

Firm Foundation

The Doctrine of Christ

Introduction

The supreme importance of this article rests on the fact that the saving grace of God is not absolute, founded on God's power, but has been gained by Christ. True, we generally call the doctrine of justification the central article of the Christian doctrine. But this article is directly based on the doctrine of Christ's God-Man Person and God-Man work. We are justified by grace, without the deeds of the Law, but that only "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24), only because Christ paid the ransom for us, Christ, who is nothing less than the Son of God. Scripture stresses particularly:

Romans 5:10: *Faith which justifies is not just any kind of belief, nor is the object Christ as a teacher of the Law, the model of virtue, the prophet "the universal fatherhood of God," etc.*

Matthew 16:16 *Justifying faith accepts Jesus as "the Son of the living God."*

1 Timothy 2:6 *And "who gave Himself a ransom for all"*

Whoever denies that Christ in His God-Man Person and work of redemption is the object of saving faith cancels the Christian doctrine of justification and does away with all of Christianity. It is obvious then that the doctrine of Christ, that is the answer to the question, "Who do you say that I am?", must be kept pure.

In order to best utilize our time and to maintain interest we will divide this study into three major sections:

- (I) The Doctrine of the Person of Christ;
- (II) The Doctrine of the States of Christ;
- (III) The Doctrine of the Office of Christ.

I

The Doctrine of the Person of Christ

(Note: This is not in the Student workbook) One of the complaints that many other churches have about the Lutherans is that the Lutheran dogmaticians, even the Formula of Concord and Luther himself, treated this doctrine too extensively and elaborately, that they went to great lengths to present the true, perfect deity of Christ and the true, perfect humanity of Christ and then even treated the personal union, the communication of the natures, and the communication of attributes in the greatest detail. This detailed presentation is a fact. But while we admit that some of the old dogmaticians may have occasionally used more words than were needed for a thorough discussion, the notion that the old teachers treated the subject at such great length from mere contentiousness or the desire to plague mankind is not in accord with history. The facts in the case put the blame for this very detailed presentation on the false teachers. These false teachers never tired of going into great detail in denying the true deity or the true humanity or the personal union of the two natures

in Christ. They forced the teachers of the Church, who recognized the importance of his doctrine, to present and defend all these truths as they are taught in Scripture. And they are forcing us to do the same today. We do not delight in controversy, but we feel like Luther in this matter. "Ah, Lord God, over this blessed and comforting article men ought always to rejoice in true faith without dispute and without doubts! We ought to sing and give praise and thanks to God, the Father for His great mercy in having his dear Son become like unto us, a true Man and our Brother. But now, the Evil Spirit, through proud ambitious and evil men, is forcing this disagreeable controversy on us, to hinder and spoil this dear and blessed joy. May God hear our plaint. (meaning: lamentation.)"

Summary

We have said that the understanding of the Theology of Cross was not fully matured until Luther. But this is what Luther says regarding the Christian Church and the true Knowledge of the Person of Christ. He says that the true doctrine of the Person of Jesus, inclusive of the communication idiomatum, was known and believed in Christendom from the very beginning, before any council passed any resolution, on the basis of the clear statements of Scripture. **All that our confessions teach concerning the Person of Christ every Christian knows and believes because it is found clearly revealed in the Word of the Prophets and Apostles.** There will be issued to discuss, but for the most part when the terminology is defined the student will say, "I knew that because that is what the Bible says."

How many "natures" does Christ have? There are two natures in Christ.

Name them: (Gal. 4:4-5; John 1:1-2.14) Divine and Human

What do we know concerning these natures? Matthew 16:13-17 one and the same Jesus presents Himself as the Son of Man and the Son of the Living God.

Col. 2:9 There is no doubt in the real communion of these two natures because Scripture tells us that the fullness of the Godhead dwells not beside, but in the human nature of Christ.

1 Cor. 2:8 We believe the Lord of Glory was crucified. Rom. 5:10; 1 John 1:7 This gives value to the suffering and death of Jesus.

The First Genus

What else do we know concerning what Christ was given according to Matthew 28:18; Matthew 11:27; John 3:34-35 Jesus was given, here in time, according to His human nature, omnipotence, omniscience and the attributes of God.

Is Omnipresence included in this list? yes Why? Actually it is thoughtless to think otherwise, that the omnipotence, etc, of which Scripture speaks may designate merely "finite, great gifts." When Christ promises His church that He will be with them always, even unto the end of the age, we cannot think of this theanthropic Savior as being present, without or outside His human nature, but with and within it. This includes Omnipresence.

The Second Genus

What do 1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14-15 tell us regarding Christ? This tells us that Christ performs His official acts as Prophet, Priest and King, not beside, but in and through the assumed human nature, i.e., according to both natures. In other words, we believe in the genus majesticum even though the term may not be familiar to us.

The Third Genus

In addition, we do not agree with the notion that the finite is not capable of the infinite (*finitum non est capax infiniti*), because Scripture convinced us that the Son of God did actually become partaker of flesh and blood, that therefore the Infinite has been united with the finite into one Person.

1

The True Deity of Christ

Scripture lays great stress on the nature of the Person of Christ and, particularly, His deity. It has been said (*Harnack in Wesen Des Christentums*, p. 92f.) that the Gospel does not require a "Christological" creed and that Christ did not insert the sentence: "I am the Son of God," into the Gospel. The very opposite is the case. *Jesus demands in the very strongest of terms the "Christological" confession of His essential deity; without it there can be no divinely created faith.*

Look up Matthew 16:13ff. *The disciples report Him to be John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the Prophets: the people (hoi anthropoi) took Him to be a mere man. Then Christ appeals to their better knowledge which was revealed not by flesh and blood, but by His Father in heaven, and affirms that the Son of Man is "the Son of the Living God." Eternal life is the result of this confession: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona!" And this confession is the Petra which makes Peter the Petros (not Peter himself) and on which the Church of Christ is built to stand forever against the gates of hell.*

It is on this confession that the Church of all ages has stood in the face of the contrary error, no matter how base or sophisticated.

One common error is that of the Unitarians: *They insist that Christ is only called God and is not God essentially or in the metaphysical sense of the term. It amounts to the same thing when Rischel (in the 19th century) says that the predicate "God," applied to Christ, it not a "judgment of being" but means that Christ has for us "the value of God" is a "judgment value." In fact, the liberal theologians of our day deny the essential deity of Christ (the "two-nature doctrine") and insist that Jesus is called God only because the dynamic will of God was active in Jesus in an extraordinary manner. This is Unitarian.*

Can you think of another heresy which denies the full deity of Christ? *Subordinationists want to let the essential deity of Christ stand. They declare Christ to be true god not merely in name, but they say this is in essence. , however He is God of a lower quality, God "in the secondary sense of the term."*

How should we address this issue? *When the Scripture calls Christ (Theos) John 1:1 and (tou Theu) in Matthew 16:16, it uses these terms in their proper and metaphysical sense and not in the secondary or figurative sense, accord to which creatures are called "gods" in Scripture because they perform divine function. This is really beyond the question from the fact that Scripture ascribes to the Son numerically one and the same essence with the Father, numerically the same divine actions, and in general the whole list of divine attributes.*

How did Jesus address this issue? *In John 10:30 the statement "I and My Father are one" does not express the idea that the son is at one in mind and will and performs the same operations with the Father (the Arian, Socinians, Subordinationists, ets. Find this idea there expressed), but it refers to the unity, the numerical unity of essence. And the Context will permit no other interpretation.*

In fact, in verse 28 Chrst ascribes to Himself omnipotence and omnipotent action by assuring that no man can pluck His sheep out of His hand.

In verse 29 He adds to this assertion the statement that no one can pluck His sheep out of His Father's hand. And then He gives the reason for this sameness and unity of the omnipotence and omnipotent action exerted by Him and His Father. In verse 30: "I and My Father are one." The reason is unitas essentiae.

The same is true of John 5:17-19. The Son can do nothing of Himself, since there are not two omnipotent operations, but only one and the same omnipotent operation in both the Father and the Son. The so called orthodox interpretation of this passage is thy only one which agrees with the text.

What of other divine attributes? As to the divine attributes in general, Scripture testifies:

John 8:58 Christ was before Abraham

John 17:5 And before the world, (John 1:1)

Heb. 1:10; John 1:3 He is the creator of all things

Col. 1:16-17 He sustains the world by His omnipotent presence.

John 21:17 He knows all things

John 10:28-30 He is omnipotent with the Father John 5:21, 28-29 He raises the dead as does the Father

John 2:11; 1:14 with the Father, He does miracles in His own power

What does all of this mean to mankind?

John 5:23 Accordingly, Christ is to be adored and worshipped by all creatures as their God and Lord

John 20:28; Phil. 2:9

Some Subordinations object, strangely enough, that Christ is called God (theos) only in the predicate (that is in action only), not in the subject (that is not in substance), and must therefore be a god of lesser rank or a lower quality. There is a three fold answer to this:

- 1) Christ is called theos in the subject 1 Tim 3:16 and Acts 20:28.
- 2) If Jesus is called God in the predicate, that settles the matter once and for all. It is primarily and principally the predicate which determines the essence of a thing. (Note: John 1:1 "The Word was God." Christ is called God in the vocative in Heb 1:8 "Unto the Son He saith: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," and John 20:28 "My Lord and my God!" And there is much more.
- 3) Polytheistic views lie in back of the argument of the Subordinationists. They take the term "god" as a classification. But "god" in the metaphysical sense is not a term designating a class or genus, but designates the one Divine Being.

