*Prayers*

† Blessed is our God always, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. ... in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Through the prayers of our holy Ancestors, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen. Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

† Εὐλογημένη ἡ Βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

† Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, You are everywhere and fill all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

† Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (three times).

† Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it is now, was in the beginning, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Discord 5, revision A

2020

*Reevaluating*

Let us retrace some of our steps to see if we can sharpen the fourth and fifth century historical picture.

As great as the Mystery of God is: “Whose dominion is incomprehensible; Whose mercy is immeasurable; and Whose love toward mankind is inexpressible”:[[1]](#footnote-1) human beings persist at trying to find words to describe God.

*The Beginning*

We easily recall that it was God Himself, in Genesis 2:19-20, Who first committed us to this task of defining and naming the things around us. In this profound vignette, we find that mankind is to study, evaluate, quantify, identify, and name each animal pair and their attributes. Thus, humanity is started on the path of endlessly searching, studying, and naming all things: even attempting to name God.

However, this profound vignette is set in the center of a discussion about Adam’s loneliness; wherein the outcome is inextricably interweaved with human sexuality, which is one of the first things Adam would have observed about behavior from the animal pairs.

People’s first obligation is to:

love God, their Father.

People’s second obligation is to:

love their spouses, which a distinctly sexual, and procreative matter.

Then three things follow logically:

First, people are to love all of the human race that will be reproduced: for, we are all interrelated somehow. Each of us is either a son of Adam or daughter of Eve.[[2]](#footnote-2) We are all the beloved children of our Heavenly Father.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Second, people are to nurture this animal kingdom; indeed, this universe, which they have just begun to name.

Third, it is inevitable that people would also assign names to God, their Father, as part of this ongoing process: naming God is a normal part of the ongoing communicative process between the Father and His children. This is true, even though, accuracy in such naming of God is elusive, if not impossible.

*The Fall*

However, as we all know, only too well, humankind’s ability to love and reason was seriously bent or distorted at the fall due to original sin. This is why we continually fail to find correct solutions. This is why, as we continue to dig for the causes of discord, we are always able to find some new evidence of wrongdoing. The council in Acts 15 results in the apparent reconciliation of all parties. The ensuing ecumenical councils all result in serious division and strife: the Church on earth is shamefully rent.[[4]](#footnote-4) The fundamental method of ecumenical councils is flawed: they did not set as their primary goal, the reconciliation of all parties.

In part it is the emotional intensity, the pseudo-importance of love names, that gets us into disputes and other troubles: in striving to be right, we become wrong. As apophatic thinking develops, we discover that it’s often safer to name what God is not, rather than what God is. That being conceded, we cannot give up Father, Almighty, Creator and replace them with Kabbalah’s dead, impersonal, philosophical abomination, Ein Sof.

We have now crossed a barrier from theology into philosophy; from the spiritual universe and its evidences, where evidence cannot be publicly measured — in the Greek mindset, the world of the forms — into the physical universe and its evidences, where all evidence can be measured by five senses.

It is impossible that a discussion about discord not confront the master center of division and discord, the philosophical systems themselves. It is naïve to believe that there is no deliberate hostile philosophical attack, a waring invasion, an intrusion into the theological Christian discussion of God.

Theology generally admits of the existence of a spiritual dimension; philosophy does not…. When Christians discuss spiritual matters, they are talking about a real experienced and felt sixth, or more, dimension(s) of life. When philosophers discuss the world of forms, they are dealing with a theoretical abstraction, not an actuality.[[5]](#footnote-5)

We struggle to avoid prejudices against individuals themselves; let each person’s merits, and evil deeds stand on their own behavior: some people are wicked; some are not wicked; some have sincerely converted to Christianity; not all are false professors; not all are advocates of bizarre philosophies; not all are usurers, and extortioners; not all are deniers of Christ. Not all Christians are honest, true lovers of God, and true lovers of mankind. The crimes of the world are pretty uniformly distributed across the human race. Let each Christian, Jew, and Pagan answer for his/her own actions: let us by every means possible, strive to free ourselves from our own prejudices, without becoming naïve in the process.

It is equally naïve to believe that Christians never distorted their views to promote proselytism. It is intellectually dishonest to overlook the bias, bigotry, bitterness, envy, exaggeration of argument and position, false-extremism, jealousy, marginalizing, mean spiritedness, murder, political assassination, pride, tricks of debate, and outright violence employed by so-called Christians in this discussion of the factors, which will ultimately rend the Church. It is equally foolish to call this inexcusable behavior, Christian behavior, as we often do: yet, this aggregation of strife was already going on in the fourth century, and possibly even before. It continues to the present day. The apostles write about it repeatedly. Paul says:

“I know that with my arrival[[6]](#footnote-6) fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the little flock. Out of you yourselves men will stand up, speaking well established perversions[[7]](#footnote-7), to wrench away the disciples after themselves.” — Acts 20:29-30

In pushing the boundaries of the fourth and fifth centuries, we will dig up more evidence: the sort of evidence that is glossed over by the standard historical summaries.[[8]](#footnote-8) In the process of sharpening the razor’s edge between right and wrong we will still fail to find the solution: because, the solution is forgiveness, love, and reconciliation; not in being right or wrong. It may not be the theology that is wrong. The method of forcing decisions by Church councils has definitely proved faulty: arguments can only be lost… never won.

*Modern Contrasts*

Ordinarily, twentieth and twenty-first century theological events would be irrelevant in the study of fourth and fifth century conflicts. In this case, they provide much needed perspective: the modern events are more clearly defined and understood; the degree and nature of punitive actions can be seen as valid or invalid: justice requires some sort of parity… a balance of our understanding of right and wrong. If such parity is not found, how can we say that Popes and Councils acted either with or without error? So, the problem is compounded by the existence of modern heresies. The disagreements of the fourth, fifth, and earlier centuries were not clearly defined or understood; the degree and nature of punitive actions seem invalid: the parity that justice requires is absent … there is an imbalance of our understanding of right and wrong.

Atheism vs. Arius

Modern disagreements are clearly defined: there can be little doubt that the communist movement in Russia was completely atheistic, and those members of the Russian church that participated in communism, became atheists, and ceased to be Christians. They may repent; they may be absolved, forgiven, and received once again in communion. They may not continue in their previous offices as though nothing happened: their compromise of leaping into atheistic communism made them unfit for Christian leadership.

Arius, on the other hand, did not deny Christ. Arius failed to understand how Christ could be eternal and still be Son; thus he argued that Christ must be a created Divinity in His procession from the Father… older than all of creation… yet, still once not existing. Arius simply taught that the Son was subordinate to the Father… there was once when the Son was not… Arius, we are told, carefully avoided words that mean time… his, “once”, was abstract, conceptual….[[9]](#footnote-9)

Before we condemn Arius, how clear was this between 256 and 336, or even until 600 and beyond? Did Arius really deny the high Christology of John as found in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7? I cannot fault Arius on the basis of Scripture? Can you? His condemnation appears to be based on theological conclusions, not on raw Scripture. Can you prove otherwise?

In the final analysis, Arius was harmless: he led a theological fad that eventually died out by itself. He had no business speculating about the hidden inner essence of God; but, neither had his opponents, any such business of speculating: they might and should have resolved the issue by silence. None of us really understands the hidden inner essence of God.

Peacemakers, from the era, like the blessed St. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386), base all their efforts on strict adherence to Scripture, avoiding as dangerous, deductions and inductions based on Scripture… they were wise enough to realize that the reasoning power of mankind was seriously flawed by the fall. We should take a tip from Cyril and do our level best to stick to the Bible, without adding anything to it, or subtracting anything from it.[[10]](#footnote-10) That’s good advice.

Still, Arius’ adversaries prevailed at Nicaea (325), Arius was condemned, and Cyril yielded to the decision of the council. What was the cost? Arianism was or quickly surfaced as the majority party. Nicaea failed to obtain the concurrence of the whole Church. Arianism took over Constantinople, and survived in the West for centuries. Ensuing battles rent the Church.

