God? For such reasons the one who suffers must be understood to be only the one who is of David's line.

Is not this an evident demonstration of their feebleness of mind to choose to say and think this? God the Father did not give us any common man taken up in the rank of mediator and artificially holding the glory of sonship, honoured with the conjunction of a relationship; no, he gave him who is above all creation, who for our sake came in our likeness, the Word who issues from his own being, so that he might be seen as the equivalent of the life of all. In my opinion it is the height of absurdity, as I have already said, to find fault with the Only Begotten, when he did not disdain the economy and became flesh, and accuse him of having militated against his own glory by choosing inappropriately to suffer in the flesh. My good friend, this was a matter of the salvation of the whole world.

And since on this account he wished to suffer, even though he was beyond the power of suffering in his nature as God, then he wrapped himself in flesh that was capable of suffering, and revealed it as his very own, so that even the suffering might be said to be his because it was his own body which suffered and no one else's. Since the manner of the economy allows him blamelessly to choose both to suffer in the flesh, and not to suffer in the Godhead (for the selfsame was at once God and man) then our opponents surely argue in vain, and foolishly debase the power of the mystery, when they think they have made a worthy synthesis. It seems that the fact he so chose to suffer in the flesh was somehow blameworthy of him, but in another way it was glorious, for the resurrection has testified that he is greater than death and corruption.¹

Cyril's analogy for the unsuffering-suffering of the Word – iron in a fire

The force of any comparison falters here and falls short of the truth, although I can bring to mind a feeble image of this reality which might lead us from something tangible, as it were, to the very heights and to what is beyond all speech. It is like iron, or other such material, when it is put in contact with a raging fire. It receives the fire into itself, and when it is in the very heart of the fire, if someone should beat it, then the material itself takes the battering but the nature of the fire is in no way injured by the one who strikes. This is how you should understand the way in which the Son is said both to suffer in the flesh and not to suffer in the Godhead. Although, as I said, the force of any comparison is feeble, this brings us somewhere near the truth if we have not deliberately chosen to disbelieve the holy scriptures.²

¹ *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, pp.117-8)

² *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, pp.130-1)

Suffering and death were endured by the Word's holy flesh (not the Word himself directly)

Just as “he made him who knew no sin into sin for our sake that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (for the nature of man has been justified in him), so in the same way he caused him who knew not death (since the Word is life and life-giver) to suffer in the flesh. But insofar as he is considered as God he remained outside suffering in order that we might live through him and in him. For this reason the suffering of Christ has been called “the likeness of death”. So it is written: “If we become one being with him in the likeness of his death, so shall we be of his resurrection” (Rom 6:5).

The Word was alive even when his holy flesh was tasting death, so that when death was beaten and corruption trodden underfoot the power of the resurrection might come upon the whole human race. It is a fact that “just as in Adam all men die, so all men shall be made alive in Christ” (1 Cor 15:22). How else should we say that the mystery of the economy of the Only Begotten in the flesh brought help to the nature of man, except that he who is above all creation brought himself down into a self-emptying and lowered himself in our condition? How else could it be except that the body which lay under corruption became a body of life so as to become beyond death and corruption?³

The suffering and death of the incarnate Word

So it is we say that he both suffered and rose again; not meaning that the Word of God suffered in his own nature either the scourging, or the piercing of the nails, or the other wounds, for the divinity is impassible because it is incorporeal. But in so far as that which had become his own body suffered, then he himself is said to suffer these things for our sake, because the Impassible One was in the suffering body.

We understand his death in the same manner. By nature the Word of God is immortal and incorruptible, and Life, and Life-giver, and yet since his own body ‘tasted death by the grace of God on behalf of all’, as Paul says (Heb.2.9) then he himself is said to have suffered death for our sake. This does not mean he underwent the experience of death in terms of his [own] nature for it would be madness to say or think such a thing; rather, as I have said, it means that his flesh tasted death. Similarly when his flesh was raised up, once again we say that the resurrection is his. This does not mean that he fell into corruption, certainly not, but again that his own body was raised.⁴

³ *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, p.115)

⁴ *Second Letter to Nestorius 5* (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, p.264)

There is One Christ and Lord (not two)

Problems with Nestorius' understanding of Christ

Our opponents have chosen to hold and teach that the Only Begotten Word of God assumed a man of the line of the divine David and Abraham, and took care to form him in the holy virgin, then conjoined himself to him, made him come to the trial of death, raised him from the dead, took him up to heaven, and seated him at the right hand of God. But if this is the case then it seems to me that the holy Fathers and all the God-inspired scriptures, and we ourselves, are speaking in vain whenever we say that he became man. Nonetheless I think that it is exactly this, and nothing else, that the all-wise John meant when he wrote: "The Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14).

