

Understanding God Incarnate

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The doctrine of the Incarnation is the central Christian conviction that the man Jesus of Nazareth was and is God Incarnate, the Second Person of the divine Trinity, God the Son, a properly divine individual, in human nature. In Jesus, we are confronted by one person in two natures, human and divine. Since being formulated carefully at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the two-natures view of Christ has served as a cornerstone of Christian faith through all subsequent centuries, up until the present day. But like many other fundamental, traditional Christian convictions, in recent years it has undergone a barrage of severe criticism and has become a focus of widespread controversy.

A great deal of that controversy has arisen in England where on occasion it seems that nearly everyone with an education and a typewriter has a penchant for theological disputation. Recall for example the publicity surrounding Bishop John Robinson's book *Honest to God*, whose publication in 1963 set off an explosion of reviews, response articles and letters to the editors of professional journals, popular magazines and newspapers. In 1977, the publication of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, edited by John Hick, had the same sort of result, generating and focusing much of the controversy that currently surrounds the doctrine of the Incarnation. Within months of its appearance, *The Myth of God Incarnate* was answered by another collection of essays entitled *The Truth of God Incarnate*. This soon was followed by another book *The Myth/Truth of God Incarnate*, and another called simply *God Incarnate*, with one more entitled *Incarnation and Myth: The Debate Continued* hot on its heels, and so on, and so on.

In America, it seems that the only religious controversy we have had even approaching these dimensions is the evolution-creation debate, and that has attained its level of publicity only because of the practical and legal questions of what should be taught in the schools. In general, we have tended to keep our disputes in philosophical theology modestly confined to a few professional journals. However, the recent attacks on Christian orthodoxy now threaten to enter the popular press and the public arena on this side of the Atlantic as well. To illustrate this let me quote from, of all

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things, a diet book published by a popular American press a few months ago, with the rather ambitious subtitle *How to Lose Weight and Change the World*. Paging through this little book in a shopping mall bookstore, I found sandwiched between chapters on fat and roughage the statement:

Christian dogma contains a number of flagrant contradictions, such as: that the same thing is both one and three things (the Trinity)...and that something can be both human and divine (Christ).¹

Now, how such a claim finds its way into a diet book I won't linger to explain. But let me comment on the specific charge that this author, in common with many others, makes; the charge that there is something logically or conceptually wrong with the doctrine of the Incarnation. In particular I want to examine the structure of that charge, sketch out one defensive strategy for turning it back, and then outline two interestingly different attempts to explicate the doctrine coherently by elaborating on the metaphysics of the Incarnation.

The charge of flagrant contradiction, or, more cautiously, of incoherence, or even more cautiously yet, the charge of metaphysical impossibility, has been repeated in various forms quite often in recent years by critics of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Basically, the sort of argument most of them seem to have in mind is roughly something like the following: On a standard and traditional conception of deity, God is omnipotent, omniscient, incorporeal, impeccable and necessarily existent, among other things. Moreover, by our definition of "God," such properties as these are, so to speak, constitutive of deity--it is impossible that any individual be divine, or exemplify divinity, without having these properties. To claim some individual to be divine without being omnipotent, say, or necessarily existent, would be on this view just as incoherent as supposing some individual to be both a bachelor and married at one and the same time. By contrast, we human beings seem clearly to exemplify the logical complement (or "opposite") of each of these constitutive divine attributes. We are limited in power, restricted in knowledge, embodied in flesh, liable to sin and are contingent creations. Jesus is claimed in the doctrine of the Incarnation to have been both fully human and fully divine. But it is logically impossible for any being to exemplify at one and the same time both a property and its logical complement. Thus, recent critics have concluded, it is logically impossible for any one person to be both human and divine, to have all the attributes proper to deity

and all those ingredient in human nature as well. The doctrine of the Incarnation on this view is an incoherent theological development of the early church which must be discarded by us in favor of some other way of conceptualizing the importance of Jesus for Christian faith. He could not possibly have been God Incarnate, a literally divine person in human nature.

As I have addressed this challenge to the doctrine of the Incarnation in great detail elsewhere, in *The Logic of God Incarnate*, I shall give only a relatively brief indication here of how it can be answered.² A lengthy response is not required in order for us to be able to see how this currently popular sort of objection can be turned back. A couple of very simple metaphysical distinctions will provide us with the basic apparatus for defending orthodoxy against this charge, which otherwise can seem to be a very formidable challenge indeed.