In the case of communism, where there can be no doubt of guilt, the offensive acts were clear, open, and public; the bulk of Christendom seems eager to welcome the offenders back will full restoration to office: apostate archbishops, metropolitans, bishops, and priests are all greeted with high honors… even those who were KGB agents… and maintained in office without any evident loss of pay or privileges. The crime of Arius was simply not of this magnitude. There is no parity here in the crimes, or in the degrees of punishment rendered; there is no balance of right and wrong.

So, how can we possibly claim that Nicaea was the ruling of the Holy Spirit, rendered by the Whole Church, for all time, inerrant, with no possibility of error, 100% true? Surely, we cannot and must not….

I can’t answer that question for anybody but myself; yet, I’m deeply troubled by it. I think that we let the Russian Orthodox Church inside of Russia, off the hook without reasonable consideration of what actually took place. We also abused and defamed the Catacomb Church (the True Orthodox Church inside of Russia) in the process. We stood idly by while most of ROCOR was swallowed whole. In 325 we were willing to throw fully half of the Church overboard over theological issues which could not possibly be understood in that age or day. Even today, I affirm the standard creeds: but, I can never, ever claim that I really understand the fullness of the mysteries of Deity, or of the incarnation. Arianism died out, on its own, centuries later; today it is all but extinct. I believe that Nicaea erred in condemning Arius, not by being theologically wrong; but, rather, by being hasty, and unwilling, in patience, to forgive. Today, the issues may be clear. It is impossible to believe that they were that clear in 325… and the majority of the Church agreed by openly asserting their Arianism. It is simply self-contradictory to absolve Russia and condemn Arius. Nicaea was wrong, in my opinion: it was disastrous, divisive, hasty, precipitous... it rent the Church asunder in ways that have not been repaired to this day. This is made all the more egregious by evidence of imperial bullying, and the probable murder of Arius. Due to the destruction of most of the evidence we can never discover the truth.[[11]](#footnote-11)

A variety of corrective statements have been published in recent years: but, still, no common communion is forthcoming. We cannot consider the problem resolved until we can honestly, sincerely, and joyously concelebrate at the Table together.

“Who are you, judging another man’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Stand he will: for, the Lord is able to make him stand. — Romans 14:4

So, Arius, Nestorius, even Eutyches must be acquitted for lack of evidence, and bound over to God’s Court of Last Resort.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Ecumenism

The modern ecumenical movement is far more difficult to sort out. At least one of the presidents[[13]](#footnote-13) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) was a self-proclaimed atheist, a communist, a KGB officer, at the same time he was a prelate in the Russian Orthodox Church inside of Russia… he was antichrist. WCC was accused of welcoming both Jews and Muslims as equals: yet, both are deniers of Christ. Many modern Christians fail to understand the warrant for Christian exclusivism. Such compromises forbid serious Christian participation in the WCC or any of its subsidiaries.

On the other hand, Christians are repeatedly commanded and exhorted to be one. There can be no doubt that the Church is One. This requires Christian exclusivism. All who deny Christ are outsiders, antichrist. Thus, we identify, not a single evil individual with this term, but rather a whole class of people holding the same profession of unbelief: namely, that Jesus is not the Christ. In denying the Son, they deny the Father also. Thus, they have no God. They are atheists. They are not the sharers of a common Monotheism.[[14]](#footnote-14)

So, how does a Christian person obey the command to be ecumenical, while at the same time being exclusive, without becoming entangled in the many compromises of Christian faith involved with modern ecumenism? There can be little doubt that participation in ecumenism involves serious compromises of Christian faith. These are things that every Christian has a duty to examine and flee. The way of repentance is open to those who have sinned; however, they may not under any circumstances retain their previous offices: they must begin again in genuine remorse, at the bottom. The cases against Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches were not nearly as clear. Moreover, the judgements against Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and the like were clouded by educational jealousies: Alexandria versus Antioch; political rivalries: Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome; language barriers: Latin, Greek, Syriac, and more; wide sweeping cultural differences: Western, Eastern, Egyptian, Persian, Indian, Brittan, Norman; as well as many other conflicted and confounded issues. WCC is a barrel containing rotten apples: eventually, the rotten apples will destroy all the rest.

“Do not be unequally partnered together with unbelievers. For, what fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness? What communion does light have with darkness? What agreement does Christ have with Belial? What partnership does a believer have with an unbeliever? What agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For, you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell among them, and walk with them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. So, come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch the unclean thing. I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the Almighty Lord.” — 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

*Naming God*

For better or worse, Nicaea chose the word ὁμο-ούσιον (homo-ousion: same-essence),[[15]](#footnote-15) in preference over ὁμοι-ούσιον (homoi-ousion: similar-essence),[[16]](#footnote-16) and ἑτερο-ούσιον (hetero-ousion: different-essence). Given John’s high Christology in 2 John there is little doubt what the outcome would be: the only question would be that Jesus’ humanity might somehow, as it cloaks or veils the Divine essence, make it a similar-essence: the mystery of the hypostasis of the Son is somehow different than the Father and the Spirit. We have been led to believe that no Christians advocated ἑτερο-ούσιον: only pagan (mostly Greek) philosophers and rebellious Jews denied the Deity of Christ.[[17]](#footnote-17)

This ὁμο-ούσιον was not distributed over Father, Son, and Spirit; we cannot speak of three ὁμο-ούσιον: there is only One ὁμο-ούσιον, which is equally and inseparably shared by Father, Son, and Spirit: One God means only One ὁμο-ούσιον.

Since God is a Spirit, we do not believe that this word for God’s indefinable and inexpressible nature applies to the physical realm of Creation; even though it defines the entire Creation: for, God created both the spiritual and the physical universes. In any case, we do not believe that God has any kind of natural or physical body.

A different word was necessary to describe any distinction we might discover between Father, Son, and Spirit. The word ultimately chosen for this impossible descriptive duty was ὑπόστασις or hypostasis: so, we eventually arrived at the expression of One ὁμο-ούσιον in three ὑπόστασεις.

Cyril

Thus, when we read, “μία ***φύσις*** τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένη***,” we are somewhat puzzled by Cyril’s[[18]](#footnote-18) choice of words: for to us, “μία ***φύσις***”, means one physical material [instance]. Cyril may have a completely different understanding of the word, ***φύσις***, than our understanding of the word. On the other hand, Cyril may have in mind John’s words as John also leads with the fleshly tangibility of Christ:

“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: for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us. That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” — 1 John 1:1-3

Cyril continues, “One physical material [instance] of the Word of God” (which is very close to John’s expression) ***σεσαρκωμένη***[[19]](#footnote-19)… being enclothed in flesh. “One concrete instance of the Word of God enclothed in flesh.” Evidently, the expression, Word of God, caused no difficulty: for it seems ever to refer to the pre-incarnate eternal Son; never to the Bible. Then, “ἕνωσις καθ’ ὑπόστασιν”, united according to the standard of basis, or united by basis.[[20]](#footnote-20) This is not a carefully laid out theological argument; it is a well-designed slogan that encapsulates years of theological thinking: to understand it we will have to dig more deeply into the Alexandrian thinking, thus escaping the standard summary statements,[[21]](#footnote-21) which often err from the mark. While Cyril’s choice of words seems strange, we cannot impeach him over them. This was the dogma of the Church at Ephesus Ⅰ in 431. How could it possibly be wrong? What is wrong with it? Nothing that we can see. We can only understand Cyril to mean that there is, only “One concrete instance of the [eternal] Word of God, Who, made that instance [in time] by becoming enfleshed.”

