

SHORT STUDY PAPER

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL CONFLICTS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST'S TWO SUBSTANCES

I have been investigating the subject of Textual Criticism and Biblical Revisionism since the early 1970s, and then added the early Christological Controversies into this study because I became convinced that they were tri-mingled. I then became aware of the two differing schools of Antioch and Alexandria and their influences. I soon discovered that the Antiochian School began as an IN CHURCH OR OLD SCHOOL church related school, and while the Alexandrian school and church, John Mark gathered and founded, was so originally, yet it did not continue on very long after his departure. These points led into the widened study of early Christology, Biblical Revisionism, and Ecclesiology.

In the process of the past nearly 25 years I have become more aware of the following point:

Those whom the Establish Catholic and Protestant writers condemned and denounced as heretics, may not have been such at all, they simply differed greatly from the evolving concepts of the growing Imperial Church and Ministers.

Early Biblical Revisionism

I became aware that Biblical Revisionism first appeared in the early ages of the Christian Churches. In fact, this was going on before the death of John the Beloved. As I studied an ever-growing number of writers, both Protestant and Catholic, I became aware that early Textual Revisionism and the so-called Corrections, centered mostly on Jesus Christ and His two-fold natures. The early reactions to Jesus Christ, among those who were processed Christians in some degree of another, were either directed toward *how* Christ was divine or how He was human.

The First Two Ecumenical Councils

As I went on, I found out that the first two Ecumenical Councils tried to shape and determine the faith of all men in an effort to settle these points. Other Councils would follow. The Nicene Council concerned itself with overall theology and how that God the Father was supposed to be the Father and Source of the Godhead. This is nothing more than mythological Zeusism in a so-called Christian garb. I found out that the Second Council was supposed to define what professed Christians were to believe about Mary and her position as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit and the Mother of God. This is nothing more than Sameramis and the Old Babylonian culture again under a Christian garb.

Not Dead Issues

I thought these mostly were dead issues of the past. However, as I continued on, I have found out that these same issues have occupied a place of great controversy in the succession of the faith and truth as it is in Christ Jesus. I discovered that Christians have been contesting among themselves the issues

about the *Substances of Christ*, both His Deity and His Manhood, even among Particular Baptists, up unto the late 1800s and the early 1900s. The First World War brought a halt to the *rapid increase* of knowledge that began about 1840.

Enter Brother Leroy and his amazing church site. Brother Leroy has spent a small fortune gathering and scanning many, many volumes written by the older Particular Baptist authors. He has posted up works covering both sides of these and other important questions, so believers can study and come to conclusions themselves. From the writings of these older Particular Baptist writers, I have discovered how that the questions of Christ's two substances have continued to be issues among our Particular Baptist ancestors, both English and American, up into the 1900s.

Brother Leroy has posted up two wonderful works by an English high Grace Particular Baptist of the anti-Nicene concepts, William Styles. His works cover his experiences from about 1860 up to about 1900. They give us much info about the Downgrader Controversy, the Sonship Controversy and the position of the anti-Nicene Particular Baptists who fellowship around the *Earthen Vessel* in opposition to the Nicene or Calvinistic Particular Baptists who fellowship around Philpot and *The Gospel Standard*. I know there were other groups, but these two seemed to represent the High Grace Particular Baptists.

In America, the Particular Baptists came to a division over Fullerism, with the Old and New School groups, and other independent groups who remained as they were, not going with either group. In American, such Old School men as Beebe and Trott represented the anti-Nicene concepts while Clark and his friends represented the Nicene concepts. Clark even went so far as to denounce Trott and others, as Arians. They responded by denouncing Clark as a Tri-Theist. Many of the Old School men of that era were both anti-Nicene and Sabellians. There is no need to embrace Sabellianism in order to denounce Niceneism. The underlying concept of these two great divisions was HOW IS JESUS DIVINE, and HOW IS HE HUMAN?

The Imperial Councils said that Jesus was divine because He was God the Word and God the Father did generate God the Word into a distinct Being before creation. They went so far as to claim that God the Word was the offspring of God the Father. God the Word was the only generated God while God the Father was the only ingenerate God. Soon, they would also add the Holy Spirit as coming out of God the Father but not by generation or creation, but by Eternal Procession. I am just now entering into those debates and decisions of the Imperial Councils over the issue of Pneumatology. I will continue on, I hope, and share the results of my researches as I have been doing with these former issues.

The Main Issues

So, the issue here was *HOW IS JESUS DIVINE?* Is God the Word a self-existent, self-sufficient, immutable Divine Being, or is He a generated Divine Being with His Father's divine nature passed on to Him by eternal generation? The Dissenters denied what then became known as eternal generation.

Equally as involved were the controversies over the Human Substance of Jesus Christ. Up until the time of the Second Ecumenical Council, and the official adoption of Mariology, the early Christian writers were nearly split as to the origin of the substance of Jesus Christ in His manhood. Some said that He had heavenly flesh and substance from God His Father. Others said that He had flesh

and substance from Mary His mother. In time, with the help of the adoption of Mariology, the Imperial concepts would evolve into a form of mutantism. Jesus Christ, in His incarnate body, was the result of the Holy Spirit's visiting Mary and giving Christ one commingling nature and making Him into a person Who was partly God and partly Man.

How the Manhood of Jesus Christ joined with His Deity also became a hotly contested subject in the Second Ecumenical Council under the disguise of condemning Nestorianism. So now, Christians were to reject Nestorianism and receive Mariology. The recent discovery of Nestorius's own works has proven that the charges made against him and his condemnation as a heretic, were unjustified and that he was among those who opposed the rapidly growing trend of Mariology.