When Subordinationists, who grant that the Son of God is God in essence, God in the metaphysical sense of the term, nevertheless call the Son of God "God in a secondary sense," they plainly have the tritheistic conception that, as there are three distinct divine Persons, so too, there are three distinct divine being unequal in rank and quality, a supreme God and two subordinate gods. Subordinationism is a clear relapse into heathen polytheism.

The statement in John 14:28, "My Father is greater than I," describes Christ according to His human nature in the state of humiliation, for according to the context Christ is speaking of a condition which ends with His going to the Father.

No one can answer the question how, with the divine essence being one in number, only the son, and not at the same time the Father and the Holy Spirit, could become man, other than that of Luther: I would be as sharp as any heretic if I could comprehend that. All attempts to explain this mystery are bad. On the testimony of Scripture the Christian faith is sure of these two things:

1) (Col. 2:9) In the Son of God, not merely a part, but all the fullness of the Godhead dwells

2) (Gal. 4:4-5) Not the Father, but only the Son became man in the fullness of time

What is it that prompts the denial of Christ? Actually there are two reasons: 1) rationalistic considerations. If Christ is not true God, but only (anthropoid) it will no longer be necessary to believe the admittedly great mystery (1 Tim 3:16) that the "Son of Man" is the "'Son of the living God" and that one Person is both God and man (theanthropos).

2) the notion that heaven is gained by man's own work.

What is Pelagianism? The notion that resides in all natural man that heaven must be earned by man's own works.

How does this necessarily affect ones understanding of Christ? It demands that we regard Christ as a mere man who is simply "our model and pattern in all virtues," etc.

How can I be sure that Pelagiansim and Synergism is not Scriptural? If God Himself became man in Christ, if it took the obedience (Gal. 4:4-5) and the suffering (1 John 1:7) of the God Man Himself to redeem men, then the notion that human works can obtain salvation at once falla; all so-called religion of moral precepts is see to be worthless; and men can be saved only by completely despairing of their own morality and works and by relying solely on Christ's theanthropic merit (sola Fida). The doctrine of the true deity of Christ gives the death blow to Pelagianism and every form of work-righteousness by which every natural man is held captive.

Listen to Luther as he comments on Gal 2:20: "These words, 'The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me,' are mighty thunderings and lightnings from heaven against the righteousness of the Law and the doctrine of works. So great and so horrible was the wickedness, error, darkness, and ignorance in my will and understanding that it was impossible for me to be ransomed by any other means than by such an inestimable ransom. Why do we, the, vaunt the integrity of our reason and clam that our natural powers are left as incorrupt, that our reason is inclined to the good, that we need do only as much as we can. . . . since here I learn that so much evil lurks within my nature that the whole world and all creatures were not able to countervail the indignation of God, but that the very Son of God Himself must needs be delivered for the same? . . . For it is an intolerable and horrible blasphemy to imagine that there is any work whereby thou shouldest presume to reconcile God, since thou seest that there is nothing which can reconcile Him but this inestimable, infinte treasure, even the death and blood of His Son, one droop whereof is more precious than the whole world.

2

The True Humanity of Christ

If some groups can argue that Jesus was truly man but not fully God then it makes sense that some people can argue that Jesus was truly God but not fully man. What are some of the errors in this regard?

1) The Docetists denied the humanity of Christ altogether making of His body a phantom while others mutilated it. (This is really Gnostiicism which held that matter is evil in itself.) Marcion made of Christ's humanity a mere phantasma, for every real body is "flesh filled with feces" and every birth "loathsome" (from Tertullian, On Marcionem)

2) The Arian ascribed to Him a body without a Soul. The Logos took the place of the Soul and the object was "to ascribe to the deity the resolve to suffer and the resurrection from death and thus to make the Logos a creature.

3) Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea (died about 390 ad) said that Jesus was a body and a soul without a spirit. He based his doctrine on the Platonic trichotomy of body (soma) animal life (fuchsa) and the ration soul or spirit (nous), which distinguished man from the brute. The place of the nous in Christ was taken by the Logos. Apollinarius was excommunicated.

There are other categories such as the Monothelites, saying, a body and a soul without a human will; and other talking about a higher spiritual body, radically different from ours.

We do not subscribe to any other confession than that Christ is fully divine and fully human at the same time. While we have dealt with the deity of Christ we now examine the humanity of Christ.

Scripture teaches clearly and plainly the true and perfect humanity of Christ. *Veritatem et integritatem humanae Christi natureae* (the reality and integrity of Christ's human nature.)

1 Tim. 2:5; John 8:40 Scripture call Him man

Matt. 8:20 Scripture calls him the son of man

These terms describe Christ not as a phantom man, but as a genuine man.

John 1:14 according to His divine nature He is "the only begotten of the Father."

Rom. 9:5 according to His human nature He is "of the fathers" of Israel who gave Him their humanity.

Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16 He is specifically called Abraham's Seed

Jer. 23:5 David's Branch

Luke 2:7 Mary's Son, her first born

Luke 1:42 described Jesus as the fruit of Mary's womb. Scripture even gives us a double human genealogy of Christ. Matthew 1:1 proves Jesus to be the legal Son of David and rightful heir to the throne; Luke 3:23ff the natural son of David. The legal line of descent also proves, indirectly, the human nature of Christ, since only a man can legally succeed to the throne of another man.

In addition the Scripture names the constituent parts of the human nature of Christ.

John 2:21 body Luke 24:39 His flesh and bones

Matt. 26:42 the Soul Luke 23: 46 the spirit

Luke 22:42 the human will

Summing it up Scripture says . . . (Heb. 2:14) according to the context the point here is the emphasis of the true and full humanity of the Son of God. Baier summarizes the Scripture doctrine of the true humanity of Christ in these words: "'Christ is true Man, consubstantial with us. Scripture expressly call Him Man. He is given, as is well known, that appellation (name or noun) "Son of Man" eighty-two times in Scripture.

It is certainly not on Scriptural grounds that one denies the true humanity of Christ.

From what does such a denial come? From rationalism and Pelagenism

What was rationalized? Rationalism inspired the Gnostic to declare that a union of God with a material body is improper and impossible. And it was a rationalistic conception on the part of Apollinarians and the Momonothelites to say that a personal union could not be affected in the human nature of Christ possessed a rational human soul, or a human will.

What did the Pelagians fail to recognized in the Gospel message? The necessity of the substitutional satisfaction of Christ. In fact, the Gnostics know nothing of the guilt of sin resting upon mankind, which calls for a satisfaction vicaria, but following its principle of Dualism, only knows of a sin substance which had entered into man. And so both of these approaches know nothing of the guilt of sin, but rather the removal of sinful matter with Christ showing us the way. The more serious-minded Gnostics sought to accomplish this by way of asceticism. These and the other Christological heresies have lost sight of the satisfaction vicaria.

Why? They forgot that the Redeemer not only needed to appear in the flesh, but had to perform work in the assumed flesh.

Why would these be disastrous in Scriptural soteriology? The Redeemer had to take the place of men both in keeping the requirements of the Law (active obedience) and in suffering the penalties of the Law (passive obedience), the Law which was given to men and binds all men, and this He could do only by becoming man in all things, sin excepted, by assuming the full human nature.

Jesus also is ascribed by all the characteristics and activities of the human nature:

Is.. 53:11 His soul suffered Luke 22:41 He kneeled down and prayed
 Matt. 26:37 He was sorrowful and heavy in spirit 26:38 His Soul was sorrowful unto death
 Luke 22:44 He sweat great drops of blood 22:42 He subjected His human will to the will of the Father
 John 19:28 He thirsted 1 Pet. 2:24 In His body He bore our sins on a tree.

What does this evidence clearly tell us? It tells us that a human nature without a rational soul and without a human will could certainly never have performed the work of redemption. This axiom of Gregory Nazienzen, "What was not assumed was not redeemed (healed)" condemned any curtailment of the human nature of Christ. And the Lutheran teachers took this axiom and showed that the attempt to prove from such passage as Romans 8:3, For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh: Phil 2:8 And being found in the fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and John 6:41 The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I Am the bread which came down from heaven. That Christ's human nature is not consubstantial with ours is a perversion fo Scripture. In short, both the true and full deity of Christ and His true and full humanity has been the confession of the Christian Church from the beginning and throughout the ages. (Simply look at the Creed) The council of Chelcedon stated the Christ, according to His divine nature is consubstantial with the Father and according to His human nature is consubstantial with men. The is a simple restatement from the clear teaching of Scripture.

To bring out the practical importance of the deity and the humanity of Christ often ask this question: "Why was it necessary that Christ should be both true God and true man?" Their answer is substantially as follows: "It was necessary for Him to be a man that He might suffer and die; but as no mere man could bear the sin of the human race, together with the wrath of God and the curse of the Law, nor satisfy infinite divine justice, nor overcome death, hell, and the devil, it was necessary that He should at the same time be true God."

Finally we call attention to the words of Luther. "We Christians must know that if God is not also in the balance and gives the weight, we sink to the bottom with our scale. By this I mean: If it were not to be said, God has died for us, but only a man, we should be lost. But if 'God's death' and 'God died' lie in the scale of the balance, then He winds down, and we rise up as a light, empty scale. But, indeed, He can also rise again or leap out of the scale; yet He could not sit in the scale unless He became a man like us."