As it usually is presented, the sort of argument I have just outlined treats humanity and divinity, or human nature and divine nature, as each constituted by a set of properties individually necessary and jointly sufficient for exemplifying that nature, for being human, or for being divine. Such an argument most often depends implicitly on a sort of essentialist metaphysic which has been around for quite awhile, and which recently has experienced a resurgence of popularity among philosophers. On such a view, objects have two sorts of properties, essential and accidental. Roughly speaking, a property can be essential to an object in either of two ways. It is simply part of an individual's essence if the individual which has it could not have existed without having it. It is a kind-essential property if its exemplification is necessary for an individual's belonging to a particular kind, for example, human-kind. Human nature, then, consists in a set of properties severally necessary and jointly sufficient for being human. And the same is true of divine nature. The critic of the Incarnation begins with the simple truth that there are many properties humans have which God could not possibly have, goes on to assume that these properties, or at least some of them, are essential properties of being human, properties without which no one could be fully human, and then concludes that no divine being could possibly become a human being. The conclusion would be well drawn if the assumption was correct. But it is this assumption we must question.

Once a distinction between essential and accidental properties is accepted, a distinction employed in this sort of argument against incarnation, another simple distinction follows in its wake. Among properties ordinarily characterizing human beings, some are essential elements of human nature, but many just happen to be

common human properties without also being essential. Consider for example the property of having ten fingers. It is a common human property, one possessed by a great number of people, but it clearly is not a property essential to being human. People lose fingers without thereby ceasing to be human. Further, consider a common property which safely can be said to be a universal human property, one had by every human being in history--the property of living at some time on the surface of the earth. Obviously this is not an essential human property either. It is clearly possible that at some time in the future, human beings be born, live and die on a space station, or on another planet colonized by earth, without ever setting foot on the earth itself. So it is not a safe inference to reason simply from a property's being common or even universal among human beings that it is an essential human property, strictly necessary for exemplifying human nature.

The relevance of this distinction to the doctrine of the Incarnation should be obvious. It is certainly quite common for human beings to lack omnipotence, omniscience, necessary existence, and so on. I think any orthodox Christian will agree that, apart from Jesus, these are even universal features of human existence. Further, in the case of any of us who do exemplify the logical complements of these distinctively divine attributes, it may well be most reasonable to hold that they are in our case essential attributes. I, for example, could not possibly become omnipotent. As a creature, I am essentially limited in power. But why think this is true on account of *human nature*? Why think that any attributes incompatible with deity are elements of human nature, properties without which one could not be truly or fully human?

It's important here to draw another distinction. An individual is *fully human* just in case that individual has all essential human properties, all the properties composing basic human nature. An individual is *merely human* if he has all those properties *plus* some additional limitation properties as well, properties such as that of lacking omnipotence, that of lacking omniscience, and so on.

It is the claim of orthodox Christology that Jesus was fully human without being merely human. He had all properties strictly constitutive of human nature, but also had higher properties as well, those properties distinctively constitutive of deity. What is crucial to realize here is that an orthodox Christian perspective on human nature will just categorize all human properties logically incompatible with a divine incarnation as, at most, essential to being *merely human*, or, more exactly, as individually-essential, not kind-essential, properties of those of us who are merely human. No orthodox theologian has ever held that Jesus was merely human, only that he was fully human. It is held that the person who was

God Incarnate had the full array of attributes essential to humanity, and all those essential to divinity.

I am suggesting that, armed with a few simple distinctions, the orthodox Christian can clarify his conception of human nature in such a way as to provide for the coherence and metaphysical possibility of the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation. But I am sure it will be objected by many that to use these distinctions to explicate what Chalcedon and the rest of the church has had in mind about Jesus is to land oneself in some well-known absurdities. On the Chalcedonian picture, it seems, Jesus was omniscient, omnipotent, necessarily existent and all the rest, as well as being an itinerant Jewish preacher. But this has appeared outlandish to most contemporary theologians. Did the bouncing baby boy of Mary and Joseph direct the workings of the cosmos from his crib? Was this admittedly remarkable man, as he sat in a boat or under a fig tree, actually omnipresent in all of creation? Did this carpenter's son exist *necessarily*? These apparent implications of orthodoxy can sound just too bizarre for even a moment's consideration, despite any amount of what critics often see as no more than metaphysical magic, or hypostatic hocus-pocus, we might engage in to save the doctrine.