It seems to me that they have turned the mystery of the economy in the flesh completely on its head, for in their argument one cannot see how God the Word, born of God, and God by nature, abased himself to a self-emptying and humbled himself to assume the form of a slave. On the contrary, in their estimate a man is exalted into the glory of the Godhead and into pre-eminence over all things; he receives the form of God and is raised on high and comes to be enthroned alongside the Father.

... And if it was true that he assumed a man, brought him to the trial of death, raised him to the heavens and made him sit alongside the Father, then where would the Only Begotten position his own throne after this? For it is part of their argument that there are not two Sons, only one enthroned with God, and he seems clearly to be the one who is of the line of David and Abraham. But if this were so, how could the Only Begotten be said to have been the Saviour of the World? Would he not rather have been the Patron and Promoter of that man by whom we were saved? In such a case the fulfilment of the law and the prophets would then turn out to be a man, someone different than him.

... It is past all belief that such a man, who is not God truly or by nature, should parade himself in a divine situation (doubtless having ousted him who is the Son by nature) and that the angels and archangels, or even the Seraphim who are higher still, should stand before him ready to do service for someone who is not truly Son or God, but in reality is a man who has received the title of Sonship, and divine honours in the form of great benefits in which he participates just as is the case with us.

... [People who think in this way] steal the worship from him who is really the Son, and persuade us to worship someone conjoined to him in some kind of relationship instead, someone (so they say) who has risen over every Principality and Authority and Dominion. In this way they have implicated not only everyone on earth, but even the rational heavenly powers too in the guilt of a deception, if they, like us, are found to be worshipping not the true and natural Son made man, the Word who shone forth from God the Father's very being, but rather some other person apart from him, a man of the line of David, a man who has only been given the external appearances of deity by God's will as if they were external decorations, but someone who is not God in truth.¹

¹ *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, pp.69-72)

A mere “conjunction” of natures is not enough

How wicked they are, then, when they divide in two the one true and natural Son incarnated and made man, and when they reject the union and call it a conjunction, something that any other man could have with God, being bonded to him as it were in terms of virtue and holiness...

A disciple can also be said to “attach” himself to a teacher in terms of a love of study, and we too can attach ourselves to one another not in one fashion only but in many. In short, when someone assists another in a task, should we not consider that he has been conjoined by will to the one who receives his assistance? It seems to us that this is exactly what these innovators mean by conjunction.

You must have heard how they stupidly maintain that God the Word assumed a man, as if he were a different son to himself, and then proposed him as a kind of assistant to his designs so that he underwent the trial of death, came to life again, rose up to heaven, and even sat upon the throne of the ineffable Godhead? With arguments such as these have they not completely and utterly proven that this man is altogether different from the true and natural son?²

The Nestorians must logically have a “saved saviour”

I cannot understand how these people, who pillage this wonderful and noble economy of the Only Begotten, connect a man to him in terms of a relationship adorned with external honours and radiant in a glory which is not his, for then he is not truly God but someone who has fellowship and participation with God, and is thus a falsely-named son, a saved saviour, a redeemed redeemer.³

The Nestorians reject the suffering of God the Word incarnate – but how can the blood of a mere man save?

[The Nestorians] think it is not at all right to attribute the suffering upon the cross to the Word born of God. They would argue instead that he prepared the man who was conjoined to himself in terms of equal honour to undergo the insults of the Jews, and the sufferings on the cross, and even death itself, and that in this way the man became the “leader of our salvation,” returning to life and crushing the dominion of death by the power of the Word who was with him.