One who denies the vicarious satisfaction is really not concerned about either the true deity or the true humanity of Christ.

The Son of Man. The term ο υιος του ανθρωπου has been the subject of many discussions. These "Theological investigations" of this term, with their various results, are useless in the fact of Christ's own specific explanation of it. In His catechesis on this term with His disciples (Matt. 16:13-17) Christ rejects the false definitions, such as John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets, and gives the correct definition: "The Son of Man" is "the Son of the Living God." The Son of Man, this is the miraculous Offspring of the human race in whom the Son of God became man. On the one hand the Son of Man is poor, he eats, he drinks, is criticized, suffers, dies. On the other hand the Son of Man sees the thoughts of the heart, forgives sins, in Lord of the Sabbath, sits at the right hand of God as the ruler of the Universe, and returns in divine glory to judge the living and the dead. Accordingly, the Son of Man is not the "ideal man", not "the flower of humanity," nor a mere man endowed with similar high gifts, but the singular, wonderful Man in whom the Son of God appeared in the flesh for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil.

PECULIARITIES OF CHRIST'S HUMAN NATURE

1. The Human Nature of Christ Came in Existence

Through the Operation of the Holy Spirit

How do we know this to be true? While all other men receive their human nature by natural descent from father and mother, Christ is not descended from a human couple, but from Mary alone, that is to say, from Mary the Virgin, and that, says Scripture, came about through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 1:18,20. Luke 1:35 describes this miraculous occurrence in the words: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." For this reason Christ is called "the Seed of the Woman" (Gen 3:15) Of Mary Is 7:14 says, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive" and that is quoted in the New Testament in the same for: "behold a virgin shall be with child" (Matthew 1:23).

How do we know this to be true? Luke 1:37 "With God nothing shall be impossible" satisfies all Christians, as it did Mary (v. 38), and should satisfy every thinking man who believes in an almighty God and has the right conception of the "laws of nature."

2. The Sinlessness of the Human Nature of Christ

While all men are sinners (Rom. 3:10, 3:23) what do we know of Christ? 1 Pet. 2:22 "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" Both the old and the new testament clearly teach the fact of His sinlessness.

Is. 53:9 no violence, deceit Da. 9:24 The Most Holy
2 Cor. 5:21 "Who knew no sin" 1 Pet. 1:19 A Lamb without spot or blemish

This is fact. Is it necessary? Absolutely What is the reason? Only because Christ was "a Lamb without blemish and without spot" did His death accomplish our redemption. The sin and guilt which Christ

confesses (Ps 69:5) and feels in His conscience (Matthew 27:46; 26:3-38) are not His own, but the imputed sin of the world (peccatum imputatum), as Scripture expressly declares: Is. 53:6, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," and 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

What is the cause of this sinlessness? The cause of His sinlessness was not the preservation of a massa sancta in Israel, nor the alleged forces of Evolution, which by way of natural or spiritual striving gradually and finally produces a sinless member of the human race from sinful forbearers, nor the sinlessness of Mary (immaculate conception), decreed by Pope Pius IX, December 8, 1854, but solely the fact that Mary became the mother of the human nature of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:35 "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee . . . therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son God." Sin does not, of course, belong to the essence of the human nature. (Luther: "sin and death are separable evils"), but the separation of sin from the human race is a work utterly beyond human power; it is solely the work of the Holy Spirit to produce from the sinful nature of the Virgin Mary the holy nature of Christ. Luther uses powerful language in setting forth this truth. He rejects the human dream of a preservation of a massa sancta (the group of holy people in Israel: the redeemed in distinction to the unredeemed.) in Israel. The progenitors of Christ, including the Virgin Mary, belonged to the sanguis corruptus (corrupt blood or flesh: the sinful nature). Not until the moment of conception did the Holy Spirit separate a holy human nature ex sanguine corrupto (defiled by blood). At the same time, Luther points to the comfort which tempted sinners find in the fact that Christ assumed the flesh, or the human nature, ex carne contaminate et horribiliter pulluta (a reference to Christ's birth from contaminated and horribly polluted flesh.) and that the Scripture's mention among the ancestors of Christ also people who had defiled themselves with gross sins.)

Was Christ, according to His human nature also free from original sin? First, in all those passages that expressly separate Christ from sinners, such as Heb 7:26: "Separate from sinners" And secondly, in the very passage Rom. 5:18-19, which presents Adam as having by his fall caused the judgment that came upon all men to condemnation, Christ is presented as exempt from this guilt and condemnation: He is rather shown to have brought about the universal verdict of justification which takes in all of mankind.

Was it possible for Christ according to His human nature to commit a sin? Having had many conversations about this with people filled with the Spirit, the question at hand is, "Was Jesus able not to sin or was Jesus not able to sin?" My conclusion is that according to His human and divine nature, Jesus was not able to sin. This, not because of the sinlessness of the human nature of Christ in and of itself because Adam too was created to be sinless and nevertheless caved in to temptation, but rather because Christ's human nature never existed apart and separate from but since the beginning constitutes one Person with the Son of God. To assume that the man Christ could sin is assuming that the Son of God could sin, with whom the man Christ constitutes one Person. They that assume the peccability of the man Christ thereby relinquish, whether they realize this or not, the incarnation of the Son of God, the unio personalis of God and man and substitute for it an Unio mystica.

Listen to what Philippi (1809-1882, German Lutheran Professor, Son of a Jewish merchant) said about this: "If we granted the possibility of sinning in the case of Christ, we should be viewing Him, too abstractly, as a mere man, and we should lose the God-Man; for if we imagined that this possibility had become an actuality the bond of personal unity between the God of God and the Man Jesus would be severed . . . The potuit non peccare (able not to sin) applies to the first Adam. The non potuit peccare (unable to sin) to the Second Adam, since this Second Adam is "The Lord from Heaven" 1 cor 15:47

Some object that impeccability would exclude temptability, would make Christ's temptation a sham battle. Matthew 4:1ff describes a real battle. In Heb. 2:18, "In that He Himself hath suffered, being

tempted.” The Expositor’s Greek Testament: “The relation of the participle *parousthes* to the main verb *peponthen* indicates the suffering as the result of the temptation.”

Even under purely human circumstances one may be certain of victory and still collect a few hard blows from the opponent. Even so, the temptation of Christ, although the outcome was not in question, was a real battle. The assertion that “freedom” must always involve the possibility of sinning operates with a false premise of freedom. The saints in heaven cannot sin, and still they enjoy a state of perfect freedom.

One man argued: “If there was no possibility of Christ sinning, the devil did a most foolish thing in tempting Him.” I would answer with two responses. 1) such an insane fury can take possession of a man that he will run his head against a stone wall; and 2) the devil’s fruitless attacks of Christ in the Wilderness are not the only proof of the foolishness of Satan.

But all of these arguments are secondary to the proper understanding of the *unio personalis* which the first Adam did not have.

What are the consequences of the Sinlessness of Christ?

1) John 10:18 Christ died because he willed to die. As Quenstedt wrote: “Christ therefore died not from necessity or the wages of His sin, but of His free will and His taking our sins upon Himself. Christ’s body became mortal from without and according to a plan entered upon voluntarily: nevertheless, it remained incorruptible in a freely accepted death.”

2) He possessed greater natural gifts, for example: wisdom (Luke 2:47). The disturbing and destructive influence of sin was absent. Adam knew this before the fall. Luther said that Adam was the true philosopher. Luther: “Who can realize that Adam and Eve shared, so to say, in the divine nature that they could understand all the affections, senses, and powers of all animals? . . . So if we want to mane the philosopher par excellence, let us name our first parents, when they were yet free of sin.”

The following section is not in the workbook

3 The Impersonality of the Human Nature of Christ.

The point of this section is: while every other human nature also is a separate person, the human nature of Christ was received into the Person of the Son of God from the moment of its existence and therefore never for a moment existed as a separate person. Accordingly, the human nature of Christ differs from all other human natures:

- (negatively) by *anhypostasia* (having no personality of its own);
- (positively) by *enhypostasia* (subsisting in the divine personality).

Liberal theologians argue against the impersonality of the human nature of Christ because they want to emphasize the humanity of Jesus. They say that the doctrine that God and man form one person destroys the human nature of Christ and its development and that, therefore, in order to make room for a “genuinely human development,” the human nature of Christ must be given a personality of its own. The problem with this approach is that it denies the incarnation of the Son of God. There can be no incarnation of the Son of God so long as the man Christ is a separate person, is personally distinct from the Son of God . . . According to the Scripture, the incarnation consists in this, that the Person of the Son of God in distinction from the Father and the Holy Spirit—took a human nature into His Person. Heb 2:14, So the human nature of Christ belongs to the essence of the incarnation of the Son of God. As long as one takes the human nature of Christ to be a separate person, one teaches *eo ipso* (in itself) that the Son of God did not become man but is still without flesh and deny passages such as John 1:14; 1 John 4:2-3; Gal. 4:4; Heb 2:14.

