

Chapter xx: *Epic of the Creed*

WELCOME BACK, BRAVE READERS, to what will be the hardest *Freeze Frame* of them all.

It's also so long I've reluctantly decided to cut it in two. This week's installment, finishing the theological wars that created our Creed, will certainly be hard work, but it comes with battle-plans, and is, I think, so scary you shouldn't attempt it without smelling salts to hand. Anyone prone to fits should skip at once to page 181.

Next week's installment (after some tidying up, and chilling pictures of Scarlett O'Hara) will discuss *how* the Credo is recited in Mass, and what it *feels* like. This will be very lush. And then the Creed'll be done with.

The story so far: beastly Arians.

LAST WEEK WE WERE DEEP in the Creed, that long, explicit formula of faith sung after the Gospel and before the sermon. It takes about two minutes to sing. It took centuries and the energy of empires to compose. We were pondering its composition in the fourth and fifth centuries as [a wall](#) against the errors that raged in those days, errors about the attributes of God and of Christ which by interpreting the apostolic Faith in distorted ways dissolved the incarnation into nothingness, and the Gospel into vanity.

The first of those errors was Arianism, which taught that in Jesus a heavenly being, but by no means divine, walked the earth: 'the Word', the so-called Son of God, who took flesh in Palestine, was in fact a creation of God.

After sixty years of turmoil throughout the Roman Empire, this heresy was expelled from the Church, and the truth established that the Son, and the Spirit, were authentically and eternally divine. Before all time God was Triune: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, a Trinity in Unity. Therefore our salvation is assured; for God Himself, God the Son, had descended and shared our life, so that humanity could be lifted up to Godhead.

The Nicene Creed, expanded at the Council Constantinople in 381, expounded the divinity of the Son so lucidly that no Arian could in conscience recite it. Arians were forced either to submit to the clarified convictions of the Church, or to pass into schism – and therefore eventual annihilation. For, as Christ remarked during the Last Supper, *Ego sum vitis vera, I am the true vine*, and

si quis in me non manserit mittetur foras sicut palmes et aruit et colligent eos et in ignem mittunt et ardent.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.¹

Not that many Arians were literally burned. But flung out of the Church, Arianism withered into kindling, delightfully combustible and short-lived.

I'm putting this breezily because it seems to me a matter of merriment that such a fatal heresy was chopped off the vine of the Church, and cut from the human brain. At every High Mass when we stand and sing the Niceno-Constantinopolitan (*gasp*) Credo we are, among other things, raising the victory pæan over our most dangerous enemy. It almost throttled us, but damn it all, we throttled it.

*Hosanna! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*²

Round II: Christology.

WITH THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY discerned at last, with Arianism banished and intellectually defeated, was the Church now (at the beginning of the fifth century) at rest? Could she settle into the serious business of rejoicing in her Master and Husband, now that she understood Him better? Not yet!

You'll remember what I quoted two week ago from Chesterton:

¹ John xv^{1,6}.

² To be exact, Arianism was cut from the *civilised* brain. Just as it was squelched within the Empire, it escaped into the barbarous north (as smallpox took off in Africa just as it was being inoculated out of existence in Europe). The shaggy-headed Germanic tribes, always prone to glum heresies, were infected with Arius' mutated version of Christianity. For Arianism was rather closer to their own pessimistic paganism than was the Catholic Faith of Incarnate God.

When these barbarian tribes overran the Western Empire in the next century, they brought the Arian religion back to the Mediterranean, oppressing their civilised, Catholic, Nicene subjects cruelly.

Thus as a matter of practical politics it was centuries more before Catholicism overcame Arianism; and the abstruse speculation of smooth Arius lingered for centuries – as the brutal prejudice of invaders too crude to acquire cheerful and civilised religion.

And so (it's impossible to resist this analogy, 'though these notes try to avoid anything that might offend anyone, or bring a blush to the cheek of a young person) with Protestantism – likewise a heresy that began in the oversubtle brains of men like the Parisian intellectual Calvin; was defeated in civilised Europe after epic conflict; and went to ground amidst the sullen Germanic peoples of the North.

