

# Craig's Contradictory Christ

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**Abstract:** William Lane Craig's "Neo-Apollinarian" christology aims to give us a model of Incarnation which seems not to imply any contradiction, and which fits well with the Bible and with at least the creed from the fourth ecumenical council. It is argued that the theory fails to achieve any of these goals.

**Keywords:** Christology, William Lane Craig, Neo-Apollinarian christology, Conciliar christology, Human christology

## 1. "Neo-Apollinarian" Christology

Since 2003 William Lane Craig has been propounding what he calls a "Neo-Apollinarian" christology (Moreland and Craig 2017),<sup>1</sup> urging that, while a Christian can't know that it's true, she can know that it seems coherent and that it is a plausible candidate for a biblical and ecumenical-creed-compliant two-natures christology, which should satisfy her that such a project is not doomed to incoherence. While too underdeveloped to impact most of the scholarly literature,<sup>2</sup> it is much-known and much-discussed at the popular level, and it deserves a careful evaluation.

The basic moves of the theory are three (2017, 603–10). First, Craig endorses the "Definition" from the catholic council at Chalcedon in 451 as a standard for Christian orthodoxy, at least in that it in some sense sets boundaries for a two-natures christology. Second, inspired by the ancient theologian Apollinaris (a.k.a.

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<sup>1</sup> Essentially the same material is presented in numerous webpages at Craig's website [reasonablefaith.org](http://reasonablefaith.org) and on YouTube (e.g. Craig 2021). While the book is co-authored, Dr. Craig is the primary author of the chapter on Incarnation, and he alone has publicly defended the model discussed here.

<sup>2</sup> Much interaction with it is of the form that it is Apollinarian (even though Neo-) and monothelite, and so is unorthodox by the standards of the ecumenical creeds. See the brief discussions by Crisp (2007, 45–63; 2009, chap. 7). It receives no substantial discussion in some important critical surveys of models of the Incarnation (Cross 2009; Beall 2021; Pawl 2016; 2020).

Apollinarius)<sup>3</sup>, he urges that the divine nature, the second Person of the Trinity, plays the role of a human soul in the incarnate Christ. This simplifies the number of elements in two-natures theorizing from as many as five (the composite Christ, the divine nature, the human nature, the rational soul, the human body) down to three (the divine nature who is Christ himself, the human body, and the individual human nature composed of Christ/the divine nature and that body).<sup>4</sup> But because this makes the divine nature the soul and self of the incarnate Christ, Craig worries that such a Christ will not have anything like a normal human conscious experience. So he adds the third element, which is that “the divine elements of Jesus’ personality were largely subliminal during his state of humiliation” (2017, 607).<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Contradicting Councils

Craig’s discussion highlights the ambivalence of many Protestant theologians about the so-called “ecumenical” councils. On the one hand, Craig simply contradicts the sixth ecumenical council by endorsing monothelism, that the incarnate Christ has only one will (2017, 608).<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Craig is concerned to secure the orthodox credentials of his christology by arguing that it fits well with the Definition propounded by an emperor-led meeting of bishops at Chalcedon in 451 (2017, 603).<sup>7</sup> But the theory seems to contradict not only the sixth, but also the first four ecumenical creeds in several ways.

First, Craig speculates that the Logos/divine nature was always human;<sup>8</sup> what happened at the time of his Incarnation was that he came to possess a *complete* human nature by coming to be the soul of the new human body (2017, 606). Or at least, that’s how I understand Craig. What he actually says is that,

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<sup>3</sup> Apollinaris (c. 315–92) was a Nicene catholic bishop of Laodicea who fought for the Nicene cause but ended up being disowned by the Nicene party because of his christological views. I shall not here enter into the difficulties of interpreting the extant fragments from Apollinaris, nor shall I consider the cheap objection to Craig’s christology that it must be heretical as it is similar in some ways to that of Apollinaris.

<sup>4</sup> See Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

<sup>5</sup> Craig’s views on Incarnation seem to be similar in many ways to the less philosophically robust position of Herbert Relton (Relton 2002).

<sup>6</sup> For the statements of this 680–81 council at Constantinople see Tanner 1990, 1:123–30.

<sup>7</sup> Craig calls the statement produced by this council “the zenith of the early church’s christological speculations” (2017, 598). On the context and events of this council a good introduction is Jenkins 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Yet this does not involve being a human person, as discussed in sections 6 and 7 below.

The Logos already possessed in his preincarnate state all the properties necessary for being a human self. In assuming a hominid body, he brought to it all that was necessary for a complete human nature (2017, 606).

