

The Person of Christ

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I. The Christian confession on the person of Christ

The Christian Church has a well-summarized statement on the Person of Christ. It is the second article of the Apostles' Creed. With this article and many other faithful statements derived from the Bible, we confess the truths about the Person of Christ over against heresies. As you know, the second article says: "I believe in Jesus Christ, his (God's) only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead." And Luther clearly and beautifully explains the meaning of the second article: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord" (David P. Kuske, *Luther's Small Catechism, Revised Version, NPH*, p. 151).

The Apostles' Creed was not written or assembled by the apostles as it had been said in the Medieval Ages. Professor Kuske says: "The Apostles' Creed developed in the early Christian church because people felt a need to have a brief summary of what they believed and taught as Christians. The wording of the Apostles' Creed developed gradually, but it soon was used wherever the Christian church had spread. Christians used it to tell others what they believed and also to confess their faith with one another when they met for worship" (*Luther's Small Catechism, Revised Version, NPH*, p. 131). The truth that the apostles did not write the Apostles' Creed, however, does not make the Creed worthless. For what the Apostles' Creed says is in accordance with what the apostles believed, confessed and taught; In other words, it is biblical.

Immediately before ascending into heaven, Jesus said to the apostles, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This promise and prophecy was fulfilled ten days after Jesus' Ascension, that is, on the day of Pentecost. All of the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (2:4). Some of the people who were at the temple in Jerusalem and heard the apostles speaking in languages "native to the different places represented" (*Concordia Self-Study Bible*, p. 1657), made fun of them, saying: "They have had too much wine" (2:13). Then Peter told the people that he and the other apostles were not drunk, and he boldly preached the message about Jesus Christ. Peter properly divided the Law and the Gospel and through his message the Holy Spirit worked. "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (Acts 2:41)." By inspiration Luke recorded not only that fact but also what the Christians in the first half of the first century believed, confessed, taught, and practiced. Luke says in Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

By the way, what does the phrase "the apostles' teaching" in Acts 2:42 mean? Is it a teaching that originated from the apostles? Absolutely not! Because, according to the Great Commission of the Lord, they taught the believers in their days to obey everything that Jesus had commanded (Matt 28:20), and Jesus says that only those who hold on to his teaching are really his disciples (John 8:31). After the apostles were convinced of Jesus' resurrection, especially after Pentecost, they were faithful to the Lord even to death and boldly confessed their belief in Jesus. When the Sanhedrin threatened Peter and John and "commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus," these two apostles replied, "We cannot help speaking what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:18,20). It is said that St. Peter wrote 2 Peter between A.D. 65 and 68 (*Concordia Self-Study Bible*, p. 1916). In 2 Peter 1:12-15, Peter implies that the day when he will die a martyr to Jesus is near (cf. John 21:18). At end of his life, Peter reminded the Christians in those days that the power and coming of Jesus Christ that he had told to them were not cleverly invented stories and that he was an eyewitness of Jesus' transfiguration (2 Pe 1:16-18). Then, Peter encouraged them to hold on to Jesus' teaching, saying: "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to

pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (1:19).

St. John, too, continued to hold on to Jesus’ teaching and was a good witness of Jesus. He writes in John 20:31: “These (his entire Gospel) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” In his later years John was exiled to the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea for his activities as a Christian missionary and there he wrote Revelation “in the mid-90s of the first century after Christ” (The People’s Bible on Revelation, Wayne Mueller, NPH, p. 2). In the last chapter of Revelation, John warned everyone who would hear the words of the prophecy of the book against changing even one word, saying: “If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book”(Rev 22:18,19).

Peter and John’s faithful attitude toward Jesus’ teaching, that is, God’s Word is not something new that we can find only in the faith of the apostles. Moses, one of the famous leaders of God’s people in the Old Testament times, also warned the people about God’s law: “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you” (Deuteronomy 4:2). When God called Ezekiel as his prophet to the rebellious Israelites, he said to the prophet: “You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen” (Ezekiel 2:7). God said to Jeremiah: “Say whatever I command you” (Jeremiah 1:7). We could speak about many more examples of faithful prophets who taught and encouraged God’s people to hold on to God’s Word.