The theological wars of the Reformation are long since over. No serious thinker seriously defends the positive doctrines of the Reformers (total depravity, limited atonement, the worthlessness of human good as a path to God). Nevertheless, the tribesmen of Scotland, Scandinavia, Ulster, Holland and northern Germany, with their American descendants, cling to what is now only a strong but unthinking superstition, a negative dread of the ancestral bogey, Catholic Christianity.

These peoples are powerful, as the Arian barbarians were powerful, but their religion is childish. A Protestant shaman terrifies and titillates his victims with claims no one can seriously defend; but these claims are valued because they are themselves a defence against the Faith, and against the civilisation and gaiety of the warm, sophisticated South.

The Church in her early days went fierce and fast as any warhorse; yet it is utterly unhistoric to say that she merely went mad along one idea, like a vulgar fanaticism. She swerved to left and right, so exactly as to avoid enormous obstacles. She left on one hand the huge bulk of Arianism, buttressed by all the worldly powers to make Christianity too worldly. The next instant she was swerving to avoid an orientalism, which would have made it too unworldly.

This second crisis or round of conflict is what we have to consider now.

‘The next instant’ was actually a generation after the Council of Constantinople. Having swerved hard to avoid the Arian heresy (which seemed such an obvious compromise between pagan commonsense, and the audacity of picturing God as a carpenter), the Church now had to avoid another pit, the pit of the Monophysites.

Indeed, the Charioteer’s course was even more reeling than that. After Nicæa the Church had to tear between two opposite errors, each of which would have dissolved the incarnation into nonsense. First she veered away from Nestorius, and veered so hard that she nearly skidded into a much more perilous abyss.

A map of Christology.

THIS SWERVING ABOUT IS SO COMPLICATED now that I (timidly and bashfully) bring forward a Diagram of Dogma, or Map of the Great Chariot Ride. It’s over the page – but don’t look yet. If you find this sort of thing unhelpful, cover it up as a thing accursèd, and press on with the tale of the ultimate crisis of Christian dogma. Myself, I think it useful, and feel wistful paternal pride in my creation. – Now glance.

Here’s the thinking my map tries to picture.

Jesus Christ was obviously in some sense a Man; but even during His lifetime there was clearly something about Him not of this world. All Christians agreed that in Jesus *Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis et vidimus gloriam eius, The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.*³ In Jesus, everyone agreed, heaven and earth mingle; and through that mingling we hope to escape into eternity because our humanity has been lifted up to heaven.

Good; but if we misunderstand Him too badly, then this mingling, which we call *incarnation, enfleshment*, dissolves in our hands into nothingness, and we are as cut off from heaven as before.

Knowledge about the constitution of Christ is known as **christology**. There are two distinct christological questions that desparately needed to be resolved. The first question is:

☞ **what was this heavenly dimension to Jesus, this ‘Word’ which had been in the beginning with God?**

And the second question is:

☞ **in what sense was the immortal Word Jesus? In other words, was Jesus as human He looked?**

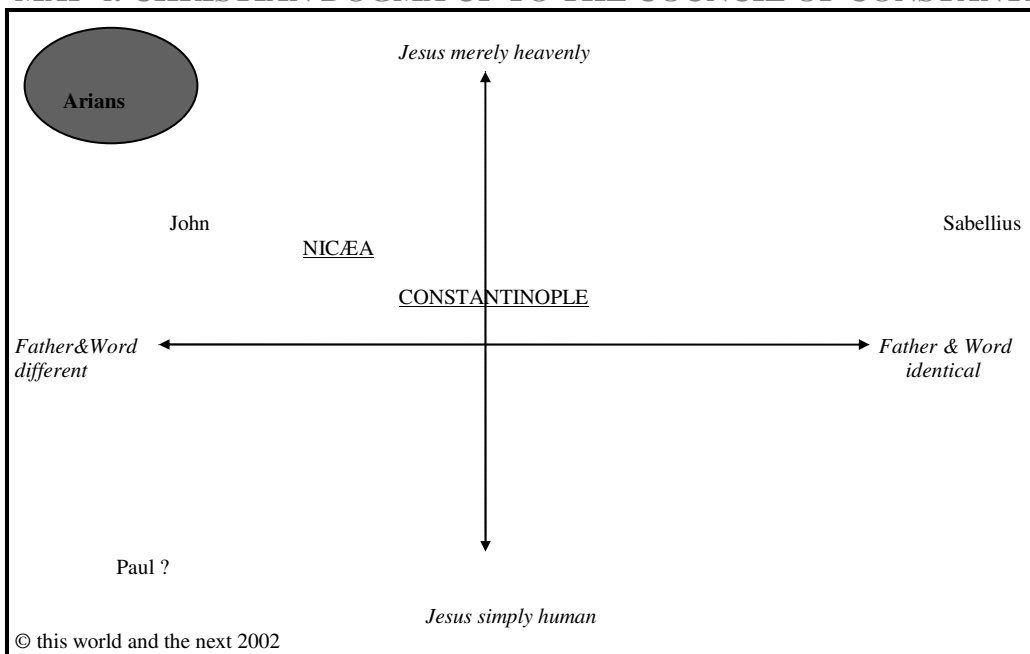
These two issues are represented here by the two axes (). ←→