At first glance it's not clear that this suggestion is coherent; if a "nature" is a set of properties each of which is necessary for being a member of a certain natural kind, then a thing can't belong to that kind while lacking one or more of those properties. But I'm charitably interpreting Craig as meaning that the Logos always had all that was necessary to being a human (since as a human self, he was both a self and human), but that before Incarnation he didn't have "a complete human nature" in the sense that he lacked at least one feature, having a certain type of body, which isn't strictly necessary for being human, but which is normally something humans have. So if a "nature" is the sum total of qualities necessary to being in a certain natural kind, the Logos always has human nature. But if a "nature" is the qualities which it is normal for a human to have, then the Logos has most of that "nature" eternally, then comes to have all of "human nature" when he obtains the right sort of body.<sup>9</sup>

At any rate, the first three ecumenical creeds clearly imply that the Logos became human at the time of his Incarnation, which rules out that he always was. For example, the document from the 381 council at Constantinople says that the Son "for us humans and for our salvation . . . came down from the heavens and became incarnate from the holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, became human and was crucified" (Tanner 1990, 1:24 [see also 5, 70]).

One might wonder if Craig could defend his theory by urging that at least at Chalcedon the door is left open to the idea that in his human birth the Son finished or completed becoming human, so that most of the normal human features were in place long before the time of Mary.<sup>10</sup> But in its famous "Definition" we read that the Son was "begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and [begotten] in the last days . . . from Mary . . . as regards his humanity" (Tanner 1990, 1:86). The picture here, which is confirmed by letters read and endorsed at the council (Pope Leo 1990, 77, 79; Cyril of Alexandria 2007b; 2007a, 179), is of two

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<sup>9</sup> Such a distinction, it seems to me, is motivated independently of Craig's theory. Many Christians want to say that "human nature" includes having a certain sort of body, and yet hold that a human person may exist bodiless in an intermediate state between death and resurrection. This will require denying that having a body is part of "human nature" in the stricter sense of all the qualities each of which is necessary to being a human. It is just saying that embodiment in the right sort of body is natural and normal for humans, even though a human can exist without having that sort of body, or perhaps any body at all.

<sup>10</sup> I owe this objection to a referee for this journal.

“births,” one eternal, which is the source of Christ’s divine nature, and one “in time,” which is the source of his human nature. *How much* of that second nature came to the Son at that time? Seemingly all of it. As Cyril writes, “born from her [Mary] was the holy body, rationally animated,” in other words, the entirety of the human nature. As best I can tell, nothing in the sources would motivate saying that in Mary Christ only finished getting what was normal to being human, most of which he already had.

Second, the careful reader of these creeds will notice that their authors endorsed the earlier “ecumenical” creeds.<sup>11</sup> The council at Chalcedon in 451 explicitly endorses the creeds of 325, 381, and the lesser known one from the chaotic meeting in 431 at Ephesus (Tanner 1990, 1:84). These latter bishops declare,

We confess, then, our lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man of a rational soul and a body, begotten before all ages from the Father in his godhead, the same in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born of Mary the virgin, according to his humanity . . . a union of two natures took place. Therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord . . . God the Word took flesh and became man and from his very conception united to himself the temple he took from her (Tanner 1990, 1:69–70).

The “temple” here, the “human nature” gained by the divine Son, is understood to consist of a body and a “rational soul,” the kind of soul characteristic of a human being, something which, it is assumed, in principle could not be a divine Person. This body and soul are thought of as both distinct from the Son himself; thus, this creed, which is endorsed by Chalcedon (Tanner 1990, 1:84), rules out Craig’s sort of “Neo-Apollinarian” christology, on which there is no “rational soul” in the above sense, but rather the divine Son himself (the divine nature) plays that role with respect to the body. So does the “Definition” from Chalcedon, which says that the Incarnate Christ is “truly man, of a rational soul and a body” (Tanner 1990, 1:86), the “rational soul” being assumed to be different in kind and different in number than Christ’s divine nature. Oddly, while Craig wants to “postulate with Chalcedon that in Christ there is one person who exemplifies two distinct and complete natures” (2017, 603), he also concedes that in the statements from that council,

Apollinarianism is implicitly rejected in the statement that Christ is not only perfect in his deity and is truly God but is also perfect in his humanity and truly man, having both a rational soul and body (2017, 599).

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<sup>11</sup> However, oddly, the third council doesn’t mention the second (Tanner 1990, 1:64–65, 84).