“Christ passed through all stages of our existence that He might fully remedy our unclean conception and birth.” -- Kromayer

3

The Personal Union

What does the term "personal union" (*unio personalis*) means? *It means that humanity and deity were joined through the miraculous act of God resulting in the wondrous and singular union of God and man into one Person. This term clearly and unmistakably expresses the truth that in Christ, God and man do not form any kind of union in general, but constitutes a personal unity.*

This truth must be clearly perceived from the Scripture and must be maintained against all perversions. All aberrations in the doctrine of the Person of Christ result from abandoning the personal union and substituting for it some other sort of union.

There is the union of God with all creatures:

Jer. 23:24 *God declares: "Do not I fill the heavens and earth?" some have said that this word refers not to God's essence, but merely to His activity. The word for fill is used in the active sense as in Is. 6:1 "His train filled the temple."*

God is essentially present in and with all His creatures, in particular, with all men. It is to this that all creatures owe their existence and activity.

Acts 17:28 *"In Him we live and move and have our being"*

Col. 1:17 *"By Him all things (ta panta – the universe) consist."*

In a special manner God is united with His Church, the believers.

John 14:23 *God Himself dwells in the believers, not merely, as some have said, according to His power and gifts.*

Book of Concord, p. 550, line 65. *it rejects as false doctrine the idea that God does not dwell in the believers, but only the gifts of God.*

2 Cor. 6:16 *the temple of the Living God.* 1 Cor. 6:19 *the temple of the Holy Spirit.*

Eph. 1:23 *the body of Christ* 2 Pet. 1:4 *partakers of the divine nature.*

All of this explains God's union with creation. But altogether different and much closer is the union of God and man in Christ: God and man form one Person. Because of this union, Scripture clearly and unmistakably calls God man and man God.

There is a danger in equating the union of Christ with the union of man and God. What is that danger? *Pantheism and the thought that we are gods. Although God is in every tree, we dare not say: "this tree is God" or "God is a tree." Although the triune God dwells in every Christian, we never-the-less dare not say: "This Christian is God" or God is this Christian.*

But we can and must say with Scripture of the Man Christ:

Matt. 16:6 *that the Son of Man is the Son of the Living God.*

Luke 1:31-32 that the son of Man is the son of the Highest

Jer. 23:5-6 that the Branch of David is Jehovah

Rom. 9:5 that the Scion (pronounced zion, meaning a detached plant shoot used in grafting a descendant or heir) of the fathers is over all, God blessed forever.

John 1:14 that the Word is flesh

Rom. 1:3 that the Son of God is David's son

These statements express this unique union of God and man in Christ, the personal union. The following statement is Luther's and unfolds the truth that though God is essentially present with all creatures, He is united with the Man Christ in one Person.

"The Deity is unmovable in itself and cannot proceed from one place to another. Therefore the Son of God did not [in His incarnation] climb down from heaven on a ladder or slide down a rope, but He is before His incarnation essentially and personally present in the virginal body, as in all other places, according to His divine nature, mode, and power.... But in Christ there is something different, something higher and greater than God's presence with other creatures: in Christ, God dwells also bodily in such a way that man and God are one Person. And although I may say of other creatures: There God is, or God is in it; never-the-less, I cannot say: 'That creature is God Himself.' However, of Christ the Christian faith not only says that God is in Him, but also declares: 'Christ is God Himself.' Whoever murders a man may truly be called a murderer of someone who is God's and in whom God is. But he who murders Christ has murdered God's Son, yes, God, the very Lord of glory." (St L.XX08.f)

It is of the utmost importance to maintain the uniqueness of this personal union. Not only must it be sharply distinguished from the union of God with all other creation and with the believers, but it must also be kept in mind that there is no analogy in all creation comparable to it.

Apart from Christ, God is not man.

The Scriptures expressly state this truth:

Num. 23:19 _____ Hos. 11:9 _____

1 Sam. 15:29 _____

Except in Christ, man is not God. *Man is not God; he commits blasphemy who makes himself God. . .*

Acts 12:21ff. _____

Ezek. 28:2 _____

But in this unique Person of Christ, God is, in the true sense of the word, Man, and Man is, in the true sense of the word, God, because in Christ, God and man constitute one Person, one Ego.

Of course there are opponents that argue that it is "inconceivable" that God should be Man and man God and that God and man are united in one Ego. How should we reply?

Scripture demands that we acknowledge this inconceivability and not engage in rationalistic attempts to explain the mystery. Scripture expressly states that "without controversy great in the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim 3:16). Luther adds, "That God not only is in Him [the man Christ], but also dwells in Him is such a manner that God and man become one Person, that is sublime work and miracle of God, which makes a fool of all reason and which is to be held fast only by faith, since otherwise it will be lost. Lord God, where are they who believe this? What will become of it if reason with its vagaries will take up the matter?" We don't need to remind any opponents that o works of God in the realm of nature are regulated by human thinking, but that they, utterly ignoring all human speculation, have their being solely by God's Word and will. Why then, should the fact of the incarnation of the Son of God, which God in His Word declares to be the miracle above all miracles, be contingent upon its conceivability? Scripture leaves no room for doubt that God and man in Christ form one Person.

Let us consider briefly some of the substitutes which have been employed in order to discredit this personal union.

A) The Union between God and man in nominal: It is argued that a man may receive the honorary title of "counselor" and never be asked to give counsel. The Unitarians, while denying Christ's essential deity, are willing to call Him God because He, as the perfect man who received divine instruction in heave before He entered upon His public ministry, perfectly revealed and performed God's will.

The Church, on the contrary, firmly maintains that Christ is not called God because of certain functions, but because He is essentially (in its metaphysical sense) God John 10:30; "I and the Father are one."

B) The second contrary opinion is: the unio habitualis, relative, signifying a close relationship, as when friends are bound together by their kindly disposition, though they remain distinct person and may be separated by wide distances. A similar relationship unites children and their parents, the citizens of a country, the members of a Church, etc., but in all these relationship the individual retain his separate personality. All anti-Trinitarians have sought to degrade the union between God and man in Christ to such a unio relative. They say that Chirst deserves the title "son of God" Because God's special favor rested on this unique man. Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. ca. 428), who prepared the ground for Nestorianism, held similar views.

But the Church will not have such a unio relative foisted upon it. Not only did God's favor rest on Christ, but all the fullness of the divine essence dwelt and still dwells in Him bodily (Col. 2:9). The Son of God made the human nature His body so that what happens to the human nature happens to the Son of God, and all that the Son of God does He does in and through the human nature.

C) The third contrary opinion is called a unio accidentalis, an external, accidental union, "as two boards are glued together," or like a garment that envelops the human body. In these and similar conjunction there is no inner organic unity. In Christ, however, the human nature is taken into the unity of the Person of the Son of God. While, therefore, a garment enveloping the body may be damaged without harming the body, the human nature of Christ could not be touched without at the same time touching the Son of God. 1 John 1:1 "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life." (1 Cor. 2:8) What affects the Man Christ, affects , too, the son of God.

D) The fourth opinion contrary to what we believe is a unio sustentative, consisting in the mere presence and sustaining power of God. Thus God is united with all creatures, and through this union He sustains them.

They use passages such as Col. 1:17 and Acts 17:28 to support this.

Now, it is indeed owing to the personal union that the human nature of Christ was supported and sustained by the divine nature. A mere man could not have borne the weight of God's wrath which rested on Christ as the Substitute of sinful mankind. But this supporting and sustaining influence does not constitute the essence of the personal union. The essence of the personal union consists in this, that in Christ, God and man are unity in one Ego.

E) the fifth opinion contrary to what we confess is a unio naturalis. We speak of a natural union in the case of things which have a natural relationship to each other, as in the case of the body and the soul of man, which were created for each other; united, they make up a natural whole. But between the divine and the human nature in Christ there is no nature relationship, because they stand in tremendous contrast to each other, namely between the Creator and the creature.

This idea of unio naturalis is unscriptural, and is pantheistic, destroying both the concept of sin and of grace. According to Scripture, the incarnation of the Son of God was not a natural development, not the result of a necessary evolution of the divine or the human essence but it was due to the free compassion of God upon fallen and condemned mankind.

F) A sixth opinion to what we confess is a unio essentialis or commixtiva. This error says that through the personal union the two natures have coalesced into one nature or essence. Luther describes this as follows: "They denounce us for mingling the two natures into one essence; that is not true. We do not say that divinity is humanity or that the divine nature in human nature, which would be a mixing of the two natures into one essence; but we do unite the two distinct natures into one single Person and say: God is Man and Man is God. We, however, denounce them for dissolving the Person of Christ, as though He were two persons. For where the works are parted and separated, there also the Person must be parted."

G) The final opinion contrary to what we confess is a unio per adoptionem. The idea is the man became God through approval and adoption.

But the man Christ did not become God's Son through faith; He is God's Son from His conception, by which He was assumed into the Person of the Son of God.