However, let us return to the subject of what St. John writes in Revelation 22:18-19. Pastor Wayne Mueller has a good comment on those passages. He writes: “John’s warning, of course, applies to how we handle all Scripture”(The People’s Bible on Revelation, NPH, p. 228). All the member churches of the CELC agree with him because, according to the Bible, whoever adds to it or subtracts from it is a false prophet. Of course, this rule also holds true in handling God’s Word concerning the Person of Christ.

We should note that St. John, as the last apostle, taught again how to handle God’s Word. This rule was surely handed down from the last apostle to our church fathers. Let me quote from the Triglotta.

The Christian writers of the first three centuries, furthermore, furnish ample proof for the following facts: that from the very beginning of the Christian Church the candidates for Baptism everywhere were required to make a confession of their faith; that from the beginning there was existing in all the Christian congregations a formulated confession, which they called the rule of faith, the rule of truth, etc.; that this rule was identical with the confession required of the candidates for Baptism; that it was declared to be of apostolic origin; that the summaries and explanations of this rule of truth, given by these writers, tally with the contents and, in part, also with the phraseology of the Apostles’ Creed; that the scattered Christian congregations, then still autonomous, regarded the adoption of the rule of faith as the only necessary condition of Christian unity and fellowship.

The Triglotta continues:

The manner in which Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, Aristides, and other early Christian writers present the Christian truth frequently reminds us of the Apostles’ Creed and suggests its existence. Thus Justin Martyr, who died 165, says in his first Apology, which was written about 140: “Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, that we reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third. Eternal praise to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

And the Triglotta says:

Irenaeus, who died 189, was the pupil of Polycarp the Martyr; and what he learned from him, Polycarp had received from the Apostle John. Polycarp, says Irenaeus, “taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true.” According to Irenaeus, then, the “rule of truth” received and confessed by every Christian at his baptism was transmitted by the apostles (Triglotta, CPH, 1921, p. 10,11).

The Triglotta has many more details of the history of the Apostles' Creed. However, from the above facts it is clear that the teaching of Jesus' two natures—true God and true man—was correctly handed down from Jesus to the apostles, and from the apostles to the church fathers. That's why the Triglotta concludes that the foundation of the Apostles' Creed was laid by Christ Himself when he gave them the Great Commission.

II. Jesus Christ's two natures

(a) The true deity of Christ

When we speak of the two natures of Jesus, we would do well to note that he, who is the only true God with the Father and the Holy Spirit from all eternity, took on a human body. It is not that a man became a God. All those who accept the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God (The CELC Constitution, Article II, Section 1) are confident from the testimony of God the Father that Jesus is true God. Jesus came to this world to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8). At the very beginning of his public ministry, Jesus told John the Baptizer to baptize him. It was proper for them to do that to fulfill all righteousness (Matt 3:15). As Jesus stepped out of the water, the Father declared: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Before Jesus went to Jerusalem to accomplish the final task as the Savior, he went up a mountain with Peter, James, and John. There these three disciples were given a glimpse of Jesus' glorious appearance as God and they heard the voice of the Father, saying: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him (Matt 17:5; 1 Peter 1:17)." By this, the Father proclaimed that Jesus is his Son.

Jesus' own testimony also makes us confident that he is true God. In John 8:58 Jesus says to the Jews: "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am." The words "I am" spoken by Jesus are not merely a pronoun and a linking verb. When God appeared to Moses at Horeb, he said to his servant: "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). God is completely independent and exists in and of himself. God is a personal being. God is not bound by time at all. Professor Ernst Wendland has a good and an interesting comment on Exodus 3:14.

Those who are familiar with the Hebrew language will see something else of great significance in God's "I AM." The letters of the Hebrew stem for the word "I am" are the same letters used in the Hebrew word which we translate as "LORD" (The People's Bible on Exodus, NPH, Ernst H. Wendland, p. 25).

That is to say, Jesus in John 8:58 applied the phrase "I AM" in Exodus 3:14 to himself and he solemnly claimed the eternity of his being and his oneness with the Father. Besides that, Jesus in John 10:30 says: "I and my Father are one." Here I want to quote from Concordia Self Study Bible.

One. The Greek is neuter—"one thing," not "one person." The two are one in essence or nature, but they are not identical persons. This great truth is what warrants Jesus' "I am" declaration (CSSB, footnote, p. 1627).

