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CHRIST AS MEDIATOR

A STUDY OF THE THEOLOGIES OF EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, MARCELLUS OF ANCYRA, AND ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Jon M. Robertson

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A Study of the Theologies of Eusebius of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra and Athanasius of Alexandria

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This work is dedicated with love
to my wife, Erin.

Many women have done well,
But you excel them all.

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Preface

The subject of this study is the access to God provided through the divine Word, as seen in the theologies of Eusebius of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra and Athanasius of Alexandria during the early years of the 'Arian' controversy.

In the Introduction, we survey recent approaches to the period that are inadequate due to erroneous presuppositions or the imposition of later concepts. The term 'Arianism', for example, is often used without any clear theological content derived from the fourth-century movement. Another reason for much of the confusion in approaches to the post-Nicene debate stems from a predilection on the part of many to treat the occurrences of theological terminology divorced from their original context. Terms and phrases such as 'essence', 'hypostasis', 'consubstantial' and 'godhead' can only be fruitfully understood within their theological *situ*. Related to this is a third problem of the inadequate categorization of the various groups of the early controversy. Classifications built upon the mere occurrence of terms; based on geographical distinctions; or imposed by later decisions of orthodoxy conceal more than they reveal. In order to counter some of these weaknesses, we outline our method in this study of the theological theme of divine mediation as being contextual, systematic and one that transcends traditional functional and ontological categories. In addition, we hope to show that the logic of monotheism was a greater influence on the thinking of the theologians of the period than has sometimes been appreciated.

In Chapter 1, we briefly analyse Origen's view of the mediation of God through the Word, which gives needed background for the study of the three fourth-century theologians, as well as providing a methodological framework for our study. We discover that, although obviously subordinationist in his view of the relationship between the Father and the Son, he had a clear view of the continuity of the divine nature shared by both. The nature of the 'species of deity' (*deitatis specie*) is such that it is in itself incorporeal and invisible and utterly simple (*simplex*). There is no manner in which the Father

precedes the Son, either temporally or conceptually. Throughout his discussion, he implies a view of divine 'oneness' within which some sort of plurality is found. This continuity of nature is then essential to his understanding of how the knowledge of God is mediated through the Son. Thus the Son is the 'invisible image of the invisible God'. Origen consistently presents this account of divine mediation both in the pre-incarnate Word as well as in the Incarnation. His usage of the *communicatio idiomatum* indicates the immediate divine revelation that he envisions taking place through the incarnate Word.

Chapter 2 analyses Eusebius of Caesarea's understanding of the radical transcendence of God the Father. This influenced his view of the Word as an intervening mediator between the Father and the created world. We argue that his concept of mediation is necessarily a 'deictic' one, i.e. one in which the mediator, while similar to that which it images, is not to be identified with it in any fundamental way. This is particularly evident in his presentation of 'image' theology. He favoured the illustration of image for the Father/Son relationship because he felt it pictured their similarity and non-identity, as well as described the eternal soteriological function of the Son in mediating knowledge of the Father. His comprehension of the Incarnation was that it reflected, at a new but not qualitatively different level, the on-going mediating function of the Word. In addition, this illuminates his role in the events leading up to, during and following the Council of Nicaea. His participation in that debate can be shown to come not simply from theological naivety or a desire for conciliation, but rather was motivated in particular by a real desire to defend this view of divine mediation. That this was at the forefront of his concerns can be shown through a careful reading of his congregational letter after the Council of Nicaea, in his other correspondence during this period and especially in his debate with Marcellus of Ancyra.

In Chapter 3, we examine Marcellus of Ancyra's account of the 'one God' and how knowledge of that God comes to humanity. That the concept of mediation was central to this debate is shown from a brief overview of Eusebius of Caesarea's response to Marcellus. The Caesarean bishop's concern about the function and identity of the image in the Marcellan controversy was shared by Eusebius of Emesa and Acacius of Caesarea. The Ancyran bishop's account is strictly 'monoprosopic' in that he believed the divine unity to be made up of

one acting person, one *prosopon*. This in turn allowed for no concept of plurality within the divine unity. In this chapter, we also consider how this conception of monotheism influenced how he formulated the mediation of God through the man Jesus Christ. It is shown that Marcellus actually shared Eusebius' view of 'deictic' mediation of the image, but differed from him in that he identified the 'deictic' mediator with the flesh of Christ, while the Caesarean saw the eternal Word in that role. The ontological 'gap' that Eusebius had posited between God the Father and his Word is, in contrast, placed by Marcellus between the divine Word and the human flesh. Thus the Ancyran distinguished between the divine and human sayings of Christ in a way that foreshadowed later Christological controversy.

Chapter 4, through an analysis of the works *Contra Gentes* and *Contra Arianos* I, II and III, considers Athanasius of Alexandria's view of the one Godhead (*θεότης*) as including the Father begetting the Son. This is in opposition to Eusebius, who had located the divine unity required by monotheism within the Father's *θεότης* and carefully differentiated it from the *θεότης* of the Son. Athanasius' approach also differs significantly from Marcellus' view of the divine *θεότης*, since it not only left room for plurality within the Godhead, but demanded it. We then go on to document the Alexandrian's hesitation to use traditional mediation language. This came from his aversion to the use made of it by his opponents, who posited the Word as a necessary ontological barrier between God and the created order. Athanasius, in contrast, wished to emphasize the direct and immediate relationship that God has with his creation. This then informed his theology of the divine image, which presupposes a link of nature between the image and that of which it is an image. Something that is created or originate, and therefore only contingently existing, cannot act as an effective image of the unoriginate God. In this he seems to show a closer tie to Origen than does Eusebius. We then go on to survey Athanasius' critique of 'deictic' mediation. He accused it of being ineffectual, unnecessary and leading away from monotheism both in worship and in Christian life. All of this provides the background for how Athanasius believed that the Father is seen in the Son. He argued for the immediate presence of God, not only in creation, but also in the Incarnation when God himself became man and took on as his own all human *pathos*.

In the Conclusion, after summarizing our study, we argue that the fourth-century 'deictic' views of mediation have much in common with the recent 'symbolic' theology of Roger Haight. This is evident especially in his view that the historical Jesus, as the 'symbol' of God, is not to be identified completely with God but rather indirectly shows us how God acts and relates to the world. Given this basic similarity, we then apply the criticisms of Athanasius to Haight's theology. Through this critique, we attempt to show that Haight's symbolic Christology does not effectively accomplish any mediation of the knowledge of God. To the contrary, it actually tends to make God less, rather than more, accessible; and posits an unnecessary mediatorial gap between God and his creation.

By demonstrating some of the theological concerns of the early fourth-century controversy, this study hopefully provides a deeper understanding of the motivations of the period. In particular, it illustrates that many of the participants in the early 'Arian' controversy were not simply motivated by superficial concerns of terminology or by political machinations, but rather on a deeper level by theological concerns about how humanity can know God. Careful contextual study of the writings of the fourth-century theologians supplies a corrective to inadequate approaches, based on simplistic or anachronistic models. This study of the differences in approach to divine mediation between three men who were all in attendance and accord with the Council of Nicaea encourages us to avoid reducing the controversy to any 'two-school' theory. In addition, it helps us to resist imposing later models of orthodoxy on this early period and pushes us to read them on their own terms, with their own stated concerns. Finally, this study assists us in the contemporary theological task by highlighting and reintroducing perspectives on concerns that continue to be live issues today.

This book would never have seen the light of day without the help and encouragement of many people. While of course the errors to be found here are the author's sole responsibility, there are many who share the credit for anything found to be of worth. Oxford University in general and Greyfriars Hall in particular provided a setting whose resources, scholarly ambience and community are surely unrivalled in the world. I would like to thank Fr. Thomas Weinandy for his encouragement, patience and many timely suggestions. By his tireless effort

he was not only a good supervisor, but also a friend. My examiners, Dr Mark Edwards and Dr Morwenna Ludlow, were of incalculable help with their thoughtful questions and suggestions for improvement. The patient help of Dr Edwards in turning D.Phil. thesis into book has been especially invaluable. I would also like to thank the Revd Jim Gustafson, whose vision for excellence in theological training in Latin America was the original impetus for my going to Oxford. Finally, I must mention my family. Without their daily patience and encouragement for more than three years, not a word would have made it to paper. Erin, Elizabeth, Joshua and David, thank you!

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Contents

Abbreviations

Arian Controversy

Opitz H. G. Opitz, ed., *Urkunden zur Geschichte des Arianischen Streites, 318–328*, Athanasius Werke 3.1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1934)

Athanasius

CA *Contra Arianos*
CG *Contra Gentes*
DI *De Incarnatione*

Eusebius

CM *Contra Marcellum*
DE *Demonstratio Evangelica*
ET *De Ecclesiastica Theologia* I and II
LC *Laudes Constantini*

Origen

DP *De Principiis*

Introduction

The controversy that embroiled the Christian world in the early fourth century over the status of the divinity of the Son of God caused such confusion that it has been famously referred to as a 'battle at night',[1] where those involved struck out at others without always fully comprehending with whom they were feuding. However, the chaos that ensued in the years just before and after the Council of Nicaea has been matched over time by similar bewilderment and difficulty in attempts to understand the nature of this conflict, especially in its earliest phase. There are several reasons for this continuing perplexity in scholarly approaches to the early Arian controversy.

First, many interpretations of the conflict are based upon uncertain assumptions concerning 'Arianism'. That this is not a felicitous term for the movement against which the followers of Nicaea reacted has been made abundantly clear in the past few years. To begin with, it is quite certain that those labelled 'Arian' did not accept the term. Those who were gathered in Antioch in 341 obviously chafed at the term, saying, 'How, being bishops, should we follow a presbyter?'[2] In addition, if by 'Arianism' we mean what was specifically believed

[1] The metaphor of the night-battle can be found at Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 2.492 and Socrates, *Historia Eclesiastica* 1.23.

[2] Found in Athanasius, *De Synodis* 22. While this disavowal is generally recognized, it is not always noted that the grounds of this complaint are not theological, but rather ecclesiastical, based on the fact that Arius was a mere priest. That there was a theological affinity is made apparent a few lines later: 'After examining and verifying his faith, we admitted him, rather than followed him.' Thus, it seems problematic at best when Kelly asserts that 'Arianism proper is excluded' at the very synod that reviewed Arius' theology and accepted it and him (J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (Harlow: Longman, 1972), 270). What would 'Arianism proper' be, if not even Arius held it?

and taught by Arius, then we may find it a nearly impossible task to get a concrete understanding of it. Precious little survives of the heresiarch's writings, and most of it comes through his adversaries.[3] However, it would seem that even if one could arrive at the dubious goal of a full understanding of Arian theology in this sense, it would be largely beside the point, in terms of understanding the larger Christological controversy of the fourth century. As already noted, he was not considered a leader by those who were subsequently labelled 'Arian' and he and his writings had little part in the ensuing debates. Wiles has well said that any 'Arius'-centred approach to the controversy has a 'primary disadvantage'

> in suggesting a view of fourth century theology, where the significant issue is seen as the various schools' relation to the one seminal thinker, Arius. And to approach them with that question in mind can be a dangerous disincentive to any serious study of their theologies in their own right. But the figure of Arius was not perhaps, in fact, very important to any of those known by one of the various expansions of his name.[4]

[3] Arius' extant writings are as follows: (1) letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia (from Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.6.1ff.); (2) letter to Alexander of Alexandria (from Athanasius, *De Synodis* 16, and Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.7); (3) letter to Constantine (from Socrates, 1.26.2 and Sozomenus, II.27.6); (4) fragments of a previous letter embedded in a letter of Constantine to Arius (from Athanasius, *De Decretis* 40.1–24, and Gelasius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.19.1); (5) excerpts from the *Thalia* (from Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* I.5–6 and *De Synodis* 15). The first four conveniently appear together, along with other important documents of the Arian conflict, in Hans-Georg Opitz, ed., *Urkunden zur Geschichte des Arianischen Streites 318–328*, Athanasius Werke 3.1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1934) as documents 1, 6, 30 and 34, respectively. Helpful summaries of Arius' theology can be found in R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318–381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 20ff.; R. P. C. Hanson, 'The Arian Doctrine of the Incarnation', in *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments*, Papers from the Ninth International Conference on Patristic Studies, September 5–10, 1983, Oxford, England, ed. Robert C. Gregg (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1985), 181–211; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition,* vol. i: *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, 2nd rev. edn., trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 219–48; Rowan Williams, 'The Logic of Arianism', *Journal of Theological Studies* 34, 1 (1983), 56–81; and Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, 2nd edn. (London: SCM Press, 2001), 95–116.

[4] Maurice Wiles, 'Attitudes to Arius in the Arian Controversy', in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 43.

That 'Arianism' as the pervading label for a group of church leaders was a polemical invention has been shown to be certain.[5] This connection of a certain group of theologians with the name of Arius is evident at least as early as the Council of Antioch in 325 (where reference is made to 'those around Arius'). However, the fact that the label was attached for polemical reasons should not lead us to the conclusion that it was *merely* polemical. That is, although the title 'Arian' is an unhappy one, this ought not to blind us to the possibility that the group so labelled actually was a recognizably cohesive theological group. But, as Wiles has said, it will only be with the 'serious study of their theologies in their own right' that any common features can be noted.

A second reason for much of the present confusion in approaches to the post-Nicene debate stems from a predilection on the part of many to treat the occurrences of theological terminology divorced from their original context and meaning. It must be understood that it is not simply the occurrence of a term that is important, but *how* that term is used. Thus, such terms and phrases as 'essence' (*οὐσία*), 'consubstantial' (*ὁμοούσιος*), 'hypostasis' (*ὑπόστασις*), 'out of nothing' (*ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*), 'Godhead' (*θεότης*) and others must be studied *in situ*. Only as the theological systems within which they are used are uncovered can these terms take on any meaning. Michel Barnes, in writing about the study of the creeds divorced from their theological contexts, has expressed a concern which can also be applied to the broader study of theological terms in general.

[5] This should help us understand that, while Athanasius was quite active in the promulgation of the 'Arian' title, he was by no means alone, nor did it start with him. For the polemical invention of 'Arianism', besides the article by Wiles cited above, see also J. Rebecca Lyman, 'A Topography of Heresy: Mapping the Rhetorical Creation of Arianism', in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 45–62; Richard Paul Vaggione, 'Of Monks and Lounge Lizards: "Arians", Polemics and Asceticism in the Roman East', in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 181–214; David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); and Christopher Stead, 'Rhetorical Method in Athanasius', *Vigiliae Christianae* 30 (1976), 121–37.

The key to grasping the correct reading of the texts must be found in words that do not appear in the creeds at all. . . . Without a good sense of the context within which these creeds were produced, without a sense of how the words that *are* there relate to the word which is *not* there, the doctrine these texts came to embody and symbolise cannot be read off them.[6]

Just as the creeds cannot be profitably studied apart from their broader theological context, so also the mere occurrences of the terms which became 'flash-points' of controversy cannot be evaluated without an appreciation of the theological framework within which they appear.

A third barrier to a proper understanding of the fourth-century struggle is related to the inadequate categorization of the various groups involved. For the above-stated reason, any categories based on a relationship to Arius ('Arian', 'Semi-Arian', 'Neo-Arian') would seem suspect from the start. Some other labels suffer from the debility just noted of making reference to theological terms used without making a deeper assessment of how those terms are understood and used by the various authors. Thus, classifications such as 'homoousian', 'homoiousian', 'miahypostasism' and 'dyohypostasism' can conceal differences as much as they reveal commonalities. Other analyses, based on geographical distinctions, such as 'Antiochene' and 'Alexandrian' soon show their inadequacy when in fact the controversy seems to have arisen between 'Alexandrians' to begin with.[7] This shows that, whatever the theological background of these various schools might be, the geographical labels have little to do with the actual situation in the fourth century. These labels are usually connected

[6] Michel R. Barnes, 'The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon', in *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London: Routledge, 1998), 62.

[7] This approach was apparently first set forth in the nineteenth century by Cardinal Newman (Cardinal Henry Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (London: Longmans, Green, 1897), 236–44). Other examples can be found in Friedrich Loofs, 'Theophilus Von Antiochien Adversus Marcionem', *Texte und Untersuchungen* 46, 2 (1930); and T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). The last in particular shows the weaknesses of such an analysis. He calls Eusebius of Caesarea 'apologetic Alexandrian', Marcellus of Ancyra 'Antiochene', and Athanasius 'neo-Alexandrian'; thus masking the great dissimilarities between Eusebius and Athanasius as well as missing the common points between Arius and Eusebius.

to supposed exegetical differences ('literal' versus 'allegorical'), but this simply does not explain all the available facts. For example, as Williams states, the evidence does not support the conclusion 'that Arius was a literalist'.[8] In reality, all the participants seem to have used a mixture of literal and allegorical approaches to interpret the scriptures in presenting their cases. Another fault common to many treatments of the period is the attempt to analyse and categorize the various thinkers involved in terms of later theological definitions. The assessment of earlier thinkers by the standards of, for instance, Chalcedon, may be tempting but is anachronistic at best and can distort the earlier writer's thought.[9]

A careful study of the writings of the various theologians involved in the 'Arian' controversy and their systems of thought from which they entered the polemical battle, and within which they employed their terminology, would seem to be indicated as the pathway out of much of the confusion that surrounds the theological upheaval of the early fourth century. Besides an in-depth analysis of each participant's writings, where available, there is also the necessity of comparing and contrasting each theologian on his own grounds, based on his own use of the terminology. While such a thorough examination of the theologians involved is well beyond the scope of this study, it is hoped that what is offered here will be a small step in the direction of understanding the early fourth-century controversy in the terms of the participants themselves. For this purpose, we will limit ourselves to one theological thread—the concept of Christ as mediator; and only study three writers of the period—Eusebius of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra and Athanasius of Alexandria.

There are several reasons for choosing the theme of divine mediation for our analysis. First of all, it was, as we shall come to see, a stated primary concern of the theologians themselves. Time and again, they formed their questions, made their accusations and defended

[8] Williams, *Arius*, 109.

[9] An example of this can be found in Grillmeier, *Christ*, 308–28. His presentation of Athanasian Christology is presented as a treatment of 'the problem', i.e. whether Athanasius held to a human soul in Christ or not. And yet, for all its importance, surely it is a distortion to imply that this is what Athanasian Christology was all about, when the Alexandrian obviously gave it little thought. Again, the distortion does not lie in the analysis of whether Athanasius held to a human soul, but rather in making it the main agenda of a presentation of Athanasian Christology.

themselves in terms of how they viewed Christ as mediator of the knowledge of God, or how it was that 'whoever saw Christ, saw the Father' (John 14:9).

While we shall use the phrase 'mediation of the knowledge of God' throughout the study, it should be understood that we are not concerned merely with knowledge *about* God. Rather, 'knowledge of God', as used here, is to be taken as including 'knowing God' as well as 'knowing about God'. Throughout the writings treated here, there are connections between 'seeing God' and 'knowing God' and being in a right relationship with God. Thus, 'knowledge of God' takes on not only intellectual content but also, and more primarily, implications of relationship and salvation. In fact, these very kinds of connections make up a large part of the debate about how Christ can be an effective mediator to humanity of the knowledge of the divine.

Second, the concept of 'mediation' illustrates the combination of 'functional' and 'ontic' theological concerns which characterized much of the fourth-century disputation. It has often been assumed that during the time of the New Testament documents, concerns about Christ were 'functional' in nature, i.e. the main consideration was about how Christ 'functioned' in bringing salvation, with little or no interest in aspects of his 'being'. In contrast, the patristic period, according to this view, was controlled by speculations into the ontology of Christ, rather than the earlier functional concerns. Usually concomitant to this view is the putative imposition of foreign 'Greek philosophical' concepts onto the original biblical faith. However, in the past few years, this point of view has been strenuously contested in the realm of New Testament studies. In particular, Richard Bauckham has contended that one must go 'beyond the fundamentally misleading contrast between "functional" and "ontic" Christology as categories for reading the New Testament texts'.[10] In a similar way, it can be argued that the controversy of the early fourth century about the divinity of Christ can also be seen as involving both the 'function'

[10] Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (London: Paternoster Press, 1998), 41. Interestingly, the 'Christology of divine identity' which Bauckham suggests as a means past the impasse of 'functional' and 'ontic' concepts is quite similar to the concerns displayed by some of the participants of the Nicene debate.

of Christ as mediator as well his ontology. In fact, we shall find in our study that the three writers upon whom we focus had as their primary concern the function of Christ as he mediates the knowledge of God to man, and only secondarily dealt with ontological issues.

In much the same way, it is also hoped that this study will highlight the connections between Trinitarian concerns and Christological problems. It is a common practice to separate the two areas of theology and, indeed, it is often conceptually helpful. However, we should not think that the church fathers made any hard and fast distinctions between the two areas. In fact, as we shall see, they continually switched between these two concerns in their writings because of their integral connections. Ideas about the relationship between the Father and Son had (and still have) obvious import for how one conceives that 'the Word became flesh'.[11] It is hoped that our study of Christ as mediator will demonstrate that the correlation and interdependence between the two areas was for our theologians indisputable.

In addition to the theme of our study, some justification is required for our selection of theologians. First, we shall briefly examine Origen's view of the mediation of Christ. This is important as background to the fourth-century debate for reasons given below. Next, in the main body of the paper, we shall examine the view of mediation, and the theological framework within which it occurred, of three theologians of the early fourth century—Eusebius of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra and Athanasius of Alexandria. It should be noted that all three were not only present at the Council of Nicaea, but were also apparently in agreement with the decision of the council. That three people with such divergent views all came out of the same

[11] In recent years, this has been highlighted considerably more than before, especially with the realization of the importance, if not the centrality, of Christological and soteriological concerns in Arianism. See, for example, Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* (London: SCM Press, 1981); Hanson, 'Incarnation' ; Hanson, *Search*, 117–28; Grillmeier, *Christ*, 245–8. The older view that Arianism was solely concerned with Trinitarian concerns can be found in Henry Melvill Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Deighton Bell & Co., 1900); G. Voisin, 'La Doctrine Christologique De S. Athanase', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 1 (1900), 226–48; and S. Rogala, *Die Anfänge Des Arianische Streites* (Paderborn, 1907).

council illustrates the confusion of the day. It should also cause us to view with suspicion any theory of the controversy which offers a simplistic 'two-schools' explanation of the struggle. While the role of Eusebius of Caesarea at the synod is still somewhat disputed, his presence there is not. His letter to his congregation defending his support of the council's pronouncement and anathema is one of the few direct sources we have for the proceedings at Nicaea. Of course, Athanasius as well was there, although not in a fully participating role. In addition, it has been pointed out only recently that Marcellus of Ancyra was present and, in fact, may have taken a leading part in the conference.[12]

Eusebius of Caesarea seems a relatively obvious choice for any analysis of the early 'Arian' debate. There is a substantial body of his theological writings extant and his involvement in the controversy was, at least on occasion, intense. This can be shown from his letters written in defence of Arius as well as by his lengthy refutations of Marcellus written after Nicaea. In addition, his ambiguous relationship with Arius and the 'Arians' would seem to make him a logical subject for the study of theological affinities and dissonance during the early Christological debates.

As for Marcellus, there has been a growing recognition of the important role he had in the events and debates that immediately followed the Council of Nicaea. His part in attacking the anti-Nicenes through his polemical work *Contra Asterium* is obvious, but it has only recently been appreciated that his role was pivotal in the events immediately prior to the council.[13] In addition, there is an obviously 'anti-Marcellan' flavour to many of the creeds, which have been described as 'Arian' during this period. This can be demonstrated, for example, in the 'Dedication' Creed of Antioch in 341,[14] the so-called

[12] See, in particular, A. H. B. Logan, 'Marcellus of Ancyra and the Councils of 325: Antioch, Ancyra, and Nicaea', *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992), 428–46.

[13] A. H. B. Logan and Joseph T. Lienhard, 'Marcellus of Ancyra in Modern Research', *Theological Studies* 43 (1982), 486–503.

[14] Found in Athanasius, *De Syn.* 23. The evidence that make this creed 'resolutely . . . anti-Marcellan' in Kelly's words are as follows: (1) the emphasis placed on the Father being 'truly' the Father and the Son 'truly' the Son, separating them into 'distinct hypostases' (*τὴν οἰκείαν ὑπόστσιν*) was a major point of contention between Eusebius and Marcellus. (2) The use of 'unchanging image' (*ἀπαράλλακτος εἰκών*)

'Third'[15] and 'Fourth'[16] Creeds of the same council, the 'Macrostichos' Creed sent to Milan in 345[17] and in the First Creed of Sirmium of 351.[18] Finally, recent studies have begun to approach the issue of what, if any, theological relationship existed between Marcellus and Athanasius and so it would seem essential to include this comparison in any study of the period. Unfortunately, the amount of surviving Marcellan literature is small, especially in comparison with the other two. The majority comes to us in fragments through Eusebius of Caesarea in a polemical context. While this is something of an obstacle to a clear understanding of Marcellus' full theology, it does highlight the differences between the Caesarean and the Ancyran. In addition, it should be noted that a major strand in this polemical exchange has to do with Christ as mediator, especially in his role as 'image'.

Probably the inclusion of Athanasius in any study of the early 'Arian' controversy needs less justification than the other two. Indeed, excluding him from any assessment of this period would cause raised eyebrows. Yet, for all the attention that has traditionally been focused on the Alexandrian bishop, there are *lacunae*. In particular, his theological thought as a systematic whole has often been neglected.[19]

(23.3) was strongly contested by Marcellus (fr. 96). (3) The unity of agreement (*τῇ συμφωνίᾳ ἓν*) expressed (23.6), a position which Marcellus also hotly opposed.

[15] In *De Syn.* 24. Actually a formula presented to the council by Theophronius of Tyre rather than a creed produced by the council, it specifically anathematizes those who hold to the doctrines of Marcellus. In appearance, it would seem that Theophronius was defending himself from the charge of holding 'Marcellan' doctrines. According to Hilary (*De Syn.* 29), there was the suspicion of heresy on the part of one of those attending which prompted the production of the official creed of the council. If this could be identified with Theophronius, then it could be plausibly argued that the creed owed its existence to the suspicion of Marcellan leanings on the part of Theophronius.

[16] In *De Syn.* 25. The emphasis on the 'endless reign' of the Son is generally seen as an attack on Marcellus' eschatology.

[17] In *De Syn.* 26 and Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.19. Marcellus is condemned by name in section 5. The particular reasons given for the anathema are that he taught: first, that the divine Logos was a 'mere word'; second, that the Son's kingdom would have an end; and finally, he denied the pre-existence and deity of the Son.

[18] In *De Syn.* 27. Of the twenty-six anathemas appended to the creed, numbers 6, 7, 8, 14 and 19 are directed against Marcellus.

[19] Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought* (London: Routledge, 1998) is a welcome recent work that fills this need to a great extent.

He has also not been studied comparatively with other theologians of his day. It will be our aim in this study to examine specifically his view of Christ as mediator, and how this view compares with his contemporaries as well as how it fits into the rest of his thought. In particular, we shall see that Athanasius' view of divine mediation was structured and determined, to a large extent, by his understanding of God as being immediately present to his creation.

1

Origen on Christ as Mediator

We shall now turn to the writings of Origen, with an eye to his presentation of divine mediation through the Son. While our treatment of the great Alexandrian thinker will necessarily be brief, it is an important *prolegomenon* to our later study of the early fourth-century controversy for several reasons. First of all, the legacy of Origen hung heavy over the debate concerning Arius. The participants themselves made pointed reference to the theologian. Eusebius of Caesarea, Paulinus of Tyre and others sought to defend their views with testimonial from Origen, while Athanasius attempted to defend the earlier writer from the charge of 'Arianism' and to demonstrate his affinity with Nicene orthodoxy. On the other hand, Marcellus of Ancyra, as we shall note, identified Origen as the source of many of the errors he saw in his opponents.[1] In addition, many analyses

[1] Marcellus noted the use Paulinus of Tyre made of Origen in frs. 19, 20 and 21; and Eusebius in turn defended him against Marcellus' attacks, especially in *Contra Marcellum* I.4.3–27 (although cf. probable allusions to Origen in *Contra Marcellum* II.4.30 and *De Ecclesiastica Theologia* I.19.5; II.25.6; III.3.1). It is good to note in passing that Marcellus, in particular, protested the Origenist plurality of hypostases (frs. 19 and 20) and his assertion that God was always Father (fr. 21). The Ancyran bishop attributed these errors of Origen to his over-reliance on Plato rather than scripture (fr. 22). He noted in particular that Origen mentioned 'the distinction of first principles taught by [Plato]' (*τῆς τῶν ἀρχῶν παρ'αὐτῷ διαφορᾶς*) and implied that this was why he entitled his book ΠΕΡΙ' ΑΡΧΩΝ. The only surviving direct evidence that we have from Marcellus concerning this Platonic connection is that the beginning phrase of Origen's work (*οἱ πεπιστευκότες καὶ πεπεισμένοι*) occurred as well in Plato's *Gorgias* 454d. By this slender foundation, Marcellus could also have claimed a Platonic root for St Paul's Second Letter to Timothy, where the same two perfect participles occur together (*οἶδα γὰρ ᾧ πεπίστευκα καὶ πέπεισμαι ὅτι δυνατός ἐστιν*). This could furnish at least as probable a source for Origen's usage, if not more probable, since the participles share the same object (i.e. Christ) in both passages. All quotations of Eusebius' writings against Marcellus are translated from *Gegen Marcell, Über die*

of the fourth-century Christological controversy up to the present label one side, or elements of one side, 'Origenist' and it is significant for our study that these supposed 'Origenist' elements often have to do with a certain view of mediation.[2] Hence, an analysis of Origen's own views on divine mediation through Christ will be enlightening for understanding where continuities in thought exist and where they do not.

Second, an overview of the Alexandrine's theology of the Son will enable us to introduce the common threads that will be developed in our investigations of the three later theologians. As described above, our theme of 'divine mediation' was chosen, in part, because it highlights the systematic links between various facets of theology, such as 'functional' and 'ontic' Christology, as well as the connections between Trinitarian concerns and what have traditionally been considered Christological ones. That the divide between these sectors of theology, at least for early Christian thinkers, was more apparent than real has already been suggested, and we shall attempt to demonstrate it throughout the study.

Methodologically, as well, our brief study of Origen will serve, to an extent, as a model of our procedure for the investigation of the three fourth-century theologians. This procedure will be: first, to enquire into the nature of the relationship between the Father and the Son as seen by the writer in question; and only afterward, to attempt to understand how this impinged on his view of the 'mediation' of the knowledge of God through the Son. In this way, we hope to underline the systematic nature of various theological assertions about Christ as

kirchliche Theologie, Die Fragmente Marcells, ed. E. Klostermann, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1905). Athanasius, in distinction from Marcellus, emphasized that Origen taught, rightly in his opinion, the eternal coexistence of the Son with God the Father (*De Dec*. 27.2–3, which Koetschau inserts, dubiously, in *De Principiis* IV.4.1) and that the terms 'Son', 'Word' and 'image' are completely interchangeable. This basic difference in their approaches to Origen intimates the fundamentally divergent theologies which these two propounded.

[2] For example, 'In true Origenistic fashion he [Alexander of Alexandria] describes Him as the unique nature which mediates (μεσιτεύουσα φύσις μονογενής) between God and creation' (J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. edn. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1978), 224). That this analysis can be misleading is shown by Kelly's characterization of Alexander as a proponent of 'cautious and middle-of-the-road' Origenism while Eusebius represented a 'more radical' form (ibid., 224). We shall have occasion to question this assumption about Origen later.

mediator, as well as grasp the common threads or themes which ran throughout much of the early controversy over the divinity of Christ. Among the common themes found in Origen are: the relationship between 'the one' and 'the many', both in the Godhead as well as in the world; how the title 'image' can be applied to Christ and what it implies about the relationship between the Father and Son; and the proper understanding of biblical terms, such as 'brightness' (ἀπαύγασμα), 'exact image' (χαρακτήρ), 'breath' (*vapor*) and 'working' (ἐνέργεια) as they refer to the Word of God. It will become evident in our study that, contrary to much current opinion, Origen actually stressed an 'essential' link of nature between God the Father and God the Son. This 'continuity of nature' had a strong positive effect on how Origen envisioned our knowing God through the Son, both before the Incarnation as well as during 'the economy according to the flesh'.

With this in mind, we also hope to challenge the common assumption that Origen's view was later represented primarily by Arius and those who defended him. To the contrary, we hope to demonstrate that Athanasius as well could be considered at least as much an heir of the third-century theologian as those whom he opposed. This is not to say that Origen was a 'Nicene' before Nicaea. Such a label would be anachronistic at best and would not sufficiently acknowledge his view of the subordination of the Son to the Father. However, it is worthwhile for us to recognize that, for Origen, subordination does not necessarily represent discontinuity of nature.

1.1. THE CONTINUITY OF DIVINE NATURE

We shall begin our overview of Origen by looking at how he conceived the simple nature of God. He argued that the utter simplicity and oneness of the divine nature implies his incorporeality.

> God therefore must not be thought to be any kind of body, nor to exist in a body, but to be a simple intellectual nature, admitting in himself of no addition whatever, so that he cannot be believed to have in himself a more

and a less, but is throughout Unity (μονάς), or if I may so say, Oneness (ἑνάς), and the mind and fount from which originates all intellectual existence or mind.[3]

An immaterial existence, as such, does not need the confines of space, magnitude, shape or colour to define its being. Thus, a few lines later, he continued,

On account of this, that simple and wholly mental existence cannot have delay or hesitation in any of its movements or operations; for if it did so, the simplicity of its divine nature would be seen to be in some degree confined or restrained by such an addition, and that which is the first principle of all things would be found to be composite and diverse, and would be many and not one; since it is proper for only the species of deity, if I may so call it, to exist apart from all bodily admixture.

There are several points worth noting for our present purposes. First of all, the divine nature, because it is one and simple, must be regarded as incorporeal. In addition, this incorporeality is something that is a property *only* of divinity, 'since it is proper only for the species of deity, if I may so call it, to exist apart from all bodily admixture' (*quod oportet totius corporeae admixtionis alienum una sola, ut ita dixerim, deitatis specie constare*). The curious phrase 'the species of deity' (*deitatis specie*) calls for some comment. It should be noted that it comes in a context that emphasizes the unity of divine nature. And yet, the expression 'species of deity' would seem to suggest some sort

[3] *De Principiis* I.1.6. Of course, this passage comes from the first section of *De Principiis*, which concerns God the Father, and so it might be assumed that this description of the utter oneness of the divine nature only pertains to the Father. However, even in this chapter, the description of God's nature, and how we access it, involves the Son and Holy Spirit. As Kannengiesser has said, 'In Peri Archon chapter 1 of book 1, God is introduced at once as Father and Son and Holy Spirit' (Charles Kannengiesser, 'Divine Trinity and the Structure of *Peri Archon*', in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and W. L. Petersen (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 242). Hence, 'if we turn to the Lord, where also the Word of God is, and where the Holy Spirit reveals spiritual knowledge, the veil will be taken away, and we shall then with unveiled face see in the holy scriptures the glory of the Lord' (*De Principiis* I.1.2). Cf. also I.1.1. In addition, the 'logic' of incorporeality accompanying indivisible nature would apply to the Son and Spirit as well as to the Father, as we shall see. All translations of *De Principiis* (hereafter referred to as *DP*) are made from the Latin text in *Traité des Principes*, vols. 1, 2 and 5, ed. H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti, Sources Chrétiennes 252, 253, 312 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978).

of plurality, a category within which more than one example could be found. Origen himself seemed to be uncomfortable with this way of speaking, for he introduced the phrase by saying, 'if I may so call it' (*ut ita dixerim*). Here, Origen tried to describe the divine nature, something which, by its very definition, was incorporeal and 'single' (*simplex*), as including the notion of plurality. The 'species of deity' was 'throughout a Unity and, so to speak, a Oneness' (*ex omni parte* μονάς, *et ut ita dicam* ἑνάς).[4]

This statement concerning the incorporeal nature of God takes on direct significance for Origen's view of the Son of God in a passage that has been much noted. Many commentators, both ancient and modern, have made mention of *DP* I.1.8 as a clear example of Origen's view of the inferiority of the Son by nature to the Father, for here he insisted that the Father was invisible even to the Son. However, to take this as an assertion of the inferior nature of the Son in relation to the Father is to miss Origen's point completely. Origen had been previously arguing for the incorporeal nature of God on philosophical grounds and now wanted to turn to Scripture in order to prove 'from that source how God's nature surpasses the nature of bodies'.[5] In other words, it is a continuation of the previous arguments concerning the immaterial existence of God. And, because he is without any sort of body, Christ is called 'the image of the invisible God'. This is not saying that God is visible to some but not to others. Rather it is 'an absolutely unvarying declaration about God's very nature'. Origen then went on to explain:

[4] G. W. Butterworth, editor of *Origen: On First Principles, Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis, Translated into English, Together with an Introduction and Notes* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), 10, notes that 'some of the later Pythagoreans seem to have distinguished, as Origen does here, between the Monad [μονάς], the primal Unity which gives rise to multiplicity, and the bare One [ἑνάς], a kind of Absolute which they tried to conceive as unrelated to anything'. To the contrary, however, Origen did *not* distinguish the terms here, but rather treated them as synonyms. Worse is the incomprehensible assertion of Berchman that Origen called 'the first One' *monas* and *henas* and 'the second One' *monada* and *henada* (Robert M. Berchman, *From Philo to Origen: Middle Platonism in Transition*, Brown Judaic Studies 69 (Chico, Calif.: Scholar's Press, 1984), 118. Kannengiesser has said that 'Berchman's Origen looks like a Middle Platonic travesty, more precisely like a hypothetical philosopher, stripped of his theological identity, or like a metaphysician gone lost in the very contradictions which the true Origen firmly and expressly avoided' (Kannengiesser, 'Divine Trinity and the Structure of *Peri Archon*', 247).

[5] *Quomodo natura dei supereminet corporum naturam*, *DP* I.1.8.

And John, too, when he says in the gospel, 'No one hath seen God at any time', plainly declares to all who are capable of understanding, that there is no existence to which God is visible; not as if he were one who is visible by nature and yet eludes and escapes the gaze of his creatures because of their frailty, but that he is in his nature impossible to be seen.[6]

It is evident that the theme of the passage is not the Son's inability to see the Father, but rather the nature of God himself. God is, in his very nature, invisible, and so even the Son cannot see the Father. For 'to see and be seen is a property of bodies; to know and be known is an attribute of intellectual existence'. It is significant for our study that Origen specifically included the Son in this assessment of the divine nature. 'Whatever therefore is proper to bodies must not be believed *either of the Father or of the Son*, the relations between whom are such as pertain to the nature of deity.'

It is, therefore, because the expressions 'to see' and 'to be seen' cannot suitably be applied to incorporeal and invisible existence that in the gospel the Father is not said to be seen by the Son nor the Son by the Father, but to be known.[7]

It might be complained at this point that Rufinus has altered his original somewhat, in order to make it more palatable to the orthodox of his day. And yet, as we shall see, Origen was quite consistent in this presentation of the invisible, incorporeal divine nature (which Origen had argued reflects its 'simple nature') as being shared by the Father and Son. In addition, there seems to be no evidence for the alleged tampering. In fact, the sentence taken from Jerome, which Koetschau inserts at this point in his edition of *DP* ('For as it is incongruous to say that the Son can see the Father, so it is not fitting to believe that the Holy Spirit can see the Son'[8]), far from further proving the essential inferiority of the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Son, actually enhances Origen's argument for the inclusion of the Son within the invisible nature of God.

A passage that in many ways is parallel to this one on the invisibility of God in his very nature can be found at *DP* II.4.3. It is helpful to our study, because Origen there went further in demonstrating

[6] Ibid. [7] Ibid.
[8] Taken from Jerome, *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum* C. 7.

how his view of the 'essential unity' of the Son with the Father in the incorporeal divine nature influenced his view of how the Son mediates knowledge of that divine nature to others. In the passage Origen, while arguing against the Marcionites, put to them the question of whether God was visible or invisible. He assumed that in order to avoid absurd conclusions about God having a body, they would answer that he is invisible. But, he then argued, if he is invisible by nature, then he shouldn't be visible even to Christ.[9] However, Christ has claimed that 'whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father as well'.[10] This cannot, argued Origen, be a reference to physical sight, but rather to 'understanding him with the vision of the heart', for 'he who has understood the Son has understood the Father as well'.

> For we have said that it is one thing to see and be seen, another to perceive and be perceived or to know and be known. To see and be seen is a property of bodies, which it would certainly not be right to apply either to the Father or to the Son or to the Holy Spirit in their relations one with another. For the Trinity by its nature transcends the limits of vision, although it grants to those who are in bodies, that is, to all other creatures, the property of being seen one by another. But incorporeal, and above all intellectual nature, is capable of nothing else but to know and be known, as the Saviour himself declares when he says, 'No one knows the Son except the Father, neither does any know the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son wants to reveal him'.[11]

Several things should be noted here. First, Origen included not only the Father and Son, but also the Holy Spirit within the invisible divine nature for whom 'knowing and being known' is proper rather than 'seeing and being seen'. Based on this assertion, although he did not state it explicitly, Origen presumably could have stated that the Father and Son could not see the Holy Spirit either. Here he emphasized the very invisibility of the divine nature, which all three shared. Second, and a corollary to the first, is the explicit exclusion of this invisible

[9] Jerome, *Ep. Ad Avitum* 6—'In the same book he [i.e. Origen] says: Grant that God is invisible. If then he is invisible by nature, he will not be visible even to the Saviour.' However, once again, Jerome's comment, if indeed meant to refer to this passage, is beside the point. He neglected to mention that the Son is included by Origen in the 'species of deity' that is invisible, nor did he bother to include Origen's *caveat* against the apparent impiety of saying that the Son could not see the Father.

[10] John 14:9.

[11] *DP* II.4.3.

nature 'to all other creatures'. This sets the Father, Son and Holy Spirit apart from the rest of existing things. While it is apparent in many passages that Origen (and many, if not all, of his contemporaries) held to a strong subordination of the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to the Son; it should be equally obvious that he believed them to be set apart in their very nature from other beings. Third, Origen was not asserting that the Father was unknowable, but could be seen through the 'knowable' Son. Rather, *both* Father and Son, sharing the same nature, are equally inaccessible to physical sight. 'No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and those to whom he wishes to reveal him.' Last, Origen underlined that this 'unity of nature' was the foundation for the revelation of the Father through the Son. Since God is invisible by nature, it is only by understanding the Son (who shares this invisible divine nature) that we can we understand the Father. The only appropriate image of God was an image that shared God's nature. This will be treated more fully in the next section.

That the Son was, in some sense, 'innate' to the divine nature in Origen's thought becomes clear from an overview of his presentation of the 'second hypostasis' in *DP* I.2. He emphasized throughout this chapter that to assign a beginning to the Son was to lessen God the Father. 'But how can someone who has learned to think and feel about God with some piety think or believe that God the Father existed, even for a moment, without having begotten his wisdom?'[12] To assert this, thought Origen, was to imply that God either could not have begotten his wisdom earlier, or could have but was not willing to. Both of these alternatives were 'absurd and impious'. Origen wished to emphasize that to limit the Son's existence was to limit God himself.

> Let him who gives a beginning to the Word of God or the wisdom of God beware lest he utter impiety against the unbegotten Father himself, in denying that he was always a Father and that he begot the Word and possessed wisdom in all previous times or ages or whatever else they can be called.[13]

It should be noted that here Origen is equating the wisdom of God, in an absolute sense, with the hypostatically existing Son. 'The firstborn

[12] *DP* I.2.2. [13] *DP* I.2.3.

is not by nature a different being from wisdom, but is one and the same.'[14] There was no other impersonal 'wisdom' that the Father possessed and then imparted to his Son. This will be important in our later discussions about the divine wisdom in the Arian controversy. Eusebius of Caesarea and others wanted to distinguish between the 'wisdom' of God (as an impersonal characteristic) and the hypostatic 'wisdom' which could be equated with the Son, while Athanasius accused them of teaching that God had 'two wisdoms'. It should be noted that here Origen is more closely linked with the Alexandrian bishop in maintaining that if there had been a time 'before' the begetting of the Son, then God would have been without his wisdom. Origen did not want merely to deny a temporal beginning to the Son, but even went so far as to assert that any conceptual beginning should be avoided with regard to the Son.

> On account of which we understand that God was always the Father of his only begotten Son, from whom he was born and by whom he draws his being, without any beginning, not only that which can be distinguished by some space of time, but also any other, which the mind alone is able to think within itself and to perceive, so to speak, with the naked intellect and reason.[15]

This will also take on greater significance during the fourth-century debates. While Arius seems to have been the only one who actually dared state 'there was [a time] when the Son was not',[16] and this sort of statement was quickly dropped by those who defended him, it was quite common to assign a 'conceptual' beginning to the Son.[17] Origen was clearly arguing for an eternal coexistence of the Son with the Father, both temporally and logically.

That Origen believed in an 'eternal begetting' of the Son is well known. However, what is not always appreciated is that this view was directly tied to Origen's understanding of the Son's nature. This is an

[14] *DP* I.2.1. [15] *DP* I.2.2.

[16] 'And before he was begotten, or created, or defined, or founded, he was not' (Opitz, 1.5). It is instructional to note that one of the public statements made by Alexander which Arius mentioned in the same letter, and to which he had objected so much, could have been nearly a direct quotation from Origen: 'neither in thought nor in a moment of time does God come before the Son' (*οὐτ' ἐπινοίᾳ, οὐτ' ἀτόμῳ τινὶ προάγει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ*) (Opitz, 1.2).

[17] Eusebius of Caesarea's letter to Alexander defending Arius (Opitz, 7) seems to demand some such understanding of the 'pre-existence' of the Father.

eternal and everlasting begetting, as brightness is begotten from light. 'For he does not become Son in an external way through the adoption of the Spirit, but is Son by nature.'[18] Origen here stated that the begetting of the Son was not something 'external', by which he apparently meant two things. The sonship was not externally bestowed on the Son, as such, but something that he possessed 'by nature'. In addition, however, he emphasized that it was not 'external' to the nature of God, for he is from the Father in the same way that 'brightness is begotten from light'. We shall see later how the analogy of light was used in varying ways by Eusebius of Caesarea and Athanasius of Alexandria to describe the relationship of the Son to the Father. Since we shall treat Origen's use of it later, it suffices for the moment to note that Origen used the analogy, without qualification, to denote the link 'according to nature' of the Son and the Father.

1.2. MEDIATION THROUGH THE SON

Having investigated how Origen envisioned the intimate link between the Father and the Son, we shall now turn to how he understood the relationship of the Son to the world, and how the Son's function as mediator was fundamentally based on his relationship with the Father.

While he emphasized the 'continuity of nature' between the Father and Son, Origen also affirmed that the Son is the source of truth, life and wisdom to all things that exist.[19] Indeed, this source of life was important, because 'it was to happen that some should fall away from life and bring death upon themselves'. Thus,

> It was necessary that before the existence of death there should exist a power able to destroy the death that was coming, and that there should be a resurrection, which took shape in our Lord and Saviour, which resurrection consisted in the very wisdom and Word and Life of God (*quae resurrectio in ipsa dei sapientia et verbo ac vita consisteret*).[20]

[18] *DP* I.2.4. [19] Ibid. [20] Ibid.

It is important to note that the power over death inherent in the resurrection consisted in, or was grounded upon (*consisteret*), the nature of the Son as the very wisdom of God, and Word and Life. That the divine nature of the Son is important in this mediation of life becomes even more apparent when we look at why 'the Word and wisdom of God became the Way' (*via factus est verbum dei ac sapientia*). While at first glance this may seem to imply a change in the Word when it *became* the Way, there are significant considerations within the context that make this unlikely. The created beings were not able to remain firm and steadfast in their goodness 'in consequence of the good being within them as an accident and not by nature, that is, not essentially' (*pro eo quod non naturaliter, id est substantialiter, inesset eis bonum sed accidens*). It was because they were not good 'naturally' that they would not remain good and could not help themselves regain their goodness. Only because the Son is good 'naturally' (not as an 'accident'), Origen has implied, does he not change; and only because he does not change can he then 'become' the Way for creation to return to God. 'And this is why he is called a "way", because he leads those who walk by him to the Father.' It would seem that the basis of the Son's mediation—bringing life and wisdom to the creation and returning creation to God—is his 'continuity' of the immutable divine nature with the Father.

The multiple titles that the Son receives through his mediating work are not to be understood as implying that he has a corporeal nature. 'For all these titles are derived from his works and powers, and in none of them is there the least reason to understand anything corporeal, which might seem to denote either size or shape or colour.'[21] It is essential that we recall that for Origen, corporeal existence necessarily implied multiplicity, while incorporeality (which only belongs to 'the species of deity') demanded a singular (*simplex*) existence. Here, Origen asserted that the multiplicity of names received by the Son should not make us think of him as corporeal, multiple in his very constitution.

Some, in contrast to this, have assumed the plurality of names (*appellationes*/*ἐπινοίαι*) given to the Son to be proof of a plurality of essence in Origen's concept of the Son, thus making the Father the

[21] Ibid.

Absolute One and the Son an essentially multiple being who provides the ontological link between God and the multiple world. Besides the passage we have been looking at, there are similar ones that list many titles or names for Christ, which names do reveal something true about his nature. For example, in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Origen related a number of titles (Life, Light, Truth, Way, Resurrection, Door, Wisdom, Power and Word) for the Son as he mediates God's salvation to humans; and insisted that these names really do say something about who he is.[22] For this reason, Grillmeier states,

> whereas strictly speaking there is no plurality of such *epinoiai* to be found in God the Father because of his absolute simplicity, Christ as *multiplex in constitutione* has room for a number of such titles, not only from a soteriological point of view, but also in respect of his very constitution. Christ is called wisdom, might or power of God, Logos, life, etc., and receives these names already in his divine nature.[23]

And yet, this would seem to contradict the passage we have just seen. For Origen had made it plain that these names should not lead us to think of him as corporeal in nature (and therefore multiple). The point of all this would seem to be that the multiplicity of names has to do with the multiplicity of good things which Christ is *for us*, rather than who he is in his essence. It is not that the Son is multiple in his nature, but rather that he is experienced in a multitude of ways because of the multiple needs of fallen creation. A passage that would seem to be appropriate is found in *Com. Joh*. I.119:

> God is altogether one and simple, but our Saviour, *on account of the many*, since God made him a propitiation and first fruit of all creation, *is made many things* or perhaps all these things, just as the whole creation that is able to be set free is in need of him.[24]

[22] *Com. Joh.* I.52ff. All citations from this book are translated from *Commentaire Sur Saint Jean*, vols. 1 and 2, ed. C. Blanc, Sources Chrétiennes 120, 157 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1966).

[23] Grillmeier, *Christ*, 14.

[24] *Com. Joh.* I.119. *ὁ θεὸς μὲν οὖν πάντη ἕν ἐστι καὶ ἁπλοῦν· ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν διὰ τὰ πολλά, ἐπεὶ προέθετο αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον καὶ ἀπαρχὴν πάσης τῆς κτίσεως, πολλὰ γίνεται ἢ καὶ τάχα πάντα ταῦτα, καθὰ χρήζει αὐτοῦ ἡ ἐλευθεροῦσθαι δυναμένη πᾶσα κτίσις.*

Here Origen's object is not to show a contrast between the simplicity of God the Father and the multiplicity of the Son in his essence, but rather the multiplicity of things that the Son is *economically*, that is, for the salvation of humanity. As Stead comments, for Origen,

> although God as such was perfectly one and simple, he could be given a number of distinct titles (*ἐπινοίαι* or *προσηγορίαι*) based on his different energies or operations in regard to the world and mankind. . . . the view we are now discussing accepts a real distinction of various operations or 'energies' of God towards the created world, which justify us in naming him by a number of distinct titles; but these intelligible 'energies' have then to be distinguished from the inexpressible divine essence from which they proceed.[25]

Another passage that speaks to this issue is *Com. Joh.* I.243–4:

> We must not pass over in silence that he is rightly 'wisdom of God' and therefore said to be this. For the wisdom of the God and Father of all does not have his hypostasis in mere imaginings (*ἐν ψιλαῖς φάντασίαις*) like dreams in human thoughts (*τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις ἐννοήμασι φάντάσματα*).[26]

He then continued by saying that we should try to conceive of the wisdom of God as 'an incorporeal hypostasis of manifold objects of contemplation' (*ἀσώματον ὑπόστασιν ποικίλων θεωρημάτων*). These 'manifold objects of contemplation' then extend, in a sense, to all 'the reasons' (*τοὺς λόγους*) in creation. Two things concerning the divine wisdom should be noted from this fairly difficult passage. First, wisdom should be conceived as an 'incorporeal hypostasis' (*ἀσώματον ὑπόστασιν*). There is no reason to believe that Origen would not have here maintained all that he had said previously about incorporeal existence, i.e. that it is simple in nature. However, this 'incorporeal hypostasis' is said to be of 'manifold objects of contemplation' (*ποικίλων θεωρημάτων*). The point would seem to be that, while the hypostasis, as incorporeal, retains its 'unity', when we contemplate it, we receive a multitude of conceptions. In other words, it is not that God's wisdom is multiple in its very constitution, but rather that in our reception of that wisdom, we perceive 'manifold objects of contemplation'.

[25] Christopher Stead, *Divine Substance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 278.
[26] *Com. Joh.* I.243–4.

The point might be made clearer by a quick comparison and contrast with the treatment of the relationship of the 'one' to the 'many' by one of Origen's contemporaries, Plotinus.[27] For Plotinus, the First Hypostasis is absolutely devoid of multiplicity, above and beyond all being. The Second Hypostasis, which is Intellect, wishes to contemplate the One that is beyond.

> Therefore this multiple Intellect, when it wishes to think that which is beyond, [thinks] that itself which is one, but in wishing to attain to it in its simplicity comes out continually apprehending something else made many in itself; so that it moved to it, not as Intellect, but as sight not yet seeing, but came out possessing the multiplicity which that sight itself made.[28]

Plotinus here described that when the Intellect attempted to contemplate the One beyond, it became, in a sense, multiple in its nature. For, although it was able to reach some sort of true perception of it (for it thinks 'that itself which is One'), it can never 'come away' from the contemplation with the simplicity and purity of the One, but rather a multitude of conceptions. It is in this way that the Plotinian One can be in some way involved in the production of a multitude of thoughts within the Intellect, without compromising its 'oneness'. To state it a slightly different way, the Intellect truly 'apprehends' something of the simple nature of the One, but never 'comprehends' it in its utter simplicity and therefore always comes away with a plurality of thoughts.

While the details of the Plotinian system are beyond our scope in the present study, the comparison with Origen is helpful on this point. For Plotinus, it is the contemplation of the One that creates, within the Intellect, the multitude of ideas. And yet, as we have seen, this multitude of ideas about the One, while true, does not in any

[27] Of course, in one sense, for Plotinus the very act of thought created a multiplicity of 'the thinker' (*τὸ νοοῦν*) and 'the object of thought' (*τὸ νοούμενον*) and therefore he argued that the First Principle was not itself Mind. Our interest here, however, is how he conceives of the perception of the One by Mind creating a multitude of true perceptions. It should be noted that Plotinus usually does not refer to the First Principle as 'One', since we cannot predicate anything of him without introducing plurality.

[28] *Ennead* V.3.11, from *Enneads*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 108–9.

way compromise the 'oneness' of the constitution of the Plotinian First Hypostasis. In a similar way, it would seem, the multitude of names given to the Son of God say something true about him, but are to be understood not as referring to his very nature, but rather to our apprehension of that single incorporeal hypostasis. As in the Plotinian system, the One is on one side of the gap between the 'simple' and the 'many' and the Intellect contemplating him is on the other; so in Origen, the Son is on the 'simple' (*simplex*) incorporeal side of the gap and as we experience and contemplate him, we come away with a variety of true but incomplete concepts (ἐπινοίαι) of his being.[29]

That Origen conceived of the mediation of the knowledge of the Father through the Son as taking place on the basis of a 'continuity of nature' between them is plain from his presentation of various terms used for the Son. We shall now briefly overview these conceptions as found in *DP* I.2.6–12. In each title for the Son, we shall note, first, that Origen interpreted it in terms of 'natural continuity' with the Father; and second, that the mediation described by each term is based on that continuity.

First, in I.6, Origen treated the title 'image' (εἰκών, *imago*) as applied to the Son. He noted that there were two basic meanings of the word: one is an object painted or carved on some material, the other usage is when we call a child the 'image' of its parent. The first, which did not necessarily imply any 'natural' relationship between the image and what it represents, seemed to Origen to be the best way to understand how human beings were made 'in the image of God'. However, the second meaning, that which implied a 'familial link', was the appropriate way to understand how the Son was the Father's image. Thus he is 'the invisible image of the invisible God'. We have seen how important invisibility was to Origen as a defining characteristic of the divine nature. We should understand that the Son was this kind of image, because, 'this image preserves the unity of nature and substance common to a father and a son' (*Quae imago etiam*

[29] This is not, of course, to suggest any causal relationship between Plotinus and Origen but rather only to note the similarities in how they approached the problem of the many arising out of the one. Stead, *Divine Substance*, 278, has suggested a Stoic source for this.

naturae ac substantiae patris et filii continet unitatem).[30] Hence, since he shares the incorporeal nature of the Father, 'we must understand that nothing in him is perceptible to the senses. He is wisdom, and in wisdom we must not suspect the presence of anything corporeal.'[31] And it is just this very 'continuity of nature' that makes the Son an effective image. Because he shares the divine nature, 'he reveals the Father by being himself understood; for whoever has understood him understands as a consequence the Father also, according to his own saying, "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father also" '.[32]

The next title of Christ that Origen treated was 'brightness of glory' (*splendor gloriae*).[33] According to Origen, this shows the unity of the

[30] *DP* I.2.6. Origen followed this up with a description of the begetting of the Son being 'an act of his will proceeding from the mind'. The idea of the Son being begotten 'of the will of the Father' was to be much used in the fourth-century controversy to escape the idea that the Son was in some way 'innate' to the Father's being, as well as to avoid material conceptions of his begetting (cf. Arius' Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, Opitz, 1.4). Athanasius was to oppose it for the implication that he thought it held of denying the essential unity of the Father and Son. Here we should understand that Origen is mainly concerned to combat material thoughts such as emanations or divisions within the Godhead. In the context, he made explicit that he held to a 'unity of nature'.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid. Once again, there are several insertions made by Koetschau. A fragment from Jerome, *Ep. Ad Avitum* 2, asserted that 'the Son in relation to the Father is *not* the truth, but in relation to us is a shadow of the truth'. An anonymous apology related by Photius, *Bibliotheca* codex 117, stated that 'the image of God, considered in relation to that of which it is an image, is not truth'. Theophilus (*Ep. Synod* 2) wrote that Origen had asserted that 'the Son compared with us is truth, but compared to the Father is falsehood'. Finally, Justinian (*Ep. Ad Mennam*, Mansi ix. 525) related that the Alexandrian had said, 'We, therefore, having been made according to the image, have the Son, the original, as the truth of the noble qualities that are within us. And what we are to the Son, such is the Son to the Father, who is truth.' The difficulty of assessing these fragments for an understanding of Origen's theology is compounded by the fact that they have been taken out of their original context and it would be exceedingly foolhardy to make any categorical statements without the said context. It seems obvious that they do not fit within this section. Second, there is enough evidence, as we shall see, to demonstrate that the ill-will of some of Origen's later critics at times caused them to be a little less than forthright in their treatment of the Alexandrian thinker. While we cannot always simply take Rufinus' word for what Origen wrote, it would seem the sanest course is to try to understand Origen's thought within the context of what writings of his we have.