While a casual reader may see Craig as friendly to this popular standard of orthodoxy, in fact Craig implicitly rejects Chalcedon as authoritative, rejecting both the letter and the spirit of its anti-Apollinarian components. He only accepts the core idea of it: one-person-with-two-natures. He also, like many, conveniently ignores that council's strict prohibition on composing further formulations about Christ and his natures:

Since we have formulated these things with all possible accuracy and attention, the sacred and universal synod decreed that no one is permitted to produce, or even to write down or compose, any other creed or to think or teach otherwise (Tanner 1990, 1:87).

The document then threatens deposition for disobedient clerics and anathematization for laypeople. About its prohibition on future creed-making, while one might argue that it allows later theologians and philosophers to interpret or reformulate or clarify its statements, it plainly anathematizes anyone who, like Craig, contradicts its teaching.<sup>12</sup>

Insofar as Craig wants to defend his christology, he ought to simply disagree with the first four ecumenical councils on the grounds that there is no scriptural support for a human soul in Jesus in addition to his divine nature and his body, or for his becoming human at the time of his Incarnation, just as he sets aside the sixth ecumenical council on the grounds that “dyotheletism [two wills in Christ], despite its conciliar support, finds no warrant in Scripture” (2017, 608). That the New Testament Jesus lacks a human soul is a contentious statement to be sure (many will assume his genuine humanity to require such), as will be the claim that the Son didn't become human when he became Incarnate, but at the end of the day a Protestant must choose Scripture over the catholic councils when they clash, and here we're granting for the sake of argument that Craig's christology fits well with the New Testament portrayals of Jesus.

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<sup>12</sup> The earlier 431 council issued a similar prohibition: “It is not permitted to produce or write or compose any other creed except the one which was defined . . . [in 325] at Nicea. Any who dare to compose or bring forth or produce any other creed . . . if they are bishops or clerics they should be deprived of their respective charges and if they are laymen they are to be anathematized” (Tanner 1990, 1:65).

### 3. The Lying Christ Problem

But this too is problematic. The Jesus of the New Testament is morally pure: “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:22, NRSVUE). Unfortunately, Craig’s theory seems to present us with a lying Christ. The New Testament Jesus explicitly says that he doesn’t know the day or hour of his future return (Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36). But in Craig’s view he was essentially omniscient, and so *did* know those things.

Craig adds that during his earthly ministry most of Christ’s omniscience was in his subconscious mind. But this additional claim does nothing to rescue Christ’s honesty. Jesus tells his disciples that he doesn’t know the day or hour *full stop* (in other words, there is no qualification stated, assumed, implied, or hinted at, so that he merely doesn’t know this *in a certain way*.)<sup>13</sup> He would have known that such an unqualified statement would communicate that he doesn’t know the day or hour *in any way*. (The statement doesn’t seem to leave open the possibility that Jesus *does* know it, although he’s just not currently aware of it.) Thus, Jesus would have known that his statement would cause his hearers to believe that he doesn’t know the day or hour in any way. But this appears to be lying, intentionally doing or saying something so that your hearers will believe something which you believe to be false. In Craig’s view, during his earthly ministry Jesus knew that he was the divine Son and that divinity entails knowing all.<sup>14</sup> Thus, even if the knowledge in question were locked away in his subconscious mind, Christ would have known that it was there, and would not, on pain of dishonesty, go around denying outright that he knew those things.<sup>15</sup>

This attribution of intentional deception to Jesus seems costly, and a point in favor of christologies on which Jesus simply doesn’t know the day or hour in any way. Craig owes us an account of why the aforementioned denial would *not* be lying, or if he grants that it *is* lying, an account of why it would not be morally wrong.

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<sup>13</sup> The onus is on any proponent of an omniscient Christ to point out such a qualification; in my view, there simply is nothing relevant to point to.

<sup>14</sup> For Craig’s arguments that the historical Jesus thought himself to be divine, see (Craig 2008, 299–327). As to Jesus knowing that divinity entails knowing all, I take it that Craig would agree that this would follow from Jesus understanding the then-current Jewish concept of *divinity*.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Loke (2017, 57) objects more gently that Craig needs to show us why, when Jesus said he didn’t know the day or hour, “he was not pretending,” and observes also that it’s unclear how Craig has made room in his theory for the boy Christ to grow in knowledge or wisdom (Luke 2:52), since this is normally understood as involving gaining new information. Incidentally, the Lying Christ problem seems to apply equally to Loke’s more complicated theory (Loke 2017, 84; 115; 153–54).