The Apollinarians and Nestorians

The Apollinarians and Nestorians became terrible heretics because they would not consent to the growing blasphemy of Mariology. The condemnation of Apollinarius is a very strange case within itself. While he was alive, he was one of the most feared and respected defenders of the Christian faith and well spoken about among most of his brethren of that era. After he died it was a different matter.

The Apollinarian Heresy

The jealous Imperialists who lusted after more power and influence found fault with Apollinarius because, in his definition of the human substance of Christ, he defined Christ as having a human soul. The imperialists denied that and said that Apollinarius should have said a **RATIONAL** human soul. Because he refused to say rational in his definition of Christ's manhood, he became denounced as a heretic. I have this material documented in my growing study, *Re-Thinking the Heretics*.

Apollinarius believed both in the *heavenly origin* of Christ's flesh and His *Antiquity as the Eternal God-Man* before creation. The Imperialists later would condemn his wrings because he included John the Baptist's statement about Christ, *that He was a man Who is preferred before me for He was before me*. It is a wonder that the Imperialists have not corrected that statement by omitting it from their Bibles.

So, in conclusion, let me place this final summation here, taken from *Theodoret*, in his *Church History* soon following Eusebius:

The short chapter on the Incarnation has a special value in view of the author's connection with the Nestorian Controversy. "It is worth while," he writes in it, "to exhibit what we hold concerning the Incarnation, for (p. 52) this exposition proclaims more clearly the providence of the God of all. In his forged fables Valentinus maintained a distinction between the only-begotten and the Word, and further between the Christ within the pleroma and Jesus, and also the Christ who is without. He said that Jesus became man, by putting on the Christ that is without, and assuming a body of the substance of the soul; and that He made a passage only through the Virgin, having assumed nothing of the nature of man. (That is, of her fallen and Adamic Nature-REP)

Basilides in like manner distinguished between the only-begotten, the Word and the Wisdom.

Cerdon, on the other hand, Marcion, and Manes, said that the Christ appeared as man, though he had nothing human. (This means that He was in the likeness of the fallen and sinful nature, not did not really have the actual fallen and sinful nature, REP)

Cerinthus intained that Jesus was generated of Joseph and Mary after the common manner of men, but that the Christ came down from on high on Jesus. (In those days writers, even such as Tertullian and Novation, did not distinguish clearly between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, REP)

The Ebionites, the Theodotians, the Artemonians, and Photinians said that the Christ was bare man born of the Virgin. (Not Theodoret the historian, REP.)

Arius and Eunomius taught that He assumed a body, but that the Godhead discharged the function of the soul. (You will note that the early Arians and followers of Lucian did not deny the Deity of Christ, nor the Hypostatic Union. REP)

Apollinarius held that the body of the Savior had a soul, but had not the reasonable soul; for, according to his views, intelligence was superfluous, God the Word being present. Taken from my forth coming work entitled, *Theodoret Identifies the Heretics*; The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, v. 3 (p. 51)

Each student must determine, from the original sources, what the various writers meant by these statements. You will note well that Apollinarius did not deny the Deity of Christ, for God the Word was present and in union with Jesus. He was condemned because in some way he taught that Christ's knowledge came from His deity. I would suspect he meant by this that the Deity of Christ assumed and overruled the Manhood of Christ in the Hypostatic Union, as most of the early brethren held. By this, I mean that the early writers taught that the Deity of Christ was His superior nature and as such, it governed all parts of His life. They did not deny that He did certain actions as a man and certain actions as Divine. This distinction would later be condemned as *Nestorianism*.

The Gnostics

I am just now entering into detailed studies about the Gnostics. I am trying to determine what they did believe by the writings of that early era, not by church historians since the Reformation. I am fairly certain about the following points:

- 1. Valentinus has been identified as the founder of the Gnostic movement. He was for several years a member of the church at Rome and embraced the Christology of that era from that church and her ministers. Here is a sample of that Christology as I quoted above: Valentinus maintained a distinction between the only-begotten and the Word, and further between the Christ within the pleroma and Jesus, and also the Christ who is without. He said that Jesus became man, by putting on the Christ that is without, and assuming a body of the substance of the soul; and that He made a passage only through the Virgin, having assumed nothing of the nature of man. (*That is, of her fallen and Adamic Nature-REP*)**
- 2. Soon the Church at Rome excommunicated him, I know not why. He followed in the philosophy of Justin Martyr. He tried to unite Justin's concepts, with the current Roman Concepts and the Persian concepts of Manes.**

3. Valentinus identified Christ as the Gnosis of God. This is why he and his friends became known as Gnostics.
4. He held to the heavenly origin of Christ humanity and that did not receive any of Mary's fallen Adamic nature.

I feel certain about the above 4 points, but here is one I am now trying to document. According to Dean (John) Burgon, in his work, *The Causes of the Corruptions of the Greek New Testament*, Valentinus corrupted John 1:18 and is the first to have inserted into the text, *Only Begotten God* rather than *Only Begotten Son*.

I do not know about this, but seems to me very unlikely because whatever else Dean Burgon stated about Valentinus, if true, shows that he believed as the Bible taught in these important matters. Before too much longer, I hope to come to some conclusion as to the real faith of Valentinus and the early moderate Gnostics.

May the Lord help us as we study these points together.