4

The Communication of Attributes

The question here is which and to what extent and upon what authority are divine attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, and human attributes such as knowledge, presence and power, effected, shared, and employed in the person of Jesus? How can God be infinite and finite at the same time in Jesus? How can Jesus be limited and unlimited at the same time? We ask these questions. But, as I write:

This chapter is unnecessary. At least it would be if the Scriptures would not have been questioned in their authority or if rationalists had not employed their tools inappropriately. The communication of attributes between the human and divine nature of Christ could have then been left to the discussion of the personal union. However, since this doctrine is extremely important in answering the central question of faith, our confession and articulation of central issues must not be stagnant. Three arguments which complicated the proper understanding of the personal union of Christ are as follows:

1. Although the incarnation of the Son of God, the personal union, and the doctrine of the two natures in Christ were accepted, the Son of God never-the-less was separated from the attributes of His human

nature, as, for example, from the birth of Mary and the suffering and death, because it was said that it is impossible, indeed even blasphemous, to assume a real participation of the Son of God in such human attributes. So Nestorius, Zwingli, and many others, took this position. *In other words they were saying that God could not be fully man.*

2. Although it was granted that the Son of Man is the essential Son of God, and although with this admission the personal union of God and man was conceded, as was also the communion of the human nature with the divine Person of the Son of God, never-the-less the Son of Mary was separated from the divine attributes of the Son of God, because it was said the human nature is incapable of such divine attributes as, for example, divine power and, above all, divine omnipresence. *In other words, God could not be fully man.*
3. Lastly, it has been denied also that the human and divine natures perform jointly, in one divine-human act, whatever is peculiar to each. It has thus been said that the Man Christ performed His miracles in no other way than did the Prophets and the Apostles. *In other words, God worked through Jesus the man.*

So we only briefly examine the communication of attributes with the understanding that as Christians we are not only called to proclaim the Gospel but to "convince the gainsayers...whose mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:9-11).

The Communication of Attributes is divided into three categories or Geni: the idiomatic, the majestic, and the apotelesmatic.

The common Reformed Christian and Theologian, in so far as he is a true believer, believes in the three genera of the communication of attributes which the Formula of Concord and the Lutheran dogmaticians teach; for they believe the statement of Scripture: "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) But this means that they believe three things:

- 1) *That the blood of Christ, that is, the blood of the human nature, is the blood of the Son of God;*
- 2) *That the blood of Christ, that is, of Christ according to His human nature, possesses the divine power to cleanse from sin, and*
- 3) *That consequently both natures work together in one theanthropic acts.*

These are exactly the three genera of the communication of attributes as taught by the Formula of Concord and the Lutheran dogmaticians: the genus idiomaticum, the genus maiestaticum, the genus apotelesmaticum. God has made also the doctrine of the communication of attributes very simple, but men seek ways of complicating these so we can "thank them" for this present discussion.

The Idiomatic Genus

Nestorius emphatically separated the Son of God from His birth of the Virgin Mary, also from His suffering and death, by denying to Mary the title "theotokos." He said: "I cannot worship God who was born, put to death, and buried." He took this separation so seriously that he was accused of pagan teaching, and then anathematized, all who referred Christ's birth of Mary and His suffering and death to the Son of God, on the ground that they changed God into a man. He stated that Christ's birth of a virgin and His suffering and death must not be referred to the logos Himself, but only to the humanity which the logos used as His dwelling.

Let me give you some examples of what he wrote:

Anathematism I: “If anyone says that he who is Emmanuel is God the Word and not rather that he is God with us, that is, that He inhabited the nature which is of our kind by His being unity with our substance, which He received from the Virgin Mary; if the Holy Virgin is declared to be the mother also of God the Word, and not rather of Him who is Emmanuel, and that this Word of God Himself was converted into flesh (this is Nestorius’ won deduction) which He received to show forth His deity, to live in it as in His house as a man, let him be anathema.”

VII: “If anyone says that the man who was made of the Virgin is the Only-Begotten, who was begotten from the bosom of the Father before the Morning Star. . . let him be anathema.”

X: “If anyone says that this Eternal Word was made the High Priest and Apostle of our confession and gave Himself for us, and does not rather say that Emmanuel is the Apostle . . . and so does not give to God what is God’s and to man what is man’s, let him be anathema.”

Zwingli seemed to be Nestorius revisited because he also separated the Son of God from His suffering and death and demanded that the suffering and death of Christ must be referred only to the human nature.

There is separation of the Son of God from the predicates of His human nature, His birth, suffering and death. But the Scripture itself, and not human speculation, predicates of the Son of God human birth and suffering and death. (Gal. 4:4; 1 cor. 2:8; Rom 5:10; Gal. 2:20).

And this is the point to which Luther calls our attention. The Bible not only teaches that God is unapproachable, invisible, and untouchable, so far as men are concerned, but also, and this as its central theme, that the Son of God was made man, receiving into His Person a human nature from a virgin and becoming like other men. Through His incarnation, the son of God, as it were, came out of the impenetrable light which hides Him from us and became visible and tangible to men. Now, according to the divine nature assumed into the divine Person, and not according to the divine nature, does Scripture to the Son of God the birth from Mary and suffering and death. (Rom. 1:3; 1 Pet. 3:18). It is these definite doctrines of Scripture, and not human speculations, which the Formula of Concord, Luther, and the Lutheran dogmaticians teach when, in agreement with the Scripture passages that ascribe to the Son of God suffering and death, they declare: The Son of God has suffered, not only in name, but actually and really, though according to His human nature. And this suffering in the assumed human nature, however, is the suffering of the Son of God, since the human nature does not constitute a separate person, but belongs to the Person of the Son of God.

Human reason cannot understand how the Son of God, impassible (Unable to suffer) in His divine person, could really and truly share in the suffering of His humanity. We wrestle with this as expressed in Cyril’s paradox: “Without suffering the Son of God suffered.” It sounds like yes and no at the same time.

This paradox stresses three points:

- 1) According to Scripture, the Son of God in Himself is impassible;
- 2) According to Scripture, the son of God did actually suffer in His human nature;
- 3) Any further explanation of the HOW must not be attempted.

As true as is the fact that the Son of God became man, though we cannot comprehend it, just so true also is the fact that the Son of God suffered and died, though this passes our understanding.

The first genus of the communication of attributes may be defined as follows: “Because the divine and human natures of Christ constitute one Person, the attributes belonging essentially to only one nature, are always ascribed to the whole person, but the divine attributes according to the divine nature, and the human attributes according to the human nature.” This is known as the **genus idiomaticum**.

A) Illustration: A person consists of body and soul; each of these has its own peculiar attributes and properties. Body and soul belong to the same person yet they are ascribed to the entire person. Example: N. N weight 150 pounds can only be said of the physical body; N.N is happy and joyful which can only be predicated of his soul.

- B) In the same way Christ has two distinct natures, a human and a divine, each of which has its own essential attributes, functions, and activities. But as both natures belong to the same Person, the attributes and properties of either may be ascribed to the Person.

Psalm 2:7 _____

Galatians 4:4 _____

Luke 3:23 _____

John 8:58 _____

- C) The Bible even names the Person of Christ according to one nature, and predicates of Him attributes of the other nature.

Romans 1:3 _____

Acts 3:15 _____

1 Corinthians 2:8 _____

Thus we confess in the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that He was conceived and born, was crucified, dead and buried. As little as we may separate the human nature from the Son of God, so little may we separate from Him what this human nature did and suffered. In other texts the Savior is designated according to His human nature, but things are predicated of Him which properly apply to His divine nature (John 6:62).

So the Idiomatic genus is this, that such things as are peculiar to the divine or to the human nature are truly and really ascribed to the entire Person of Christ, designated by either nature or by both. It does not follow, however, that what is ascribed to the person is at the same time a property of both natures, or an inherent attribute of both natures, but it is distinctively explained what nature it is according to which anything is ascribed to the person. This means that things divine are ascribed to the entire Person of Christ but according to the divine nature, and things human are ascribed to the entire Person of Christ according to the human nature. (Look up page 598, lines 36 and 37 in the Book of Concord.)

The Majestic Genus

In the case of the Genus Idiomaticum we noticed that both Nestorius and Zwingli and their followers demanded that the human attributes of birth, suffering and dying should not be ascribed to the son of God. But more emphatically, Reformed theologians demand that an unbridgeable distance should be established between the divine attributes of the Son of God and His human nature, because, as they say, Christ's human nature cannot be invested with divine omnipotence, divine omniscience, and other attributes of the deity without its being destroyed. In both cases their opposition to our understanding allegedly seeks to save Christian orthodoxy, from the colossal catastrophe of changing the humanity into deity. For example, they admonish the Lutheran stance by saying: "They [the Lutherans] most certainly while doing this [i.e. ascribing communicated divine attributes to the human nature], change the human nature into a divine nature, deify it, as does Schwenkfeld, and abolish it, as did Eutyches." Danaeus says, this: "Nothing whatever that is proper and essential to the deity can truly be communicated to any created thing, such as is the assumed human

nature of Christ, unless we are ready to admit that a sort of new God can be born and come into existence."

Now, the Reformed theologians are prepared to attribute to Christ, because of its union with the Son of God, with extraordinary finite attributes (dona extraordinaria finite). But to the Lutheran Church, the Reformed theologians submit a lengthy list of dreadful calamities that would follow if the human nature of Christ would be made to share in divine power and other divine properties not merely nominally, but really and truly. They assert that the whole life and suffering of Christ would be reduced to a mere sham and so lose its atoning value.

Recall Nestorius said that he could not worship a God who was born of a woman, crucified, put to death, and laid into a grave. The Reformed Theologians say that they do not know what to do with a savior who, according to His human nature, shares in divine power and other divine properties. In fact, Boehl sums up all the tragic effects of the Genus Maiestaticum as follows: "Its result would be nothing but sham. The entire suffering of the Savior, all His states of weakness and humiliation, would be nothing but outward show and congruent factor of satisfaction over against an angry God would be no more. Before a human nature of the Redeemer, fused with the divine nature ever since the Incarnation, and kept only with difficulty within the frame of the state of humiliation, the law would be frightened, death would flee, God's children would step aside, overwhelmed with awe, for that would no longer be the Savior ascribed in Heb 2:14-18." In other words, they are saying that God can't be angry at Himself.