³ John i¹⁴.

The **left-right axis** represents the range of possible answers to the question: *What is this 'Word'?* The extreme left hand of the axis marks the idea that the 'Word' or 'Son' was quite different from God the Father: that the Word is a creature, a being made by the Father, therefore as fundamentally different from Him as a planet or angel. The extreme right hand of the axis marks the idea that the Word simply, flatly *was* God the Father: 'the Word' and 'the Son' are alternative names for the One God. And there are of course a range of views in between.

The **up-down axis** represents the range of possible answers to the question: *Who was the Man Jesus?* Was He (bottom of the axis) simply a Man? Was He (top of the axis) simply heavenly? And again, there are a range of views between these two extremes.

MAP i: CHRISTIAN DOGMA UP TO THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE



Round One of the great theological crisis had started when Arius staked out his radical position: the Word was quite different from God the Father, not at all divine, but a creature (so that puts Arius at the far left of the horizontal axis). But was Jesus genuinely human, then? No: the Word did not take on a human mind, merely the disguise or veil of flesh; He remained a purely heavenly being (so that puts Arius at the extreme top of the vertical axis. I have marked Arianism as a large gray pit, full of cutting rocks and hissing serpents, because these are orthodox notes, and make no pretence of neutrality).

Most Christians were horrified by the Arian position, which cuts mankind off both ways from God: the Word did not become human, but only hid Himself in a human body; and the Word was not divine anyway, but only a finite creature. The incarnation of the Son of God dissolved into the flesh and blood masquerade of a super-duper-angel. Hence the horror and rage of Athanasius and the orthodox. If Arius' views prevailed, the Christian hope was lost.

Before Arius, the Church had been, frankly, rather vague about christology. St Paul didn't have a developed view. He seems to have thought that Jesus was a Man on Whom God had conferred Sonship. Thus He was essentially human (down the bottom of the first axis), and His 'Sonship' was not at all the same as being divine. John moved christology along, with His declaration the 'Word' had been *in the beginning with God, and was God* (a move to the right), and Jesus was this 'Word' taking flesh (a big move up). And since John, the Church had been realising more and more how more-than-human her Master was. Thus on the map, the Church's Chariot tracks lead up until suddenly – *ach!* the pit of fully-worked out Arianism opens before her. She skews violently to the right, declaring at Nicæa, and then even more explicitly at Constantinople (COUNCILS ARE MARKED LIKE THIS ON MY MAP), that the Word that was revealed in Jesus of Nazareth was not dissimilar to God the Father; was *homoousion*, of the same substance, as the Father. The Word, indeed, was divine; and the doctrine of the Trinity was developed to explain how the Son of God, was distinct from the Father but perpetually united with him.

(The Word had been merely identified *as God* long before by a theologian named [Sabellius](#) – which places him at the extreme right of the axis – but Sabellius was, quite correctly, regarded with revulsion by everyone, for his theology involves the horrific or nonsensical idea that the Source of all things was tortured to death, that Being was entombed, and that the Son and Spirit are mere names, modes or stages of activity of the one monadic God. No one wanted to go *there*. After Sabellius the extreme right of the map stayed empty forever – or at least until the advent of a Lutheran heretic, still alive, named Moltmann).