[33] *DP* I.2.7. Taken from Hebrews 1:3: ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόζης. For more treatments of Origen on 'light', see M. Martinez-Pastor, *Teologia De La Luz En Orígenes*, Publicaciones Anejas a 'Miscelánea Comillas' (Santander: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Facultad de Teologia, 1963); Henri Crouzel, *Origène et la 'Connaissance Mystique'*,

divine nature because just as the radiance of the Sun shines down without dividing from the Sun, so the Son proceeds 'without separation' from God. We shall see later that this analogy, with qualification by Eusebius of Caesarea and without by Athanasius, would play an important role in the Arian controversy. He argued elsewhere[34] that this analogy also supported the eternality of the Son, since the Sun, by its very nature, always was accompanied by its radiance. That this 'natural' connection of the brightness to the light was the basis of its effective mediation of the light was obvious to Origen. 'For it is through its brightness that the nature of the light itself is known and experienced.'[35] The radiance is not another thing that shows something about the light, but rather it is the medium through which we actually experience the light. That the radiance of the light comes softly and gently has to do with the fragility of the recipients (*fragilibus et infirmis mortalium oculis*), not the nature of the light itself. By slowly clearing the darkness, 'it makes them able to endure the glory of the light, becoming in this respect a kind of mediator (*μεσίτης*) between men and the light'.[36] Thus the mediator between men and the light is, in its very nature, light.

Another term which Origen described was 'the express figure of God's substance or subsistence' (*figura expressa substantiae vel subsistentiae*).[37] He first asked, 'How can there be said to be, besides the substance or subsistence of God (whatever substance or subsistence means), something else which is an image of his substance?' He then

Museum Lessianum, Section Théologique 56 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), 130–54; John Dillon, 'Looking on the Light: Some Remarks on the Imagery of Light in the First Chapter of *Peri Archon*', in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*, ed. C. Kannengiesser and W. L. Petersen (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 215–30.

[34] *DP* I.2.11. Athanasius will repeat this argument.

[35] *DP* I.2.7.

[36] Ibid.

[37] *DP* I.2.8, taken as well from Hebrews 1:3 (*χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*). It is interesting that apparently Origen had doubts about the exact meaning of *ὑποστάσις*. If we are right in taking *substantia* as the translation of *οὐσία* and *subsistentia* as that of *ὑποστάσις*, then we have here additional evidence of the confusion between the two terms which were to play such an important role later in the resolution of the 'Arian' controversy. The ambiguity of both terms was to be a major factor in the confusion of the early fourth-century debate. The synonymity of the terms in Origen has long been recognized, cf. C. H. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, Bampton Lectures (London: Clarendon Press, 1886), 163–4.

proffered two explanations: the first was with reference to the eternal existence of the Word and could be termed an 'internal' image or figure of God; the second was with reference to the Incarnation. First, one can consider the internal workings of the wisdom of God, as she 'internally' outlines the revelations to be made concerning the divine nature. Origen believed that in some sense this could be considered a 'figure' of God's substance. 'When wisdom outlines first in herself the things which she wishes to reveal to others, by means of which they are to know and understand God, then she herself may be called the express figure of God's substance.'[38]

In the following passage, Origen gives another answer to his query, and one perhaps more to the point of an 'express image' which was 'beside' or 'beyond' (*praeter*) the substance of God, had to do with the Incarnation. In this infamous passage, Origen likens Christ to a small, easily seen statue which is similar 'in every detail' to another, much more massive, statue which, because of its great size, was invisible to everyone.[39] Before one takes this as positive proof of the inferior nature of the Son as compared to the Father, a few things should be noted. First the passage, in spite of occurring within a chapter concerned with the eternal Son, obviously is concerned with the Incarnation. This is shown from the fact that Origen twice mentioned that it was when 'the Son, who was in the form of God, emptied himself' and then stated that the small statue had reference to while he was 'within the very narrow compass of a human body'. In addition, while in that condition, 'he gave indications . . . of the immense and invisible greatness that was in him'. The contrast between the large statue and the small one is not that of the nature of the Father as compared to the nature of the Son, but rather the great power within the Son (and

[38] Ibid.

[39] Jerome, in *Ep. Ad Avitum* 2, reported on this passage, 'He gives an illustration of two statues, an immense one and a very small one; the former fills the world and is in a way invisible from its very size, the latter is perceptible to our sight. The former he compares to the Father, the latter to the Son.' This is such an obvious distortion of the passage at hand that one begins to doubt the basic veracity of Jerome in his comments concerning Origen. It was this type of thing which led Dillon to accuse Jerome of 'tendentious distortion' (John Dillon, 'Origen's Doctrine of the Trinity and Some Later Neoplatonic Theories', in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, ed. D. J. O'Meara (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 20.

thus the Father) and the works done in the body which revealed it. Thus, mixing his metaphors, Origen explained,

> It is by some such likeness as this that the Son, in emptying himself of his equality with the Father, and showing to us a way by which we may know him, becomes an 'express figure' of God's substance; so that, through this fact of his becoming to us the brightness, we who were unable to look at the glory of pure light while it remained in the greatness of his deity, may find a way of beholding the divine light through looking at the brightness.[40]

In section I.2.10, Origen next considered the title 'almighty' as applied to the Son. First, he suggested that the term implied something external to God over which he could be 'almighty'.

> Now as one cannot be a father apart from having a son, nor a lord apart from holding a possession or a slave, so we cannot even call God almighty if there are none over whom he can exercise his power. Accordingly, to prove that God is almighty we must assume the existence of the universe.[41]

We should recall that Origen had already said that one could not speak of a time before which the Son was begotten, nor even properly conceive of such a thing. The begetting of the Son had no beginning, either temporal or logical. God was always Father. It would seem at first glance that his insistence on a world existing over which God could be 'almighty' would fall into the same category. However, Origen was adamant that being 'Father' was prior, either temporally or logically, to being 'almighty'.

> Let him who is inclined to believe this [that the title of almighty belonged to God before the birth of wisdom] hear what the scriptures plainly proclaim; for it says that 'you have made all things in wisdom', and the gospel teaches that 'all things were made by him and without him was not anything made'; and let him understand from this that the title of almighty cannot be older in God than that of Father, for it is through the Son that the Father is almighty.[42]

[40] *DP* I.2.8.

[41] *DP* I.2.10. The positing of a necessary universe over which God must rule in order to be considered almighty is a facet of Origen's theology which has met quite consistent criticism. However, it is tangential to our present concerns. More to the point of our discussion is how Origen saw the relationship between God's role as 'Father' and his title as 'almighty'.

[42] Ibid.

Not only is the Father–Son (or God–wisdom) relationship logically prior to the God–world relationship, it is also somehow a more innate part of God's nature, for 'the Father is almighty *through* the Son'. The Son is the *manner* in which the Father is almighty. Thus, one cannot distinguish between the omnipotence of the Father and of the Son, for they are 'one and the same'.

> For it is through wisdom, which is Christ, that God holds power over all things, not only by his own authority as Master, but also by the voluntary service of his subjects. And to prove to you that the omnipotence of the Father and the Son is one and the same, just as God and the Lord are one and the same as the Father, listen to the manner in which John speaks in the Apocalypse: 'These things says the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the almighty'. For he who 'is to come', who else is it but Christ? And just as no one ought to be offended because, while the Father is God, the Saviour also is God; so too ought no one to be offended because, while the Father is called almighty, the Son is also called almighty.[43]

Thus Origen highlights both the distinction of the Father and the Son, as well as their unity of nature ('God and the Lord are one and the same') and of activity ('the omnipotence of the Father and the Son is one and the same').

Turning to the final term addressed by Origen, in *DP* I.2.12 he treated the passage in Wisdom 7:25 which states that wisdom is called an 'unspotted mirror of the ἐνεργείας (that is, of the working) of God'.[44] By 'working', said Origen, was meant 'a certain strength by means of which the Father works' and this is to be understood for all of the Father's works: creating, providing, judging, disposing and dispensing. All demonstrate the activity of the divine wisdom. The reference to an unspotted mirror, he opined, was to give us to understand that wisdom 'moves and acts in correspondence with the movements and actions of him who looks into the mirror, not deviating from him in any way whatever'. Far from giving the idea of one individual imitating another, this illustration helps us to understand that 'as regards the power of his works, then, the Son is in no way whatever separate or different from the Father, nor is his work anything other

[43] Ibid.

[44] Rufinus in his translation retained the Greek word, while also translating it as *inoperationis*.

than the Father's work, but there is one and the same movement, so to speak, in all they do'.[45] The Son does not work externally to the Father, 'like a pupil's work in likeness to or in imitation of his master', nor does the Son make 'in bodily material' what the Father has formed 'in their spiritual essence'. Rather, as above he had affirmed that the Father is almighty *through* the Son; in the same way, all that he does is done through the Son, because their movement is one and the same.

This strong assertion of divine unity may seem to contradict other statements in Origen which seem to stress just as strongly the opposite.[46] One well-known example is *Com. Joh.* II.16–18, where Origen asserted that God (the Father) is 'God-himself' (*αὐτόθεος*). This then explains 'why the Saviour says in prayer to the Father, "That they might know you, the only true God"; but any besides "God-himself" that are made God by participation in that Godhead are not "the God" (*ὁ θεός*) but "God" (*θεός*)'. Hence, the title *αὐτόθεος* denotes for Origen the source of all divinity. For Origen, the order of phrases in John 1:1 implies this. It is only after stating that 'the Word was with God' that John adds that 'the Word was God'. It is the Word's being with the Father—his participation in the true God—that allows him to be God himself. The Son's divinity is derived from his participation in the divinity of the Father. Thus, there is here a clear subordination of the Son to the Father. This would, in turn, seem to imply not a 'continuity of nature' between the Father and the Son, but rather a gulf of qualitative difference in essence. While the difficulty in the interpretation of Origen is very real, there are some observations that can be made concerning this passage.

First, in the context, Origen is addressing 'two false and impious doctrines'. The first is to deny that the Son has a 'distinctness of his own' (*ἰδιότητα ἑτεραν*) besides that of the Father, even keeping back the name 'Son'. The second is to deny the divinity of the Son, 'making his distinctness and essence to be circumscribed apart from the Father, whence they are able to be separated' (*τιθέντας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἰδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν τυγχάνουσαν ἑτεραν τοῦ πατρός, ἐντεῦθεν λύεσθαι δύναται*).[47] While this difficult

[45] *DP* I.2.12.
[46] See Mark Edwards, 'Nicene Theology and the Second God' (unpublished).
[47] *Com. Joh.* II.16.

passage is not completely clear, it is evident that Origen was concerned about both the *distinctness* of the Father and the Son, as well as their *inseparableness*. This should be kept in mind as one interprets the following section. In fact, this obviously illuminates Origen's teaching concerning the Father as the source of the Son's divinity. Affirming the divinity of the Son without finding his source in the Father would mean that there are two separate founts of divinity, which would constitute ditheism. Maintaining the divinity of the Son cannot mean a separate source of divinity from the Father. By the distinction he makes between ὁ θεός and θεός, Origen hopes to maintain both that the Son has a distinctness of his own; and also that the Son is truly divine and not to be separated from the Father.

The bluntness of Origen's assertion of the distinction between the Father and Son should not blind us to the fact that his chief concern is not to lower the divine status of the Son, but rather to confirm that status.[48] This is shown by several things in the passage. First of all, the participation that the Son has in the divinity of the Father is of a different order than that of others. Thus, he is 'more honoured than the other gods beside him' (ἔστι τιμιώτερος τοῖς λοιποῖς παρ' αὐτὸν θεοῖς).[49] This qualitative difference between the Son and others who receive the divinity of the Father is further underlined by the fact that the Son is always God. As we have seen, the order of the phrases in John 1:1 have import for Origen and he mentions that the very first thing mentioned by John (before 'the Word was with God' and 'the Word was God') is 'In the beginning was the Word'. The Word has, since the beginning, been with God and therefore 'always remains God' (ἀεὶ μένων θεός).[50]

Also, and most important for our concerns about mediation, Origen emphasizes here that it is only through the Son that the Father communicates his divinity to others. 'It was by the ministry of the first-born that they became gods, for drawing from God in generous measure in order to make them gods, he distributed to them according to his own goodness.'[51] It is important to remark here that it is not the case, for Origen, that the Father allocates his divinity to

[48] It is significant here to note that, judging by article 1 of Pamphilius' apology, it was the injudicious elevation of the Son, rather than subordination, that was originally charged against Origen. I am indebted to Dr Mark Edwards for this insight.

[49] *Com. Joh.* II.17. [50] *Com. Joh.* II.18. [51] *Com. Joh.* II.17.

others just as he does to the Son, but rather that he communicates it through, and only through, the Son. The Son, in his eternal participation in the Father, draws God's divinity into himself and then apportions it to others. As we have seen that the Father is almighty through the Son, so also he mediates his divinity through the Son.[52] Not only this, but the Son shares the fecundity of the Father, for just as God the Father is the source of all divinity that exists, so also the Word (ὁ λόγος) of God is the source of all reason (λόγος) among rational creatures. For this reason, while Origen reserves the title ὁ θεός for the Father, he does refer to the Word as ὁ θεὸς λόγος. The Son shares the function of 'source' with the Father—'both have the position of fount' (ἀμφότερα γὰρ πηγῆς ἔχει χώραν).[53]

In summary, it can be concluded that while Origen does clearly subordinate the Son to the Father, this does not imply a discontinuity of nature. To the contrary, by finding the source of the Son's divinity in the Father, Origen seeks to secure the continuity of the divine nature. While the Father is divine 'in himself', it is with the Father's divinity that the Son is divine. If the Son were not sourced in the Father, then they would be separable deities. Again, the twin concerns of Origen here are for the *distinctness* and *inseparability* of the Father and Son. For this reason, it would seem that 'degrees of divinity' would not be the most appropriate way of describing Origen's theology. The Father as 'true God' is not to be contrasted with the Son as 'false' or 'lesser' God. Rather, he is 'true God' while the Son is the one who participates eternally in the divinity of the 'true God'. Rather than 'greater' and 'lesser', it would seem better to think in terms of 'source' and 'conduit' of divinity. It is always through the Son that humanity is 'divinized' with the Father's divinity; the Father mediates his divinity through the Son. Thus, while it is unimaginable for Origen that the Son could be God without participating in the

[52] The present discussion would seem to illuminate another problematic passage, *De Oratione* 15, where Origen maintains that supplicatory prayer should only be directed to the Father. While he does assert this, he also emphasizes the mediatorial role of the Son in such prayer: 'It remains then to pray only to God the Father of the whole universe; *but not apart from the high priest*. . . . A man who is exact about his prayers should not pray to him who himself prays, but to the Father whom our Lord has taught us to call upon in prayers. *But at the same time no prayer should be addressed to the Father apart from the same Jesus*.'

[53] *Com. Joh*. II.20.

divinity of the Father, it is equally unthinkable that the Father could be God to the world without the Son.

1.3. DIVINE MEDIATION THROUGH THE INCARNATE WORD

We have briefly touched on the mediation of the knowledge of God through the incarnate Word above, in our assessment of Origen's 'two statue' analogy. It was evident, in our analysis, that it was through the 'small visible' figure of the human Jesus that the 'greatness' of the divine power was revealed in a way that was amenable to human weakness. It was not that the Son of God was, in his divine nature, a more 'user-friendly' deity than God the Father, but rather that the divine power of God himself was 'confined to the narrow confines of a human body' in order that we might receive a true, if somewhat filtered, knowledge of God. Indeed, it was because the Son is really 'God' that he can mediate knowledge of God. We shall now enquire further as to how Origen understood the manner in which we know God through the man Jesus Christ.

One of the most controversial elements of Origen's theology is the pre-existence of human souls. This facet of his thinking now comes to the fore, because the pre-existent soul of Christ plays a role in the Incarnation of the Word. This human soul had clung to the Logos in love from eternity and, at the Incarnation, acted as a sort of 'interface' between the otherwise incompatible incorporeal divine nature and the physical body.

> This soul, then, acting as a medium between God and the flesh (for it was not possible for the nature of God to mingle with a body apart from some medium), there is born, as we said, the God-man, the medium being that existence to whose nature it was not contrary to assume a body.[54]

[54] *DP* II.4.6. *Hac ergo substantia animae inter deum carnemque mediante (non enim possibile erat dei naturam corpori sine mediatore misceri) nascitur, ut diximus, deus-homo, illa substantia media existente, cui utique contra naturam non erat corpus assumere.*

It was natural for the soul, as a spiritual entity, to be united to the Logos, as well as to the body. In this sense then, for Origen, the divine presence in the human Jesus Christ was a mediated presence. But we should note that the divine presence which needed this 'mediation' was the Son's own divinity. In addition, Origen envisioned that the union between the flesh and divinity was an intimate one. As Crouzel has stated, 'This union, then, gives it the "form of God" which is proper to the Word, establishing between God and man a perfect *communicatio idiomatum*, that is to say everything attributed to the Word can be said of the man and vice versa.'[55] Thus Origen marvelled at 'how the wisdom of God can have entered into a woman's womb and been born as a little child and uttered noises like those of crying children'.[56] Note that here it is the wisdom of God, that very wisdom without which it is impossible to imagine God ever to exist, that has entered the virgin's womb and become a little child.

The question can be raised whether this human soul acted more as a barrier or as a filter. Crouzel seems to imply the former when he comments on this passage, 'The soul of Christ, image of the Word, is like a second intermediary image after the Word between God and man.'[57] However, as we have seen, the purpose of the Incarnation, for Origen, was to reveal God. This was what his point had been concerning the 'small statue': it made evident what the 'big statue' was really like. In addition, as we saw, the 'big statue' was not to be identified with a completely absent Father, but rather was identified with 'the immense and invisible greatness that was in him'.[58] It would seem that for Origen, the humanity of Christ was not there as a barrier, but rather acted as a filter of sorts, by which the divine power could be seen in a way manageable to human beings. Grillmeier correctly asserts: 'In the Logos, of course, all the secrets of God are first contained. He reveals the Father. The manhood of Christ, like the Holy Scripture, is like a filter through which the Godhead is

[55] Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 192.
[56] *DP* II.6.2.
[57] 'L'âme du Christ, image du Verbe, est comme une seconde image intermédiaire après le Verbe entre Dieu et l'homme', Origen, *Traité des Principes*, Crouzel and Simonetti, eds. He also here assumes an 'intermediary' role for the Word between God and the world that we have seen does not concord fully with what Origen wrote.
[58] *DP* I.2.8.

imparted in accordance with the receptive capability of man.'[59] While corporeality in some sense conceals the incorporeal nature of God, it also reveals it. Thus, 'Origen shows . . . how the Godhead becomes transparent precisely in the corporeality of Jesus.'[60]

In conclusion, let us summarize what we have learned about Origen's view of divine mediation through the Son. We have seen, contrary to the opinion of many, that Origen actually emphasized a 'unity of substance' between the Father, Son and Spirit which entailed incorporeality (with its concomitant invisibility) and the utter simplicity of being which only belongs to 'the species of deity' (*deitatis species*). In addition, we have seen that he wanted to maintain the distinction between the Father and Son, even as he asserted their mutual activity. As a consequence of this 'substantial unity' between the Father and the Son, a true mediation of the knowledge of God can take place through the Son. It is only through the divine nature itself that the knowledge of God can be obtained. Only God is a proper mediator of God. Thus, we come to the statement that Origen made at the beginning of his first chapter to the *De Principiis* while commenting on 'In your light shall we see light' (Psalm 35:10—LXX):

> For what other light of God can we speak of, by which a man sees light, except God's spiritual power, which when it enlightens a person causes him either to see clearly the truth of all things or to know God himself who is called the truth? Such then is the meaning of the saying, 'In your light shall we see light'; that is, in your Word and Wisdom, which is your Son, in him shall we see you, the Father.[61]

[59] Grillmeier, *Christ*, 143.
[60] Ibid., 144. Cf. as well Crouzel, *Connaissance*.
[61] *DP* I.1.1.

2

Mediation in Eusebius of Caesarea

It is obvious even to the casual reader of the theology of Eusebius of Caesarea that the idea of mediation is central to his theology of God and the Logos. In the present chapter, we will first analyse Eusebius' view of God, which will then lead us to consider what sort of divine mediation Eusebius considered necessary for God to relate to the created order. We shall then enquire how this view of mediation impacted Eusebius' understanding of the Incarnation. In addition, hopefully this study will show that during his participation in the Arian controversy and in his writings against Marcellus of Ancyra, his concerns were not simply with the unity and indivisibility of the Godhead, but also with safeguarding this mediating position of the Word. In anticipation of our conclusion, perhaps it would be wise to outline here the basic concept of these relations as conceived by the bishop of Caesarea.

For Eusebius, the Logos is defined by the relations he possesses 'upward' (i.e. with God the Father) and 'downward' (i.e. with the created world),[1] which are best described in terms which connote a tension between 'likeness' and 'unlikeness'. In other words, for the Logos to function truly as a mediating being it must share something of the two extremes between which it mediates, and yet remain different from either. It must be able to have a relationship of some sort with both God above and creatures below. For Eusebius, this will entail, as we shall see, some sort of affinity on the part of the Logos

[1] These relations are described in the context of the philosophical background of the dual functions of the Word as 'Ideenwelt' and 'Weltseele' in H. Strutwolf, *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie des Euseb von Caesarea: Eine dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung seiner Platonismusrezeption und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

both 'downwards' and 'upwards'. The Word must be 'like' the Father and also 'like' the creature. But, believed Eusebius, this 'affinity' that the Logos has with the Father cannot be construed as 'sameness'. There are a variety of reasons for this *caveat* in Eusebius' writings, but for our purposes we shall concentrate on that which is demanded by his view of mediation. In this context, it is obvious that if the Logos is the same as the Father in every way, then he cannot function as a mediator. He must be different in some way from the Father, or he would be no easier to approach than the Father. And, of course, if the Father were easy to approach, there would be no need of a mediator. Hence, for Eusebius, the Son must be both 'like' and 'unlike' the Father. Not only must 'the Father be the Father', as Eusebius is fond of putting it, but also 'the Son must be the Son'.

In the very same way that this is true in the 'upward' relation to the Father, so there is in Eusebius' writings a similar tension between the Logos and the lower, created order. He is 'like' other creatures, but also 'unlike' them and therefore unique. In this way, Eusebius hopes to maintain the proper position of the Son as mediator between two otherwise incompatible ontological levels, those of God and men. This type of 'ontological' mediation can then be contrasted with views of divine mediation which generally characterize the 'gap' between God and man in other terms, such as sin. This does not imply that those other models of mediation may not contain some important ontological aspects (e.g. the divine/human natures in the incarnate Word). It is also not meant to intimate that sin was not an important category for Eusebius. However, it would seem that it should be understood as a 'sub-text' within the framework of 'ontological' mediation.

For the present overview of Eusebius' theology, we shall take a look at various writings, from various periods. In particular, we shall analyse portions of his *Demonstratio Evangelica* from the pre-Nicene period, his letters during the Arian controversy, and the *Laudes Constantini*, *Contra Marcellum* and *De Ecclesiastica Theologia* from later in his life.[2]

[2] While the chronological details need not concern us, it is important to understand that these documents range broadly from the year 315 to about 337. The *Demonstratio* was almost certainly written after the *Praeparatio* (written after 314) and before the controversy around Arius started in earnest (*c*.318). The *Laudes Constantini*

2.1. THE TRANSCENDENT GOD

Eusebius' view of God was especially informed by his radical understanding of the divine transcendence. As he stated in *Laudes Constantini*:

> But inspired instruction says that the highest of good things, who is himself the cause of all things, is beyond all understanding. Wherefore he surely is inexpressible, unspeakable, and nameless, greater not only than all language, but even than all conception, not to be confined in a place nor existing in a body, not in the heavens or the sky, or in any part of the universe, but everywhere and beyond everything, set apart in an ineffable depth of knowledge. The divine account teaches to recognize this one alone as truly God, separated from all bodily existence, different from all inferior systems.[3]

In this description, it is important to note that Eusebius here was asserting that God is not only beyond our abilities of description but even beyond our conceptual capabilities. One can only describe him by not describing him, a *via negativa.* He is alone, without any other co-ordinate being.[4] In addition, He does not exist in a direct relationship with this world, but rather He is 'set apart in an unfathomable depth of knowledge'. For Eusebius, God's utter simplicity and otherness necessitate that He have nothing directly to do with the material world. For understanding Eusebius' perspective of mediation, it is

(also known as *The Tricentennial Orations*) is really two works joined together. The second half (chapters 11–18), with which we are here concerned, was a treatise that Eusebius presented to the Emperor at the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 335 (for dating, cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. iii, trans. Revd Placid Solari, OSB (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1986); H. A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976). The *Contra Marcellum* and *De Ecclesiastica Theologia* were written during the struggle against Marcellus of Ancyra and can probably be dated around 336/7 (Marcellus was deposed at the Synod of Constantinople of 336). We shall discuss below the dating of the various letters written during the Arian controversy.

[3] *Laudes Constantini* XII.1, translated from *Über das Leben Constantins, Constantins Rede an die heilige Versammlung, Tricennatsrede an Constantin*, ed. I. A. Heikel, Eusebius Werke 1, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902), hereafter referred to as *LC*.

[4] There is a similarity here with Arius' view of divine transcendence, as described by R. Williams, 'The Logic of Arianism', *Journal of Theological Studies* 34, 1 (1983), 69, 'Arius believes God to be without co-ordinates: he is by nature eternal and unproduced, and nothing else is so.'

vital that we grasp that here he was stating, not only that God is not to be identified with any part of the cosmos or its entirety, but also that He is not to be directly associated with the material world. One cannot know God directly because he is 'beyond all apprehension'. Hence, for God to be the one, true God required of monotheism, he must (*a*) not be composed of parts nor admit of any divisions; and (*b*) be 'distanced' from the material world with its divisions and change.

The possible provenance of Eusebius' teachings on divine transcendence has elicited some comment. Most commentators on Eusebius have noted the Platonic flavour of this view.[5] Eusebius' knowledge and use of Numenius is especially apparent in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* and also in the *Laus Constantini*.[6] In fact, as S. Lilla has pointed out, Eusebius' writings 'are our main source of knowledge of Numenius'.[7]

Numenius understood the 'second god' to be concerned with both the intelligible realm above and the sensible world below.[8] He believed that the second god participates in the first god,[9] but is a distinct essence from it.[10] This is certainly echoed in Eusebius' desire to keep the Father and Son as separate beings. Numenius' radical understanding of the transcendence of the 'First God' as being completely

[5] Hanson, *Search*, 48; Lyman, *Christology*, 82f.; R. Lorenz, *Arius judaizans? Untersuchungen zur dogmengeschichtlichen Einordnung des Arius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 204–10. Lyman goes on to attempt to argue that the affinities between Eusebius and Platonism are more apparent than real, a side-effect of his consideration of a pagan audience. However, while strongest in such works as *Laudes Constantini* and *Praeparatio Evangelica* (designed for audiences at least partially pagan), such similarities can be noted, as we do in the present work, in works designed purportedly for a Christian audience (such as the *Demonstratio*).

[6] F. Ricken, 'Zur Rezeption der platonischen Ontologie bei Eusebius von Kaisareia, Areios und Athanasios', in *Metaphysik und Theologie*, ed. K. Kremer (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 114–17, 326, 331, argues that this is evidence of Eusebius' uncritical use of Middle Platonism, but note below on Eusebius' critical selection. Lyman, *Christology*, 98, as noted above, insists that the Platonic vocabulary is 'a deliberate style of address in which little Christian language is used, so as not to offend non-Christian sensibilities'.

[7] S. Lilla, 'Platonism and the Fathers', in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, ed. A. di Berardino (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1992), ii. 694.

[8] *Numénius Fragments*, ed. E. des Places, Collection des universités de France (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1973), fr. 15, p. 56.

[9] Ibid., fr. 19, p. 59; fr. 20, p. 60. [10] Ibid., fr. 16, p. 57.

unknowable,[11] absolutely inactive and motionless[12] seems also to have influenced Eusebius. Both Numenius and Eusebius stop short of raising the first principle above intellect as Plotinus did.[13]

While there is an undeniable influence of Numenius on Eusebius, it is the contention of this study that we can best understand Eusebius' motivations in his theology if he is understood, first and foremost, as a Christian thinker, rather than as a Platonic philosopher. There are at least two reasons for this. First, we should take seriously the words of Eusebius himself about what *he* thought his primary sources to be. In the quotation above, he asserted that we should think of God as beyond all apprehension simply because that is what 'inspired instruction' says. He is beyond conception and unfathomable because 'the divine account teaches [us] to recognize this one alone as truly God, separated from all physical existence'. These references to 'inspired instruction' and 'the divine account' obviously were with regard to the Christian scriptures, which he clearly understood to be his starting-point in theology. We shall have a chance to note this several times in the course of our study of Eusebius. Eusebius quoted Numenius plentifully because he thought he found in Numenius *corroboration* of what he believed to be the correct Christian doctrine, rather than a *source* for those doctrines.[14]

[11] Ibid., fr. 17, p. 58. [12] Ibid., fr. 12, p. 54; fr. 15, p. 56.

[13] *Enneads*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), I. 8.

[14] That Eusebius' use of Numenius was selective rather than uncritical is hinted at by an aspect of Numenius' thought which does not appear anywhere in the fragments quoted by Eusebius. In fragment 52, taken from Calcidius' *Commentary on the Timaeus*, there is evidence in Numenius of a dualism that might seem uncharacteristic, 'an eternally opposed pair of Monad and Dyad', where matter is a positively evil force. This dualism exists within each of us. Dillon notes the eternal nature of this dual opposition: 'Numenius points out that if the Demiurge in the Timaeus reduced Matter to order out of disorder, that implies a force outside the range of his Providence and pre-existing his ordering activity, which is responsible for this disorderly motion. God is unable to overcome entirely this force, and can only keep it in check' (J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 B. C. to A. D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 373). Dillon then goes on to suggest that this sounds 'more Gnostic than Platonist'. While how this intriguing dualism fits into the rest of Numenius' philosophical thought may not be clear, our point here is simply that in the numerous quotations of Numenius in Eusebius' writings, there is no trace of it. This absence is best accounted for by allowing that Eusebius saw that an eternal dualism between good and evil simply would not agree with a biblical Christian theology.

The second reason for giving priority to understanding Eusebius within his Christian context over his relation to pagan philosophy is that the former has greater explanatory power than the latter. As we have argued here, understanding the uniquely Christian pressures of maintaining monotheism while also recognizing a true divine mediation through Jesus Christ helps us understand the task before Eusebius as he himself understood it. We shall also suggest, through the course of this chapter, that this theological context enlightens us on how Eusebius interacted with others during the Arian controversy. In contrast, pointing out similarities between Eusebius and Platonists may be interesting, but it has little explanatory power. As Mark Edwards has well put, while addressing the issue of finding Platonic characteristics in Basilides, 'the critical objection to all such truffle-hunting is that it contents itself with the exhumation of sources, real or imagined, and does nothing to interpret what it finds'.[15] Simply noting that there are parallels between Numenius and Eusebius tells us little that we would not have been aware of before. Eusebius quoted Numenius to support his argument more than does any other ancient writer, so we can assume that there would be similarities. However, these similarities do not tell us what the actual nature of the relationship between the two thinkers was. They do not tell us *why* Eusebius quoted Numenius when he did, in the way that a serious analysis of Eusebius' theological motivations does.[16]

However, this approach cannot be used to lessen the importance of what Eusebius has written concerning divine transcendence. This seems to be Lyman's aim in pointing out that for reasons of a pagan

To repeat our assertion once again, Eusebius quoted Numenius when he felt that Numenius supported a Christian view.

[15] M. Edwards, *Origen Against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 28.

[16] In view of this, Strutwolf's conclusion (Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, 187–94) that Eusebius' cosmology is 'between Numenius and Plotinus' is unhelpful at best and inaccurate and misleading at worst. It implies a simple philosophical continuum on which Numenius, Eusebius and Plotinus can all be placed, while it ignores the obvious differences between these thinkers. Neither Numenius nor Plotinus would have accepted the label 'monotheist' while Eusebius spent much of his life defending his monotheism. Eusebius' acceptance of the Old and New Testaments as divinely inspired revelation also would seem to distance him categorically from the Greek philosophers. Strutwolf's statement also seems to simplify erroneously the relationship between the two Platonists, since Plotinus eschewed Numenius' dualism, as noted by Dillon, *Platonists*.

audience, Eusebius may sound more 'Platonic' than he really was in some writings. The consideration of audience may certainly have affected the *terminology* employed by Eusebius, but we still must take the *content* of what he wrote seriously. He posited an extreme transcendence for the 'true God' because he believed it was required by Christian revelation and quoted Numenius because he thought that he supported this 'Christian' view. While this radical view of divine transcendence of the 'first God' holds implications for Eusebius' Trinitarian theology, it also has obvious import for the need of a mediator between God and the created order.

2.2. DIVINE MEDIATION

While Eusebius maintained this radical divine transcendence, he did not want to imply that the highest God is not the ultimate Creator of the world—indeed he refers to God as 'the cause of all things'.[17] This, however, should not be understood as Lyman has it, that Eusebius' view of transcendence 'does not mean that God is distant; rather, God is continually present and active through his power and will in shaping human history'.[18] God is indeed active through his power and will, but his distance from creation makes this activity possible only if mediated and this makes the placement of an intermediate being even more vital, for Eusebius continues to emphasize the great gap that exists between God and the material world. This gap is between the 'unbegotten' on one hand and the 'begotten' on the other, 'for the One [i.e. God the Father] was unbegotten, above and beyond the universe, . . . while the other [i.e. all created existence] brought forth from that which did not exist, stood the furthest apart and was completely isolated from ungenerated nature'.[19] Hanson has rightly warned that we should not expect 'at this stage to see a significant difference between *genetos* ('originated') and *gennetos* ('generated', 'begotten').[20] There is no doubt that Eusebius, at least, used them interchangeably. The great ontological gap between begotten

[17] *LC* XII.1.

[18] Lyman, *Christology*, 94. Later she writes that Eusebius conceived of the Father as being 'intimately involved in the creation' (100).

[19] *LC* XI.12. [20] Hanson, *Search*, 48 n. 97.

and unbegotten is caused by the radical transcendence and simplicity of God on the one hand, and by the weakness of the created order on the other. 'For the perishable existence of the body and the nature of so newly created (*γενομένων*) reasonable beings could not approach the All-Ruling God.'[21] Eusebius described the situation in *Demonstratio Evangelica*, Book IV, chapter 6 by analogy with the Sun.[22] Supposing, stated Eusebius, that the sun 'came down from heaven and lived among men, it would be impossible for anything on Earth to remain undestroyed, for everything alive and dead would be destroyed together by the rushing stroke of light'. He then proceeded to make the theological point: 'Why, then, are you surprised to learn the like about God (Whose work is the sun, and the whole heaven, and the Cosmos)? That it is impossible for any to exist to have fellowship in His unspeakable and inexplicable Power and Essence . . . '

It is instructive to contrast this perspective with that of Origen in *De Principiis* I.2.8. While the Alexandrian theologian had considered the grandeur of God (the 'big statue') to be more than anyone could take in, this power could be filtered to men through the incarnate Word (the 'small statue'), while still containing the grandeur within. For Eusebius, it is simply the nature of God to be more than humanity can take. The only one for whom fellowship with God is possible is the Word of God and this helps us to understand the unique relationship which the Word must have with God—he is 'like' him in order to be able to have fellowship with the divine being in a way impossible for the created beings. The great chasm which Eusebius posited between God and creation provided him with the rationale for the presence of the Logos which bridges the gap and helps us understand how he envisions the God–Word relation.

> Therefore, the wholly good God of the whole projects a kind of medium, the divine and omnipotent power of his only-begotten Logos, which associates most perfectly and closely with the Father and partakes of His ineffable qualities, yet most graciously descends among and in some way or another conforms to those who fall short of perfection. For otherwise, he who is undefiled and holy, above and beyond the whole, could not intermix with

[21] *LC* XI.12.

[22] *Die Demonstratio Evangelica*, ed. I. A. Heikel, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1913), hereafter referred to as *DE*.

perishable and physical matter (*ἄλλως γὰρ οὔτ' εὐαγὲς οὔθ' ὅσιον τὸν τῶν ὅλων ἐπέκεινα καὶ ἀνωτάτω ὕλῃ φθαρτῇ καὶ σώματι συμπλέκειν*).[23]

The Logos is the intervening being or 'intermediary' between God and the world, which can have fellowship with both sides, acting as a sort of great 'interface' between the two otherwise incompatible extremes. He partakes somehow of God's qualities while also descending and conforming to that which is below. The origin of the Logos and his relationship with both God and the world are complex themes within the theology of Eusebius.

Eusebius described the origination of the Logos in various manners. In the quotation above, God the Father 'projects' (*προεμβάλλει*) him, while elsewhere God is described as 'inserting' (*ἔμβαλων*) the Logos into the world like a soul into the body.[24] Noting the Platonic overtones of this type of language, Strutwolf encapsulates the Eusebian concept of the Word as it exists for the world in the title 'World-Soul'.[25] Perhaps it would be fairest to the intent of Eusebius not to press these descriptions too far, since he believed them merely to be attempts to express the inexpressible. As he wrote, the Logos of God 'gushes forth by inexplicable means from the Good Father'.[26] He went on to describe the coming forth of the Word with the analogy of the human word coming out of the mind. This was a common theme and, given the various meanings of the Greek term *λόγος*, an obvious illustration. In analogy to the human thought process, Eusebius argued that God was like a mind 'living apart like a sovereign in his unapproachable inner chambers, he alone decides what must be done, and from him proceeds the only-begotten Logos, begotten from the most private, innermost recesses of the Father by indescribable means and unnameable power.'[27] As always, here again Eusebius was determined to protect the transcendence and incomprehensibility of the Father. When we look at the Caesarean's theology vis-à-vis the controversy around Arius, we shall have a chance to enquire more deeply into how Eusebius envisioned the relationship between the

[23] *LC* XI.12. [24] *LC* XII.8.

[25] Throughout Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, but especially in section 3.2, 129ff. Numenius associates the 'second god' with the material world, though he also keeps him separate from it (fr. 11, p. 53).

[26] *LC* XII.2. [27] *LC* XII.3.

Father and his Word, especially as it relates to the mediating role of the Word.

What is clear is that Eusebius asserted that the origin of the Logos was prior to the creation of the universe. In fact, he spent the entire fourth chapter of the fourth book of the *Demonstratio Evangelica* proving that the Logos is antecedent to all creation. Given the view of Eusebius that the Father cannot be touched by the material world, this should not surprise us. The presence (and activity) of the Logos in the creation of the material world was an absolute necessity. While the Father is indeed the ultimate cause of all, he is not the direct cause. 'For which reason', Eusebius wrote, 'it has been handed down that all things were begotten *from him* (ἐξ αὐτοῦ), not, however, *through him* (δι' αὐτοῦ)'.[28] It is essential that this usage be noted. First, the Father, as transcendent, cannot be the immediate creative agent in the world, but gives this task to the Son.[29] However, it is not only admissible, but also part of the authoritative received tradition that all things are 'from' (ἐκ) him. Here, Eusebius uses the phrase 'ἐξ αὐτοῦ' to express what could be roughly described as an 'ultimate' cause of all creation and that cause is God the Father.[30] The vital importance of this in judging Eusebius' role in the Arian controversy will be seen clearly later.

The exact relationship between God the Father and his Logos as understood by Eusebius is complex, but follows the profile stated earlier of continuity and discontinuity. On one hand, he emphasized the divinity of the Logos; on the other hand, he went to great lengths to demonstrate the dissimilarity between the Father and the Logos. His position in the universe is unique, as the 'only-beloved

[28] *LC* XII.1. The biblical precedent for this distinction comes in 1 Corinthians 8:6, where it is the Father 'from whom' (ἐξ οὗ) all things are and the Lord Jesus Christ 'through whom' (δι' οὗ) all things are. John 1:3; Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 2:10 also speak of creation 'through' the Son. However, the New Testament does not maintain the rigid distinction held by Eusebius. In Romans 11:36, for example, it is simply 'God' in the singular 'from whom, through whom and for whom' (ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν) all things exist.

[29] Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, 193, describes this function in creation as part of the divine *Weltbezogenheit*.

[30] It should be noted in passing that the preposition 'ἐκ' was used by Aristotle (*Physics* II.7, 194b24) to describe the 'material' cause, which may have been a factor in the later confusion which was to surround this phrase as a description of the relation between the Father and Son.

and only-begotten Son of the One Supreme God'.[31] His divinity is such that he can be called 'God', for he acted as 'a true Word of God and as God Himself'.[32] He is the 'begotten God' (*θεὸν γεννητὸν*), 'the only-begotten God, the God-begotten Logos' and as such he alone bears the true image of the Godhead and is of 'primary likeness' (*τῆς πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ἐξομοιώσεως*) to the Father.[33] The Logos reflects the Father's character uniquely: he is 'the perfect creation of the perfect creator' (*τὸ τέλειον τελειου δημιούργημα*), 'the wise edifice of the wise builder' (*σοφου σοφὸν ἀρχιτεκτόνημα*), and 'the good offspring of the good Father' (*ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς ἀγαθὸν γέννημα*).[34] This very likeness to the Supreme God is what guarantees the uniqueness of the Logos, for the true image of the One God must also itself be one. As Strutwolf states, it is the very correspondence between the Son and the Father which allows the Son to act both as the prototype and the world-soul to creation.[35] To mediate divine knowledge and power, he must mirror the Father closely. This 'imaging' of the Father by the Son also relates to his oneness:

> And as the Father is One, it follows that there must be one Son and not many sons, and that there can be only one perfect God begotten of God, and not several. For in multiplicity will arise otherness and difference and the introduction of the worse. And so it must be that the One God is the Father of the one perfect and only-begotten Son, and not of more Gods or sons.[36]

This needs to be understood correctly. Eusebius is not saying that the Son is one *with* the Father, but rather, as the Father is one and not many, so too, in his sphere, is the Son one and not many. Otherwise, a multiplicity of sons (with its corresponding changes for the worse) would mean that the Son could not effectively mediate knowledge of the Father.

While the Logos is one in essence, he has many functions. Eusebius emphasized that the multiplicity of functions of the Logos does not

[31] *DE* III.7. [32] Ibid. [33] *DE* IV.2. [34] Ibid.

[35] Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, 193. Although this 'continuity' between Father and Son should not blind us to the discontinuity which Eusebius also wishes to retain. For example, Strutwolf goes on to conclude incorrectly that 'Father and Son are for Eusebius … one Godhead.' While for Eusebius the Father necessarily relates to the creation through the Son, his concept of 'divine unity' is always firmly located within the Father.

[36] *DE* IV.3.

necessitate a plurality of essence. Just as a man can do a variety of tasks but only have one soul, or as the sun or fire do many different things but still remain the single entity that they are, so also the Logos can be one but do many different jobs.[37] Lyman proffers this view of the simplicity of essence/multiplicity of function of the Word as an example of how Eusebius differed from Origen and the Middle Platonists.[38] However, as we have argued above, in the passage in *Com. Joh.*1.22 adduced by Lyman, Origen was addressing the multiplicity of the Word as it is considered vis-à-vis the economy, i.e. in his relation to creation, rather than as being an essential multiplicity. In any case, it does remain obvious that Eusebius wished to maintain a unity of nature for the Son, but a unity which can 'mingle' with the material world.

Eusebius used many analogies to illustrate the relationship between God the Father and the Logos. One of the most important came when, quoting Hebrews 1 : 3 ('Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person') in *Demonstratio Evangelica* IV.3, he repeated the theological commonplace that the Son is to the Father as the radiance is to the light.[39] We have already seen the importance of this analogy for Origen's understanding of the relation between the Father and Son. However, it is the qualifications that Eusebius placed on it that are most revealing in terms of what he thought about the relationship between the Logos and God and will be helpful later as we evaluate Eusebius' condemnation at the Council of Antioch of 325.

The first limitation of the analogy Eusebius saw was that 'the radiance is inseparable from the light of sense, while the Son exists in Himself in His own essence apart from the Father' (*τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ φωτὸς ἀχώριστος ἡ αὐγή, ὁ δ' υἱὸς ἰδίως παρὰ τὸν πατέρα καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐφέστηκε*) Here Eusebius asserted that the Son exists separately, individually and distinguished from the Father. Second, 'the ray has its range of activity solely from the light, whereas the Son is something different from a channel of energy, having His being in Himself' (*καθ' ἑαυτὸν οὐσιωμένος*). Here the main point seems to be that the Son, unlike the ray of light, is not simply an impersonal conduit of the

[37] Cf. *LC* XII.12–16. [38] Lyman, *Christology*, 111.

[39] Another New Testament passage which uses the 'light' motif in the context of Christ's mediation (connected with the concept of 'image') is 2 Corinthians 4:4–6.

activity (ἐνεργεία), and this is because he has his own separate being. Clearly, while Eusebius wished at times to emphasize the closeness of the relationship between God the Father and the Son, he certainly does not want them to be confused or joined too closely. This probably explains why Eusebius, after expressing his hesitations about the light analogy, 'rather strangely', in Stead's words, 'takes refuge in the alternative metaphor of a fragrant odour'.[40] The point would seem to be that the fragrance, while having its source in something else, has a separate existence on its own. If the Sun is gone, the light disappears as well, but a fragrance can linger long after that which caused it has passed. In the same way, the Son has a separate existence from the Father, i.e. he is 'other' than the Father, as we would expect if he is to function as a mediator for the Father. That in part Eusebius was also motivated by his view of the Ultimate God is obvious in his third qualification of the light–radiance analogy. He notes that 'the ray is coexistent with the light, being a kind of complement thereof; for there could be no light without a ray: they exist together and simultaneously'. However, such is not the case with the Father and the Son, for the

> Father precedes the Son, and has preceded him in existence, inasmuch as he alone is unoriginate. The One, perfect in himself and first in order as Father, and the cause of the Son's existence, receives nothing towards the completeness of his Godhead from the Son: the Other, as a Son begotten of him that caused his being, came second to him, whose Son he is, receiving from the Father both his being, and the character of his being.[41]

The verbs here translated 'precede' (προυπάρχω) and 'precede in existence' (προυφίστημι) have as their usual meaning the connotation of pre-existence in time, i.e. that something existed before something else began to exist. It is just possible that here Eusebius wanted to emphasize the quality of existence that the Father has over the Son rather than his temporal pre-existence, and this (less usual) understanding of the verbs would harmonize this passage with others, such as one which follows shortly after, where he asserted that the Son was not 'at some time non-existent, and originating later, but existing and

[40] C. Stead, '"Eusebius" and the Council of Nicaea', *Journal of Theological Studies* 24, 1 (1973), 91.
[41] *DE* IV.3.

pre-existing before eternal times'.[42] Strutwolf, in particular, argues strongly that we should not take Eusebius as meaning that the begetting of the Son should be conceived as a specific act.[43] The Father only has a 'logical' precedence over the Son. It is interesting, however, that in the immediately following chapter (*DE* IV.5) to the present passage, Eusebius used '*προυφίστημι*' to describe the relation between the Son and creation, where temporal pre-existence is, of course, central to the argument. In any event, the contrast with Origen, for whom even a conceptual beginning of the Son was unthinkable,[44] could not be any stronger.

At any rate, the major thrust of Eusebius' point here cannot be mistaken. The Father 'precedes' the Son because he is the cause of the latter's existence. Conversely, the Father owes nothing of his existence to the Son; he 'receives nothing towards the completeness of his Godhead from the Son'. This would seem to weaken Strutwolf's conclusion that Eusebius considered the Father and Son together as 'One Godhead'.[45] The Caesarean consistently located the divine unity firmly in the Father. God is 'One' because the Father himself is 'One'. The Son without the Father would simply be nothing (i.e. his existence is totally dependent on the Father), while the Father without the Son would remain who he already is—the One True and Ultimate God.

Also important in the context of the gap between the 'ungenerated' and the 'generated' is the fact that here Eusebius plainly put the Son on the side of the 'generated', since the Father 'alone is ungenerated'. Again, this should not surprise us if we remember that for Eusebius, as well as for many in his day, 'generated' and 'begotten' were synonymous terms.

Related to this point is the fourth qualification of the light analogy. The light does not produce the ray 'by its deliberate choice' (*κατὰ προαίρεσιν*) but rather by 'something which is an inseparable

[42] *DE* IV.13. [43] Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, 173 n. 374.

[44] 'Wherefore we recognize that God was always the Father of his only-begotten Son, who was born indeed of him and draws his being from him, but is yet without any beginning, not only of that kind which can be distinguished by periods of time, but even of that other kind which the mind alone is wont to contemplate in itself and to perceive, if I may so say, with the bare intellect and reason' (*DP* I.2.2).

[45] Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, 193.

consequence of its essence' (*κατὰ τι δὲ τῆς οὐσίας συμβεβηκὸς ἀχώριστον*). As Eusebius affirmed, the light makes no conscious decision to produce a ray, it simply (and necessarily) makes the ray as a consequence of being light. However, Eusebius wanted no part of this with regard to God. To make the Son a necessary production of the Godhead would mean that the Father must necessarily produce the Son, and thus in a sense would be 'incomplete' without the Son. For this reason, he stressed that the begetting of the Son is not a necessity for the Father, but rather a deliberate act of his will. It would be good to contrast Eusebius' treatment of the divine will in the begetting of the Son with Origen's. Here, the Caesarean opposes begetting 'by will' to begetting 'by necessity of nature'. In contrast, the Alexandrian, in a context that assumed the unity of nature (*unitas naturae*) of the Father and Son, emphasized the divine will in the begetting of the Son in order to oppose corporeal concepts (*DP* I.2.6).

For Eusebius, relating the Word and the One God too intimately was an error to be avoided at all costs. While describing how different groups have misidentified the Logos that permeates the universe, he stated,

> Some again have declared him to be the God above the universe, confusing I know not how things which stand the farthest apart and taking the ruler of all himself, the unbegotten and highest power, and casting him down to earth, intermixing him with both physical creatures and perishable matter, and saying that he is pressed between dumb beasts and rational beings on the one hand, and the immortals on the other. So say some.[46]

To equate the Logos with the true God was not simply an error of categories, but to confuse 'things which stand the farthest apart' (*τὰ πορρωτάτω διεστῶτα*). It was blasphemously to suggest the impossible: that the incomprehensible One beyond all being is entangled with the physical, 'squeezed' between physical beings on one hand and spiritual ones on the other. To the bishop of Caesarea, such a

[46] *LC* XI.17. *οἱ δ'αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὅλων θεὸν οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως τὰ πορρωτάτω διεστῶτα μιγνύντες ἀπεφήναντο, αὐτὸν τὸν πανηγεμόνα καὶ τὴν ἀγέννητον καὶ ἀνωτάτω δύναμιν κάτω βάλλοντες ἐπὶ γῆν, καὶ σώματι ὕλῃ τε φθαρτῇ συμπλέξαντες, ξώων τε ἀλόγων καὶ λογικῶν θνητῶν τε καὶ ἀθανάτων μέσον εἰλεῖσθαι φήσαντες. Ἄλλ' οἱ μὲν ταῦτα.* It is not incidental that the description of the gap between the Logos and God the Father mirrors almost exactly Eusebius' description of the difference between God and all other existence in *LC* XI.12 (cited above).

conclusion was not only wrong, it was inconceivable how anyone could arrive at it. As we have seen that the role of mediator necessitated the 'likeness' of the Logos with the Father, it also mandated a definite discontinuity between them.

If Eusebius maintained such a gulf between God and the Logos, how is it that the Logos can in any sense be called 'God'? The answer is that the Logos is truly entitled to the name 'God', but only in a derivative sense. It is the unique relationship between the Logos and the Father that allows the former to be considered divine. Hence, the Word 'is declared to be God of God by his communion with the Unbegotten that begot him, both the first and the greater'.[47] This fellowship with God is unique to the Logos alone and using a favoured analogy, Eusebius maintained that he is 'the sharer of the Father's divine fragrance communicable to none other'.[48] Eusebius described this unique relationship well in his account of the title 'Christ' (or, 'Anointed One') in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* IV.15. Disregarding human theories of this anointing which have to do with earthly 'unguents or incense', he regarded the title 'Christ' or 'Anointed One' to be a type 'of greater and divine things'. The oil for anointing should be understood as an image of the divine power of the 'All-Creating God'.

> It is thus the power of this Being, the all-strong, the all-good, the source of all beauty in the highest unbegotten Godhead, the divine spirit (which by the use of a proper and natural analogy) it calls the (Oil of God), and therefore it calls one who partakes of it Christ and Anointed.[49]

Thus the title 'Christ' belongs especially to the Logos alone, because he 'is the first and only one to be anointed with this oil in its fullness'. This anointing not only emphasizes the exalted place the Logos

[47] *DE* IV.15. This would appear to be one of the weakest points in Eusebius' theology considered as a type of monotheism. By not allowing the inclusion of the Word within the identity of the 'one true God', Eusebius opened himself up to charges of 'ditheism', even if he wished to understand this title for the Son in a limited manner. As we shall see in the next chapter, Marcellus of Ancyra's argument based on the Old Testament statement, 'there is no other God besides me', cut deepest here.

[48] Ibid.

[49] The portions in parentheses reflect a phrase included in the Paris MS and in Donatus, but omitted in Migne. It would seem that this or something similar would have to be provided to make the sentence intelligible. It is also interesting that here Eusebius seems to refer to the Spirit as merely the impersonal divine power.

holds for Eusebius, it also underlines the difference between God the Father and the Son, for 'he was anointed by another greater God, his Father'.[50] Thus, as Lyman affirms, 'Eusebius' use of participation language in conjunction with the scriptural image of anointing and in relation to the unbegotten nature of the Father suggests that he intended to underline the unique, essentially derivative relation rather than a shared essence between the Father and the Son.'[51]

2.3. IMAGE THEOLOGY IN EUSEBIUS

This view of the 'derived' divinity of the Son leads Eusebius to what is one of his main analogies for describing the Son's relation to the Father, that of 'image'. This theme is so recurrent in Eusebius' writings that Strutwolf can sum up the Caesarean's view of the Father–Son relation as 'Abbildstheologie'.[52] The real importance of 'image' language for Eusebius is that it simultaneously emphasized, he believed, the 'double' aspect of the relationship between the Father and the Son, i.e. he must be both like him and unlike him. For example, in *DE* IV.2, Eusebius stated that the Son can be called 'begotten God' because he uniquely bears the image or 'primary likeness' of God, having been appointed by the Father for that purpose. While by the standards of later orthodoxy Eusebius' view of the Father–Son relationship was obviously insufficient, it is important to understand here that he was not trying to 'demote' the Son to a lower level, but rather to maintain a unique relationship between the Word and the 'true' God. It was only if the Son had a very unique 'likeness' to the Father that he could function as a mediator in the way that Eusebius envisioned. It is hard to see how Eusebius could have had any patience with the 'anomoian' theology of the later Neo-Arians. For Eusebius, the Word is like the Father, and like him in a way that nothing else could be. 'For only he had the validity of likeness to the Father (*τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμοιώσεως ἔχειν τὸ κῦρος*), as being the only person shown to be enthroned with him.'[53]

[50] *DE* IV.16. [51] Lyman, *Christology*, 115.
[52] Strutwolf, *Trinikätstheologie*, 164ff. [53] *DE* V.3 (220d).

That being said, Eusebius also wanted to underline that, in his view, the Son was also not in any way identical with God. Of course, his view of the simplicity of God mandated this, but we are now in a position to understand that his view of mediation also required it. And for Eusebius, the best way to express that was with a term like 'image'. For not only did it necessitate a very definite 'likeness' between the image and that which was imaged (or else it would not be called an 'image'), but it also, thought Eusebius, required that the image be different from that which is imaged. Thus, Eusebius opined, while commenting on Isaiah 45:14–16, that the title 'God' as applied to the Son should be understood within the framework of his function as image, for he has it 'as one who has received it, and does not possess it in his own right'.[54] Thus in his letter to Euphration of Balanea, Eusebius stated that even a 'true image' must be different from the thing imaged and so we must hold to a plurality of *οὐσίαι*.[55] Not only did the 'image' language that Eusebius found in scripture serve him in delineating what he felt to be the proper relationship between Father and Son, it also described how the Son functions as a mediator between God and creation. Because the Word has a great likeness to the Father, and yet is more approachable, we can see God 'through the Son as by a mirror and image'.[56]

Eusebius connected the purpose of the Logos in the divine plan firmly to the creation of the cosmos. The very language used in scripture to describe how God created manifested to Eusebius the necessity of another besides the Father, for, having quoted Psalm 32:9 ('For he spoke, and they were created, he commanded and they were made'), he went on to state, 'for it is plain that a speaker must speak to someone else, and one who issues a command must issue it to another beside himself'.[57] In addition, God foresaw all that he would make and 'aware that as in a vast body all these things about to be would need a head, thought that he ought to subordinate them all

[54] *DE* V.4 (227d). It is well to note here that, while demonstrating similarities with Platonic views of God's transcendence, Eusebius based his understanding of the Son as image on Colossians 1:19—'For in him it pleased that all the fullness of the godhead should dwell.'

[55] Opitz, 3.4. [56] *DE* V.4.

[57] *DE* V.5. We shall see a very different understanding of the 'words of creation' in Marcellus of Ancyra.

to one governor (οἰκονόμον) of the whole creation, ruler and king (ἡγεμὸνα καὶ βασιλέα) of the universe'.[58] The role the Logos plays is, in a way, bi-directional—'looking upward towards his Father, he pilots this inferior and dependent sphere as a common saviour of all in accordance with his ordinances, standing somehow midway and uniting generated with ungenerated existence'.[59] Here, the two-fold task of the Logos is described, which tasks or 'levels' Strutwolf has characterized as *Ideenwelt* (world of ideas) and *Weltseele* (world-soul). First, in a way reminiscent of the Platonic 'World of Forms', his gaze is upon the Father above, receiving his ordinances and, second, as the World-Soul, he guides the world below according to them.[60] In this way, just like the human logos, the divine Logos 'surely becomes for all the first messenger of the paternal intentions. He reports in the open the things decided by the Father in his unreachable depths, and also fulfils the intentions in deeds, by bringing them to the attention of all.'[61] He acts as a channel by which we can in some way know the Father, who nevertheless remains unknowable in his essence. All creation in some sense partakes of the Logos as 'he channels all things together . . . and he himself activates all things as the Logos of God, present in all things and pervading the whole with intellectual power'.[62] Here it should be grasped that once again Eusebius was conceiving of the cosmological and epistemological mediation of the Logos in terms of the interposition of a 'third being' between the true God and the world. It is necessary, both because of the utter greatness of God and because of the weakness of creation. The Logos not only separates the two, but also, by his mutual continuity with both extremes, connects them. The Logos acts as a 'bond' (δεσμός)[63]

[58] *DE* IV.1. [59] *LC* XII.6.

[60] Cf. also D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Eusebius of Caesarea* (London: Mowbray, 1960), 128; A. Dempf, 'Der Platonismus des Eusebius', *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademic der Wissenschaften*, 3 (1962), 7; F. Ricken, 'Die Logoslehre des Eusebios von Caesarea und der Mittelplatonismus', *Theologie und Philosophie* 42 (1967), 341–58; and E. Des Places, 'Numénius et Eusèbe de Césarée', *Studia Patristica* 13, 2 (1975), 19–28.

[61] *LC* XII.3. [62] *LC* XII.4–6.

[63] A favourite term of Eusebius to describe the cosmological role of the Logos. Sometimes it is used to describe how the Son 'binds' the material world to the Father and sometimes to describe his function of 'holding together' the world. Cf. *DE* IV.2; *LC* XII.7; and *Theophania* I.24.

between the two otherwise incompatible extremes of God and creation.

There was, then, no question for Eusebius of the creature being restored to a direct knowledge of, or relationship with, the one true God because it never had, nor ever could have, this direct contact. The knowledge we can attain is a 'mediated' knowledge, i.e. a knowledge of God grasped only through the Logos, who is not to be confused with the higher God. The nature of the mediation provided by the Eusebian Christ, then, is necessarily a 'deictic' one;[64] that is, the act of 'pointing' to another, with whom the mediator, while associated, is not identified. The Logos exists primarily, according to Eusebius, not to point to himself, but as a 'signpost', as it were, to the one true God. This does not mean that Eusebius wished to demean the Logos, for he speaks of him and his role in exalted terms.