#### 4. A Contradictory and Docetic Christ

Creeds and the Bible, though, are not Craig's main concern. His main aim is to produce a model of the incarnate Christ which seems not to imply any contradiction. I will focus, then, for the rest of the paper on this aim of his "Neo-Apollinarian" theory, mentioning along the way a few more serious biblical problems it faces. I will argue that here the theory clearly fails, as it leaves several apparent contradictions intact. Craig starts his discussion with a quick glance at some of these.

How can Jesus be both God and man, [1] infinite and finite, [2] Creator and creature? How can we unite in a single person both [3] omniscience and ignorance, [4] omnipotence and weakness, [5] moral perfection, and moral perfectibility? The attributes of deity seem to drive out the attributes of humanity, so that it seems logically inconsistent to affirm with the historic Christian church that Jesus is truly God and truly man (2017, 595 [numbers added]).

Let us set aside the vague "infinite and finite."<sup>16</sup> We have then four pairs of attributes such that arguably divinity implies one and humanity implies the other, and it seems that in principle nothing could have both attributes. In a recent presentation of this material Craig starts with these six pairs of attributes: self-existent and created, necessary and dependent, eternal and time-bound, all-powerful and limited in power, all-knowing and limited in knowledge, all-present and limited in space (Craig 2021). Tightening up these formulations and combining the lists, we get:

1. created and not created
2. perfect in knowledge and not perfect in knowledge
3. perfect in power and not perfect in power
4. in principle incapable of moral improvement and in principle capable of moral improvement
5. self-existent (*a se*) and not self-existent
6. having metaphysically necessary existence and having metaphysically contingent existence
7. in principle incapable of coming into existence, in principle capable of coming into existence
8. omnipresent and not omnipresent

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<sup>16</sup> We should ask: infinite and finite in what respect? Perhaps this is just a shorthand way to gesture at the whole range of apparently contrary properties to be discussed below.

Craig is committed to all of these divine attributes, the first in each pair, as am I. But it is plausible that the kind-essence *humanity* implies each of the second attributes.<sup>17</sup> Let's very briefly run through these.

It seems impossible for there to be an uncreated human. The human race is a lineage, like a big, extended family; you and I exist because of the reproductive activity of our parents. Any human will be in this lineage somewhere, either at a far end of it (i.e. a human not caused by at least one previous human) or somewhere later in the lineage "closer" to you and me. Either way, he or she will exist, ultimately, because of the creative activity of God, whether directly or indirectly. Given God's existence, it seems that being human entails being a creature, a part of God's creation.

While we don't know the top limits of knowledge and power which are consistent with humanity—perhaps they are a billion times beyond what we see in humans now<sup>18</sup>—still, it is very plausible that there are some such limits, that *humanity* prevents a being from reaching the heights of knowledge and power enjoyed by an absolutely perfect being. Human knowledge will be grounded in the intrinsic properties of a human brain and/or a human soul, and both, being finite, would seem to impose limits. Nearly any human power that you can think of seems to require a functional human body—but these are rather small and frail physical objects. Perhaps, we can grant for the sake of argument, some human actions involve only the human soul or mind. Still, such is, we assume, limited, and so whether or not humans have souls, it seems they must have limits to their power and knowledge.

It seems possible that any human, as such, could in principle be without moral defect. This is imaginable; there seems to be no contradiction implied by a claim that there's a morally perfect human, and in fact all Christians believe that presently the man Jesus is without moral defect. But given what look like necessary limits on human power and knowledge, even in the case of an actually morally perfect human, it seems that he or she in principle might have failed to be so, had things gone differently. He or she might, having been weaker or less knowledgeable, have been in need of moral growth, improvements in character.

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<sup>17</sup> Here the astute reader may object that *actually* Craig, following Morris, won't grant that *any* of these properties are essential to the kind *human being* (Morris 1986, 64). Craig's reliance on Morris will be discussed below in section 7, but for now we are going to explore some reasons for thinking that these attributes are, as many assume, essential to the kind *human being*.

<sup>18</sup> See Thomas Emlyn's intriguing discussion of the scope of Christ's human knowledge in his current, exalted state (2021, 73–89).