One Nature or Two?

WHAT WAS LEFT UNRESOLVED by the Councils of Nicæa and Constantinople was the second of my two questions, about the human attributes of Jesus Christ.

Given that the Second Person of the Trinity is *homoousion*, of one substance, with the First, was Jesus Christ human the way you and I are? Did He have a human Nature, just the way you do? Did He therefore have [Two Natures](#)? Was He a Man, as you are, with all human Nature implies (except our positive evil), but also with a divine Nature, the Nature of God?

The Church seemed to be heading in this direction after the Arian crisis. Having insisted on the divinity of Christ against Arius, she wanted to insist also on His full humanity (which Arius, you'll see from the map, also denied: he stood at the extreme top of the axis). But hell-holes threatened to swallow the Chariot on both sides.

For was not Christ – argued one school, pushing Two Natures theology to an extreme – *simply* a man, with the Second Person somehow *within* him? Given that Christ was divine, was His humanity (His human mind and soul) so different from His divinity that He had two essentially *separate* Natures, one divine and one human? The human being we called Jesus was born from the womb of Mary, hungered and suffered and was sick and died in agony, as all men do. But the divine Son of God, the immortal Word, spoke through the human mind of Jesus. And this extreme version of the Two Natures view was the solution advanced by one extremist party (soon to be called the [Nestorian](#) party).

Or, on the contrary, should we reject the idea of Two Natures? Did Jesus have one Nature? Did He have simply a divine character? Was His humanity – humanity’s finite and fallible mind – swallowed up by the divinity within Him, so that He had no human mind or soul? Was His flesh merely the human veil the Second Person wore? This was the opposing position – called [Monophysitism](#) (mon -*OFF* -iz -ite -izm), a hard-to-say name formed from *mono*, one, and *φύσις*, [physis](#), the Greek word for Nature. I have marked it as another atrocious pit.

In other words, Round One had ended with Nicæa and Constantinople staking out the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy about the first question, the divinity of the Word. No orthodox Christian could position himself on the left of the horizontal axis: the Creed as emended at Constantinople set a limit to how much we could distinguish the Word from the Father. And no one wanted to be on the extreme right, which was the place of the madness of Sabellius. But where on the vertical axis was the truth? Up or down? Was Christ’s humanity almost nothing, merely a matter of a human body? Or was His Manhood complete, an entity separate from the divine Son of God?

Thus the Chariot of dogma thundered on dangerously after Constantinople until –

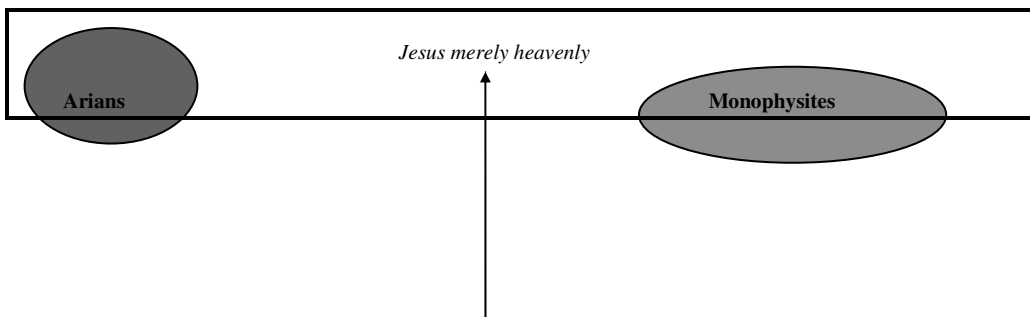
Nestorius.

