they have their reward. But why do children do good? Because their father bids them do it.

And just here lies all the secret that there is in this much discussed Sermon on the Mount. How hard, men say, it is; who among us can live up to it? The difficulty with it is not that it is so hard, but that it is so easy. The child does what the father bids him, does it simply, does it easily. But he must be a child first. Hard? The Sermon on the Mount is either easy or else it is altogether impossible.

The Person of our Lord.

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I.

The Definition of the Fourth General Council has proved to be the high-water mark of confessional Christology, though not quite the latest of conciliar utterances on the subject. Not, however, because it solved the problem, for that it did not attempt; it did not even state the difficulty which faith offers to the intellect, and its careful phrasing rather concealed than harmonized the divergent tendencies which in the middle of the fifth century distracted the Church. On the contrary, it has owed its long prominence to the fact that it tried to formulate only the core of truth which is the minimum that faith feels it necessary to say on the mystery of the Incarnate Person. It would be a mistake to ask of any creed what it cannot give—an explanation either of the Person or of the Work of our Saviour. For its function is a different one. Dogmatic theology, indeed, working on the facts, and calling in such aid as it may find in other fields of science or of philosophy, may essay to penetrate a little way into a phenomenon so unprecedented as the Life of Jesus; and so long as this is done in the reverent and cautious temper which befits a sacred mystery, it seems to me to be within its rights. But the definitions of ancient creeds were meant to serve a purpose, humbler, and yet more necessary. They were an attempt to stake off the limits of that area which the Church had come to claim as reserved for faith and sacred to it; marking it off by certain assured points which she believed to be guaranteed at once by the witness of Holy Scripture and by her own consciousness of salvation in Christ.

Ever since the time of Irenæus, leading representatives of Christian thought had been contributing materials towards the ascertainment of what is vital to the Christian Faith in its central Object; and throughout the protracted controversies of the dogma-building period, what had continually turned the scale between rival opinions and determined the final judgment of the Church, was more than anything else the soteriological interests involved. The service which at Chalcedon the Latin West rendered to Christendom through Leo's valuable though prolix Letter to Flavian, was one of the same kind. No better service could at that conjuncture have been rendered to theology than just to recall both sets of disputants to those central conditions of the Christological problem which must always be prescribed to theological inquiry by the religious faith of Christian men in their Redeemer.

The Chalcedonian definitions are in part positive, in part negative. The positive are limited to two points. First, the true Deity and the complete Humanity of our Lord are affirmed. So much of net result had accrued on the one hand from the long fight with Arianism, on the other from the yet longer resistance to a docetic Christology, culminating in its most seductive shape of Apollinarism. 'The Catholic Church,' in Leo's words, 'lives by this faith, and by this faith makes progress that in Christ Jesus neither is the Humanity to be believed without true Divinity, nor the Divinity without true Humanity.' And this result, at least, of the first five centuries of discussion, is accepted by the latest Ritschlian writer on the 'Gottheit Christi,' Hermann Schultz of Göttingen—however far in many ways he and the school to which he belongs may deviate from the traditional dogma. The second positive affirmation of Chalcedon stands equally firm—the

singleness of our Saviour's blessed Person: 'one and the same Christ'—whichever of the two disputed readings you adopt in the clause that follows: 'recognized in two natures,' or 'out of two natures' (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν, or ἐκ δύο φύσεων). For I need not stay to discuss the grounds which persuade the bulk of modern scholars to prefer the Western to the Eastern preposition.

These two are the only positive fixed positions, but they are the essential ones. The famous negative adverbs by which Nestorian and Eutychian extremes were shut out are secondary—how far subordinate, I shall not presume to say. At any rate they are no more than danger-flags warning divines against the two forbidden extremes of speculation on the debated question of the relation of Humanity and Divinity to each other. That relation must at least be of such a kind that from it shall issue a unity of Personal Life; neither so loose a union as splits into two personal subjects, or centres of the conscious and moral life, the one theanthropic Saviour of men; nor so close a union as to give us a *tertium quid* that cannot be called either God or Man. This service of danger-signals the famous adverbs have ever since rendered to a surprising extent, as students of the history will recognize. Between the forbidden limits, to be sure, theology has found a fairly wide range of permissible inquiry. Only no solution which divines may put forward by way of explanation or solution can be acceptable to faith, which either (1) denies to our Lord essential divinity, or (2) mutilates the completeness and invades the reality of His humanity, or (3) takes away the singleness of Christ's Person, or (4) merges into one His Deity and Humanity.