> One must marvel at the hidden and invisible Logos, who is in fact the framer and organiser of the universe, being the only-begotten of God, whom the maker of the universe, the One beyond and above all existence, himself begetting from himself, appointed commander and helmsman of all.[65]

Elsewhere he described the Logos as 'friend and guardian, saviour and physician, the helmsman holding the rudder-lines of the creation of the universe'.[66] The Logos holds all created things in order, 'be it rhythm, beauty, harmony, order, blending of qualities, substance, quality [or] quantity'.[67] And yet, even in passages of the loftiest language concerning the Logos, sight is not lost of this primarily 'deictic' function of pointing to another. For example, in *DE* IV.4, Eusebius waxed eloquent describing the exalted role of the Word—as 'architect of the universe', 'source of growth' and later as 'foreseeing, guiding, healing, ruling, and judging all things', but still climaxed the crescendo of description with what was the primary deictic function

[64] For lack of a better term, I have borrowed the functional term 'deictic' from grammar. A deictic function is what certain words have, in that they serve only to make reference to something else already mentioned in the context, that is, they simply 'point to' something else. Hence, for example, 'this', 'that' and 'those' are words which have a deictic function. In the same way, the Logos points not to himself, but rather to the 'higher' God who is an essentially different being.

[65] *LC* XI.11. [66] *DE* IV.2. [67] *DE* IV.5.

of the Word—'he who proclaims the reverence of the Father' (*πατρὸς εὐσεβείας ἀπαγγελτικόν*). The ultimate purpose of the Word, stated Eusebius, was not to be worshipped, but to point to the worship of the one true God.

In many ways, as we have stated, Eusebius' conception of the role of the Logos in the world resembled the doctrine of a 'world-soul', and indeed, Eusebius often used the analogy of the soul in the body to describe how the Word works in the created order.[68] By its actions in the world, one can see the reality of the Logos. Throughout his writings, Eusebius was concerned with the polytheistic error of worshipping the creation instead of the creator. This, he said, would be like praising the lyre rather than the musician, or the victory crowns rather than the valiant man, or the monuments rather than the sovereign who built them.[69] Instead, if properly understood, these things should point to the one Logos, who in turn points the way to the One God. As was a common theme among Christian writers, Eusebius believed that the harmony and balance of the multiple visible universe should point the onlooker to the divine unity, but *not* to a unity of Father and Son.[70] Rather, for Eusebius, nature's balance should lead us to belief in the one Logos, who in turn, *as a faithful image*, will turn us to belief in the one true God. The one divine power at work generally in the created world is the one Word of God, who is a faithful image of, but separate from, the most high God. Thus the universe is like a many-stringed lyre which the Logos plays 'all wisely and well, rendering his Father and King of all, a melody befitting and becoming to him'.[71]

This deictic nature of the Logos' role is also evident in Eusebius' account of salvation history given in *Demostratio Evangelica* Book IV, chapters 6–9. We will return to this section later when we analyse

[68] Cf. *DE* IV.5; *LC* XII.8, 13.

[69] *LC* XI.9.

[70] It is helpful to note the difference between how Eusebius viewed this 'apologetic' work of nature, and how Athanasius, for example, was to see it. Athanasius, in his *Contra Gentes*, saw the evidence of the cosmos pointing to the one God, who is the Father working through his Word. There was no 'distancing' between God and his handiwork in creation. The 'One, True God' is the Father working through his Word. Hence, Athanasius could use the lyre analogy to prove that the one creator of the universe is God (*CG* 38.4) and later to illustrate that the one creator is the Word (*CG* 42.3). We shall analyse this further later in this work.

[71] *LC* XII.11.

Eusebius' view of how the Incarnation fits into the divine 'economy'. However, it is important here to note the nature of the task he assigned to the Logos. All the nations of the earth were divided up and distributed among the angels, but to Christ 'was handed over that part of humanity denominated Jacob and Israel, that is to say, the whole division that has vision and piety'.[72] Then, the other nations, under the various angels, began to worship the sun and moon and stars and later descended even to the worship of images, which Eusebius equates with demon worship. However, Israel, under Christ, worshipped the true God.

> These, then, it was, whom the Word of God, the head and leader of all, called to the worship of the Father alone, who is the most high, far above all things that are seen, beyond the heaven and the whole begotten essence, calling them quietly and gently, and delivering to them the worship of God most high alone, the unbegotten and the Creator of the universe.[73]

It is vital to see here the deictic role of the Word to act as a 'signpost', as it were, 'calling' and 'delivering' the people to the worship of 'God Most High alone'. Through the Christ, they could 'know' God indirectly, although God Himself was essentially unknowable by the creatures. God does not reveal Himself directly, but only indirectly through the mediator.

This logic also has consequences for the divine revelations of the Hebrew scriptures. Noting that Moses himself sometimes refers to God and sometimes to the angel of the Lord as delivering divine oracles, Eusebius concluded, 'he clearly implies that this was not the Omnipotent God, but a secondary Being, rightly called the God and Lord of holy men, but the angel of the Most High His Father'.[74] Indeed, it would be impious to suggest that the Most High God Himself appeared to men. 'And if it is not possible for the Most High God, the Invisible, the Uncreated, and the Omnipotent to be said to be seen in mortal form, the being who was seen must have been the word of God, whom we call Lord as we do the Father.'[75] As Strutwolf rightly says, 'It lies in the axiomatic of Eusebius' theology of radical transcendence, that the Father, as immutable and

[72] *DE* IV.7. [73] Ibid. [74] *DE* I.5. [75] Ibid.

radically invisible, is unrecognizable; so that it is only possible to apply the divine appearances of the Old Testament to the Logos as the second God.'[76] Eusebius believes that this ongoing mediating ministry of the Logos was the spiritual reality to which the Old Testament priesthood pointed. Noting the reference of Hebrews 8 : 5 to the Old Testament saints serving 'under the example and shadow of heavenly things', he then asserted that 'Moses plainly shows that he had perceived with the eyes of the mind and by the divine spirit the great High Priest of the universe, the true Christ of God.'[77] We shall see shortly how this view of the 'eternal priesthood' of Christ informs Eusebius' view of the mediation that took place in the Incarnation.

To summarize what has been said about the Eusebian theory of divine mediation, he felt that direct contact between the transcendent, 'true' God and the created world is unthinkable. This impossibility comes, on one side, from the fact that God, in his utter transcendence and simplicity cannot be entangled in the material multiplicity of this world; and, on the other side, from the weakness of the created beings to withstand the unmediated presence of God. Because of this radical view of divine transcendence, influenced in part by Greek philosophical systems and in part by Eusebius' understanding of the Christian scriptures, there was the necessity of an intermediary being, the Word of God, to stand in their midst. To function as a mediator for Eusebius, it would seem necessary to maintain a tension of 'similarity' and 'dissimilarity' in the nature of the Word with regard to his upward and downward relationships; that is, in his relationship with God and in his relationship with the world. In other words, for the Word to be a real channel of God's power and a true reflection of the 'true' God, he must have a relationship with the higher deity which is truly unique and more intimate than other beings. At the same time, if he is not distinct from the higher God, then he cannot function as a mediator, because he would be no more 'user-friendly' than the Father and would cease

[76] Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, 157 n. 306. It is difficult to harmonize this statement about the Word as the 'second Godhead' ('zweite Gottheit') with Strutwolf's later conclusion that Eusebius always considered Father and Son together as 'one Godhead' ('eine Gottheit'), 193.

[77] *DE* IV.16.

to function as a proper mediator.[78] We have seen how Eusebius used a number of analogies, especially that of the Word as 'image' of God, to hold simultaneously this very tension of 'similarity' and 'dissimilarity' between the Word and the Father. In addition, it was essential to Eusebius' theology that a similar tension of 'likeness' and 'unlikeness' existed between the Word and the created order. If there were no similarity, then the creatures could not approach him, nor could he permeate the cosmos. In contrast, if there were no difference between them, the Word would not be able to function as a divine mediator any better than another creature. Along with a desire to maintain that in spite of the 'ontological gap' between God and creation, God can still be called the Creator in a meaningful way, we shall see that this tension of 'likeness' and 'unlikeness' both downwards and upwards for the divine Word was a predominant force in shaping and informing what Eusebius wrote during the Arian controversy.

2.4. EUSEBIUS AND THE INCARNATION

Having seen the centrality of the Word as a mediating being ontologically located between, and linking, two otherwise incompatible levels of existence in Eusebius' account of creation, it should perhaps not surprise us that it had a profound effect on his approach to the Incarnation. We shall now analyse briefly how Eusebius believed the Incarnation fits within the history of salvation, noting in particular what he saw the function of the Incarnation to be within that history. We shall then see how this affected Eusebius' view of what was mediated through the Incarnation and how he conceived the relationship between the divine and human in Christ. It is a contention of this study that Eusebius' conception of divine mediation as we have

[78] This is not to undervalue the other obvious motivation of Eusebius, and many of his contemporaries, in separating and subordinating the Son's *hypostasis* relative to that of the Father; i.e. to safeguard the unity and indivisibility of God. The perspective gained from an appreciation of Eusebius' view of divine mediation simply enables us to appreciate his desire to maintain *both* similarity *and* dissimilarity between the Son and the Father.

analysed up to this point, is the key to understanding the Caesarean's incarnational theology.

Eusebius, in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* IV. 7–10 (156b–165c), gave an overview of the spiritual history of mankind leading up to the Incarnation. Just previously, he had mentioned how humans created by the Word of God, by using their free will badly, turned 'from the right road, went wrong, caring neither for God nor Lord, nor distinguished between holy and unholy'.[79] Commenting on Deuteronomy 32 : 8,[80] he stated that the Supreme God divided the nations of the world up and distributed among them the angels as 'invisible guardians'. The one exception was that Jacob and Israel, the chosen Hebrew people, were allotted to Christ himself. We should note in passing that Christ in this role continued the 'deictic' function that we have already noted—he called the Hebrews 'to the worship of the Father alone, who is the Most High, far above all things that are seen, beyond the heaven and the whole begotten essence, calling them quietly and gently, and delivering to them the worship of God most high alone, the unbegotten and the Creator of the universe'.[81]

Unfortunately, the other guardians did not do so well, allowing the nations under their care 'to worship things seen in the heavens, the sun and moon and stars' since they were the most impressive parts of the phenomenal world and tended to speak the most of God's glory.[82] Eusebius here seems to imply that this was a relatively minor fault, since it was better than turning toward 'the opposing demonic powers amid the stress of things obscure and dark. So all the most beautiful visible created things were delivered to them who yearned for nothing better, since to some extent the vision of the unseen shone in them, reflected as in a mirror.'[83]

[79] *DE* IV.6.

[80] *DE* IV.7, quoting the Septuagint—'When the Most High divided the nations, when he distributed the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God.'

[81] Ibid.

[82] *DE* IV.8. It is worthwhile noting that the reason for the failure of these angels was that 'they were not able with their mind to see the invisible, nor to ascend so high through their own weakness'. This serves not only to highlight the difference Eusebius sees between the Word and other spiritual beings, but also to underline the huge epistemological gulf between the Most High God and even the higher angelic beings.

[83] *DE* IV.9.

However, as time passed the 'Great Demon', who opposed the Most High, found that he could ensnare mankind through his weapons, mostly because humans 'possessed in their power of free choice the ever-ready possibility of falling into evil from their own thoughts'.[84] Thus Eusebius believed it demonstrable that the earliest humans worshipped 'only the lights of heaven' but that later, due to demonic activity, humanity was led into greater and greater wickedness. Against this onslaught, the guardian angels 'were unable to defend in any way the subject nations now involved in such a flood of evil'.[85] At the nadir of this evil plummet, God the Word 'sent forth at last some small and faint rays of his own light to shine through the prophet Moses' and other godly men.[86] However, although the Law thus provided a cure to the wickedness of men, 'the activity of the demons daily grew stronger, so that even the Hebrew race was hurried along in the destruction of the godless'.[87] It was in this dire situation that 'at last the Saviour and Physician of the universe came down himself to men, bringing reinforcement to his angels for the salvation of men'.[88]

Before continuing, we should notice a few things about Eusebius' account. First, and perhaps most surprising, there is no reference to a 'Fall' as is presented in the beginning of Genesis, nor to any concomitant inherent 'sinfulness' of fallen man. This is not to say that there is a complete absence of reference to sin in Eusebius' writings. As we shall see, he did mention sin and he did hold a place for a necessary sacrifice for sin. However, this 'sin' for Eusebius had more to do with the 'misuse' of free will, than any resulting state or condition of mankind. Eusebius offered no account of the original fall into sin. Idolatry, to a certain extent, seems to be 'built-in' to the system, an unfortunate side-effect for those who, bereft of the ability to comprehend the Most High God, were under the protection of the angelic powers but did not have the benefit, as did the Hebrews, of the direct oversight of the divine Word. Second, as there was no reference to an Adamic fall, there was also, of course, no reference to Adam. While in the context this is no surprise, it is notable that the theme of the Christ as a 'second Adam' had no place in Eusebius' theology of

[84] Ibid. [85] *DE* IV.10. [86] Ibid. [87] Ibid. [88] Ibid.

the Incarnation.[89] This had been a central aspect of the Incarnation for theologians before this time and would be an important facet of later fourth-century Christology.[90] Eusebius, as we shall see, preferred to talk about the incarnate Word as the 'new Moses', or as a priest after the order of Melchizedek. While these are both biblical themes used to describe Christ, we need to understand how Eusebius characterized the 'problem' for which the Incarnation was the 'solution', in order to grasp why he chose these themes over that of the 'second Adam'.[91]

As we have seen, Eusebius emphasized the character of the moral failing of humanity in terms of 'error'. This error (usually related by Eusebius to polytheism or the worship of demons) came about through the misuse of free will. There seems to be no hint of any loss of this free will, even though the result is that mankind is 'enslaved by the errors of demons.'[92] What needed to be done was to 're-teach' or 'redirect' mankind to God. 'The whole circuit of the writings of Moses and his successors . . . included exhortation and teaching of duty to the God of the Universe'.[93] This 'deictic' function of Moses to point to the Most High God was continued, at a much more effective and broader level, by the incarnate Word, 'who himself would become the teacher of the same religion, and be revealed as Saviour of the life of men, through whom they foretold that the ideals of the ancient godly Hebrews would be handed on to all nations'.[94]

Thus we can see that, for Eusebius, the Incarnation was in many ways the continuation of the deictic mediatorial role of the eternal

[89] I am not aware of any references to Christ as the second Adam in Eusebius' writings. In the *Demonstratio*, the closest he comes are references to Romans 5:12 in VII.1 (313d) and to Romans 5:18 in X.intro. (462d). Both of these are used to show the importance of the human nature of the sacrifice of Christ, but are not pressed otherwise.

[90] e.g. the apostle Paul in Romans 5 (where the term 'second Adam' does not occur, but there is an extended parallelism of Adam and Christ) and 1 Cor. 15:45–9 (where Christ is called the 'last Adam'). Among the church fathers, the most notable use is in the recapitulation theology of Irenaeus. Cf. *Adv. Haer.* III.21.9ff.; V.12.2, 14.1, 21.1. Origen's teaching on this point, as argued by Edwards, *Origen Against Plato*, 104–7, is closer to Irenaeus' viewpoint than is often assumed. For an example from later Christology, see Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Nestorius* III.1–2.

[91] Moses is compared to Christ explicitly in only one passage of the New Testament, Hebrews 3:1–6, and there it is to show, not that Christ is a 'new Moses' but rather that Christ is completely superior to Moses. Melchizedek is used to illustrate the 'non-Aaronic' nature of Christ's priesthood in Hebrews 7.

[92] *DE* V.4. [93] *DE* V.intro. [94] Ibid.

Word. The primary reason for his coming among men was 'to bring back that which had of old wandered away from the knowledge of the Father to its own way'.[95] Indeed, Christ himself was recorded 'to have been devoted to the One almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth and the whole universe, and to have led his disciples to him, and that even now the words of his teaching lead up the minds of every Greek and barbarian to the Highest God, outsoaring all visible nature'.[96] The ministry of the incarnate Word consisted of modelling with his life, and teaching with his words, devotion to the 'one true God'. It is in this sense that Christ can be considered the fulfilment of Mosaic Law. It was not that Christians should now follow the Old Testament code, something that Eusebius vociferously denied. Rather, as Moses was the mediator of a Law accommodated to a certain people at a certain time, so Christ 'laid down a law suitable and possible for all'.[97] Moses turned the people from idolatry, published 'the theology of the one God', drew up a plan of religious life and was the one and only lawgiver of the Hebrews.

> But Jesus Christ too, like Moses, only on a grander stage, was the first to originate the teaching according to holiness for the other nations, and first accomplished the rout of the idolatry that embraced the whole world. He was the first to introduce to all men the knowledge and religion of the one almighty God. And he is proved to be the first author and lawgiver of a new life and of a system adapted to the holy.[98]

He appeared as 'the second Lawgiver after Moses, giving to men the Law of the Supreme God's true holiness'.[99] The law of Christ, however, was better than the Law of Moses, not just by being for all nations, but also for being inscribed, not on stones, but 'on the hearts of his pupils, purified and open to reason'.[100]

For Eusebius, the teaching of Christ does not restore us to some kind of pre-fall Adamic innocence, but rather sets in place once again the pre-Mosaic religion. His claim was that Christ 'bids us worship God as did the men of old, and the pre-Mosaic men of

[95] *DE* IV.15.

[96] *DE* III.3. The references to the 'teaching' role of Christ are so ubiquitous in Eusebius as to make their complete citation both impossible and unnecessary. A few of the many examples can be found in *DE* III.2, 4, 6, 7; IV.16; V.2.

[97] *DE* I.7. [98] *DE* III.2. [99] *DE* I.7. [100] Ibid.

God, and . . . our religion is the same as theirs, and our knowledge of God is the same'.[101] While as we shall see in a moment the concept of sin as a barrier between God and humanity did play a role in Eusebius' theology of the Incarnation, it is important to grasp here that Eusebius taught that the Word became flesh not primarily to transform or heal a sinful mankind, but rather to redirect it back to an earlier piety held by ancient people. This should not come as a surprise, for it will be remembered that, for Eusebius, there was no possibility of a 'direct' relationship with the 'High God'.[102] The most that could be expected was to have an indirect worshipping relationship to him eternally mediated through his unique and more approachable Son. This is what Eusebius believed that the pre-Mosaic saints enjoyed and what could be true for the Christian church. The concept of a 'transformation' or 'healing' of humanity, so central to Athanasius as we shall see, seems largely to be foreign to Eusebius' system. The importance of this for our understanding of Eusebius' Christology cannot be overemphasized.

However, it would be unfair to Eusebius to imply that he thought that the only reason for the Incarnation was a didactic one. Besides coming as a teaching prophet, the Word also came to mankind as the Eternal Priest to offer a sacrifice for sin. Yet even here, it was his view of the Word as the eternal mediating agent between God and creation which forms and shapes how Eusebius regarded the priesthood of Christ. Following the line of thought of Hebrews 7, Eusebius believed that the Old Testament priests were shadows of the heavenly reality, which he called 'the great High Priest of the Universe, the true Christ of God'.[103] Moreover, like the writer to the Hebrews, Eusebius declared that a truer type of Christ's priesthood was to be found in that of Melchizedek, the priest of 'God Most High' who appeared only once in the biblical narrative (Genesis 14:18–20) and was referred to once more in Psalm 110 : 4. While there are various motives for Christian writers to appropriate the 'priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek' for Christ,[104]

[101] *DE* I.9. [102] Cf. commentary on *DE* IV.6, above.

[103] *DE* IV.16 (193c).

[104] This emphasis, having been sanctioned by Hebrews 5:5–10; 6:20–7:19, was fairly common among the fathers. Typical examples can be found in Justin, *Dial.* 33.1–2; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* V.9; and Origen, *Com. Joh.* I.11. However, by and large,

Eusebius appears unique in his assertion that this priesthood of the Word was part of his eternal cosmic role. 'He was revealed clearly as eternal Priest, existing as Offspring and Son of God before the Morning Star and before the whole creation'.[105] It is of central importance for Eusebius to show that Christ's priesthood did not start in time.

> For he was neither to be designated priest after a period when he was not priest, nor was he to become priest, but be it. For we should notice carefully in the words, 'You are a priest for ever,' he does not say, 'You shall be what you weren't before,' any more than, 'You were that before, which you are not now,' but by him who said 'I am that I am' it is said, 'You are, and remain, a priest forever.'[106]

In other words, the priesthood of the Word does not belong to the *οἰκονομία* of the Incarnation, but rather to the very essence of who and what the Divine Word is eternally. Just as the Old Testament priests represented the people to God and provided divine access to the people of Israel, so the Son of God mediates eternally, as we have seen clearly, between the God Most High and creation.

If the priesthood of the Word is eternal, then why did he come to earth as man? The answer, for Eusebius, was that the Eternal Priest came to offer a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. The necessity of this sacrifice was demonstrated by the ancients and by the Mosaic Law.[107] It was while discussing this sacrificial act of the Word of God that Eusebius gave some idea of how he saw the interplay between the divine and the human in the Incarnation. It is the divine Word who, as high priest of God, offers the sacrifice, which is the human being Jesus, to God the Father. In this way, according to Eusebius, the Word simply was continuing, albeit in a definitive act which ended all necessity of more sacrifices by humans, his role as the great High Priest mediating between humanity and the Father.

these only reference the priesthood to Christ's post-incarnational ministry. While Tertullian in the passage cited above does call Jesus 'the Pontiff of the priesthood of the uncircumcision' even during the Old Testament time, he still seems to be referring to the application of what was accomplished in the Incarnation. This author has been unable to find a single remark in patristic writings that match the Eusebian emphasis on the pre-existent Word's function as 'Eternal Priest'.

[105] *DE* IV.16. [106] *DE* V.3. [107] *DE* I.10.

He then that was alone of those who ever existed, the Word of God, before all worlds, and High Priest of every creature that has mind and reason, separated one of like passions with us, as a sheep or lamb from the human flock, branded on him all our sins, and fastened on him as well the curse that was adjudged by Moses' law, as Moses foretells: 'Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.' This he suffered 'being made a curse for us; and making himself sin for our sakes who knew no sin,' and laid on him all the punishments due to us for our sins, bonds, insults, contumelies, scourging, and shameful blows, and the crowning trophy of the cross. And after all this when he had offered such a wondrous offering and choice victim to the Father, and sacrificed for the salvation of us all, he delivered a memorial to us to offer to God continually instead of a sacrifice.[108]

Eusebius seemed to want to keep separate the divine from the human in a manner in keeping with this view of the divine 'priest' offering a human 'sacrifice'. He spoke of the humanity often as the 'instrument' (ὄργανον) of the divine Word. The divine works of Christ were done 'through the visible man' (διὰ τοῦ φαινομένου ἀνδρός), but even during this manifestation, the Word remained invisible, for he showed 'clearly by his deeds God the Word who was not seen by the multitude'.[109] In fact, at times it is difficult to see how Eusebius even conceived of a true Incarnation, i.e. of the Word actually *becoming* flesh. It would seem that the divine Word used the human being to demonstrate his power and to make a sacrifice for sin, but did not in any significant way become the man Jesus Christ. In fact, Eusebius implied that the activity of the Word in the Incarnation was quite similar to his characteristic involvement in the world in general. It is well worth quoting Eusebius at length on this point:

And since this is so, there is no need to be disturbed in mind on hearing of the birth, human body, sufferings and death of the immaterial and unembodied Word of God. For just as the rays of the sun's light undergo no suffering, though they fill all things, and touch dead and unclean bodies, much less could the unembodied Power of God suffer in its essence, or be harmed, or ever become worse than itself, when it touches a body without being really embodied. For what of this? Did he not ever and everywhere reach through the matter of the elements and of bodies themselves, as being the creative Word of God, and imprint the words of his own wisdom upon them, impressing life on the lifeless, form on that which is formless and shapeless

[108] Ibid. [109] *DE* IV.11.

by nature, . . . but yet receiving hurt from nothing, nor being defiled in his own nature.[110]

There are several things that we should note. Even in his description of the sufferings of the Christ, the Word remains for Eusebius 'unembodied' (ἀσωματὸς).[111] While the humanity truthfully revealed the power and goodness of the Word of God, it was still in some way 'distanced' from that Word. In addition, it is vital to understand that here Eusebius equated how the Word was related to the humanity in Christ with his relation in general to the created world. He used the same analogy of the sun shining on filthy things yet remaining pure for both how the Word is untouched by the sufferings of the humanity in Christ, as well as how the word of God is always and eternally active in the impure world without becoming impure himself.

The point of our investigation here is not to critique Eusebius' theology of the relationship between the divine and human natures of Christ. It would be anachronistic to use the decisions of later councils on the two natures in hypostatic union to deride Eusebius' understanding of this issue, however weak his concept may seem. At his time, these issues had yet to be thrashed out seriously in any broad sense. In fact, while the quotations above would strongly suggest a distinct division (and even ontological separation) between the divine and human, there are other passages where this is not as marked.[112] If anything, these passages serve to show some confusion on Eusebius' part about how to describe the Incarnation. And yet, from what we have seen of Eusebius' view of divine mediation up to this point, this is to be expected. The fact is simply that the Incarnation did not, for Eusebius, indicate any 'new level' of mediation of the Word of God for men. The exact nature of the relationship between the divine and human in Christ was not a central point in Eusebius' theology. The Incarnation was the continuation of the mediation that the Word of God had always carried out between God the Father and mankind. That mediation, for Eusebius, did not depend on the divine Word becoming flesh in any literal way. The Word always and eternally mediated between the created order and the Most High God. The

[110] *DE* IV.13. [111] A point which he reiterated a few lines later.

[112] While not nearly as obvious as the 'divisive' Christology shown above, such passages as *DE* IV.12 could be understood in a more 'unitive' sense.

Incarnation was simply a way, first, to communicate more effectively his divine teaching; and second, to provide a human sacrifice for sin.

This also perhaps provides us with a better understanding of how Eusebius got involved in the Arian controversy, a subject to which we will be turning in a moment. It has sometimes been suggested that the main difference between Eusebius and others during the Arian controversy was one of temperament.[113] According to this view, Eusebius at points defended Arius because he was simply more open-minded and irenic. And yet, this 'irenic' spirit was to disappear in his debates against Marcellus of Ancyra, when a point was attacked which he considered vital, the essential difference between the Father and Son.[114] Others have questioned his competence as a theologian—that he was simply not astute enough to understand the import of the debate.[115] However, if our analysis thus far is correct, it would seem that Eusebius showed a more irenic spirit during this struggle because he saw the debate of little concern, since it was not an important point in his theology. The essential thing, he thought, was that the Son was a separate being (*ousia* or *hypostasis*) from the Father, and that he acted as the mediator between God and the created order, as we have seen above.[116] The Incarnation happened when this great divine Mediator came to offer the final human sacrifice to the Father God. Arguments about the details of the origin of the Son or how

[113] Stead, 'Eusebius', 91f.

[114] This is shown especially in that, while he was certainly distressed by the attacks made by Marcellus against himself and others, he did not merely attack Marcellus' lack of peacefulness, but rather, as we shall see, made strong theological counterpoints against the Ancyran.

[115] Representative here is C. R. B. Shapland, ed., *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 20–1, where in just a few lines the terms 'mediocrity', 'muddle-headedness' and 'obtuse' are all applied to the bishop of Caesarea.

[116] The similarity between Eusebius and Arius on this point is suggested by the description of the latter's theology given by Williams, 'Logic', 78: 'The Son's revelatory importance [for Arius] lies in being a maximally endowed creature who manifests at once the immense and unbridgeable gulf separating even the highest creature from God, *and* the fact that God is not idle or indifferent, but wills to create (necessarily fragmented) images of his own life.' However, the difficulty (as is also the case in R. Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2001) in assessing Arius' views as given here is compounded by the labour required to sift out the scanty first-hand evidence for Arius' own theology from Williams' own lengthy 'reconstruction' of that theology.

the divine was present in the human Christ were certainly of less importance to Eusebius. In contrast, these issues directly impinged and endangered what, for example, Athanasius viewed as the linchpin of the mediation between God and man, i.e. that God himself truly became man. As we shall find, Eusebius participated most strenuously when he felt that an important theological principle, that of the divine mediation of the Word of God, was in danger.

2.5. EUSEBIUS AND THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY

Assessing the relation of Eusebius to the 'Arian' controversy[117] has been, itself, a controversial undertaking. While some have believed the Caesarean to have been simply one of an Arian party of theologians, others have rushed to his defence, attempting to distance him from that heresy. It would seem to be a mistake to apply anachronistically the orthodox definitions of a later date to our study of Eusebius, i.e. to make as our primary question 'Was Eusebius an Arian?' This begs the question of the definition of 'Arian' as well as applying a title to Eusebius that he hardly would have understood. It would seem better, methodologically, to study an aspect of Eusebius' own theological questions and concerns (such as Christological mediation) and then analyse how he interacted during the controversy with regard to that aspect as well as compare and contrast his views with others, such as

[117] The question of whether the Arian controversy should even be labelled as such has been the subject of much discussion lately. The main difficulties arise from, on one hand, the scant direct evidence available concerning what Arius himself actually taught and, on the other, a growing consensus among scholars that the 'Arian' movement was not a self-consciously defined or unified movement at all and that most 'Arians' seemed not to have considered Arius himself of much importance. While there is much of value and interest in the current debate, we shall here dispense with the inverted commas when referring to this controversy because with regard to Eusebius, at least, we are mainly concerned with his defence of and/or reaction to the teaching of Arius himself. It is also the opinion of this author, on the basis of the evidence presented in this study, that while 'Arian' is not the best name, the designation does refer to a group of thinkers who have some theologically important characteristics in common. Among these common characteristics, we shall argue here, is the exclusion of the Word from the identity of the 'one, true God'. This, of course, does not mean that their theologies are identical in every detail.

Arius himself and Asterius. It should also be kept in mind that we are not treating the Arian controversy in all its complexities, but rather one aspect of Eusebius' participation in it.

We have seen the presence and importance of the concept of the Word's 'cosmological' mediation in Eusebius' theological reflections. However, what has not been generally recognized is the centrality of this issue for Eusebius' Christology in general and specifically in his interaction with the debate surrounding Arius. We will now attempt to analyse his participation in the debate surrounding Arius and the Council of Nicaea from this angle of divine mediation. It is our contention that one cannot correctly assess Eusebius' role in these proceedings without an understanding of his view of the necessity of a cosmological mediation between God and creation.

In this section, we will look particularly at Eusebius' understanding of the use of 'ἐκ' ('from') phrases to demonstrate the Son's relationship to the Father because of its centrality to the discussions at Nicaea, especially with regard to Eusebius' participation. We will take our data mainly from the *Demonstratio Evangelica* (probably written between 314 and 318), the letter to Euphration of Balanea,[118] the letter to Alexander of Alexandria,[119] and the letter that he wrote to his congregation in Caesarea following the Nicene Council[120] in 325. In addition, we shall consider the acta from the Council of Antioch held earlier in 325 that had provisionally anathematized Eusebius.

As a side issue, the matter of relative dating of these documents should be addressed. The consensus until recently, as shown by Opitz in his critical edition[121] of the documents surrounding the Nicene Council, has been to put the letter to Euphration at around 318 and Eusebius' defence of Arius sent to Alexander at *c*.320. However, R. Williams has proposed a major reworking of the chronology of all these documents.[122] The most important effect of this re-dating would be to place Alexander of Alexandria's letter to his namesake in Thessalonica, the *he philarchos*, much earlier—to 321/2 (as opposed to 324 in Opitz) and his *henos somatos* later—from the traditional 319 to January or February 325. For our purposes, we should note that

[118] Opitz, 3. [119] Opitz, 7. [120] Opitz, 22. [121] Ibid.

[122] Williams, *Arius*, 48–61. Williams' chronology has received some criticism (U. Loose, 'Zur Chronologie des arianischen Streites', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 101 (1990), 88–92), but he defends his thesis ably in the above cited work, 252–6.

this would probably force the dating of the letter to Euphration to be switched to around 321/2 and Eusebius' letter to Alexander in defence of Arius even to as late as early 325, before the Council of Antioch in March.[123] While this new understanding of chronology does not strongly affect our understanding of the documents from Eusebius' pen, it does tend to downplay the role of Eusebius of Nicomedia and thus 'the role of Eusebius Pamphilus becomes correspondingly more significant; as a good deal of recent research has indicated, Eusebius of Caesarea's adherence to the Arian cause was not a matter peripheral to his general theological style and commitment'.[124] We shall return later to the question of theological similarity between Eusebius and Arius.

2.5.1. The 'Demonstratio Evangelica'

One need not assume that at the time of the writing of the *Demonstratio* the debate surrounding Arius was still completely in the future. As Hanson states, it is 'likely that by the time Eusebius wrote the *Demonstratio* the subject which was to be central to the Arian controversy [i.e. the relation between the Father and the Son] was being widely canvassed'.[125] In *DE* IV.1, Eusebius wrote as a summary to a section about God the Father, *αὐτὸς ὢν ὁ εἷς καὶ μόνος θεός, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐστιν* several things are important to note here for our purposes. First of all, it is obvious that here Eusebius states that 'all things' are 'from (*ἐκ*) God'. It is essential to an understanding of Eusebius' later statements during the Arian controversy to make clear at the outset that he felt it correct to state that all (*τὰ πάντα*)

[123] Williams is noncommittal on the dating of this letter. It presupposes the Arian credal statement (Opitz, 6, dated 321 by Williams) as well as knowledge of Alexander's condemnation. While this means that it could have been earlier, several verbal parallels with *henos somatos* noted by Williams seem to argue that it post-dates that document (Jan.Feb. 325). While Williams allows the possibility that it might have been written after Antioch (March 325) and before Nicaea (June 325), surely it would strain credibility to believe that Eusebius wrote this letter while under provisional excommunication.

[124] Williams, *Arius*, 61.

[125] Hanson, *Search*, 49. Although if one takes R. Williams' re-dating of the documents seriously, then the suddenness of the uprising of the issue could possibly mean that Eusebius at the time of writing *DE* had not yet become aware of the controversy.

that exists is 'from God'. Second, Eusebius notes that it is 'on account of' (δι' ὃν) God that all things exist. This point has been confused somewhat by a mistranslation of this phrase into German as 'durch den' by Berkhof,[126] confusing it with διά followed by the genitive case. Followed by the accusative, as we have it here, it is better translated as 'on account of' or 'because of'. This is important because, as we have noted and will note again, for Eusebius it is inadmissible that creation came about 'through' the Father. It is 'from' (ἐκ) the Father that all things are, but 'through' (διά+ genitive) the Word that all things are.[127] While there would seem to be the influence of Platonic thought in general in Eusebius' system, it should be emphasized that here he was merely repeating scriptural data.[128] This is to underline the role of the Father as the ultimate source of all existence and being by his 'sheer will power', but not through direct involvement in the created order. It also emphasized the difference or discontinuity that Eusebius saw between the Father and the Son. The Father, 'from' whom all things are, begot the Son *in order that* 'through' him (the Son, in an instrumental sense) all things could be created. Although the cosmos was made 'through' the Son, the Father is still the Creator, because all existence is 'from' him.

After a section describing how all things derive their existence from the fact that God's will and power determined their existence,[129] Eusebius stated what could be considered a corollary of the above statement. As we have seen, Eusebius had asserted categorically that all things are 'from' the Father. Now he affirmed that it is 'no longer reasonable to say that anything that exists is from nothing' (ὡς μηκέτι εὐλόγως φάναι δεῖν ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων εἰναί τι τῶν ὄντων). This statement has caused a great deal of confusion among scholars. Lyman describes it as a 'curious description of *creatio ex nihilo*' and avers that 'although the precise nature of the relation is difficult to make out in this context, it can hardly be a literal statement'.[130] Kofsky states that here 'in a brief account of the problem of creation *ex nihilo*,

[126] H. Berkhof, *Die Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea* (Amsterdam: Uitgeversmaatschappij Holland, 1939).

[127] *LC* XII.1 [128] Cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; and Rom. 11:36.

[129] The role of the Father's will in Eusebius' concept of the relationship between the Father and the Son has been ably described in Lyman, *Christology*, 90–9.

[130] Ibid., 96.

Eusebius offers a solution as if by magic, in a neo-Platonic tone indicating that he may not have believed in creation *ex nihilo* in the first place'.[131]

And yet, it would seem that this statement fits in well with what he has been saying previously. Obviously, Eusebius here is conceiving of ἐκ (as he had in the immediately previous section by saying all things are 'from' God) in the sense of an 'ultimate cause', to describe the source of existence, rather than as a 'material cause', to describe the 'stuff' out of which something is made.[132] In general discussions, it is usually assumed that *creatio ex nihilo* is used in the sense of 'material cause', and is thus a helpful way to describe creatures who have a merely contingent existence and were created at some point before which they (and the material from which they are made) did not exist. Thus it could be used to describe all existence beneath the great gap which separates it from God who is uncreated and self-existent, while at the same time asserting that there was no 'co-eternal' matter alongside God. In this sense, it became a contentious phrase for describing the Son's origin throughout the Arian controversy. Something created out of nothing (in the material sense) would be created simply by God's good pleasure and will and neither it nor the 'stuff' out of which it was made would have existed previous to its creation, and certainly not co-eternally with God. However, for Eusebius, at least at the relatively early stage represented in *DE*, the ἐκ phrases, whether connected with God or with nothing, denoted an 'ultimate cause' for things. Thus, in this sense, since all things are 'from the Father' (i.e. the source of their existence is grounded in him), it would be nonsensical to say that something which exists is from that which does not exist, for nothing can cause nothing to exist! Hanson seems to misunderstand the point when he sums up Eusebius' meaning here to be that 'it is wrong to think that God created anything out of nothing'.[133] Not only do we need to guard

[131] A. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea: Against Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 194.

[132] 'Material cause' is used here to mean the material or matter from which something is made. In this sense, leather can be seen as the 'material cause' of a shoe. 'Ultimate cause', as we use it here, is a little different from the 'efficient cause' (e.g. the cobbler as the 'efficient cause' of the shoe) in that it is the ultimate source for its existence. It could be argued then, as Eusebius seems to, that the 'ultimate cause' of anything (including a shoe) would be God.

[133] Hanson, *Search*, 49.

against assuming that ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων meant for Eusebius what it means for us, we need also to consider that the phrase may not have meant the same thing for Eusebius as it did for other theologians of his day. In the present passage, Eusebius wants to affirm (and he immediately follows up his statement concerning ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων by mentioning this) that all things are 'from' the only one who truly 'exists', the one who said, 'I am He who is' (Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ ὤν). For our present purposes, Eusebius' teaching in this passage can be summed up in two points:

1. All things which exist are ἐκ τοῦ πατρος (in the sense of an ultimate cause or source).
2. It is at least questionable, if not completely inadmissible, that any existent thing can properly be called ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων (again, in the sense of ultimate cause or source), since this would imply an impossible derivation of existence from the non-existent, and would seem to negate point (1) above.

We shall now turn our attention to the fifth book of the *Demonstratio Evangelica*. When passing from Book IV to the introduction to Book V, a student of Eusebius familiar with his later reservations at the Nicene Council concerning the phrase 'from the essence of the Father' might understandably be shocked at reading the following in Ferrar's English translation: 'the Word Who is of the essence of God'. This reading is problematic on a couple of grounds. First, it implies that the Son shares the essence of God the Father, something that Eusebius is very hesitant to accept. Second, this translation seems to derive a meaning out of the text that the original simply cannot support. The phrase is οὐσιώδη τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον. Here, οὐσιώδη is an adjective which modifies λόγον and can signify 'essential', 'intrinsic', 'really existing'.[134] It is questionable whether Eusebius really had in mind the idea of 'essence' (οὐσία) at all here and if he did, it is not a reference to the essence of the Father, but rather to that of the Word. Eusebius at this point simply is emphasizing that the Word is truly and intrinsically the Word of God and does not receive that title 'honorifically' or externally. He is in his essence truly the Word of God. In other words,

[134] H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, eds., *A Greek–English Lexicon, with revised supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1274; and G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 986f.

the passage says nothing about the relationship between God and his Word, but rather about the nature of the latter. This accords well with the Eusebian view of the divine mediator having a unique relationship with God.[135]

The other passage that is germane to the issue at hand is found in the following chapter, Book V, Chapter 1. For our present interest of understanding Eusebius' relation to the Arian controversy, we shall focus on one phrase which Eusebius seeks to disallow: 'that the Son is begotten out of nothing in a manner similar to the other begotten beings' (*καὶ τὴν ἐναντίαν ἐλθεῖν οὐκ ἀκίνδυνον, καὶ ἁπλῶς οὕτως ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γεννητὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῖς λοιποῖς γεννητοῖς ὁμοίως ἀποφήνασθαι*). This has been generally taken as a strong statement by Eusebius that the Son is unlike other begotten beings *on the basis that* he was not created *ex nihilo* as they were.[136] This has then been understood as a clear 'anti-Arian' statement by the Caesarean. And, indeed, if it is taken as a given that *creatio ex nihilo* is the qualification which separates all beings below the great gap from the self-existent essence of the divine being, then it would seem to be an inescapable conclusion. However, we must resist the temptation to read into Eusebius later connotations associated with the term *creatio ex nihilo*. We have already seen the doubts raised by Eusebius in *DE* IV.1 concerning the appropriateness of the phrase *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* under any circumstance. He hesitated to use this term not only concerning the origin of the Son, but of any existing thing. Thus, it would be strange for him here, in the very next book, to make the opposite point that all things *except* the Son are created *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* and that it was precisely this which distinguished him from the former. A closer analysis of the passage in question not only suggests an alternative interpretation, it

[135] This statement that the Logos is 'in his essence' the Word of God, especially if the proximity of Eusebius' Christological views to those of Arius could be demonstrated, would tend to count strongly against theories of early Arianism which emphasize the Word's divinity as something 'earned' through obedience, such as presented by R. C. Gregg and D. E. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* (London: SCM Press, 1981). In addition, one can probably see here a 'pre-echo' of Eusebius' later affirmation, against Marcellus of Ancyra, that the divine Word had a 'real' or 'essential' existence of his own. While the term *οὐσιώδη* is not a central one to the debate, Eusebius does use it directly against what he perceived to be Marcellus' position of an impersonal Logos. Cf. *ET* I.20 and also the adverbial form in *ET* I.6.

[136] Lyman, *Christology*, p. 110; Williams, *Arius*, 172f.

also enlightens us on how Eusebius later reacted to the controversy surrounding Arius on this very point.

First of all, it seems obvious by the phrasing and context that Eusebius here is making a critique of the theologizing of others. While it need not be thought that the phrase in question is a specific quotation from another source, it was used early in the controversy by Arius himself and later became a common accusation against the Arians[137] and very likely by this time Eusebius had heard it. It is also informative for an understanding of his tone to note the relative softness with which he makes this critique. It is something that is *οὐκ ἀκίνδυνον*, 'not without danger'. In other words, the statement was not completely wrong, but should not be made 'without qualification' or 'simply' (*ἁπλῶς*). We should also note that within this phrase is an implicit acknowledgement that while the Word and created beings are not similar in their origin, they are to be considered on the same 'continuum' of begotten (or created)[138] beings, for the Son is not similar 'to the *other* begotten beings' (*τοῖς λοιποῖς γεννητοῖς*).[139] The use of the term 'other' denotes that the Son and other beings are within a group called 'begotten beings'. Thus, while Eusebius here wants to point out the dissimilarity between the Son and the created order, he does not lay aside the similarity he sees between them.

The next question to be asked is: What is the problem in the statement for Eusebius? It would seem that there are two choices or a third that would be a combination of the two. One possibility is that we should not say that the Son was begotten *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*. And yet Eusebius has already expressed reservations about this term in general, as referring to any being. Thus, while he would not be happy with its use, it would seem odd, at the very least, to use the term as that which defines the Son as against the rest of creation. The other possibility is that he is condemning the view that the begetting of the Son is *similar* to the begetting of other existing things; that it is the 'similar to' of the sentence which one should not say 'without

[137] Cf. Arius (Opitz, 1.5) and Athanasius, *De Syn.* 31, where it is claimed that at the time of the baptism of Constantius the Anomoians were commonly known as the 'Exoukontians'.

[138] As has been shown, the terms 'genetos' and 'gennetos' were used interchangeably by Eusebius, as well as by the majority of his contemporaries.

[139] Not 'geneta', as quoted by Williams, *Arius*, 173.

qualification'. While the first problem (that the Son was not created *ex nihilo*) is implied in the second problem, it seems that there are good reasons for believing that Eusebius' real concern with the idea expressed here has nothing much to do with the formula ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων and more to do with the fact that one should not conceive of the generation of the Son in any way similar to the generation of other creatures. That this would seem to follow Eusebius' reasoning here is made clear by the following descriptions, which highlight both the difference of the Son's origin to that of the other generated beings and its basic incomprehensibility. Their origins are different, for the 'generation' (γένεσις) of the Son is one thing and the 'making' (δημιουργία) through the Son is another. The Son, while being similar to the created order in that he is included on the same 'continuum' of begotten beings, is also different from the created order in that his origin is unique. Once again, we can see the creative tension of similarity and dissimilarity which controls so much of Eusebius' thinking on the role of the divine Word.

In conclusion to this section, then, we can state the following:

- Eusebius here is not using ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων as a definition of the gap between the Son and creation.
- He does want to emphasize the great dissimilarity between the begetting of the Son and the begetting of all else.
- Eusebius at the same time implies a continuum that would include all begotten things, thus showing a similarity between the Son and the created world (and their basic dissimilarity to the Father).

2.5.2. The Correspondence Preceding Nicaea

As we now approach the documents which more closely link Eusebius to the controversy surrounding Arius, it behoves us to underline the fact that previous to this time, Eusebius has not made an unequivocal statement suggesting that the Son alone was begotten 'from the Father' while creation was made 'out of nothing'. To the contrary, he has made a clear statement that all things are 'from (ἐκ) the Father' and that the phrase ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων is suspect in any case,

since he thinks of ἐκ phrases as denoting 'ultimate cause' or source of existence.

The first document we have which has directly to do with the milieu of the controversy leading up to the Council of Nicaea in 325 is his letter to Euphration of Balanea.[140] We have only segments of this and the following letter, which were used against Eusebius in the Second Council of Nicaea. It would appear that they are genuine, and their theological content, at any rate, fits in well with Eusebius' general framework, as hopefully will become clear through our analysis.

In this letter, Eusebius strove to clarify for Euphration what he understood the relationship to be between the Father and the Son. It has been generally recognized that here he is concerned to protect the 'monotheism' of the Father as the one true God, but it is also clear that he is concerned to protect the identity and position of the Son as mediator. Within the framework of similarity/dissimilarity described above, Eusebius here clearly feels that the dissimilarity between the Father and the Son is at risk. Thus he begins (in the fragment we have) by stating that the Son does not 'coexist' (συνυπάρχειν) with the Father, but rather the Father 'pre-exists' (προυπάρχειν) the Son. The main problem Eusebius sees with stating the opposite is that the distinction between the Father and the Son disappears. Hence,

> If they coexist, how is the Father the Father and the Son the Son? Or how is one the first and the other the second? And how is one unbegotten while the other is begotten? For if the two were equally coexisting each with the other, both would be considered worthy of equal honour, as I said, each would be unbegotten or begotten. But neither of these would be true, for neither would there be the unbegotten or the begotten.[141]

Here, it is obvious that Eusebius is concerned to vouchsafe the pre-eminence of the Father, for he continues by saying that 'the one is considered both first and greater than the second both in order and in honour'. However, we should not rush to the conclusion that it was his only concern. The separate existence of the Son is mentioned by Eusebius as of as much importance as that of the Father. The result of this confusion, as he sees it, would be to deny the reality both of the 'unbegotten' and of the 'begotten'. There is concern for both beings,

[140] Found in Opitz, 3. [141] Ibid., 3.1.

unconfused and distinguished from one another. As we have seen, for Eusebius' mediation framework, the equating or confusing of the two would mean not only the denial of the one unbegotten, it would also signal the disappearance of the 'only-begotten' who acts as a necessary mediator between the unbegotten and the world.

That Eusebius was thinking along such lines is demonstrated by the remaining extant parts of the letter. He first backed up his assertion about the subordination of the Son to the Father with a quotation from the Gospel of John 6 : 44: 'The Father who sent me is greater than me.'[142] He then went on, importantly for our argument, to say that Christ himself taught that the Father was the only true God and quotes John 17 : 3: 'That they would know you, the only true God'. Here it is worthwhile to point out that the context is that of the deictic mediation of the Son, i.e. the role of the Son is to 'point to' the true God. Christ does not say merely 'the only God', says Eusebius, but rather with the necessary addition (*μετὰ προσθήκης ἀναγκαιοτάτης*) of 'true'. 'The Son', said Eusebius, 'is himself "God", but not "true God" '. The Son is true, but only as an image (*εἰκών*) of the true God.[143] Once again, the analogy of image helps Eusebius to make his point that the Son in Scripture is called 'God' (John 1 : 1) not because he is in any way equal to the Father, but because he is a mediating image, separate from the Father, which points to the 'only, true God'. This favourite illustration, as we have seen, aids him by simultaneously showing the similarity between the Father and Son (otherwise how could he be called a true image?) and showing the dissimilarity (for an image and that of which it is an image cannot be thought of as one and the same). Again, the similarity/dissimilarity pattern emerges—the Son is 'like' the Father and so can be called 'God' and 'true image', and yet is 'unlike' him in that he is not the only, true God, nor does he coexist with him. Finally, what we have of this letter closes with another quotation, this time from Paul, which discloses the twin themes that Eusebius believes himself to have covered in this epistle. For the Apostle declared in 1 Timothy 2 : 5 that there is 'One God' and immediately adds that there is 'one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'. Eusebius is concerned to safeguard the truth of monotheism (which 'one, true God' he identifies completely as the

[142] Ibid., 3.2. [143] Ibid., 3.3.

Father) and the existence of a mediator who links that one true God with the created order and through whom alone humanity can know him.

Around 320, Eusebius wrote another letter, this time to Alexander of Alexandria, in which he directly entered into the debate over Arius.[144] In it, he defended Arius and his supporters against the accusations previously made and published by Alexander. While we shall be able to understand better after this analysis the relationship between the beliefs of Eusebius and those of Arius, our principal aim here is not to determine whether Eusebius was an 'Arian' or not, but rather to understand his motives as he moved in to defend the accused.

As in the case of the previous letter, we only have portions of this letter preserved from the second Council of Nicaea. There are two heretical statements that the Arians are accused of asserting. The first is that the Son came into being from nothing, just as one of all (other beings) (*ὁ υἱὸς ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος γέγονεν ὡς εἷς τῶν πάντων*). Here is the infamous accusation of *creatio ex nihilo* applied to the Son to say that he is just one among many creatures. R. Williams states that it 'seems to suggest that Eusebius believed Arius' party to be *falsely* accused of teaching this doctrine'.[145] Eusebius did indeed suggest that the accusation is false, but it is very interesting to note just *why* he believed it unjust. He proceeded to see that the statement reported by Alexander does not match what he himself has heard from the Arians. He then went on to quote the document which the Arians had presented to him, apparently identical to that which Alexander had received, and noted in particular that they had asserted that the Son is 'perfect creature of God, *but not as one of the creatures*' (*ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἓν τῶν κτισμάτων*). Luibhéid believes that there is an 'implicit reference' to the *ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος*, but that seems unlikely.[146] He made no mention of the *creatio ex nihilo*, but defended the Arians against the accusation that they had said that the origin of the Son *was the same as* other creatures. Alexander had apparently inferred that to say the Son was a creature was to imply that he is like the other creatures.

[144] Opitz, 7. [145] Williams, *Arius*, 172–3.

[146] C. Luibhéid, *Eusebius of Caesarea and the Arian Crisis* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1981), 45.

Arius and Eusebius, on the other hand, seemed to want to affirm that the Son was a creature, but not like other creatures. It is important to grasp here the similarity/dissimilarity pattern so important to Eusebius' view of divine mediation. Once again, he implied that the Son and created things are on the same continuum by referring, apparently without thought of censure, to the Arian title 'perfect creature'. However, it is also imperative to maintain the dissimilarity by asserting that his origin is not like other creatures. Eusebius in fact did not defend the Arians from the charge of maintaining that the Son was created 'out of nothing'. We have already seen how he would probably not have used that phrase at this time, but we have also seen that his stated hesitation was to its use *in general*, whether applied to the Son or to any other existing thing. If Eusebius was at all consistent in his theology, what was of most interest to him here was the assertion that the Son was completely like the created order. Again, we can see that this would upset his view of the function of the Word as mediator. He consistently favoured terms and phrases which underlined the similarity and dissimilarity simultaneously, such as 'perfect creature, but not as one of the creatures'.

The second accusation that Eusebius dealt with in this letter is quite illuminating for our purposes. The alleged Arian statement here is that 'he who exists begot him who did not exist' (ὁ ὤν τὸν μὴ ὄντα ἐγέννησε). It is vital to remember that earlier Eusebius had construed the ἐκ phrases to denote ultimate cause or 'source' of existence. Thus 'ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων' seemed to him virtually meaningless, while 'ἐκ τοῦ πατρός' described all contingent existence. Here the phrase is changed so that the inescapable meaning would be that of non-existence 'before' (whether temporally or merely logically) the beginning of existence. Eusebius' reply is interesting, and his reasoning is even more intriguing. First, he simply asked how one could speak otherwise? The one who 'is' (ὁ ὤν) is obviously one, so that everything which exists 'after him'[147] has come to be 'from him' (ἐξ αὐτοῦ). But to assert that the Son was also 'he who is' (ὁ ὤν) leads to absurdity. 'For if he [God] is not the only one who "exists"

[147] Luibhéi, *Eusebius*, 46, has translated this phrase as 'with him' (with the Latin text 'cum ipso'), but the most likely meaning of 'μετ' αὐτόν' would be 'after him' and agrees better with the context.

(ὁ ὤν), but the Son also was "ὁ ὤν", how could the one who is (ὁ ὤν) beget one who also is (ὁ ὤν)?' There are several things essential to note here. First, Eusebius maintained that, at least logically if not temporally, one must conceive of something 'begotten' as being 'after' the one who begot. Also, he asserted that all things are 'ἐξ αὐτοῦ', that is, from the Father; and that the Son is included in the 'all things'. This is completely consistent with his teaching above that connects 'ἐκ' phraseology with the 'source' of existence. And, above all, he admits that it seems to him unavoidable to consider that 'before' the begetting, the one to be begotten simply does not exist. It has been debated whether Eusebius saw a time 'when' the Son was not and it is not clear from this passage what he thought. If pressed, the language here could certainly be taken to mean just that. On the other hand, Eusebius goes out of his way in other places[148] to assert the absolute incomprehensibility of the Son's origin. What does remain quite clear here is that Eusebius claims that 'all things' are 'from' (ἐκ) God *and* that he includes the Son in that category. The truth that all things are 'from God' is for Eusebius the basis for *both* doubting the suitability of 'ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων' *and* asserting that all things (including the Son) did not exist before they were begotten.

Thus in this letter Eusebius has answered the first accusation as referring to the relationship between the Word and the created world. He is mostly concerned to defend the Arians from the charge of not maintaining a distinction between the Son and 'other' creatures. The problematic issue of the *creatio ex nihilo* of the Son is simply left on the side. In the second accusation, he sees the Arian statement as maintaining the distinction between the Word and the true God. Both of these dissimilarities (combined with their matching similarities) are fundamental to Eusebius' understanding of the divine ontological mediation of the Word.

2.5.3. The Council of Antioch, 325

Before approaching the documents directly concerned with the Council of Nicaea, it is important to analyse the information which

[148] *DE* V.1, for instance.

has been obtained concerning an earlier council of the same year in Antioch.[149] The import of this council for our discussion should be obvious, since Eusebius of Caesarea was provisionally banned for his views. In analysing the portion of the conciliar letter having to do with the anathemas, it becomes clear that there are two separate condemnations, each followed by an abbreviated theological affirmation. The first is directed at those who say that the Son is *κτίσμα*, *γενητὸν* or *ποιητὸν* and not truly *γέννημα*; and who say 'there was when he was not'. The basic thrust of this condemnation is obviously the idea that the Son is a creature. While Eusebius, as we have seen, would want to affirm that the Son is truly begotten, he would also feel at freedom to use the other terms as well. For example, he tells how God first makes 'of all existences next to himself his child and then goes on to describe the Son as 'perfect creation (*δημιούργημα*) of a perfect Creator, wise edifice of a wise Builder, and good child (*γέννημα*) of a good Father'.[150] For Eusebius, as we have seen, the terms *geneta* and *genneta* are simply interchangeable and the same would seem to be true for *γέννημα*. To say that something was 'begotten' was to say that it was 'originated'. What is interesting is that at the Council of Antioch, apparently the bishops present used the term *γέννημα* not only as *not* meaning 'created' but as disallowing that a true *γέννημα* of the Father could have been created. It would seem that this is a 'pre-echo' of later work by Athanasius in which *γέννημα* and *γενητός* are considered not only *not* synonymous, but mutually exclusive.[151] It is

[149] Opitz, 18. Our comments are based on Schwartz's translation from Syriac to Greek given in this edition. The authenticity of this document is supported by 'a growing body of responsible opinion' (Kelly, *Creeds*, 208), but has been argued against by D. L. Holland, 'Die Synode von Antiochien (324/325) und ihre Bedeutung für Eusebius von Caesarea und das Konzil von Nizäa', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 81 (1970), 163–81; particularly on the belief that it is difficult to explain the anathema against Eusebius in the light of his theology. We hope to demonstrate the opposite here.

[150] *DE* IV.3.

[151] *Γέννημα* and its homonym *γένημα* display some of the same possibilities for confusion as the *γέννητος*/*γένητος* pair. *Γέννημα* is of course from the verb *γεννάω*, 'to bear'; *γένημα* is descended from *γίνομαι*, 'to become'. However, both terms were used rather unambiguously to refer to that which is reproduced. Thus *γέννημα* can refer to a child (Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1167) or to the fruits of the earth (Polybius, I.71.1) or to the act itself of reproducing (Sophocles, *Antigone* 471; Aeschylus, *Prometheus Vinctus* 850). *Γενήματα* became the usual term to refer to the produce of the land, whether animal or vegetable; particularly in the LXX where it

easy to see how there could have been disagreement with Eusebius on this point at Antioch. In addition, while Eusebius never stated that 'there was when he was not' and indeed seems to be unclear as to whether the origination of the Son should be conceived as taking place within time, his thoughts on 'he who is' begetting 'him who is not' (as in Opitz, 7 above) could easily have been understood in that way. If, as we have argued above, that letter was written between January and March of 325, then it reflected Eusebius' thoughts on the matter right on the eve of this Council. While not completely clear, that this anathema is aimed at Eusebius seems to be further hinted at by the short affirmation following it—'For we believe that he was and is and that he is light.' As it stands, the reference to light seems inexplicable. However, as we can recall, Eusebius was hesitant to use the 'light' analogy to describe the relation between Father and Son without several qualifications. In addition, his concerns were against the assertion that the Son eternally and necessarily 'coexisted' with the Father. If, in the debate concerning the origin of the Son at the Council, discussion went into this area, we can imagine how the Council responded to his worries concerning the Son being the 'ray' of the 'light' which is the Father. It would seem, then, that this anathema, with its accompanying affirmation, is indeed directed at Eusebius of Caesarea.

The second anathema of the Council is more difficult to relate to Eusebius. It is directed at those who believe that the Son is immutable by his own will, and not in the same way that the Father is immutable. It would seem that for Eusebius, the Son is immutable as a result of the Father's will, but he does not seem to emphasize the Son's will as the source of his immutability. In fact, his view of the Word as 'inherently' (*οὐσιώδης*) the word of God would seem to militate against this. In addition, the affirmation attached ('he is the image of the Father') is one to which it would seem Eusebius would have heartily agreed.