*History of Σαρκ-…*

In earlier centuries, we find:[[22]](#footnote-22)

Origen

Origen (184-253), “κρισιν, θείαν δίδωσι, παρεμφαίνων, ὅτι Θεὸς εἴη ***σεσαρκωμένος***. Ἢ τοίνυν οὕτω νοήσεις· ὅτι ὄρη μὲν καὶ βουνοὶ” “criticize, He gives divine, showing, that God is incarnate. You know all that; you know how many times”

Athanasius

Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373),

“μονεῖ δὲ καὶ ἐκθαμβεῖται θεότης τὸν θάνατον, ἢ τὸ ἄψυχον σῶμα.… Δηλονότι ἡ θεότης ***σεσαρκωμένη***. Ἀνόμοιος ἄρα ἡ τοῦ Υἱοῦ θεότης τῇ τοῦ Πατρὸς θεότητι…. Μὴ γένοιτο!” “Now, he is to be left alone; he is also astonished at the death of Godhead, which is the lifeless soul…. Visibly, the Godhead being enfleshed. Strangely, therefore, the Son of the Godhead [is] in the Fathers Godhead…. Inconceivable!”

“Διὸ καὶ τοὺς λέγοντας μίαν ***φύσιν*** τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένην***, καὶ μὴ ἐπιφέροντας ἐψυχωμένην, λογικήν τε και….” “Wherefore, also the saying, ‘One concrete instance of God the Word enclothed in flesh’, and should not be carried on by futile (?), either logic(al) or…. Before Cyril is born, Athanasius casts this identical phrase in its accusative form.

“Αὐτὸς ἐπικαλέσεταί με Πατήρ μου εἶ σὺ, Θεός μου. Πάλιν ἐνταῦθα οἰκονομικῶς ὁ ***σεσαρκωμένος*** Θεὸν ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Πατέρα καλεῖ, λέγων Πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα μου καὶ Πατέρα ὑμῶν,” “He himself said to me, ‘You are my Father, my God.’ Again, at that very time, the steward-like enfleshing of God Himself calls [to] the Father, saying, ‘I go to my Father and your Father’,”

“τότε ὑπάρχων, ὡς ἄνθρωπος αὐτοῖς πολλάκις ἐφαίνετο ***σεσαρκωμένος***. Ὅθεν πρόδηλον ὅτι, οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔβλεπον, ἀλλὰ τὴν δόξαν.” “then existing, as a man in these many times was revealed being flesh. Whence, it was clear, that they were seeing not the essence of God, but the Glory.”

“διότι ἐχρίσθη, ἤτοι ἐφόρεσε τὴν σάρκα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται ***σεσαρκωμένος*** Θεὸς, καὶ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ” “because he was anointed, whenever he watched over the flesh of man. Also through this he said, ‘God [is] enfleshed, and the Son [is] Christ, and Word of God”

“[βα]σιλεὺς ὑπάρχων ὡς Θεὸς εἰς βασιλείας ἀρχὴν λέγεται ἔρχεσθαι διὰ τὸ ***σεσαρκῶσθαι*** αὐτόν οὕτω καὶ ἅπερ οἶδε ***φυσικῶς*** ὡς Θεὸς, ταῦτα πάλιν ἀκούειν λέγεται διὰ” “the king existing as God in the first kingdom said, ‘to work through his enfleshment’, in this way also, which indeed this [is] physically as God, to hear these again, he said, ‘through’”

“βασιλεὺς, καὶ ὥσπερ βασιλεὺς ὑπάρχων καὶ Θεὸς, εἰς βασιλέως ἀρχὴν λέγεται ἔρχεσθαι, διὰ τὸ ***σεσαρκῶσθαι***. Οὕτω καὶ ἅπερ οἶδε ***φυσικῶς***, ὡς Θεὸς, ταῦτα πάλιν ἀκούειν λέγεται διὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον” “king, and as king and God existing, in the first of kings said, ‘to come through the enfleshment.’ In this way also, which indeed this [is] physically, as God, to hear these again, he said, ‘through the human nature’”

“Ὁμοούσιον εἶναι τῷ Πατρὶ τὸν Υἱόν· καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, τῷ Πατρὶ, καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ συνδοξάζεσθαι Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ***σεσαρκῶσθαι***, πεπονθέναι, ἀναστῆναι, εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνεληλυθέναι, ἥξειν κριτὴν ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.” “[The] same essence exists in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, in the Father and in the Son, you are together-glorified, true God, the son of God enfleshed, suffered, raised, into heavens ascended, he will come to judge living and dead, in whose glory [is] into the ages of the ages.”

“κείαν εὐλάβειαν χαλινοῦσαν τοὺς λογισμοὺς ἔχοντες (μέγα γὰρ καὶ κατ’ ἀλήθειαν ὂν τὸ ***σεσαρκῶσθαι*** Θεὸν ὑπελάμβανον), ἔτι τὸν νοῦν κλονούμενον εἶχον” “This was the reason why the people in the world were bruising (a great deal and indeed a sense of belonging Thou hast done, that thou wilt be worshiped

“Μὴ λέγε ἐνηνθρωπηκέναι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ***σεσαρκῶσθαι***. Εἰ γὰρ οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἔμψυχον σῶμα, οὐδὲ ἐνηνθρώπησε.”

“Θεοῦ εὐπρέπειαν δὲ τὴν σωτηρίαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ γένους φησίν. Εἰ μὴ γὰρ ***σεσάρκωται***, τὴν ἡμετέραν δίχα τῆς ἁμαρτίας λαβὼν ***φύσιν***, δηλονότι οὐκ ἂν ἡμῖν”

Gregory

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390), “μία ὑπόστασις, μία θέλησις[[23]](#footnote-23), μία ***φύσις*** τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένη***, καὶ προσκυνουμένη. Σταυρωθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ ὁμολογήσας….”

Cyril

Cyril himself adds:

Cyril of Alexandria (376-444),

“Θεὸς γάρ. Ὡσαύτως καὶ ὁ μίαν ***φύσιν*** εἰρηκὼς τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένην***, οὐ μιᾶς ***φύσεως*** τὸν Κύριον ἐδογμάτισε.”

“τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένην***, οὐ μιᾶς ***φύσεως*** τὸν Κύριον ἐδογμάτισε. Τὸ γὰρ ***σεσαρκωμένην*** προσθεὶς, τὴν τοιαύτην ἀνεῖλεν ὑπόνοιαν.”

“ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα καὶ ***σεσαρκωμένον*** τεθέανται τὸν μονογενῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ Υἱὸν, κακόνοι τε καὶ ὀλιγογνώμονες,”

“Ὅτι δὲ τὸν μονογενῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγον ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, καὶ ***σεσαρκωμένον***, ἐπέγνωσαν μὲν καὶ τετιμήκασιν οἱ νομομαθέστεροι,”

“ὄμμασιν αὐτὸν μονογενῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου, τὸν δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἐν ᾧ τὰ πάντα, ***σεσαρκωμένον*** τε καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα θεωρῶν, καὶ εἰς ἑκούσιον ἑαυτὸν”

“Σωτῆρά γε μὴν τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ὀνομάζουσιν αὐτὸν τὸν ἐνανθρωπήσαντα καὶ ***σεσαρκωμένον***, αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον εἶναι πιστεύσαντες, ὃς καὶ πάλαι τοῖς ἐξ”

“Κύριον ἴσμεν, τουτέστι μονογενῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγον ***σεσαρκωμένον*** οὐκ ἀνὰ μέρος τιθέντες ἄνθρωπον καὶ Θεὸν, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν τὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς Λόγον,”

“συναμφοτέρου Χριστὸν ὀνομάζομεν, καὶ Θεὸν καὶ ἄνθρωπον κατὰ ταυτὸν καὶ Θεὸν ***σεσαρκωμένον***. Ποτὲ δὲ ἐξ ἑνὸς τῶν μερῶν, Θεὸν μόνον καὶ Υἱὸν Θεοῦ,”

“γὰρ Θεὸς ἦν ἀποῤῥήτως ***σεσαρκωμένος***, μόνος ᾔδει τὸ ἀγαθὸν, καὶ πονηρίας τῆς ἐν ἀνθρώποις”

Moreover, others will go on to say:

Apollinaris

Apollinaris (d. circa 390) is said to have used such terms: however, we were unable to locate an exact quote in Greek.