To 'surround in this way the speculative theologians with a hedge' (to use Harnack's metaphor) is possibly the main function and use of creeds, to which it might have been well if all later symbolic documents had limited themselves. But, unfortunately, in doing this the Chalcedonian formula adopted without misgiving current technical terms of philosophy which were extremely familiar to the theological disputants of the age, and by adopting them conferred upon them confessional sanction. One of these terms, indeed, was no stranger to the vocabulary of the creeds. When Nicæa, to secure the essential Deity of the Second Person in the Godhead, inserted in its symbol the word οὐσία as a loan word from philosophy, it took the first step on a questionable road. Every student of Church history knows how keenly the innovation was resented, and what a part the objectionable word ὁμοούσιος (for which Athanasius himself had no particular liking) played in embittering and prolonging the opposition which the Nicean Creed encountered. The word had, since the year 325, done its work as a stronghold against the fluctuating and multiform types of semi-Arianism, and might have been allowed to rest now that that battle was over. But the first step forward which Chalcedon took was to extend the application of the famous adjective to our Lord's humanity as well as to His Deity: ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. Already one has to observe here that the word is not employed in both cases in the same sense. Christ's substance as Man is only the same as ours in the sense in which the individuals of the same species are alike; or, as it is explained by the Creed itself, κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας = 'like us in every respect, sin excepted.' But this is not at all the sense in which the Church affirms the Three Distinctions in the Holy Trinity to be 'of one substance.' The οὐσία, or essence of Godhead—that which makes God to be what He is—is not *specifically* identical only in all the Three Blessed Persons, but is *numerically* identical, one and the same: a single essence.

Moreover, Chalcedon took another long step on this questionable road. It might have saved a good deal of subsequent debate had this highly abstract term οὐσία, whose footing was already secured in confessional speech, been alone employed in Greek, with of course for the West its equivalent 'substantia' as a *vox technica* in Western divinity current since the days of Tertullian, or its better translation 'essentia,' more recently introduced, I think, by Augustine. No safer, because no vaguer, term of the schools could be found to denote what we are obliged to think of as Godhead, or that unsearchable Somewhat in which inhere all those powers and attributes of Spirit-life which make up our conception of Deity. But a new and less happy synonym was introduced into the doctrinal definitions of this Council: φύσις = *natura*. Of course the Council only accepted this word because it was, and had been for some time the catchword of contending parties in the Church. It was probably felt that in no other

way could the error of the Eutychians be explicitly condemned than by declaring in opposition to their teaching that our Lord is to be acknowledged 'in two natures'—'the distinction between which is by no means abolished through their union.' It could be pled, too, that the phrase 'two natures' applied to our Lord had been more or less at home in Church language since Origen. It remains true all the same that this was giving conciliar authority to a word which in such a connexion lay open to more than one objection. With all that recent Ritschlian writers have been repeating in criticism, even in scornful rejection, of the 'Two Natures Doctrine,' I by no means find myself in agreement, as I shall try to explain later on. But the word itself I am compelled to regard as an unfortunate one in this connexion. For one thing, alike in its Greek and in its Latin dress, alike by etymology and by usage, 'nature' connotes something which has come to be, a derived originated thing, in short, a creature, the life or activity of which is straitly determined for it by the mode of its origin and the laws under which it has come into existence. It suggested this then, and it suggests it still more to-day. Wherefore we moderns have come to employ the word for the complex of the physical universe: more and more with a material connotation—the World, as not even including, rather excluding, the unseen world of spiritual being. The word fitted fairly well, therefore, to denote what we call 'human nature,' the composite and originated constitution of our species as a part of the wider world of nature. But it did not so well suit the simple, unbeginning, and unchanging Being of God. In popular language, perhaps, one may occasionally speak of the 'Divine Nature'—as even a New Testament writer does—without being misunderstood. But its introduction into theological, and still more into confessional, speech tended to confusion of thought, and had (as we shall see) harmful results. At the very least, the word means one thing when you speak of the human nature of Jesus, and a very different thing when you speak of His Divine nature. And the transference of a word with such associations to the pure and self-existent Personal Spirit, whose simple essence is known only by His changeless acts of knowing and willing—was to give apparent sanction to physical ideas where spiritual alone were in place. When the Son of God united human nature with Himself, He assumed as His own and as the sphere of His earthly life a complicated and composite whole, having a natural origin, and forming part of the natural world, made up of fleshly body, animal soul, and rational spirit; a whole humanity, the limits and the processes and the laws of which are more or less familiar. But if He who assumed our nature was a Divine Person, then He brought with Him into the union nothing which you can describe as at all comparable or commensurate with human nature, not a second *natura* of the same or similar kind with the one He assumed, but just the resources of His spiritual Personality, His eternal and unchangeable spiritual powers of being.