It seems clear that any human, as such, must not be self-existent. After all, any human will be caused to exist by God and/or previous humans. And that humans are creatures entails that they are not self-existent. Further, for any human, it seems that possibly he or she does not exist. (In current philosophers' lingo: there is a possible world in which that human does not exist.) Whatever a human is—a soul, a living animal, a combination of body and soul, a physical object which also has mental properties—it seems that all its components will be that way (non-necessary, contingent), and so it seems that so will the human being herself. Being metaphysically contingent, any human will be capable of coming into existence, and no human will be incapable of coming into existence.

Finally, the concept of divine omnipresence is disputed. It may be understood literally, as being located in all places, or it may mean that one can immediately act in any place. Either way, it would seem that a human must be less than omnipresent. This is particularly clear if humans are physical objects or animals. But even if humans are souls (or souls plus bodies), it seems that a human must be in some places but not in others. If omnipresence means the ability to immediately act at any point of space, this seems to be something any human must lack because any human, as such, will be limited in power, as mentioned above.

Just as it is plausible that the first of each above pair is entailed by *divinity*, so it is plausible that the second of each above pair is entailed by *humanity*. Also, each pair of attributes strongly seem to be contraries, attributes such that in principle nothing could simultaneously have both. This is why Incarnation claims are problematic.

And beyond general considerations about the kind-essence *humanity*, the Jesus of the New Testament seems to have the limited properties numbered 2, 3, 4, and 8 above. Further, this Jesus dies, whereas God in the New Testament is assumed to be essentially immortal.<sup>19</sup> And this Jesus is tempted, whereas it would seem that a being with the above perfections and whose well-being doesn't depend on anything else, could never, in principle, be made to "see" some wrong action as overall choice-worthy. That is, such a being seems incapable of even having a motivation to do wrong. Thus, such a being seems to be in principle untemptable.<sup>20</sup> But a being with human limits like those mentioned would seem to be, in principle, able to "see" a wrong action as choice-worthy, and so will be in principle temptable. And given that a human will be in principle temptable, able to be given a motive for wrongdoing, it

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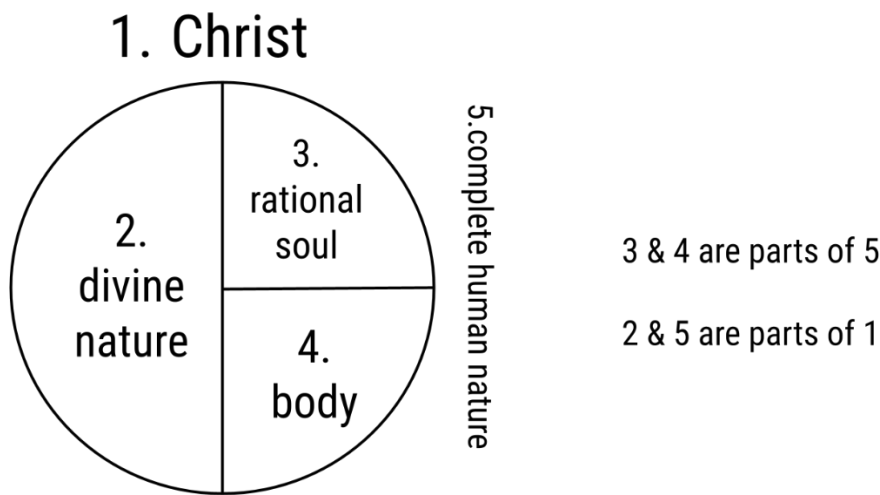
<sup>19</sup> For New Testament texts and an argument that they imply that immortality is essential to God see my 2016.

<sup>20</sup> This confirms the New Testament claim that "God cannot be tempted by evil" (James 1:13, NRSVUE).

would seem that in principle such a being should be able to do wrong, to act on that motive. Therefore we should add to the list,

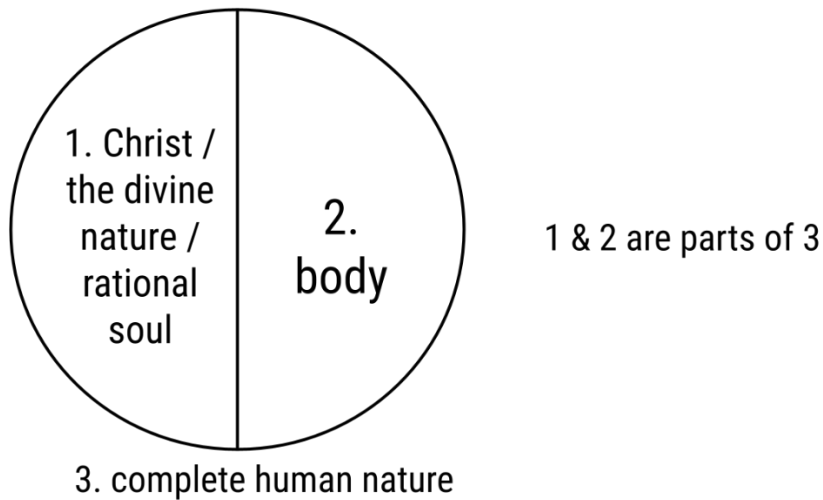
9. in principle incapable of dying (essentially immortal), in principle capable of dying (not essentially immortal)
10. in principle incapable of being tempted, in principle capable of being tempted
11. in principle incapable of doing wrong (essentially impeccable), in principle capable of doing wrong (not essentially impeccable)