Epiphanius

Epiphanius of Salamis (310-403), “Ἀριστοτέλην σοφίσαντα, ἀλλὰ Θεὸν τὸν εἰς τέλη τῶν αἰώνων σε σώσαντα. Πέπτωκε Κρόνος, ὅτι ***σεσάρκωται*** Θεὸς Λόγος οὐ μὴν ἀνδρὸς ἐκ παθείας, ἀλλὰ θεανδρικῶς ἐκ Μαρίας ἐπιφανείς.”

Chrysostom

Chrysostom (349-407),

“καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ δειχθέντων, ἐτόλμησάν τινες λέγειν, δοκήσει καὶ φαντασίᾳ αὐτὸν ***σεσαρκῶσθαι***· εἰ μὴ ταῦτα ἐγεγόνει, ποῦ οὐκ εἶχον ἐξοκεῖλαι ἀσεβείας; Πᾶς οὖν ὁ ταῖς ἁγίαις Γραφαῖς”

δὲ τῇ σαρκί. Οὐδὲ γὰρ κατὰ φαντασίαν, ὥς τινες τῶν αἱρετικῶν δοκοῦσιν, ἀληθείᾳ δὲ ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος ***σεσάρκωται***. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἑρμηνεύων ὁ Δαυῒδ πάλιν ἔλεγεν, Ἀλήθεια ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἀνέτειλε, τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα τοῦ”

Finally, the courts will conclude:

Nicaea

Symbol of Nicaea (325), “καὶ ***σαρκωθέντα*** ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου, καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα.” “and being enfleshed by the Holy Spirit and Mary, The Virgin, He was also made man.”

Chalcedon

Chalcedon (451), “ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστόν, υἱόν, κύριον, μονογενῆ, ἐκ δύο ***φύσεων*** [ἐν δύο ***φύσεσιν***], ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως … εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπὸστασιν συντρεχούσης, οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρούμενον”, Crudely, “One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, in two “natures” (δύο ***φύσεις***).[[24]](#footnote-24)

*History of Φυσις*

“***φύσεις*** ζῴων καὶ θυμοὺς θηρίων” — Wisdom 7:20

“ματαιοι μὲν γὰρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι ***φύσει***” Wisdom 13:1

“αἵ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν ***φυσικὴν*** χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ ***φύσιν***” — Romans 1:26

“ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν ***φυσικὴν*** χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας” — Romans 1:27

“ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα ***φύσει*** τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν” — Romans 2:14

“καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ ***φύσεως*** ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα” — Romans 2:27

“εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῶν κατὰ ***φύσιν*** κλάδων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, οὐδὲ σοῦ φείσεται.” — Romans 11:21

“εἰ γὰρ σὺ ἐκ τῆς κατὰ ***φύσιν*** ἐξεκόπης ἀγριελαίου καὶ παρὰ ***φύσιν*** ἐνεκεντρίσθης εἰς καλλιέλαιον, πόσῳ μᾶλλον οὗτοι οἱ κατὰ ***φύσιν*** ἐγκεντρισθήσονται τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐλαίᾳ.” .— Romans 11:24

“οὐδὲ ἡ ***φύσις*** αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾷ, ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστιν,” — 1 Corinthians 11:14

“Ἡμεῖς ***φύσει*** Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί,” — Galatians 2:15

“Ἀλλὰ τότε μὲν οὐκ εἰδότες θεὸν ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς ***φύσει*** μὴ οὖσι θεοῖς”[[25]](#footnote-25) — Galatians 4:8

“ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν ποτε ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν, ποιοῦντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν, καὶ ἤμεθα τέκνα ***φύσει*** ὀργῆς ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί” — Ephesians 2:3

“πᾶσα γὰρ ***φύσις*** θηρίων τε καὶ πετεινῶν ἑρπετῶν τε καὶ ἐναλίων δαμάζεται καὶ δεδάμασται τῇ ***φύσει*** τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ” — James 3:7

“δι’ ὧν τὰ τίμια καὶ μέγιστα ἡμῖν ἐπαγγέλματα δεδώρηται, ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ ***φύσεως***,[[26]](#footnote-26) ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς.” “through which [special knowledge of Jesus, having called us through glory and excellence] had been bestowed valuable and large promises to us; that through these you would become with [the] divine fellow-shippers by nature, having fled the rotten desire in the world.” — 2 Peter 1:4

“οὗτοι δέ, ὡς ἄλογα ζῷα γεγεννημένα ***φυσικὰ*** εἰς ἅλωσιν καὶ φθοράν, ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν βλασφημοῦντες, ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καὶ φθαρήσονται,” — 2 Peter 2:12

“οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἴδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν, ὅσα δὲ ***φυσικῶς*** ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῷα ἐπίστανται, ἐν τούτοις φθείρονται.” — Jude 10

We might proceed farther with this line of investigation. Perhaps, one day we will find it profitable to do so. Additional research must be added here for ***φύσε*** and Apollinaris. That being said, we have already decided that this is the wrong approach. Of what benefit is it, if we prove the whole world wrong, so that we might be right. Winning arguments does not purify us before God. So, we abandon the details of this approach for the time being.

“Now, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” — 1 John 1:7

Analysis

How did we slide from Gregory’s precise and explicit, “μία ὑπόστασις, μία θέλησις[[27]](#footnote-27), μία ***φύσις*** τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένη***, καὶ προσκυνουμένη. Σταυρωθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ ὁμολογήσας,” and Cyril’s apparently accurate, “μία ***φύσις*** τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένη***,” into the fuzzy and murky illogical language of Chalcedon, “ἐκ δύο ***φύσεων”***? Here is an hypothetical reconstruction. First, we take the root idea of the feminine noun, ***φύσις***, which is physicality, and change it into the adjective use, physical. We follow a similar course of action with the root meaning of the counterpart noun, πνεῦμα, which is spirituality and turn it into the adjective, spiritual. Φύσις and πνεῦμα are two category nouns that distinguish the dominions or realms of the physical and spiritual. However, when they are contorted into an adjective, they frequently expect a noun to modify in Latin as well as English. In English we supply the noun, nature, turning φύσις into physical nature and πνεῦμα into spiritual nature; rather than, reflecting both words back to their respective roots: namely, physicality and spirituality. However, this adjectival transition shifts the emphasis and meaning away from the adjective and onto the noun, nature. Then, in the next tragic step, the adjectives are removed, and the noun nature is left standing alone: hence, two natures. Finally, we reverse translate from Latin to Greek and we arrive at the absurdity, “ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστόν, υἱόν, κύριον, μονογενῆ, ἐκ δύο ***φύσεων*** [ἐν δύο ***φύσεσιν***]…”: but, this is nearly the opposite and a fairly clear contradiction of Ephesus Ⅰ. There are a variety of modern explanations and justifications for this; but, some of them even state that the wording used at Ephesus Ⅰ was wrong: hence, they accidently prove that councils err, to the horror of Canon lawyers everywhere. Eutyches will only make matters worse.

Eutyches

Eutyches (380-456) changes “μία ***φύσις*** τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένη***”, “One concrete instance of the Word of God enclothed in flesh”, to “μία ***φύσις*** τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου ***σεσαρκωμένου***”, One concrete instance of the Word of God made of flesh”. The subtle change from a feminine nominative to a masculine or neuter genitive makes ***σεσαρκωμένου*** modify τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου; rather than, ***σεσαρκωμένη***, which modifies μία ***φύσις***: so now Eutyches has “the Word of God is flesh”, or “the fleshly Word of God”; rather than “a fleshly concrete instance”, or “One concrete instance in flesh”. Evidently, Eutyches fails to understand the implications of his grammatical modification.[[28]](#footnote-28) We understand Eutyches to say that there is, only “One concrete instance of the fleshly Word of God”, which completely undermines the eternality of the Word of God, or God the Word.

Nevertheless, we convict Eutyches only of ignorance or of misunderstanding, not of heresy: but, these were fighting words in certain sectors of the fourth and fifth century Church… never mind the moral contradiction of Christians fighting.