And here we encounter yet other terms of the philosophers which no earlier Œcumenical Council than that of 451 had inserted in its creed: the words: *πρόσωπον*, otherwise *ὑπόστασις* (for I think the two are meant as synonymous). The use of those metaphysical terms, I admit, was not only amply sustained by the long custom of theologians (though not by the example of earlier Catholic creeds); it seems to me to have been here unavoidable, since it was in the single Personality of Christ that the Council saw the only meeting-place and certain point of union for the 'two natures.' Again the terms are taken over from the earlier doctrine of the Trinity; yet again without taking any notice of the fact that they are not employed in precisely the same sense. Personality is not ascribed to the Sacred Three Distinctions within the unity of Godhead in the same sense in which we are conscious of ourselves as Human Persons. The Church teaches a triple distinction within the Personality of God: Each of the Sacred Three possessing that Personality with a difference, which permits us to speak of personal relationships with Each Other; but it does not simply transfer to the Three such a separate selfhood as we are conscious of possessing in ourselves. If it transfer the word 'Person,' it does so only under careful safeguards. How far this may affect the doctrine that the Person of the Son is become the Personal Centre and focus of our Lord's Human Nature, is a point which I do not remember to have ever seen discussed. Setting that aside, however, there remains the difficulty of placing in so central a position in Christology a term so little understood as '*Person*.' The ancient fathers were unquestionably right in their feeling that Personality and Nature, though

never actually found in separation, are yet quite distinguishable in thought. But the psychology of the ancients never attained to a quite clear conception of personality as now understood. The famous definition, formulated by the writer who so long passed under the name of Boethius, was for centuries current in the schools: 'Persona est naturæ rationalis individua substantia.' It does not get beyond the notion of individuality. It is only since the time of Locke that personality in the proper sense, of self-conscious selfhood, has come to be one of the foremost, if not the foremost, question in psychology. And it is not too much to say that in view of the new meaning which we moderns have come to attach to this word, much may call for revision in the future, both in our traditional Trinitarianism and in the doctrine of our Lord's Person.

Such criticisms as I have now passed on the metaphysical terms of Chalcedonian Christology certainly do not predispose us to expect from further discussion along those lines any very clear or satisfactory result; especially when we recollect that it was precisely around those ill-defined terms of the schools—two natures united in one person, that christological debate had for two hundred years revolved, and was fated still to revolve for centuries to come. The few fixed points laid down in 451, valuable as they are to faith, offer us nothing better than hard and meagre outlines of a *doctrine*. A Being who combines in an inscrutable fashion Divine with Human properties, and of whom consequently contradictory assertions may be made, whose single Person is Divine, while His dual natures hold an undefined relation to one another: this is not a scheme to satisfy either head or heart. It is but the bare skeleton of a dogma, in which one cannot readily recognize either the Jesus of the Gospels or the Christ of the Church's worship. It needs to be filled up with the details of our Saviour's earthly life, and with the meaning of His saving work as Revealer of the Father and Redeemer of man, before we can see in Him the Person whom Christians trust and love.

Yet it is surprising how long and how completely the Latin Church remained content with the formula of Leo as the Council accepted it. The long interval from Charlemagne till the Reformation contributed nothing of consequence to Christology. So far from betraying any speculative need for the unifying of the Incarnate Life as the East had done, mediæval divinity was satisfied to set the Godhead of our Lord alongside His humanity with the loosest conceivable relationship between them. God being thought of by the schoolmen in His metaphysical unchangeableness was too unlike the creature for any real union of the one with the other to be thinkable. In assuming manhood, the Deity could only set Itself into a new relationship, and begin to operate through a new organ, nothing more. Once only in the twelfth century, when the Master of Sentences went so far as to infer that the Son of God in taking humanity as a robe to wear could not be said to have become anything other or different from what He was before, did the Christian instinct of the Church take fright, so that his Nihilianism was condemned at a Lateran Council. None the less Scotist and Thomist for once agreed that the human soul of Jesus can be but an organ for the manifestation of the Divine. So long as the Deity of our Redeemer was present to impart to His saving Passion an infinite value, it mattered nothing that the earthly life of growth and limitation receded before the overmastering Divineness of the Son of God, till they became logically mere appearances of human growth and limitation. So far from stumbling at the fact that a whole series of affirmations could be made concerning the God-Man which stood in open contradiction to each other, mediæval devotion seems positively to revel in such contradictions. Anselm was one of the acutest reasoners of the Middle Age; yet let any one read his *Meditations*, and he will see how he labours the seeming unreasonableness of this sacred mystery. Faith adoring the God-Man exults in glorious contradictions which baffle intellect.

While the Latin West before Luther never took kindly to the problem which our Lord's Person presents to the thinking of Christendom (for the brief Adoptionist speculation of Spanish divines swiftly crushed by Alcuin was but a momentary exception), that problem exerted a positive fascination over the Eastern mind. Alike the subtle Greek and the meditative Syrian made the problem their own, wrestled with it, split the Churches over it, and century after century, with a pathetic tenacity, while little by little the intellectual atmosphere grew murkier and light after light of scholarship and science went out, hung over the mystery which they could not resolve, as the central mystery of their faith.