We have other testimony too. As the leader of the Jewish court Caiaphas, the high priest, asked Jesus if he was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus replied: "Yes, it is as you say" (Matt 26:64). We should note that in each case the Jews understood what Jesus wanted to say but they didn't believe it. Rather, they thought that Jesus had blasphemed God. That's why they tried to stone him (John 8:59; 10:31) and finally crucified him.

The authority of forgiving sin also gives proof of Jesus' divinity. While Jesus was staying in Capernaum, a paralytic man was brought to him. Jesus didn't say to the paralytic, "I shall heal your sickness." But Jesus said to the man: "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). Having heard that, some teachers of the law thought to themselves: "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (2:7) Because Jesus is the all-knowing God, he knew what they were thinking in their hearts. Then Jesus said to the paralytic: "Get up, take your mat and go home" (2:11) in order to show them that he had the authority to forgive sins. The man got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all (2:12). We agree that God alone can forgive sins, but we don't want to copy the unbelief of these teachers of law. We believe that Jesus is true God. In fact, Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead (Matt 25:31).

We know that Jesus did many miracles. At a wedding that took place in Cana, Jesus changed water to wine (John 2:1-11). Jesus healed a dying child in Capernaum (4:46-54). Jesus fed the five thousand people (6:1-14). Jesus healed a man born blind at Siloam (9:1-7). He also healed many more. Jesus did these miracles to reveal his glory as the Son of God (3:11; 10:25). On the night Jesus was betrayed, Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus replied: "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves" (John 14:11). Needless to say, his own resurrection from the dead is one of these miracles.

Before ending this section regarding the true deity of Christ, I would like to show some other testimony from the Old and New Testaments. Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 are famous passages for referring to Jesus' divine nature. In Isaiah 7:14 the prophet calls the baby who is the promised Savior and who will be born of the Virgin Mary, "Immanuel." According Matthew 1:23, the word "Immanuel" means "God with us." And in 9:6 he calls the baby, "Mighty God, Everlasting Father."

St. John begins his Gospel with the solemn phrase that reminds us of the account of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis. He writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made" (1:1-3a). John continues: "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him" (1:10). Even if we don't know Greek, it is obvious from the context that John is referring to Jesus. John ascribes divine names, divine attributes and divine works to Jesus.

(b) The true humanity of Christ

The first promise about the Savior is recorded in Genesis 3:15. It says: "And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman (Eve), and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." We know from this gospel that the Savior is called her (Eve's) offspring. Namely, the Savior is a true human being who will be born of a woman. This promise also tells us about the Savior's passion and his victory over Satan. Yet, from Genesis 3:15 alone, we don't know anything else about who the Savior is. God, however, gradually makes this promise clear and specific through the prophets.

Let's say that we are looking at God's saving plan through a single lens reflex camera. While we are bringing Genesis 3:15 into focus, distant scenes are out of focus and vague. Therefore, next let us bring Gen 12:1-3 into focus. It says: "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. . . . I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." These passages tell us that God chose Abraham (Abram) as the ancestor of the Savior; that God gave him three promises. God promised that he would give a country to Abraham and his descendants; that he would make Abraham's descendants many; that the Savior would be born from Abraham's descendants (cf. Gen 22:18; Gal 3:16). Abraham became a father of many nations (Gen 25:1-4; 13-18), however, the Savior would be born as promised in Canaan from the Israelites, Abraham's descendants.

Next, we bring Jeremiah 23:5,6 into focus. God here declares: "The days are coming when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness." A righteous Branch is one of the titles of the Savior. Out of the twelve tribes of Israel, the tribe of Judah was chosen as the tribe from which the Savior would be born. And out of the many houses of the tribe of Judah, God chose David's line as the line from which the Savior would be born (cf. Gen 49:10; Is 11:1-5). The Savior would be born as a descendant of King David in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

Finally, we bring the familiar passages—Luke 2:11,12—into focus. "Today in the town of David (Bethlehem) a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." His parents named this baby, Jesus. This personal name means "One who will save his people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). Because of the above and the other prophecies about the Savior, his genealogy was important especially to the Jews. That's why Matthew recorded Jesus' genealogy at the very beginning of his Gospel. As promised, the Savior, Jesus was born of a woman who was the descendant of Abraham and David. Jesus' legal father, Joseph, too was from the same line.