At this point we face two distinct problems. First, it may be difficult to imagine how anyone could be genuinely human from first to last while exemplifying the full array of divine attributes. It may be just simply beyond belief that such an individual would share the human condition. Second, when we study the biblical portrayal of Christ, we do find ourselves presented with an extraordinary individual, but as a matter of fact the Jesus of the Gospels seems not to have been exemplifying all those impressive divine attributes. Was he omnipotent? He grew tired. Omniscient? On at least one occasion he indicated there was something he did not know. Omnipresent? At one time he was in Jericho; at another time in Jerusalem. He walked from one place to another.

By means of the sorts of distinctions I have already sketched out, we can defend the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation against direct charges of logical inconsistency. But we need much more than this if we are to make sense of the doctrine, if we are to come to any significant understanding of what it could mean for Jesus to be God Incarnate. What we are forced to consider is whether an account of the Incarnation can be provided which will on the one hand recognize Christ as a properly divine being in accordance with conciliar orthodoxy, and yet on the other hand clearly allow his earthly sojourn a genuinely human quality, such as what we find portrayed in the Gospels. I want to present the

outlines of two very different attempts to provide such an account, and along the way indicate some of my own grounds for preferring one to the other.

In the nineteenth century a view was developed which has come to be known as "kenoticism" (from *kenosis*, the Greek word for emptying; see Philippians 2:5-8). The central claim of kenotic christology is that in order to enter the earthly stream of human life, God the Son voluntarily and temporarily laid aside, or emptied himself of, all those metaphysical attributes of deity which otherwise would preclude such an incarnation. Some people understand kenoticism to involve the claim that the Son gave up all the distinctively metaphysical attributes of deity for his time among us, while yet retaining all the moral qualities which are properly divine. But of course it is just impossible that all the metaphysical attributes of deity be temporarily laid aside. No individual could possibly cease to be eternal, or immutable, or necessarily existent, for a brief period of time, not even a being with the most astounding powers of self-limitation. But it can be argued in defense of a kenotic christology that the kenotic maneuver need not be applied to these properties. For example, relying on the distinction between common and essential human properties, and the distinction between being fully human and being merely human, we can argue (I think, quite plausibly) that the properties of coming into existence at some time (a contrary of eternity) and contingency (the contradictory of necessity) are just not kind-essential properties for being fully human. Thus, the individual who was Jesus could have been both necessary and eternal in basic metaphysical status while taking on the nature of a fully human being. Furthermore, there are construals of divine immutability which will allow the possibility of a divine incarnation, although none of them will allow a movement of *kenosis* with respect to immutability itself. But this is unnecessary anyway, since on the sort of understanding of immutability clearly compatible with a divine incarnation, God the Son could perfectly well retain his proper immutability while yet exemplifying the fullness of human nature. In short, it can be argued that, armed with the distinctions we have drawn concerning human nature, we can see that any divine attributes which do not allow of *kenosis* do not require it either in order to be compatible with an incarnation into human nature.

But I need to say something about how Jesus' having these kenotically recalcitrant metaphysical attributes need not have any absurd implications for orthodoxy. First, it is an ancient, and independently plausible, claim that no person is strictly identical with his body. Even a modern materialist who holds that all

personality is necessarily embodied need not deny this. So the necessary existence of God the Son, with its implications that He cannot have begun to exist and cannot cease to exist, and therefore is eternal, does not entail that the earthly body in which He incarnated Himself had these properties. His body was conceived, and grew like any other human body. Likewise, the kenotic theologian must hold, a person is not identical with any particular range of conscious experience, or any particular set of belief states, he might have. So the eternality of God the Son need not entail the comprehensive continuity of His cognitive states from His pre-incarnate mode of existence as God into His earthly childhood. The kenotic theologian thus allows that the earthly mind-set, along with the earthly body, came into existence and grew. Nothing about the necessity, eternality or immutability (in a sense to be explicated) of the divine Son need preclude this.