There is more. The Genus Maiestaticum is not only inconceivable, but also childish and ridiculous according to the Reformed theologian. Again: Boehl argues: "It is impossible to conceive of a human nature in the divine Redeemer to which omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and life-giving power have been communicated and which at the same time, since its inception, is held in duress by God on account of our guilt."

The problem is that Boehl forgets what he himself said a few pages before, namely, that the miracle of Christ's Person must not be judged by human reason.

Not only the Reformed but the Roman Catholic church opposes the Genus Maiestaticum as a terrifying "monstrosity" the participation of the human nature in divine omnipresence.

In response to this we say that a denial of the communication of the divine attributes of God's Son to the human nature is both theological suicide and rejection of the teaching of God's Word.

Theological Suicide: Logically, if the human nature of Christ, because of its finiteness, is incapable of the divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and such, then it is also incapable of the divine person of the Son of God, who is not less infinite than is His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and so on. There then is no true union between Man and God. As a result they uphold the Unitarian teaching, namely, that the Person of the Son of God is not communicated to the human nature in Jesus, or anyone else.

If we hold and maintain, correctly, the personal union of God and Man in Christ, then we must logically hold the communication of the attributes of God and Man. If this union were to be destroyed by the communication of attributes it would have first been destroyed by the communication of natures (personalities).

(In order to fully expose this discussion we would need to take various attributes separately and expound on the basis of Scripture. I did not include this in the original study)

A) Illustration: The human body in itself is dead; but when joined to the living soul, this soul communicates life to the body. The soul is not diminished or divided, but it remains fully intact. There are times that this life is manifest in the body in a lesser degree, when the person is awake as to when he sleeps; but does the body impart anything to the soul? No.

B) When the Son of God assumed the human nature, He imparted and communicated to it divine majesty, glory, and attributes. Thereby the majesty of the divine nature was in nowise lessened or divided, but remained fully intact in both natures. However, in the state of humiliation

Christ did not always and fully manifest this divine majesty in His human nature. (Philippians 2:6-8)

Colossians 2:9_____

1 Timothy 3:16_____

John 1:14_____

also: 2 Peter 1:17, 18; Matthew 17:1,2

John 17:5_____

Dan 1:13, 14; Heb. 2:7,8_____

Matthew 28:18_____

Matthew 28:20_____

As a result of the personal union of the two natures in Christ the human nature became omnipotent and omnipresent. That also the human nature of Christ is omnipresent we learn from Eph. 4:10. That Christ is omniscient we see from John 21:17 and John 2:24, 25.

- C) While the divine attributes belong essentially to the divine nature, they belong by communication also to the human nature. Like as heat is communicated to iron, and life to the body, so is divine majesty communicated to the human nature because the divine nature is perfect, and nothing can be added thereto.

For further reading see the Book of Concord, page 600, lines 48-87.

The Apotelesmatic Genus

A) Illustration When a person takes action – not only his body but also his soul acts: both contribute. Without the soul, the body does not move – without the body the soul could not act. “Apotelesmatic” means “pertaining to the final result to be accomplished.” In regard to Christ the result to be accomplished by this God/Man – by his work as Prophet, Priest, and King – to redeem the human race.

- B) The Word was made flesh for the express purpose of saving sinful mankind. Whatever the Savior did and still does to accomplish this blessed purpose may not be ascribed to either of His natures exclusively, but must be ascribed to both natures conjointly. Christ is our Savior not according to one of His natures, but according to both natures; the divine nature using the human nature as its organ, and participating in everything this nature did and suffered.

1 John 3:8_____

Heb. 2:14_____

Gal. 4: 4,5 *If only the human nature (alone) was under the law His work would have been no greater than a saint.*

Acts 20:28 _____ *divine and human nature co-operated*

2 Cor. 5:19: What was the work of Christ? _____

Also read Book of Concord, page 600, line 46.

II

THE DOCTRINE OF THE STATES OF CHRIST

Scripture sharply differentiates between the two states of Christ. The state of humiliation, in which Christ lived for thirty-three years as a lowly Sufferer and which culminated in His death on the Cross and His burial, came to an end when He entered the state of exaltation, in which He rose from the dead, was enthroned as the Ruler of the universe and Head of the Church, and will return visibly in divine glory for the Judgment.

The Old Testament establishes these two states:

Is. 53: 3-12_____

Ps. 8:6-10_____

Ps. 110_____

The New Testament unfolds these prophecies:

Luke 24: 26_____

Phil. 2:7-9_____

This discussion is a continuation of the discussion of the unio personalis. There is much confusion in Unitarian and Reformed circles as to the relationship of the divine and human natures in Christ. They say that the humiliation argues against the deity of Christ. Regarding Christ's elevation to the throne of world dominion and His presence with the Church also according to His human nature, the same people insist, this is incompatible with His true human nature. As pointed out, we have spent time examining the Scriptural reality of the union of God and man in Christ, however, this section will bring out the specific meaning of humiliation and exaltation.

1

The Nature of the Humiliation and the Exaltation

The Book of Concord has much to say regarding the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. Read Solid Declaration, Article VIII. Person of Christ, lines 8-30, 64-64, pages 593-604; and the Epitome, Article VIII,

Person of Christ, lines 15 and 16, page 488-9.

The teaching of the Formula of Concord on the humiliation and exaltation may be summarized in the following manner:

1. Humiliation and exaltation affect only the human nature of Christ. It is a blasphemous perversion to refer them to the divine nature.

2. propter unionem personalem: (on account of the personal union) Christ possesses the divine majesty from the moment of His conception.

3. The exaltation was not a feigned, but a real renunciation of the full and constant use of the divine majesty imparted to Christ's human nature. This non-use made the genuine human development of Christ possible.

4. Christ did not renounce all use of the divine majesty. The full weight of His deity, for example, which was attached to His death, made it infinitely meritorious

5. The difference between the two states is this, that the use of the divine majesty, during the state of exaltation, was limited, subject to the demands of Christ's office, while in the state of exaltation the full exercises, operation, or manifestation of the divine majesty set in.

We could summarize this teaching with the words of two Lutheran dogmaticians. Baier writes: "The explanation of Christ pertains to His human nature and consists in this, that Christ for a time abdicated the full use of the divine majesty which the human nature received in the personal union by communications. The state of exaltation is that in which Christ, according to His human nature, after laying aside the infirmities of the flesh, assumed and exercised the full use of the divine majesty."

Hollaz says: "Christ did not always exercise in the same manner the divine majesty communicated to His flesh; but from His conception to His death and burial He retracted and restrained the full use of it; but in His quickening, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and exaltation to the right hand of God, He made plenary use of it. That accounts for the two states."

2

The Several Stages of Christ's Humiliation and Exaltation

Christ's humiliation includes all events of His earthly life, from His conception to His burial. Christ's descent into hell cannot be included in humiliation. This we will learn from Scripture.

How does Scripture designate the entire period of Christ's humiliation?

Heb. 5:7 _____

What does this mean? This represents the whole time during which Christ in the interest of His office, that is, in the interest of rendering the vicarious satisfaction, abstained from appearing in the form of God, entered upon equality with men, and did not refrain from suffering and dying on the cross.

Christ's Conception and Nativity

First let us state that the humiliation of Christ in the incarnation is connected with the mode or the manner in which He joined the human race (according to His human nature).

Gal. 4:4 _____

Luke 1:42 _____

The Son of God did not join the human race as a fully developed and mature man. He could have done so, but choose not to.

The question we have to answer is this: "Why do you suppose He came from the womb of Mary instead of just appearing on earth?"

This beginning of Jesus is characteristic of the official work which Christ was to perform as the Redeemer of mankind. Early in His life, in fact at conception, our Lord had to begin His redemptive work as our Savior.

What was the goal of Jesus' work? The substitutional presentation to God of a human life that was perfect from the very beginning.

Now we can answer the question: "Why do you suppose He came from the womb of Mary instead of just appearing on earth?"

For this reason the Mediator between God and man had to share our common human development. This causal relation of Christ's lowly incarnation to the redemption of mankind is clearly attested by Scripture, which tells us that God sent forth His Son into the world by having Him born of a woman and made under the Law to redeem sinful mankind, which was under the Law.

Gal. 4:4-5 _____

What is the significance of this reality in terms of original sin and Baptism?

One theologian wrote, "Christ passed through all stages of our life in order that He might thoroughly heal...."

A word or two must be said regarding the operation of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Christ. What the Nicene Creed declares is entirely Scriptural: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost for the Virgin Mary, and was made man." Outside the incarnation of the Son of God the terms virginity and motherhood are contradictory. But in the case of Mary, the unique mother, the "blessed among women," they are not mutually exclusive. Any one who denies the virgin birth and adheres to it must be classified as heretic.

Christ's Education, Growth in Wisdom, and Visible Earthly Life

No schooling, of course, was necessary for Jesus in His childhood and youth in the sense that in Him evil propensities of the flesh had to be curbed, as must be done in the case of ordinary children.