The solution would seem to be that the bishops at the Council had two groups, separate but more or less associated, in mind.

occurs numerous times (e.g. Gen. 41:34; Lev. 19:25; Isa. 29:1). One wonders whether the term *γέννημα* was chosen both at Antioch and later by Athanasius to emphasize the Son as 'begotten' *as opposed to* 'originated' because there was less chance of semantic confusion.

The first clue to this is simply that there are two anathemas. In addition, the second anathema is prefaced by '*προσέτι*', which generally means 'over and above', 'besides', and would usually connote the juxtaposition of two separate things. In addition, the pronouns used to describe the objects of condemnation in the two anathemas (*ἐκείνους . . . κακείνους*) could suggest two different groups. If our analysis has been accurate, then there are several conclusions to be drawn. First, at least the first anathema seems to have been directly aimed at Eusebius.[152] Secondly, at this early stage in the controversy, there was no monolithic 'Arian' movement, but rather a group of beliefs, not all uniformly held by all so accused, which were perceived by the attending bishops to be in some way related to the doctrines which led to the previous excommunication of 'Arius and those around him'. The name of Arius does not seem, at this stage, to be mentioned as the source of the heterodoxy of those anathematised but rather simply as a reference to a previous excommunication for related beliefs. It should be noted that, while there seems to be little evidence at this stage for a homogeneous 'Arian' teaching, there were many who perceived similarities between certain doctrines (such as the creation of the Son, on one hand, and immutability by will rather than essence) and were willing to group them together. While the later rhetorical 'creation' of the term 'Arianism' has been well documented,[153] it should be noted that the lumping together of heterodox doctrines which seemed similar and relating them to Arius did not begin with Athanasius but was rather the response of many, including the bishops gathered at Antioch in March 325. That the earliest forms of 'Arianism' were not a cohesive theology seems obvious, but it still remains to be asked whether there was sufficient 'common ground' between them to warrant the association. And, particularly for our purposes, whether this 'common ground' included a shared view of a necessary mediation of an intervening third being, i.e. the Word,

[152] As opposed to Holland, 'Synode', and A. H. B. Logan, 'Marcellus of Ancyra and the Councils of 325: Antioch, Ancyra, and Nicaea', *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992), 428–46, who, although accepting the authenticity of the Council of Antioch, thinks the condemnation to be aimed, not at Eusebius, but rather only at Arius.

[153] Cf. J. R. Lyman, 'A Topography of Heresy: Mapping the Rhetorical Creation of Arianism', in *Arianism after Arius*: *Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, M. R. Barnes and D. H. Williams, eds. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 45–62.

between God and the world; which would in turn necessitate the 'exclusion' of the Son from the identity of 'the one God'.

2.5.4. The Congregational Letter after Nicaea

The final Eusebian document dealing directly with the controversy surrounding Arius is the letter that he wrote to his congregation in Caesarea right after the Council in Nicaea in 325. In it, he was apparently striving to defend why he had decided to sign the credal statement of that synod, when it contained phrasing that sounded suspiciously 'non-Eusebian'. Using Eusebius' concerns with mediation as our 'lens', we shall first look at the creed which he himself presented to the gathered body of church leaders, then take a glance at the addition of '*ὁμοούσιος*' which Eusebius asserted was by the initiative of the Emperor Constantine. Then we shall see the creed presented by others at the council and which was finally adopted by the Council, along with Eusebius' concerns about parts of that creed and the answers given to him.

The obviously defensive posture taken by Eusebius in the presentation of his creed is easily understood if we take into account the fact that he had been provisionally excommunicated earlier in the year at Antioch. Rather than see this creed as being presented by Eusebius as the basis for the creed of the council, we should understand it as his (successful) attempt to be re-admitted to fellowship. There seems to be no grounds for taking the line of Hanson that 'Eusebius of Caesarea gives the impression that N was no more than his own creed . . . with the single addition of the homoousion.'[154] Even a casual comparison of the Caesarean's creed with that of the one produced by the Nicene Council shows this to be highly unlikely.[155] In

[154] Hanson, *Search*, 163. Similar views were held by F. J. A. Hort, *Two Dissertations* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1876), 54–72; A. E. Burn, *Introduction to the Creeds and to the Te Deum* (London: Methuen, 1899), 76ff.; and A. von Harnack, ed., *Realencyklopedia*, 15f.

[155] As is shown in Kelly, *Creeds*, 217–20. In addition, A. H. B. Logan, 'Marcellus of Ancyra and the Councils of 325: Antioch, Ancyra, and Nicaea', *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992), 428–46, argues persuasively that these not only conclusively prove the non-Eusebian nature of N, but that they also tend to support his thesis that N betrays the hand of Marcellus of Ancyra.

addition, Eusebius nowhere in his letter claims such a thing, but states plainly that the addition of the homoousion was used as a 'pretence' (*πρόφασις*) by others for the production of another document which became the Nicene creed.[156] Indeed, as Kelly remarks, 'the whole theological bias of the resultant documents was out of harmony with his own teaching, especially in view of the string of anathemas which they had appended'.[157]

Returning to the creed presented by Eusebius, as reported later by him in his letter, it is interesting for our purposes to note the emphasis Eusebius placed, as he did earlier in his letter to Euphration, on the differentiation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that they retain their respective qualities (*πατέρα ἀληθῶς πατέρα καί υἱὸν αληθῶς υἱὸν καί πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἀληθῶς ἅγιον πνεῦμα*).[158] Protecting the 'oneness' of the Father is an obvious motive for maintaining this distinction. However, as we have noted, Eusebius was not just interested that 'the Father truly be the Father', but also that 'the Son truly be the Son'. In other words, it would seem that Eusebius here wished to defend his theological position that the Son, external to the Father, stands as a necessary mediator between the Father and the world.

At this point, Eusebius asserts that the whole assembly was in agreement with his statement. This is not to be taken as part of the discussion leading to the doctrinal statement of the Council, but rather as an acceptance of Eusebius' position and as a re-acknowledgement of the Caesarean's standing within the church. It should be noted that the theological understandings behind credal statements such as this one could be wildly varying even as there was agreement on the actual words used. It is doubtful that Marcellus of Ancyra or Alexander of Alexandria would have agreed with the

[156] So Kelly, *Creeds*, following H. Lietzmann, 'Symbolstudien', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1925), 201f. Lietzmann also makes the point that there is probably a note of disgust in the way in which Eusebius writes 'this document' with reference to what would become N.

[157] Kelly, *Creeds*, 222.

[158] While Eusebius here includes the Holy Spirit, it would seem that he holds little place in his view of mediation for the Spirit's role. On Eusebius' pneumatology, see Strutwolf, *Trinitätstheologie*, 194ff. Marcellus of Ancyra, as we shall see, was particularly irritated by the assertion of the 'Father truly the Father, the Son truly the Son'.

Eusebian understanding of the Logos' ontological mediation, and yet they could, with their own interpretation, agree with the creed presented by Eusebius.[159]

Eusebius reported that the Emperor himself also was in agreement with his statement of faith, with the single *proviso* of adding the term '*ὁμοούσιος*'. The motive for the introduction of this term has often been discussed. Hanson believes that it was chosen because it was one 'which serious and wholehearted Arians could not stomach'.[160] There is some truth in this, for Arius himself had complained specifically about those who, in the manner of the Manichaeans, considered the Son to be a 'consubstantial part' (*μέρος ὁμοούσιος*) of the Father.[161] However, if our reading of the acta of the Council of Antioch is correct, then Hanson's statement is problematic in that it assumes a single 'movement' of Arianism, with differences within that movement being arranged in a single continuum from 'mild' to 'wholehearted'. More likely, 'those around Arius' at this time were perceived by others as grouped together, holding related opinions (e.g. the Father and Son existing as separate '*ousiai*', with the Son being ontologically subordinated to the Father), but with various related theological structures (e.g. the necessity of some sort of ontological mediation between the Father and created beings; the Son being immutable through an act of his will, rather than because of his essence). If this is true, then at the time of the Council of Nicaea, the term *homoousios* may have only served to offend some, but not all. It would seem that only later would the term truly be considered a bulwark of the pro-Nicenes.[162]

As Vaggione has pointed out, *homoousios* in its original philosophical sense was used to explain the soul's relationship to the divine and

[159] Alexander's own position was a bit muddled, as can be seen by his reference to the Word as a 'mediating only-begotten nature', cf. Opitz, 14.45. Of course, it is a matter of discussion whether indeed these individuals, or even the council as a whole, were in as resounding approval of his statement as Eusebius seems to indicate. Be that as it may, the point is still taken that the naked words of the creeds could sometimes conceal fairly wideranging theological positions. This would seem especially true at Nicaea.

[160] Hanson, *Search*, 167. [161] Opitz, 6.3.

[162] Athanasius only started using the term around 357, in reaction to the Second Creed of Sirmium. The term is also conspicuously absent from the Marcellan-Eusebian debate. Cf. Hanson, *Search*, 438.

'described the relationship between two entities that had some things in common but were at least superficially different'.[163] If Eusebius had this philosophical background in mind, it is just possible that he could take the term as fitting in with his own view of the relation between the Father and Son as made up of 'likeness' and 'unlikeness'. The real problem with the term was its material implications. Even among the philosophers, the kinds of relations that *homoousios* described 'were considered to be immaterial, but much of the language used to describe them had a material origin' and indeed, most who used the term found it hard 'to exclude material images altogether'.[164] That the possibility of 'material overtones' was a concern at the Council is shown by the 'philosophical explanation', as Eusebius describes it, of Constantine at this point. The main concern expressed is that *homoousios* not be understood 'according to the affections of bodies'. All seemed to be concerned to exclude any material connotations from the term.[165] Even Athanasius, writing years later, would insist that when considering the consubstantial relation between the Father and Son, 'let every corporeal inference be banished on this subject'.[166]

As was mentioned above, the resultant Nicene credal formulation should not be construed as a re-working of Eusebius' creed presented at the council. Besides the addition of the *homoousion*, there are a number of significant differences between the creeds.[167]

First, the Son is described as being 'begotten . . . of the essence of the Father' (*γεννηθέντα . . . ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός*). We have seen the hesitation of Eusebius to use the phrase 'of the essence of the Father' to describe the generation of the Son for the same reason of 'material overtones' which could make the term *homoousios* objectionable. Eusebius states that this was only acceptable to him after he was convinced during the discussions that ' "from the essence" was stated by them to mean the Son's being from the Father, not as if he is

[163] R. P. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 55. He cites the following references: Plotinus (4.4.28.55, 4.7.10.19), Porphyry (*Abst.* 1.19), and Iamblichus (*Myst.* 3.21.150.9). He also gives a helpful summary of the orthodox and heretical Christian use of the term, 55–8.

[164] Ibid., 55f. [165] Ibid., 58. [166] *De Dec.* 24.1. Cf. also *De Syn.* 42.

[167] It is quite surprising, in light of what he wrote concerning the 'true God' in the letter to Euphration (Opitz, 3), that Eusebius does not mention the additional phrase 'true God from true God'.

part of the Father'.[168] Indeed, here Eusebius subscribes to the phrase (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός) only by interpreting it as being identical to 'of the Father' (ἐκ τοῦ πατρός). As we have seen, 'of the Father' was, to Eusebius, an utterly uncontroversial way to describe the Son's origin (as it was appropriate to describe all things as 'from the Father').

In the same way, Eusebius was grudgingly prepared to accept *homoousios*, based on the same 'non-material' interpretation that Constantine had put forward. It is, in fact, in his defence of his agreement to this term that he pens the strongest statement that could be understood as 'anti-Arian'.[169] The phrase 'consubstantial to the Father', states Eusebius, 'is indicative of the fact that the Son of God bears no likeness to the originated creatures' (παραστατικὸν δε τὸ ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ τοῦ μηδεμίαν ἐμφέρειαν πρὸς τὰ γενητὰ κτίσματα τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θέοῦ φέρειν). It is only 'to the Father who has begotten that he was made to resemble in every way' (μόνῳ δὲ τῷ πατρὶ τῷ γεγεννηκότι κατὰ πάντα τρόπον ἀφωμοιῶσθαι).[170] Taken in isolation, these statements could be taken as a strong assertion against what was to be understood as the Arian position. And, in fact, however they should be interpreted, they do show that many of Eusebius' concerns were foreign to those of Arius. Nevertheless, one should probably not see here a strong statement of what later became the 'orthodox' interpretation of the Nicene *homoousion*, i.e. that the Son is co-ordinate to, and equal in honour with, the Father. Rather, we should understand that Eusebius, in emphasizing that the Son carries the likeness (ἐμφέρειαν) of the Father and is made to resemble (ἀφωμοιῶσθαι) the Father, was completely consistent with his understanding of the

[168] Opitz, 22.9. [169] Opitz, 22.13.

[170] It seems best to translate 'ἀφωμοιῶσθαι' here as 'is made to resemble' rather than simply as 'is alike' as does, for example, W. G. Rusch, ed., *The Trinitarian Controversy*, Sources of Early Christian Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 59. The trouble with the Rusch translation is that it wrongly gives the impression of some sort of 'essential equality' between the Father and Son which is not necessitated by the term. In fact, the contexts in which this term was usually used classically (e.g. Plato, *Respublica* 396b; *Cratylus* 424d; *Sophista* 240a; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.10.2) tend to underline the idea of 'copy' or 'portrait' and support the view presented here of the importance of 'image' language in Eusebius' view of divine mediation, rather than the idea of 'identity' or 'equality'.

function of the Son as 'image' of the Father.[171] It is not that the Son is completely unlike the creatures, but rather that the Son is not the 'image' of any created thing. Indeed, he functions only as 'image' of the Father to the creation. He who is begotten carries the image of the one who begat. As we have already seen, and will see even more clearly in his debate with Marcellus of Ancyra, far from being a strong declaration of the essential equality of the Father and Son, Eusebius' understanding of the Son as 'image' of the Father necessitates not only similarity, but also dissimilarity between them.

On one other difference, the addition of 'begotten, not made' (*γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα*), a couple of points should be made. First of all, the very fact that a defence of the phrase was required by Eusebius demonstrates what we have already noted in this study, namely that he was accustomed to using 'creation' language in speaking of the origin of the Son. As we have seen repeatedly, Eusebius wished to maintain some sort of continuity between the Son and creation. However, the opposite point should also be noted here—a differentiation needed to be maintained between the origin of the creatures and the origin of the Son. This was precisely the point he was trying to make in his defence of Arius to Alexander when he wrote that the Son was 'a creature, but not as one of the creatures'.[172] The wording '*γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα*' was certainly not of his choosing, but when it was forced upon him at the time of the Council, he was prepared to interpret it in a manner which fitted his general theology.

Eusebius' account of why he agreed to the anathemas appended to the creed (Opitz, 22.15–16) probably comes the closest to substantiating Hanson's description of Eusebius' position at the council as 'a good deal of disingenuousness without the necessity of direct mendacity'.[173] Here we can see the bishop of Caesarea, just freshly reintroduced back into fellowship, walking a careful path through a field of potential theological landmines. It is beyond doubt that he

[171] As we shall see below, the term *ἐμφέρεια* is also used by Athanasius in his description of the Word's function as image. The usage there reinforces our interpretation here that the import of Eusebius' assertion is in terms of the *function* of the Word, rather than his *ontology*.

[172] Opitz, 7. [173] Hanson, *Search*, 166.

was not happy with these.[174] What we have here is not so much a defence of the list of anathemas itself as an argument of why he felt it to be 'harmless' (ἄλυπον).

The first two phrases which are disallowed, 'out of nothing' (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων) and 'there was when he was not' (ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν), Eusebius agreed should be avoided on the grounds that, first, they are not biblical, and second, he himself had never been in the habit of using them. As we have seen, this is quite truthful; Eusebius had already voiced concern over the validity of the first as a way of talking about the origin of the Son (or, indeed, of the origin of any created thing). Eusebius also avoided the second phrase in practice, although, as we have seen, he did defend Arius for saying something quite similar. However, we should also note that here Eusebius does not give theological reasons for avoiding these phrases, only that they should be avoided as not well attested in scripture.

The third phrase that was anathematized is of greater interest since Eusebius reveals some theological reasons for concurring. The contested phrase was 'before he was begotten, he was not' (πρὸ τοῦ γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν), which Eusebius interprets, incredibly, as referring to the time 'before his begetting according to the flesh' (πρὸ τῆς κατὰ σάρκα γεννήσεως)! The assertion that the forbidden formula had reference to the pre-incarnational existence of the Word must be taken as either a very confused interpretation of the council's statement or simply as a wilful misinterpretation. That all sides agreed to the existence of the Word before his Incarnation is obvious (even Eusebius here notes that it is 'the confession of all'). Arius as well as Alexander of Alexandria would have hastened to affirm this. The point of debate was, as the previous anathemas demonstrate, whether the Son or Word had a definite beginning (or 'begetting') before which he did not exist. The only participant at the council who is known to have held the position that 'begetting' only referred to the Incarnation was Marcellus of Ancyra, but it would be problematic to see Eusebius influenced by him, for reasons that will become clear in the next chapter.

[174] The discussion of Lietzmann, 'Symbolstudien', followed by Kelly, *Creeds*, 222–6, would seem to be correct at this point.

Even the following reference to a statement made by Constantine, while more to the point, does not clear away the confusion. For here, Eusebius quoted the emperor as stating that 'even according to [the Word's] divine begetting he existed before all ages, since before he was begotten "in actuality" (ἐνεργείᾳ), he was ungeneratedly in the Father "in potentiality" (δυνάμει)'. The reason for this, Constantine had argued, is that the Father is always the Father, thus the Son must have existed, but only 'potentially' within the Father. Once again, this would seem to be begging the question, and certainly would have appeased no one at the Council, since on one hand it fudges on the 'before he was begotten, he was not' (thus Arius and his followers could not agree); and on the other it concedes only a pre-existence in the 'potentiality' of the Father. Indeed, on this same argument, one could assert the 'potential' pre-existence of all created things, since 'as the Father is always the Father' so he is always King and always Saviour, as Eusebius notes. A further indication that Eusebius is here scrambling for some sort of defence of his signing the Nicene statement, is that the terms he now quotes, as we shall see later, come dangerously close to the Marcellan position against which he will fight so strongly.

In closing, it would seem that Eusebius here can be seen to have been in a precarious position. Having been so recently (indeed, at the beginning of the same Council) re-admitted to fellowship, he could not afford confrontation. And yet, he felt constrained to sign a statement concerning which he apparently had grave doubts, and for which he would have to give account to his congregation. The understanding which he purported to have received concerning the creed produced at Nicaea, and even more importantly, concerning the anathemas appended to that creed, shows the variety of interpretations which some of the participants of the council were willing to assign to it, regardless of how far-fetched these interpretations were. Whether the Eusebian interpretation was an accurate portrayal of how some of the other bishops at Nicaea understood the creed produced is debatable. What cannot be in doubt is that it demonstrates the diversity of opinion that came out of the Council. Vaggione has pointed out that the most serious problem emerging from the council was that it dealt with 'the disputed propositions,

but not with their systematic context'.[175] While this is true, it should be understood that the participants of the council desired to address systematic issues *through* the disputed propositions. The council did not want merely to keep Arius from using certain terms (or, more to the point, *force* him to use certain terms). Rather they wanted to *exclude Arius' theology*, which was understood to exclude the Son from the divine identity. While the precise meaning of *homoousios* at Nicaea continues to be a centre of debate, it cannot be denied that the concern was to emphasize the inclusion of the Son *within* the identity of the one true God.[176] As we have seen, the theological system of Eusebius of Caesarea, Asterius and Arius himself depended on a sharp ontological distinction between God and his Word and the explicit *exclusion* of the Word from the identity of the 'one, true God' (and, this *in spite of* obvious differences in the details of their

[175] Vaggione, *Eunomius*, 59.

[176] As has been shown by Bauckham, *God Crucified*. This concern for the inclusion of Christ within the identity of the One God was not a concern which first arose in the fourth century, but rather was an integral part of Christian reflection from the beginning. For modern views of divine identity, see R. W. Jenson, *The Triune Identity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); R. A. Krieg, *Story-Shaped Christology: Identifying Jesus Christ* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988); P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); K. J. Vanhoozer, 'Does the Trinity Belong in a Theology of Religions? On Angling in the Rubicon and the "Identity" of God', in *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*, K. J. Vanhoozer, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 41–71. One can accept the premise of an early inclusion of Jesus in the identity of God without necessarily accepting some of the conclusions drawn by these authors. In particular, the distinction and opposition posited between '*idem*' identity (an ontological 'sameness') and '*ipse*' identity (a continuity of 'self-hood') seems forced. Certainly it could be argued that, for the Fathers at least, God's 'personal identity of self-continuity' (Vanhoozer, 'Trinity', 47) is guaranteed by his 'ontological sameness'. Much of the recent writing on this topic has been hindered by the misunderstanding that the Fathers' insistence on 'ontological sameness' (or divine immutability) *necessarily* entailed a God who does not lovingly *act* toward his creation. In fact, the patristic assumption would seem to be that *only* an immutable God (*idem* identity) could be consistently loving and good (*ipse* identity). It would seem that the Fathers at the Nicene Council thought of the *identity* of the one God as implying both ontological sameness and continuity of the divine 'self-hood', if indeed they thought about these distinctions at all. The relationship between the ontological immutability of God and his consistent love toward the world has recently received in-depth attention in T. G. Weinandy, *Does God Change?* (Still River, Mass.: St. Bede's Publications, 1985) and T. G. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

theologies).[177] Whether, in hindsight, it seems wise to have used such a controversial and polysemous term as *homoousios*, coupled with no further attempt to resolve the larger theological issues (such as that of divine mediation) is a separate point. The profusion of opinions which later came from those who signed the Nicene formula (as we shall soon see in the debate between Eusebius and Marcellus) demonstrates that the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 should be seen as just the beginning of a long process through which the church would come to a general consensus on the way in which this truth (the identity of 'the one and only God' including both Father and Son) should properly be expressed. The debate between the 'Nicenes' and the 'Arians' can be seen as a struggle between 'exclusionists' and 'inclusionists' of the Word within the one true God. As we now turn to Eusebius' controversy with Marcellus of Ancyra shortly after Nicaea, the necessity and nature of divine mediation will continue to play a large role in that debate.

[177] While it would be difficult to reconstruct completely their theologies of mediation from the existing fragments, perhaps it would be appropriate to gather together here the points of Arius' and Asterius' writings that impinge on our study. Arius provided a convenient summary of his thoughts in his letter to Alexander of Alexandria. There he made clear that the 'one God' believed in by Christians ought to be identified solely with the Father (Opitz, 6.2). He described the Father, in distinction from the Son, as μόνος eight times in this short section and later as μονώτατος (6.4). He specifically excluded the Son from the Father's deity ('for he is not everlasting or co-everlasting or unbegotten with the Father, but 'thus he [the Father] is before all things as monad and source of all things'). And yet, the Son displays some continuity with the Father and can be properly called 'God' (in his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia). Arius also emphasized the continuity and discontinuity between the Son and the rest of creation that we have seen in Eusebius of Caesarea ('immutable and unchangeable perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures', Opitz, 6.2–3). Asterius, as well, unambiguously taught an 'exclusive monotheism' (Athanasius, *De Syn.* 18.6–7). He stressed the necessity of an intervening being between God and creation (Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* II.24). He apparently emphasized the Word's function of imaging God to the world and very definitely held to the inclusion of the Son within the created order, even though pre-eminent within it (*De Syn.* 19.1).

3

Mediation in Marcellus of Ancyra

It has often been stated that the starting-point and main impetus for the theologizing of Marcellus of Ancyra was a concern for strict monotheism. And yet, it is precisely this that does *not* differentiate him from other Christian writers of his time.[1] As we have seen, a large part of Eusebius' efforts in this direction were motivated by an attempt, successful or not, to show why what he believed to be the Christian doctrine was *not* identical to pagan polytheism. Arius and others were vitally concerned with protecting the impassibility and sovereignty of the one God. Indeed, it can be argued that all the fourth-century theologians during the time of the Arian controversy were concerned to formulate the faith in such a way as to safeguard the truth that God is one. The real distinctions between theological systems of the day came into play when the confession, 'God is One', was put alongside an equally important part of the Christian kerygma and liturgy, which was, 'Christ is Lord'.[2] How these two parts of the communal faith, that is the lordship of Christ and the oneness of God, were to be understood together formed the backdrop for the Christological controversies of the fourth century. As noted before, attempts to understand the connection of these two aspects of Christian faith can be grouped in two very broad categories—those who 'excluded' Christ from the identity of the one, true God and those

[1] Cf., for example, Hanson, *Search*, 235, where he sums up the theological motivation of Eustathius and Marcellus by stating that 'what they were really trying to achieve was monotheism'. While this is no doubt true, this is exactly what other Christian writers of the day were trying to achieve as well.

[2] As already noted, Bauckham, *God Crucified*, argues persuasively that the desire to include Jesus in the identity of God in a manner compatible with Jewish monotheism was at the heart of Christian thought from the beginning.

who 'included' him within that monotheistic identity. These two divergent opinions have been referred to here as 'inclusive monotheism' and 'exclusive monotheism' respectively. While, as we have already seen, Eusebius (as well as Arius, Asterius, Eusebius of Nicomedia and others) identified the one true God with the Father and then considered the Son as a hypostatically independent mediatorial link between God and the world (what we have referred to as 'exclusive monotheism'), Marcellus desired to locate the divine Word within the oneness of the Godhead, without jeopardizing the divine unity.

Besides desiring to protect Christian monotheism, he was motivated as well, it seems, by a desire to deny the need for an intervening mediator between God and his creation, such as his opponents had posited. As Hanson points out with regard to the Marcellan doctrine of the Logos, he desired 'to insist that God did not create through an intermediary *hypostasis*, but direct'.[3] This is most likely what Marcellus saw implied in the words of Paulinus that Christ was 'a more human God' (*ἀνθρωπικότερος θεός*),[4] that is, a God with whom humans could reasonably have discourse, as opposed to the Father. While it is uncertain that this was Paulinus' point in using the phrase, Marcellus' understanding would fit well with what we have seen of the Eusebian view of the impossibility of direct contact between God the Father and the created order. While Marcellus, as we shall see, only referred explicitly to mediation a few times, he strove to exclude the possibility of another being who would mediate God's actions of creation and providence. For Marcellus, God's action of creation and revelation through the Word have been just that—God's acts, unmediated by another being.

We shall begin our analysis by looking at Eusebius of Caesarea's portrait of Marcellus as one who threatened what he understood to be the Christian concept of divine mediation.[5] This will help us

[3] Hanson, *Search*, 226.

[4] Markus, Vinzent, *Markell von Ankyra: Die Fragmente, Der Brief an Julius von Rom* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), fr. 121. All references to fragments from Marcellus' polemical work will be translated from this edition.

[5] We shall also make occasional reference to Acacius of Caesarea (found in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 6–10) and Eusebius of Emesa (in E. M. Buytaert, ed., *L'héritage littéraire d'Eusèbe d'Émèse: étude critique et historique; textes* (Louvain: Bureaux de Muséon, 1949)), two other writers who saw Marcellus' understanding of divine mediation as a threat.

understand that the controversy immediately after the Nicene Council was one largely fought in the theological arena of divine mediation. We shall then turn to Marcellus. In order to understand his perspective of divine mediation, we must first examine his comprehension of the divine unity as a single πρόσωπον or ὑπόστασις. We will then investigate how this strict monoprosopic view of God impacted his conception of the Incarnation. Only then shall we be prepared to appreciate his exposition of the mediation of knowledge of the invisible divine nature as taking place through the visible image of God. We will limit our analysis at this time to his theology as expressed and preserved in the extant fragments of his work *Contra Asterium*. The principle reason for doing so is that our interest is in demonstrating how Marcellus first combated what he believed to be the heretical view of Eusebius and others, and this is contained in the fragments found in Eusebius' own works against Marcellus. Whether he later changed, or moderated, his views on these issues is only of secondary interest to our concerns at present.[6]

3.1. EUSEBIUS 'CONTRA MARCELLUM'

That Eusebius of Caesarea considered the true concept of the mediation of the Word to be endangered by Marcellus is beyond doubt.

[6] There seems to be still no scholarly consensus concerning other writings purported to come from Marcellus. Besides the fragments preserved by Eusebius, there is also his letter to Julius of Rome (found in Epiphanius, *Haer.*72.2–3), which is published along with the Marcellan fragments in Vinzent, *Markell von Ankyra*. In addition, the pseudo-Athanasian *Expositio Fidei*, *Epistula ad Liberium*, *Sermo Maior de Fide* and *De Incarnatione et Contra Arianos* have all been tentatively assigned to Marcellus, as well as Pseudo-Anthimus' *De Sancta Ecclesia* and the so-called *Epistula Liberii ad Athanasium*. The confusion of the situation is demonstrated by Grillmeier, who cites, with apparent agreement, Tetz's conclusion that the *De Incarnatione et Contra Arianos* is 'now no longer to be regarded as one of the works of Marcellus' and then goes on to base a large part of his presentation of Marcellus' Christology on that very document! (Grillmeier, note concerning Tetz's conclusion on p. 275, note 1). This in fact mars his entire presentation of Marcellus. Much of the discussion revolves around the relation between the theology expressed in these works and the theology presented in the fragments treated here, so it would seem a good starting-point in any case first to establish Marcellus' theology in his work against Asterius. Whether the theology of the other works is then that of Marcellus or of one of his followers is a question we shall have to put to one side for our purposes here.

Near the beginning of his first work against Marcellus, Eusebius described in detail how he understood this mediation to take place.[7] While this present chapter is largely concerned with Marcellus and his view of divine mediation, it will be worthwhile to consider this passage at length for two reasons. First, this will help set the stage of the polemical context within which Marcellus' statements should be considered.[8] Also, it will serve to show how Eusebius, far from softening his views on mediation after Nicaea, actually stated them more explicitly, detailing how the eternal mediation of the Word between God and creation necessitated certain conclusions about his ontology. Finally, it will help to spotlight the seeming paradox that, while Marcellus of Ancyra and Eusebius of Caesarea had obvious differences in how they conceived the relationship between God and his Word, there is an aspect of their concepts of divine mediation which they held in common. Both held that 'mediation', particularly as presented in terms of 'image', required a 'distancing' between the image and what it represents. For Eusebius, as we have seen, this 'distance' was located between God the Father and the Word and required that the 'one, true God' be identified with the Father alone. Soon it will become evident that Marcellus located this 'distance' within the economy of the Incarnation. We shall see that, contrary to expectations, it was actually this common aspect in their otherwise divergent views of divine mediation, which gave them difficulty in successfully combining into a theological whole the twin confessions, 'God is One' and 'Christ is Lord'.

In *Contra Marcellum* I.1.28–35, Eusebius attempted to show, against Marcellus, that the Logos was mediating before the time of the Incarnation, in the Mosaic Law. As we shall see shortly, Marcellus wanted to limit this mediation only to the Incarnation of the Logos. To argue against this, the Caesarean quoted Galatians 3:19, 20: 'What

[7] *Gegen Marcell, Über die kirchliche Theologie, Die Fragmente Marcells*, ed. E. Klostermann, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1905), *CM* I.1.7–9, pp. 7–8. All references to Eusebius' anti-Marcellan works will be taken from this edition and translated by the author. Eusebius' works will hereafter be referred to in abbreviated form: *Contra Marcellum* = *CM*, *De Ecclesiastica Theologia* I & II = *ET* I & II. Passages similar to the above citation can also be found at *ET* I.20.65 and *ET* II.21.3–4.

[8] Eusebius' comments, of course, came chronologically after those of Marcellus. Yet this still can prepare us to understand Marcellus better, as it shows how his original opponents understood his assertions, as well as how they attempted to answer them.

then? The law was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not for one, but God is one.' First it is important to grasp, said Eusebius, that here Paul is teaching the Galatians that there is only one God. Again, it is completely clear that Eusebius just as much as Marcellus wished to be considered a monotheist.[9] And beside the one God, there is also one mediator between God and the angels. In what follows, Eusebius obviously understood the passage to mean that the law was given to Moses through the angels, but that the angels received it from God, 'through the hands of a mediator'. Thus, here we have a clear example, Eusebius believed, of a mediation, previous to the Incarnation, between God and his creation, in this case the angels.

He then compared this with the passage in 1 Timothy 2:5 which proclaims, 'There is One God; and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.' As we shall see, this was a key passage for Marcellus' understanding of the mediation of Christ as limited to his time in the flesh. But the point, asserted Eusebius, is that Paul, in the former passage, is emphasizing the mediation between God and angels, while in the latter he is talking directly about the mediation between God and man. Thus in the latter he names the Word 'man' while in the former he simply refers to him as 'mediator'. There was, then, no reason to think that the Word's entire mediatorial function should be limited to the time of the Incarnation alone. Even more importantly for our concerns, Eusebius then went on to state that the apostle quite clearly differentiates the mediator from God by saying, 'A mediator is not for one (*ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν*), but God is one.' We should understand by this that 'neither God could be the mediator (for of whom would he become mediator?), nor the mediator himself be God'.

Then Eusebius made an essential and seemingly natural point—that necessarily a mediator must be one who stands between two others, neither of which can be equated with the mediator. In the

[9] This in spite of the fact that just previously (*CM* I.26–7), as many times in his writings, Eusebius conceded that the Son can be called 'God'. This is why he struggled to emphasize that there is only one 'true' God, from whose identity the Son must be excluded. Whether he succeeded in his endeavour to maintain monotheism is open to debate.

case of the Mosaic law, 'the Son of God, being in between [the angels and God], is said, on the one hand, to have received the law in his own hand from the Father, and on the other, to have appointed it through angels to the first people'. In terms of mediation, this is precisely the point that Eusebius felt was threatened by what he believed Marcellus to have propounded—i.e. the Logos as 'the mere anhypostatic word of God, existing one and the same with God (for he would then not be mediator)' (*ψιλὸς θεοῦ λόγος ἀνυπόστατος, ἓν καὶ ταὐτον τῷ θεῷ* [*οὐ γὰρ ἂν εἴη οὕτω γε μεσίτης*]). It is worthwhile quoting Eusebius at length at this point.

> Wherefore this one is not for one, but of necessity is in the middle of two (*δυεῖν δὲ μέσος ἐξ ἀνάγκης*), being neither of those of which he happens to be the middle (*οὐδέτερος ὢν ἐκείνων ὢν μέσος τυγχάνει*); so that he is neither to be considered the Most High God, nor one of the angels, but rather the middle and mediator of these (*τούτων δὲ μέσον καὶ μεσίτην*), when he mediates between God and angels. And again, when he becomes mediator (*μεσίτης*) between God and man, being between each rank (*μέσος ὢν ἑκατέρου τάγματος*), he is neither of the two for which he exists as mediator. He is not the One and Only God, nor a man like the other men. If neither of these, then who else than the only begotten Son of God, now having become mediator between men and God, but long ago existing for Moses as mediator between God and the angels?[10]

From this several conclusions can be made. First, Eusebius thought that there was sufficient evidence to affirm that the Son of God had filled the role of mediator before his Incarnation. As an aside, we should not take his statement that Christ 'became' mediator between God and men to signify that he believed that previous to that time the Word had not fulfilled this particular function between God and humanity. Not only would this contradict what we have already seen concerning the Eusebian view of divine mediation, it also does not sit well within this passage. For even though the Word mediated the law to the angels, the ultimate goal was to mediate God's law to men. Thus, the Son was mediating between men and God before, but it was natural to emphasize this point with a reference to the Incarnation. The point was that, as we have seen, the Son's mediatorial function

[10] *CM* I.1.33–4, p. 8.

is an eternal one between God and his creation (whether angels or men).

Second, the very role of mediator (μεσίτης) necessitated that he be in the middle (μέσος)[11], between the two extremes he mediates. The mediator is in the middle not merely positionally but also, at least in the case of divine mediation, 'in between' ontologically. Thus he cannot be identified with either of the two sides. If 'B' mediates between 'A' and 'C', then it is not possible that B would equal A or C. Note that this does not exclude the possibility of similarity between the mediator and those between whom he mediates, something that we have seen made up an important part of Eusebius' understanding of mediation. Here he simply emphasized the 'dissimilarity' because of what he perceived as Marcellus' complete identification of the Word with God the Father. It is problematic, to say the least, that Lienhard, in his generally very helpful book on Marcellus, states that for Eusebius, 'The Son is clearly on the side of the divine, and not an intermediary being between the divine and the created that participates in some way in each.'[12] While saying that the Son 'participated' in each side may or may not be the most felicitous way of describing how Eusebius envisioned the relationships, it is surely foreign to Eusebius' thought to impose upon him the idea of a very definite ontological 'line' of demarcation on the divine side of which is located the Son. The Caesarean considered there to be gradations of divinity, as did many of his contemporaries. However, when as a Christian monotheist he felt the need to clarify the identity of the 'one God', he

[11] The translation of μέσος is a little problematic. Eusebius does not actually write that the Son is 'in the middle'. But rather that he *is* the 'middle'. While this use of μέσος as signifying 'that which is in the middle', rather than the middle place itself makes perfect sense in ancient Greek (e.g. μέσος was used to describe the 'middle term' in logic), it seems less transparent in English. While it could have been translated more literally as 'middle being', I have chosen to translate it more idiomatically as the adjectival phrase 'in the middle'. The important point to make is that for Eusebius, ὁ μεσίτης had to be ὁ μέσος as well.

[12] J. T. Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth Century Theology* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 117. In a footnote he goes on to say, 'This is not what Eusebius means by "mediator", *mesites*. See C. Mar. I,I, 33 (8, 4–11), and the important sentence there on the Son's role as mediator.' The precise opposite would seem to be true as is shown in this passage, as well as in *ET* I.20.65, where he stated, with reference to Galatians 3:19, 20: 'You hear how individually calling God by name and naming the angels, he introduces between [them] the mediator (μεταξὺ τὸν μεσίτην εἰσάγει).'

did so in such a way as to exclude the Word. A corollary of this tenet was the mediatorial role that he gave to the Word, a role that explicitly denied the possibility of identity between God and his mediator. As we have seen clearly to this point, Eusebius did indeed envision the Son as mediator in the sense of one standing between two others, and he believed this to be necessarily so. In addition, this is nowhere expressed more clearly than in this very passage. As mediator between God and man, the Word 'is not the one and only God, nor a man like the other men'.

3.2. DIVINE UNITY IN MARCELLUS

Marcellus was horrified at what was being preached and written, not only by Eusebius of Caesarea, but also by a number of his contemporaries concerning the divine status of the Son vis-à-vis the Father. He reported how Paulinus had described Christ as 'a second God' or even as 'a more human God'.[13] Elsewhere he alluded to Asterius' apparent willingness to admit to the existence of two gods.[14] For Marcellus, the root cause of this obviously blasphemous ditheism was that these writers had 'divided the Word from God' and necessarily in the process had to name the Word another God.[15] The division of the Godhead into three *ὑποστάσεις*, thought Marcellus, made it impossible to unify them into one strict 'monad', unless they had started out that way.[16] And, if they had started out that way, how could the one divine God have been divided into three *ὑποστάσεις*? Marcellus' use of the term *ὑπόστασις* here, as well as elsewhere in his writings, seems to require that he conceived of it as meaning something like 'separate, existent beings'. In denying three divine *ὑποστάσεις* and demanding one within the Godhead, he was simply asserting that there was only one God and that the Word was included in that one God. Thus the Word is 'one and the same' as God.[17] As we shall see, for Marcellus *ὑπόστασις* was similar to, if not completely synonymous with, the term *πρόσωπον*, which was Marcellus' preferred term. Lienhard is probably right in saying that, at least 'in the dative

[13] Fr. 121. [14] Fr. 97. [15] Fr. 117. [16] Fr. 47. [17] Fr. 73.

form, *hypostasei*, *hypostasis* means the reality behind the *prosopon*'.[18] The point that Marcellus seemed to want to make, in any case, was that there was only one 'who' in God. Logan's suggestion that 'while rejecting three hypostases [Marcellus] can accept three distinct (but not separate) prosopa in God' could possibly indicate a later change in the Ancyran's theology.[19] At the time of the *Contra Asterium*, at any rate, a multiplicity of divine ὑποστάσεις (or πρόσωπα) would have signified for him competing minds and wills within the Godhead, as will become clearer later when we examine Marcellus' view of the Incarnation.

An example of this understanding comes out clearly in his challenge to his opponents to answer a question about the divine assertion 'I am he who is' (ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὤν).[20] Marcellus wanted his opponents to answer the question, 'Who is saying this?'[21] Since they proposed two (or more) ὑποστάσεις, then they had to answer either the Son or the Father. Both the pronoun 'I' (ἐγώ) and the verb 'am' (εἰμι) together pointed to one πρόσωπον, one person.[22] If it were the Father, then this would run against the view, held by Eusebius and many others, that the Father spoke in the Old Testament mediated by his Son. If it were

[18] Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 54.

[19] A. H. B. Logan, 'Marcellus of Ancyra (Pseudo-Anthimus): On the Holy Church: Text, Translation and Commentary', *Journal of Theological Studies* 51 (2000), 99. The occasion for this suggestion is in the commentary on the phrase καί πάλιν ἡ προφητεία ὡς ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρος πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν (*Sancta Ecclesia* 2). Another possibility is that Marcellus allowed 'prosopic' independence to the Son but not to the Word even at the late date of the 'Holy Church', as we shall argue later was the case at the time he penned *Contra Asterium*.

[20] Fr. 85, quoting Exodus 3:14.

[21] Although Hanson apparently has Asterius originally asking this question, it would make more sense in the context to understand it as a challenge from Marcellus to Asterius.

[22] Fr. 97. Πρόσωπον, as we have mentioned, was Marcellus' preferred way of referring to the divine person. It carried with it the concept of an independent existing personal being, much like ὑπόστασις. If there was a difference for Marcellus, it would seem to be that the ὑπόστασις was the independent existing being, while πρόσωπον was that being acting or speaking. However, it would be wrong to exaggerate this difference in Marcellus too strongly. Also, it would seem that Marcellus did not make a difference between ὑπόστασις and οὐσία in his theology. In fact, there is no evidence that he ever used the latter term in a positive sense at all, using it nine times in total (twice each in 74, 113, 116 and once each in 114, 117, 120) in the extant fragments, and always with reference to his opponents. In those occurrences, it is obvious that he understood it as synonymous with ὑπόστασις.

the Son, then he would be wrongly claiming supreme existence, since only God the Father, according to his opponents, could be described as ὁ ὤν. His opponents had got into trouble because they had wrongly separated the Word of God from God, something that simply could not be done. This was obviously God speaking, and therefore it was one person, one 'who' who was speaking, one ὑπόστασις.

A comment seems in order at this point about the human analogy as used by Marcellus. In the above example, he stated that the confusion that resulted for his opponents stemmed from confusion about the human flesh which the Word took on and on account of which the Father calls him Son. Marcellus then went on to say that his opponent thus wrongly 'separates the Son of God from the Father, as he would separate some son of man from his natural father'.[23] It is important to note that Marcellus did *not* say that this way of speaking of the Godhead was merely figurative and should not be taken literally, something that would have been very useful at this point. In fact, we shall see again and again that for Marcellus, these 'human' ways of speaking of God should be taken at face value. The problem he saw with his opponents is that they had made the *wrong* spiritual application of the literal interpretation of the Father begetting the Son. As we shall see later, Marcellus did believe that one could understand the Father as being separate from the Son. It simply was important to understand that this 'separation' could only have occurred when the 'sonship' occurred, and that, for Marcellus, was only at the Incarnation.

Returning to Marcellus' question concerning who was speaking in the divine utterances of the Old Testament, Eusebius' response—that it was the Father speaking, but through the Son—solved nothing for Marcellus, for he thought he could make the challenge even more difficult for those who proposed a hypostatic independence to the Son. Marcellus pointed out Isaiah 44:6, where God was recorded as saying, 'I am the First and I am after these things; Besides me there is no God.'[24] Who is saying this, if we are to divide the Godhead into Father and Son? For this statement, with its firm claim to uniqueness, was without a doubt coming from one πρόσωπον. It is difficult to see how anyone could have answered this as the Father

[23] Fr. 85. [24] Fr. 97.

speaking through the Son, if the Father alone was considered the one true God and yet the Son as well could be called God. The problem would seem especially acute if one considered the Father and Son two hypostatically independent beings, as did Eusebius. Facing clear evidence that his opponents had spoken of the Son as a 'second God', Marcellus probably felt that here he had an unbeatable argument.

If, as we have seen, Marcellus wanted to maintain a strict monoprosopic view of God, and yet keep the Word of God within the Godhead (i.e. with no independent hypostatic existence of the Word), how did he handle the appearance of the Word of God and its role in creation? Marcellus stated that before the making of everything, there was silence (*ἡσυχία*), since the Word was still within God.[25] He questioned whether Asterius really believed that God was the Maker of everything, since this meant that God alone exists forever, never receiving a beginning, and that all other things were originated by him and came into being from nothing (*τὰ δὲ γεγενῆσθαί τε ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γεγενῆσθαι*). Here we have a clear description of the *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* as the dividing line between the created order and God himself, while avoiding the confusion that we saw in Eusebius of Caesarea between everything being *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* (in terms of pre-existent matter) and being *ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ* (in terms of God as the ultimate cause of all). Creation is both 'from nothing' (in terms of previously existing material) and 'by God' (in terms of the one who made it). We have also seen how over time, Eusebius slowly came to see, as others had seen before him, that *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* was an important 'boundary' between the created order and God. It is tempting to conjecture that it was in his polemics against Marcellus that he finally became convinced of this.

Marcellus arrived at one of the most difficult parts of his theology when he described the creation. As we have seen, he would not endanger the absolute unity of God, conceived of in personal terms (i.e. one *prosopon*, one 'who'), so he had to be very careful in describing the action of the divine Word when God came out of his 'silence' so as not to imply a real division from one *prosopon* to two.

[25] Fr. 76.

When the almighty God planned ahead to make all things in heaven and upon the earth, the genesis of the cosmos required active power (ἐνεργείας ἡ τοῦ κόσμου γένεσις ἐδεῖτο δραστικῆς), and on account of this, there being nothing beside God (for it is confessed that all was originated by him), then the Word going out became the Maker of the cosmos.[26]

It is very difficult to understand exactly what Marcellus had in mind by this 'active power' (ἐνέργεια δραστική). In another fragment,[27] Marcellus clarified himself a bit by comparing the first part of John 1:1 ('In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God') with 1 Corinthians 8:6 ('Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.') Marcellus began with the first part of the Johannine prologue—'In the beginning was the Word'—and asserted that this was with reference to the Word existing 'in potentiality' (δυνάμει) within the Father. This accorded with the Pauline verse where there was mentioned the 'One God, from whom are all things'. Then, when John went on to say, 'and the Word was with God', this described the Word existing 'in activity' (ἐνεργείᾳ) with God. This then would go with the part of the Corinthian passage that stated that there is 'one Lord, through whom are all things'. In this way, Marcellus wanted to describe the activity of the Word of God without 'dividing the Godhead'.

It might be tempting to see in this Marcellan theory of creation a fairly simple use of the Aristotelian distinctions of 'potentiality' (δύναμις) and 'actuality' (ἐνέργεια). However, there are some serious reasons for rejecting this. Possibly the most obvious is that in the extant fragments of *Contra Asterium* Marcellus never mentioned Aristotle and most of his references to Greek philosophical ideas were extremely negative.[28] Thus, if there were an Aristotelian background

[26] Fr. 110. [27] Fr. 70.

[28] Cf. e.g. ibid., fr. 22 and 118. If Logan's convincing argument for the Marcellan authorship of *De sancta ecclesia* (A. H. B. Logan, 'Marcellus of Ancyra and Anti-Arian Polemic', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1987), 189–97)—following M. Richard, 'Un opuscule méconnu de Marcel évêque d'Ancyre', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 6 (1949), 5–28; and against R. P. C. Hanson, 'The Date and Authorship of Pseudo-Anthimus De Sancta Ecclesia', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 83, 9 (1983), 251–4—is accepted, then the development of Marcellus' heresiology so depicted there, finding Greek philosophical roots for all heresies and mentioning Aristotle by name, enhances the difficulty of seriously considering any conscious 'Aristotelian' interpretation of

to the ideas here, it would seem likely that Marcellus himself was unaware of it. In addition, this view would demand that Marcellus saw unactualized potential within the Godhead. This is quite difficult to believe, considering that 'fully actualized' was one of the norms for descriptions of deity in the ancient world, both Christian and pagan.[29] Also, considering that Aristotle introduced the concepts of 'potentiality' and 'actuality' in part to describe change and growth, this would seem to imply change within the Godhead, again something difficult to believe that a Christian theologian of the fourth century would contemplate. It would also mean, for Marcellus, an ultimate return of the Godhead from actuality to mere potentiality at the end, since he believed that the Word would at some point in the future return back into God. All of these may be true difficulties for the Marcellan theory, no matter what the provenance. However, it makes it impossible to believe that he was deliberately borrowing from Aristotle. In addition, the use of the term *ἐνεργείᾳ μονῇ* to denote that the separation between the Godhead and his Word in the Incarnation was only apparent[30] seems to warrant the conclusion that

these terms. For the text, see A. H. B. Logan, 'Marcellus of Ancyra (Pseudo-Anthimus): On the Holy Church: Text, Translation and Commentary', *Journal of Theological Studies* 51 (2000), 81–112.

[29] Whether the terms could be called Aristotelian is debatable, but the application of the terms to God is certainly *not* Aristotelian, for whom God *was ἐνέργεια* (cf. *Metaphysica* VII.7, 1072b13–30), against R. Hübner, 'Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra', in *Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Gregoire de Nysse*, Actes du Colloque de Chevetogne (22–26 Sept. 1969), M. Harl, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 199–229. See the helpful discussions in T. Zahn, *Marcellus von Ancyra: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie* (Gotha, 1867); and M. Tetz, 'Markellianer und Athanasios von Alexandrien: Dies markellianische Expositio fidei ad Athanasium des Diakons Eugenios von Ankyra', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64 (1973), 75–121. As Edwards writes, Aristotle's God was 'free from all tincture of potentiality' (Edwards, *Origen Against Plato*, 51). It also should be noted that these distinctions were not simply and exclusively Aristotelian, but had spread out to many Middle Platonic philosophers and to Neoplatonism, as shown by M. Alexandre, 'L'exégèse de Gen. 1.1–2a dans l'In Hexaemeron de Grégoire de Nysse', in *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie: zweites internationales Kolloquium über Gregor von Nyssa*, Freckenhorst bei Münster 18–23 September, H. Dörrie, M. Altenburger and U. Schramm, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 159–92. While Plotinus states that 'the One' contains all things potentially in itself in an undifferentiated state (*Enneads* V.2.1; V.3.15), this is to describe how the potentiality of all things are located within the One, not that the One has unactualized potentiality within itself.

[30] As we shall discover below. Cf. frs. 73, 87, 104, 105.

by the δύναμις–ἐνέργεια distinction, Marcellus was merely denoting the Word at rest within God, on one hand, and the Word in action in the world, on the other; strongly reminiscent of the differentiation made by Theophilus of Antioch with the terms λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and λόγος προφόρικος, borrowed from Stoicism.[31] The most striking fourth-century parallel to Marcellus' use of these terms to describe the relationship of the Word to God is the Emperor Constantine's words at the Council of Nicaea as reported by Eusebius of Caesarea, as we have already seen. It may be that we have here evidence of the influence of Marcellus at that synod.

Marcellus described this 'proceeding' of the Word for creation by comparing it to a human artist.[32] When God said, 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness,' there was, of course, no other God with whom he could discuss the creation. This was to be understood in the same way that a sculptor, while imagining and planning his future sculpture in his mind, 'encourages himself as if speaking to another, "come, let's work, come let's form a statue" '. It was the same for God in the creation.

It is interesting to note that Marcellus has taken the human analogy (a man and his word) and taken it as a literal description of what happens within the Godhead. Just as a man can speak to himself, but his words have no independent existence, so it is with God and his Word. Not just in creation, but at every step of self-disclosure, God's Word is analogous to our own. Of course, Marcellus confirmed that when God the Father spoke to Moses, he spoke through his Word. But it is the same with us. 'For everything which we would wish according to our ability to say and to do, we do through our word.'[33] Nor does this compromise the oneness of God, or of ourselves, 'for the word is one and the same with the man, and it separates nothing except by the

[31] *To Autolycus* 2.10; 2.22. W. G. Gericke, *Marcell von Ancyra: Der Logos-Christologe und Biblizist, Sein Verhaltnis zur antiochenischen Theologie und zum Neuen Testament* (Halle: Akademischer Verlag, 1940); and Edwards, *Origen Against Plato*, 66; have shown that while the terminology may be Stoic, Theophilus' theology is not. As Gericke has stated, there was for Marcellus as well no sharp distinction: 'daβ der λόγος als προφόρικος doch zugleich ἐνδιάθετος im Vater bleibt: Gott geht seines Wortes nicht verlustig, wenn er es aussendet'.

[32] Fr. 98. [33] Fr. 89.

mere action of the deed' (*μόνῃ τῇ τῆς πράξεως ἐνεργείᾳ*).[34] Thus, by denying the divine Logos any independent hypostatic, or personal, existence, Marcellus believed that he had affirmed monotheism in a way consistent with scripture and human reason. The question, however, is how this view of monotheism affected the manner in which Marcellus treated the Incarnation and the mediation of the knowledge of God through Christ.

3.3. THE INCARNATION IN MARCELLUS

3.3.1. God and His Word

As we move deeper into Marcellus' writings on the Incarnation, perhaps it would be wise to make a methodological note on how we shall proceed. As we are especially interested in understanding the Marcellan view of mediation, that is how God is seen and known through Jesus Christ, we shall be focusing on *functional* aspects, notably as expressed in Marcellus' account of the image of God. Because of this functional emphasis, we shall spend less time on issues of the *ontology* of the Incarnate Word. In particular, the theme of the exact ontological link between the divine Word and the human flesh in Christ, though doubtless of great interest, will not be answered with any degree of satisfactory clarity. In part, this is unavoidable since Marcellus, in the extant fragments of his work, has not left anything approaching clearness on the issue. However, we should also realize that Marcellus has given a very unmistakable description of the *function* of an image, which can enlighten us as to his probable view of the ontology of Jesus Christ. We shall mention the possible ontological inferences at the appropriate moment. Nevertheless, it should be understood that primarily we are occupied with functional concepts as they relate to the Incarnation and how these concepts illuminate the early post-Nicene debate. It is, as has been stated, the contention of this study that, while functional and ontological aspects

[34] Fr. 87. It should be noted in passing that here Marcellus uses the phrase *μόνῃ ἐνεργείᾳ* to show that the separation of a man and his word is simply apparent, not real. This phrase, used in the same way, will take on even greater significance later for our understanding of the Marcellan concept of the Incarnation.

are necessarily interrelated, an overriding concern of the participants of this debate was for the function of Jesus Christ as mediator.

It is usual in descriptions of Marcellus' theology to state that he envisioned an original Monad which expanded into a Dyad, then into a Triad; and that this Triad would eventually contract once again back into a Monad at the end of time.[35] While Marcellus used the word 'expand' (πλατύνω) to describe the activity of the Word, he did so only three times and then with careful qualifications to avoid the implication that the Godhead was somehow divided.[36] He nowhere used the term 'Dyad' and used the term 'Triad' only three times, generally in response to his opponents. For this reason, Lienhard correctly says, 'to make the expansion of the Monad into a Triad the keystone of Marcellus' thought is to distort his theology'.[37] It is probably truer to Marcellus to speak of an undivided Monad which during creation and redemption appeared to be divided, but in reality remained a strict unity.

The first stage in Marcellus' approach to the Incarnation is perhaps the most misunderstood part of his theology—the differentiation of the Word, as Word, from the Son. For example, Lienhard confuses the Marcellan distinction between Son and Word when he states that Marcellus 'argues that Ex. 3:14 must be the words of Father and Son'.[38] But this would have been an impossibility for Marcellus—the Son only came into existence, was 'begotten', at the time of the Incarnation. And, again, it can hardly help when Hanson, treating the theology of Marcellus and Photinus, states that they 'favoured the analogy of a man and his thought for the relation of the Father to the Son', and then a few lines later adds, 'like the early Marcellus, [Photinus] distinguished sharply the Son from the Father'.[39] The point is that the former analogy (a man and his thoughts) was how Marcellus envisioned the relation between God and his *Word*, while the latter 'sharp distinction' described the difference between God and his *Son*. That these were mutually exclusive descriptions (the one being a strong statement of unity in one ὑπόστασις, while the other is just as strong in asserting two independent ὑποστάσεις) was

[35] Cf., for example, K. Seibt, *Die Theologie des Markell von Ankyra* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 336.
[36] Frs. 48, 73. [37] Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 57. [38] Ibid., 54.
[39] Hanson, *Search*, 237.

to have, as we shall see, interesting ramifications for his view of the Incarnation.

Marcellus began the distinction between the Word of God and the Son of God by noting that there was no mention of begetting in the description of the Word existing in the beginning with God.[40] He complains of how Asterius had mixed his metaphors, putting talk of 'the word' and 'proceeding' with that of 'begetting'.

> For it is customary to allow some kind of meaning for those who hear with human understanding; not to say that the word was what proceeded from him and that this also was the true manner of begetting, but rather that simply the Son alone [was begotten].[41]

Marcellus was driven here by a desire to take the analogies of the relationships between God and Christ in the most literally 'human' terms allowable. A word proceeding and a son being begotten were demonstrably different events (with distinctive ensuing relationships) in the human world. If God's revelation was to be understandable to humans, then these processes had to be understood in terms of their human analogies. On the one hand, the Word proceeded from God, but without any true hypostatic separation or independence; on the other hand, the Son was begotten from the Father, with all the ensuing independence that implied in the human world. Hence, the 'proceeding' of the Word and the 'begetting' of the Son had to be different events in the divine economy. At least, this seems to be Marcellus' argument here.

From this, Marcellus proceeded to differentiate two economies of salvific history: the first economy was from creation to the Incarnation, when the Word alone existed within God, with no hypostatic independence; the second economy began with the Incarnation, which was the begetting of the Son.[42] Because of this separation of history into two economies, one of the Word and the other of the Son, Marcellus felt himself constrained to limit all passages touching on sonship, being begotten or created, to the second economy, to that of

[40] Fr. 71, with reference to John 1:1.

[41] Fr. 66. *Τὸ γὰρ μὴ λόγον εἶναι φῆσαι τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ προελθόντα καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν τῆς γεννήσεως ἀληθῆ τρόπον, ἀλλ' ἁπλῶς υἱὸν μόνον, ἔμφασίν τινα τοῖς ἀκούουσιν ἀνθρωπίνης ὄψεως παρέχειν εἴωθεν.*

[42] Frs. 5 and 7.

the Incarnation. Thus, he interpreted Proverbs 8:22, 'the Lord created me, a beginning of his ways', as a reference to God uniting his Word to human flesh through the Virgin Mary.[43] This could not refer to the beginning of deity (ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς θεότητος—a concept for which Marcellus had no time, since God had no beginning), but rather to the begetting of the Son. It should be noted here that for Marcellus, the 'divinity' (θεότης) could in no way be assigned a beginning. Marcellus consistently followed through with this exegetical principle in other passages as well.[44]

Not only was Son an inappropriate name for the pre-incarnate Word, but so was any other christological title.

> From all quarters it is evident that no other name is suitable to the eternality of the Word than this which the most holy disciple and apostle of God, John, used in the beginning of his Gospel. For since after the taking on of flesh he is both preached Christ and Jesus; and named Life, Way, Day, Resurrection, Door, Bread, etc. by the divine scriptures; it is not fitting beside these for us to ignore the first name, which was Word. For on account of this also the most holy evangelist and disciple of the Lord, having been greatly awakened by the Spirit, and making mention of the beginning from above and of nothing more recent, said, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God', in order to show that, if there is a new and more recent name, this exists for him from the new and recent economy according to the flesh.[45]

For Marcellus, the primary name (τὸ πρῶτον ὄνομα), the name which is most fitting as a reference to the Word as it exists in itself, was simply 'Word'. This was probably because the other names seemed to Marcellus to suggest the kind of hypostatic independence which he was unwilling to ascribe to the eternal Word. What is of great interest for our thesis is that all the names which suggested any kind of mediatorial function in the salvation of humans, such as Life and

[43] Fr. 26. Athanasius shared this interpretation with Marcellus (see especially *Contra Arianos* II.18–82). Others of the fourth century who proposed similar views were Eustathius of Antioch (in Theodoret, *Dial.* I.90), Gregory of Nazianzus (*Orat.* XXX.2), Gregory of Nyssa (*con. Eun.*III.584b), Didymus the Blind (*De Trin.*III.816) and ps. Basil (*Adv. Eun.*IV.704).