It is a standard kenotic claim that God the Son temporarily gave up His omniscience for the course of the earthly stage of the Incarnation. From all eternity, He had been omniscient. For roughly three decades He was not. But upon His Ascension, and for all eternity future, He continues now to enjoy that maximal noetic state once again. This is the kenotic story about God the Son's knowledge. Clearly, it allows both the orthodox claim that Jesus was God, and the biblical claim that He grew in wisdom as a child.

It is fairly easy to explicate coherently the kenotic allegation that the Son voluntarily and temporarily gave up His omniscience, later to regain it. For consider Shorty, a spy who is going on a dangerous mission in which he will have to pretend to be a great scientist with amnesia. So that he will not succumb to questioning under torture if suspected, Shorty is given a limited-amnesia producing pill, and an antidote for later use. Clearly, such a scenario seems perfectly coherent. And in relevant respects it parallels the kenotic claim about Christ.

Temporarily failing to exemplify the property of omniscience thus seems, at least so far, to be a possibility. But what of omnipotence and omnipresence? Perhaps the best understanding of the attribute of omnipresence is that of its being the property of being present everywhere in virtue of knowledge of and power over any and every spatially located object. A divine being would then presumably divest himself of that attribute by divesting himself of the requisite power or knowledge. Omnipotence, however, may not so simply fit into the kenotic scheme. It, like immutability, is what we might call an internally modalized attribute. Being omnipotent is, very roughly, being *able* (having the power) to do anything it would be logically possible (in the

broadly logical sense) for a maximally perfect being to do. Now, let us attempt to describe a case of fully voluntary kenosis with respect to this property. A being, *S*, is omnipotent from *t*₁ to *t*₂, voluntarily divests himself of this property from *t*₃ to *t*₅, and regains it at *t*₆. What exactly is the state of *S*'s power or abilities at *t*₄, during the period of kenosis? If the state of kenosis is entirely and thoroughly voluntary, at *t*₄ *S* has the ability (an ability which he freely refrains from exercising) to re-exemplify omnipotence. But at *t*₄, if *S* can be such that he can do anything logically possible for a maximally perfect being, then at that time he can do anything logically possible for such a being--in other words, it seems he is still omnipotent. If he cannot at *t*₄ take up his omnipotence again, he is not in a state of the thoroughly voluntary, temporary relinquishing of it.

If the kenotic theologian is committed to the complete voluntariness of the state of the Incarnation, he thus may not be able to hold that God the Son temporarily ceased to be omnipotent. But if the Son then lacked at least omniscience, one piece of knowledge He may be said to have lacked is the knowledge of His being omnipotent. And anyone who has restricted his knowledge of the range of his own power may be argued thereby to have restricted the exercise of his power, since, presumably, no one usually draws on resources he does not believe he has.

By maneuvers such as this, kenoticism can attempt to explain how it is that:

1. Omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence are properly divine attributes;
2. Jesus was divine as well as human; but,
3. During the decades of His time among us on earth, this individual appeared to have none of these attributes.

The kenotic strategy has had many critics, but most of them have failed to appreciate the subtleties of a limited kenotic picture with elements such as these. When combined with the distinctions we have drawn concerning human nature, the kenotic maneuver applied to the attribute of omniscience alone can appear to go a significant way toward ridding orthodoxy of any apparently absurd implications.

I do not, however, find the traditional kenotic strategy fully plausible, or even very attractive. I'll mention here only a couple of problems I think it faces. First, given any traditional and standard analysis of the divine attributes, kenoticism requires a general view of the modalities of those attributes which is less than fully satisfactory. Second, on the same condition, it necessitates abandoning any plausible, substantive metaphysical ascription of immutability to God, of even a quite moderate form.

The first point about modality is this. As I mentioned earlier, it is a fairly standard theistic view that there are properties essential to being God, attributes which can be considered to be constitutive of deity. Omnipotence and omniscience are clear and relatively uncontroversial as examples of such properties. It is impossible, on this view, for an individual to be God, or to be literally divine, without being omnipotent and omniscient. Many orthodox theists, in particular many of those who endorse an Anselmian conception of God, go further and hold that omnipotence, omniscience and the other attributes constitutive of deity form not only something like the kind-essence of deity, but also serve as components of the individual-essence of any being who is God. Moreover, many also go on to hold the even more stringent and exalted view that no individual can possibly count as God unless it is essentially possessed of maximal power, and likewise for the other attributes constitutive of deity. On this view, there is a collection of attributes an individual must have, and must have essentially, in order to be strictly, literally divine.