Heb. 7:26 "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

Luke 2:48-49 (Who was right?) The Son was right

What do we learn from Luke 2:52? "It is, however, true that Jesus as a youth learned, studies, and increased in wisdom, not only seemingly, but actually, so far as His human nature is concerned, since in the state of humiliation the divine knowledge remained quiescent (inactive or dormant or still) to the extent that His redemptive office made such quiescence necessary. This quiescence cannot be rationally understood or demonstrated, but must nevertheless be acknowledged as a fact, since Scripture teaches it as an historical reality."

Regarding His visible earthly life what makes it humiliation?

Is it simply that He appeared among men? Matt. 25:31 ff; 1 Pet. 4:13; 2 Thess. 1:7 etc.

Jesus will also appear on Judgment Day, visibly

What does His humiliation consists of? His humiliation consists in this, that He, who was and remained at the same time the eternal essential Son of God (John 8:58; Matt 16:16ff), did not appear among men as the God-Man, but as an ordinary human being and permitted men to treat Him as such.

Christ's Suffering, Death, and Burial

Christ's suffering extends through the entire state of His humiliation. The whole history of Christ's earthly life, from His birth on, is truly a "Passion story."

The intensified suffering that came upon Christ during the last two days of His earthly life, on Thursday and Friday of the Passion Week, has been termed the Great Passion.

Baier writes of this suffering this way: "He was subject to government; He was regarded as equal with, or even inferior to, others; to satisfy His hunger He ate, and to quench His thirst He drank; when He was weary, He slept; he bore to the end the burdens of toils and the dangers of journeys, as also perils, temptations, sorrows, poverty, and insults." The intensified suffering that came upon Christ during the last two days of His earthly life, on Thursday and Friday of the Passion Week, has been fitly denominated the Great Passion (passio magna).

Part of this includes Matt. 27:46 A part of the passio magna was His being forsaken by God, which was revealed in His cry of anguish; "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We can understand the meaning of Christ being forsaken by God only if we fully accept the central Scriptural truth of Christ's substitution for us. Christ in Him indeed was no sinner. The transfer of our sin to Him was a purely juridical divine act: which is what Paul said in 2 Cor 5:21.

2 Cor. 5:21 “God made Him to be sin for us who knew not sin.”

What does this mean? This divine juridical act of God penetrated to the very heart and conscience of the suffering Christ. When Christ was forsaken of God, He felt the sin and guilt of all men in His soul as His own sin and guilt. This is clearly brought out in the Old Testament prophecy in which Christ speaks of His own sin and guilt in the Words of Psalm 69:5.

This is clear from Ps. 69:5 “O God, Thou knowest My foolishness; and My sins are not hid from Thee.”

This also meant something else. Not only did Christ feel the guilt of all mankind but He felt something else.

What was that? With our sin and guilt, Christ also felt the wrath, that is, God's verdict of condemnation and rejection, in His soul, just as if He had personally committed all sins of mankind. The desertion of Christ by God has therefore correctly been described as the feeling of divine wrath on account of the sins of men imputed to Him, and so they cry that God had forsaken Him express a very real fact and part of His suffering.

In connection with this question has been discussed whether or not, in the case of Christ's suffering, we may speak of His having endured the punishment of torments of hell. Bellarmine and other Roman Catholic dogmaticians have expressed dismay at this statement and have gone so far as to declare it an “intolerable wickedness” to ascribe to Christ the suffering of the torments of hell. Also timid Lutherans such as Horneius and others have disapproved this statement. But their pretended piety has right been pronounced folly; for as surely as the wages of sin is not merely temporal death, but eternal punishment in hell, and as surely as Christ has borne all punishment of all sinners in the world, it is Scriptural to call Christ's suffering an enduring of the torments of hell. Furthermore, Scripture describes the torment of hell as the condition in which men are rejected from the presence of God, that is to say, in which they are forsaken of God. (Matt 8:12; 25:41; 2 Thess 1:9).

How could the Son of God suffer an eternity while only being forsaken temporarily?

That Christ was but temporarily forsaken of God is explained by the fact that He is the eternal, divine Son of God. When the Person who is God was forsaken of God for a little while, this transient condition was the equivalent of all sinners' being eternally forsaken of God. This is not a man-made “theory of compensation,” but Scripture teaches this compensation by the divine majesty of the Person of Christ in all passages in which it asserts that the truth that it is through the work and suffering of the eternal Son of God that we sinners have been redeemed (1 Peter 1:18-19). When we inquire into the essence of this abandonment, in what it really consisted, we face the very core of the redemptive work of the Mediator between God and man, namely as Isaiah calls it, “the travail of His soul” (Is 53:11).

Luther says it very well: "This matter no man can so well depict in words as it is here stated in frank, terse, and plain terms. It does not treat of Christ's bodily suffering, which also was great and heavy, but of His deep spiritual suffering, which He felt in His soul and which far surpassed all bodily suffering ... In what this consisted no man on earth can understand, nor has any man the vocabulary adequately to describe and depict it. For to be forsaken of God is much worse than is death. Those who have tasted and experienced a little of it can somewhat sense it. But such as are secure, carnal, and have not endured or experienced such suffering neither know nor understand anything about it ... From Job's example we can somewhat understand what it means to be forsaken of God ... And Christ has truly been forsaken of God, not in such a way that the deity has truly been separated from the humanity, but that The Deity withdrew into Itself and hid Itself ... So the

righteous and innocent Man had to tremble and fear like a poor, condemned sinner and in His tender, innocent heart had to feel God's wrath and judgment over sin, taste for us eternal death and damnation, and, in short, suffer all a condemned sinner has deserved and must suffer eternally ... He had to quench and put out in His soul the extreme agony that is called 'being forsaken of God' and the devil's fiery darts, hell's fire and terror, and all that we had deserved by our sins. But this heaven, eternal life and blessedness, has been purchased for us, as also Isaiah says: 'He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.'"

This offends many Christians. They say that Christ was not damned. No less than John Calvin himself, believed this. He uses passages such as Matt. 3:17 to prove his opinion. He says that Is. 42:1 tells us that the Love and Wrath of God cannot mix..

Calvin writes: "We do not admit that God was ever hostile to Him, or angry with Him. For how could He be angry with His beloved Son, 'in whom His soul delighted.' (Is 42:1)?"

How would you approach this problem? And what does Calvin forget?

What Calvin forgot was that Christ is our Substitute, a truth which he means to teach in the words that preceded and that follow the quotation.

The death of Christ was a true death because in Christ's death occurred the very thing which constitutes the nature of death, namely, the separation of body and soul.

Matt. 27: 50_____ Mark 15:37_____

Luke 23:46_____ John 19:30_____

Does this mean that God died or that there was a break down in the economy of the Trinity?

Since Christ's death is the death of the Son of God, and, accordingly, not merely the departed soul, but also the entombed body remained in personal union with the Son of God, the possibility of death in the case of Christ passes human understanding. But the fact of Christ's death must be believed because Scripture attest it so clearly. All who assert merely an apparent death of Christ or a trance are to be regarded as being extra ecclesiam.

The question whether Christ remained a true man even in His death, Quenstedts calls a *quaestio curiosa*. And he's right. The scholastics were the first to propound the search, but strange to say, even some Lutheran dogmaticians voiced doubts as to whether Christ, in His death, was still a true man. In the reference just mentioned, Quenstedt refers to Thomas Aquinas, who writes: "In the three days of death the body of Christ was not alive and therefore not a man . . . While it is an article of faith that Christ truly died, it is a heresy to assert that He was man (*homo*) during the three days of death." The confusion is caused by defining man thus: "Man is a living being as an animal" and then denying to a dead person the state of being a man, either directly or indirectly, through the wrong distinction of "being a man" according to substance or according to form or condition. **We say in reply:** Though man originally was not destined to die, but death entered into the world as God's dreadful judgment upon man's sin, still Scripture speaks of the dead as persons, as, for example, in John 5:28-29. In addition, Scripture calls Christ man and just this respect, that as Mediator between God and man He gave Himself unto death, hence was man also in death (1 Tim 2:5-6).

Christ's Descent into Hell

The doctrine of Christ's decent into hell which we confess in the Apostles' Creed, is based on 1 Pet. 3:18 ff, where it is taught so clearly that the Church was justified in adding this doctrine to this Creed.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.”

According to this passage Christ, after being made alive in the tomb and so according to soul and body, went to the place where the souls of such men as on earth had remained unbelieving are in prison.

What does it mean that Jesus proclaimed victory? The verb used in Scripture at this point is “kerusain” and it does not necessarily mean to proclaim “salvation” or “the Gospel.” Instead, it is a vox media which means to make a public announcement or to proclaim as a town crier. The word is used in the New Testament not only of Gospel preaching as for example in Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14 but also of Law preaching as in Matt 3:1; Acts 15:21; Romans 2:21. So the special meaning of “kerusain” is a given passage must be determined by the context. In 1 Pet 3:18ff, the context in several ways decides against the preaching of the Gospel and for a preaching of judgment or the Law. The text does not speak of people who had no opportunity to hear the Word of God but the preaching pertains to those to whom the Word of God has been preached in earth in richness and in long terms, and under warning circumstances (the building of the ark), but who rejected the Word in unbelief and so perished in the flood. We certainly must not forget that Scripture depicts the generation that perished in the Flood as a type of the generation that will be damned in the Judgment of the Last Day, for Christ says: “As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the day that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered in the Ark, and knew not until the Flood came and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left.” (Matthew 24:37ff; Luke 17:26-27)

But not only the immediate context, namely the description of those before whom the “kerusain” took place, but also the more remote context points to a proclamation of condemnation. Christians are admonished in 1 Peter 3 and 4 to patiently bear in this life (sarchi) the suffering and calumny (a maliciously false and injurious statement) heaped on them by the unbelieving world in expectation of God's righteous Judgment, which shall come upon all unbelievers and blasphemers of His Church on Judgment Day (cf. 3:14-4:7). That admonition to patient suffering is made the more impressive by the example of Christ, for whom, too, the earthly life was a time of suffering, but who promptly, at His coming to life in the tomb, appeared before the spirits in prison as the Judge and who at the end of the world will appear as the Judge of the quick and the dead.