Evidently, Cyril himself used this word ***φύσις*** in three or more ways: one, as a concrete instance of things as they exist in this material, physical universe (which is the way that we, at first, understand the word); two, by connotative or implicit use, a reference to the properties of things in this material universe (physicality); finally, by a further extension of connotative or implicit use, a reference to any properties… spiritual or physical. Hence, an extended concept of δύο ***φύσεις*** gradually emerges. Thus, one concrescence, comes to be further explicated as having two distinct natures.[[29]](#footnote-29) Possibly, this transition of terms was aided by the loss of the distinction between “forms” and “physis” prevalent in Greek philosophy.

So, we cannot honestly retain the orthodoxy of Chalcedon’s (451) Dyophysite theology, if we do not also, at the same time, embrace Ephesus Ⅰ’s (431) earlier Miaphysite expression. Both are ecumenical councils; both have been repeatedly ratified; both are reportedly true, which is John Meyendorff’s suggestion.[[30]](#footnote-30) It is precisely this dynamic energy of the inseparable union of both Divine and human natures, this miracle of incarnation, which transforms us by grace into what Christ is by nature: it is nothing less than the restoration of perfect manhood: it is our salvation in Christ.[[31]](#footnote-31)

*Interjecting*

But, it is exactly at this point that we must interject with our proposed solution and reject Chalcedon in its entirety.

“πνεῦμα ὁ θεός, καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας αὐτὸν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν.”

“God is Spirit: and those who worship Him, in spirit and in truth must worship.” — John 4:24

Πνεῦμα and φύσις speak if two distinct, incompatible realms; albeit, they parallel each other and intermingle with each other, because both are created. Even though ὁ θεός is not part of the realm of πνεῦμα, being its Creator, He is described as πνεῦμα, definitely not in any way, shape, or form ever to be described as φύσις. So, the linguistic slide from “μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη” to “ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστόν, υἱόν, κύριον, μονογενῆ, ἐκ δύο ***φύσεων*** [ἐν δύο ***φύσεσιν***]…”; from the denotative and explicit meaning for φύσις as a concrete instance of things as they exist in this material, physical universe, into the connotative and implicit meaning of properties of things in this material universe, to infinity and beyond into the chaos of loosely speaking any properties… spiritual or physical. Such a linguistic slide may suffice for common street conversation; but, it will never do for the precision required by theology, or any philosophical or otherwise sensitive field where every argument, every logic structure, every reason hangs on the mathematically precise, hairsplitting, meanings of words. We may have explained how Dyophysite theology (451) became the popular, trendy, buzzword theology; but, we have done so at great damage and expense to Ephesus Ⅰ’s (431) earlier Miaphysite expression. Miaphysitism is correct; Dyophysitism is incorrect; Dyophysitism is just sloppy theological expression: “πνεῦμα ὁ θεός” cannot be made into “φύσις ὁ θεός.”

For us, there can only be one correct theological statement of St. John’s high Christology as expressed in John 4:24; 1 John 2; 2 John; and elsewhere: namely, that the Son, Himself a divine Spirit or πνεῦμα changed His ὑπόστασις by adding to Himself a complete and perfect, now inseparable, human φύσις; without mixing the πνεῦμα and the φύσις; without diminishing or eliminating the properties of either the πνεῦμα or the φύσις: He is therefore Miaphysite or Monophysite[[32]](#footnote-32) in nature: He became and is forevermore, the ἓν-πνεῦμα-mia-φύσις, The God-man, Theanthropos, Theandros.

Of course, we do not speak for The Church; so, we await the approval or condemnation of the whole Christian Church on earth; yet, if we fail of such ratification, we quickly repent and denounce all our words: for we have no desire to be innovators, renegades, or heretics; we only seek to ferret out the Truth in history… which, we hope we have found, and this discussion adequately explains.

We begin again, where our previous discussion was interrupted:

*Resuming*

Twelve Anathemas[[33]](#footnote-33)

Quote:

1. If anyone will not confess that the Emmanuel is very God, and that therefore the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God, inasmuch as in the flesh she bore the Word of God made flesh [as it is written, “The Word was made flesh”] let him be anathema.[[34]](#footnote-34)

2. If anyone shall not confess that the Word of God the Father is united hypostatically to flesh, and that with that flesh of his own, he is one only Christ[[35]](#footnote-35) both God and man at the same time: let him be anathema.

3. If anyone shall after the [hypostatic] union divide the hypostases in the one Christ, joining them by that connection alone, which happens according to worthiness, or even authority and power, and not rather by a coming together, which is made by natural union: let him be anathema.

4. If anyone shall divide between two persons or subsistences those expressions which are contained in the Evangelical and Apostolical writings, or which have been said concerning Christ by the Saints, or by himself, and shall apply some to him as to a man separate from the Word of God, and shall apply others to the only Word of God the Father, on the ground that they are fit to be applied to God: let him be anathema.

5. If anyone shall dare to say that the Christ is a Theophorus [that is, God-bearing] man and not rather that he is very God, as an only Son through nature, because “the Word was made flesh,” and “has a share in flesh and blood as we do:” let him be anathema.

6. If anyone shall dare say that the Word of God the Father is the God of Christ or the Lord of Christ, and shall not rather confess him as at the same time both God and Man, since according to the Scriptures, “The Word was made flesh”: let him be anathema.

7. If anyone shall say that Jesus as man is only energized by the Word of God, and that the glory of the Only-begotten is attributed to him as something not properly his: let him be anathema.

8. If anyone shall dare to say that the assumed man ought to be worshipped together with God the Word, and glorified together with him, and recognized together with him as God, and yet as two different things, the one with the other (for this “Together with” is added [i.e., by the Nestorians] to convey this meaning); and shall not rather with one adoration worship the Emmanuel and pay to him one glorification, as [it is written] “The Word was made flesh”: let him be anathema.

9. If any man shall say that the one Lord Jesus Christ was glorified by the Holy Ghost, so that he used through him a power not his own and from him received power against unclean spirits and power to work miracles before men and shall not rather confess that it was his own Spirit through which he worked these divine signs; let him be anathema.[[36]](#footnote-36)

10. Divine Scripture says, that Christ became High Priest and Apostle of our confession, and that he offered himself for us a sweet-smelling savor to God the Father. Whosoever shall say that it is not the divine Word himself, when he was made flesh and had become man as we are, but another than he, a man born of a woman, yet different from him, who is become our Great High Priest and Apostle; or if any man shall say that he offered himself in sacrifice for himself and not rather for us, whereas, being without sin, he had no need of offering or sacrifice: let him be anathema.

11. Whosoever shall not confess that the flesh of the Lord giveth life and that it pertains to the Word of God the Father as his very own, but shall pretend that it belongs to another person who is united to him [i.e., the Word] only according to honor, and who has served as a dwelling for the divinity; and shall not rather confess, as we say, that that flesh giveth life because it is that of the Word who giveth life to all: let him be anathema.

12. Whosoever shall not recognize that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, that he was crucified in the flesh, and that likewise in that same flesh he tasted death and that he is become the first-begotten of the dead, for, as he is God, he is the life and it is he that giveth life: let him be anathema.

Analysis

It would seem that the reason Leo’s *Tome* was scrutinized carefully by evaluation with these *Twelve Anathemas* is that Leo’s *Tome* was known to be based on “Tertullian and Augustine”, not at all current with the fifth century drift of meanings.[[37]](#footnote-37) However, it is dangerous to assail Augustine’s precision in Greek; he worked under a Greek mentor, so that together they could perfect Latin publications: it is unlikely that a serious misunderstanding of Greek escaped Augustine’s attention. There is little evidence that Greek uses changed in the year between Augustine (354-430) and Ephesus Ⅰ (431). Also, it was critical that a misunderstanding of Latin nuances not confound the more authoritative Greek: this appears to be what actually happened in the final analysis; the Latins did not fully understand the Greek meanings, and chose a wording that satisfied them. Leo’s *Tome* (449) was presented, but refused reading, at Ephesus Ⅱ? (449), before Chalcedon (451): that’s a net span of only nineteen years from Augustine to Ephesus Ⅱ.