The New Testament has many more details about Jesus' humanity. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21). Jesus grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). Jesus felt hungry (Luke 4:2). Jesus ate and drank (Luke 7:34,36). Jesus slept (Mark 4:38). Jesus had a will (Luke 22:42). Jesus had emotions (John 11:33). Jesus wept (John 11:35). When Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, he said: "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (Matt 26:38). Jesus died on the cross (John 19:30) and was buried (19:42). Thus, the Bible ascribes a human nature to Jesus. Jesus has the same body that we have, consisting of flesh and blood and bones (Luke 24:39; John 19:33-34).

One big difference between Jesus and all human beings is that he had no sin, since he had been conceived by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. "The Christian Church has from the beginning believed and confessed that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary" (Christian Dogmatics, Volume II, CPH, Francis Pieper, p. 72). Another big difference is that he did not have to die.

For that reason, we reject all the unbiblical teachings that the virgin birth of Jesus was not a true story; that Jesus was only seemingly a human being, but not so in reality; that Jesus only had a body; that Jesus only had a human soul; that Jesus didn't have a human will and emotions, etc.

III. The Personal Union of the two Natures in Christ

I met a Canadian businessman by chance. I don't know his name. I don't know where he lives. Yet, I will never forget that I met him, because he is the first "Christian" who said to me: "I am a Christian but I don't believe Jesus' virgin birth." If a typical Japanese had said that, I would not have been surprised, because many Japanese think they are Buddhists and they don't believe in Jesus. Is our faith and the above man's faith the same? I would say, "No!" As long as one tries to understand Jesus' virgin birth according to reason, he will never be able to be convinced of the truth that "God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law" (Gal 4:4); that the divine and human natures were personally united with one another when God the Son was conceived in Mary's womb and became man.

The personal union of the two natures in Christ is a deep and great mystery (1 Tim 3:16). The Formula of Concord also says: "Next to the article of the Holy Trinity this (the personal union or communication of the natures in the person of Christ) is the greatest mystery in heaven and on earth" (Triglotta, Th. Dec., Art. VIII, 33, p. 1027). The Formula of Concord has many more details on this matter, but allow me to quote from Koehler. Koehler briefly explains the union the two natures in Christ as follows.

The two natures are not so mixed and mingled as to make a new composition; neither has one changed into the other, losing its own identity; but, like body and soul, they remain distinct. Nor do they exist beside each other, like two boards glued together, without having any communion with, and interrelation to, each other; but again, like body and soul, the divine nature so permeates and penetrates the human nature, and the human nature is so permeated and penetrated by the divine nature, that both natures make one person. "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one in Christ" (Athanasian Creed). (A Summary of Christian Doctrine, CPH, Edward W. Koehler, p. 88).

St. John describes this personal union with easily understood words. He writes: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). St. Paul writes: "God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him" (Col 1:19). "In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form (2:9)." Because of this inseparable but distinct personal union, both are correct as John says, "He (Jesus) is the true God" (1 John 5:20), and Paul calls Jesus, "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5; Rom 9:5).

IV. The Communion of Attributes

We believe, confess, and teach another important thing concerning the Person of Christ. It is the communion of the attributes of the natures of Jesus. After amplifying the personal union, the Formula of Concord says:

From this basis of the personal union, as it has been stated and explained above, that is, from the manner in which the divine and the human nature in the person of Christ are united with one another,

namely, that they have not only the names in common, but have also indeed and truth communion or equalizing of the same in their essences, flows also the doctrine concerning the true communion of the properties of the natures (Triglotta, Th., Dec., Art. VIII, 31, p.1025).

I think that this matter is the most difficult doctrine concerning the Person of Christ. I also think that it is the best way to explain this matter that we “receive and repeat the explanations which the ancient orthodox Church has given here of the good foundation of Holy Scripture” (Triglotta, Th. Dec., Art. VIII, 61, p.1035). For that reason, I quote from the Formula of Concord.