[44] Cf. also for Proverbs 8:22, frs. 27–9; for Proverbs 8:24, fr. 42; and for Colossians 1:15, frs. 12–15.

[45] Fr. 3. Cf. also fr. 8.

Way and others, were then all subsumed within the economy of the incarnated Word.[46]

It is clear that Marcellus distanced himself from any hint that the Word, as Word, acted as any kind of mediator between God and men. This mediation took place completely within the economy 'according to the flesh'. We shall have to wait until we have looked at the relationship between the Word and the man Jesus Christ as Marcellus envisioned it, before we are in a position to analyse fully how he saw this mediation taking place. In addition, we shall enquire whether divine mediation required, for Marcellus, a being hypostatically separate from God the Father. We have seen how Eusebius held that a mediator could not be ontologically identical to either of the two sides between which it mediates. Hence, because of the function that he envisioned for the mediator, he placed ontological 'distance' between God the Father and his mediating Word. Marcellus, in contrast, will posit this 'distance' within the Incarnation for similar functional reasons of mediation. Whether this was a 'necessary' distancing for Marcellus is an issue we shall address later.

The first question we must raise with relation to the Marcellan view of the incarnational mediation is: what was the relationship between the Word and God during this time? We should expect, having come this far in our analysis, to see no division or separation between God and his Word. This was the very thing he had accused his opponents of doing. And yet, there seems to be a 'distancing' between God and the man Jesus Christ; a distance, in fact, so great that Marcellus even saw room for disagreement between them, as we shall see later. How did Marcellus resolve this?

The terms he used in general to describe the Incarnation were unexceptional. God 'joined together' (*συνῆψεν*) the man with his own Word.[47] Through the Virgin, he 'assumed' (*ἀναλαβεῖν*) human flesh, 'uniting what was his own with it' (*ταύτῃ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἑνώσας*).[48] All of these were commonplaces of the time and he did not hesitate to repeat them. However, when he desired to analyse more deeply what took place in the Incarnation, a slightly different picture developed.

[46] Seibt, *Theologie*, shows how unique Marcellus was on this point by comparing him with Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Athanasius and Eustathius.

[47] Fr. 4. [48] Fr. 11 and often elsewhere.

At this level, he believed that there were two ways of examining Christ. As he explained,

> If the examination would be only of the spirit, it would manifest reasonably that the Word is one and the same with God. If, however, the addition to the saviour according to the flesh were examined, the Godhead *seems* to have been expanded *only in activity*, so that, reasonably, the Monad is *really undivided*.[49]

There are a couple of observations to be made. First, there is no reason for taking the view that Marcellus thought the Word to have been actually separated from God the Father at any time, even during the Incarnation. For the point of this passage is that if we consider the spiritual reality[50] of what took place in the Incarnation, we should understand that the Word continues 'one and the same' with God. However, when we turn our gaze to the physical human being, 'the addition according to the flesh' (ἡ κατὰ σάρκα προσθήκη), the Godhead seems (δοκεῖ) to have expanded or broadened (πλατύνεσθαι). However, this is an appearance from divine activity alone (ἐνεργείᾳ μόνῃ). That the phrase ἐνεργείᾳ μόνῃ carried the connotation of an apparent separation that is not real is clear from the concluding phrase. Marcellus, as we can recall, even used this phrase to describe the merely apparent separation of a human and

[49] Fr. 73. The same basic point is made as well in fragments 104 and 105. Hanson, 228, has translated this fragment with the wrong nuance, in this author's opinion. He softens Marcellus' conclusion unnecessarily, especially by the translation of εἰκότως as 'in all likelihood'. While this is an acceptable meaning for the term on occasion, it certainly seems inappropriate in this context. Marcellus is not stating that it is *likely* that the Godhead is indivisible, but rather that it is *reasonable* (εἰκότως) that the Godhead is *really* (ὅττως) indivisible. If Marcellus were simply making a suggestion concerning the indivisibility of the Godhead, he certainly could have been less polemic about it! In reality, the view expressed here is one about which he felt significantly more strongly than Hanson's translation would suggest.

[50] This is the import of the phrase ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐξέτασις. This may imply, as some have thought, that for Marcellus the Spirit was merely the impersonal power of God. Indeed, it seems that it would be hard to escape this conclusion, considering Marcellus' strong miahypostatic monotheism. That the spiritual/physical contrast cannot refer to the soul of the Incarnate Word as opposed to his body is plain from the following description of the inner reality (and independence from God) of the man Jesus.

his word.[51] Thus, the *spiritual* reality of the Incarnation was that the Word remained completely identical ('one and the same') to God, whilst the *physical* appearance, because of the divine action, was that of separation, or at least of a 'widening' of the Godhead. Hanson comes close but fails to see precisely what Marcellus was doing here when he says, 'It is only by his activity that the *Logos* is separate from the Father during the Incarnation.'[52] It would be more accurate to state that Marcellus thought that it was only by his activity that the Logos *seemed* to be separate from the Father during the Incarnation. Though it seems a small point, it is a difference that was important for Marcellus and had, as we shall see shortly, large implications for his view of the Incarnation.

3.3.2. Word and Flesh

If, then, the separation between the divine Word and God the Father was more apparent than real, what of the relationship between God and the man Jesus Christ? Here we come to one of the most surprising aspects of Marcellus' theology, one that will have crucial consequences for his view of the mediation of the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ.

An influential view, first put forward by Gericke, holds that the divine Word was the determining subject behind most if not all the human acts of Christ.[53] This has also led to the assertion that Marcellus did not believe there to be a human soul in Christ. Since Gericke's original study, many have followed his lead.[54] A number of things ought to be mentioned in this regard. First, at times the qualified manner in which Gericke first presented his theory is not

[51] In fact, this phrase is used several times (frs. 87, 104 and 105, for example) by Marcellus, as we have noted, and each time it is in the context of an apparent happening behind which lies another, truer reality.

[52] Hanson, *Search*, 228.

[53] W. G. Gericke, *Marcell von Ancyra: Der Logos-Christologe und Biblizist, Sein Verhaltnis zur antiochenischen Theologie und zum Neuen Testament* (Halle: Akademischer Verlag, 1940).

[54] For example, T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), bases much of his analysis of Marcellan Christology on Gericke's thesis.

noted.[55] Second, it should be noted that Gericke's study is weakened in general by the contrived opposition of 'heno-prosopic' and 'dyo-prosopic' Christologies, both of which he proposed to find within Marcellus.[56] Third, some of Gericke's reasons for his conclusion have been accepted too uncritically. For example, to prove that the Logos was *a* determining subject (and received human titles) in the historical Jesus does not necessarily confirm the thesis that he was the *only* or even the *predominant* subject.[57] Indeed, some of Gericke's justification for his conclusion simply go to prove that Marcellus held to a strict non-identity of the Word and the humanity of Christ, as we shall see below.[58]

But in addition, Gericke's account seems to ignore the real complexity of the evidence concerning Marcellus' view of the incarnate Word. Perhaps the best way of demonstrating this would be by quoting at length from one of the more difficult fragments.

> If therefore he says these things: 'I come out of the Father and I have come', and again, 'The Word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me'; it is clearly reasonable that he also said 'The Father in me and I in the Father' in order that as the Word in the Father he was saying this, and the Father in the Word, for the Word is the power of God. For a trustworthy witness has said he is 'power of God and wisdom of God'. It is not 'on account of the exact agreement in all words and deeds', as Asterius says, that the Saviour states, 'I and the Father are one', but because it is impossible either for the Word to be divided from God, or God from his own Word. Since if Asterius thinks that the Saviour said this on account of agreement in everything, it is necessary to remind him how sometimes one

[55] 'Thus for Marcellus the Logos is *to a large extent* the determining subject in the historical Jesus' [emphasis mine] (Gericke, *Marcell von Ancyra*, 153). It should be noted, though, that Gericke himself then went further than his evidence in suggesting the lack of a human soul in the Marcellan Christ.

[56] This is due to his insistence on using the theological and exegetical templates of the 'Antiochene' school in his analysis of Marcellus. See the comments apropos in Hanson, *Search*, 229.

[57] Of Gericke's fifteen reasons, the first eight are of this sort. See Gericke, *Marcell von Ancyra*, 154ff.

[58] Reasons 9 to 11 (ibid.), which all stress the role of the Logos *rather* than the historical Jesus. This would tend to support the view that the Logos was not to be identified with the historical Jesus, not that the Logos was the determining subject within the historical Jesus. In addition, some of the fragments cited by Gericke (e.g. 3, 31, 42, 93, 124, 126) would seem to be beside the point. For example, fr. 124 refers to Genesis, not the Incarnation.

sees disagreement according to what is seen (*κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον*). For thus the sayings teach us. For what sort of agreement is this in the time of suffering when he says, 'Father, if possible, let this cup pass from me', adding also, 'yet not my will, but as you will'. For he was not agreeing when he said first, 'Let this cup pass from me', but there really seems to be no agreement either in the addition, for he says, 'not my will, but yours be done, Father'. You hear how the letter demonstrates disagreement of the one willing according to what is seen (*κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον*). For that the Father willed is apparent because what he willed happened. But that the Son did not will it is manifest from the things he asked for. And again, he said, 'I do not seek my will, but the will of the Father who sent me'. How then, can it be on account of agreement in everything that the Saviour said 'I and the Father are one'?[59]

Although Marcellus' style in this passage (and in the following fr. 75) is somewhat confused and meandering, it would seem that there are several cogent points to be mentioned for our present discussion. First, it should be kept in mind that Marcellus is arguing against Asterius' position that the 'oneness' of the Father and Son is one of agreement, a unity that can be conceived of as existing between two hypostatically independent beings. In countering this, Marcellus wanted to argue two different points. The first was that, since the Word is never really divided from the Father, the concept of 'agreement' is an inappropriate one for describing the relationship between God and his Word. The second, rather surprisingly, is that where there can be seen two separate 'hypostases' (between the Father and the Son), there was no 'complete agreement in word and deed'. This argument required for Marcellus the radical disjunction of the Word and the Son; the former being included within the single divine *prosopon*, the latter demonstrating marked independence from the Father. We shall now look at how Marcellus distinguished between two types of utterances made by Christ. Then we shall observe how Marcellus applied this distinction in his reply to Asterius' 'unity of agreement'.

It seems apparent that Marcellus distinguished between two kinds of statements made by Christ, those 'regarding (*ἀποβλέπων*) the man whom he took on' and those 'regarding the Word that proceeded from the Father'.[60] The former is also referred to as 'according to what is

[59] Fr. 74. [60] Fr. 75.

seen' (*κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον*). These two types of statements not only referred to different aspects of Christ (the 'human' and the 'divine'), but also described two very different relationships vis-à-vis the Father. Thus, when he said, 'The Word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me', it would be absurd to think that this was the Word of God himself speaking, but rather the human being referring to the divine Word. When the Saviour (the human being?) spoke anything that implied a close union with the Father ('All that the Father has is mine'), it showed that 'he was not master of his own word, but the Father was' (*ἐν δὲ τῷ φάσκειν μηδὲ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ λόγου κύριον εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτου τὸν πατέρα*).[61] And yet, the fact that at times the 'humanity' was 'master of its own word' was evident, as we shall see below, by the disagreement shown between the Father and Son. There were times when the human, as a hypostasis separated from the hypostasis of the Father, was speaking his own words and this can be seen by the manner in which he spoke. Thus Marcellus can speak of the Father and Son 'having been distinguished into two separate hypostases' (*εἰς δύο ὑποστάσεις διῃρημένους*) and that 'the Father separated the things proper to the Son' (*ἀφαιρεῖσθαι τὸν πατέρα τὰ ἴδια τοῦ παιδός*), both from fr. 74. That Marcellus could envision something 'proper' to the Son that did not belong to the Father shows a distinction between them which was unavailable in the Marcellan system between God and his Word.

On the other hand, when he stated, 'The Father in me and I in the Father', it is clear that 'as the Word in the Father he was saying it, and the Father in the Word'. And Marcellus left no doubt what was meant by 'the Word in the Father', for 'it is impossible for the Word to be divided from God, or God from his Word'. For the divine Word to speak was the same as for the Father to speak, as is intimated by the quotation above.

The disjunction between the Word and the flesh of Christ becomes even more evident when we investigate how he responded to Asterius' claim that the unity of the Father and the Son was that of 'agreement' (*συμφωνία*). First, as we can imagine, Marcellus thought that Asterius' 'unity of agreement' said too little about the relationship between God and his divine Word. As stated above, when Christ said, 'The

[61] Ibid.

Father in me, and I in the Father' (John 10:38), argued Marcellus, he was speaking *qua* the eternal Word within God.[62] The Word was in God and God was in the Word, because 'he is the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1:24).

However, for Marcellus the concept of agreement seemed to necessitate the existence of two separate entities. One cannot speak of 'agreement' between God and his Word 'because it is impossible to divide the Word of God from God or God from his own Word' (*διότι ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, ἤ λόγον θεοῦ ἤ θεὸν τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ μερίζεσθαι λόγου*).[63] Considering how Marcellus conceived of the union of God and his Word as strictly within one *ὑπόστασις*, it is consistent to his thought that he rejected the concept of *συμφωνία* to describe adequately their relation.

However, the next move of Marcellus was to argue that in another sense, 'agreement' was not an appropriate description of the relationship between Christ and God because it said too much. For when we regard the 'second economy', i.e. that of the flesh, it was necessary to remind Asterius that at times there was even disagreement. 'For in time of suffering, what kind of agreement is there of one who says, "Father, if possible, let this cup pass", and then adding on, "yet not as I wish, but as you wish"?'[64] To Marcellus, the first sentence obviously showed disagreement between the Father and the Son and even the second showed a separation of two wills between two separate beings, thus showing that here there was no unity of agreement. 'That the Father willed is evident from the fact that what he willed took place; and that the Son did not will it is evident from that which he asked for'.[65] Indeed, asserted Marcellus, Christ himself admitted to having a will independent of the Father when he stated elsewhere, 'I do not seek my will but the will of the Father who sent me' (John 5:30). How then could Asterius say that it was because of agreement in everything that the Saviour said, 'I and the Father are one'?

[62] Fr. 74. [63] Ibid.

[64] Although there are no extant fragments where Marcellus explicates this point further, it is interesting to note that he here asserted that this disjunction between the Father and the human Jesus as being 'in times of suffering'. It would seem that this radical distinction between the divine Word and the human being was Marcellus' strategy for protecting the divine nature from suffering.

[65] Fr. 74.

The strong division that Marcellus posited between the Father and Son becomes even clearer when we look at the following fragment, where he continued to develop his argument against the 'unity of agreement' by looking at John 16:15.

> How is the Son able to have agreement with the Father, or the Father with the Son, when the Son says, 'Everything that the Father has is mine'? For openly the Son was being covetous (*πλεονεκτεῖν*) of the things of the Father in saying, 'Everything that the Father has is mine'. The reason is this—he omitted to say, 'Everything that the Father has is shared (*κοινά*)' and instead said, 'Everything the Father has is mine'. For if the book of Acts, to praise the agreement (*συμφωνία*) of those who at that time belonged to the faith, says that 'all things were shared (*κοινά*) among them'; and it is right for men who are able to agree (*συμφωνεῖν*) to consider all things to be in common (*κοινά*), how much more was it necessary that the Father and Son share in fellowship (*κοινωνίας μετέχειν*), *having been divided into two hypostases* (*εἴ δύο ὑποστάσεις διῃρημένους*)?[66]

The point of this difficult passage seems to be the following. For individuals that are capable of *συμφωνία* (such as the early disciples), the appropriate phrase to use to refer to the common use of property and belongings is that these things are 'shared' (*κοινά*). To simply claim them as one's own would be to covet (*πλεονεκτεῖν*) what belonged rightfully to someone else. In addition, the ability to agree with someone else presupposes that the two in agreement are separate beings—two *ὑποστάσεις*. It was for this reason that the early Christians were 'able' to agree—they were independent individuals with their own wills.[67] In other words, the terms *συμφωνία* and *κοινά* are only appropriate in situations involving more than one individual or hypostasis. Christ's use of the term 'mine' implies *either* identity (in the case of there being only one hypostasis) *or* covetousness (if there are two hypostases). As we saw above, it was by noting these kinds

[66] Fr. 75.

[67] In passing, it should be noted that there is a marked difference between Marcellus and Athanasius in how they attacked the Arian understanding of *συμφωνία*, as well as how they understood the 'difference of will' in Gethsemane. This in turn shows a major difference in their theologies. For Marcellus, the concept of 'agreement' is disallowed within the Godhead, because there is only one divine prosopon. For Athanasius, 'agreement' does exist between the Father and Son, but it is not the basis for their unity. Cf. *Oratio contra Arianos* III.10.1–3; 54.3; 57.1. This will be more fully developed in the next chapter.

of things that one could, Marcellus thought, determine whether the Saviour was speaking with regard to the divine Word of God or to the human flesh.

The next point is essential for understanding Marcellus' view of the Incarnation as well as of divine mediation in general. He did *not* say that this way of speaking was only appropriate because of the unity of the singular *ὑπόστασις* or *πρόσωπον* that the Word had with the Father (although he certainly would have agreed with this and made a related point as we shall see). The point he *did* make was that the only appropriate way for the Son, *as the Son*, to speak of his relation to the Father would have been in terms of 'sharing' (*τὰ κοινά*) what the Father has. To speak any other way was to be 'covetous' of things that rightfully belonged to someone else. The reason for this was that the Father and Son were divided into two separate hypostases.[68] This point has obvious importance for a correct understanding of Marcellan Christology. While he was willing to use the commonplace terminology of union to describe the Word/flesh relationship in passing, he saw a very definite division between them. The Word, as we have seen, was undivided from God. Indeed, it was impossible for God to be separated from his Word, even during the Incarnation. They are united in one hypostasis. However, at the same time, the Son (the flesh 'assumed' by the Word) was a separate hypostasis from the Father, therefore capable of agreement (*συμφωνία*) and, as we have seen, disagreement (*ἀσυμφωνία*) with the Father. Such was the separation of Son and Word that one had to differentiate carefully between statements made by Jesus.

> If therefore there was any disagreement between them [Father and Son], it is fitting, in order to know the Saviour accurately, to ascertain the true master [of the saying] (*ἀνάγκη δὲ τὸν δεσπότην ἀληθεύειν*). For when he said, 'I and the Father are one', he was at that moment not regarding the man whom he assumed, but rather the Word which proceeded from the Father. For if there would seem to be any disagreement, this ought to be referred to the weakness

[68] While it could be thought that this phrase was an ironic reference to the doctrine of Asterius, it is obvious in the full context of the quotation that Marcellus here wants to *affirm* that the Father and Son are two separate hypostases. Thus the Son, if speaking as the Son, could show disagreement with the Father, and would be greedy (*πλεονεκτικόν*) if he claimed what was the Father's.

of the flesh, which the Word took on and did not previously possess. But if unity is spoken of, this is obviously referring to the Word.[69]

These changes in reference not only had to do with the subject of the utterances, but also determined the *hypostasis* (κύριος or δεσπότης[70]) behind the words.

Marcellus' view at this point has superficial similarities with the later so-called Word/Man Christology, which saw the two natures of Christ, the human and divine, as quite separated. Pollard is partially correct when he states, 'Marcellus' dyo-prosopic Christology is one in which the Logos, not as a separate personal being, but as God himself in his activity, is joined to a man.'[71] However, it should be emphasized that Marcellus was not a proponent of any real dyo-prosopic model of the Incarnation, simply because the divine Word had no 'prosopic' or 'hypostatic' existence apart from the Father. There were statements made by Christ that should be taken with regard to the eternal Word of God, and others that ought to be understood as referring to the human flesh. The former, due to the lack of any hypostatic division between the Father and the Word, demanded that they speak as one. The only hypostasis independent from God in Jesus Christ was that of the flesh, the humanity that the divine Logos assumed. For Marcellus, then, it would seem that there is no identification of the divine with the human. It would seem that Marcellus' strict monoprosopic monotheism provided a difficult model for allowing any real idea of 'God-become-man' since even during the Incarnation, the Logos was still united to, or rather one and the same with, the divine hypostasis and only appearing by its action (ἐνεργείᾳ μόνῃ) to have been separated from God. Importantly for our discussion, it would then seem that Marcellus had no place for God revealing himself humanly in Jesus Christ.

In view of this, it is difficult to understand the common confusion regarding whether the Marcellan Christ had a human ψυχή. Gericke asserts that Marcellus never held that there was a human ψυχή in Christ, but this is connected with his confusion about the Logos as

[69] Fr. 75.
[70] κύριος occurs in fragment 74 in this sense, δεσπότης in fr. 75 above quoted.
[71] Pollard, *Johannine*, 256.

sole subject of the human actions.[72] Hanson appears to agree, at least in the early Marcellus, stating that 'there is no reason to conclude that Marcellus saw the necessity of postulating a human *psyche* in the flesh assumed by the *Logos* at the Incarnation'.[73] It is certainly true that Marcellus is only recorded by Eusebius using the word *ψυχή* twice, and then only in biblical quotations.[74] However, we have seen that Marcellus made absolutely clear that the flesh assumed by the Logos was to be considered a separate hypostasis from the Father. In addition, the human hypostasis was capable of, and indeed demonstrated on occasion, disagreement with the Father. While Marcellus is not recorded as having specifically ascribed a human soul to Christ, it would seem difficult not to conclude that the Ancyran attributed to the humanity of Christ everything that would be expected in an independent hypostasis. The difficulty of Gericke's erroneous reading has been intensified by more recent studies which have shown that it is extremely likely that Apollinarius of Laodicea was in part motivated in his 'soul-less' Christology by an antipathy towards what he understood to be Marcellus' view.[75] While Apollinarius was wrong to see the Marcellan Christology as 'dyo-prosopic', if indeed he did, it would seem quite natural that he would emphasize a 'unitive' Christology as a way of combating what he saw as the unnecessarily 'divisive' Christology of Marcellus.

It would probably be helpful at this point to summarize our argument so far. Marcellus, urged by scriptural texts, wished to emphasize a strict monotheism, which he felt was threatened by his opponents' doctrine of an intervening mediatorial 'second god'. This he accomplished by denying any 'hypostatic' independent existence to the divine Logos. God's Word was, at least in this respect, like a human word which goes out from a man, but never truly is separated from him, nor takes on an existence of its own. Because of this strict unity of the Godhead in one *prosopon* (one 'who' or subject) , it was difficult for Marcellus to consider the Word, *qua* Word, to have been truly incarnated and to exist as a subject separate from the Father. One

[72] Gericke, *Marcell von Ancyra*, 153ff. We discussed his view of the divine Logos as only subject of Christ's activity above.

[73] Hanson, *Search*, 229. [74] These occur in frs. 91 and 92.

[75] K. M. Spoerl, 'Apollinarian Christology and the Anti-Marcellan Tradition', *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1994), 545–68.

alternative, which Marcellus did not take, would have been to make the divine *prosopon* (i.e. God himself) the subject of all the actions of Jesus Christ. The other alternative, which Marcellus did take, was to make the human being Jesus Christ a separate hypostasis, which implied for Marcellus a separate will from the Father and even the ability (evidenced in the human life) for the Son to disagree with the Father. Many of the words uttered by Christ should be considered God the Father's words, but others should be understood as coming from the independent humanity. This involved for Marcellus a very strong contrast between the Word/God relationship ('miahypostatic') and the Son/Father relationship ('dyohypostatic'). This 'distancing' of the human Jesus Christ from God the Father is of great consequence as we now turn to how Marcellus viewed the mediation which took place in the Incarnation.

3.4. MEDIATION THROUGH THE IMAGE

It is perhaps at this point that we should briefly remind ourselves of the use Eusebius of Caesarea made of the Word as image of God and how this concept was central to his position on the Word as a necessary mediating link between God and the world. He appreciated the title 'image' for the Son in particular because it encapsulated for him both the similarity and dissimilarity that he felt together described the relationship between the Father and Son.[76] We have already seen

[76] That the central place given to image theology in the anti-Marcellus campaign was not simply a peculiarity of Eusebius is shown by the prominence given to the concept of image by both Acacius of Caesarea (found in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 6–10) and Eusebius of Emesa (a critical edition of his sermons was published in E. M. Buytaert, ed., *L'héritage littéraire d'Eusebe d'Émèse: étude critique et historique; textes* (Louvain: Bureaux de Muséon, 1949). In the passage from Acacius preserved by Epiphanius, there can be no doubt that the 'key theological concept' is 'image' (Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 183). Much of what he states there against Marcellus seems beside the point and not to advance to any great extent the arguments proffered by Eusebius of Caesarea in *ET* I.7.3 and II.17.3. The term used by Acacius in 6.3 that is usually translated 'image' is *ἐκμαγεῖον*, *not* *χαρακτήρ* (as incorrectly stated by Lienhard). In general *ἐκμαγεῖον* signified the material on or in which an impression was made (it is, for example, used in this sense by Plato in *Theaetetus* 191C and *Timaeus* 50C). While its usage should not be pressed for theological content, it would seem that Acacius' utililization of the term does nothing to advance Lienhard's argument that for the

how important it is to understand this approach of Eusebius before analysing his participation in the Arian controversy. Marcellus also addressed the view of the Word as 'image' which Asterius (as well as Eusebius) had put forth.

> For since he dares to divide the Word from God and to name the Word another God, separated from the Father by substance and power, it is possible to learn easily into what sort of blasphemy he has fallen from the things he has written plainly. He has written in this way, 'Doubtless, the image and that of which it is an image are not to be considered one and the same, but rather two substances, two things and two powers (*δύο οὐσίαι καὶ δύο πράγματα καὶ δύο δυνάμεις*), just as there are this number of names.'[77]

Obviously Marcellus was in disagreement with this dividing of the Word and the Father into two separate beings. In the quotation from Asterius, this separation was based on the logic of 'image'—an image was not to be considered 'one and the same' with that of which it was an image. It is perhaps to be expected that Marcellus would then argue against this basic premise, since he asserted that God and his Word were, indeed, 'one and the same'. However, as we follow the flow of Marcellus' argument, we shall see that he took a very different tack.

Rather than suggest that Asterius had an erroneous conception of how the divine image related to that of which it was an image, Marcellus instead raised the issue of the point at which the image appeared in the divine economy. And indeed, if we keep his view

Caesarean, 'an image is very much like an archetype'. Marcellus could have agreed with much that Acacius asserted in regard to 'life' being a characteristic of the image, merely shifting the *locus* of such 'living' imaging to the human flesh, rather than the divine Word. It would seem that Acacius' stress here arose from his distaste for what he understood to be Marcellus' view of an impersonal divine Word. Lienhard's conclusion seems strained as well by Acacius' assertion that the image 'is an image not of itself but of another, just as you wish, carrying in himself the characteristics of the prototype' (10.2). He is an image of another (*ἑτέρου εἰκών*) and that other is the prototype. Acacius simply wanted to point out that 'image', while implying non-identity, also implies great similarity, not dissimilarity as Marcellus had argued.

[77] Fr. 117. The same argument is found in fr. 51, where Asterius is said to have tried to separate God and his image in the same manner in which a man is separate from his own image. We shall see in a moment that here, once again, Marcellus did not shy away from taking a very literal view of this 'human' analogy.

of the two economies in mind, we can recall that Marcellus reserved the function of image for the second alone, that is, for the economy 'according to the flesh'. As we saw earlier, all the titles that could be considered a part of the mediation of salvation—Way, Door, Life, and others—were to be considered descriptive only of the economy of the Incarnation. 'For, as I have said many times, before this there was nothing other than the Word.'[78] However, Marcellus went into much more detail on why it was wrong to ascribe the function of 'image' to the pre-incarnate Word.

The Word of God could not be the image of the invisible God, as Asterius had said, because the Word was not visible itself. 'How is the Word in himself (*καθ' ἑαυτὸν*) able to be an image of the invisible God, when he himself is invisible?'[79] 'It is fitting for the image to be seen, in order that through the image what is at the time unseen can be seen.'[80] For this reason, the function of 'image' of the invisible God had to be considered to take place during the economy of the Incarnation. 'Now clearly, at the time he assumed the flesh which was according to the image of God, he became a true image of the invisible God.'[81] There are two things to be mentioned about this. First, and most obviously, it is in the nature of an image to be visible. But second, and more importantly, it is the nature of God to be invisible and therefore necessarily only to be 'seen' through another. We have seen that 'invisibility' had been considered by Origen a distinguishing characteristic of God (and which he believed to be shared by the 'invisible image of the invisible God'), as opposed to all corporeal beings. That the Word, for Marcellus, could not be that mediating image is obvious from the fact that its nature is precisely that of God, they are 'one and the same'. The Word, *qua* Word, by its nature could never function as an image of God. Therefore, it was important for Marcellus that God (and his Word) be 'imaged' by another who had a 'visible' nature. This provided the context for understanding Marcellus' assertions

[78] Fr. 52. Cf. also fr. 3, where it is stated that any 'new and more recent name' (*καινὸν καὶ νεώτερον ὄνομα*) is 'from the new and recent economy according to the flesh' (*ἀπὸ τῆς καινῆς καὶ νέας κατὰ σάρκα οἰκονομίας*).

[79] Fr. 54. This insistence on the 'visibility' of the image of the invisible God is in marked contrast to the emphasis of others. As was discovered above, Origen had spoken of the 'invisible image of the invisible God' (*DP* I.2.6) and this was echoed by Eusebius of Emesa in his response to Marcellus (*Sermon* 20.5).

[80] Fr. 53. [81] Fr. 55.

concerning the 'disjunction' between the divine Word and the human flesh of Christ. That which implies any independence or disagreement with the Father is 'according to what appears' (*κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον*), and is not indicative of the invisible nature of God.

At this point, we must emphasize a facet of this that is crucial to the Marcellan view of the mediation of the knowledge of God through the flesh taken on by the divine Word. In effect, we shall see that Marcellus was in agreement with Asterius (and Eusebius) in the latter's supposition that the image was necessarily other than that of which it was an image.[82] Marcellus asserted that 'images of these things of which they are images are indicative of things not there (*ἀπόντων δεικτικαί*) so that the things not there seem to be manifested through them'.[83] We can see that the 'deictic' concept of mediation implicit in Eusebius is here made explicit. That the 'image' and 'imaged' were, for Marcellus, mutually exclusive categories becomes even clearer as we consider how his argument continued. He first berated Asterius for inconsistency in his description of the Son.

> For how can the begotten Lord and God, as he said before, be the image of God? For 'image of God' and 'God' are mutually exclusive terms. (*ἕτερον γὰρ εἰκὼν θεοῦ, καὶ ἕτερον θεός*) So that if he is image, then he is not Lord and God, but rather an image of the Lord and God. But if he is really Lord and God, then no longer, since he is Lord and God, is he able to be the image of the Lord and God.[84]

Thus to be the image of God *necessarily* meant *not* to be God. Marcellus carried this even further, claiming that whatever divine attribute the Word was said to represent by Asterius and others meant an actual denial of that quality to the Word, *qua* Word. Asterius had contended that the Word was 'unchangeable image of [God's] essence and will and glory and power' (*οὐσίας τε καὶ βουλῆς καὶ δόξης καὶ δυνάμεως ἀπαράλλακτον εἰκόνα*).[85] Marcellus countered,

[82] As noted above, Acacius also noted this partial agreement when he asserted that 'the image was not of itself, but of another, *as you wish*' (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 10.2).

[83] Fr. 54. [84] Fr. 113.

[85] Ibid. It is possible that Asterius' usage of *ἀπαράλλακτος εἰκών* was in response to its employment at the Council of Nicaea. According to Athanasius (*De Decretis* 20), the phrase was one of several that were tried in an attempt to disallow the Arian theology, but that the 'Eusebians' were able to accept in their own way. Obviously, Asterius here showed it to be a welcome part of his theology. Any account

Therefore if he is an image of substance (οὐσίας), then he no longer can be substance himself (αὐτοουσία); and if an image of will (βουλῆς), then he cannot be himself will (αὐτοβουλή); and if an image of power, then not power, and if image of glory, then not glory. For the image is not of itself, but rather an image of something else.[86]

Here Marcellus made clear that he took the appellation of 'image of x' to be tantamount to a denial of 'x' to the image itself. It should be noted that Marcellus was not really fair in his attack of the 'Eusebians'. As we have seen, Eusebius and others used the term 'image' to denote both 'similarity' and 'non-identity' simultaneously. Acacius' reply, as noted above, was precisely to this point.[87] Marcellus was pushing his logic to the limits to make image *necessarily* mean both 'non-identity' as well as 'non-similarity'.

Marcellus was not merely making this point in order to deny the title and function of 'image' to the eternal Word of God, although of course he did. He was also stating that this was exactly how the flesh assumed by the Word, as image, related to the Godhead. We have seen how 'flesh' was understood by Marcellus to mean not just the human body, but rather the hypostatically independent human being. As has been proven, this was not just a vessel controlled by the Word, but rather a *hypostasis* that even had a will independent of the Father. This was fully consistent with his theology elsewhere, since the Word was not a separate entity from the Father and therefore could not exhibit the independence that Marcellus saw sometimes expressed in the words of Christ. As we have seen, even when the human being Jesus spoke about his unity with God, it was not the flesh speaking, but the Word (i.e. God himself). The man assumed by the Word, as image of God, could not, in the final analysis, be God himself by the criteria of Marcellus. While Marcellus did not put it into such blunt language, it is difficult to see how he could have avoided the conclusion.

It is vital that we capture the point of Marcellus' argument at this juncture. According to Asterius (and, as we have seen, the Eusebii

of Marcellus' involvement and influence at Nicaea must take into account his very negative treatment of the term, or at least its implications, here. This is in stark contrast to Athanasius' generally very positive view of the phrase.

[86] Fr. 114. [87] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 6–10.

of Caesarea and of Emesa and Acacius of Caesarea)[88] the image was necessarily other than that which was imaged. Therefore, the Word of God, as image of God, could not be 'one and the same' as God of whom he was an image. For Marcellus, as well, the image was necessarily other than that which was imaged. For both sides of this debate, 'image of A' necessarily meant 'image of A does not equal A'. The image of God, by the very definition of the term 'image', cannot be included within the identity of God. Thus, for both Marcellus and his opponents, the mediation of the knowledge of God through the image of God necessarily occurred 'deictically', i.e. the image, as a pointer, *necessarily* points to something other than itself.[89] The image mediates knowledge of God to us, shows us God, in the same way the image on a British penny 'shows' us the Queen, by indicating her likeness. God's presence is only indirectly there, if at all—for the image is 'indicative of things absent' (δεικτικὴ ἀπόντων). This was equally as true for Marcellus as it was for Asterius and Eusebius of Caesarea. The main difference between them on this point had to do with when this image of God came to be and who it was. Marcellus, since he allowed no prosopic existence to the Word of God separate from that of the Father, was forced to attribute this 'deictic mediating function' to the human flesh assumed by the Word, i.e. to the human being Jesus Christ. And, in fact, it seems that Marcellus would locate any such 'mediatorial' function in the flesh, the assumed 'Son of God'. That this was the case is evident from the fact that, as we have seen, Marcellus placed all titles which have to do with the bringing, or mediating, of salvation and the knowledge of God (such as Door, Way, Life,

[88] As Maurice Wiles states, 'Subordinationist image theology was prominent in circles often dubbed as "Arian" ' (M. Wiles, 'The Theology of Eusebius of Emesa', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 267–80). However, it is our contention here that it was not 'subordinationism' nor 'image theology' *per se* that characterized these theologians so much as the use of this theology to exclude the Word/Son from the identity of the one true God.

[89] In many ways, this simply follows from the logic implicit in the concept of an 'image'. Even Augustine would later ask, 'What could be more ridiculous than calling something image with reference to itself?' (*De Trinitate* VII.2, translated in *The Trinity*, E. Hill, trans. (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991). The difference for him was that he attempted to understand this imaging within a theological framework which included the Son within 'God'. Thus, as Hill summarizes, the Son is image of the Father in that the 'eternal, active divine self-presence generates eternal active self-expression, and only in that self-expression is the self-presence so to say realised' (267).

Resurrection), to the assumed flesh. Any 'mediating' that takes place, it would seem, must take place through something hypostatically (or prosopically) differentiated from God and that possessed the requisite 'visible' nature demanded of an image. For Marcellus, this function was fulfilled by the humanity of the Word. What took place in the Incarnation, then, was no direct revelation of God himself through the historical Christ, but rather a 'visible' pointer to the 'invisible' reality.

> When he said not only, 'I and the Father are one', but also, 'So long I have been with you, Philip, and you say, "Show me the Father"?'; it is evident [that he referred] not to these eyes, but to the spiritual eyes that are able to see spiritual things (τοῖς νοητοῖς τὰ νοητὰ ὁρᾶν δυναμένοις). For the Father and his Word exist invisible to the eyes of the flesh.[90]

Thus, even during the Incarnation, there was no 'direct' divine self-revelation, but rather the humanity of Christ was a visible 'deictic' pointer to the invisible divine nature. This makes it difficult to fully accept Seibt's conclusion that for Marcellus the Incarnation was not a devaluation of the deity, but rather a promotion of the humanity.[91] While allowing that Marcellus certainly did not see any 'lowering' of the Godhead, and that the human flesh played an important role in divine mediation for him, Seibt's argument seems to ignore the very real separation which the Ancyran saw between the human flesh and the Word.

A couple of questions yet remain to be addressed. First, to what extent would Marcellus have said that it was the Word that carried out this deictic mediation, even though it was *through* the flesh? It is evident that the Word, *qua* Word, could not carry out this mediating function, since it is one and the same as God and, as we have seen, the image necessarily was other than God. Could it be possible that Marcellus thought that it was the Word, *qua* man, that fulfilled this role? As we have seen, Marcellus' strong view of the utter 'oneness' of the Godhead, the disallowing of any 'plurality' there, signified the complete indivisibility of God and his Word. Even in the Incarnation, the Word was only seemingly divided 'by his activity alone' (ἐνεργείᾳ μόνῃ). Thus, for Marcellus, to say that the Word does

[90] Fr. 75. [91] Seibt, *Theologie*, 341.

something is to say that God does it. Therefore, to give the divine Word any sort of ability to act outside of God, or independently of God, even to the point of disagreement, would seem impossible. To say that the Word, *qua* man, was the image of God would contradict what he had said about the relationship of the Word to God. This would be equivalent, for Marcellus, to saying that God himself, *qua* man, was the image of God. And yet, clearly Marcellus felt very strongly that the image of something could not be that thing itself. In addition, since the Word and God were to be completely identified, for Marcellus the human flesh became the image of the Word of God, as well as image of God. It is 'through this image that we are considered worthy to know the Word of God'.[92] That is, it is through the image that we come to know the Word, therefore (according to Marcellus' view of an image) the image itself cannot be the Word. Hence, it would seem, all of the conclusions he reached concerning the non-identity of an image and the one imaged would continue to hold for the relation between the Word and the flesh.

Another question that arises is whether for Marcellus the knowledge of God was *necessarily* mediated through the image? Is it possible for man to know God without the intervening presence of a mediator, in this case the humanity of Christ? Again, Marcellus did not address this issue very much in the extant fragments. We have seen how Eusebius and Asterius considered this kind of mediation essential. They had considered the imposition of a mediator between the 'true God' and creation to be absolutely vital and thus saw the Word in this role. It is plain that Marcellus wished to deny this cosmic mediating function to the Word. For Marcellus, God created the cosmos through his Word, that is to say, he created it directly in the same way a sculptor forms a statue. There was no room for any separate, intervening being between God and his creation—a world-view that he shared, as we shall see, with Athanasius of Alexandria. However, when the focus turned from initial creation to the new creation, from cosmology to salvation, the answer is not quite as clear in Marcellus. Is it possible for God to mediate knowledge of himself and the salvation that accompanies it to humanity directly, without the aid of an intervening being? As noted above, the divine characteristic

[92] Fr. 55.

of 'invisibility' seemed to necessitate the existence of some sort of 'visible' image. While the evidence is scant, we have seen evidence that Marcellus would have tended toward the necessary existence of such a mediator for the bestowal not just of knowledge of God, but of any divine benefits. Hence the limiting of these sorts of titles to the economy of the Incarnation. It would be good to quote more fully fragment 55 alluded to above.

> For if we are considered worthy through this image to know the Word of God, we ought to believe in the very Word who said through the image, 'I and the Father are one'. For neither the Word nor the Father of the Word is it possible to know without this image. (*οὔτε γὰρ τὸν λόγον οὔτε τὸν πατέρα τοῦ λόγου χωρὶς τῆς εἰκόνος ταύτης γνῶναί τινα δυνατόν.*)[93]

From this, it would seem that Marcellus thought that the image was vital to the mediation of the knowledge of God and his Word, for without it, it is simply not possible to know them.

3.5. SUMMARY

It might be helpful to summarize our findings to this stage. Perhaps it would be best to speak of two models of mediation, the 'Eusebian' and 'Marcellan', in which a certain amount of 'distancing' is required.

For Eusebius of Caesarea (and, as we have seen, for many members of the group often called 'Arian'), the 'one, true God' required of Christian monotheism was to be identified fully only with God the Father.[94] He specifically excluded the Word of God from the identity of the one God. The 'distancing' in the Eusebian model takes place

[93] Ibid.

[94] A creedal example of this theology can be found in the *Ecthesis Macrostichos* of 345. After anathematizing any who would confess three Gods, it explained that 'while we confess three things (*πράγματα*) and three persons (*πρόσωπα*) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit according to the Scripture, we do not make on account of this three Gods; since we know the self-complete and unbegotten, unbegun and one and only invisible God, the God and Father of the only-begotten who alone has being of himself and who alone ungrudgingly gives this to all others' (*de Synodis* 26 (IV)). Note that the defence against the accusation of polytheism was a monotheism grounded firmly on the Father as the one true God. This incidentally also gives more evidence that the 'Eusebian' model was not unique to Eusebius.

between God and his Word. This should not be interpreted as a desire on the part of Eusebius to denigrate the Word, but rather as an attempt to understand how to hold to the belief in 'one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ'. As image of God, the Word has a unique relation to God the Father of both great similarity as well as dissimilarity. As we have seen, as 'image' he must necessarily be other than the one of whom he is an image, and yet, at the same time, be similar to God in order to function properly as an image. Hence, divine mediation, in the Eusebian model, is a cosmological constant, a necessary eternal aspect of God's dealings with the world.

Marcellus, on the other hand, obviously did not posit any intermediary being between God and his creation. To maintain this, as well as to ensure the full deity of the Word within a monotheistic theology, he strongly asserted the divine unity of one ὑπόστασις. In other words, in contrast to Eusebius, he desired to include the Word within the identity of the one, true God but allowed no sense of plurality within the Godhead. Mediation of the knowledge of God, as well as salvation, came through the image which, similar to Eusebius, was not to be identified with God. Unlike Eusebius, however, Marcellus located this mediating image function not in the eternal function of the Word, but rather within the incarnate flesh, the humanity that was somehow linked to the divine Word. This incarnate reality was what Scripture referred to as the Son of God. That he distanced this humanity from the divine *prosopon* is evident, both from his explanation of disagreement between the Son and Father as well as from his image theology. To put it probably too simplistically, while Eusebius put an ontological 'distance' between God the Father and the Word in his view of mediation, Marcellus put this 'distance' between God and the flesh of Jesus.

In contrast to both of these, as we shall see, for Athanasius of Alexandria God himself was *immediately* involved both in creation and in the Incarnation. We shall see that this concern in his polemical literature against the 'Arians' shaped much of what he wrote. While it is surely the most well-known fact of patristic theology that Athanasius fought for the full divinity of the Word against the 'Arians', it is less well known that one of his driving concerns throughout the controversy was to maintain the unmediated presence of the

Christian God both in the created order as well as in the economy of the Incarnation of the Word. This provides an (often-ignored) explanatory context within which much that he has written concerning the Trinity and the humanity of Christ can be better understood. Especially when we read Athanasius within the context of the contemporary 'Eusebian–Marcellan' debate, a background is provided against which Athanasius' view of mediation and image theology can be better appreciated. In addition, the weaknesses of Athanasius' approach (especially as it relates to the lack of mention of Christ's human soul) can be understood within their original context. The proof of this concern of Athanasius for 'the immediacy of God' is the burden of the next chapter.

4

Mediation in Athanasius of Alexandria

As we have seen, the theologians studied so far have been adamant about maintaining monotheism. And yet, they displayed two differing strategies for the mediation of the knowledge of the one God to humanity through Jesus Christ; or, put more simply, how they upheld the claim of Jesus that 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father'.

Eusebius of Caesarea maintained that only the Father was the one and only God (εἷς καὶ μόνος θεός), even as he asserted that the Son, while not identical to the one God, was like him to a high degree and therefore functioned as a true image and could even be called 'God'. We have termed this 'exclusive' monotheism in that the Word, while highly regarded, is 'excluded' from the identity of the one true God and we have seen evidence that this perspective would have been shared by Arius, Asterius, Eusebius of Nicomedia and most of those who have generally received the appellation 'Arian' and, as shown above, in the Macrostichos Creed of 345. Indeed, as we shall suggest in our conclusion below, it might be worth considering that these designations of 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' theology, or something similar, are more meaningful theologically and certainly more accurate appellations than 'Arian' or 'semi-Arian' and might help to differentiate between theologians who are presently lumped together under the epithet 'homoiousians'.

That this perspective was fuelled for Eusebius of Caesarea to a great extent by the concern for how the Word could function properly as a mediator has been shown by our analysis in Chapter 1.

Marcellus of Ancyra, on the other hand, wished to maintain a strongly 'inclusive' monotheism in that he located the Word strictly within the identity of the one true God. However, due to his strongly

'monoprosopic' view of the divine unity, he was unable to distinguish between God and his Word in any significant sense, nor to ascribe any prosopic activity to the Word. The single *hypostasis* of God meant that to say that the Word spoke or acted was the same as saying that the Father spoke or acted. God and his Word were no more two persons than a human and his or her word. That the consequent separation of the Word from the identity of the Son was motivated, in part, by his view of the relationship of the image to that which it represented, was also demonstrated in the last chapter.

We hope to demonstrate here that Athanasius, as desirous of holding to a true monotheism as were others of his day, located the 'oneness' demanded by monotheism in the Godhead (or θεότης) *within which* a plurality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit exists. While this concept (the Athanasian view of one God consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit) has been noted by many in the past, it has not always been appreciated within the theological and polemical context of the early fourth century. We shall attempt to show that this view substantially differed from that of Eusebius of Caesarea and was a considerable theological issue at stake in the 'Arian' controversy; an issue which affected liturgy, worship and the very identification of Christianity as a type of monotheism. In addition, this 'Athanasian' perspective, while 'inclusive' in the sense defined above, differed considerably from that of Marcellus and should make us wary of any model of the theological conflict of the early fourth century which associates the two thinkers too closely, or indeed offers any overly simplistic 'two-schools' analysis of the controversy.[1]

We shall proceed in this chapter by first inspecting an early argument for the divine unity proffered by Athanasius in the *Contra Gentes*. There are two reasons for this. First, it will help us to understand that the perspective of the Alexandrian on the divine unity (and where the Word should be located within that unity) was something which he brought to the controversy and remained relatively unchanged in the controversy against the 'Arians'.[2] Second, by following Athanasius' argument in *Contra Gentes* we will be able to discern

[1] In particular, this study has an impact on the 'miahypostatic/dyohypostatic' model presented by Lienhard (Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*).

[2] This point (taken with the non-polemical nature of these writings) is valid, whatever date is assigned to the *Contra Gentes/De Incarnatione*, since even the latest

the intimate interrelationship between divine unity and the mediation of the knowledge of God to humanity in his thought. Next, we shall analyse Athanasius' view of the unity of the 'Godhead' (θεότης) in *Contra Arianos* I, II and III, especially noting his use of the term θεότης. Then we shall make a detailed comparison of this usage with that of Eusebius of Caesarea and Marcellus of Ancyra from approximately the same period, which will make clear their differing views on the *identification* of the 'one and only God' required by monotheism. This will lead us consequently to investigate Athanasius' theology of mediation, including his use of traditional mediation terminology, the presentation of the Son as the 'form' (εἶδος) of the Godhead, and also his theology of the image of God. Last, we shall then turn to Athanasius' view of Christ as Mediator in the Incarnation, taken largely from *De Incarnatione*, but with references to appropriate passages from the *Contra Arianos* and other documents.

4.1. DIVINE UNITY IN 'CONTRA GENTES'

Athanasius most likely gave his first writings on cosmology in the treatise *Contra Gentes*, which is in reality the first part of the work of which *De Incarnatione* forms the second half.[3] After the introduction (1) the treatise divides naturally into two parts: the first, consisting

date which most would accept (335/6) would make it quite early in relation to the other writings.

[3] It has been traditional to assign a very early date for these writings, between AD 318 and 323, on the assumption that they must predate the outbreak of the Arian controversy. This, however, would put the writing at a time when Athanasius was a very young man and many have found this untenable. Although Nordberg ('A Reconsideration of the Date of St. Athanasius' *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*', *Studia Patristica* 3 (1961), 262–6) preferred a date of 362/3, Kannengiesser ('Le témoignage des lettres festales de saint Athanase sur la date de l'apologie Contre les paiens sur l'incarnation du Verbe', *Recherche de science religieuse* 52 (1964), 91–100) argued persuasively for a date around 336. This view has since been slightly revised by Pettersen ('A Reconsideration of the Date of the *Contra Gentes–De Incarnatione* of Athanasius of Alexandria', *Studia Patristica* 17, 3 (1982), 1030–1040) and Slusser ('Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*: Place and Date of Composition', *Journal of Theological Studies* 31 (1986), 114–17) to just before Athanasius' first exile in July 335. This dating, persuasive in other ways, also has the twin advantages of giving Athanasius a little more maturity at the time and allowing us to see veiled references to the Arian controversy.

of 2–29, aimed at the refutation of paganism; and the second, 30–44, containing a defence of what Athanasius felt was the Christian worldview. This is then followed by a conclusion (45–7). Here we will concentrate on the second part (30–44), as it deals most with the activity of the Logos. This half can be divided into two major sections: 30–4 concerned with the existence of the soul and the possibility of its knowing God; 35–44 dealing with nature as the revelation of God. It is in this final section that Athanasius began to develop his theology of the Word of God, and so we will focus our attention there. In our analysis, we shall find that Athanasius, even at this relatively early date, had already developed a view of the divine nature which was immediately present in the created order and that was a unity *within which* the plurality of Father and Son is located.

Sections 35–8 have as their aim to demonstrate that the universe reveals to us its maker. 'For often the artist even when not seen is known by his works.'[4] First, the apparent order of the universe leads us to the conclusion that there exists a maker guiding it. Thus Athanasius asked,

> for who that sees the circle of heaven and the course of the sun and the moon, and the positions and movements of the other stars, as they take place in opposite and different directions, while yet in their difference all with one accord observe a consistent order, can resist the conclusion that these are not ordered by themselves, but have a maker distinct from themselves who orders them?[5]

Not only the order of the various parts of creation argue for a creator, but also the existence of seeming opposites together in harmony proves the presence of a divine balancing hand (36–7). All of this, Athanasius thought, irresistibly leads us to the conclusion that a maker exists:

> Since then, there is everywhere not disorder, but order; proportion and not disproportion; not disarray but arrangement; and that in an order perfectly harmonious, we must infer and be led to perceive the master that put

[4] *Contra Gentes* 35.1. All quotations from *Contra Gentes* (cited as *CG* from now on) are taken from the Greek text in *Athanase d'Alexandrie: Contre Les Païens, texte grec, introduction, traduction et notes*, 3rd edn. revised and corrected, P. T. Camelot, ed., Sources Chrétiennes 18 bis (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1983).

[5] *CG* 35.4.

together and compacted all things, and produced harmony in them. For though he is not seen with the eyes, yet from the order and harmony of things contrary it is possible to perceive their ruler, arranger, and king.[6]

Athanasius did not stop by saying that the universe leads us to understand that there is an arranger, but went on to assert that it proves to us that he is singular. Just as the music from a lyre, with its harmonious combination of different notes, leads us to perceive that there is a single player,

so, the order of the whole universe being perfectly harmonious, and there being no strife of the higher against the lower or the lower against the higher, and all things making up one order, it is consistent to think that the ruler and king of all creation is one and not many, who by his own light illumines and gives movement to all.[7]

Athanasius then took the entire following section (39) to try to show that it would be absurd to believe in a multiplicity of creators. The importance of this point will be clearer after we have looked at Athanasius' teaching on the Word. Athanasius believed that his 'natural theology' argument thus far (combined with his earlier attack on paganism) had already led his readers to one inescapable conclusion, although he believed it worth stressing. It was 'a point most necessary to make plain, lest, from ignorance with regard to him, a man should suppose the wrong maker, and fall once more into the same old godless error, but I think no one is really in doubt about it'.[8] Who could be this 'Lord of creation and maker of all existence'?

Who then is this, save the Father of Christ, most holy and above all created existence, who like an excellent pilot, by his own wisdom and his own Word, our Lord and Saviour Christ, steers and preserves and orders all things, and does as seems to him best?[9]

It is vital that we note here that Athanasius was saying that the one creator that nature reveals to us is God the Father working through his Word.

Next, Athanasius went on to describe the activity of the Word in creation. Section 40 begins his account of how the Word works within creation. Making the connection between the Word (*Λόγος*)

[6] *CG* 38.1. [7] *CG* 38.4. [8] *CG* 40.1. [9] *CG* 40.2.

and reason (*λόγος*), Athanasius asserted that the creation is ordered and rational because the Word of God governs it. 'But if it subsist in reason and wisdom and skill (*λόγῳ καὶ σοφίᾳ καὶ ἐπιστήμῃ*), and is perfectly ordered throughout, it follows that he that is over it and has ordered it is none other than the Word (*Λόγος*) of God' (40.3). Thus, the created order reveals the existence of the Word. However, by 'Word' he does not want to suggest that it is a 'seminal principle' (*σπερμάτικον*), as some think (40.4). By this Athanasius meant something which is 'twined together and grown into one with' (*συμπεπλεγμένον καὶ συμπεφυκότα*) the created things (40.4). Presumably Athanasius here wanted to avoid the Stoic concept of the Logos. 'Athanasius intentionally distinguishes the Word, which he sees present to all the universe he created, from the seminal Word of the Stoics, part of the universal Word immanent to creatures and the source in them of all truth.'[10] He also described this 'seminal principle' as an impersonal force which is only acted upon 'by external art', in contrast to the 'living and powerful Word'. In addition, he emphasized that the doctrine of the divine Word he is putting forward here is not like human speech 'which consists of syllables and has the air as its vehicle of expression'.[11]

The Word 'has united himself' (*ἐπιβέβηκεν*) with creation because each created thing is 'of a fleeting sort, and weak and mortal, if composed of itself alone' and because God in his goodness will not begrudge existence to all things (41.2).[12] It is thus through his Word that God creates, gives substantive existence to, guides and settles the world. Athanasius then proceeded to describe how the created world leads us to an understanding of the Word in a way strongly reminiscent of what he has already said about its witness to God (in 35–9). Thus, the harmony of seeming contraries argues for the balancing and ordering work of the Word (42.1–2; to be compared with the proofs for God in 36–8). The wisdom of God handles 'the

[10] 'Athanase distingue intentionnellement le *Logos*, qu'il voit présent à tout l'univers qu'il a créé, du *Logos* séminal des stoïciens, parcelle du *Logos* universel, immanent aux créatures, et source en elles de toute vérité.' Camelot, *Contre les Paiens*, 191 n. 1.

[11] We should note in passing the similarity of Athanasius' understanding of the 'human word' analogy here with that of Eusebius (*DE* V.5) and the equal dissimilarity with Marcellus.

[12] The divine motive of kindness is reminiscent of Plato in *Timaeus* 29E.

universe as a lyre',[13] the very simile used previously in 38.4 to show that 'the ruler and king of all creation is one and not many'. This is followed in section 43 by three illustrations—a chorus harmoniously led by one conductor, the various senses all directed by the single soul, a well-ordered city managed and directed by the presence of a single ruler—to describe the relationship between the Logos and the world.

It must be stressed that here we find the convergence of three arguments. First, Athanasius wished to stress that the created order reveals the presence of the creator God. Second, he wanted to argue that the natural revelation also makes clear that the creator is not multiple, but singular. Third, he used the very same arguments advanced in the first argument to assert that the created order reveals the divine Word of God. Hence, in *CG*, Athanasius posited God as one, and the divine unity as made up of the Father working through his Word.

While it is well known that Athanasius championed the Nicene *homoousion*, it has been called into question in recent years exactly what the term meant. Did it stress the unity of the Father and Son, or was it used simply to assert the 'full divinity' of the Son, that is, that Father and Son were of the 'same kind' of substance?[14] While the term *homoousios* does not occur in *CG*, its arguments would seem to suggest strongly that Athanasius, even at a relatively early date (almost certainly during or before his first exile beginning in 335) argued for understanding the Father and Son as one entity.[15] This 'one entity' of Father and Son gave Athanasius the rationale for describing the divinity and attributes of the Son in the way he does. They are not his by 'participation, nor as if these qualities were imparted to him from without' (*οὐ κατὰ μετοχὴν ταῦτα ὤν, οὐδὲ ἔξωθεν ἐπιγινομένων*),[16] but rather are his own. Athanasius used the term 'offspring' (*γέννημα*) here to describe the relationship between the Father and Son. He is 'the good offspring of him that is good, and true Son'. However, in context, this should not be understood to imply

[13] *CG* 42.3.

[14] General discussions of the import of the Nicene *homoousios* can be found in G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1959), 212–14; and, more recently, in Stead, *Divine Substance*, 191–266.

[15] This would tend to weaken Stead's conclusion, based on his detailed study of Athanasius' use of *homoousios*, that there is in Athanasius no 'consistent suggestion of numerical identity in the strict sense', in Stead, *Divine Substance*, 266.

[16] *CG* 46.8.

in Athanasius' thought that the Son has his existence in a derivative manner from the Father, but rather that he, being a 'real' Son of the Father, shares his attributes. He is the 'good Word of the good Father' (ἀγαθοῦ γὰρ Πατρὸς ἀγαθὸς Λόγος).[17] This relationship extends to the very mode of the existence of the Word:

> But God possesses true existence [ὤν ἐστι] and is not composite, wherefore his Word also has true existence and is not composite, but is the one and only-begotten God, who proceeds in his goodness from the Father as from a good fountain, and orders all things and holds them together.[18]

This understanding of the relation between God the Father and the Word was enhanced by Athanasius' use of αὐτο-′ language in *CG* 46 and 47. J. R. Lyman has pointed out the usage of this language to describe the relationship between Father and Son in Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea.[19] According to Lyman, Origen stated that only the Father is αὐτοθεός, that is, God in himself, while the Word is derivatively divine because he participates in the Father's divinity. Hence, only the Father can be called 'good' in this sense, while the Word is 'good' derivatively. However, it is proper to call the Word αὐτολόγος and αὐτοσοφία because he is Word and wisdom of God.[20] On the other hand, Eusebius attributed the titles to both the Father and Son, but in a context which emphasizes that they all belong to the Father by right and that he then gives them to the Son.[21] Athanasius' usage of this language contrasted somewhat with that of both Origen and Eusebius. In his description of the Word in *CG* 46.8, he made a long list of 'αὐτο-′ titles: αὐτοσοφία, αὐτολόγος, αὐτοδύναμις ἰδία τοῦ Πατρός, αὐτοφῶς, αὐτοαλήθεια, αὐτοδικαιοσύνη, αὐτοαρετή, αὐτοαγιασμος, αὐτοζωή. Athanasius wished to impress upon his reader that the Word is Wisdom, Word, Power, Light, Truth, Righteousness, Virtue, Holiness and

[17] *CG* 40.5. [18] *CG* 41.1.