*In Other Words*

We can discuss the physical creation (φύσις) as a whole; related to one object in it (Cyril); by the characteristics (φύσις) of an object (Jesus has a complete human body, mind, soul, and spirit); or, by a very extended figure of speech, talk about characteristics (φύσις) in general, some of which may only exist outside of the physical creation. Already, we are on dangerous ground: such connotations and implicit uses indicate sloppy, and imprecise speech habits, which are intolerable in any professional technical discussion: I may call my disease something, but my doctor cannot; I may call my legal predicament something, but my lawyer cannot; I may call my edifice something, but my architect cannot. These theological arguments are going on among learned theologians, who are splitting every hair to justify their own opinion: it is unlikely that Cyril used the term, φύσις, in a loose or casual way. That Leo seems to have written carelessly, seems fairly obvious: but, Leo was first of all a Latin.

We believe from the Bible that the physical creation (φύσις) is paralleled by a complete spiritual (πνεῦμα), immaterial creation (ἀ-φύσις). We believe that God has created both of these; and thus, God is independent and outside of both of these creations. Since, Nicaea begins to talk about the ὁμο-ούσιον, it is important for us to see that this ὁμο-ούσιον is also completely outside of the spiritual (πνεῦμα), immaterial creation (ἀ-φύσις). So, even though God is described as spirit; He is, in no way, part of His spiritual (πνεῦμα), immaterial creation (ἀ-φύσις). Angels are part of that spiritual (πνεῦμα), immaterial creation (ἀ-φύσις): God is not.

We think of mankind as primarily a set of objects within the physical creation as a whole. However, the Scripture records that God endowed mankind equally with an immaterial human spirit; it is therefore necessary that this human spirit be part of the spiritual (πνεῦμα), immaterial creation (ἀ-φύσις). Any description of this human spirit in terms of physical creation is really off track; nor, can it be measured by any scientific instruments or means: yet, millions of people attest to its existence.

Moreover, God enters His spiritual and physical creations freely, by means that only He understands: we call this entry or communication of God, Revelation. Without Revelation, we could not know God at all. Similarly, angels traverse the spiritual and physical boundaries as part of their duties as servants of God and as servants of the human race. This differs quite a bit from the Greek idea of a perfect triangle, exiting only in the world of forms; for instance, a perfect triangle cannot possibly exist in the physical creation (φύσις): only corrupt copies can exist in the physical creation (φύσις).

When Jesus add to Himself a complete and perfect human nature, a physis, it is incredible to us that the word physis would also be used to describe that ὁμο-ούσιον, which the Son shares inseparably with the Father, and the Spirit, which ὁμο-ούσιον exists only outside of and distinct from creation. That we should pick a new word to describe the members of the Trinity individually, seems obviously necessary: that word is properly ὑπόστασις. Yet, three ὑπόστασεις are still entirely outside of creation. When Jesus adds to Himself a complete and perfect human nature, He is inseparably uniting that which is uncreated (His ὑπόστασις), with what is created (His physis), to make one new and changed ὑπόστασις, the hypostatic union. We are appalled to discover that Chalcedon has drafted the word physis to describe or name that which is uncreated (πνεῦμα and ἀ-φύσις): namely, the pre-incarnate ὑπόστασις (πνεῦμα) of the Son: Dyophysitism has always been incorrect….

It would appear, at this point, that we have won the argument… at least to our own satisfaction. In truth, we have won nothing. As we pointed out before, the problem is not solved by winning arguments. We can only hope, by continuing this line of reasoning, that we have gained some hope of absolution and respect for the anti-Chalcedonians. We hope that the anti-Chalcedonian position has gained some degree of theological credibility in your eyesight, as it certainly has with us.

*Leo’s Tome*

Leo’s *Tome* [[38]](#footnote-38) is far too lengthy to consider in its entirety; moreover, it is written in Latin: so, the linguistic barriers between English, Greek, and Latin are too formidable to breach with any certain outcome. It is obvious why the reading of Leo’s *Tome* was delayed; these same linguistic barriers prohibited instant understanding and analysis: it took days to perform a careful analysis of the *Tome*. Officially reading any uninspected manuscript with approval has all the risks of lighting a fuse attached to a keg labeled dynamite: the fuse may not be lit until the contents of the keg are certified to be nonexplosive. Similarly, it is obvious why Leo’s *Tome* was evaluated from the *Twelve Anathemas*, and not the other way around: again, the sheer length of Leo’s *Tome* prohibits the reverse procedure; the Latin language also prohibits the reverse procedure, since Greek was the standard language: the Latin vocabulary required evaluation for correct nuances of all sorts. In addition, Leo’s *Tome* is primarily concerned with Eutyches, and is not central to the present discussion. We found this one sentence of interest.

“Therefore, in consequence of this unity of person which is to be understood in both natures[[39]](#footnote-39), we read of the Son of Man also descending from heaven, when the Son of God took flesh from the Virgin who bore Him.”

We do not know what words Leo selected to represent the English ideas of person, natures, or took flesh. What is repugnant to us that the uncreated ὁμο-ούσιον, and the uncreated ὑπόστασεις could possibly be described by any words connected to the created φύσις or the equally created human spirit. The amazing, even miraculous, event of incarnation is spectacular precisely because two such spectacularly different things are joined in the hypostatic union. It is impossible to conceive of any more completely different things than that which is created in contrast with that which is uncreated. To learn that these are joined is unimaginable. How can we hear of such a great mystery without our mouths agape and our lower jaws on the ground in astonishment? How can we be told such wonders, without falling on our faces in awe and worship?

“But when during your cross-examination Eutyches replied and said, ‘I confess that our Lord had two natures before the union but after the union I confess but one,’ ”

Here, at least in English, Eutyches appears to apply the same word to both uncreated ὁμο-ούσιον, and the uncreated ὑπόστασεις: which we can’t support at all. Still, it is possible to get tangled up in the word, ὑπόστασις; so, insofar as the uncreated ὑπόστασις of the Son and God the Word, becomes the miraculous ὑπόστασις, by the addition of a complete and perfect, sinless man, called the hypostatic union, that the word ὑπόστασις might also be attached directly to the physis. In all honesty, this language is murky, confusing, and driven too much by runaway emotions and the power politics of Empire. The extant fracturing presses for immediate solution, and attendant peace in the Empire. It is possible that Eutyches was thrown under the bus to satisfy a hidden agenda. The conclusion was too hastily drawn. The outcome was further tragic fracturing.

Oxford Scholarship Online opines:

“Leo's decision to write letters offering theological teaching was a new departure for the papacy. The Tome was his most ambitious theological project; arguments against his authorship are weak. It is uncharacteristic of the main emphases of his theological development in previous years, where he had sought to coordinate rather than distinguish the two natures of Christ. It can best be understood as a response to what he thought to be the opposite errors of Eutyches and Nestorius. He revised his understanding of Nestorius when he was accused of Nestorianism in the aftermath of Chalcedon, and produced a more characteristic and satisfactory Christological statement in the Letter to the Palestinian monks.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

*Beginning of Ending*

Vladimer Moss writes:

“When we contemplate the extraordinary, all-devouring religious, political, economic and social phenomenon that is western civilization today, it is natural to ask: where and how did the whole tragic story begin?”[[41]](#footnote-41)

For us the answer is self-evident: it began around 325 when the Church, less-and-less saw itself as a spiritual entity; more-and more conceived of itself as a physical organization: when and as humility was replaced by pride; poverty was overcome by power; the way of crucifixion was replaced by murder, strife, and war. The True Church will continue in both East and West, wherever Christ-like humility, poverty, and following the way of the cross may be found. The false churches in both East and West are found, wherever the flesh, murder, power, pride, strife, war, and wealth prevail. These two distinct things are mixed within the human society, as tares and wheat are inseparably mixed. Yes, “western civilization today [is] an extraordinary, all-devouring religious, political, economic and social phenomenon.” Yet, within it, as within the rest of the world, the Christ-like, humble poor survive in catacombs of fidelity and obedience. He knows His own, and they follow Him.[[42]](#footnote-42) All of the ensuing Church history is glutted with gross wrongdoing; yet, even in the manure pile a flower grows….