It should be clear that on this modally exalted view of deity, divine kenosis as I have explicated it so far would be an impossibility. No individual can give up temporarily a property he has essentially. If any being who is divine must have all the metaphysically distinctive attributes of deity essentially, none of them could be given up by him temporarily, while he yet continued to exist. If omniscience is an essential property of God the Son, He could not have given it up temporarily. If it is merely a requisite of deity, but not a part of His individual essence, He could have given it up, but He would thereby have ceased to be God. So the earthly period of the Incarnation would not, after all, have presented us with an individual with the two natures of humanity and divinity simultaneously. On either understanding of the modal status of omniscience, the traditional kenotic strategy as so far presented cannot be used to explicate and defend the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation.

Now consider for a moment the ascription of immutability to God. A number of prominent theists throughout history have understood God's immutability to be the property of being absolutely incapable of undergoing or engaging in any sort of real change whatsoever. It's obvious that this extreme sort of immutability would disallow the possibility of a divine kenosis. But what is important to note is that even moderate construals of immutability would render kenosis impossible. Consider, for example, the conception according to which divine immutability consists in simply the impossibility of any individual's beginning to have or ceasing to have any of the attributes distinctive of deity,

such as omnipotence or omniscience. Such a conception is moderate in that it allows many sorts of change in the case of God, but it is nonetheless a conception of divine immutability because it disallows the possibility of basic change with respect to the exemplification of the distinctively divine attributes. This is a view I think many traditional theists, including Christian theists, would endorse, and it is also a view which rules out the kenotic strategy for defending the doctrine of the Incarnation, at least in its standard form. So again at this point, traditional kenotic christology is incompatible with a view which is otherwise very attractive to theists.

But why accept any of these views about the modal status of the divine attributes? It has been suggested by some very traditional, conservative theists that these modal claims are untrue. Stephen Davis, for example, has claimed to see no reason to think that omniscience is necessary for being divine. Other philosophers have suggested that on a certain view of the Trinity, the divine persons may differ in the modal status of their attributes; for example, it could be that God the Father is essentially omniscient, and that God the Son exemplifies that property only contingently, being capable of ceasing to have it for a while. If we make less than the most modally exalted claims for deity, the standard kenotic strategy will be a live option for displaying the coherence of the Incarnation and explicating some of its features. But it seems to me that there are plausible grounds of an Anselmian sort to make such strong modal claims for deity as those I have mentioned. If such claims clearly prohibited an incarnation, I would join Davis and others in relinquishing them. For any Anselmian intuitions on which they are ultimately based are after all defeasible. But I am inclined to think that these modally maximal claims can be made for God and can be reconciled quite well with the evident facts of the career of Jesus that kenoticism tries to accommodate. If I can go some distance toward showing this, I can thereby provide some reason for thinking that the modal background of standard kenoticism represents at least an unnecessary weakening of the claims many traditional theists otherwise want to make about God.

I want to sketch out an alternative to kenoticism which accords with a modally exalted conception of deity. It is a perspective which may even comport with the most extreme understanding of divine immutability, if that construal is compatible with any divine agency in a world such as ours. It is clearly a perspective which stands fully consistent with the more moderate version of divine immutability most theists are prepared to endorse. In many ways it seems to me to offer a picture, or model, of the Incarnation which is superior to that provided by a kenotic view. The view I want to

present can be called, succinctly, if possibly somewhat misleadingly, "the two-minds view of Christ." It is an ancient view which has been relatively neglected for a long time. I believe some distinctively modern perspectives can be drawn upon to explicate it and display its plausibility.