A man by the name of Thomasius presents the larger context very well in these words: “Thoughts of the Judgment surround, and are interwoven with, our entire passage. The Apostle is speaking of the suffering of the Church. It lives as a small flock in the midst of a world of unbelief and disobedience, exposed to the mockery, defamation, and persecution of a multitude which slanders their righteous life in Christ (v. 14ff). In view of such great suffering of the Christians on earth, Peter points out to them the example of Christ, who traveled the same road of suffering and contempt. His, however, was a suffering which took place only once, and then ended in victory and glory. It was changed into absolute triumph over His enemies, who must soon behold Him as the eternal Judge of the living and the dead. For ‘the end of all things is a hand’ (1 Pet. 4:7).

“Believers should bear in mind this suffering and exaltation of Christ and persevere in patience and

suffering. If now, in this sequence of thoughts, mention is made of those wicked souls who once upon a time, in the days of Noah, jeered at the admonition of God and opposed with disobedience His exhortation that came to them through Noah, God's herald 'kerous' of righteousness by word and deed (2 Peter 2:5), how can there be room in this connection for the thought of a deliverance of these sinners from destruction, of an offer of salvation to departed spirits who by their former conduct serve as a pattern for the blasphemers of the present? It seems to me that the whole context points to a condemnatory testimony on the part of Christ. The Apostle desires to show by an analogous case, on the one hand, how the Lord knows how to preserve His saints in their whole trial in the flesh and how, on the other, the unbelievers will in yonder world experience nothing but the judgment of destruction."

Maybe the best way to say what happened is to determine what did not happen. The following are false teachings of Christ's descent into hell.

The descent of Christ does **not** mean ...

- 1) Christ preached salvation or the Gospel in hell either to all the godless, as Marcion taught, or to the godless and the devils, as Origen taught, or at least to those who had no opportunity on earth to hear the Gospel. For proof of this last figment the passage 1 Peter 4:6 has been used: "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead." But the very purpose clause: "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh" allows one to think only preaching of the Gospel which those who are now dead formerly heard in their earthly life. In 1 Peter 4:6 the Apostle is thinking merely of God's purpose in having the Gospel preached. In case the result does not correspond to the divine purpose, that makes the unbelieving hearers objects of God's eternal wrath on Judgment Day.
- 2) Christ descended into hell to continue His suffering as some have specifically taught. The words: "preached unto the spirits in prison which sometime were disobedient" does not suggest a suffering of Christ. Moreover, all suffering of Christ after His death is absolutely excluded by the fact that, according to Scripture, His spirit, after its separation from the body, was in the hands of His Father and in Paradise, as Luke 23:46 and 23:43 testify. The "pains of death" which are mentioned in Acts 2:24 pertain to Christ not according to His soul, but according to His body.
- 3) Christ's decent into hell is to be taken figuratively and not in a real sense. The Reformed church taught this. The Reformed identify Christ's descent into hell with Christ's entire state of humiliation, or with Christ's suffering, especially with His magna passio in Gethsemane and on Calvary, or also with Christ's death and burial. Quenstedt writes about this confusion: "Whoever descends into the infernal prison alive, descends to hell neither before His death, nor in the moment of death, nor even immediately after His death. But Christ was made alive.
Christ, in His passio magna, suffered very greatly in both body and soul as Scripture teaches, but the Reformed seem to go further than Scripture allows. 1 Peter 3:18-20 is a sedes doctrinae of Christ's descent into hell which also excludes the Roman Catholic error that Christ by His descent into hell delivered the patriarchs and saints of the Old Testament from the legendary 'limbus partum'".
- 4) Peter's words on Christ's descent into hell are no more than a mere reference to the preaching of Noah, so some have taught. It is true, the Spirit of Christ was in Noah and preached to the people before the Flood through His great prophet of God, as we learn from 1 Peter 1:11. But in 1 Peter 3:18ff, the reference is not to Noah, but to the historical Christ, who is expressly mentioned as the subject of the proclamation, after He had been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.

The summary on the events are as follows: Christ was put to death according to His lowly,

earthly mode of subsistence in the state of humiliation and made alive according to His glorious, heavenly mode of subsistence in the state of exaltation. In this glorified state, as the exalted Savior and Lord, He went and preached to the spirits in prison.

The Resurrection of Christ

Who raised Jesus from the dead?

Rom. 6:4 On the one hand, it says that God the Father has raised Christ from the dead . . .

Other such passages are; Eph. 1:20; Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10 etc.

John 2:19, 21 On the other hand Scripture also states that Christ raised Himself, or that He rose from the dead by His own power.

Also John 10:17-19

Both statements must be accepted side by side, as they read. The passages which ascribe the resurrection of Christ from the dead to God the Father refer to our Savior as the Mediator between God and man, on whom God had laid the "inequity of us all" (Is. 53:6; John 1:29) and whom the Father therefore had delivered into death for the sins of all men (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3).

Rom. 4:25 The term justification here means the act of divine justification executed through God's act of raising Christ from the dead.

What kind of justification does this verse refer to? Objective Justification. Dr. Walther stressed that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the actual absolution pronounced upon all sinners. To refer the words: "Who was raised again for our Justification." To the so-called subjective justification, which takes place by faith, not only weakens the force of the words but also violates the context. It has been pointed out that Christ's resurrection took place as an actual absolution from sin. As God punished our sins in Christ, upon whom He laid them and to whom he imputed them, as our Bondsman, so he also, by the very act of raising Him from the dead, absolved Him from our sins imputed to Him and so He absolved also us in Him.

What does this mean? It means that actual absolution was pronounced upon all mankind. This is an absurd and glorious work.

What kinds of comfort can we derive from this understanding of justification? _____

In other words, our sins are not forgiven because we believe but because Christ was raised. *Belief is the tool by which we grasp forgiveness already earned.*

So the object of justification, as pointed out in Rom. 4:24 and Rom. 10:9, is also the object of saving faith, that is our risen Lord. It is not simply faith that is important but the object of faith.

What does John 20:20-27 tell us of the resurrection of Christ? Christ's body, however, had different attributes before and after the resurrection. The body of the flesh, or of the state of humiliation, which had been subject

to earthly conditions of substance, such as eating, drinking, suffering, had now become a spiritual and glorified body.

What must we recognize in the post-resurrected body of Christ? Christ's eating after the resurrection was not done for nourishment, but for establishing the identity of the risen body with the body slain on the Cross.

Why do you think the door of the tomb was moved aside? The only purpose for removing the door was to exhibit the empty tomb to the women and disciples (Augustine and others). The reformed teach that the open door allowed Christ to leave. John 20:19. Look for an open door. This because of their error that the body of Christ can possess only one mode of presence, that is visibly and local. This goes to their understanding of the Eucharist, and their denial of the Real Presence.

The Forty Days Between Christ's Resurrection and Ascension

There is an apparent contradiction during this period.

1. Luke 24:44 He is no longer with His disciples.

2. Luke 24:39-40 He is still with His disciples.

How are we to answer this? Christ was no longer with His disciples according to the mode of an earthly, visible body, but He came to His disciples according to His invisible, illocal presence, and so He could appear before them even "when the doors were shut." By the same illocal mode of presence He again left the disciples when "He vanished out of their sight."

After the resurrection Christ no longer needed food or drink to sustain His life, but He partook of food in the presence of His disciples to prove that He was the risen Savior (Luke 24:41-43).

The reason Jesus was still appearing to disciples is twofold:

1. Christ wished to confirm the disciple's faith in His resurrection.
2. He wished to give them instructions concerning God's kingdom. Both of these are stated in Acts 1:3 and 1 Cor. 15:5-8

In His discussions Jesus had a special subject. What was that? Luke 24:25-27

He discussed the Old Testament with special emphasis on His Person and Office.

Christ's Ascension

The Resurrection had no witnesses. It needed none.

Acts 1:3

But the ascended Savior no longer shows Himself in visible form to His believers on earth until His return at the end of the world.

Acts 1:9 Went to heaven visibly and freely and assumed a local visible movement upward. We do not claim that it is continued in a local mode after the clouds.

Christ's Session at God's Right Hand

The sitting at the right hand of God designates the unending dominion upon which Christ entered by His ascension.

What does the phrase "right hand of God" mean? *It is a phrase which means power and omnipotence. Ps. 118:15-16; Ps. 139:9-10; Ps 89:13. This is called an anthropomorphism.*

Christ's Second Advent

This is the last stage of Exaltation. This is treated in the section called "Eschatology." (End Times)