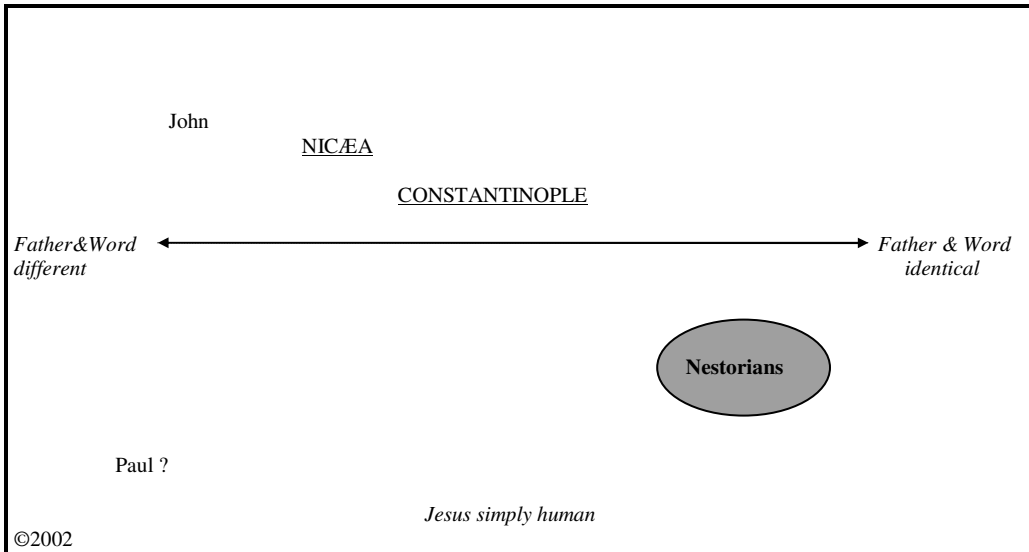
ROUND TWO BEGAN IN THE SPRING OF A.D. 428. NESTORIUS, Patriarch of Constantinople, opened up the chasm in front of the Chariot by condemning the title Christians were giving to Mary: the title of *Theotokos*, which means *God-Bearer* or Mother of God. No, he insisted, Mary brought forth a smallish *baby*, the vehicle of divinity but not God. We cannot say that Godhead lay for nine months in a woman’s womb, or that He hung on her breast (to do so, he taught, would be blasphemous). Mary bore a man; we worship the Son of God. Divinity and humanity were not combined, even in Christ; the divine and human Natures of Christ were quite distinct.

Nestorius indiscreet attack on the title *Theotokos* touched off war. It didn’t last long. Nestorius had pushed Two Natures christology (or at least its rhetoric) to an extreme, and when they heard it, most Churchmen realised it was fatally wrong. If God were only loosely present in humanity, if His fusion with us were so tenuous that even the wary, bleeding, five-foot-ten Jesus of Nazareth was only the *vehicle* of God, then how are we truly united with God? How are we saved?

Mary wasn’t herself the issue. Her status was (as always in sane theology) a consequence of how we understand the incarnation. Nestorius was denying her the title of Mother of God because he was underselling the incarnation; he was therefore condemned and deposed at the riotous [Council of Ephesus](#), the [Third Ecumenical Council](#), in 431, which asserted that the infant of Bethlehem was God in so thorough a sense that Mary was God’s Mother. The Chariot thus twisted away from one gulf –

MAP ii: NESTORIANS AND MONOPHYSITES





Monophysitism.

BUT SHE ALMOST OVERSHOT. Her swerve away from Nestorius, who *understated* the divine presence in Jesus, brought the Church terribly close to *overstating* that presence, and thus crashing into the opposite abysm.

For if Christ's divinity is drastically overstated, there is no room left in Him for humanity. If God the Son so possessed the mortal figure called Jesus that Jesus had no distinct human, fragile conscience, no human, fallible mind, then God was not after all fully united with Man.

Nestorius seemed to trivialise the incarnation. He described a loose union between a Man and divinity. The divine presence in the Man Jesus sounded not much more than the presence of God's voice and will in an inspired prophet. But the triumphant Monophysites trivialised the incarnation in the opposite direction, for real humanity was no longer involved in Jesus. And, having helped destroy Nestorius, the Monophysite party was appallingly strong.