... [but] in that case we have no longer been redeemed by God (how could we have been?) but rather by the blood of someone else. Some man or other, an impostor and a falsely-named son, has died for us. The great and venerable mystery of the incarnation of the Only Begotten has turned out to be only words and lies, for he never really became man after all. We certainly could not regard him as our Saviour who gave his blood for us, we would have to attribute this to that man.⁴

² *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, pp.73-4)

³ *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, p.89)

⁴ *On The Unity of Christ* (McGuckin, pp.111-2)

Cyril's "Twelve Anathemas"¹

1. If anyone does not confess the Emmanuel to be truly God, and hence the holy virgin to be Mother of God (for she gave birth in the flesh to the Word of God made flesh), let him be anathema.
2. If anyone does not confess that the Word of God the Father was hypostatically united to the flesh so as to be One Christ with his own flesh, that is the same one at once God and man, let him be anathema.
3. If anyone divides the hypostases of the One Christ after the union, connecting them only by a conjunction in terms of honour or dignity or sovereignty, and not rather by a combination in terms of natural union, let him be anathema.
4. If anyone interprets the sayings in the Gospels and apostolic writings, or the things said about Christ by the saints, or the things he says about himself, as referring to two *prosopa* or *hypostases*, attributing some of them to a man conceived of as separate from the Word of God, and attributing others (as divine) exclusively to the Word of God the Father, let him be anathema.
5. If anyone should dare to say that Christ was a God-bearing man and not rather that he is truly God as the one natural Son, since the Word became flesh and 'shared in flesh and blood just like us' (Heb.2.14), let him be anathema.
6. If anyone says that the Word of God the Father is the God or Lord of Christ, and does not rather confess the same one is at once God and man, since according to the scriptures the Word has become flesh, let him be anathema.
7. If anyone says that Jesus as a man was activated by the Word of God and invested with the glory of the Only Begotten, as being someone different to him, let him be anathema.
8. If anyone should dare to say that the assumed man ought to be worshipped along with God the Word and co-glorified and called 'God' as if he were one alongside another (for the continual addition of the phrase 'along with' demands this interpretation) and does not rather worship the Emmanuel with a single veneration and render him a single doxology since the Word became flesh, let him be anathema.
9. If anyone says that the One Lord Jesus Christ was glorified by the Spirit, using the power that came through him as if it were foreign to himself, and receiving from him the power to work against unclean spirits and to accomplish divine signs for men, and does not rather say that the Spirit is his very own, through whom he also worked the divine signs, let him be anathema.
10. The divine scripture says that Christ became 'the high priest and apostle of our confession' (Heb.3.1) and 'offered himself for our sake as a fragrant sacrifice to God the Father' (Eph.5.2). So if anyone says that it was not the very Word of God who became our high priest and apostle when he became flesh and man as we are, but it was someone different to him, a separate man born of a woman; or if anyone says that he made the offering also for himself and not rather for us alone (for he who knew no sin had no need of offerings), let him be anathema.
11. If anyone does not confess that the Lord's flesh is life-giving and the very-own flesh of the Word of God the Father, but says that it is the flesh of someone else, different to him, and joined to him in terms of dignity, or indeed only having a divine indwelling, rather than being life-giving, as we have said, because it has become the personal flesh of the Word who has the power to bring all things to life, let him be anathema.
12. If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and tasted death in the flesh, becoming the first-born from the dead, although as God he is life and life-giving, let him be anathema.

¹ *Third Letter to Nestorius* (McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, pp.273-5)

The Council of Chalcedon's "Definition of the Faith" (451 AD)

Taken from J.N.D Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: Continuum, 1977⁵), pp.339-40

In agreement, therefore, with the holy fathers¹, we all unanimously teach that we should confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a rational soul and body, consubstantial with the Father in Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten from the Father before the ages as regards his Godhead, and in the last days, the same, because of us and because of our salvation begotten from the Virgin Mary the *Theotokos*, as regards his manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, made known in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coalescing in one *prosopon* and one *hupostasis* - not parted or divided into two *prosopa*, but one and the same Son, only-begotten, divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old and Jesus Christ Himself have taught us about Him and the creed of our fathers has handed down.

¹ The "holy fathers" are those who met at the Councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD). Just prior to this extract, the Chalcedonian document includes the full text of the creeds produced at both of these important councils, and reaffirms them.

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