[19] J. R. Lyman, 'Substance Language in Origen and Eusebius', in *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments*, Papers from the Ninth International Conference on Patristic Studies, September 5–10, 1983, Oxford, England, R. C. Gregg, ed. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1985), 257–66.

[20] *Com. Joh.* II.2, 3; *DP* I.2.13. Unfortunately, this seems to miss entirely a primary concern of Origen to maintain some sort of 'essential' continuity between the Father and his Word.

[21] Lyman, 'Substance Language', 260, cites *DE* 4.2; *ET* 1.8; 2.14.

Life of God, not by derivation, but in and of himself. The phrase αὐτοδύναμις ἰδία τοῦ πατρός ('the Father's own power in itself') is especially enlightening here. The point is not that there are two separate sources of, in this case, divine power. Nor is it the case that the Father has power and then bestows it upon the Son. Rather, the Father has his own power and that power is no less than the Word himself. There are not two divine powers, one absolute and the other derivative, but rather only one, and that is the Son, who is 'the Father's own power'.[22] Louth has shown that Athanasius used the term ἴδιος to emphasize the intimate connection between the Word and the Father. Interestingly enough for our concerns here, he also notes that the

> two usages of ἴδιος—the Trinitarian and the Christological—clearly go together for Athanasius, because both (the intimacy of the Son with the Father, and the intimacy of the union of human and divine in Christ) are necessary for the accomplishment of redemption.[23]

We shall see more of this connection below, when we are discussing Athanasius' view of the Incarnation. What is important to note here is that in this context, 'to declare the Father' is 'to discover the powers of his Word'.[24] The importance of this for an understanding of the Son as divine self-manifestation in creation (and as a necessary *prolegomenon* for the Incarnation) is immediately made clear by Athanasius. God the Word condescends to impart knowledge of God through creation. This is not a 'knowable' Word making known an 'unknowable' Father, but rather a complex 'mutual revelation' of the Godhead: the Son reveals the one who begot him, and the Father is constantly revealing the Son and himself through the Son:

> the Father did not hide him [the Word] out of the sight of his creatures, but even day by day reveals him to all by means of the organization and life of all things, which is his work. But in and through him he reveals himself also, as the Saviour says, 'I in the Father and the Father in me'.[25]

[22] This is evidence from an early stage in Athanasius' career for an aspect of his theology which will later lead him to accuse the 'Arians' of teaching two 'Words' and two 'wisdoms'.

[23] Andrew Louth, 'The Use of the Term IDIOS in Alexandrian Theology from Alexander to Cyril', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1987), 198–202.

[24] *CG* 47.1. [25] *CG* 47.1–2.

Athanasius then followed this up, in language reminiscent of Romans 1, by relating how human beings 'in their folly have set aside the knowledge and service of him'.[26] These are without excuse because 'although they knew the way of truth their acts were contrary to their knowledge'.[27] This rejection of divine natural revelation is a pattern that will be repeated and strengthened as part of the rationale for the Word becoming flesh in *De Incarnatione*.

It has been suggested that in his development of Logos doctrine Athanasius betrayed a perspective strongly influenced by Stoicism. It cannot be denied that there is some relationship between Athanasius' teaching on the Word and Stoicism. *Διακόσμησις* was a term sometimes used by the Stoics for the divine management of the universe and a verb used by Athanasius to describe the Word's action in the world was the related *διακοσμέω*.[28] Camelot calls the image of the pilot holding the rudder (39.5) a 'classic comparison' of the Stoics.[29] Grillmeier has also pointed out the Athanasian 'take-over' of the Stoic concept of the world as a body, in passages such as *De Incarnatione* 41, as evidence for the view that Athanasius saw the Word as taking the place of the human soul in Christ, although he does note the differences between the Stoic 'world-soul' and the Athanasian Logos.[30] The similarity is so evident to Grillmeier that he can simply refer to the 'Christian-Stoic point of view' of Athanasius. And yet, one wonders if this is completely accurate.

First of all, we have seen that Athanasius was at pains to show that the universe reveals a maker who is *distinct* from creation,[31] a very different idea from the usual Stoic concept of an identification of God with the material world. In fact, in his refutation of paganism he took three sections (27–9) to attack in particular the identification of all or part of nature with God. Also, he had specifically explained himself (in 40.4), as we saw, as *not* proposing a doctrine of the *λόγος σπερμάτικος*, 'as the Greeks held'. In addition, the connection between the Stoic concept of the world as a body (*σῶμα*) and that of Athanasius may not be quite as direct as Grillmeier believes. In *De Incarnatione* 41, Athanasius stated,

[26] *CG* 47.2. [27] *CG* 47.4. [28] Cf. Zeno Citieus, *Stoicus* 1.28.
[29] Camelot, *Contre Les Païens*, 189 n. 1. [30] Grillmeier, *Christ*, 311.
[31] Cf. esp. *CG* 35. 4.

the philosophers of the Greeks say that the universe is a great body; and rightly so. For we see it and its parts as objects of our senses. If, then, the Word of God is in the universe, which is a body, and has united himself with the whole and with all its parts, what is there surprising or absurd if we say that he has united himself with man also.[32]

The point Athanasius was making here is *not* that the manner in which the Word is active in the world (i.e. as a soul in a body) is the same manner in which he has joined himself to a human body, but rather that just as the Word of God is active in something material, such as the world, so also it should not surprise us that he could become a man. In other words, we should not think it impossible that God should be present in a physical human body, since it is understood that he is present with the whole physical universe. The proof of this intention on Athanasius' part is that the reason he believed we can call the world a 'body' is that 'we see it and its parts as objects of our senses'. In other words, the world is a 'body' because it is a physical, material reality, just as the body of Jesus was. In fact, as we shall see later, the way in which Athanasius saw the presence of the Word in the Incarnation is quite different from his action in the world, for there is an identification of the Word with the human being Jesus Christ that does not take place in the rest of creation.[33] If, as Grillmeier has admitted, the Athanasian doctrine of the Logos does not fit with the Stoic 'world-soul' concept and if the manner in which the Logos works in the world is not really analogous to how he is present in the human body in the Incarnation, one begins to wonder if the positing of any conscious 'Stoic' borrowing on the part of Athanasius, especially as it relates to his understanding of the Incarnation, really creates more problems than it explains.

In addition, the evidence would seem to imply that Athanasius was quite eclectic in his use of philosophical ideas. Besides Stoic

[32] Taken from *Athanase d'Alexandrie: Sur L'Incarnation du Verbe, Introduction, texte critique, traduction, notes et index*, C. Kannengiesser, ed., Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2000) and hereafter referred to as *DI*.

[33] For example in *DI XIX*.3 where he baldly states that the phenomena at the time of the crucifixion showed that 'Christ on the cross was God' (*ταῦτα δὲ τὸν μὲν ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ χριστὸν Θεὸν ἐδείκνυον*), something it would be unimaginable for Athanasius to say about some other part of creation, such as the Sun.

concepts, Camelot has shown reminiscences of Philo, Homer and Aristotle;[34] and most commentators have seen, in the description of a generous God not begrudging existence to the world (41.2), an echo of Plato's *Timaeus*. Meijering suggests that, while maintaining an 'antithesis' with the Platonic system as a whole, Athanasius used the terms and ontology of Platonism.[35] It seems to this author that his use of these sources does not suggest a deep adoption of their underlying philosophies but rather a borrowing of metaphors and illustrations to support a point he is making at the moment. This would seem to indicate that Athanasius, rather than actually espousing a particular philosophical school of thought, simply appropriated in a somewhat superficial way what he considered useful of the general philosophical heritage of his day. And of this 'general heritage' Athanasius would have been understandably attracted to Stoic descriptions of nature, because of his belief that the created order is a true revelation of the creator God and that the divine Word was the enlivening and harmonizing principle of all. 'Optimistic Stoic doctrine that saw the cosmos as permeated by divinity (Virgil, Aen. 6, 726–727) was antithetical to the cosmic pessimism of gnosticism.'[36] The Stoic world-view could often provide more language than gnosticism for the orthodox Christian theologian, as earlier Christian writers had already discovered.[37] There can be little doubt that, in Athanasius' own opinion at any rate, Christian scripture furnished him with the majority of his ideas about the Logos. There are at least fifteen biblical allusions or direct quotations concerning the Word vis-à-vis the Father and creation in sections 35 to 46.

A short, but important *excursus* must be made at this point. Louth has pointed out a difficulty with understanding Athanasius in the *CG* on the point of the original capability of humans to know God.[38] Since this impinges directly on the need for mediation of divine

[34] Camelot, *Contre Les Païens*, 189–95.

[35] E. P. Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius: Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 114–32.

[36] Tibiletti, 'Stoicism', 796.

[37] For example, Athenagoras used the verb διακοσμέω in a cosmological sense four times (*Legat.* 7.1; 10.1; 22.12; 24.3) and Theophilus employed the distinctions of λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and προφόρικος (*Ad Auto.* II. 10; II. 22).

[38] A. Louth, 'The Concept of the Soul in Athanasius' *Contra Gentes–De Incarnatione*', *Studia Patristica* 13 (1975), 227–31.

knowledge to humanity, it is important that we treat the issue here. While the general pessimistic view of man's innate ability to reach and contemplate God is quite obvious in *DI*, Louth has noted that the view presented in *CG* is much more optimistic. Comparing especially sections 30–4 of *CG* with sections 3 and following in the *DI*, he concludes that there are irreconcilable differences between the two accounts. Besides contrasts with regard to the accounts of the fall, Louth points out how the general optimism of the earlier work concerning the human soul's ability to know God contrasts strongly with, if it doesn't actually contradict completely, the pessimism of the later work. This then has repercussions for the entire view of redemption presented. 'The development of the idea in chapter 7 of *DI* that repentance would not suffice for men to return to incorruption marks absolutely the contrast between *CG* and *DI* on the question of redemption.'[39] Louth has rightly pointed out some serious contrasts between the two works. And yet, one wonders if the differences have been stressed a bit too much. In comparing the two works, it would seem that Louth places too much emphasis on chapters 2 and 3 (sections 2–10) of *DI*, to the exclusion of the following chapter (11–16). As we shall note, chapter 2 deals with the Incarnation primarily as the redemption from death and the giving of life. One should expect to find contrasts here with what is presented in *CG*, as Louth does. However, as we shall see, chapter 4 deals specifically with the loss of human knowledge and the contemplation of God. This part, it would seem, is the one to be compared and contrasted with the parallel section on contemplation in *CG*. And in this section of *DI* the passages Louth quotes, especially from section 3 of *CG*, fit in fairly well. For example, Louth quotes 3.1:

> So they turned their minds away from intelligible reality and began to consider themselves. And by considering themselves and cleaving to the body and the other senses, deceived as it were in their own interests, they fell into selfish desires and preferred their own good to the contemplation of the divine.[40]

While this does remind one of Plotinus, it also calls to mind the theme of chapter 4 of *DI*, where Athanasius went to great lengths, as we

[39] Ibid., 228. [40] Ibid., 227.

shall see, to relate how humanity has repeatedly been given chances to 'see' God and has continually looked elsewhere for his contemplation. While the account in *CG* seems to owe more to Greek philosophical terminology, the two accounts are not quite as diametrically opposed as one might think.

This is not to say that there are not still major differences. The strong statement in *DI* 11.1 concerning the lack of an innate ability for mankind to know God, does seem to contradict the optimistic tone of *Contra Gentes* 30–4. And yet, even here the contrast is not quite as strong as one might think. Notes of 'pessimism' can be found in the earlier work. For example, in *CG* 30.2, immediately after describing how the 'way of truth' is within our own souls, Athanasius stated, 'For having in ourselves faith, and the kingdom of God, we shall be able quickly to see and perceive the king of the universe, the saving Word of the Father.' While here presenting the ability of the soul to see God, Athanasius still asserted the need of 'having faith and the Kingdom of God' within. Even here, although not as clearly as in *DI*, there is need of divine grace. In addition, there are passages in *DI* which, if taken in isolation, would seem to suggest a very optimistic view of man's ability. For example, in 4.6, while speaking of the image of God given to man originally, he wrote, 'and if he still preserved this likeness by keeping God in his knowledge [or 'contemplation'—*κατανόησις*], he would stay his natural corruption, and remain incorrupt'. The context makes clear here that Athanasius did not believe that men can and will do this of themselves, but this sentence alone would seem to suggest the ability to do so. The most difficult passage in *CG* to harmonize with the view presented in *DI* is section 34.2–3. There Athanasius wrote,

> For they are able, as they turned away their understanding from God, and feigned as gods things that were not, in like manner to ascend with the intelligence of their soul, and turn back to God again. But turn back they can, if they lay aside the filth of all lust which they have put on, and wash it away persistently, until they have got rid of all the foreign matter that has affected their soul.

This passage, if taken at face value, does in fact seem to eliminate any need for the Word's Incarnation for it seems to suggest that men, *in their present state*, have the capability to turn back to God. Probably

the best we can do is assume that here Athanasius was talking about a hypothetical possibility, based on the soul 'made after the image and likeness of God' (34.3) which is never in reality brought to fruition. It should be noted how closely this would reflect the view quoted above from *DI* 4.6. It may also be that the 'laying aside' of filth, the 'washing away' and the 'getting rid' of sin is to be understood as something which only the Incarnate Word does. These are certainly things that Athanasius was to put in the account in *DI*. Be that as it may, one does wish that Athanasius had been clearer at this point.

Even allowing for this true and significant difference in the two accounts, one should not think them to be irreconcilably contradictory. The major points of the 'spiritual' history of man presented are fairly consistent. The gist of both accounts is that man was originally created in such a state that he could continue in a life of blessed relationship with God, but perversely chose, and continually chooses, to turn away from that relationship. The difference in the accounts comes from the ability for this relation, being originally 'natural' in *CG*, to be a gift in *DI*. This is a real difference, but should not be exaggerated. While in *CG* the emphasis is placed on the contemplation motif, in *DI* we see a 'double' motif of, first, in sections 4–10, the loss of life, and second, in sections 11–16, the loss of knowledge of God. These two motifs provide the bases for the two reasons of the Incarnation presented in the treatise, which we shall treat later in this chapter.

In summary then of this section, let us review our findings. First, Athanasius has argued in *Contra Gentes* that the order and harmony of the created world point to a single Creator, in whom the Alexandrian bishop included both the Father and the Son. The Father works directly in the world through his Word, and both God and his Word mutually manifest each other in the universe. Contrary to some recent studies, Athanasius here was not greatly influenced by philosophical concerns, and continuity between *CG* and *DI*, which together form a single work, is demonstrable. We shall now continue our perusal of Athanasius' view of the divine unity *within which* the plurality of Father and Son is located by analysing what he has written on the subject in *Contra Arianos*. Only after we have appreciated fully how he conceived the intimate relationship within the Godhead, will we be able to understand his presentation of the mediation that takes place through the Word.

4.2. THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD IN 'CONTRA ARIANOS'

We shall now deal in this section with the presentation of the unity of the Godhead in the *Contra Arianos*, contrasting his use of θεότης with that of Eusebius and Marcellus. Then, we shall turn to the account of how the knowledge of God is mediated through God's image; and finally, to how and why Athanasius understood that mediation to take place in the Incarnation. However, it should be understood that the structure of our present argument does not reflect the structure of Athanasius' argument as presented in the three books of the *Contra Arianos*.[41] Actually it might be argued that the books of the *Contra Arianos* reveal little pre-planned structure at all. Kannengiesser has made a valiant effort to analyse the structure of the first two books and his work is of great value, but if it reveals anything it is the disarray in which these books come to us.[42] The cause of the disorder will continue to be a mystery, although it must be maintained that the overall consistency of theology presented in these books is plain. If anything, the 'messy' nature of the books may show a desire to go over the same points again and again, a repetitiousness which Athanasius himself realized was necessary and for which he asked the pardon of the reader at several points, and can be taken as positive evidence for Athanasian authorship.[43]

Not only are arguments repeated, but also within the arguments we shall see that Athanasius dashed between presenting the unity of

[41] Of the first three *Orationes*, only the third has sustained any real doubt about its Athanasian provenance. In particular, Kannengiesser has questioned whether Athanasius was the author (see in particular Charles Kannengiesser, 'Athanasius' So-Called *Third Oration against the Arians*', *Studia Patristica* 26 (1991), 375–88). However, he has been generally unsuccessful in convincing the majority of scholars, who continue to regard it as genuine, and so we shall treat it as authentic here. The so-called 'Fourth Oration against the Arians' is universally considered not to be Athanasian in authorship and therefore will not be dealt with here. However, the many correlations between it and the first three documents are sufficient to show some connection—possibly a follower of Athanasius authored the work. Its anti-Marcellan tone is notable and any parallels with the first three in this regard will be duly mentioned.

[42] C. Kannengiesser, *Athanase D'alexandrie Évêque Et Écrivain: Une Lecture Des Traités Contre Les Ariens* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1983).

[43] Examples can be found at *Contra Arianos* II.80.1 and III.54.3. An example outside of any overt polemical context is *De Incarnatione* 20.3.

the Godhead and demonstrating the mediation of the knowledge of that divinity. In other words, for Athanasius, the 'imminent' Trinity, or God-as-he-is and the 'economic' Trinity, or God-as-he-acts-and-reveals-himself,[44] were intimately joined together and an argument for one led fluidly into the other, as we have already seen in *Contra Gentes*.[45] This can be taken as proof of the centrality of the issue of divine mediation for Athanasius in the controversy with the 'Arians'. He argued for the full inclusion of the Son within the one true God, as we shall see, because he felt that this was the only way in which we could see the Father 'in the Son'.

First we shall investigate Athanasius' view of divine unity, particularly as it is revealed in the application of the term 'Godhead' (*θεότης*). It will become evident that he envisioned the 'Godhead' to be the one indivisible God within which the plurality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is located. In contrast, Eusebius of Caesarea, as we shall see, used the term exclusively to describe the *quality* of being divine and limited it in its strictest sense ('by nature') to the Father, with the Son only receiving it derivatively. Marcellus, on the other hand, only accepted one 'Godhead', but would not allow any suggestion of plurality within it. This comparison will also give us the opportunity to evaluate the recent suggestion by Lienhard that the various theological groupings of the period can be helpfully categorized as 'miahypostasism' and 'dyohypostasism'.[46] The reason that we are surveying Eusebius' and Marcellus' use of *θεότης* here, rather than in their respective chapters is twofold. First, to highlight their

[44] These distinctions can also be paralleled with the so-called 'ontic' and 'functional' concerns of Christology, which we have already argued above should not be dichotomized in treatments of this period.

[45] For example, the argument presented in *Contra Arianos* II.41.1 on 'oneness' leads seamlessly into a 'mediation' segment in II.41.2–43.6. Other examples are III.3.1–2 (unity) to III.3.2–3 (mediation) to III.4.1 (unity); III.10.1–11.3 (unity) to III.11.4–13.5 (mediation); and III.15.1 (unity) to III.16.2 (mediation) to III.16.3–7 (unity) then back to III.16.8a (mediation) and finally to III.16.8b for a final word on the unity of the Godhead.

[46] Cf. especially Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, as well as J. T. Lienhard, 'The "Arian" Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered', *Theological Studies* 48 (1987), 415–37, and J. T. Lienhard, 'Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of "One Hypostasis" ', in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 99–122.

usage of this term in a survey of their theologies would have given undue place to it in their theologies. Second, the significance of their understanding of θεότης comes out strongest when paralleled with that of Athanasius. For our purposes here, we shall limit ourselves to the Eusebius–Marcellus controversy that followed the Nicene Council. This is for the sake of length, as well as in order to compare usages that are more or less contemporaneous, both with each other as well as with Athanasius.

4.2.1. The One Godhead of the Father and the Son

In *Contra Arianos* II.41.1, Athanasius wrote about the oneness of God in relation to his creation of the world in a manner reminiscent of *Contra Gentes*: 'The Father of Christ is one, the ruler and maker of creation through his own Word.' However, he went on at this point to describe the Son's unity and identity in relation to the Father.

> The Word of God is one, being the only proper and genuine Son from his essence and having undivided with his own Father the unity of the Godhead. (εἷς ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, ὁ μόνος ἴδιος καὶ γνήσιος ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ ὢν υἱὸς καὶ ἀχώριστον ἔχων πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ τὴν ἑνότητα τῆς θεότητος).[47]

Several things can be noted from this passage. First of all, as we have already seen in *CG*, Athanasius presented the identity of the Father as bound up in what he does *through his Word*. Who the Father is becomes revealed to us through his acts, and these acts are done through the Word. This is then followed up by the presentation of the Word's 'oneness' and identity which is, in a similar manner, bound up in his relationship with the Father. Who the Word is, is contained in his being 'the proper and genuine Son' of the Father. In other words, both the identity of the Father and of the Son are comprehended in their mutual relationships. However, it is the following phrase that we wish to focus on at the moment. For the Word has 'the indivisible unity of the Godhead with his own Father'. Athanasius had

[47] Translated from the Greek text given in *Die dogmatischen Schriften: Orationes* I–III *Contra Arianos*, K. Metzler and K. Savvidis, eds., Athanasius Werke 1.1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998, 2000). All references to *Contra Arianos* are from this text and hereafter will be referred to as *CA* I, II and III.

maintained that the Father was one, and that the Word was one. To this point, Eusebius could have agreed. The bishop of Caesarea was adamant to prove the oneness of the Creator, and that his Word was unitary as well, as we have seen. However, Athanasius went beyond the Eusebian argument by going on to state that together the Son and Father are 'one, indivisible Godhead'.

The pivotal nature of this concept ought to be stressed. The 'unity' of the Father is concerned with his identity '*through his proper Word*' (*διά τοῦ ἰδίου λόγου*) and the 'unity' of the Word is seen in his identity '*with his own Father*' (*πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ*). That is to say, one cannot know either the Father or the Son without knowing both in relation to one another. And yet, these two are not to be considered two deities, for their relationship constitutes 'the indivisible unity of the Godhead' (*τὴν ἑνότητα ἀχώριστον τῆς θεότητος*).

The term *θεότης* used here for 'Godhead' is common but should not be ignored, for all its ubiquity. It is the contention of this study that the discordant usages of this term in the three theologians we are investigating reveal an underlying theological difference which had massive repercussions for their conceptions of how God is 'one' (as required by monotheism) as well as for their views of how God is 'seen' through the Son. It is only as we come to grips with these very real differences that we can fully appreciate their divergent views of divine mediation through the Son. It will also help us to better comprehend some of the theological nuances between factions during the 'Arian' controversy. We shall now continue our investigation of Athanasius' presentation of the 'unity of the Godhead' by looking in particular at an important passage from *CA* III that illustrates in particular how Athanasius conceived of the divine *θεότης*. We shall then briefly survey the applications of *θεότης* by Eusebius of Caesarea and by Marcellus of Ancyra as a means of contrasting their views with Athanasius.

In *CA* III.3–4, Athanasius has given one of the more complete presentations of how he conceived the relationship between the unity of God and the plurality of Father and Son. Here, he furnished what at first would seem a fairly odd description of the divinity of the Son: 'It is because the very being of the Son is the form and Godhead of the Father, that accordingly the Son is in the Father and the Father

is in the Son.'[48] It would appear that Athanasius here referred to the 'being' (τὸ εἶναι) of the Son in order to insist that it was part of his very existence to be within the Godhead of the Father. Then Athanasius cited Christ's pronouncement that 'I and the Father are one' (John 10 : 30) and added the reference previously alluded to, John 14 : 10: 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me.' The reason that Athanasius gave for the juxtaposition of the two statements is enlightening for our study. Christ said both, asserted Athanasius, 'in order that he might show both the identity of the Godhead and the unity of the essence' (ἵνα τήν μὲν ταυτὸτητα τῆς θεότητος, τὴν δὲ ἑνότητα τῆς οὐσίας δείξῃ). Athanasius argued here that the combination of the two statements by Christ was needed in order to make the twin affirmation, demonstrating that for him, 'identity of the Godhead' and 'unity of the essence' were not strictly synonymous phrases. The 'identity of the Godhead' is related to the Johannine phrase 'I in the Father and the Father in me' and seems to indicate that for Athanasius this mutual indwelling meant that they were identical in the sense that both were simultaneously and always present together. This will have obvious implications later for our understanding of the Athanasian view of Christ as mediator of the knowledge of God. Also, the addition of 'unity of essence' (ἑνότητα τῆς οὐσίας) indicates that not only are the Father and Son always 'co-present', but they are together essentially one. This was, to Athanasius, what was obviously meant by 'I and the Father are one'.

However, this strongly 'unitive' view of the Father and Son within the same Godhead along with an emphasis on the 'mutual identity' of the Father and Son would seem to lend itself to some sort of modalist conception of the Godhead. Indeed, this was precisely what the opponents of Nicaea were concerned about from the beginning, accusing the pro-Nicenes of 'Sabellianism'.[49] It was perhaps because of this very accusation that in *CA* III.4, immediately after the above

[48] *CA* III.3.3.

[49] Note Arius' concern, in his letter to Alexander of Alexandria (Opitz, 6.3), to fight against those who 'say Son-Father (υἱοπάτορα), dividing the monad like Sabellius'. This was not lessened later by the perception of Marcellus' monoprosopic view of the Godhead as modalistic in essence. Lienhard (*Contra Marcellum*) has amply shown the preponderance of the term 'Sabellius' as a kind of shorthand reference in the anti-Marcellan literature for Marcellus himself.

pronouncement concerning the 'unity of the Godhead', Athanasius proceeded to describe more fully what he had in mind.

The structure of paragraph 4.1 reveals the twin objectives that Athanasius was attempting to reach: he began the passage with 'For they are one' (ἓν γάρ εἰσιν) and then a few lines later, added 'but they are two' (ἀλλὰ δύο μέν εἰσιν). For Athanasius, the same subject can be predicated as 'one' as well as 'two'. Once again, we can see that the Alexandrian considered that the divine plurality was to be located within the unity of the 'one God'. First we shall look at his contention that Father and Son are 'one', and then we shall see how he distinguished them as 'two'. Here he laboured to demonstrate why his view of the unity of God was not modalism:

> For they are one, not as one then divided into two parts, and being nothing more than one; nor as one twice named, so that at one time he himself is a Father, but at another time he becomes his own Son (for this Sabellius thought and was judged a heretic).[50]

First Athanasius tried to distance his position from those who would divide the one into parts, a material view of the Godhead that was often associated with the Manichaeans.[51] In addition, he wanted to differentiate his view from what 'Sabellius thought', i.e. that the plurality within the Godhead was merely a plurality of names, but with only one underlying hypostasis. Thus, at one time God presented himself as Father, at other times as Son. It should be noted in passing that this description of 'Sabellianism' would also have fit the popular conception of Marcellus' position. As we have already seen, he would have differentiated strongly between the Father and Son, but the description of the divine plurality being one of names only

[50] *CA* III.4.1.

[51] Again, note the concern of Arius in the letter cited above in regard to those who 'as Manichaeus, thought the offspring to be a consubstantial part (μέρος ὁμοούσιον) of the Father' (Opitz, 6.3). The great opposition to ὁμοούσιος as an appropriate manner of speaking about the Father and Son relationship can be explained at least in part, by this association with Manichaeism. However, this should not lead one to think that the controversy was simply about proper vocabulary. As we are attempting to show in this study, there were substantial theological differences cloaked beneath the terms, as well as sometimes substantial agreement hidden by the differing usages of terminology. The recognition of this latter point with reference to οὐσία and ὑπόστασις was the great accomplishment of the Synod of Alexandria of 362 (cf. the *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, Greek text in Bibliotheca Patrum Graeca 25, J. P. Migne, ed. (1857), 794–810).

might be considered a fairly close reproduction of his view of God and his Word. Here, it would seem that Athanasius was aware of this accusation being brought against Marcellus and wanted to show how his own theology was not 'Marcellan'.

That Athanasius was aware that some had considered Nicene theology an offshoot of previous heresies seems apparent in another passage, where he worked to show that 'we do not introduce three origins (ἀρχάς) or three Fathers, as those following Marcion and Manichaeus'.[52] Rather, they are one just as the Sun and its radiance are one. Since there are not three Suns, but only 'one light that is from the Sun and in the radiance (ἕν το ἐξ ἡλίου ἐν τῷ ἀπαυγάσματι φῶς); so also we know only one origin'.[53] The illustration of light, suggested by Hebrews 1:3, was a favourite of Athanasius which, he thought, depicted the essential unity of the Father and Son.[54] This therefore meant that 'the Creator Word had no other manner of Godhead than that of the only God' (τὸν δημιουργὸν λόγον οὐκ ἕτερον τινα τρόπον ἔχειν θεότητος ἢ τὴν τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ). It is important to note that here

[52] *CA* III.15.2.

[53] It is noteworthy that, according to this explanation, Athanasius would have stated that, just as the Sun is the 'one origin' whence comes the radiance, so also the Father is the 'one origin' from which comes the Son. Thus, in answer to the Arian accusation that the Nicenes taught three 'origins', he would have countered that there was only one origin, which was the Father. This serves to highlight that it was not subordinationism *per se* which fuelled the anti-Nicene furore, but rather, how one located the 'subordination' with reference to the one true God. For 'inclusive' monotheism, there was a place for subordination (or τάξις) within the identity of the one God. Note the later references to the Father as ἀρχή in, for example, Gregory of Nyssa, [Basil] *Ep.* 38 and as the *principium deitatis* in Augustine's *De Trinitate* IV.29.

[54] Some of the many references to the light analogy occur in *De Dec.*12, 20.5, 23f.; *CA* II.41.4; III.3.2, 4.3, 11.1, 13.5, as well as here in 15.2. Athanasius also quoted his forebear Dionysius as favouring the light analogy as well in *De Sent. Dion.*15–16. It is interesting to note as well that there is an allusion in Dionysius to the Father as source of the Son when he is quoted as saying that 'God was always Father and the Son is not simply (ἁπλῶς) eternal, but his eternity flows from the eternity of the Father' (16). The obvious contrast between the Alexandrian bishop and Eusebius of Caesarea's careful qualification of the light analogy as a proper way of speaking of God will be made more explicit below in the section on the image theology of Athanasius. Note also Arius' similar hesitation concerning analogies from light (which he connected with the heresiarch Hieracas) in the previously cited letter to Alexander. As we have seen, the inclusion of the phrase 'we believe that he was, and is, and *he is light*' in the pronouncement of the Council of Antioch of 325 against 'those around Arius' may indicate that such language was a pivotal point of the early controversy.

Athanasius once again used the term θεότης to refer to the one God within which the Father and his Word existed.

Having established that the Father and Son 'are one', Athanasius went on to add,

> but they are also two, because the Father is the Father and not the Son himself, and the Son is the Son and not the Father himself. But the nature is one—for the offspring is not unlike the one who begot him, because he is his image—and all things of the Father's are the Son's.[55]

Athanasius did not want his teaching of the 'identity' of the Godhead to be taken to mean that the Father and the Son are completely identical with each other. The Father and Son retain their individual identities in relation to each other and so there remains a true plurality within the divine unity.

Much has been made of the fact that Athanasius never utilized the term *hypostasis* as the appellation of what is plural within the Godhead. In fact, while the Synod of Alexandria over which he presided sanctioned the use of one hypostasis or three hypostases in reference to the Godhead, both before and after this conference he regularly used only the term in the singular concerning the Godhead. This fact has been pointed out most recently by Lienhard, who uses it in his categorizing of schools of thought during the Arian controversy into 'miahypostasism' and 'dyo- (or tri-) hypostasism'.[56] On the basis of his analysis, Marcellus and Athanasius are both adherents of 'miahypostasism' while Eusebius of Caesarea would be a representative of 'dyohypostasism'. And yet, there would seem to be several difficulties with this hypothesis.[57]

First of all, it does not take into account the major biblical passage impinging on the discussion; i.e. Hebrews 1:3: 'he is the exact representation of his hypostasis' (χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ). That this might suggest a singularity of hypostasis within God is apparent

[55] *CA* III.4.1. [56] See especially Lienhard, 'Arian'; *Contra Marcellum*; 'Ousia'.

[57] We shall here only deal with the difficulties for this view based on the use of the term hypostasis. Later, we shall argue more thoroughly that the miahypostasism/dyohypostasism model is fundamentally flawed as a helpful categorization of the fourth-century Christological/Trinitarian controversy.

and would certainly have been a factor at this stage in how one termed the 'plurality' within God.[58]

Second, it exaggerates the importance of the term 'hypostasis' for Athanasius. While it is true that he only referred to a single hypostasis in the Godhead, he actually seldom used the term at all.[59] And he made quite clear on at least one occasion that he believed that 'subsistence (*ὑπόστασις*) is essence (*οὐσία*), and means nothing else but very being, which Jeremiah calls existence (*ὑπάρξις*)'.[60] Thus it would appear that the terms *ὑπόστασις* and *οὐσία* were synonymous for Athanasius and simply referred to the existence of something. This would certainly make it difficult to refer to a plurality of hypostases while at the same time asserting the *ὁμοούσιον*. When Athanasius wrote about what was 'one' in God, he more often used terms such as *θεότης* (most importantly), *εἶδος* and *φύσις*; [61] while his statements about the 'unity' expressed in this one divine nature were generally phrased in terms of its *ἰδιότης*, *οἰκειότης*, *ταυτότης* and *ἑνότης*. The refusal to use 'hypostasis' for the plurality of persons may also have had something to do with the previous controversy between Dionysius of Alexandria and his namesake in Rome. Apparently, at that time there had been an association of 'three hypostases' with 'three Godheads (*θεότητα*)'[62] and this certainly would have been something that Athanasius would have wanted to avoid.

A third obstacle to this interpretation is that it ignores the great emphasis which Athanasius placed on the plurality within the

[58] The realization that this passage was a possible argument against more than one hypostasis within God, and that it was not an insurmountable difficulty for those who thus taught concerning the plurality of divine hypostases, can be seen in Gregory of Nyssa, [Basil] *Ep*. 38. Besides *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*, Gregory also used *φύσις* and *πράγμα* to refer to what was respectively singular and plural in God. Cf. the helpful discussion of the so-called 'Cappadocian settlement' in Lienhard, 'Ousia' .

[59] In *De Syn.* 30, he noted his amazement that the tenth Confession at Nike and Constantinople 'even' prohibited the use of the term hypostasis (apparently since it was one of the few terms which had biblical warrant). 'Three hypostases' is listed in *De Syn.* 36.5 with other 'unbiblical' phrases used by the Arians. However, it should be noted that Athanasius was not opposed to all the terms listed (which included *τό ἀγένητον* and *οὐσία*), he was merely countering his opponents' claim that *ὁμοούσιος* should be avoided because it was unbiblical.

[60] *Ad Afros* 4.

[61] *Εἶδος* is used, for example, in *CA* III.15.4 in combination with *θεότης*. In *CA* II.4.2, the Father and Son are one '*τῇ ἰδιότητι τῆς φύσεως*'.

[62] Cf. *De Dec.* 26.2.

Godhead, an emphasis which contrasts absolutely with Marcellus and which will become even clearer later when we analyse the Ancyran's use of the term 'Godhead' and makes any theological category of 'miahypostasism' which includes both unhelpful, to say the very least.

A fourth point, which it would seem Lienhard's discussion does not adequately take into account, is the real difficulty of giving a common name to the three in the Trinity. While we have become accustomed to the formula of 'one *οὐσία*, three *ὑποστάσεις*', it is still difficult to answer the question, 'Three what?,' in any meaningful way. Any answer given, such as 'three persons' seems to assume a category of 'person' (which category is defined by certain common characteristics); and of the said category we have three representatives. And yet, the 'three' are presumably only called three because of what differentiates them, not what they have in common.[63] The enormity of the problem is shown later by Augustine, who asked, 'So Father and Son and Holy Spirit being three, we ask three what, meaning what do they have in common?'[64] He went on to explain that each is called what he is called (Father, Son or Holy Spirit) because that is how they are differentiated from each other. In another place, after confessing to not understanding the Greek contrast between *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*, he conceded that 'we say three persons, not in order to say that precisely, but in order not to be reduced to silence'.[65] While of course this was all stated after the time of Athanasius, it would seem entirely likely that the difficulty of naming what the three were would have been an obvious problem in his day as well and his 'solution', i.e. to simply list them as Father, Son and Holy Spirit was certainly in line with what Augustine was later to assert. In the passage discussed above (*CA* III.4.1), the Alexandrian bishop contents himself with saying that the Father and Son are two, 'because the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father'. The fact of the matter is that Athanasius not only avoided hypostasis as defining the 'plurality'

[63] This problem is the subject of much of Gregory of Nyssa's epistle on the use of *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*, usually counted as [Basil] *Ep*. 38. To this author, it would seem that Gregory here is not so much talking about the *reality* of the Godhead in these terms, as he is addressing *how we should talk* about that reality.

[64] *De Trinitate* VII.7. [65] Ibid., V.10.

of the Godhead, he regularly refused to refer to them by any generic name, preferring to simply state that they are three.

Lastly, Lienhard's discussion of the various theological systems assumes a uniform meaning of the term θεότης in all of the writers under discussion. This term can be translated 'divinity' or 'deity' and is the usual term being translated in the Church fathers by the term 'Godhead'. It can be used to describe the quality of being divine, or being god and in this sense of the term, an entity which was considered to be 'divine' would possess θεότης. It then came to be used as a noun for a being that possessed deity, and particularly in Christianity it came to refer to the Trinity, the 'Godhead' within which the three persons have their being. Thus θεότης and its English equivalent 'Godhead' have become a convenient way of referring to the one single 'God' within which the plurality of the Trinity is located. However, this use of Godhead to refer to the divine unity within which one understands a plurality of persons should not be assumed in Christian writers of the early fourth century. Indeed, we shall now try to show that the differing employments of the term θεότης reveal sharp distinctions in the varying theologies of the day. The blanket assumption that all talk of divine hypostases during the 'Arian' controversy was about how to refer to what is plural within the Godhead is anachronistic at best and misleading at worst. Thus, according to the theory, the 'miahypostatic' school would only accept the possibility of one hypostasis 'within the Godhead', while the 'dyohypostatic' understanding would allow for more than one hypostasis 'within the Godhead'. And yet, to state that 'the Eusebians had said that the two names "Father" and "Son" must have a referent *in the Godhead* itself'; or that 'the Eusebians held that there are *in the Godhead* two essences, hypostases, persons, powers, natures, objects, or Gods' is seriously to misunderstand Eusebius' theology.[66] The usage of the term θεότης differed greatly between these three writers. The categorization offered by Lienhard at this point simply does not accord with the usage of the term during this period. In order to illustrate this point, we shall now turn to Eusebius' use of θεότης.

[66] All this is found in Lienhard, 'Ousia', 111.

4.2.2. The Two Separate Godheads in Eusebius

In coming to Eusebius of Caesarea's utilization of the term θεότης, it is our assertion here that he *never* used it to describe a divine unity within which a plurality of hypostases was to be located. He often used it to refer to the 'divinity' of the Son, as well as the 'divinity' of the Father, because the attribute 'divine' pertained to them, but never hinted that these together should be conceived as one 'Godhead'. The references to the Godhead of the Father are especially illuminating in the insight they give to how he conceived Christian monotheism. A typical reference is found in *ET* I.11.1: 'the only unbegun and unbegotten, who possesses natural deity' (ὁ μόνος ἄναρχος καὶ ἀγέννητος, ὁ τὴν θεότητα οἰκείαν κεκτημένος).[67] By 'natural deity', it would seem that Eusebius wanted to make clear that only the Father had his deity simply as a result of who he is.[68] The relationship between ὑπόστασις and θεότης is made especially clear in a passage from *ET* II.7.1: 'But fear, O man, by not confessing two hypostases, that you introduce two origins (δύο ἀρχάς) and fall from the monarchical Godhead (τῆς μοναρχικῆς θεότητος)'. The Caesarean's fear is that anyone who is convinced by Marcellus to confess only one divine hypostasis will necessarily have two origins, i.e. two Gods.[69] However, it is not because Eusebius believed that one should confess two hypostases within one Godhead, but rather that by confessing two hypostases, one could more easily differentiate between the hypostasis of the 'one God' and that of the Son. For he continued, 'Because there is one unbegun and unbegotten deity (θεότης) and the Son has been begotten from him, one shall be the origin, the monarchy and one the

[67] An interesting point is the juxtaposition of 'unbegun' and 'unbegotten', something which is quite common in the *ET*. We have seen that for much of his life, Eusebius seemed not to distinguish between γένητος ('originate') and γέννητος ('begotten'). It is tempting to see in the repeated pairing of these two words (ἄναρχος καὶ ἀλέννητος) that at this late point in his life, he had come to understand that 'unbegotten' might not imply a beginning to some, and thus added 'unbegun' to it, in order to make himself clear that it was the Father alone who had neither beginning nor begottenness.

[68] The only other occurrence of θεότης οἰκεία that this author could find was a few lines later, in *ET* I.11.3, where it is once again used to describe the deity of the Father to the exclusion of the Son.

[69] This can be contrasted with the Athanasian idea above of the Father being the ἀρχή of the Son, but both being still included within the one Godhead.

kingdom'.[70] Christians are monotheists, he explained a few lines later, for this reason. 'It is not necessary for the one who understands two hypostases to posit two gods. For we do not determine them to be of equal honour, nor are they both unbegun and unbegotten.'[71] Even Christ excluded himself from that 'Godhead', for he said, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' Thus, 'because he clearly showed God the Father to be also God of the Son, there is one God preached in the church of the Son'.[72] A clearer presentation of what we have termed 'exclusive' monotheism could not be asked for. The Christian church is a monotheistic church, and its one God, 'the only unbegun and unbegotten Godhead', is the Father and does not include the Son. To state that Eusebius saw the Father and the Son as two hypostases *within* the one Godhead is to misunderstand his theology completely.

While Eusebius emphasized the exclusion of the Son from the Godhead of the Father, we have seen from our earlier study of his image theology that the Caesarean bishop believed that the Son was divine, even if not in the same way that the Father was. In the *Contra Marcellum* and *Theologia Ecclesiastica*, he referred repeatedly to the θεότης of the Son.[73] Many of these refer to the mediatorial role of the Son, as we saw in Chapter 1. Such a one is *ET* II.17.3, in a commentary on John 1:1:

> Not that he was God above all, but that he was (a) God. For the conjunction 'and' connects the deity of the Son to the Father. Wherefore he says, 'And the Word was God', in order that we might see the God above all to whom he was the Word.

This is a clear presentation by Eusebius of what we have termed 'deictic' mediation. The hypostasis of the Son (who possesses θεότης) acts as a pointer to the 'God above all' (who possesses his own θεότης οἰκεία, 'natural divinity'), but is not identified with that God. 'For neither would someone speak piously to say that the Son is the God over

[70] *ET* II.7.1. [71] *ET* II.7.2–3, [72] *ET* II.7.3–5

[73] Eusebius stressed the deity of the Son because he perceived (rightly, if our analysis of Marcellus above is correct) that Marcellus had 'distanced' the Son from God, even as he included the Word within the divine πρόσωπον of the Father. Among the many occurrences of θεότης in this sense, besides the ones commented on in the text, are: *CM* I.4.21, 36, 51; *CM* II.1.8; *ET* I.14.1; I.20.71, all having to do with the Saviour's deity, often paralleled with his humanity.

all (for of whom shall he be Son who has appropriated the unbegun and unbegotten Godhead?)'.[74] Thus there is only one God preached by the church, but there is also one Only-begotten Son of God who is the image of the Father's Godhead (εἰκὼν πατρικῆς θεότητος), and *on account of this*, is called God.[75]

4.2.3. The One Godhead of the Father in Marcellus

Turning from Eusebius to Marcellus we find a very different picture, as should be expected. We also, once again, need to bear in mind the paucity of evidence. In the collected Marcellan fragments found in the Vinzent edition,[76] there are only eight occurrences of θεότης. And yet, even these give us an indication of what his understanding of the divine Godhead was and how he compared with Eusebius of Caesarea and Athanasius. As we have seen, he held to a very strict monoprosopic view of the Godhead and there is nothing in his use of θεότης in the *Contra Asterium* which contradicted that assessment. He maintained, of course, that one should not divide the 'Godhead' of God and his Word.[77] The Godhead, as we saw earlier, only seemed by action (δοκεῖν ἐνεργεία μονῇ) to expand.[78] There is no hint that the human being taken on by the Word possessed any kind of θεότης, even though he did state that the Godhead was shown bodily 'in the flesh'.[79] This would accord with Eusebius' complaint that Marcellus made the body of Christ the image of the Father's Godhead.[80] Not surprisingly, in three of the eight occurrences of θεότης in the Marcellan fragments it is connected with the term μόνας. For Marcellus, the Godhead could only be identified with the one πρόσωπον, which is God himself. At least, this is the evidence that is included in the fragments collected from the Eusebian polemical documents and

[74] *ET* I.7.3. [75] *ET* I.2.
[76] The references are 30.1; 34.2; 60.8; 62.3; 86.6, 20; 106.10, 128.11.
[77] Fr. 70. [78] Fr. 73. [79] Fr. 33.
[80] *ET* II.23.4. This would explain Eusebius' desire that we 'hear the Word . . . as an image of God and image not as in soulless matter, but as a very precise one in a living Son, like the archetypical Godhead of the Father' (*ET* II.17.3). Both statements tend to reinforce the views of mediation already seen, that for Eusebius the image must be very like the archetype, while for Marcellus, the image is not identical with, and therefore does not have any real similarity to that which it represents.

which, therefore, illustrates how Marcellus thought and wrote soon after the Council of Nicaea. However, there is an interesting use of *θεότης* purportedly by Marcellus that has come down to us through Epiphanius.[81] It is in the confession that Marcellus made to Pope Julius and which convinced the Roman leader and others in the West that he was orthodox. There he stated that he confessed 'the Godhead of the Father and of the Son to be undivided' (*ἀδιαίρετον εἶναι τὴν θεότητα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ*). This is a surprising find in the limited Marcellan corpus, to be sure. In great contrast to his earlier statements concerning the 'monoprosopic' unity of the one Godhead as made up of God and his Word, he now included the Father *and* the Son in the one *undivided* Godhead. It could be that this confession passed down by Epiphanius is not authentic, or that Marcellus was being disingenuous simply to curry the much-needed favour of the Western church. Another possibility exists, and that is that here we can glimpse the influence of Athanasius on the Ancyran bishop. Both had been deposed from their sees around 339, and both had gone to Rome for approximately the same period of time. They had evidently met there, and it has been suggested that they mutually influenced each other theologically.[82] And yet, our study so far has shown a theological gap between Athanasius and the early Marcellus (as revealed in the Eusebian fragments) which would seem unbridgeable. The dates recognized for writing of *CA* I and II would make them coincide more or less with Athanasius' time in Rome, but there seems to be little in them that would be harmonious with what we have seen of Marcellus' theology as presented in the *Contra Asterium*. The Athanasian emphasis on the plurality *within* the unity of the Godhead and his complete identification of the eternal Word with the Son of God were obvious in his earliest writings, such as *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*, and, if anything, actually became more pronounced over time. While it may be true, as Tetz avers, that Marcellus was the one who encouraged Athanasius to write the *extract* against the 'Arians',[83] there is no indication that the Ancyran influenced any change in the Alexandrian. Zahn noted the similarity

[81] *Haer.*72. 2–3.

[82] Cf. M. Tetz, 'Athanasius von Alexandrien', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 4 (1979), 337–8; Zahn, *Marcellus*; and Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 1–9.

[83] Tetz, 'Athanasius', 337–8.

of exegesis of Proverbs 8:22, but this is a slender piece of evidence upon which to build any sort of theological connection.[84] The very section that Zahn mentions which exhibits this similarity (*CA* II.18–82) is precisely where we have found some of our strongest evidence for a 'plurality within the unity of the Godhead'.[85]

By way of summary, we note that we have traced Athanasius' doctrine of the divine unity from the early *Contra Gentes* through to the much later *Contra Arianos* III and have found him to be quite consistent in presenting a view of the 'one, true θεότης' *within which* the plurality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is found. There is no substantiation for Stead's claim that for Athanasius, 'we cannot claim there is any consistent suggestion of numerical identity in the strict sense',[86] if he means by this that there is no meaningful way in which Athanasius believed the Father and Son to be truly 'one God'. If, on the other hand, his meaning is that the Father and Son were not completely and numerically identified with each other, i.e. that the Son is not the Father and the Father is not the Son, then the conclusion becomes so commonplace for the patristic period as to be banal. Stead's conclusion can be explained as the result of a study based solely on Athanasius' use of ὁμοούσιος divorced from its theological context. Indeed, Stead presents his conclusion as a corrective of two 'misreadings' of Athanasius' use of the term. Perhaps it would be helpful at this stage to briefly analyse Athanasius' use of the term.

First, it should be understood that ὁμοούσιος was never a foundational word in Athanasius' own theologizing. It predominantly occurs in apologetic contexts where he is defending (or qualifying) its use. For instance, in *De Decretis* 23–4 and *De Synodis* 41–54, Athanasius was defending the use of the term in the Nicene creed, while in section 25 of *De Decretis* and in *De Sententia Dionysii*, he justified Dionysius of Alexandria's use of the term. In addition, he was obviously aware

[84] Zahn, *Marcellus*, 118. While the Marcellan and Athanasian understanding of the 'creation' of wisdom as referring to the Incarnation was certainly not the majority opinion, they were not the only ones to hold it and thus the similarity cannot be considered, in and of itself, as strong evidence of cooperation between the two. Similar views were also offered by Eustathius of Antioch (*apud* Theodoret, *Dial.* I.90), Gregory of Nazianzus (*Oratio* 30.2), Gregory of Nyssa (*C. Eun.* III.584b) and Didymus (*De Trinitate* III.816).

[85] See, for example, *CA* II.41.1–4.

[86] Stead, *Divine Substance*, 265.

of the potential for misunderstanding that ὁμοούσιος carried, as is manifested in *De Decretis* 24.

Having shown the non-centrality of the term for Athanasius' own theology, we should also understand that he was willing to defend it strongly as an important Nicene word. However, even in this, what Athanasius wished to defend was not the word *per se*, but the sense behind it.[87] Stead has distinguished between two differing meanings of the term: the generic sense, in which it would describe two individuals of a *genus*; and the numerical sense, by which it would denote a single *ousia*.[88] And yet it seems that this categorization is a false dichotomy with regard to Athanasius' use of the designation. He emphasized the idea of 'oneness' in many places. For example, he argued in *De Decretis* that the Nicene term meant a 'oneness' and 'identity' and should not be taken 'in the human sense'.[89] In other places, Athanasius employed it to describe the sharing of properties between the Father and Son in such a way as to imply the 'generic' view of the word.[90] And yet it would be wrong to see these as competing theories of the import of ὁμοούσιος. Rather, Athanasius held to both. It was *because* the Son was ὁμοούσιος to the Father that he shared his attributes. However, this did not mean for Athanasius that thus the Father and the Son were simply two entities or examples of the same *genus* in the way that two men would be. The reason for this was that one of the 'properties' of the Father was that he was μόνος. Therefore, the Son was also μόνος.[91] This then ensured that there was a single οὐσία of the Father and Son. In this way, Athanasius can list the 'common properties' of the Father and Son:

> The Father is eternal, the Son is also eternal; for through him the ages came into being. The Father is the one that is; of necessity, the Son also is 'he that is over all, God blessed forever, amen', as the Apostle said. It is not lawful to say of the Father: 'there was when he was not'; it is also unlawful to say of the Son: 'there was when he was not'. The Father is almighty, the Son is also almighty . . . The Father is light; the Son is radiance and true light. The Father

[87] Cf. *De Syn.* 41.1; 54.1.

[88] Stead, *Divine Substance*, 265.

[89] *De Decretis* 24.1, 2.

[90] Cf. e.g. *De Synodis* 41ff.

[91] This should not be confused with Eusebius' view of the Son being an image of the Father's oneness described above. The Caesarean argued that just as the Father was 'one' (εἷς) so was the Son. However, the Father and Son together were not the one and only God.

is true God; the Son is true God. . . . To sum up, of all that the Father has, there is nothing that does not belong to the Son.[92]

This 'sharing of attributes', far from leaving the impression of two separate entities, leaves no doubt that the Son is included within the identity of the one God 'over all'. Athanasius then follows this up by stating as a general principle that 'those to whom we are alike and whose identical nature we share, with these we are one in essence (*ὁμοούσιοι*)'.[93] Hence, we men and women are 'mortal, corruptible, capable of change, originated from nothing' because we share the same nature. The Father and Son together are the one true God because they share the same divine nature. For Athanasius, God simply *is* the Father begetting the Son.

Thus it is clear that Athanasius did indeed speak of a numerically unitary Godhead, within which was to be located the plurality of the Father and Son. In comparing his view of the 'one God' with that of Eusebius of Caesarea, we found that for Eusebius the 'one *θεότης*' of monotheism was to be identified completely with the '*θεότης*' of the Father, and the '*θεότης*' of the Son was a separate, derived one which was meant to point us toward the Father. For Marcellus, on the other hand, there is the indication, at least in the earlier writings, that since God was strictly one hypostasis, there was no room for any 'plurality' within his *θεότης*.

It has become evident that Athanasius held to what we can describe as 'inclusive' monotheism in that he sought to include the Son and the Holy Spirit *within* the identity of the one God. That this perspective of the 'Arian' controversy (i.e. between 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' views of monotheism) was Athanasius' own seems beyond doubt. He often referred to the 'exclusion' of the Son from the one God that he perceived in his opponents.

The Son is not another God—for he is not to be conceived as external—since there would altogether be many once a foreign deity is conceived of alongside the Father. For though the Son is other as an offspring, he is the same as God, and he and the Father are one in the particularity and kinship of the nature and in the identity of the one Godhead, just as it has been said.[94]

[92] *Ad Serapionem* II.2. [93] Ibid., II.3.

[94] *CA* III.4.2. *διὸ οὐδὲ ἄλλος θεὸς ὁ υἱός-οὐ λὰρ ἔξωθεν ἐπενοήθη-, ἐπεὶ πάτως καὶ πολλοὶ ξένης παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπινοουμένης θεότητος. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἕτερον ἐστιν ὡς*

Although owing to the focus of this study on Christ as mediator we have emphasized the identity of the Son within the Godhead, it should be understood that Athanasius just as clearly included the Holy Spirit within the same identity of the one Godhead. Thus, 'we confess God to be one through the Triad' (*ἕνα διὰ τῆς τριάδος ομολογοῦμεν εἶναι τὸν θεόν*) and 'the one Godhead in Triad' (*τὴν μίαν ἐν τριάδι θεότητα*).[95]

Having established how Athanasius conceived of the unity of the Godhead as 'containing', so to speak, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are now in a position to understand better his theology of divine mediation and how his Trinitarian perspective influenced it. We shall first investigate how Athanasius used traditional terms of mediation before we study in detail his theology of the image of God.

4.3. MEDIATION LANGUAGE IN ATHANASIUS

We will now turn our attention to the use of 'mediation' language in Athanasius, especially as it relates to God's relation to the world. We shall look at his use of the terms 'mediator' (*μεσίτης*), 'mediate' (*μεσιτεύω*) and 'medium' or 'middle' (*μέσος*). In reality, Athanasius did not use any of these terms much—the total occurrences number at 34.[96] Of these, four are from works of dubious authorship, which we shall ignore here.[97] Of those remaining, two (*μέσος* in *Hist. Arianorum* 44.6 and *Contra Arianos* II. 70.1) have nothing to do with the issues that concern us here.

Two occurrences of *μεσίτης* are quotations from other documents. While they do not show directly what Athanasius believed, they are of some interest to our study here. Found in *De Synodis* 23.4 and 26,

γέννημα ὁ υἱός, ἀλὰ ταὐτόν ἐστιν ὡς θεός, καὶ ἕν εἰσιν αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ πατὴρ τῇ ἰδιότητι καὶ οἰκειότητι τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῇ ταυτότητι τῆς μιᾶς θεότητος, ὥσπερ εἴρηται. Note in particular the contrast between the Father's *θεότης οἰκεία* in Eusebius of Caesarea, and Athanasius' assertion here that the Son and Father are 'one in the *οἰκειότητι* of nature'.

[95] *CA* III.15.5.

[96] These data are taken from G. Müller, *Lexicon Athanasianum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1952).

[97] These include one use of *μεσιτεύω* in *De inc. Ver. et c. Ar.* PG 1024B13, and three occurrences of *μεσίτης*, one each in *C. Arianos IV* PG 476B4, *De inc. Ver. et c. Ar.*PG 1024B10, and *Sermo Maior de Fide* PG 1280B13.

they are quotations from creeds, the former from the Second Council of Antioch in 341 and the latter from the 'Macrostich' Creed of 345. These are important for us mainly in showing that Athanasius knew the use of the term μεσίτης in creeds which he considered Arian or at least not sufficiently pro-Nicene, even though the usage is not terribly controversial. In the Antiochene creed, the Incarnate Word was called 'mediator between God and man', echoing the New Testament passage in 1 Timothy 2:5. The occurrence in the 'Macrostich' is a little more interesting — the writers anathematized any that held that the Word 'was not . . . mediator . . . before ages'. While we shall see that Athanasius can speak of a mediatorial role for the pre-incarnate Word, he will generally avoid such language.

There are three places where Athanasius denied the existence of any intervening μέσος between the Father and the Word. In *Contra Arianos* I. 15.7, he was arguing against the idea that the Word is God simply because he participates in the divine nature which is by nature the Father's alone.[98] For Athanasius, this argued for some 'stuff' external to the Father that is shared between them. And if this were so, then 'he will not now be partaker of the Father, but of what is external to him' (15.6). That which is shared between them needs to be their 'essence' or there will be some intervening external thing (μέσος) between them, which was unacceptable to Athanasius. In similar ways in *De Decretis* 24.4 and *CA* III. 66.4, he argued that there can be no μέσος between the Father and the Word. Whoever sees the Son, then, sees the Father, for their relationship is like that of the Sun and its radiance.[99] 'Truly the light and the radiance are one, and the one is manifested in the other, and the radiance is in the sun, so that whoever sees this, sees that also.'[100]

Of the remaining passages where mediation was talked about in a Christological context, by far the greatest concentration occurred in *CA* II. 24–6 and in the parallel passage *De Decretis* 7, 8. Since these two passages are very similar in content, we shall simply look at the *Contra Arianos* passage.

[98] Similar to Eusebius of Caesarea's view, as shown above.

[99] This will be a crucial part of Athanasius' concept of the image of God, as we shall see below.

[100] *De Dec*. 24.2.

Toward the end of section 24, Athanasius quoted a passage written by the 'Eusebians':

> God willing to create originate nature, when he saw that it could not endure the untempered hand [ἀκράτου χειρὸς] of the Father, and to be created by him, makes and creates first and alone one only, and calls him Son and Word, that, through him as a medium [μέσος], all things might thereupon be brought to be.

From our study of Athanasius' thought concerning the relationship between God and creation in *CG*, we can quickly guess how he would receive this. For Athanasius, nature was continually declaring God's handiwork and presence. This quotation would seem to indicate that the Arians felt completely the opposite, at least with regard to creation. We can see that Athanasius would have seen here a direct threat, not only to what he felt to be the orthodox view of Christ, but also to what he understood to be the Christian view of the world. For this reason, he stated that 'the whole creation will cry out against them as saying unworthy things of God'.[101]

Before dealing with the issue of whether the created world can bear the direct touch of God, which is really the assertion of the quotation, Athanasius stated that he believed this view dishonoured God by suggesting that he was too proud to condescend to the level of creation. And yet, as Athanasius noted from the Gospel of Matthew 10:29 and 6:25–30, God is constantly active in the world. If he can be directly involved in the work of providence at the very lowest levels, why not in creation?