Monophysitism was the danger Chesterton calls *orientalism*, the danger of a Christianity too unworldly. It would have turned Christ into a remote sultan, adored rather than loved, barely human, a solar deity burning down on us, different from us in every way that matters. Such a Christ would be powerful; but He would no longer be our brother, *pontificem qui . . . possit conpati infirmitatibus nostris, an high priest which [can] be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, Who was in all points tempted like as we are.*⁴ Such a Monophysite Christianity must be, in the end, a religion aloof from the world: pessimistic, passive, fatalist about the enigmas of this life, hoping for God's embrace only in the next – in other words, a religion rather like Islam.

And for a generation after the fall of Nestorius, it seemed that the Church had indeed swerved too violently and wrecked herself in such a Monophysite ravine. Certainly there was chaos and fury: alliances were broken and salvaged, majorities

⁴ Hebrews iv¹⁵.

engineered away and minorities tinkered into new majorities, creed after creed, anathema after anathema, riots and rebellion and coups.

Here's some masterful sarcasm about these decades from Edward Gibbon, whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is one long, entertaining and elegant sneer at Christianity:

a secret and incurable discord was cherished between those who were most fearful of confounding, and those who were most fearful of separating, the divinity and humanity of Christ.... The poverty of ideas and language tempted them to ransack art and nature for every possible comparison, and each comparison misled their fancy in the explanation of an incomparable mystery. In the polemic telescope an atom is enlarged to a monster, and each party was skilful to exaggerate the absurd or impious conclusions that might be extorted from the principles of their adversaries. To escape each other, they wandered through many a dark and devious thicket, till they were astonished by the horrid phantoms . . . who guarded the opposite issues of the theological labyrinth. As soon as they beheld the twilight of sense and heresy, they started, and measured back their steps, and were again involved in the gloom of impenetrable orthodoxy.⁵

Sneering apart, Gibbon is right that almost everyone wanted to say that Christ is truly divine and that He is human. But Monophysites heard any talk of Two Natures as Nestorianism, reducing divine presence in Christ to mere inspiration; while the orthodox majority (including virtually all Westerners) were sure that talk of one Nature obliterated the humanity in Christ, darkening understanding of the incarnation. Sometimes atoms were indeed enlarged to monsters; in no age was that family fault of quarrelsomeness so atrociously apparent in our family affairs.

At last, in 450, the Monophysite Emperor Theodosius II fell off his horse and broke his neck (if you think he was pushed by an angel, then you underestimate the complexity of the universe. But if you think Providence couldn't be involved with such accidents, then you underestimate the subtlety of God). Theodosius' successor believed in the Two Natures of Christ, and summoned a [Fourth Ecumenical Council](#) in a small town near his capital at Constantinople (A.D. 451). The [Council of Chalcedon](#) (chal-SEE-donn) duly condemned Monophysitism, and produced the Chalcedonian (chal-see-DOAN-ian) formula, insisting on the Two Natures – *duo fusesin, duo physesin* – of Christ. The core of the definition runs:

Jesus is perfect both in deity and also in human-ness
of the same reality [‘omooouision tw patri, homooouision tō patri] *as the Father*
as far as His deity is concerned
and of the same reality as ourselves [‘omooouision ‘hmin, homooouision hēmin]
*as far as his human-ness is concerned . . .*⁶

This is (as I hope you feel) an astonishingly bold declaration. That venerable word *homooouision*, which we saw used to drive out Arianism, is now swung about like a swivel

⁵ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter xlvi (v, 113f in Bury's edition).

⁶ You can find this definition at the back of your 1979 American Prayer Book, which very usefully prints the most important documents of the Faith.

gun and fired at the Monophysites. Christ is *of the same substance* as God; but He is also of the same substance *as us*. He has our nature: human nature, perfect and entire. He is, indeed, not just truly man, but the only true Man: the only human being (unless He shares this with mother) not degraded and damaged by evil. In Him we see not just the human body but human psychology, human sensibility, artistry, sexuality and feeling vindicated. The Chalcedonian Christ is rather like what Greek civilisation always aspired to: the human God. In Him humanity is lifted up so that, without ceasing to be human, it becomes perfect, and therefore divine and immortal, lovely and wholly desirable.

Finality.