The problems, then, are more numerous than Craig lets on. And given his simplification of the parts or components in the two-natured Christ, it is fairly easy to go through the options looking for possible bearers of each of these attributes which it seems that any godman (divine and human person) must have. Whereas there seem to be five numerically distinct items in the composite christologies of some theorists, as in Figure 1,



**Figure 1: a five-item two-natures christology**

in contrast, Craig's theory features exactly three items, as in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Craig's 3-item "Neo-Apollinarian" christology**

When it comes to the three possible attribute-bearers in Craig's proposed christology, it is clear that the divine attribute in each of the pairs 1–11 above should be had by the divine nature. He, having all the essential attributes of divinity, will be uncreated, perfect in knowledge (or at least, omniscient—more on this below), perfect in power, incapable of moral improvement, self-existent, metaphysically necessary, in principle incapable of coming into existence, omnipresent, essentially immortal, in principle untemptable, and essentially impeccable.

But serious difficulties arise when we try to find an owner or bearer for the essential human properties. Consider the attribute of being limited or less-than-perfect in knowledge. Craig says that Christ (aka the divine nature) knows all, so he can't also be less-than-perfect in knowledge. Could the subject of this less-than-perfect knowledge be the human body? No, for a mere body is not the sort of thing which can have any knowledge at all; by hypothesis it is the soul which is the subject of mental states, not the body. Could it then be the "complete human nature" which is the subject of this less-than-perfect knowledge? No, because the self in that, the bearer of all its mental properties, is the divine nature/Logos/Christ, who is, Craig tells us, omniscient.

Consider then the quality of being limited or less-than-perfect in power to intentionally act. This can't be had by Christ (i.e. the divine nature), since as divine he is essentially omnipotent. Nor could it be had by the body, for it's just not the sort of thing which can intentionally act. Nor could it be had by the "complete human nature," as its soul is the essentially omnipotent Christ. Similar considerations hold for the properties of being in principle capable of moral improvement and of being in principle capable of sinning.

And let's not forget the Jesus of the New Testament, who we are told was tempted (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2; Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 4:15), and who died on the cross (Matthew 27:50; Luke 23:46; Luke 24:20; Acts 2:23; Romans 5:6–10). Where is this Jesus in Craig's proposed christology? It would seem: nowhere. Where is the thing in this theory which can, like the New Testament Jesus, be tempted? It won't be the divine nature, i.e. Christ. Nor will it be the body, which isn't the sort of thing which can have motives. Nor will it be the "complete human nature" whose soul is the essentially untemptable Christ/divine nature. And who is it here who can die on a cross? Not the divine nature (Christ), who is, as divine, essentially immortal. Nor will it be the body; not having a human life, the life of a human person, in principle it can't lose such a life. Nor will it be the "complete human nature," whose soul is the essentially immortal Son/divine nature. The liver of this life which is lost is the person, in this theory the essentially divine and so immortal Christ, not the human nature. But it is only the liver of a life who can lose it. Could the body, and so, the human nature, be destroyed? Yes, but this would not interrupt the divine life of the Logos/divine nature; divine life doesn't depend on the fate of any physical object, or on anything else at all. In sum, there is nothing in this theory which could be the one who died on the cross.<sup>21</sup>

Craig's Christ just doesn't seem to be the sort of thing which could have these six essential human attributes: being less than perfect in knowledge, being less than perfect in power, being in principle capable of moral improvement, being in principle capable of dying, being in principle capable of being tempted, and being in principle capable of doing wrong. This christology, then, is docetic; while such a one would *appear* to be truly human, he would lack half a dozen attributes which are, arguably, required for being human. But of course, the whole point of the theory is that Chalcedon is right, that the one person Christ is both fully divine and fully human, that he has both kind-essences, divinity and humanity (2017, 603; 610). But this *seems* to be impossible, and Craig has not dispelled this strong appearance of impossibility.