Recall first of all a claim needed for kenoticism, the claim that no person is identical with any particular range of conscious experience, or collection of belief states, he might have. I think that the truth of this claim will follow from any modally plausible and metaphysically careful account of what a person is. With this in mind, we can begin to appreciate the early view that in the case of God Incarnate, we must recognize something like two distinct ranges of consciousness. There is first what we can call the eternal mind of God the Son with its distinctively divine consciousness, whatever that might be like, encompassing the full scope of omniscience. And, in addition, there is a distinctly earthly consciousness which came into existence and grew and developed as the boy Jesus grew and developed. It drew its visual imagery from what the eyes of Jesus saw, and its concepts from the languages he learned. The earthly range of consciousness, and self-consciousness, was thoroughly human, Jewish and first century Palestinian in nature.

We can view the two ranges of consciousness (and, analogously, the two noetic structures encompassing them) as follows: The divine mind of God the Son contained, but was not contained by, His earthly mind, or range of consciousness. That is to say, there was what can be called an asymmetric accessing relation between the two minds. Think, for example, of two computer programs or informational systems, one containing but not contained by the other. The divine mind had full and direct access to the earthly, human experience being had through the Incarnation, but the earthly consciousness did not have such full and direct access to the content of the over-arching omniscience proper to the Logos; only such access, on occasion, as the divine mind allowed it to have. There thus was a metaphysical and personal depth to the man Jesus lacking in the case of every individual who is merely human.

This account allows for the apparent intellectual and spiritual growth of Jesus in His humanity to be a real development. And when it is used in connection with the distinctions we have drawn concerning human nature, we have in principle a full and adequate account of the basic features of the metaphysics of the Incarnation. In particular, this view allows us to avoid the absurdities to which orthodoxy has always seemed vulnerable. On it, we have in the person of Jesus no case of a God merely dressed up as a man. We have an individual who is fully human, and who shares in the

human condition, experiencing the world in a human perspective. No docetic absurdities are implied by the view. Nor is it Nestorian. Nor Appollinarian. There is one person with two natures, and two ranges of consciousness. He is not the theological equivalent of a centaur, half God and half man. He is fully human, but not merely human. He is also fully divine.

The two-minds view seems to me, further, to be a clear improvement over standard kenoticism. When He became a man, God the Son did not give up anything of deity, He merely took on the nature and condition of humanity. We can capture full well the New Testament claim that in the Incarnation, God the Son humbled Himself, without following kenotic christology in holding that He gave up any metaphysical attributes distinctive of deity. His humbling consisted rather in His rendering Himself vulnerable to the pains, sufferings, aggravations and agonies which became His as a man but which, in His exclusively divine form of existence, could not have touched Him this way. It is not by virtue of what He gave up, but in virtue of what He took on, that He humbled Himself. This sort of divine kenosis was a feature of the Incarnation, but so understood, it is a feature which accords logically with strong claims concerning the modality and immutability of the attributes distinctive of, and traditionally held to be constitutive of deity. No kenotic move with any of those attributes is required for ridding orthodoxy of any appearance of absurdity.

But can we really understand what it is to attribute two minds, or two ranges of consciousness, to one person? That depends on what is required for understanding the claim. Can we know what it is like to be a God-man? Well, can we know what it is like to be a bat? It is hard, if possible at all, to imagine what a sonar-consciousness is like. Likewise, we do not, and cannot, know what it is like to be God, at least not in the way we know what it is like to be a human being. It is no objection to my suggestions that it is impossible in this sense to know what it would be like to be a God-man with two related but distinct ranges of consciousness. But as a matter of fact, we can fill out some significant level of understanding concerning the claim by way of some analogies.

I have suggested already a computer or artificial intelligence analogy. Consider two or three others. First, an interesting, and interestingly parallel, dream phenomenon is reported by many people. It is an experience I think I have had myself on more than one occasion. The dreamer is having a dream with a large cast of characters. The dreamer himself is one of those characters, perceiving the internal environs of the dream and taking part in its action "from within." But, at the same time, the dreamer "as

sleeper" is somehow aware, in what could be called an overarching level of consciousness, that it is just a dream that is going on, in which he is playing a role as one of the characters. If in fact there is in such an experience a twofold consciousness, one "within" the dream, the other "outside" the dream simultaneously, then we have, if not a model, then at least an analogy of some value in helping us to get some imaginative grip on the two-minds picture of the Incarnation. It is possible, though, that in such experiences the dreamer is very rapidly alternating between two perspectives. And of course this would provide no model or particularly good analogy at all.