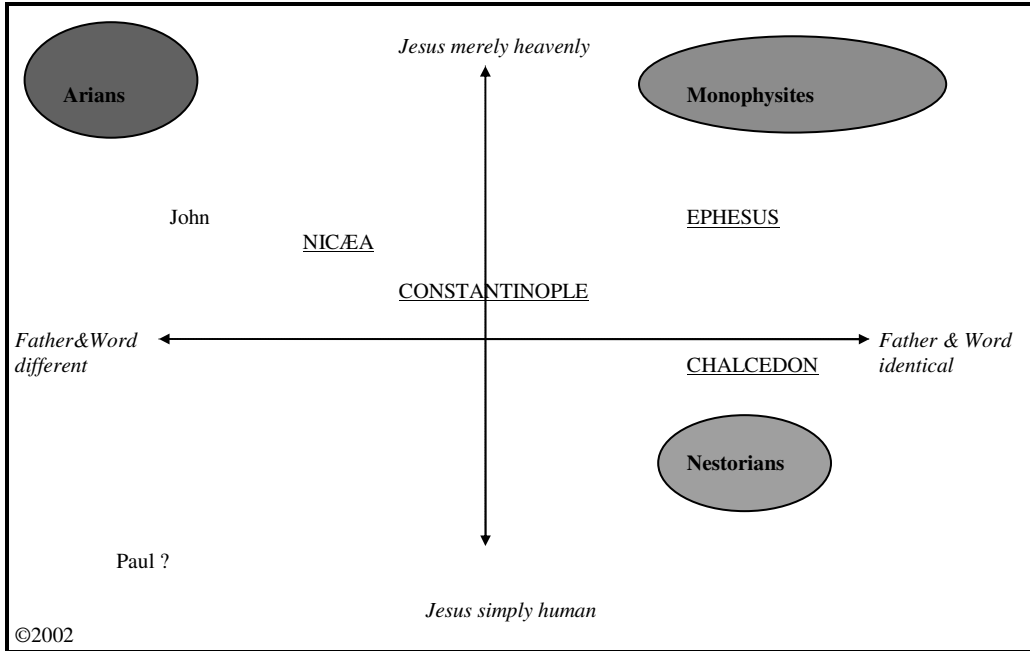
THE SPLENDID ILLUMINATION OF CHALCEDON brought the era of Creed-making to a close, at least as far as the West was concerned – and just in time, because by 451 the Latin-speaking Western Empire, based in Rome, was going down into darkness and barbarism.

The East continued to have subtle theological crises, for the barbarians didn't destroy the Eastern Empire for another thousand years, and meanwhile the Monophysites refused to vanish. The poor distracted Eastern Emperors, based in Constantinople, kept dabbling in heretical compromise to try to lure their Monophysite subjects back from schism. The West generally opposed these half-way houses between orthodoxy and Monophysite error (although at one point even the Pope fell into heresy – the Chariot seemed to be rolling backward!). But in the end (in 681, at the Sixth Œcumenical Council) the Eastern Church rejected Monophysitism forever – with dire political results, as we'll see next week.

At Chalcedon the Church's dogma about the nature of Christ arrived at its classic perfection. Here we have it: [God is Three 'Persons' \[hyperstases\] in Unity; and the Second 'Person' united Himself with humanity as Christ, Who had therefore Two 'Natures' \[physein\], being fully human and fully divine.](#) That is it: that's the answer to the two hard questions I posed on page 174. Three 'Persons' in the Godhead; Two 'Natures' in Christ.

And here's our final map, showing the Chariot skewing away from Nestorianism so sharply it almost tumbles into the opposite error or Monophysitism, but wheeling off in time, and arriving at Chalcedonian completion.

MAP iii: CHRISTIAN DOGMA UP TO THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON



So did the Chariot come to rest after Chalcedon? No. There's no more movement on this map, for the Chalcedonian definition solved the two questions which are mapped here: divine presence and human reality in Christ. But our understanding of Christ is not complete; nor will our understanding of Christ ever be complete, even in eternity. Throughout eternity we shall soar higher and higher into the truth about the unspeakable union of God and humanity in Christ Jesus, and the wonder of what we understand will stir our perfected minds like wine. Christology is the only science that will never cease. Thus at Chalcedon the Chariot of orthodox belief simply passed off this little map of knowledge and ignorance, flying up into the air – becoming, as it were, that *currus igneus et equi ignei, chariot of fire, and horses of fire*, which appeared suddenly for Elijah, so that Elijah's disciple found himself crying in an ecstasy close to anguish: *Pater mi pater mi currus Israhel et auriga eius ! My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof!*⁷

The point of it all.