*Conclusion*

This whole study has brought upon us considerable personal humiliation. Other voices of parallel discussion have followed, each with its own bias, each with its own self-assertions and self-justifications (Luke 10:29). All of these are dreadfully wrong.

Eventually, it dawned upon our own thick skulls that what is essentially wrong with this whole discussion is that eternal quest of humans, that stubborn insistence on being right at all costs: thus, it is wrong to be right… only God is that right. Having been put in our place, we now happily confess how glad we are to be wrong.

We are forced to conclude that the whole method of ecumenical councils is wrong. Even though the conclusions reached may be entirely correct, and we sincerely hope they are correct: they failed to exhibit the patience and love required of all disciples. Thus, the practice of all ecumenical councils after Acts 15, including Nicaea, rent the Church rather than healing it.

Today, we generally agree that Arius was wrong. The issue was not so clear in 325. Cyril of Jerusalem tried to be a peacemaker; he was branded with the very biased pejorative “Semi-Arian” for his troubles… why not Semi-Nicaean or Totally-Nicaean… since he concluded with that opinion. In spite of the ruling of Nicaea, nothing was solved; Arianism took control of Byzantium and persisted in the West for centuries; eventually, as knowledge of the Word of God grew, Arianism died out: today, Arianism, for all intents and purposes, is practically extinct… even though the rare Arian still survives. Would we not have done better with Arius had we lovingly and patiently born with him, avoiding the argument; had we allowed time for the Spirit to do His work?

All the same things may be said of Cyril of Alexandria, Eutyches, and Nestorius. Would we not have done better had we lovingly and patiently born with them, avoiding the arguments; had we allowed time for the Spirit to do His work?

Ironically, reading Cyril of Jerusalem brings a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes as he convicts me of my sinfulness; reading Cyril of Alexandria has the opposite effect… his reputation of extreme arrogance is apparent.

Many murders, wars, and much other wrongdoing resulted from the ecumenical councils. Even today, we are unable to repair the breaches in the Church. We want nothing more or less than to be in one communion with all our brothers and sisters in Christ. What concept of Christian hospitality entertains guests in our house and turns these same guests away from a place at the table?

The ecumenical councils may have been right: but, they were all fundamentally wrong. Arguments can only be lost: they can never be won. Please allow me to be wrong.

“Ὁ θεός, ἱλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.” — Luke 18:13[[43]](#footnote-43)

“Ἰησοῦ, μνήσθητί μου ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.” — Luke 23:42[[44]](#footnote-44)

“I know that with my arrival[[45]](#footnote-45) fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the little flock. Out of you yourselves men will stand up, speaking well established perversions[[46]](#footnote-46), to wrench away the disciples after themselves.” — Acts 20:29-30

*Results*

* The reversal, brought about by the legalization of Christianity (313)[[47]](#footnote-47), Nicaea (325), affirmation of Christianity as the state religion (380)[[48]](#footnote-48), and other sweeping events of the early fourth century brought about violent psychological changes among Christians; changes not unlike Stockholm Syndrome[[49]](#footnote-49) in some of their effects. Many jumped to the irrational kneejerk conclusion that having been persecuted, Christians should now become persecutors. The ensuing strife and violence is anti-Christian and unworthy of biblical ethics: this is not Christian or Christianity. Many others, treasuring the sainthood of the martyrs from the first three centuries, continued in the pursuit of humility, often in some form of monasticism: this is the first Catacomb Church; this is the true Church. Christians are called to take up their crosses and die with and for Christ as His true body; they are not called to become killers, which is the denial of His Name: such sin is clearly forbidden.
* These cultural reversals led many to draw the incorrect theological conclusion from Daniel 2, that “the stone cut without hands” was Constantine’s Empire: that Rome was thrown down by New Rome. Instead, we believe that Rome survives in the Empire and is just as much under attack by “the stone cut without hands” as Old Rome: which also includes the British Empire, the Russian Empire, the United States, and all other human governments that pit themselves against the Kingdom of God, as all human governments eventually do. Thus, there is no hope of redemption in human made Monarchies, wherever they are found. We believe that “the stone cut without hands” is Christ Himself and His Church, and not any human government that comes after Him.
* Eusebius of Caesarea writes of Constantine in such glowing terms that he approaches blasphemy in his comparisons of Constantine to Christ. Consequently, we believe that Eusebius’ *Church History* must be read with an eye to rejecting his exaggerated and expansive claims… these must be strained out to understand the true history in progress. Eusebius is an effective public relations officer for Constantine and Empire; he is a victim of the same psychological aberrations that moved Christians to become killers.
* Constantine becomes the first nascent Pope; he conceives of himself as a bishop, the head of the Empire, with oversight of all other bishops, and he acts accordingly. This leads to jealousy with Old Rome; to the ongoing arguments about where the Papacy belongs, and more. We reject all hierarchical government as the unbiblical machinations of Empire: this is why God destroyed them, or allowed them to be destroyed… Byzantium, Britain, Russia… with more to come. Empire is not the way of Christ. Monarchy is not the way of Christ. Trineocracy is the way of Christ. Humiliation is the way of Christ.
* Ecumenical Councils all defy the principles or concepts that were laid down in Acts 15. These Councils change doctrine into dogma, eventually becoming public law, enforceable by the Emperor.[[50]](#footnote-50) Dogma will multiply, so, recreating a neo-Judaizing of rules, not of the Spirit: thus, the principle that nothing be added to or subtracted from Scripture is openly defied. Consciences are coerced everywhere.
* The word priest is used to describe Presbyters for the first time: thus, rearranging and redefining all the biblical offices of the Church, especially denying the priesthood of all believers. Calvin fails to find a truly biblical solution: he has modified the definitions of the offices.

This is Judaizing, Pharisaism, and/or Sadduceeism warmed over: with the emphasis on the physical, rather than the spiritual. We are not quite sure what to call what was created; but, it is not the Church: the Church lives on, in the Catacombs. The collapse of so-called earthly Christianity did not begin with The Great Schism in 1054. It began, evidently in the fourth century, when men began to believe that domination was the way of Christ. While ΙΣ ΧΣ ΝΙΚΑ is still true; the conquest is one of the heart, mind, and Spirit, never, ever of the flesh. Constantine, though he appears to be sincere in his faith, is not the new Messiah. The Empire is not a legitimate expression of Biblical Christianity.

This attitude of Empire will continue to poison all of Christianity to the present day. It infiltrates and influences Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, as well as Protestantism. Fortunately, the meek and humble poor have always found a way to hide in its shadows as the Catacomb Church. All within Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism have not drunk from this toxic well: but, many have. Power mad, they continue to throw their weight around, bullying and oppressing others. Nevertheless, the essence of Christianity can never be physical, it can only be spiritual.