> If then it is not unworthy of God to exercise his providence, even down to things so small, a hair of the head, and a sparrow, and the grass of the field, also it was not unworthy of him to make them. For what things are the subjects of his providence, of those he is maker through his proper Word (τούτων καὶ ποιητής ἐστι διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου λόγου).[102]

Here, Athanasius wanted to affirm that God the Father made the world through the Word and at the same time to assert that the Father is still the maker [ποιητής] of the world. The Word does not act as any kind of protecting 'medium' between the frailty of the created order and the hand of God, but rather is simply the one through whom the

[101] *CA* II.25. [102] Ibid.

Father is maker. It is helpful to note here the usage of ἴδιος, as we saw above in *CG*, to denote the unity of being and action of the Father and his Word. The Father, according to Athanasius, does not have power to make which he then gives to the Word, but rather he is the maker who makes the world 'through his own Word'. In this sense, then, the Word, active in the world, is *himself* the 'untempered hand' of God.

Athanasius then went on, in section 26, to the real concern expressed in the quotation given, that is, that the world could not bear the direct touch of God without some mediating presence in between. He argued against this view in two ways. First, he stated that, if created things could not bear the direct touch of the hand of God, then why could the Word bear it in being created? It is worth quoting Athanasius at length here.

> If even the Word be of originated nature, how, whereas this nature is too feeble to be God's own handiwork, could he alone of all endure to be made by the unoriginated and unmitigated essence of God, as you say? For it follows either that, if he could endure it, all could endure it, or, it being endurable by none, it was not endurable by the Word, for you say that he is one of the originate things.[103]

The force of Athanasius' argument should not be lost here. If God managed to make something (the Word) directly, then why could he not create other things in the same way? And if he could not, then surely he would not have been able to create the Word either. This argument runs against the Arian assertion that the Word is part of the created order. It is very possible that the Arian formula that the Word was 'a creature, yet not as one of the creatures' was an attempt to answer this objection.

Athanasius next argued that a view that 'originate nature could not endure to be God's own handiwork' will result in the absurdity of an unending chain of mediators.

> it must follow, that, the Word being originate and a creature, there is need of a medium in his framing also, since he too is of that originate nature which endures not to be made of God, but needs a medium. But if some being as a medium be found for him, then again a fresh mediator is needed for that second, and thus tracing back and following out, we shall invent a vast crowd

[103] *CA* II.26.1.

of accumulating mediators; and thus it will be impossible that the creation should subsist, as ever wanting a mediator.[104]

It should be noted that here, once again, Athanasius' concerns were not simply Christological, but cosmological as well. We have seen in *CG* (and will see in *DI*) that Athanasius had a deep and abiding belief that nature reveals true things about God and his activity. This profoundly affected his view of the world as well as his view of the Incarnation. It is because Athanasius believed that God, through his Word, directly acted in creation and revealed himself in nature that he held that God could also become flesh and reveal himself in it as well. This view of the relationship between God and the world, and how he reveals himself, is fundamental to understanding Athanasius' view of the Incarnation.

A third argument against the need for some sort of ontological mediator between God and creation is found a few sections later, in 29.4. Here, the focus is on God's will. Would not the necessary existence of a mediator between God and created things limit the power of his will, 'as if his will did not suffice to constitute whatever seemed good to him'? After citing Psalm 115:3 and Romans 9:19 on the power of God's will, he stated that if we understand that 'his mere will is sufficient for the framing of all things', then a mediator to come between God and creation is completely unneeded.

We have seen how Athanasius completely denied any need for an ontological mediator between God and creation. He argued that the character of God, on one hand, prevented this; and the frailty of creation, on the other, did not necessitate it. It would seem likely that Athanasius saw this as a major flaw in the Arian doctrine and this may account for the general scarcity of 'mediation' language in his writings. In spite of the biblical use of the term 'mediator' for Christ, Athanasius may have thought that there was simply too much confusion due to the controversy with the Arians and therefore decided to avoid it. However, there are three examples of this language which give a hint of the positive view Athanasius held with regard to the Word as mediator. Two of these are indirect in their presentation of Athanasius' views, while the third is more straightforward.

[104] *CA* II.26.2.

One of the indirect references to the Word's mediation occurs in *CA* II. 7.6, where in reference to the High Priest Aaron, Athanasius noted that after 'going into the holy place, he offered the sacrifice for the people; and in them [the high priest's clothing], as it were, mediated between the vision of God and the sacrifices of men'. Here, Athanasius was using Aaron and his robes as an illustration of the Word and his humanity. However, for our theme, it is perhaps most important to note that Athanasius used 'mediation' in the context of the high priest and the access of the people to God through him. This usage is confirmed in another passage that speaks of mediation, but only indirectly of Athanasius' own view. In the letter *Ad Adelphium*, Athanasius was ironically quoting the Arians hypothetically, for the purpose of trying to show that the Arians in their theology were working against their own best interests. He thus put into the mouth of the 'Arians', among other things, 'we do not desire the Word to be made flesh, lest in it he should become our mediator to gain access to you, and so we inhabit the heavenly mansions'.[105] Here, the reference is obviously to the Incarnate Word and the point of the mediation that he provides, from having been made flesh, is that of 'access to God'. While Athanasius was hesitant to use 'mediation' language in his theology in general, the few times that he did use it, it was to show that the Word brings God to men, and, consequently, men to God.

The last reference we have to analyse is perhaps in many ways the most surprising, for Athanasius here referred to the pre-incarnate Word as mediator. In *CA* II. 31.7, just a few lines after the arguments, treated above, against the need for an ontological mediator in creation and providence, Athanasius, with reference to those who receive God's commands in the Old Testament, said that 'each of these has the mediator (μεσίτης) Word, and the wisdom of God which makes known the will of the Father'. What is surprising is that, after so much time refuting the need for the Word as a mediator, Athanasius here described him explicitly as a mediator. It is important to take careful note of the context for a proper understanding. In fact, here Athanasius' point was, as before, the unity of the Father and Son. When God commanded those of the Old Testament, there were signs of the independence of the one commanded, for 'then the

[105] *Ad Adelphium* 5.

hearer answers; and the one says, "Whereby shall I know?" and the other, "Send someone else"; and again, "If they ask me, what is his name, what shall I say to them?"' (31.6). However, 'when that Word himself works and creates, then there is no questioning and answer, for the Father is in him and the Word in the Father' (31.7). Thus, the context makes it clear that Athanasius has not here contradicted himself about a separate Word acting as a mediator between God and humanity. But, in what way is the Word here said to be a mediator? It is a 'revelational' mediation; that is, by communicating and 'making known the will of the Father', he acts as mediator. This would seem to be an important point for our argument. The Word is mediator not as a third party who comes between God and man, but rather as God himself condescending and communicating his will and making himself known. We shall see that this was a fundamental point of Athanasius' theology of the Incarnation that also shaped his view of salvation.

We have seen that Athanasius was hesitant to use 'mediation' language to describe how God interacts with the world through the Son, probably because of the use of those terms by his opponents. He attacked their views of mediation on two fronts, both of which were built upon assumptions the Alexandrian bishop made about the divine unity, which we examined in the previous section. He argued first, as we have already begun to see, that there is no *need* for the mediation of a 'third party' between God and the created world, what we have shown to be the 'Eusebian' model of mediation. Second, he argued that such a mediation *would not work*; no intermediate being could effectively mediate true knowledge of God, and with it salvation. We shall now expand our study of the Athanasian approach to divine mediation to passages in which the direct 'mediation' terminology (μεσίτης, μεσιτεύω, μέσος) does not occur. While this terminology is not used, we shall see that Athanasius expands his basic view of how we can see the Father through the Son by a number of analogies, particularly that of image. By looking at Athanasius' theology of the divine image, we shall better understand his critique of the efficacy of the 'deictic' model which was held by Eusebius of Caesarea, along with a more complete presentation of his own view of how God mediates knowledge of himself to the world through Christ.

4.4. IMAGE THEOLOGY IN ATHANASIUS

It has long been recognized that the concept of 'image' is central to Athanasius' theology.[106] While we have seen that Athanasius limited his use of overt 'mediation' language, much of what he understood of divine mediation is imbedded in his theology of the image of God. In the context of our present study, one of the most striking aspects of Athanasius' view of the divine image is how much it contrasts both with that of Eusebius as well as that of Marcellus. These differences, while to be expected between Eusebius and Athanasius, are also quite evident between the Alexandrian and the bishop of Ancyra. An analysis of these contrasts will have tremendous import for our understanding of the controversy that swept the church in the years following the Council of Nicaea.[107] We shall begin our analysis by taking an overview of how Athanasius conceived of the image in general terms. Then we will look at how his view of the determining nature of a being's origin affected his view of what could be a proper divine image. After this, we will be ready to understand why he believed the only true image of God could be an unoriginate image. Finally, we shall look at his critique of what we have called in this study 'deictic' mediation.

We shall first turn to *Contra Arianos* I.20–1 and a parallel passage in II.33–6. In these passages, Athanasius gave a portrait of the divine image in relationship to other analogies for the Father–Son relationship.[108] This will give us insight into his view of what is entailed in being an 'image'. Indeed, he has stated that his desire here is to lead the reader to consider 'that the Son is image and radiance of the Father and expression (χαρακτήρ) and truth' (20.3). In having listed several 'double' biblical terms (light/radiance, substance/expression,

[106] Cf. Régis Bernard, *L'image de Dieu d'après St. Athanase*, Théologie 25 (Paris: Aubier, 1952).

[107] Our findings will continue to call into question the conclusions reached by Lienhard concerning the use of the broad categories of miahypostasism and dyohypostasism to characterize the theologies of this period, especially as the data here illuminate the very wide theological gap which existed between Athanasius and Marcellus of Ancyra (against as well the theological affinity assumed in Zahn and Tetz).

[108] Indeed, it would seem that Athanasius saw these 'figures' as a primary resource sanctioned by the bishops gathered at Nicaea for use against the 'Arians'. Cf. *Ad Afros* 6.

and Father/Son), Athanasius then argued that the existence of one of the pair necessitates the existence of the other. Thus, he asserted that if a light exists, there will be 'its image' the radiance; if there is a substance, its 'whole expression' will be there; and if the Father exists, then of necessity there will exist 'his truth, the Son'. It is especially interesting to notice the contrast of Athanasius' usage of the 'light' theme with that of Eusebius.[109] As will be recalled, the Caesarean bishop felt it was only possible to use the analogy of light and its radiance for the divine relationship if a series of qualifications to what might otherwise be inferred from it were kept in mind. These included the separate existence of the Son from the Father; the 'pre-existence' of the Father before the Son (whether logically or temporally); and the fact that the Father receives no 'completion' to his deity through the Son, i.e. the Father is complete in himself, whether the Son exists or not. In contrast, Athanasius here wished to emphasize the 'essential unity' of the Father and Son and that the existence of the divine *hypostasis* meant that 'immediately' (*εὐθύς*) the 'expression' and 'image' existed (20.5). In fact, the expansion of this description of the light and its radiance as a type of the Father and Son found in *Contra Arianos* II.33.2 would almost lead the reader to conclude that Athanasius had Eusebius' description in mind. The Alexandrian bishop described the propriety of the illustration by noting that, like the Son's relationship to the Father, the radiance is intrinsic (*ἴδιον*) to the sun, the essence (*οὐσία*) of neither the sun nor the radiance is divided or diminished, and that the radiance *coexists* with the sun as 'a true offspring' (*ὡς γέννημα ἀληθινὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ συνόν*).

Having asserted this close union of the divine image to the imaged, Athanasius then gave a warning to his opponents—'Let those who measure the image and form of the Godhead by time consider into what kind of pit of irreligion they fall' (*σκοπείτωσαν οἱ τὴν εἰκόνα καὶ τὸ εἶδος τῆς θεότητος χρόνῳ μετροῦντες, εἰς πόσον ἀσεβείας βάραθρον πίπτουσιν.*)[110] We should notice the pairing of the terms *εἰκών* and *εἶδος*.[111] We have seen how Eusebius interpreted the divine

[109] Cf. above, pp. 48–51, with reference to *DE* IV.3.

[110] *CA* I.20.4.

[111] We should also note in the above quotation (*CA* I.20.4) that Athanasius was criticizing those who would 'measure the image and form of the Godhead by time'. While doubtless he has primarily in mind those who had stated that 'there was (a time) when he [the Word] was not', it should be noted that his warning would be just

εἰκών, analogously to the image or statue of a king,[112] as showing simultaneously the likeness of the image to the one it represents and its lack of identity to that represented. This very tension between 'likeness' and 'unlikeness' made the royal image, for Eusebius, the ideal analogy of the relationship between the Word and God the Father. In addition, we have seen that Marcellus, with very different results, had much the same view of the function/identity of an 'image'. For him, the 'non-identity' of the image and that which is imaged explained the separation from and even disagreement (ἀσυμφωνία) with God that the humanity of Christ (the 'Son') displayed. By pairing εἰκών here with εἶδος, Athanasius signals that he is thinking along very different lines.

Εἶδος, while having some semantic overlap with εἰκών, generally is used to describe *how* something itself appears. Thus, while the εἰκών ἀνθρώπου could exist on a coin or as a statue, the εἶδος ἀνθρώπου would normally be translated as the 'form of a man' or as his shape.[113] In other words, Athanasius is using a term (and paralleling εἰκών with it) which not only implies likeness (as does εἰκών) but also allows an identity between the εἶδος and the one to whom it belongs. It is difficult to imagine the shape or form of a man being other than, or outside of, the man himself. While it would be a precarious argument indeed to come to any conclusions about Athanasius' theology based solely upon the pairing of these two terms here, we can see that this is a fundamental aspect of his view of the divine image. Indeed, we

as appropriately focused on Marcellus of Ancyra. As we have seen, while Marcellus argued vigorously for the eternality of the Word within God, he very clearly delineated the time period of the existence of the 'image' of God (identified with the humanity of Christ) as beginning at the Incarnation. We should note that there is here not only a terminological difference between Athanasius and Marcellus, but a theological one as well. Marcellus would have been completely opposed to the pairing of the 'image' and the 'form' of the Godhead, since for him the 'image' necessarily was of something other than, and separate from, the imaged. This evidence of a deep gulf between the theology of Athanasius and that of Marcellus will become more and more evident as we continue our analysis of the Alexandrian's writings.

[112] A concept which we find once, maladroitly employed, in Athanasius, at *CA* III.5.3–5.

[113] Cf. H. G. Liddell, and R. Scott, eds., *A Greek–English Lexicon, with revised supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 482. This is not to deny other significations of εἶδος such as 'kind' or 'class', simply that they do not enter our present discussion. This semantic connection, however, does underline the close link between the 'form' of something and its 'kind' (or identity).

shall observe that he argued that the only possible imaging of God necessitates not only a *similarity* with God (although he was happy to use the term as well), but an *identity* with God. This will be particularly obvious with reference to the difference between originate and unoriginate being.

The proper measure of the divine image, thought Athanasius, should be God himself. 'For such as its Father is, so must the image be'. (*τοιαύτην γὰρ εἶναι δεῖ τὴν εἰκόνα, οἷός ἐστιν ὁ ταύτης πατήρ*).[114] Thus one should look to the attributes of the Father to determine whether the image is really his. Since the Father is 'eternal, immortal, powerful, light, King, almighty, God, Lord, Creator, and Maker', so must the image be all these things.[115] It should not escape our attention that once again we have here a substantial difference between Athanasius' view of the image and that presented by Marcellus in his *Contra Asterium*. As will be remembered from our last chapter, Marcellus, in his polemic against Asterius, had pushed the *non-identity* of the image with the imaged to an extreme. Asterius had called the Word the image of all the attributes of God in order to show the high level of similarity that existed between the Word and the Father. We have seen how this would fit in well with an 'Eusebian' model of mediation which required an image which was 'similar to' but not 'identical with' that which it represents. Marcellus had argued that if the Word were 'image of glory' (for example), then this meant that the Word could not be 'glory' itself. The image, for Marcellus, could not contain, or be, the reality of which it was an image. Hence, as we have seen, the divine Word was not a proper image; an 'invisible image of an invisible God' made no sense to Marcellus. Rather, the humanity of Christ was the *locus* of the image of God—the visible image of the invisible God—signalling or 'pointing to' something else which was not there (*δεικτικὴ ἀπόντων*). However, in Athanasius, there is a profound difference in approach from Marcellus. Athanasius responds to the claim that the Word is the image of God, and therefore cannot *be* God, not with a denial of the function of 'image' for the Word, as we saw in Marcellus, but rather with the argument that the only proper

[114] *CA* I.20.7.

[115] *CA* I.21.1. Athanasius explicitly connects this with the mediation of the knowledge of the Father through the Son by quoting John 14:9: 'These things must be in the image in order that truly "he who has seen the Son has seen in him the Father" '.

image of God is God. Once again it should be recognized that here we have not only a terminological difference between the Alexandrian and the Ancyran (which in itself would be an indication that a very close theological link between the two was suspect), but also a deep theological difference concerning *who* the image of God is and *how* that divine imaging works.

4.4.1. Origin and Capability

Because the nature of God was the measure by which an effective image of God should be judged, Athanasius had asserted that the truly divine nature of the Word was essential to his function as image. And, consequential to this, his opponents had failed to understand that the nature of something was inextricably linked to its origin. This could be seen in both the human analogies of 'word' and 'son' as applied to the Godhead. By looking at these two analogies briefly, we shall be able better to understand the nature of the Word of God as understood by Athanasius.

'God is not like man', he declared, quoting Judith 8:16.[116] As he had just previously stated:

> If they are reasoning about some man, let them reason humanly about his word and his son; but if they reason about God who created men, no longer let them think humanly but in a different way concerning the nature above humans.[117]

The reason why the words of men and the Word of God should be differentiated, according to Athanasius, is that in each case, the nature of the speaker affects the nature of the word spoken. Crucially, for our understanding of Athanasius' response to his opponents during this entire controversy, he noted that the human word 'ceases and does not remain'. The reason for this evanescence is seated in the origin of man—'he has come to be out of nothing' (ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος γέγονε). God, on the other hand, is he 'who is' (ὤν ἐστι) and is eternal and therefore 'his word is (ὤν ἐστι) and is eternally with the Father'.

Athanasius' reasoning here is enlightening not just for the argument at hand, but also for a general understanding of his reaction to

[116] *CA* II.35.2. [117] *CA* II.35.1.

the 'Arian' challenge. The importance of the *ex nihilo* argument here for the transitory nature of the human word is especially important. As we have seen, the argument that the Son of God originated 'out of nothing' was one of the first points of contention between Arius and those who attacked him. While it seems that it was fairly soon abandoned by those who defended him, we have also seen the rather confused discussion of the *creatio ex nihilo* within Eusebius. The Caesarean bishop certainly understood the import of the assertion that 'he who is' (i.e. who exists non-contingently) begat 'him who was not' (i.e. who only exists contingently or dependently) or else there would be two eternal beings who both existed non-contingently. In fact, he said that he would be amazed 'if anyone were able to say otherwise'.[118] It was, therefore, an obvious point of attack for Athanasius. However, before we consider his direct reaction to the *ex nihilo* as applied to the Son, it is helpful to see how he envisioned the relationship between the origin of something 'from nothing' and its ensuing nature. Here, in a context not referring to the Son as *ex nihilo*, Athanasius has stated that a man that comes from nothing is incapable of uttering anything which will last. The evanescence of his words is merely an outcome of his own instability of being.

This connection between the origin of a thing and its consequent nature and capability is one that lies at the heart of much that Athanasius wrote. The very nature of the created universe, 'inasmuch as it subsists out of nothing, is fleeting, weak and mortal'.[119] It is because of the frailty of human nature that, once turned away from the sustaining presence of the Word, it began to return to the 'non-existence' from which it came.[120] While this is a well-known facet of Athanasius' thought, it has not always been sufficiently appreciated in the context of his polemic against the Arians. He attacked the *creatio ex nihilo* as applied to the Son because it ran counter to his understanding of the deeper narrative of creation and redemption.

[118] *θαυμάζω δὲ, εἰ δύναται τις ἄλλως εἰπεῖν*, in his letter to Alexander of Alexandria (Opitz, 15).

[119] *CG* 41.2.

[120] *DI* 3.1, 3, 4; 4.4, 5, 6; 5; 6 among many others. This will be treated in detail later in this chapter. Suffice it to say at the moment that the logic of the 'contingent existence' of creatures made 'from nothing' is the driving force of the narrative of creation and redemption provided in *DI* 2–10.

If the Son were ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων then he would have no ability to give eternal existence to others. Indeed, it is only on account of his origin as 'having sprung forth from God' (διὰ τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ πεφυκέναι) that the Word has the nature and capability to redeem fallen humanity.[121]

Returning to the argument in *CA* II.35, we should note that for Athanasius, an *ex nihilo* origin determined the nature of the creature, which in turn determined the capability of that creature. Thus, a man created 'from nothing' not only had no ability in and of himself to continue existing, but also was incapable of producing a word that reflected a more durable existence. While we have seen that this has major implications for how the origin of the Word impacts how he can effect salvation, Athanasius' argument here is distinct. In this passage, he argued that because it is *God's* Word, it must reflect *divine* nature. The eternal, self-existing God must have an eternal self-existing word. Thus, while human words are many, various and vanishing, God's Word is one and the same, never changing—a reflection of its author. This, contended Athanasius, is the reason that the divine Word is called a 'radiance' (ἀπαύγασμα) and 'perfect offspring' (γέννημα τέλειον). In fact, it is only as understood in this way that the Word can be considered 'both God and image of God'.[122] The word which proceeds from the mouth of a 'ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων' human is not apt 'for operation' (εἰς ἐνέργειαν) and he or she must therefore use hands 'because they have existence while their word does not' (ὅτι αὗται μὲν ὑπάρχουσιν, ὁ δὲ λόγος αὐτῶν οὐχ ὑφίσταται). Thus Athanasius views the relationship of the Word to the Father in the functionality of an image; it reflects in its being and capabilities the nature of the speaker.

It might be helpful to briefly compare and contrast Athanasius' view of the relationship of the Word to God with that of Eusebius of Caesarea. There are several points of the Caesarean's thought that Athanasius here echoed. Both warned that the Word of God should not be thought to be exactly the same as human words. 'No one should think that the Word of God is like that among humans consisting of syllables, put together with nouns and verbs, articulated and pronounced.'[123] However, the disagreement between the two authors

[121] *CA* III.15.2. [122] *CA* II.35.4.

[123] *DE* V.5 (230A). Both Eusebius and Athanasius deny that the Word can be thought of as προφόρικος.

is also clear. For Eusebius, the very fact that God is portrayed as speaking[124] in creation meant that there was another to whom he spoke. 'For it is very clear that, as one is speaking, he speaks to another; and he who commands, commands another beside himself.'[125] He is called Word 'because the almighty has deposited in him the words that make and create all things'.[126] Thus there are 'prior' words (whether antecedent temporally or, more likely, logically) spoken by the Father to the 'Word' by which the creation takes place.[127] Eusebius stressed that while human words were products of physical organs like the tongue, throat and mouth, obviously this could not be the case with the unembodied God. The major theme of the difference with the Word of God, however, is in his autonomous existence, external to, but in all ways like, 'the nature of the first and unbegotten and only God'.[128] All of this contrasts sharply with Athanasius' view of the Word being internal to the being of God. In fact, in the passage above, Athanasius stressed that, in spite of the obvious limits to the illustration of human words to show the relationship between God and his Word, they are similar in that 'just as this [human word] is proper (ἴδιος) to us and not a work external (ἔξωθεν) to us, so

[124] In a commentary on Psalm 33:9: 'For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.'

[125] Πρόδηλον λὰρ, ὡς ὁ λέγων, ἑτέρῳ λέγει·καὶ ὁ ἐντελλόμενος, ἐτέρῳ παρ' ἑαυτὸν ἐντέλλεται (*DE* V.5) Early in his career, Athanasius had used a similar argument for the pre-existence of the Word (*CG* 46), but even then his approach can be distinguished from that of Eusebius. Where Eusebius stressed the separate existence of the Word, Athanasius emphasized the coexistence of the Word with God (*οὐκοῦν ἀνάγκη συνεῖναί τινα τούτῳ ᾧ καὶ ὁμιλῶν ἐποίει τὰ ὅλα*). The context of *CG* 46 makes abundantly clear that, whatever the similarities, Athanasius discerned a very different relationship between the Word and the Father (cf. discussion above on the aujto-language here used). One is tempted to conclude that Athanasius dropped this sort of argument in his later writings because of these similarities with 'Arian' arguments for the ontological separation of God and the Word. Note that both Eusebius and Athanasius contrast with Marcellus, as we have already seen, who explicitly denied that the 'speaking' of creation implied the existence of another being.

[126] Ibid.

[127] This passage could easily have suggested to Athanasius the accusation he made that his opponents taught 'two Words'.

[128] *DE* V.5. Note especially the repetition of ἴδιως and καθ' ἑαυτόν to describe the Word's separate existence, as well as how God spoke to 'another beside himself' (ἑτέρῳ παρ' ἑαυτόν) in 229C. In passing, we can note once again the Eusebian pattern of dual stress on the 'similarity' and 'non-identity' of the image to God.

also is the Word of God proper to him and not a work'.[129] It was only this intimate connection between God and his Word, sharing his essence and reflecting his divine nature, which allowed the Word to be a proper image of God at all.

Athanasius understood the term 'Son' to encapsulate the essential unity of the Word with the Father that, for him, underlay the 'mediation' function of the Word. Thus, he often linked it with 'image' language, such as in *CA* II.2.[130] In the section previous to this, he had stated that he would assume as true for the moment the assertion brought forward by the Arians.[131] He then went on to try and show what he believed were the results of the asseveration that the Word of God is a work. 'If therefore he is not a Son, let him be called a work.'[132] At first, it would appear that Athanasius here accused the Arians of saying that the Word was *not* the Son and that *therefore* he was a work. However, as we have already seen, the separation of the Word and the Son was exactly what Eusebius and Asterius had accused Marcellus of Ancyra of doing. Athanasius' opponents were content to state that the Word was both son and a work and would certainly have considered the distinction (between son *or* work) brought up here to be a false dichotomy. And yet we should not too quickly assume that here Athanasius is simply trying to make a polemical point with an unsubstantiated accusation. To the contrary, the dichotomy that Athanasius posited between 'son' and 'work' was a very real one for him. As we have seen and shall see more later, the Father–Son relationship necessitated a much more intimate connection than that between a Maker and his work. In addition, this essential unity

[129] *CA* II.36.4.

[130] As we noted above, this linking of Son and image was also done by Marcellus. However, the Ancyran did it for precisely the opposite reason. The Alexandrian emphasized the connection to underscore the 'essential' unity of the divine image to God; Marcellus, on the other hand, did it because between the Son and the Father he envisioned a 'gap' (between two *hypostases* or *prosopa*) which was inconceivable between God and his Word.

[131] *ΛαμΒάνοντες παρ'αὐτῶν τὸ λῆμμα*. This most likely refers to the immediately following argument *ad absurdum* found in section 2, rather than the general approach of the *Oratio* II of 'going through certain texts brought against the Catholic view, instead of bringing his own proofs' as mentioned by Cardinal Newman (*Athanasius*, A. Robertson, trans., A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd series, 4 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1891), 348 n. 13).

[132] *CA* II.2.1.

between Father and Son was fundamental to his view of the divine image.

By making the Son a work of God, rather than something internal to God, one not only implies something about the nature of the Son, but also about God himself. If, as his opponents had said, the Son was a work, then we could apply to him whatever terms can be predicated of works. However, we cannot call him 'Son' or 'Word' or 'wisdom'.[133] In addition, these titles of the Word did not simply describe who the Word was, they also made assertions concerning the divine nature itself. Hence, if there is no Son, then God cannot be called Father, but rather only 'Maker' (*δημιουργός*) or 'Creator' (*κτίστης*), since he would have the same relationship to the Word as a 'work' as he would to other created beings. Then, if what the Arians have said is true, we must assert that a creature is 'image and exact expression of the framing will'.[134] God himself, however, under this assumption would apparently be barren of any 'generative nature' (*γεννητικῆς φύσεως*)[135] with the result that there would be 'no Word, nor wisdom, nor, in short, any image of his own essence'. Essence (*οὐσία*) in this context was probably used by Athanasius to mean nothing more than 'God as he is in himself'. Athanasius then concluded that, given the premise that there is no Son of God in essence (i.e. who is 'of the essence' of God and therefore internal to the Godhead), then there is no image of God himself (*εἰ γὰρ μή ἐστιν υἱός, οὐδὲ εἰκών*).

[133] Ibid. As we saw in the previous section, all of these names indicated that the Word was something *intrinsic* to the nature of God, rather than external. This assumption should be kept in mind in the current argument.

[134] *Καὶ ἔστω ἡ μὲν κτίσις εἰκὼν καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς δημιουργικῆς βουλήσεως αὐτοῦ.* The concept of 'image of his will' probably suggested to Athanasius the idea that one looking at this sort of 'image' could get a view of what God's will was, but would not be able to see God himself in the image. Later (2.4) in the same passage he would object that while the Arians are able to attribute 'willingness' for creation, they fail to recognize that in God which lies above the will. Below we discuss Athanasius' argument against the possibility of any originated being fulfilling the task of 'image' for the Unoriginate, in his essential nature.

[135] Along the same lines, but with reference to the creation, in the next section (2.2), he complains that the Arian position would mean that the divine essence is not 'productive' (*καρπογόνος*).

4.4.2. Unoriginate Image of the Unoriginate God

This 'essential' unity of the Son with the Father also illuminates Athanasius' approach to the terminological problem of the 'unbegotten' (*ἀγέννητον*) as opposed to the 'unoriginate' (*ἀγένητον*). We have seen that these terms were virtually interchangeable for Eusebius of Caesarea.[136] It should be noted that for Athanasius, these two terms were not only *not* synonymous, but the concepts of 'originating' and 'begetting' behind them were mutually exclusive. Thus, he did not argue that the Son, *in spite of* being *γέννητος*, was still not to be considered *ἀγένητος*. Rather, he maintained that it was *because* the Son was a *γέννημα* of the Father that he *could not* be among the *γένητα*. He spells out his reasoning in *CA* I.31.4, after delineating the possible meanings of *ἀγένητον*.[137] Just because God is *ἀγένητος*, in the sense that he is 'not made, but exists eternally' (*μὴ ποιηθέν, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ ὄν*)[138], does not mean that the Son is 'originated' (*γένητον*). In fact, because the Word is begotten (*γέννητον*), he cannot be 'originate' (*γένητον*) in this sense. 'What sort the one who begat him is, so also must be the Word.'[139] That this intimate relationship implied by the Word being 'offspring' is important for Athanasius' view of the divine image then becomes clear. The unoriginate nature of God demands that his image also be unoriginate. 'If therefore God is unoriginate, then the image of this one is not originate, but an offspring, which is his Word and wisdom.'[140]

This next led Athanasius into a crucial statement concerning the possibility of any created or 'originated' being serving as a proper

[136] As indeed in general in the pre-Nicene period. As noted above, there is some evidence that Eusebius had begun to understand a difference between the two terms by the time he wrote *ET*.

[137] This discussion (*CA* I.30.5–7) lists four possibilities and is the most detailed in Athanasius' writings. Parallel accounts of the various meanings of *ἀγένητον* can be found in *De Dec.* 28 (where there are three mentioned, the last being a conflation of the last two in the present account) and, possibly, *De Syn.* 46. This last (which only mentions the final two mentioned here) is complicated by the fact that there is textual confusion as to whether the term being discussed is *ἀγέννητον* or *ἀγένητον*.

[138] He has already noted that the sense of 'not being begotten, nor having a father' (*μήτε δὲ γεννηθὲν ἔκ τινος μήτε ἔχον ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα*) only pertains to God the Father (I.31.3).

[139] I.31.4—*τοιοῦτον εἶναι τὸν λόγον, οἷός ἐστιν ὁ γεννήσας αὐτόν.*

[140] Ibid. *οὐκοῦν εἰ ἀγένητος, ὁ θεός, οὐ γενητή, ἀλλὰ γέννημά ἐστιν ἡ τούτου εἰκών, ἥτις ἐστιν ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ σοφία.*

image of God. The term used by Athanasius in *CA* I.31.5 and usually translated as 'likeness' is ἐμφέρεια and is of special significance for our understanding of Athanasius' view of the mediation of divine knowledge. It should also be recalled that Eusebius of Caesarea had used this term to exclude any imaging likeness between the Son and other created things in his letter to the Caesarean congregation shortly after Nicaea.[141] The Alexandrian bishop used ἐμφέρεια less often than he did the more usual terms of ὁμοίωσις or ὁμοιότης. Besides this passage, it occurs in *CA* I.21.1 and II.3.3. In each case, it is intimately connected with the relationship required between an 'image' and that which it represents. In summary, for Athanasius, ἐμφέρεια was the preconditional relationship between the image and the prototype necessary for the function of the mediation of knowledge of the imaged through the image. Where there is no ἐμφέρεια there can be no true εἰκών.

As Athanasius never tired of reiterating, the function of the image was such that, when one looked at a true image, he simultaneously was looking at that which was imaged. This function of divine image was precisely what Christ meant when he said, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.'[142] Indeed, Athanasius recognized that this function of image was envisioned by his opponents as well. In the present passage, he intimates that it is their intent to show 'that the one is like the other, so that he who sees the one beholds the other'.[143] However, Athanasius posed a rhetorical question: 'For what sort of likeness to the unoriginated is there in the originated?' (ποία γὰρ ἐμφέρεια τῷ γενητῷ πρὸς τὸ ἀγένητον;)[144] The obviously implied response Athanasius wished to elicit was a resounding 'none whatsoever'.[145]

[141] Opitz, 46. Thus, for the Caesarean, the Word can share a ὁμοίωσις or ὁμοιότης with the created order (which does not imply any 'imaging' function) while he carries an ἐμφέρεια, or a likeness which functions as an image, to the Father alone.

[142] John 14:9.

[143] Athanasius demonstrated the centrality of this concept of seeing the Father in the Son by repeating this phrase in various similar ways in *CA* I.21.1; II.33.3; and III.13.5. We shall see his critique of the 'Eusebian' model of deictic mediation along these lines below.

[144] *CA* I.31.5.

[145] If pushed, this argument would deny the possibility of human beings fulfilling any role as 'image of God'. The Origenian distinction between image as 'painted or sculpted' and image as a 'son' would have been of help to Athanasius here.

As we noted above, Athanasius saw the origin of something as decisive for the nature of that thing as well as a determinant of its capability. Thus, 'what is the likeness (*ἐμφέρεια*) of what is out of nothing (*ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*) to him who created the things which came to be out of nothing?'[146] Eusebius had asserted that there was no *ἐμφέρεια* between the Word and created beings. Athanasius, in contrast, was contending that the qualitative gulf that existed between the originated and the unoriginated (and, hence, the complete absence of any real likeness) meant that no effective image of the divine could be conceived among the things created. As we have seen, the '*ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*' origin of creatures defined their characteristic nature and limited sharply their consequent capabilities. Thus creatures can never be thought of as an 'efficient cause' (*ποιήτικον αἴτιον*) precisely because they are

> of those things which come into existence, and moreover also are both separated and divided from the only [God] and other in nature and being works; neither are they able to do the works which God works (since they themselves are made) nor, as I have already said, do they give grace with him when God gives grace, nor would anyone say, upon seeing an angel, that he has seen the Father.[147]

In terms of our present interest in ascertaining the Athanasian theology of the image of God, it is useful to note that he here described what he believed were the limitations of any created being in 'mediating' God's blessings. If they are involved in God's work at all, it is merely as his instrument and not as creative agents. Nor, Athanasius added, does the seeing of an angel constitute a vision of God. This would seem to be central to Athanasius' critique of the 'Arian' concept of the mediation of the knowledge of God through Christ. If the Word is separated from the being of God-as-he-is-in-himself (again, this was the import of *οὐσία* for Athanasius), then one does not 'see' God when one 'sees' the created being. The saints in the scripture who had visions differentiated between whether they had seen a messenger of

[146] *CA* I.21.3.

[147] *CA* III.14.1. *οὐδέν γὰρ τούτων ποιητικὸν αἴτιόν ἐστιν. ἀλλὰ τῶν γινομένων εἰσίν ἄλλῶς τε καὶ κεχωρισμένοι καὶ διεστηκότες τοῦ μόνου καὶ ἄλλο τὴν φύσιν ὄντες καὶ ἔργα τυγχάνοντες—οὔτε ἅπερ ἐργάζεται ὁ θεὸς δύνανται ἐργάζεσθαι—ἐπεὶ καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἐργάζεσθαι δόξουσιν—οὔτε, καθὰ προεῖπον, χαριζομένου τοῦ θεοῦ συγχαρίζεσθαι οὔτε βλεπομένου ἀγγέλου εἴποι ἄν τις ἑωρακέναι τὸν πατέρα.*

God or had seen God himself.[148] The recipients of the theophanies were able to tell the difference between the angels and God because 'greatly, or rather wholly, do things by nature originate differ from God the Creator.'[149] This has obvious consequences for a correct grasp of Athanasius' image theology. There is simply no sufficient 'likeness' (*ἐμφέρεια*) between God the Creator and the things that he created for any of the *γένητα* to act as a true image. This, thought Athanasius, required the essential likeness (*κατ' οὐσίαν*) implied by the Word as *γέννημα*. If we were to suppose that such a likeness existed between the unoriginated and the originated, then Athanasius thought that it was not far-fetched to suppose blasphemously that the unoriginated God could just as easily serve as the image of the originated creature.[150]

Another important term which Athanasius used to describe the mediatorial function which arose from this essential unity of God and his Word was *ἀπαράλλακτος εἰκών* which could be translated 'unchanging' or 'precisely similar' image.[151] The importance of this phrase for Athanasius is indicated by his use of it as the climax of a longer passage that answered the question: Is mankind left entirely without the knowledge of God? While we have already analysed this passage in detail above, it would be good to quote the conclusion: 'And to sum it up, he is the completely perfect fruit of the Father and alone is Son, precise image of the Father' (*καὶ συνελθόντι φράσαι, καρπὸς παντέλειος τοῦ Πατρὸς ὑπάρχει, καὶ μόνος ἐστὶν Υἱός, εἰκὼν ἀπαράλλακτος τοῦ Πατρός*).[152] The meaning of the phrase for Athanasius will become clearer if we look at another passage in which it occurs, *CA* III.11.1–3. There, the Alexandrian bishop argued that the

[148] *CA* III.14.2f. Thus Athanasius asserted that Zacariah (Luke 24:23), Manoah (Judg. 13:21) and Gideon (Judg. 6:12) saw angels, while Isaiah (Isa. 6:1), Moses (Exod. 3:6) and Abraham (Gen. 18:1) had visions of God.

[149] *CA* III.14.3. *πολὺ γὰρ, μάλλον δὲ τὸ ὅλον διέστηκε τῇ φύσει τὰ γένητα πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα θεόν.*

[150] *CA* I.31.5.

[151] Athanasius' positive use of this phrase spanned his writing career—from the early *CG* 41.1–2 and 46 to the late *CA* III.11.2 and 36.1. This preference was in spite of the perceived failure of the term at Nicaea to exclude the Arians (cf. *De Dec.* 20) and the continued use of it by the 'Arians' (e.g. in the 'Dedication' Creed of Antioch, 341, and in Asterius, as noted above, p. 129).

[152] *CG* 46.

terms 'likeness' (ὁμοίωσις) and 'unity' (ἑνότης)[153] as applied to the relationship of the Son to the Father only make sense if they refer to the very essence of the Son (ἐπ' αὐτὴν τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ). The reason is that if the Son is not similar to the Father in his essence, then 'he will not be like the Father, but only like the Father's doctrines' (οὔτε τοῦ πατρὸς ὅμοιος ἔσται, ἀλλὰ τῶν τοῦ πατρὸς ὅμοιος ἔσται δογμάτων). By δόγματα of the Father it would seem, from its pairing with διδασκαλία in the following sentence, that Athanasius means his characteristics, or the teachings *about* the Father. But this kind of 'similarity', he asserted, would be a false relationship. For the Father differs from the Son in that he is Father, but the doctrines and the teaching are of the Father. If the Son is like the Father 'only in doctrine and teaching', then the Father is father in name only. Hence, the Son would not function as ἀπαράλλακτος εἰκών of the Father. He would have neither the 'peculiar nature' (ιδιότης)[154] nor 'similarity' (ὁμοίωσις) of the Father. To have the teaching of the Father would be insufficient for the function of image. 'Even Paul taught things similar to the Saviour but was not similar in essence to him' (*CA* III.11.3). It is only because of the essential unity of the Father and Son (as also implied by the illustration of the Sun and its radiance) that the Word acts as the proper image of the Father. This unity is then the basis for understanding the mediation of all divine acts and knowledge.

> For on account of the Son being such, when the Son works, it is the Father who is working and when the Son comes to the saints, the Father it is who comes in the Son, as he promised, saying 'I and the Father will come and make our dwelling with him'. For in the image the Father is seen and in the radiance is the light.

Hence according to Athanasius, divine mediation is not something which is brought about by a third mediator acting as the interface

[153] The pairing of these and similar terms recurs often in Athanasius. Cf., for example, *CA* III.36.1, 3 (ἰδιότης/ὁμοιότης). This seems to be on account of his insistence that anything which was truly 'similar' to God would be God; since there is only one God, the Word must be 'one' with God as well as similar. It could also be linked to his insistence on plurality within unity. Thus they are 'like' (implying more than one) and 'one' (implying identity).

[154] Here ἰδιότης is used roughly as synonymous with ἑνότης. See Louth, '*ΙΔΙΟ*Σ' and above for a discussion of Athanasius' use of ἴδιος.

between two otherwise incompatible sides, but rather the one true God himself coming to the world and being seen 'in his image'.

4.5. ATHANASIUS' CRITIQUE OF DEICTIC MEDIATION

Athanasius made what was probably his most direct attack on what we have labelled 'deictic mediation' in *CA* III.16.2. In the context of identifying the 'one God' as the Triad made up of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he had attacked his opponents as either saying the Son is not 'true God' or holding to two 'true Gods'.[155] He then went on to address the confusion that he believed would ensue from holding the Father and Son to be two separate beings—one 'unoriginate' (ἀγένητος) and one 'originate' (γένητος), especially as it relates to Christian worship. Since they are two distinct beings, Christians cannot worship both simultaneously. Thus, when they worship the 'Unoriginate', they must turn their back (κατανωτίζεσθαι) on the 'Originate'. Conversely, when they approach the creature, it is necessary to turn away from (ἀποστρέφεσθαι) the Creator. With this argument, Athanasius sought to put in question the ability of the Arian Christ to provide any real mediation of divine knowledge, or even of approach to God in worship. It is obvious that Eusebius would have contested Athanasius' point here. It was the Caesarean's contention, as we have seen, that the Word was the one being who was 'like' the Father in every way possible while not being the one true God himself. Thus, while not identical to God, as God's image, he functioned by his very likeness as image, to point people to God. In addition, in all fairness, Athanasius here emphasized the 'unlikeness' (τὸ ξένας καὶ διαφόρους) of the Arian Son to the Father both in nature (φύσις) and in activity (ἐνεργεία) in a way that certainly Asterius and Eusebius would have protested.[156] However, the argument here was based not only on 'unlikeness' but on the 'non-identity' of the one God as

[155] *CA* III.15.3–16.1.

[156] Although one must say that this is more than mere polemic on Athanasius' part. While never willing to pull punches in his attacks on the 'Ariomaniacs', his insistence here on the unlikeness of a 'made' Son to the 'unoriginate' Father reflected the Alexandrian's deeper appreciation of the great gulf between the creature and the created. This was simply a corollary of his view, noted above, that the origin of a being defined that being's nature and capabilities. And, once again, we should note that for

Father–Son–Holy Spirit as well. Because, according to Eusebius, the Father and Son are two separate beings in their essence, they are therefore two separate objects of perception (or lack of perception, depending on the accessibility of the Father) and two separate objects of worship. Therefore, to look at one of them, by definition, is not to look at the other. Thus the use of terms such as 'to turn the back on' (*κατανωτίζεσθαι*) or 'turn away from' (*ἀποστρέφεσθαι*) used by the Alexandrian. One simply does not really 'see this one in that one' (*οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἰδεῖν τοῦτον ἐν ἐκείνῳ*).[157]

Not only does the 'deictic mediation' espoused by the 'Arians' fail to provide any real mediation of knowledge of the 'one true God', it positively leads, asserted Athanasius, to the worship of more than one being and thus is no better than paganism. 'Why, then, . . . do they not rank themselves with the Gentiles? For they also, as these, worship the creature rather than the Creator of all.'[158] While it was a well-worn polemical technique of many Christian writers to rank their opponents among the pagans, it would seem that there is more than mere polemic in Athanasius' accusation here. In reality, he pointed to a genuine difficulty of the 'Eusebian' model of mediation within a monotheistic worship context. The 'Arians' had claimed, at the worst, that the Son was a mere creature (who originated *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*) or; at the least, that he was a being who only possessed existence contingently (a 'creature' even if 'not as one of the creatures'). At any rate, Eusebius, Asterius and Arius were united in that they all held that the Son was *not* to be identified with the 'one true God' demanded by the faith. The Son was thus an identifiably separate being from the Father. And yet, the 'Arians' (as well as all other Christians) worshipped the Son along with the Father. Thus, it seemed clear to Athanasius that they worshipped two Gods—one unoriginate and one originate.[159]

In summary, then, Athanasius attacked the 'Arian' view of mediation on several fronts. First, he asserted that the only proper image of God would have to be like God in all ways and that for this reason, no originate being could function as an unchanging (*ἀπαράλλακτος*)

Athanasius, whether the Son's 'creation' was in time or before time would have made little difference—only 'he who is' (*ὁ ὢν*) can give existence to others.

[157] *CA* III.16.2. [158] *CA* III.16.3.

[159] Compare Eusebius of Caesarea's somewhat confused attempt to defend his 'exclusive' monotheism as a true form of monotheism in *ET* II.7.

divine image. This was especially brought home by Athanasius' view of how the origin of a being determined that being's nature and consequent capabilities. He believed that a proper understanding of what it meant to be God's Word and God's Son would show that these titles ensured that the Son shared the Father's nature. Finally, he critiqued the 'Eusebian' model of deictic mediation for two basic reasons. First, he felt that it simply did not work. Two independently existing beings would demand that one regarded one or the other; it was impossible to 'see one in the other'. Second, he believed that this view led to the worship of more than one entity, thus becoming blatant idolatry. The solution was, for Athanasius, to recognize that the Son was included with the Father within the one Godhead. This safeguarded the worship of one true God, as well as acknowledging that God himself was immediately present and active in the world. The knowledge of God was mediated in the sense that God himself condescended to manifest himself directly through his Word. We shall now turn our attention to the divine mediation that took place in the Incarnation of his Word in Jesus Christ.

4.6. THE IMMEDIACY OF GOD IN THE INCARNATION

We have seen the distrust that Athanasius had for any concept that hinted at the Word as some necessary ontological mediator standing as a 'third party' between God and the world. Because of this basic stance, he almost completely avoided the use of the traditional 'mediation' language to describe the Word. We have also seen, in our study of the *CG* and *CA*, that, contrary to both Eusebius and Marcellus, he conceived of the unity of the Godhead to be that *within which* the plurality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit were located. Because of this 'essential' (*κατ'οὐσίαν*) unity, the divine mediation through the Word in creation was to be considered the direct activity and manifestation of God. This mediation is God manifesting himself 'immediately' through his Word in creation. It is not something that intervenes between God and his creation, but rather it is God immediately manifesting himself. Lastly, our investigation into Athanasius' theology of the image of God reinforced this basic approach by underlining how Athanasius considered that the only possible 'image' through which

God could be seen and encountered was an image which was from the very 'essence' of God himself. Only in this way, thought Athanasius, would it be true that 'those who have seen the Son have seen the Father'.

As can be expected, Athanasius' view of the nature of God and his relationship to the world influenced his view of the Incarnation. This has been seen already in his usage of the term ἴδιος. Athanasius believed that God is directly involved in the world and is revealed by that world. While the Word is actively guiding and balancing the created order, he is not to be considered an intermediary step between God and the world. Rather he is God himself acting and creating in the world. In the very same way, as we shall see, Athanasius believed that it was God who was directly acting and manifesting himself in the Incarnation. While it is nothing new to assert that Athanasius believed that the Incarnate Word is completely divine, the general focus of Athanasius' theology of the Incarnation has sometimes been missed. We shall argue here that, in the same way that God is directly involved with and manifested by his creation in a direct 'unmediated' manner, so in the Incarnation, for Athanasius, the 'mediation' provided is largely an 'immediate' one of divine self-manifestation. Not only this, but the divine self-manifestation has as its *locus* the humanity of Jesus Christ. This 'mediation' of the divine is directly manifested in the flesh. This epistemological mediation has as its basis the divine–human ontology of the Incarnate Word. Only because the Word is truly divine, as Athanasius had developed in *CG* and *CA*, can he truly be a manifestation, or 'image', of the divine. Likewise, this revelational mediation is based upon the Word being truly human, since it is a divine manifestation *within* his humanity. We shall largely confine ourselves to the study of *De Incarnatione* for Athanasius' general view of the Incarnation, while drawing as well from his polemical anti-Arian texts when appropriate.

One often can pick up intentions of an author in the introduction to a work. This is certainly true of Athanasius' *De Incarnatione*. As well as showing the connection this work has with the previous (*CG*), Athanasius also plainly stated what he planned to accomplish in the present work:

> Come now, Macarius (worthy of that name), and true lover of Christ, let us follow up the faith of our religion, and set forth also what relates to the

Word's becoming man, and to his divine appearing amongst us (*καὶ τὰ περὶ τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου διηγησώμεθα, καὶ περὶ θείας αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐπιφάνείας δηλώσωμεν*).[160]

Here, Athanasius summed up what he wanted to set forth in this treatise by describing it first of all as the Word 'becoming man' (*ἐνανθρώπησις*) and then as his 'divine appearing' (*θεία ἐπιφανεία*). It seems clear that for Athanasius, the Incarnation was, first and foremost, an 'appearing' or 'manifestation'(*ἐπιφανεία*) of the divine. And not just this, but Athanasius went on to make clear where he believed this divine 'epiphany' occurs in the Incarnation. First of all, he described how this 'manifestation' has been received by the world. At his coming, 'Jews slander and Greeks laugh to scorn, but we worship'.[161] The reason for this inauspicious reception of the Word in the world is because of 'the seeming cheapness of the Word' in his Incarnation. The word 'seeming' here should not be understood with any kind of docetic overtones, as if the Word only seemed to come to the human level. Rather, the phrase '*τῆς δοκούσης εὐτελείας*' has to do with the apparent value of the Incarnate Word. E*ὐτελεία* denotes the low value or 'cheapness' of something. It is not that the Word 'seemed' to condescend to our level, but rather that when he did so condescend, it appeared that he was of little value. Athanasius ended section 1.1 by suggesting that the Christian's piety is increased as he realizes the lowliness of the Word's condition in the Incarnation.

Athanasius then proceeded to outline how the Incarnation overturned all expectations of the world with regard to how divinity would appear. This takes the form of three pairings in 1.2: the first member of each pair represents the scorn of the world and the second member represents the revelation made by the Word in his Incarnation. It is important to grasp that it is the very thing that the world is denigrating that the Word uses to show his divinity. First, that which men mistake as impossible (*ἀδύνατα*), he demonstrates to be possible (*δύνατα*). Second, what men mock as 'unseemly' (*ἀπρεπῆ*), the Word makes 'very seemly' (*εὐπρεπῆ*). Finally, what men laugh at as human (*ἀνθρώπινα*) the Word demonstrates to be divine (*θεία*). This last contrast cannot be overemphasized for our argument. It is not simply that the Word became man to be able to communicate better about

[160] *DI* 1.1. [161] Ibid.

God to humans. Rather, it is that the things which men (especially the 'wise'—οἱ σοφιζόμενοι) think to be the most 'human' are the very things that are shown to be 'divine'. The point here is that Athanasius held that not only is the Incarnation to be understood as a divine self-manifestation (ἐπιφανεία), but that the very place where that manifestation happens is in the humanness (τὰ ἀνθρώπινα) of the Incarnate Word. The Incarnation is the divine Word manifesting himself in his humanity. Reflecting his view of the presence and activity of God in the cosmos in his theology of the Incarnation, Athanasius believed there can be no intervening 'mediating' substance between the divine and the material in Christ. Rather it is in the very realm of the human that Christ reveals his divinity. This does not mean that the divine nature itself is something which is material. Far from it,

> But that being incorporeal by nature, and Word from the beginning, he has yet of the lovingkindness and goodness of his own Father been manifested to us in a human body for our salvation.[162]

Athanasius then finished the introduction by reminding the reader of the importance of the doctrine of creation for an understanding of the Incarnation. Indeed, this is a preliminary note to the theme of chapter 1 (2–7) on the relation between creation and Incarnation. It is important that the very one who created the universe in the beginning be the one who renews it in the Incarnation. Thus, 'the renewal of creation has been the work of the self-same Word that made it at the beginning'.[163] In this way, the Word who directly acts and reveals himself and his Father in the universe (as we have seen from *CG*) is the very Word who reveals his divinity directly in his flesh.

We shall now spend the majority of our time in the analysis of sections 11 to 16. Here, Athanasius turned his attention to the 'second' reason for the Incarnation, that is, to bring the knowledge of God to men once again. In relation to this motive of the Word becoming man, we shall see that the concept of 'divine self-manifestation' comes to the fore. This portion of *De Incarnatione* can be

[162] *DI* 1.3. We can note a similarity here between Athanasius and Origen in that the divine nature is incorporeal and that the Word shares that divine nature. Note also *CA* III.56.2, where Athanasius argued that the Word, *qua* Word, could not suffer during the Incarnation, due to its incorporeal nature. Cf. *De Principiis* I.1.8.

[163] *DI* 1.4.

conveniently divided into two sub-sections, the first (11–12) presents the problem of man bereft of the knowledge of God, the second (13–16) attempts to demonstrate how the Incarnation meets this need on the part of humanity.

Athanasius began by describing the human condition if left to its own devices. Note that here he is concentrating on the epistemological problem of knowing God and so the emphasis is on man's comprehension of the divine. Athanasius used various terms of perception in 11.1 (*γνῶναι, λαβεῖν ἔννοιαν θεοῦ, τὴν ἔλλειψιν πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πεποιηκότος κατάληψιν καὶ γνῶσιν*) to underline that he is now concerned with the issue of seeing and knowing God. Through 'the weakness of their nature', humanity 'was not sufficient of itself to know its maker, nor to get any idea at all of God'. The reasons for this were that humans had been made 'from nothing' (*ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*) and that they 'had been fashioned in a lower way in the body'.[164] In fact, 'in every way the things made fell far short of being able to comprehend and know their maker'. Therefore, only because of God's kindness was the knowledge of himself given to mankind in the beginning. We have already discussed how this view compares with that presented in *CG*.

While the problem of humanity described in the earlier section was the ontological one of wasting away into non-existence (cf. 6.1), here it is expressed as the loss of the very thing which gives existence meaning—knowing God. 'For what profit to the creatures if they knew not their maker?'[165] The very reason that God had given humanity the ability to know him was 'lest they should find no profit in existing at all'. This ability to know God came in the form of the divine image:

> He gives them a share in his own image, our Lord Jesus Christ, and makes them after his own image and after his likeness: so that by such grace perceiving the image, that is, the Word of the Father, they may be able through him to get an idea of the Father, and knowing their maker, live the happy and truly blessed life.[166]

[164] Again, the Athanasian emphasis that origin determines the nature and capability of a thing.

[165] *DI* 11.2. [166] *DI* 11.1.

It is vital that we see here that the original human ability to know God is connected to the activity of the Word to make known the maker. According to Athanasius, then, it was even in the beginning the role of the Word to manifest God to man, not as an intervening third party, but rather as God himself.

The human reaction to this was to reject it utterly. It is important to highlight this, as it represents the beginning of a pattern of divine condescension and subsequent human rejection in Athanasius' theology. Let us note not only the rejection, but also the implications of such a rejection.

> But men once more in their perversity having set at nought, in spite of all this, the grace given them, so wholly rejected God, and so darkened their soul, as not merely to forget their idea of God, but also to fashion for themselves one invention after another.[167]

By rejecting the knowledge of God, that is, forgetting him, humanity set themselves upon a course of ignorance and idolatry. Because of this, the world was 'full of irreligion and lawlessness' in spite of the fact that God had continued to make himself known in various manners.[168] Athanasius wanted to make sure that the reader understands that the divine image given in grace (ἡ κατ' εἰκονα χάρις) within man was sufficient 'to make known God the Word, and through him the Father'.[169] Even so, because God knew the weakness of humankind, he also provided other means of manifesting himself. He provided the works of creation, as we have seen, as a means through which men could avoid ignorance of God. But, 'since men's carelessness, by little and little, descends to lower things', God also revealed himself through the law and the prophets. Thus,

> even if they were not ready to look up to heaven and know their creator, they might have their instruction from those near at hand. For men are able to learn from men more directly about higher things.[170]

Athanasius here was describing God as one who condescends to the level of men and their condition. When they do not look up at the heavens, he speaks to them through their fellow men. Thus, said Athanasius, wherever men look, to the harmony of nature, to the

[167] *DI* 11.4. [168] *DI* 11.7. [169] *DI* 12.1. [170] *DI* 12.2.

holy men or to the law, they can see the hand of God revealed. He ends section 12 by repeating his theme of divine condescension and human rejection. Although God had, in his goodness, done so much for men, they

> did not raise their heads toward the truth, but loaded themselves the more with evils and sins, so as no longer to seem rational, but from their ways to be reckoned void of reason.[171]

We should emphasize once again that, while in the previous chapter (8–10) Athanasius described the result of man's turning from God in terms of loss of existence, here he describes the result of the rejection of the image of the Word (*λόγος*) in qualitative terms, as men becoming 'void of reason' (*ἀλόγοι*).

In 13.1–6, the seeming hopelessness of the situation is presented. For man, what was the point or necessity of having a 'concept of God' (*ἐννοία περὶ θεοῦ*)? 'For if he is not fit to receive it even now, it would have been better if it had not been given to him at first.'[172] And for God, there was no glory because 'men, made by him, do not worship him, but think that others are their makers'.[173] And yet, God in mercy wished to spare his own creatures, besides which, 'it was unfitting that they should perish which had once been partakers of God's image'.[174] The dilemma and solution are then expressed in epistemological terms. 'What then was God to do? Or what was to be done save the renewing of that which was in God's image, so that by it men might once more be able to know him?'[175] The means by which the solution comes about is described in terms of 'the renewing of that which was in God's image' and the goal of such a renewal is that men might know God. Here we have Athanasius' description of the epistemological necessity of the Incarnation. The agent through whom such a renewal might take place could only be the Word of God. Men could not have accomplished this, since they are merely made 'after the image' (*κατ' εἰκόνα*), nor could angels since they are not images of God. 'How could this have come to pass save by the presence of the very image of God, our saviour Jesus Christ?' (*εἰ μὴ αὐτῆς τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκόνος παραγενομένης τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν' Ιησοῦς*

[171] *DI* 12.6. [172] *DI* 13.3. [173] *DI* 13.4. [174] *DI* 13.6.
[175] Ibid.

Χριστοῦ;)[176] This renewal of the image of God in man is nothing less than the manifestation of divinity in humanity.[177]

Athanasius followed this up with his famous analogy of the restoration of the effaced portrait.[178] It is somewhat similar to an analogy of Methodius of Olympia according to which men can behold the Incarnate Word 'as on a tablet the divine pattern of our life'.[179] However, for Athanasius, the emphasis was on the renewal of the original image. When a portrait is damaged by stains, it is necessary that the one whose portrait it is come and sit once again to renew his likeness. In the same way, the Word, being the very image of God, had to come 'to our region to renew man once made in his likeness'.[180] Athanasius then described once again why, in a world where 'the knowledge of God was hid' it was only the Word of God that could 'teach the world concerning the Father'.[181] Men obviously couldn't do it, being altogether incapable and insufficient for the task, nor would the revelation in creation be enough, for that had been there all along, but had not prevented men from 'grovelling in the same error'.[182] Only the Word of God could reveal the knowledge of God once again to man. It is important to note that the description of the qualifications of the Word for this job is strongly reminiscent of the account of his actions in creation in *CG*.