THIS ACCOUNT OF THE CHRISTIAN CREDO has been as swift and clear as I could make it. I'm aware I've failed, and produced something long and difficult. But then the subject *is* difficult. It took millions of Christians, fighting and rioting and intriguing and poisoning, it took synods where bishops kicked each other to death, it took the loss of provinces and the ruination of empires (we'll contemplate all this next week), to test the truth about Christ and fix on it. We burn methane from garbage to produce light and power. The Holy Ghost uses our family flaw of quarrelsomeness to utter His truth: He employs our fault in the process of discovering wisdom. What else could He use, since God has committed Himself and us to the dangerous experiment of coöperation?

⁷ II Kings ii¹⁷.

I can appreciate Christians who say they don't want to hear about the Credo, if it is as complicated and troublesome as all that – just as they don't want to know details of parochial budgets. It is enough that budgets and creeds are there to prop up the Church for us. Perhaps it is enough to hurry through our recitation of the Credo on Sunday morning, spending two minutes on the tremendous formula, trusting that it is a true statement and adequate wall against heresy, and not troubling our pretty little heads any further. Fair enough.

But I don't much take to the man who sneers or laughs at the Credo, and at the messy history that produced the Credo, saying he doesn't care about christological metaphysic or dogmatic theology: "I just want to be alone with Jesus in a room." What does he think *that* would it be like? – Here's what it would be like. The door opens and a shortish darkish Levantine young Man enters. He has big serious eyes and (like everyone in the ancient world) imperfect teeth. He sits in a chair opposite and looks at you. Now there is nothing in you – limited experience, dread of death, a certain nation and race, a certain era and culture, painful reminiscences from childhood, limited mental energy, a body that often hurt and was bound to die eventually, fallible memory, love for a mother and grandparents, particular friendships and dislikes, a temper – that is not in Him. You are no more human than He is: in fact, you're less human, since all sorts of human characteristics have in you been allowed to go to sleep. He is entirely awake, patently a great man. But also – at the same time, at the same time – He is God. Nothing exists unless He made it. He made the world. He made you. Your fate for ever is either Him or nothingness. He envelopes all things, He is the origin and goal of every atom in stars mankind will never see. And He is on a chair in a room with you. – That is what it is like to be alone in a room with Jesus (or at the communion rail, holding His Body). We cannot understand it without attending to the fourth and fifth century Creeds. There is no viable Christian faith but Chalcedonian faith.

Here's a rather beautiful Indian story about Krishna. Krishna is Hinduism's hazy guess at incarnation. He's a god (indeed, vaguely, the second person of a imprecisely-realised of trinity of ultimate gods) who spent a merry lifetime as a human. Once, when he was a child, his playmates ran inside to tell his foster mother that Krishna had naughtily eaten dirt, as children do. She prised open his mouth and gasped with vertigo, for within his little mouth she saw, swimming in infinite rich blackness: turning galaxies and throbbing nebulae, and all the jewelled immensity of the cosmos. – Of course this story can't work in Christianity. We've grasped how utterly humble God was when He unimaginably contracted Himself and made Himself man. Except once, at the Transfiguration, no signs marked Him out as God but rather small-scale successes in faith-healing. Still, the truth about Him is more shattering than the legend of Krishna.

Monkeying with the Creed.

IT WOULD NICE TO FINISH HERE. It would be fine to move on our freeze-frame film of the Mass from the Credo to the sermon.

But to describe honestly what we hear and don't hear in the words we sing, I need to mention two crimes against the perfected Creed, both perpetrated in our part of Christendom; and then two odd defiances of the Creed which linger on in the East. Finally we'll meditate on what it is to have a Credo to sing at all, a Creed that makes the heart sing as it strums the brain, a *sensuous* Creed.