“It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life.” — John 6:63

“For if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die: but, if you by the Spirit kill the deeds of the body, you will live.” — Romans 8:13

“Furthermore, we have had fleshly fathers who corrected us. We respected them: how much more, will we not be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? — Hebrews 12:9

“Because, for this purpose the gospel was also preached to those who are dead; so that, they who were judged according to fleshly human [standards], might live according to God’s [standards] in spirit.” — 1 Peter 4:6

[[51]](#footnote-51)

1. A familiar prayer found in worship: for example, Papadeas, Fr. George (editor and translator), The Divine Liturgy of St. John The Chrysostom (Patmos Press, South Daytona, 2008), page 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is the familiar language of C. S. Lewis, found throughout his popular fantasy, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. John 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This is a mystery of internal contradiction, a self-defying conflict of impossibility: for, by definition, the Church cannot be rent. The Church is, was, and ever shall be only One. It is this difference between the obvious definition and the physical reality which drives our perplexing study of fourth and fifth century Christianity. Since the Church cannot possibly be split; how was it split: what is the meaning of this rending for all of Christian life? Hebrews 12:22-29 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Although, many of the Greek philosophers would insist that it was the world of the forms that was real; while the ***φύσις*** (physis), they would claim, was the corrupted, distorted, and flawed theoretical abstraction, not an actuality. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Paul refers to his arrival in heaven; which would be a departure from earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. These διεστραμμένα are in the perfect passive: the most likely source of these is Jewish fables, such as Oral Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Standard historical summaries are nearly worthless. The discerning reader must eventually set them all aside and strive to approach original evidence. We must not read about Eusebius of Caesarea. We must read Eusebius of Caesarea, himself… in his original language if at all possible. Standard historical summaries are loaded with biases and presuppositions about truth; if we read enough of them, we eventually see that they contradict each other: if we want to unravel the contradictions, we must struggle with the originals. Standard historical summaries also provide an oversimplified place to start, and a way to fill gaps where our limitations block our paths. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Revelation 22:18-20; Deuteronomy 4:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arius>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius_of_Nicomedia>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origen>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pamphilus_of_Caesarea>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorius> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. An interesting defense of Nestorius is found at:

    <https://www.academia.edu/384037/The_Lynching_of_Nestorius_Cyril_The_Strongman_of_Alexandria>

    We might just as easily have written about the lynching of Arius. Here is a profound paper showing that we don’t fully understand Justinian either, and that the process of wrongful bullying continues:

    <https://www.academia.edu/37886926/538_A.D._and_the_Transition_from_Pagan_Roman_Empire_to_Holy_Roman_Empire_Justinians_Metamorphosis_from_Chief_of_Staffs_to_Theologian_b_Edwin_de_Kock_and_Koot_van_Wyk> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Evidently, WCC has multiple presidents in office at the same time. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. This is John’s teaching in 1 John and elsewhere, not my own: John sets the High Christology watermark, which all of us are obliged to reach. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This word is not uncontested. Evidently some earlier Christian writers condemned it as heretical. It is not a Biblical term (at least we did not find it in Hatch and Redpath, pages 993 or appendix 123). If the article on Eusebius is correct it possibly originated from Constantine himself from Hermes, a pagan source, in which case Constantine could be guilty of imposing pagan resources and paganism upon the Church.

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeticism> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Indeed, none of these words appear to be Biblical. The Latin translations are even worse in that they introduce an idea of concrescence for God in using the word, substantia or substance: God is Spirit, He has no concrescence or substance. The West needs to find a less offensive word than substance for the Godhead or Godhood. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. According to John in 1 John 2, and in 2 John [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cyril of Alexandria (376-444) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Σεσαρκωμένη: perfect middle or passive participle, feminine nominative singular of σαρκάω – to tear flesh, or σαρκόω – to make flesh or strong (Liddell-Scott-Jones) σαρκοῦμαι (Valsamis), σαρκέω, σάρξω, or σαρξέω: to make flesh; to clothe or wrap in flesh (modern: incarcerate). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril_of_Alexandria>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miaphysitism>

    <http://classicalchristianity.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/St.-Cyril-of-Alexandria%E2%80%99s-Miaphysite-Christology-and-Chalcedonian-Dyophysitism.pdf>

    <https://afkimel.wordpress.com/2016/01/11/st-cyril-of-alexandria-the-one-incarnate-nature-of-christ/> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. ibid, especially:

    <http://classicalchristianity.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/St.-Cyril-of-Alexandria%E2%80%99s-Miaphysite-Christology-and-Chalcedonian-Dyophysitism.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. All of the following were discovered by poking around endless hours in Pantelia, Maria, Project Director, *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG): <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/index.php>

    We wish to give full credit for this resource; but, this is an exceedingly difficult study: we aren’t always able to recover our own paper trail, once we have left it.

    We attempted to reconstruct this resource in chronological order. All mistakes are ours. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. What exactly does Gregory intend by this term? We’re not going to accuse Gregory of Monothelitism, are we? [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Note how the meaning of the word has shifted from meaning concrete instance to meaning nature), unconfounded, unchanged, without exception, inseparable … in one face and one basis, not one in two faces divided or separated. Εἰς πρόσωπον has taken over the use of μία φύσις: they mean approximately the same thing.

    <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/demo/tsearch.jsp#s=10σεσαρκω>

    <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/lsj/atσεσαρκωμένη> (nominative), σεσαρκωμένην (accusative or rare dual?), σεσαρκωμένον (masculine accusative), etc.

    <http://reasonablechristian.blogspot.com/2012/12/the-definition-of-chalcedon-in-english.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. This expression, gods by nature, comes as close as anything to assigning physicality to that which is spiritual. However, the idols have no spirituality, so this expression mocks their physical limitations: since, they are not living. The only argument for the spiritual realm would require introducing the issue of demonic involvement: but, the spiritual nature of demons is created…. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Here Peter seems to write of the physicality of the divine nature; however, we believe that this refers to the incarnation by which we come into fellowship [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. What exactly does Gregory intend by this term? We’re not going to accuse Gregory of Monothelitism, are we? [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril_of_Alexandria>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miaphysitism>

    <http://classicalchristianity.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/St.-Cyril-of-Alexandria%E2%80%99s-Miaphysite-Christology-and-Chalcedonian-Dyophysitism.pdf>

    <https://afkimel.wordpress.com/2016/01/11/st-cyril-of-alexandria-the-one-incarnate-nature-of-christ/>

    <http://classicalchristianity.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/St.-Cyril-of-Alexandria%E2%80%99s-Miaphysite-Christology-and-Chalcedonian-Dyophysitism.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This works in English, were mono means one. It is technically incorrect in Greek: for, μόνος is the related adverb meaning alone or only, which is not properly used in a numerical sense (one). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Some spellings were changed: [www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/cyrilofalex\_twelve\_anathemas.htm](http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/cyrilofalex_twelve_anathemas.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. At least part of the confusion here is that Christ also indicates God. To say that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed is also to insist that Jesus is God; even though some could argue, not necessarily: this is, we believe, the common Apostolic meaning. Mother of Jesus was never suggested. This appears to be a knee-jerk, over reaction. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Note how Cyril’s own language insists that Christ includes the Godhead. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. This is doubtless true; yet, difficult to discern: since, the Son and the Spirit seem to be inseparable companions. Indeed, the indivisible oneness of the ὁμο-ούσιον suggests that Father, Son, and Spirit always participate together in some mystical way. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. <http://classicalchristianity.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/St.-Cyril-of-Alexandria%E2%80%99s-Miaphysite-Christology-and-Chalcedonian-Dyophysitism.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3604028.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. But this very word could hide the subtlety of φύσις, which we protest. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199534951.001.0001/acprof-9780199534951-chapter-6>

    Our following somewhat biased summary does epitomize the historic setting. It is evident that Leo was moving to establish and solidify his power base in Rome: he is setting the stage for Old Rome to again be the Capital of the Empire. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. <https://www.academia.edu/27503946/HOW_THE_WEST_FELL_FROM_GRACE_1003-1204_> [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. John 10:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. God, let me be pardoned, the sinner. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Jesus, let me be remembered when you come in your kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Paul refers to his arrival in heaven; which would be a departure from earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. These διεστραμμένα are in the perfect passive: the most likely source of these is Jewish fables, such as Oral Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Edict of Milan [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Edict of Thessalonica [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockholm_syndrome> [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. If this is not yet clear to us, it should become clear when Justinian legally terminates Old Rome, inaugurates the Papacy, and founds the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, the existence of the Caesaropapism Empire is now locked in combat with the Papocaesarism Empire. The dogmatic implications of this become clear as Justinian incorporates Christian doctrine into his Code, changing that doctrine into dogma, subject to official legalized state persecution.

    <https://www.academia.edu/37886926/538_A.D._and_the_Transition_from_Pagan_Roman_Empire_to_Holy_Roman_Empire_Justinians_Metamorphosis_from_Chief_of_Staffs_to_Theologian_b_Edwin_de_Kock_and_Koot_van_Wyk> [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)