- (a) Since in Christ two distinct natures exist and remain unchanged and unconfused in their natural essence and properties, and yet of both natures there is only one person, hence, that which is, indeed, an attribute of only one nature is ascribed not to that nature alone, as separate, but to the entire person, which is at the same time God and man (whether it is called God or man). But, in this mode of speaking, it does not follow that what is ascribed to the person is at the same time a property of both nature, but it is distinctively explained what nature it is according to which anything is ascribed to the person. Thus the Son of God was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and hath suffered for us in, or according to, the flesh, 1 Pet. 3,18; 4,1. (Triglotta, Th. Dec., Art. VIII, 36-37, p. 1027).
- (b) As to the execution of the office of Christ, the person does not act and work in, with, through, or according to only one nature, but in, according to, with, and through both natures, or, as the Council of Chalcedon expresses it, one nature operates in communion with the other what is a property of each. Therefore Christ is our Mediator, Redeemer, King, High Priest, Head, Shepherd, etc., not according to one nature only, whether it be the divine or the human, but according to both natures (Triglotta, Th. Dec., Art. VIII, 46, p. 1031).
- (c) However, it is still a much different thing when the question is whether the natures in the personal union in Christ have nothing else or nothing more than only their natural, essential properties; for that they have and retain these has been mentioned above. . . . But that this opinion [that nothing should be ascribed to the human nature of Christ which is beyond its natural properties] is false and incorrect is so clear from God’s Word that even their associates rebuke and reject this error. For the Holy Scripture, and the ancient Fathers from the Scriptures testify forcefully that human nature in Christ, when it was glorified and exalted to the right hand of the majesty and power of God, after the form of a servant and humiliation had been laid aside, did receive, apart from, and over and above its natural, essential, permanent properties, also special, high, great, supernatural, inscrutable, ineffable, heavenly prerogatives and excellences in majesty, glory, power, and might above everything that can be named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph 1:21) (Triglotta, Th. Dec., Art. VIII, 48-51, p. 1031).

V. The reason why Jesus had to be God and Man

- (a) The reason why Jesus had to be man:

Hebrews 2:14-17 helps us to understand why Jesus took on a human body and came to this world. “Since the children have flesh and blood, he (Jesus) too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.”

All people are sinful by nature and sin every day in their thoughts, words, or actions. Sin pays off with eternal death in hell. But no one can save himself from eternal death. Everyone needs the Savior. That’s why God promised Adam and Eve to send a Savior. That’s why Jesus came to this world. Jesus took on a human body in order to obey God’s law in full as the substitute of all people (Gal 4:4,5); in order to take all the sins of all people (2 Co 5:19-21); in order to die and pay the ransom for the sins of all people (Heb 10:5-10; 1 John 2:2); in order to be forsaken by God for all people (Matt 27:46).

- (2) The reason why Jesus had to be God:

According to Psalm 49:7, no man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him. The story of the young rich man reminds us of this (Matt 19:16-24). If there were a perfect saint, he would indeed be saved, but he would have no superfluous merit, which he could pass on to some one else (A Summary of Christian Doctrine, CPH, Koehler, p.94). It is also obvious that no mere human can destroy Satan who holds the power of death. Satan was successful in tempting even Adam and Eve, who were holy and had a perfect knowledge about God. We are sinful by nature and don't have a perfect knowledge about God. How can we overcome all his cunning temptations? It is God alone that can defeat Satan's temptations. Because Jesus was the holy one and the Son of God (Luke 1:35), he didn't have original sin. Jesus didn't commit any sin by his thoughts, words or deeds. The Bible says: "We have one (Jesus) who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb 4:15). 2 Co 5:21 says that Jesus had no sin. Another thing that only God can do is to rise from the dead. Jesus had to be God in order to rise. Jesus had to be God in order to prove by his resurrection that he accomplished his task as the Savior of the world.

VI. Conclusion

Before closing this essay, let us recall Jesus' question in Matthew 16:13-17. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; other say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophet." Then, Jesus asked them, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" As their representative, Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus accepted this confession and said to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but my father in heaven. On this rock (not on Peter, but on the confession he made) I will build my church, and the gate of Hades will not overcome it."

The Christian Church that even Satan cannot overcome is built on the "solid rock"—that is to say, on the One who is the Son of Man and who is at the same time the Son of the living God. Let me ask you two more questions before closing this essay. Who do the people in our day say Jesus Christ is? We may hear many strange answers. But what about you? Who do you say Jesus is? Of course, you and I follow what the Bible says. I believe, confess, and teach that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. I know you agree. I rejoice that by the gracious working of the Holy Spirit God has given us this common faith and confession, which is proclaimed to the world by our joint-fellowship, our activities, and our confession. May our God continue to bless our confession to his glory and the good of all people.

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