Some others of the seemingly essential human attributes in our list above *can* find a bearer in Craig's theory. Is there something created here? It would seem that both the body and the "complete human nature" which that body comes to be a part of will be created. Just so, both will exist dependently and contingently, and both, having come into existence roughly two thousand years ago, will be such that

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<sup>21</sup> At one point Craig suggests that "Christ died only in his human nature" (2017, 605), but he leaves unclear what he means by that and how it supposedly helps us to understand how an essentially immortal divine person might die.

essentially they can come into existence. So there are two things in Craig's theory which would have those five essential human qualities.

Unfortunately, it would seem that *Christ himself* would not! Remember, the two-natured Christ is supposed to be one person or self with all the essential human attributes and all of the essential divine attributes.<sup>22</sup> And it is clear that not every attribute of a part of a thing can also be ascribed to the whole thing. There *are* created items here, the body and the human nature, but these are not Christ himself. Being the divine nature, he is uncreated and not also created. According to this theory, he comes to be closely united to one created thing, the body, and to be a part of another created thing, the human nature, but this does not imply that *he* is created. The one person here doesn't have the human quality of having been created. Nor will he have the properties of existing dependently, existing contingently, being such that he might come into existence, and being less than everywhere. But as divine he'll exist *a se* and necessarily, and he'll be such that he couldn't come into existence and he couldn't be less than everywhere.

We can see that some of the seemingly essential human qualities above simply have no bearer in Craig's theory, and others have a bearer, but this is not the supposedly human Christ, and the things which bear them don't thereby make Christ himself have those human attributes. Himself lacking all eleven of the aforementioned limits, Craig's Christ is divine but not human, unlike the Christ of the New Testament, who is explicitly a man.<sup>23</sup>

## 5. Divine Knowledge, Immunity to Temptation, Immortality, and Unimprovable Character

Let's return now to the matter of divine knowledge, which seems to be why Craig adds to his Neo-Apollinarian theory the claim that the subconscious portion of Christ's mind contains most of his knowledge. This, he hopes, will yield an omniscient Christ who nonetheless during his earthly ministry operates from a perspective something like ours, since the range of his normal waking consciousness will be similar to ours. Happily, Craig provides us with a definition of the concept of omniscience: "for any person S, S is omniscient if and only if S knows every true

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 27:19, 24; Matthew 27:54; Mark 14:31; Mark 15:12; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47; John 1:30; John 8:40; John 9:33; John 11:50; John 19:5; Acts 2:22–23; Acts 13:38; Acts 17:31; Romans 5:15–19. And one must recall that Jesus is everywhere in the New Testament portrayed as and assumed to be a real man. For non-question-begging arguments for seeing the New Testament Jesus as a special man rather than as God or a "godman" see my 2021a.

proposition and believes no false proposition" (2017, 524). The theory at hand, then, features a Christ who is truly omniscient, as defined. But does it give us a Christ who is like the perfect God in respect of knowledge?

It does not, as there must be more to perfect knowledge than simply knowing all truths in some way or other and not in any way believing any falsehoods. Imagine that there is an omniscient being whose knowledge is almost completely in his divine subconsciousness. Suppose that all he knows consciously, all of his knowledge that he is directly aware of, consists of these three truths: that there is something strange about Donald Trump's hair, that February comes after January, and that  $2+2=4$ . Would he be equal to the perfect God in respect of knowledge? It would seem not, despite his omniscience. Contrast him with an omniscient being whose knowledge is all directly in his consciousness. He as it were beholds all the truths at once. He would seem to be infinitely better off, intellectually or cognitively speaking, than the unfortunate being who only consciously knows three things. But then, this second being will also be infinitely cognitively better off than the sort of Christ we meet with in Craig's theory, someone who has a waking consciousness much like yours or mine. Such a one is not at all equal to the perfect God in respect of knowledge. The divine sort of knowledge must be more than mere omniscience as defined above. So when we say that Craig's theory presents us with a Christ who isn't fully human, though he is fully divine, that seems a bit too generous; this Christ won't be fully divine either, as he won't have the greatest sort of knowledge.