> Who, then, was needed, save the Word of God, that sees both soul and mind, and that gives movement to all things in creation, and by them makes known the Father? For he who by his own providence and ordering of all things was teaching men concerning the Father, he it was that could renew this same teaching as well.[183]

Most important for us to notice here is that the Word who 'makes known the Father' in creation is the one who 'makes known the Father' in the Incarnation. We have seen how Athanasius viewed the Word's revelatory mediation in nature not as the mediation of a 'third party' who pointed to God, but rather, as the Father's 'own' (ἴδιος) Word manifesting himself and the Father in his creation. In the same way, an important aspect of the Incarnation for Athanasius was the manifestation of the Father mediated, not deictically as it was for

[176] *DI* 13.7. [177] *DI* 13.9. [178] *DI* 14.1–2.
[179] *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, I.4. [180] *DI* 14.2. [181] *DI* 14.4.
[182] *DI* 14.5. [183] *DI* 14.6.

both Eusebius and Marcellus, but directly through the Son who is ontologically one with the Father.

After answering the rhetorical question of *who* could make God known, Athanasius then turned to *how* the Word should make God known. He had revealed God in the creation before, but this would not suffice, for 'men missed seeing this before, and have turned their eyes no longer upward but downward'.[184] The only sure way of manifesting himself was in humanity.

> Whence, naturally, willing to profit men, he sojourns here as a man, taking to himself a body like the others, and from things of the earth, that is by the works of his body [he teaches them], so that they who would not know him from his providence and rule over all things, may even from the works done by his actual body know the Word of God which is in the body, and through him the Father.[185]

The implications for our thesis are obvious. Athanasius had just finished showing how the Incarnation needed to be thought of as a divine self-manifestation and now asserted that the *locus* of that manifestation was the humanity of the Incarnate Word. It is with some repetition that Athanasius asserted that it is 'by the works of his body' and 'from the works done by his actual body' that we know the Word and through him the Father. The point cannot be missed. For Athanasius, it was not the works done by the Word '*while in the body*' but rather the very bodily works of the Word that manifested God. A few lines later, he stated how the 'downward' spiritual posture of mankind necessitated that he manifest himself through human flesh.

> For seeing that men, having rejected the contemplation of God [*τὴν πρὸς θεὸν θεωρίαν*], and with their eyes downward, as though sunk in the deep, were seeking about for God in nature and in the world of sense, . . . the Word of God takes to himself a body, and as man walks among men and takes hold of [*προσλαμβάνει*] the senses of all men to the end, I say, that they who think that God is corporeal may from what the Lord effects by his body perceive the truth, and through him recognize the Father.[186]

Section 16 is largely taken up with showing how the works of the man are used to manifest the divine Word. Athanasius believed this to be Paul's point in Ephesians 3:18—to apprehend 'the breadth and

[184] *DI* 14.7. [185] *DI* 14.8. [186] *DI* 15.2.

length, and height and depth' of Christ's love is to see it manifested in nature as well as in the human flesh, in Hades as well as in all the world. And 'to know the love of Christ' is 'to be filled with the knowledge of God'.[187] It was for this reason that he did not immediately die after coming to earth, but rather 'he made himself visible enough by what he did, abiding in it, and doing such works, and showing such signs, as made him known no longer as man, but as God the Word'.[188] Athanasius then summed up what he believed were the twin reasons for the Incarnation.

> For by his becoming man, the saviour was to accomplish both works of love; first, in putting away death from us and renewing us again; secondly, being unseen and invisible, in manifesting and making himself known by his works to be the Word of the Father, and the ruler and king of the universe.[189]

These two reasons of putting away death and of manifesting his divinity coincide respectively with what Athanasius has presented in chapter 2(8–10) and chapter 3 (11–16).

The remaining passages that we shall briefly treat from *DI* will demonstrate how Athanasius perceived the divine manifestation to take place within the humanity of Christ. After showing in 17 that the Incarnation did not actually change the Word from what he was, but that he continued to manage and direct the cosmos, even while united with the humanity, Athanasius went on to state that the body was a real, physical human body which needed to eat, drink and sleep like any other body. Although he wanted to guard against attributing weakness to the divine nature, Athanasius did not deny that the experiences of the body were those of the divine Word himself.

> Did he [i.e. the Incarnate Word] not then hunger? Yes; he hungered, agreeably to the properties of his body. But he did not perish of hunger, because of the Lord that wore it.[190]

In this way, Athanasius tried to show that God the Word had truly become a *man*. Conversely, it was by those very bodily acts that he demonstrated that it was *God* who had become man.

> But just as from these things he was known to be bodily present, so from the works he did in the body he made himself known to be the Son of God.

[187] *DI* 16.2–3. [188] *DI* 16.4. [189] *DI* 16.5. [190] *DI* 21.7.

Whence also he cried to the unbelieving Jews; 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though you don't believe me, believe my works; that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.'[191]

When Christ drove out demons and healed diseases, he showed himself to be God and not a mere man.[192] 'For he that gave back that which the man from his birth had not, must be, it is surely evident, the Lord also of men's natural birth.'[193] His miraculous, but truly human, birth declared his divinity. His miracles, done in the human body, constantly manifested that he was 'the very Lord whose providence is over all things'.[194] The divine self-manifestation in Christ's human acts extends even to the manner in which he died. For by not fleeing the ignominious end on the cross, he showed himself 'to be Saviour and Life; in that he both awaited death to destroy it, and hurried to accomplish the death offered him for the salvation of all'.[195]

Space does not permit us to treat the many other passages in *DI* which speak of the manifestation of divinity in the humanity of Christ.[196] And yet we would be remiss if we did not glance at Athanasius' concluding remarks to his treatise which highlight in particular how he viewed divine manifestation as a major part of his theology of the Incarnation. Here, in section 55, he concluded his chapter refuting the pagans (41–54) by describing how since the appearance of Christ, pagan idolatry had slowly been dying away. He compared this to the disappearance of the darkness as the Sun rises. He then goes on,

> So, now that the divine appearing of the Word of God is come [*ἐλθούσης τῆς θείας ἐπιφανείας τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου*], the darkness of idols prevails no more, and all parts of the world in every direction are illumined by his teaching. (55.3)

He then went on to relate an analogy of a king who has been hidden from the people. Since the people cannot see the king, unscrupulous people deceive many into believing that they are the king. However,

[191] *DI* 18.2. [192] *DI* 18.3–4. [193] *DI* 18.4.
[194] *DI* 18.6. [195] *DI* 22.2.
[196] There is a good summary of the of the teaching role of the Incarnate Word in a later section of *DI* found in Karen Jo Torjesen, 'The Teaching Function of the Logos: Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* XX–XXXIII', in *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments*, ed. Robert C. Gregg (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1985), 213–21.

when the king finally appears, and the people are able to see him, then they leave off following the impostors. It is vital here to grasp that it is not simply the Incarnation as such, but rather the immediate *visible manifestation* of the king in the Incarnation that Athanasius asserted will drive off the false gods. If there remained any doubt about the manner in which this manifestation took place, Athanasius once again said that it took place 'when the Word of God appeared in a body, and made known to us his own Father' (55.5). That his appearing should have such an effect is proof for Athanasius that 'Christ is God the Word, and the power of God' (55.6).

A number of years after the writing of *Contra Gentes/De Incarnatione*, Athanasius was forced, in his debate with the 'Arians', to develop more fully his understanding of the relationship between the divine and human in the man Jesus Christ.[197] We shall see that his basic view of how we know God through Christ, i.e. the manifestation of divinity in the humanity, has not changed; however, we shall see that he had by this time elaborated more fully his conceptions, particularly in terms of the relationship between the human and divine in Christ.

The Arians had claimed that their view of the Son of God as less divine than the Father was supported by biblical evidence for human weaknesses in Jesus Christ. How could he be 'fully God', they queried, when he experienced fear, ignorance and even was forsaken by the Father?[198] Athanasius began his response,[199] by noting that the scripture gives us a 'double description' (ἀπαγγελίαν διπλῆν) of Christ.[200] On one side he was eternal God, and on the other he really took on flesh and became man. However, it was important to Athanasius that this not be understood as two 'sides' of Christ, a divine and a human, which only have a casual relationship. As we have seen, the 'immediate' presence of God as a human being was the basis of the divine revelation made available in Jesus Christ in his earlier writings, and it is no different here. Thus it is to be stressed that 'he became

[197] The primary concentration of this material, and where we shall confine ourselves in this study, is found in *CA* III.26–58.

[198] These arguments are summarized in *CA* III.26.

[199] In *CA* III.29.1, after a polemical section comparing the Arians to the Jews.

[200] This 'double description' contrasts with Marcellus' doctrine of the two different *hypostases* distinguishable behind Christ's statements analysed above.

a man and did not come into a man'.[201] The latter form of divine communication would have followed the pattern of the prophets who had received the Spirit of God at various times for assorted purposes. But Christ was different, for the 'Word became flesh'.

The 'double description' of the Lord in scripture helps us to understand that the one person of the Son, while remaining God, also became man for our sakes. In 'becoming man', we should understand that he made his own everything that it meant to be human.

> And on account of this, the properties (*τὰ ἴδια*) of this [flesh] are said to be his, since he was in it, such as hunger, thirst, suffering, weariness, and the like, of which the flesh is a recipient; while on the other hand the works proper (*ἴδια ἔργα*) to the Word himself, such as raising the dead, restoring sight to the blind, and curing the woman with an issue of blood, he did through his own body (*διὰ του ἰδίοῦ σώματος*).[202]

It is essential that we grasp exactly what Athanasius was doing here. There are certain things, such as hungering, thirsting and such, which are proper things (*τὰ ἴδια*) for humans to experience; there are also things, such as healing and doing miracles, which are proper works (*ἴδια ἔργα*) for the divine Word. Now, in becoming man, it is to be expected that the Word-become-man would demonstrate things proper to both natures. However, it is not that the Incarnate Word simply gave evidence of the 'double description'. Rather, Athanasius declared that the union of the two 'sides' was of such intimacy that the very things which are proper to the flesh can be said to be the Word's and, importantly for our study, the miraculous divine works which the Word did, he did 'through his own body'. That is to say, as

[201] *CA* III.30.1.

[202] *CA* III.31.2. It is sometimes suggested that 'flesh' and 'body' as used here by Athanasius meant radically different things; the former being more or less equivalent to the fallenness of humanity, while the latter merely referred to the morally neutral physical entity. However, there are strong reasons for avoiding this conclusion. First, Athanasius himself defined the term 'flesh' in III.30.5 as 'human' (*ἄνθρωπος*) or 'humankind' (*τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος*), with reference to Joel 2:28 and Bel and the Dragon 5. In addition, while there may be cause to believe that at times Athanasius used 'flesh' to emphasize the fallen, sinful condition of humanity; he more often used both this term and 'body' as synecdoche for the whole man as is evident from their parallel use throughout the passage, but especially demanded in places such as III.32.1 and 34.3.

we saw in the earlier *DI*, the acts done in the human body were the very means he used to manifest his divinity.

In order to emphasize the 'taking on' or 'owning' of the humanity by the Word, Athanasius used several different verbs: *βαστάζειν*, *φέρειν* and *ἰδιοποιεῖν*. All were used to emphasize that the 'taking on' of our humanity was no mere 'external' affair. Athanasius, alluding to Isaiah 53:4, asserted that 'he carried our weaknesses *as his own*' (*ἐβάσταζεν ἀσθενείας ὡς ἰδίας*), rather than simply healing us from outside. In addition, he did not merely take on humanity in some neutral state, but rather took on all of our 'suffering' or *πάθος*.[203] While as God he receives no hurt in this, by his taking on our *πάθη*, we are redeemed from our own *πάθη* and are filled with his righteousness. It should be noted that 'shielding' the divine nature from change or suffering was not merely to maintain the 'impassibility' of God.[204] Rather, it was to underline that only one who has life unchangeably and eternally in himself would be able to take on the *πάθη* of others and, in turn, redeem them from their own *πάθη*.

> But now the Word having become man and having made his own (*ἰδιοποιουμένου*) what pertains to the flesh, no longer do these things touch the body, because of the Word who has come in it, but they are destroyed by him, and henceforth men no longer remain sinners and dead according to their own sufferings (*κατὰ τὰ ἴδια πάθη*), but having risen according to the Word's power (*κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου δύναμιν*), they abide ever immortal and incorruptible.[205]

[203] *CA* III.31.3. *Πάθος* is a rich word which invariably suffers upon translation into English. It can be a fairly emotion-neutral term meaning something like experiences or emotions or even qualities. However, it also often has the connotation of being changed (especially passively) and usually for the worse. For this reason it is often rightly translated 'suffering' in the negative sense. It is obvious from the lists of 'passions' listed in 31.2 and 32.2 that Athanasius had in mind not only suffering negative 'external' conditions, but also the 'inner' weaknesses of humanity: on one hand experiencing things like hunger, thirst, torture and death; but also ignorance and fear. The real shock of Athanasius' message, even today, is that it is precisely *this* part of our human condition that God 'made his own'.

[204] It seems to this author that Hanson's description of Athanasius' doctrine of the Incarnation as 'Space-suit Christology' (Hanson, *Search*, 448) is a barely recognizable caricature of the Alexandrian's thought, completely divorced from its context.

[205] *CA* III.33.3. Note also III.38.1: 'For when he became man, he did not cease from being God; nor, since he is God does he flee from what is human—perish the thought! But rather, being God, he has taken to him the flesh, and being in the flesh deified the flesh.' While Athanasius' explanations of the apparent human limitations

By Athanasius' insistence on the Word not being hurt (*αὐτὸς οὐδὲν ἐβλάπτετο*) with regard to his deity, we should not take this to mean that he thought the human sufferings were any less real. Nor should we think that the humanity was somehow separated from his divinity. Both the suffering and the divine works were truly his.

> Thus it was that when the flesh suffered, the Word was not external to it, for on account of this also the suffering is said to be his (*αὐτοῦ λέγεται καὶ τὸ πάθος*); and when divinely he did the works of his Father, his flesh was not external, but the Lord would do them in his very body.[206]

Athanasius then proceeded to give some examples of how the Lord 'divinely worked in the body'.[207] When he healed Peter's mother-in-law, 'he stretched forth his hand "humanly" (*ἀνθρωπίνως*), but he stopped the sickness "divinely" (*θεϊκῶς*)'. With the man born blind, Jesus gave him 'human spit', but then opened his eyes divinely. It is good to notice that here Athanasius was not describing two different 'realms of activity' which could be denominated 'human' and 'divine', but rather attempted to show that the divine acts themselves were done in a 'human' way. As was seen in our study of *DI*, the divinity is revealed directly in the very humanity of Christ.[208]

The immediate presence of the divine Word in the humanity of Christ and the 'making his own' of the common human *πάθη* had tremendous repercussions for Athanasius' understanding of the mediation of God's salvation to mankind, as well as for Christian worship.

> If therefore, the body is someone else's, then it would be said that the sufferings (*πάθη*) are that one's as well. If the flesh is the Word's (for 'the Word became flesh'), of necessity then the sufferings of the flesh (*τά τῆς σαρκὸς πάθη*) are also ascribed to him, whose flesh it is. And to whom the sufferings (*πάθη*) are ascribed, such as to be condemned, to be

of the Incarnate Word sometimes do not satisfy us, we do need to keep in mind this fundamental insight of Athanasius—that only God (i.e. an unchanging God) could effect the salvation, and he could only effect it in the flesh.

[206] *CA* III.32.1. [207] *CA* III.32.2.

[208] This can be contrasted with Leo the Great's *Tome* 4, where he spoke of 'reciprocal spheres' of divine and human activity in Christ's life and then proceeded to differentiate between them. This may reflect a real theological difference between Leo and Athanasius, or it may simply reveal a contrast in purposes. It should be noted that Athanasius did sound more like Leo in other passages, such as *CA* III.40.5.

scourged, to thirst, and the cross, and death, and the other weaknesses of the body, of him too is the success and the grace (*τούτου καὶ τὸ κατόρθωμα καὶ ἡ χάρις*).[209]

One of the reasons that it was so important to Athanasius that the Word take on all the *πάθη* of the human condition was that only one who actually experienced the weaknesses and suffering of the flesh could be said to have success or victory (*τὸ κατόρθωμα*) over them. It would seem that Athanasius was stating here that the virtuous acts[210] of Christ's life only had some sort of 'redemptive' value if they were done 'in the flesh', with all the accompanying *πάθη*. He cited others who had been 'made holy', even from their mother's womb.[211] However, even their cleansing from sin was a partial one, for still 'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression'.[212] This had happened, asserted Athanasius, because the help given them was 'external', a healing from outside which did nothing to rectify the sin and corruption within. It is implied, then, that any view of the Incarnation which 'distanced' the divine nature from the humanity was fundamentally flawed in Athanasius opinion.[213]

> Who would not marvel at this? Or who would not agree that the thing is truly divine? For if the works of the Word's deity had not taken place through the body, man would not have been deified. And again, if the properties of the flesh had not been ascribed to the Word, man would not have been thoroughly delivered from them.[214]

[209] *CA* III.32.3–4. [210] Another possible translation of *κατόρθωμα*.
[211] *CA* III.33.2. These included Jeremiah and John the Baptist.
[212] Ibid., quoting Romans 5:14.
[213] We should note that the Christologies of both Eusebius and Marcellus are here condemned. For the Caesarean, as we have noted, there was a 'distance' posited between the fully divine nature of God the Father and creation which was only bridgeable (and this only to a certain extent) by the 'mediating being' (*ὁ μέσος*) of the Word. This 'mediation' took place eternally and the Incarnation was only one phase of that mediation. This is one of the underlying reasons for the often-noticed stress that he made on the 'teaching' aspects of Christ's ministry. On the other hand, Marcellus of Ancyra, due largely to his 'monoprosopic' view of the Godhead, placed this 'distance' between the divine (and anhypostatic) Word and the human Son at the time of the Incarnation; it was a gap sufficient, as we discovered, to allow even for disagreement between the Father and the Son.
[214] *CA* III.33.1.

Not only did this 'appropriation' of human πάθη by the divine Word effect our salvation, it also has great ramifications for our worship. We saw above how Athanasius believed that to understand the Word to be 'external' to the one true God was to destroy any 'mediating' capability of the Son of God. For, he thought, one would constantly be torn between the two separate entities, and to turn to one necessarily meant to be turned away from the other. In the same way, in the Incarnation, whoever suffered (or possessed the πάθη) was the one who had attained the victory and was worthy of receiving praise. However, to praise one who was not the one true God would compromise our proper adoration of him. For Athanasius and those who believed like him, this was not a problem:

> On account of this, then, consistently and fittingly, such sufferings (πάθη) are said to be, not another's, but the Lord's; that the grace also may be from him, and that we may not become servants (λάτραι) of any other, but truly worshippers of God (ἀληθῶς θεοσεβεῖς), because we invoke none of the originated nor an ordinary man, but the natural and true Son of God, who has become man, yet is none the less Lord and God and Saviour.[215]

Here Athanasius has put his finger on what seemed to be a large problem for the 'Eusebian' system. Besides the difficulty of an 'external' solution to an 'internal' problem which Athanasius believed he saw in the 'Arian' Christ, it was also extremely difficult to understand how one could give worship to a being who was not to be identified as the one true God. It would seem that, no matter how 'alike' they were, if one was praising the one who overcame the πάθη of human existence, he was not at that moment praising God. Athanasius believed that only as we recognized Christ as the fully divine God, who also came down and became man in the full sense of 'making his own' all of humanity's suffering and limitations and weaknesses, in short, all its πάθη, could we truly understand how 'God became man' *for us*. In this way, Christ not only manifested the divine nature in the human realm, he also mediated salvation to the human realm.

The Athanasian view of mediation through the Incarnate Word should be seen in the context of earlier theologians. Some Christian writers, such as Irenaeus and Tertullian, had seen the mediation of the

[215] *CA* III.32.4.

Word as implying a sharing of both the divine and human natures. Origen developed this basic idea further, emphasizing the manifestation of the divine nature through the human life of Christ. He stated that it was while 'in the very narrow compass of a human body' that the Son of God 'gave indications of the immense and invisible greatness that was in him'.[216] While he posited a human soul as a 'link' between the incorporeal nature of the Word and the physical human body, it would seem that he saw this soul, not so much as a barrier, but as a filter for divine manifestation.[217] In much the same vein, but in more detail, Athanasius has sharpened the focus of the divine-human mediation that occurred in the Incarnation. First, he considered it a manifestation of divinity itself in the *locus* of the humanity. As was the case with Eusebius, Athanasius' understanding of the relationship between the divinity and humanity in Christ was conditioned by his conception of how God relates to creation. God, through his own (ἴδιος) Word, is present and is active *directly* in the world. No intervening mediation of an ontologically 'middle' being is necessary or, indeed, possible. In the same way, God the Word made the humanity, with all of its πάθη, his own (ἴδιος) and it is only in this way that God, in the flesh, could procure redemption for the human race. As Louth has well noted, Athanasius used the term ἴδιος to show 'the intimacy of the union of human and divine in Christ'.[218] For Athanasius, all the πάθη had to be the Word's.

One of the most debated aspects of Athanasius' theology in the last few decades has been his view (or lack thereof) of a human soul in Christ.[219] Theologians have searched in vain for some positive teaching on the part of Athanasius concerning a human soul and some have even declared him Apollinarian. Often the question is posed in terms of later dogma, which is then imposed upon Athanasius.

In contrast, the view presented here illuminates the issue since it brings out Athanasius' own concerns and emphases. In particular, it should make us wary of arguments from silence concerning Athanasius' view of Christ's human soul. Grillmeier notes that a main Arian argument for the passibility, and therefore non-divinity,

[216] *DP* I.2.8. [217] Cf. discussion above. [218] Louth, '*IΔIOΣ*', 200.
[219] A good general account of the debate can be found in Grillmeier, *Christ*, 308–26.

of Christ is that the Logos took the place of the human soul in the Incarnation. He goes on to say that Athanasius never resorts 'to the expedient of giving Christ a human soul in order to solve the great difficulties raised by the Arians', and that this has been seen by some as 'proof positive' that Athanasius did not believe in a human soul in Christ.[220] And yet, if the views presented in this study are correct, the positing of a human soul *in order to* show that the Word was not truly the subject of the human acts was the one thing Athanasius could not do. He viewed it as vital that the divine Word became man and directly experienced what it was to be human himself, for it was his 'own' (ἴδιος) humanity. Hanson has noted that pro-Nicenes from the middle of the fourth century onwards tended to shield the divine Logos from 'human emotions and experiences by a human soul or mind'.[221] If our analysis of the Ancyran bishop in Chapter 2 above is correct, it would seem that this was precisely what Marcellus attempted to do in his presentation of the Incarnation. But surely Athanasius must be excepted from this generalization because, given his views expressed here, he would never have allowed a soul to act as a 'protecting mediator' between the Word and the humanity. Shielding the Logos from such human things would have meant that he could not have manifested his divinity in his humanity. Athanasius continued to affirm consistently throughout the Arian controversy that the divine Word is the subject of all the human acts and that those acts were truly human. It would take later theological reflection during the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies to find a more adequate way to express this idea. This gives a compelling reason why Athanasius could not have introduced a human soul in order to 'shield' the divine Word from the humanity. For the Alexandrian bishop, it was in the very humanity of Christ that the Word manifested his divinity and secured redemption. This 'epistemological' mediation (bringing the knowledge of God to man) and 'redemptive' mediation could only have taken place by means of the ontologically unmediated presence of God in the humanity of Jesus Christ.

To show that Athanasius believed that the Incarnate Word is truly divine as the Father is divine is not exactly new. And yet, the point to be made is, it would seem, a bit more subtle than that, and the

[220] Ibid., 310. [221] Hanson, 'Incarnation', 192.

implications of this view are not always brought to the fore in analyses of Athanasius' work. First, the point made is not simply that Athanasius believed Christ to be God. More specifically, he presented, consistently and logically, that the Incarnation of the Word needs to be viewed as the self-manifestation of divinity, *and* that manifestation has as its sphere or *locus* the humanity of Christ, a humanity that included all of the suffering and weakness common to humanity. This view takes on more significance as we view it in the context of the theological background and heritage of Athanasius' day, as shown by our previous studies of Eusebius and Marcellus. The Caesarean bishop relied on what we have termed 'deictic' mediation to present a Christ who can only indirectly show us how the Father is. This was due, in particular, to his view of the inaccessibility of the Father who was ultimately for Eusebius 'the one and only God' of Christian monotheism. Marcellus of Ancyra, in contrast, due to his monoprosopic view of God, was unable to include any real sense of divine manifestation in the man Jesus Christ. Indeed, he found it necessary to posit a spacious gulf between the divine Word speaking through the human Christ, and the human being himself speaking. The visible flesh of Christ could only act 'deictically' to point to the invisible reality of God. It was only in a very limited sense, then, that either Marcellus or Eusebius could affirm that 'whoever saw the man Christ, saw the Father'. In contrast to both, Athanasius wanted to maintain that in Jesus Christ, one sees God directly.

The second point is that this Athanasian perspective on the Incarnation is not always folded into reflections on Athanasius' theology. Many examples come readily to mind having to do, for example, with Athanasius' soteriology or his cosmology. For Athanasius, to propose, as the Arians apparently and Eusebius certainly did, that the Word was an intermediate 'third' being between God and creation was to suggest that God himself was not active nor could be known from his creation. To suggest that the Incarnate Word was anything less than God was to destroy what he regarded as a major facet of the salvation (the manifestation of God) brought by the Son of God.

It would seem, then, that this view of the Incarnation as the 'immediate mediation' of the knowledge of God, that is, the direct manifestation (ἐπιφανεία) of the divine to humanity in the sphere of the humanity (τὰ ἀνθρώπινα) of Christ, is one that illuminates various

aspects of Athanasian theology. It also has the strength of being an aspect of Athanasian theology that is understood in Athanasius' own terms, rather than by the standards and formulae of a later era. It also goes a long way in explaining, in theological terms, why he reacted so vehemently to the Arian Christ. He saw there, not merely a different way of conceiving the Incarnation and salvation, but also a view that completely undermined what he believed to be the relation that God had with his world.

4.7. SUMMARY

It is appropriate at this point to make some summary of what we have seen in this lengthy chapter. In our quick perusal of the first half of Athanasius' treatise, *CG*, we saw that he wished to present God as one who is present and active in our world. He is not only active, but the creation reveals both his existence and that he is singular. Because of this singularity of the creator, we are not to think of the divine Word as an ontological mediating 'third' being between God and creation, but rather as the wisdom, Power and Word of the Father in creation.[222]

Later, as he became more embroiled in the 'Arian' controversy, Athanasius continued to describe this 'single' God as including the Son (and the Holy Spirit) in his identity, in contradistinction to his opponents, who very explicitly excluded the Son from the identity of 'the one and only God'. In particular, his usage of θεότης to describe the unity *within which* the plurality of Father and Son was to be located was contrasted sharply with both Eusebius' and Marcellus' conceptions of the one true God. This 'inclusive' monotheism was reinforced when we analysed Athanasius' rejection of traditional 'mediation' language as it referred, especially among the 'Arians', to the Word as a mediator 'external' to the being of God. Instead, Athanasius stressed that only an image that was truly divine could be an effective mediator of the knowledge of God.[223]

[222] It should be noted that this is an echo of the earlier assertion by Origen that 'it is *through the Son* that the Father is almighty' (*DP* I.2.10).

[223] Again, an 'Origenist' accent on the continuity of nature between the 'invisible God' and the 'invisible image' (cf. *DP* I.2.6; Athanasius, *De Dec.* 27.2).

His arguments against the 'deictic' mediation of his opponents were two—one with regard to the difference in nature between the image and God; the other dealing with the difficulty of a being separate from God effectively leading us to God. First, he argued that it was impossible to have a true manifestation of God through someone who was not himself God, i.e. only God could be the image of God. Whatever likeness there might be between God and one of his creatures, there was an even more massive dissimilarity.[224] One simply could not 'see God' in an entity that did not completely share the nature of God and therefore was different from God. Second, Athanasius contended that the sort of mediation through a mediator external to the being of God offered by his antagonists would not work, because the separate entity would distract from God, rather than show him to us. Because of the separation, one simply did not 'see one in the other'. Because they were different entities, necessarily one had to 'turn away' from one while gazing on the other.[225] Only by the affirmation of a 'unity of substance' as a single object of our spiritual knowledge and worship could this be avoided, thought Athanasius, while still maintaining the distinction between Father and Son.[226]

In contrast then to both Eusebius and Marcellus, Athanasius emphasized the *immediacy* of God in his dealings with the created

[224] If pushed too far, this would seem to argue against the possibility of any manifestation of God within the realm of nature, a natural revelation that Athanasius obviously wanted to affirm, as was shown in our study of *Contra Gentes*. There probably should be understood here some sort of parallel with Origen's distinction of the two types of image—the first, resembling an image on a coin, expresses the way in which humans are said to be 'in the image of God'; the second, a son as the image of his father, describes the 'natural' image that is the Son. Athanasius' argument would still hold, it seems, for it was only the latter image that would 'work' in the setting of monotheistic worship, and be of any salvific efficacy.

[225] One might see a grudging acceptance of this factor in the eschatologies of both Eusebius and Marcellus. Both had to posit a future when the mediator ('flesh' for Marcellus and the Logos for Eusebius) disappeared, because unnecessary (and distracting) for the direct contemplation of God. This eschatological vision is especially awkward for Eusebius (presented in *ET* II.7, in the defence of his view as monotheistic) and would seem to reveal a change from his earlier view of the eternal mediation of the Word.

[226] It is only in this context, as we argued above, that we can understand the use of ὁμοούσιος and similar terms in Athanasius. Thus in the sense of a single object of spiritual apprehension and worship, he held a 'numerical unity' of Father and Son, *contra* Stead, *Divine Substance*, 265f.

world, and it is this very emphasis that probably made him so hesitant to use traditional mediation language. This divine 'immediate' mediation, accomplished by God revealing himself directly to mankind, was then the framework within which Athanasius understood the mediation that took place when God became man. The revelation of unmediated divinity in the humanity of Christ emphasized the importance, for Athanasius, of the ontological oneness of the divinity and humanity of the Word Incarnate.

5

Conclusion

At the beginning of this study we mentioned some concerns about recent approaches to the theological controversies of the early fourth century. These included misconceptions concerning Arianism, the consideration of theological terminology divorced from its context, and inadequate categories applied to the fourth-century struggle. It would be appropriate at the conclusion of our study to reflect on whether our findings have any bearing on these issues.

We have seen that the three writers we have targeted in this study came to widely differing views on how one 'sees the Father in the Son'. That this disagreement concerning how Christ mediated knowledge of God was significant in nature can be seen by the intimate connection it had with the differing views of the 'one God' in all three theologians. This organic link between mediation and monotheism has been indicated throughout our study. Perhaps it would be helpful at this point to summarize our findings concerning the views of each.

5.1. THE THREE PERSPECTIVES OF DIVINE MEDIATION

Eusebius of Caesarea, usually denominated the 'Origenist' in the controversy, nevertheless demonstrated a divergence from his Alexandrian forebear by his insistence on an explicit 'discontinuity' of nature between the Father and the Son. This separation between the Father and Son, while definitely influenced by his view of the Father as the transcendent 'one true God' demanded by monotheism, was also driven by the 'logic' of the function of mediation he saw for the Word.

In order to function as a proper image of God, the mediator had to possess a great likeness to God, while at the same time an unlikeness in order that humanity can approach him. We can 'see the Father in the Son' because he is so very much like him, yet we can approach him (and he to us in the Incarnation) precisely because he is *not* the Father. The Son then 'deictically' points to the Father. That is, he acts as a 'signpost' indicating another without embodying or otherwise being identified with that 'other'.

Eusebius of Caesarea defended his theology against the charge of ditheism by defining the 'one God' required by monotheism as God the Father:

> Therefore, in the same way, positing two hypostases does not necessarily render two Gods. For we do not define them as being of equal honour nor of both of them being unbegun and unbegotten; but the one is unbegotten and unbegun, while the other is begotten and has the Father as a beginning. Wherefore even the Son himself teaches that his Father is his own God when he said, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God' (John 20:17). In fact, God the Father is shown to be also God of his Son. Wherefore, indeed, one God is preached in the church of the Son.[1]

To emphasize the exclusion of the Son from the identity of the μόνος θεός, Eusebius then added that, 'when the Son is contrasted to the Father, he shall no longer be God, . . . but rather image of the invisible God'.[2]

Marcellus of Ancyra, unlike Eusebius, sought to include the divine Word within the identity of the one and only God of Christian monotheism. He did this, in his polemical work against Asterius and the Eusebii of Caesarea and Nicomedia, by insisting that God was a single *prosopon* and that his Word functioned much like a human word and had no independent existence apart from him. This strict monoprosopic view, however, caused him difficulties when it came to his presentation of the Incarnation. His belief that there was evidence of independence from the Father on the part of the human Jesus Christ, coupled with his notion, shared by his opponents, that the image had to be distinct from that which it imaged, caused him to posit a distinction between different sayings of Christ. The Word (which in actual fact was the Father speaking) spoke those

[1] *ET* II.7.2–5. [2] Ibid.

that demonstrated a unity with the Father; the human flesh spoke those that demonstrated independence from God. While in so many ways different from Eusebius, the Ancyran bishop was similar to the Caesarean in that he also demanded a form of mediation of the knowledge of God in which the non-identity of the image with that which it represented was required. Because of the deictic nature of Marcellan mediation, it was the visible human being that was an image of the invisible God, and that human being, as an image of God, *could not* be identified with God.

Marcellus, in his attempt to combat what he viewed as Asterius' wrongful imputation of deity on multiple *hypostases*, argued that Christian monotheism demanded that God be one and only one person, or *prosopon*:

> But if he wishes to hear another prophecy from the same book that confirms to us the one God: 'I am the first God, and in the things that come after, I am' (Isa. 41:4). For the 'I' is indicative of one person, for the two words signal to us one person. For having said, 'I', he brings in 'am' so that through the two parts of the saying, both the pronoun and the verb, the Monad of the Godhead is witnessed. If there is need of yet another witness, I shall offer to him again the same prophet saying, 'I am the first and I am after these, and besides me there is no God' (Isa. 44:6).[3]

There was no room in Marcellus' theology as expressed in the fragments from his *Contra Asterium* for any plurality within the one true God.

Finally, we have just finished analysing how Athanasius of Alexandria argued for the direct manifestation of God in the Son. In doing this, he stressed the unity of substance of the Father and Son, which made possible the direct knowledge of the Father through the Son, because the Son himself, both eternally and in his Incarnation, is fully God. The unity of both substance and action made it quite literally true that the Father was in the Son, and the Son in the Father. While Athanasius laboured to maintain the distinction between the Father and the Son, they together presented a single object of contemplation and worship.

Athanasius in many ways fought a 'two-front' battle. Against Eusebius and those he called 'Arians' he sought to include the Son within

[3] Fragment 76.

the identity of the one God of Christian monotheism. In contrast to Marcellus' monoprosopic view of the Godhead, he endeavoured to maintain the real distinction between the Father and the Son. For this reason, it would seem appropriate to include two quotations from Athanasius which provide his response to both expositions of 'monotheism' represented by Eusebius and Marcellus. First, the Son is fully included in the Christian God's identity:

> On account of this also the one who believes in the Son, believes in the Father. For he believes in that which is particular to the essence of the Father and thus there is one faith in one God, and he who worships and honours the Son, in the Son worships and honours the Father. For the Godhead is one. And, on account of this, there is one honour and one worship which is in the Son and through him in the Father, and he who worships thus worships one God. 'For God is one and there is no other besides him' (Mark 12:32). When therefore it is said the Father 'alone' is God and that 'God is one' and 'I am, and beside me there is no other God' and 'I am first, and I am after these things', it is said rightly—for God is 'one and only and first'—but it is not said to the exclusion of the Son that he says these things. May it never be! Rather, he himself is *in* the 'one and only and first' as being the only Word and Wisdom and Radiance of the 'one and only and first'. But he himself is also first and fullness of the first and only Godhead, being complete and 'full' God. Therefore, it was not said on account of him, but for the exclusion of any other who is not such as is the Father and his Word.[4]

And yet the Father and the Son remained truly distinct from each other:

> But they are two, because the Father is Father and is not the Son, and the Son is Son and not the Father, but the nature is one, for the offspring is like its parent, for it is his image. And all that is the Father's is the Son's. Wherefore the Son is not another God . . . for if the Son be other as an Offspring, still he is the same as God. He and the Father are one in propriety and peculiarity of nature, and in the identity of the one Godhead, as has been said.[5]

These passages, while not providing us any information not already uncovered in our investigation, do help to highlight the vast theological differences between the three. While Eusebius honoured the Son highly, he ultimately excluded him from the identity of the one and only God. Marcellus desired to include the divine Word

[4] *CA* III.6.5–7. [5] *CA* III.4.1–2.

within the identity of the one and only God. However, his strict monoprosopic view of God prevented him from seeing any plurality within the one Godhead. Athanasius, in distinction from both, believed that Father, Son and Holy Spirit together formed a numerical unity of deity which satisfied the demands of monotheism and therefore could together be called the 'one and only and first God'. And yet, he simultaneously maintained that these retained their distinctiveness and represented a plurality within the identity of the one true God.

All of this makes it very difficult to accept the recent attempt by Lienhard to categorize the debate into two camps denominated 'miahypostasism' and 'dyohypostasism'.[6] As we have seen, it blurs some common ground between Eusebius of Caesarea and Marcellus of Ancyra but, more importantly, it would seem to necessitate a close theological alignment between the latter and Athanasius of Alexandria. We have only mentioned a few of the many difficulties with seeing much at all in common between the early Marcellus (as seen in his *Contra Asterium*) and Athanasius at any point in his career.[7] If our investigation into the theology of these three writers has revealed anything, it has shown that the controversy, even at its earliest moment, exhibited much more complexity than can be explained by any 'two-model' theory.

This investigation also demonstrates the weakness of any approach to the fourth-century debate that is built solely on the usage of a pre-determined set of theological terminology, especially if the

[6] Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum*, 35–46.

[7] Limitations of space have not allowed anything approaching a full description of the tremendous theological differences between the Alexandrian and Ancyran. Besides the possibly superficial differences of terminology, there can be seen deep systematic gulfs between them. A partial list of some of the passages which illustrate this from just the *CA* I–III follows: I.14.6; 17.3; 20.4; 25.5–6; 28.1–3; 31.4; 39.1f.; 61.2–5; II.2.1; 13.1; 27.5; 30.1; 33.3; 35.3–6; 36; 38.4; 43.4; 82; III.2; 4.1; 5.3–4; 7.4; 8.1–3; 10.1–3; 11.2; 17–20; 36; 54.3; 57.1f. While most of the differences revealed in these passages (understanding of Son and Word; image theology; response to the Arian 'unity of agreement' among many others) are mentioned in the text of this study, only a careful reading of these passages can unveil the very great differences that existed between Marcellus and Athanasius. While the anti-Marcellan nature of the pseudo-Athanasian *Contra Arianos* IV has been universally acknowledged, it has not always been appreciated that many of the parts most opposed to Marcellus have parallels with the earlier Athanasian polemical works. Two such parallels are I.17/IV.13 and I.22/IV.15.

analysis of such terms is divorced to any extent from its theological context. As was mentioned in the Introduction, the excavator of theological opinions must show as much care as the more mundane archaeologist in preserving his intellectual artefacts *in situ*. This error is especially tempting in the study of the early 'Arian' controversy because we *know* what the 'important' words are, because of later discussions and councils. Thus, words like *ousia*, *hypostasis* and *homoousios* take on a significance that was not as apparent to those participating in the early years of the struggle. For example, while it has often been observed that Athanasius did not seem to grasp the significance of the term ὁμοούσιος before the middle of the century, it has escaped notice that even after this, he used it little in his own theology and it never took a central place.[8] In addition, this sort of imposition of later meanings onto earlier documents can skew the significance of those writings. For example, Hanson's insistence that the anathema at Nicaea against those who held that the Son was of another *hypostasis* or *ousia* from the Father was 'a rankly heretical (i.e. Sabellian) proposition, because the Son must be of a different *hypostasis* (i.e. "Person") from the Father' only is a meaningful statement if the term *hypostasis* is taken with the strict technical meaning given later. And yet, the terms *hypostasis* and *ousia* were at the time of Nicaea more or less synonymous.[9] A study such as Stead's *Divine Substance*, while of great importance for approaching the period, is limited in giving a true understanding of the thought of the fourth-century writers precisely because he treats the usage of terms like *ousia* with little regard for the theological context or whether the writers themselves gave any special import to them. In much the same way, Lienhard's observation that both Marcellus and Athanasius preferred to speak of one divine

[8] As mentioned above, his usage of the term is generally limited to an apologetic nature, such as his defence of Nicaea (*De Dec.* 23–4; *De Syn.* 41–54) or of Dionysius of Alexandria (*De Dec.* 25; *De Sent. Dion.*). See the discussion above.

[9] Hanson, *Search*, 167. His argument against their synonymy (168) is not strong. In fairness, his assertion is tempered by the qualification 'by the standard of later orthodoxy' but he still relies on a continuity of significance for the term that cannot be sustained. It should be pointed out that Hanson's discussion on this point is confused. While referring to the creed of Nicaea as 'virtual Sabellianism' (171) and an 'openly Sabellian creed' (172), he later concludes his discussion by stating that 'it is going too far to say that N is a clearly Sabellian document'!

hypostasis conceals much more than it reveals, as should be clear by now.[10]

Our study has hopefully as well put to rest the hoary spectre of Origen as the true 'culprit' of the Arian controversy. As we have seen, this allegation against the Alexandrian is as old as Marcellus' accusations in the *Contra Asterium*. However, our study has shown that 'Origenist' precedents in the controversy are not so simple. Eusebius of Caesarea is usually deemed the 'Origenist' in the conflict and indeed he may have been influenced by Origen's distinction between ὁ θεός and θεός in his differentiation of the divinity of the Father and the Son, respectively.[11] On the other hand, in spite of his great regard for the Alexandrian teacher, he differed greatly from Origen in his insistence on a strong 'essential' break between the Father and the Son. It is not insignificant that much of the imputed 'Origenism' of the fourth century is based on the use of *hypostasis* in the plural to describe divinity.[12] While this certainly reflects Origen's usage of the term, this interpretation ignores the theological context of both the fourth-century writers as well as that of Origen. The fact of the matter is that some of the greatest 'Origenist' influence seen in our study has been in the writing of Athanasius. This can be seen, for instance, in his insistence on a 'unity of substance' between the Father and Son. The Athanasian and Origenian presentation of the eternal begetting of the Son are quite similar, not only in its eternality, but also in the fact that it signals for both that the Son is 'innate' to the very being of God, prior to his relationship towards creation temporally, or at least logically (for Origen). Hence, it was 'through the Son that the Father is almighty'. Although the quotation comes from Origen's *De Principis* I.2.10, one could be forgiven for assuming it to have come from Athanasius' *Contra Arianos*. In addition, the two shared a common concern for the image of God to be connected 'essentially' to God. Thus, Origen argued that only the Son was an

[10] This is not to say that both Stead, *Divine Substance*, and Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum* are not very helpful studies. They provide a goldmine of information and analysis for the period. It is just that in regard to an overall framework and understanding of the controversy they fail, for the reasons noted above.

[11] Whether or not this was in accord with the original intent of Origen. Cf. the discussion in the introduction above.

[12] Hanson, *Search*, 172.

'image' in the sense of a natural son; and Athanasius asserted that the Son was ἐξ οὐσίας of the Father.

5.2. CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

In closing, a few brief words would seem to be in order with regard to the relevance of our study to contemporary theology. The debate over divine mediation is inherently central to Christian theology. In this sense, it is always a relevant topic and our decisions concerning the conclusions of the fourth-century controversy will impinge on how we do theology. In particular, we shall argue that some of the concerns addressed by the participants of the 'Arian' debate could be of interest and importance in some current issues in theology, especially as brought to light by Roger Haight's symbolic Christology.

First, it would seem that the fourth-century controversy could serve as a contributing voice in contemporary debate over how Christ mediates the knowledge of God. For reasons of space, we shall limit our comments to the recent book *Jesus, Symbol of God* by Roger Haight.[13] The presentation by Haight has been called 'a wonderful, mind-clearing' book by some and 'a form of atheism that is merely couched in religious symbolism' by others.[14] While it would not be appropriate nor possible to give here an overall assessment of Haight's Christology, we shall investigate briefly an aspect of how he conceives

[13] Roger Haight, *Jesus, Symbol of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999). This was an expansion and further treatment of what he had previously published (Roger Haight, 'The Case for Spirit Christology', *Theological Studies* 53 (1992), 257–87). The present argument should not be taken as a summary of the author's only disagreement with Haight's 'symbolic' theology. Overall, Haight's theory seems fatally flawed by several factors, including a faulty hermeneutic (addressed in Thomas G. Weinandy, 'The Symbolic Theology of Roger Haight', *The Thomist* 65, 1 (2001), 121–36), a misunderstanding of Christian soteriology, a failure to take seriously all of the scriptural data (even given his presuppositions about what is and isn't historical) and a general lack of coherency and cogency in his argumentation. Obviously, all of this is well beyond the scope of our study, so our discussion here will be limited to his presentation of 'deictic' mediation.

[14] The former quotation is attributed to David Toolan, S.J. on the book cover, the latter is from Weinandy, 'Symbolic', 136. For further criticism, see also Thomas G. Weinandy, 'The Case for Spirit Christology: Some Reflections', *The Thomist* 59, 2 (1995), 173–88; and John Wright, 'Roger Haight's Spirit Christology', *Theological Studies* 53 (1992), 729–35.

of the mediation of Jesus and then determine whether the ancient debate might indicate the possible direction of a critique of the said mediation.

The centre of Haight's message is that 'Jesus is the concrete symbol of God'.[15] The term 'concrete symbol' for Haight 'refers to things, places, events, or persons which mediate a presence and consciousness of another reality'.[16] By this, it seems clear that Haight would like to emphasize both the *efficacy* of the symbol (i.e. that it really does mediate knowledge of the other reality) as well as the *non-identity* of the symbol with that 'other reality'. Thus, Haight wishes to affirm that Jesus really does 'mediate God and God's salvation to human beings who grasp them in faith'.[17] However, at the same moment, he must admit that 'as the human mediator Jesus points not at himself but at God and God's rule'.[18] While the historical human being Jesus is *associated with* and can even be said to personify, to some extent, God and God's rule, he is not to be *identified* with the divine reality of which he is a symbol.

The similarities to Eusebius' view of divine mediation are obvious. In much the same way as Haight, the Caesarean bishop wished to affirm that through the Word (and thus through the historical human Jesus) one could come to a knowledge of the truth of God. However, just as Haight, Eusebius tried to avoid making the Word in any way *identical* to the one true God.[19] Thus, it would seem fair to

[15] Haight, *Symbol*, 14.

[16] Ibid., 13. A 'concrete symbol' is contrasted with 'conscious symbols' in that the latter are 'words, notions, concepts, ideas, sayings, or texts' while the former 'is an object'.

[17] Ibid., 204. [18] Ibid.

[19] This is not to deny the very obvious differences between the two. In contrast to Eusebius, for example, Haight wishes to maintain that the mediator himself must be 'historical', while the Caesarean claimed that the mediator was a spiritual reality. This would tend to align Haight more with Marcellus of Ancyra's view of the visible flesh deictically pointing to the invisible God. Also, while Eusebius of Caesarea affirmed the uniqueness of the mediation provided through the Word, Haight not only does not maintain this, but the non-unique nature of Jesus as symbol of God is a primary motivation for his theology (cf. in particular, *Symbol*, 395–423). And yet, here it would seem that Haight wants to have his cake and eat it too, for he states that 'other representations of God can be universally normative, and thus, too, for Christians, even as Jesus Christ is universally normative' (Haight, *Symbol*, 422). For this to be a coherent statement, the traditional meanings of both 'universal' and 'normative' would have to be greatly altered, it would seem. While sensitivity and openness to

characterize Haight's theory of divine mediation as 'deictic' in the sense used in this study. And, if this is the case, then it would seem relevant to subject his theory to the same criticism that we have seen was used by Athanasius in the earlier controversy.

It will be remembered that Athanasius sharply criticized the Eusebian model of mediation through an intervening being for a number of reasons. First of all, he believed the mediation of the knowledge of God through a mediator not identified with God to be unworkable, especially in the context of worship. As long as there were two separate objects of perception, and therefore of worship, then one necessarily had to turn away from one while looking at the other.[20] If the two were not in some way identified, then the only options would seem to be either to worship one and not the other; or to worship both. Even if one were to worship the one *through* the other, they would not both be objects of devotion. And yet, the Christian scriptures and tradition are replete with examples of Jesus as the object of devotion and worship.[21] Both for Eusebius and for Haight, this criticism seems to cut deep. As Eusebius in the fourth century, so the latter as well does not wish to deny that Jesus is in some sense the proper object of worship. In answer to the question of whether Jesus is the object of Christology, faith and worship, Haight's response is 'both Yes and No'.[22] Yes, in that he is 'the religious symbol central to Christianity' and no, in that he points to God and not to himself. And yet, one has to wonder whether this is a coherent statement in the context of faith and worship. It is conceivable that a person worships one, or the other, or both, or even one *through* the other; but how can one simultaneously have Jesus as the object of worship and *not* have Jesus as the object of worship? It would seem more coherent to Haight's argument simply to disregard Jesus as a proper object of Christian faith and worship, but he avoids coming to this radical conclusion. He does seem aware of the possibility of the criticism, for he states, 'the point of the Yes and No, however, is not to

other traditions are to be applauded in the contemporary world, it seems to this author that Haight's path is fraught with confusion.

[20] *CA* III.16.

[21] For example, Matthew 15:25–8; 21:9–16; 28:9–10, 17; John 5:23; 9:35–9; 17:4–5; 20:28–9; Philippians 2:10–11; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5.

[22] Haight, *Symbol*, 204f.

present alternatives, nor to propose a focus of attention that oscillates between the two poles, although this may be inevitable'.[23] Inevitable, Athanasius would contend, because it is a misconstruction of how one sees the Father in Christ.

A second criticism levelled at 'deictic' mediation by Athanasius was that it had the tendency to render God less, instead of more, accessible. He argued that, if it was necessary for there to exist a mediating being between God and his creation, then surely 'the mediating being', itself a created being, would need a mediator as well. This would end, he asserted, in an unending chain of mediators, and the world would wait in vain for an effective mediation of the knowledge of God.[24] While of course Haight comes at the Christological problem from a very different mindset than the 'Eusebians', it would seem that this critique of deictic mediation still hits home. The point is that the imposition of any necessary medium between humanity and knowing God has the ultimate effect, both in the Eusebian system as well as in Haight's 'symbolic theology', of making God less accessible. Haight certainly wants to affirm that God, in his system, is 'knowable'. Hence, against Bultmann, Haight asserts that his position 'opposes the theological view that one cannot make any objective statements about God'.[25] And yet, this seems to be an impossibility in Haight's system, if 'objective' here has its usual meaning.[26] The only statements about God that could be made would be 'symbolic' statements of events that are themselves 'symbolic'.[27] This becomes even more obvious

[23] Ibid., 204.

[24] *CA* II.26.2. Actually, Athanasius maintained that the world would have to wait an eternity to exist, since this 'mediating hand' was necessary for creation.

[25] Haight, *Symbol*, 486.

[26] In contrast, Haight elsewhere contends that subjective religious experiences *do not* reflect 'autonomous spheres of objective reality' (*Symbol*, 401).

[27] As Haight asserts elsewhere, 'the world of religious symbolism, the world of language about God, is not one of facts and digital information; it is a world of religious experience; it is based on a narrative of a symbolic encounter with God in history' (*Symbol*, 473). Here, he implies that not only are the narratives of religious experience symbolic, but the experiences themselves are symbolic. It is difficult to see, then, how this could be described as 'an encounter with God'. Haight interprets Rahner's assertion that all divine self-communication to humanity takes place 'by virtue of an historical mediation' to mean that God is only experienced indirectly through historically conditioned symbols and these experiences ultimately tell us nothing of God himself (Haight, *Symbol*, 12–15, 487–8). Haight quotes with approval LaCugna and McDonnell on this point, 'The model of God *in se* is not God as such. A model of

in Haight's refusal of Rahner's axiom that 'the "economic" trinity is the "immanent" trinity and *vice versa*'.[28] Thus, whatever religious experiences one might have, whether through Jesus or some other medium, would not really speak to us of who and how God really is in himself. Here, it would seem that Eusebius' theology is superior to Haight's in that he posits that we can receive real objective knowledge of the one true God through the Word. In 'symbolic theology', we are forced to speak symbolically of our experiences, which are themselves symbols of God, which in turn tell us nothing about God as such. It would seem that one could speak of 'experiencing God' in Haight's theology only in a very equivocal sense.

A third criticism aimed at deictic mediation by Athanasius is related to the previous point. In searching for the presuppositions that would force one to posit an intervening mediator between God and humanity, Athanasius asked, Why would such a mediator be needed? It seemed to him to argue for a God either too weak to enter into direct contact with the material world, or too proud to condescend to us; or that the world is too frail to bear the hand of God.[29] Even the last was a blasphemy against God, since it implied that he was unable or unwilling to create a world that could withstand his touch. And if God was indeed intimately related to his creation at all times, then what need would there be of this kind of mediation? In the same way, one can ask why there is even the need of any symbolic mediation of God and his kingdom according to Haight? That this deictic mediation has and does take place universally is assumed throughout his study. And yet, in the end, one wonders why it is there at all. Haight affirms that God is present throughout his creation. 'The inner logic of Christian revelation, then, is determined by the concrete symbol Jesus and the conceptual symbol Spirit

"the trinity" is not the trinitarian God. Models must reflect our unknowing of God; model is reflective vision, not direct beholding' (Haight, *Symbol*, 472). 'Model' here is equivalent to Haight's 'symbol'.

[28] Haight, *Symbol*, 487.

[29] *CA* II.24–6; 29.4; *De Dec.* 7. The scriptural data demand that the transcendence of God should be understood in a way that does not negate the close relation he has with his creation and especially with humanity. The God before whom 'the mountains melt like wax' is the God who 'preserves the souls of the saints' (Psalm 97:5, 10). God's intimate care for all aspects of the world are expressed in many places, one example is Psalm 104.

pointing to God's personal presence to human beings.'[30] But, if the symbols point to the fact that God is already present with human beings (i.e. does not *make* God present), then what need is there of Jesus as a symbol? But the question really must be raised at an even broader level—if God is indeed present with us already, why do we have the need for any such indirect symbolic approaches to him? Either God is present to the world in only a very 'vague' way, or it would seem that for Haight, just as Athanasius had inferred for his fourth-century opponents, God is simply too weak or too haughty to communicate himself to us. A response to this could be to affirm that God is indeed intimately concerned and involved with his creation and has communicated directly in various and diverse manners, and ultimately and finally come to earth, manifesting himself as man.[31] But, unfortunately, this would sound too dangerously close to the 'dated doctrines' that Haight fears so much.

It seems clear that these Athanasian criticisms are serious ones that hit at the heart of Haight's proposed 'symbolic theology'. Whether they are answerable or not needs to be determined, but it would seem that they cannot be ignored. In this way it appears that the fourth-century debate still has something to contribute to (post-)modern discussions.

5.3. SUMMARY

In conclusion, we would assert that this study has relevance because it deals with a foundational debate about an issue that is always central to Christianity. The fourth-century Christological controversy was a conflict over an important and substantial part of the Christian theological heritage and therefore is of perennial relevance. Recent studies, mentioned in the introduction, have proven that there were important church-political factors involved in the controversy, and that the intentions of the participants were often not completely and purely theological.[32] In addition, there was the undoubted polemical utilization of the dubious title 'Arian' to colour all those who opposed the pro-Nicenes. While it should be stressed that the appellation

[30] Haight, *Symbol*, 484. [31] Hebrews 1:1–2.
[32] Cf. Introduction, footnote 5 above.

'Arian' was not one that would have been accepted by those so named, nor is it necessarily a felicitous term for scholars to use at present, it should be recognized that Arius' name was used from the Council of Antioch of 325 onwards not simply to condemn, but also to describe a group that had a certain theological propinquity. These were united, at the very least, in the desire to 'exclude' the Son from the identity and 'essence' of the one true God. While the precise terms to be used to describe this exclusion were not always the same, the general aspect of 'exclusion' has been demonstrated in Eusebius of Caesarea and, while not elaborated upon in this study, also in Asterius and Arius himself. In addition, it has been abundantly revealed that Athanasius saw his opponents in these terms and so sought to prove that the Son was not 'external' to God.[33]

That there was a theological dimension to the controversy is clear and it should be kept in mind that it was of no little import. As we have indicated above, the 'Arian' debate, and specifically how one should understand Christ as mediator, was concerned with nothing less than the conception of Christianity as a monotheistic religion. That it *was* monotheistic was a given for all of the participants, but the identity of ὁ μόνος θεός thereby implied was hotly debated. This was not simply a discussion over the proper definition of the term 'monotheism', but rather an issue that struck at the heart of the faith-life of the community. Who was the proper object of worship and the subject of proclamation? And could there be more than one such object and the Christian faith still be considered monotheism? Our study of the differing views of mediation implied or taught by the divergent schools of thought on the one true God has shown above all that this was not merely an academic debate over what terms to use in speaking of God. Nor was it simply concerned with relatively abstract philosophical interests in the ontology of God. Rather it was, for all of the participants, a struggle over how we are to know God and, more specifically, how we are to know God *through Christ*. And our brief treatment of Roger Haight above has shown that it is a live issue today.

[33] Cf. *De Decretis*, where Athanasius' perception of the theological differences among the 'Arians' (3.1; 4.3; 9.4) as well as their unity on the 'deictic' mediation of the Son (7.1–9.4) is abundantly clear.

It has been stated, rightly, that Athanasius' Christology can be characterized as soteriological, in that it is centred on how salvation comes to man through Christ. And yet, it should not be understood from this that the other participants were less interested in the function of Christ as mediator of the knowledge of God. Marcellus was convinced that the divine Word itself could not function as an image of God,[34] while Eusebius believed that only by participating in a special way in the Father's divinity while *not* being identified with him could the Word function as the image of God to humanity.[35] The former experienced great difficulty in demonstrating how the Incarnation could, ultimately, be considered in any true sense a manifestation of God; the latter became mired in great difficulties in attempting to show how his view was to be differentiated from polytheism.

It would appear that Athanasius alone of the three was able to present a theology that maintained monotheism successfully on the one hand, while affirming a true manifestation of God in the man Jesus Christ on the other. That this had ramifications for how we conceive of God, both then and now, is obvious. Not only does it demand a concept of God that *includes* plurality within unity; it also brings us the good news that he is a God who is immediately present to his creation and can truly and directly become man, whose changelessness is unthreatened by the *pathos* which characterizes this world. In fact, it would seem, if Athanasius was right, that it is only because of the Incarnation, the rupture of the divine into this mundane world and his taking on of our *pathe*, that we can have any hope of seeing God. Thus it is only because the Father and Son are truly one, in such a way that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, that the Son effectively mediates the knowledge of God to humankind. We can know God because God, himself, came to earth and revealed himself to us:

> For the one who, in this sense, understands that the Son and the Father are one, knows that he is in the Father and the Father is in the Son; for the Godhead of the Son is the Father's and it is in the Son. And whoever grasps this is convinced that 'whoever has seen the Son, has seen the Father', for in the Son is contemplated the Father's Godhead.[36]

[34] Cf. frs. 94 and 97. [35] Cf. *DE* IV.7 and *CM* I.1. [36] *CA* III.5.2.

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Index