Consider the common claim in twentieth-century psychology that there are various strata to the ordinary human mind. The postulated unconscious, or subconscious, mind would stand in an asymmetric accessing relation to the conscious mind somewhat parallel to that postulated between the divine consciousness and the earthly consciousness of God Incarnate. If modern psychology is even possibly right in this postulation, one person can have different levels or ranges of mentality. In the case of Jesus, there would then be a very important extra depth had in virtue of His being divine.

Finally, there are cases of commissurotomy, multiple personality and even hypnosis, in which we are confronted by what seems to be, in some significant sense, a single individual human being, one person, but one person with apparently two or more distinct streams or ranges of consciousness, distinct domains of experience. Now, of course, there are philosophers who claim that in many if not all cases of multiple, simultaneous ranges of experience associated with the stimulation of one human body, the requisite conditions are lacking for judging there to be a single person who is the ultimate bearer of the disparate sets of experience. Some theorists identify each discrete range of consciousness in the commissurotomy patient, and each personality in the case of a multiple personality, as a person. Such a claim is less often made with respect to different levels of consciousness or divergent streams of awareness associated with cases of hypnotism. But, in any case, the sort of identification can be argued to be implausible. If one troubling, aberrant personality is eliminated therapeutically from the behavioral repertoire of someone afflicted with multiple personalities, the therapist surely need not see the effect of his work as the killing of a person. Moreover, it is plausible, and indeed illuminating, to view normal persons as either having or even being systems of systems of mentality or experience. And, again, if it is even conceivable that one person have, simultaneously, such distinct ranges of mentality, we may have

here, in at least some of the more unusual cases, vivid, partial analogies which can help us to gain some firmer understanding of the two-minds view.

As a matter of fact, in some cases of multiple personality, there exists one personality with apparently full and direct knowledge of the experiences had, information gathered, and action initiated by one or more other personalities, a sort of knowledge which is not had by any other personality concerning it. In other words, there seem to exist asymmetric accessing relations in such cases interestingly, though of course not perfectly, parallel to the sort of relation claimed by the two-minds view to hold between the divine and human minds of Christ.

Does the two-minds view then present the Incarnation as a case of split-personality on the part of God the Son? And if so, should not the recognition of this alone suffice for a rejection of the view as an unworthy, demeaning characterization of Christ? Does what initially can appear to serve as a partial explication of orthodoxy end up amounting to no more than a gross impiety?

First of all, the reference to some phenomena of multiple personality here is intended only to provide a partial analogy for some of what the two-minds view claims to be true in the case of Christ. It is to have no more than the limited, but hopefully helpful, function of providing some understanding of, and imaginative grip on, the central elements of the two-minds view. It thus is intended to serve the same function as the computer (AI) analogy, the dream analogy, and the reference to the classic distinction between the conscious and unconscious, or subconscious, mind. It is not intended to be a complete modelling of the noetic features of the Incarnation.

Furthermore, the analogy or partial parallel is in no way demeaning to God the Son. To see this we must ask exactly what it is about the phenomena of multiple personality generally which renders the state of exhibiting such phenomena a bad state to be in for a human being, a state which it would be better to be without. The answer is, I think, quite simple. Typical cases of multiple personality exhibit two negative features: they are not mental states, or arrangements, voluntarily entered into by the person who exhibits the phenomena, and they are not mental states, or arrangements, conducive to the attainment of goals valuable to the person involved. Both these features are, on any orthodox deployment of the two-minds views, absent from the case of Christ's exemplification of two minds. His taking on of a human mind was entirely voluntary. And, given any traditional account of the purpose of the Incarnation, it was conducive to, if not in fact necessary for, the attainment of goals valuable to God. So it seems

to me that we have no reason from this quarter to hesitate using whatever parallel phenomena we find in psychologically unusual human cases to help us to understand the relevant aspects of the Incarnation.

The two-minds view of Christ allows us to take seriously the human limitations of the earthly career of Jesus without incurring the metaphysical and modal costs of kenoticism. I believe it is a very powerful picture, and that it can be an important ingredient in philosophically explicating the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation and defending it against all forms of the contemporary incoherence challenge.

Notes

1. Richard Watson, *The Philosopher's Diet: How to Lose Weight and Change the World* (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1985), p. 49.
2. Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