Craig has been presented with this objection before. The substance of his answer is:

If Christ is maximally excellent cognitively, then he, too, must be able to bring to consciousness what he knows, even if during his earthly sojourn he voluntarily prescind from accessing the divine subliminal. My model leaves that option open. It is consistent with saying that Christ could have drawn upon his subliminal knowledge, had he chosen to do so, but he refrained from doing so, thereby having an authentic human consciousness . . . Does maximal greatness imply omniscience in the consciousness rather than the subconsciousness? I don't see any reason to think so. Even if maximal greatness implies "having access to any and all knowledge on the spot," it doesn't follow that Christ needed to be conscious of all that he knew, but at most that he could access anything that he knew (total recall) (Craig 2015).

In terms of my thought experiment above contrasting two omniscient beings, Craig's point is that the first being may *very easily* be able to access his subconscious knowledge, so as to bring items there into his consciousness. But we can simply

adjust the description of the first omniscient being above, adding that his access to his subconscious knowledge is easy and total. Still, the second being seems to be infinitely better off than him with respect to knowledge. And so too, we still think that a Christ whose conscious mind contains far less than that of the second being in our thought experiment also falls infinitely short of the cognitive perfection of an absolutely perfect being, even though he knows all truths and believes no falsehoods. Craig's suggestion about Christ's powers of recall does nothing to turn back our intuition that maximal greatness implies more than omniscience as Craig defines it above.

Perhaps also a being like Craig's Christ would be less than omnipotent, and so could not be essentially omnipotent. Here's something an essentially omnipotent being should be able to do: deliberately and directly reduce the number of atoms composing the planet Mars by 10%. Doing such an action requires that one is already consciously aware of the number of atoms composing Mars. Now, Craig's Christ would, let's suppose, be able to access his divine knowledge regarding Mars, but he'd have to do this first, before he would be able to reduce its atoms by 10%.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, he would not be able to do the above-described action, *directly* making that reduction. Therefore, he would not be omnipotent, which would imply that neither is he essentially omnipotent.<sup>25</sup>

When Craig adds to his theory that "the divine elements of Jesus' personality were largely subliminal during his state of humiliation" (2017, 607), clearly his intention is to deal with the clash between perfect knowledge (or at least, omniscience) and limited knowledge, and perhaps with a few other pairs of attributes which involve some mentality, such as the pairs numbered 3, 4, and 10

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<sup>24</sup> If you object that God could do these two actions instantaneously and simultaneously, that is not to the point, for still he would lack the ability to deliberately and *directly* (without simultaneously doing anything else) reduce the Martian atoms by 10%, which is something an omnipotent being would be able to do. If you object that God would be able to act on the basis of his subconscious knowledge, I reply that I have specified that the direct act in question is deliberate or intentional, which entails being directly conscious of one's motivations, which includes any relevant knowledge.

<sup>25</sup> One might think here that Craig should move in the direction of kenosis theory, saying that to become incarnate the Son willingly loses his omniscience and omnipotence. But Craig is for many reasons hostile to any sort of kenosis theory about Incarnation (2017, 601–5). The considerations just given also count against similar views on which most of Jesus' knowledge is subconscious or "preconscious," on which see Loke (2017, 49–58; 65–76). About the divine knowledge and omnipotence objections just given, they clearly apply to Loke's theory, on which "at the Incarnation the Logos no longer had . . . conscious awareness of all truths" (Loke 2017, 69).

above.<sup>26</sup> What's puzzling, then, is that many of the other pairs (1, 5, 6, 7) don't involve mental states or events, and so this thesis about Christ's subconsciousness seems not to help in the slightest with these apparent contradictions. Perhaps the following passage, which immediately precedes Craig's discussion of Christ's subconsciousness, reveals some of what he's thinking.

The principal difficulty with our christological proposal as described thus far is that it seems to founder on the human limitations evinced by Jesus of Nazareth according to the Gospel accounts. The church has typically dealt with the problem of Christ's evident limitations by means of the device of reduplicative predication, that is to say, by predicating certain properties of the person of Christ with respect to one nature or the other. Thus, for example, Christ is said to be omniscient with respect to his divine nature but limited in knowledge with respect to his human nature, to have been omnipotent with regard to his divine nature but limited in power with regard to his human nature, and so on. Such a device seems to work well with respect to certain properties like omnipotence and necessity. It is easy to see how Christ could have limited strength and mortality relative to his humanity in virtue of his having an ordinary human body, though he is omnipotent and imperishable in his divine nature. But for other attributes, reduplicative predication, especially on our proposed scheme, does not seem to work so well. How could Christ be omniscient and yet limited in knowledge if there is a single conscious subject in Christ? How could he be impeccable (incapable of sin) with respect to his divine nature and yet peccable in his humanity? Regarding Apollinarianism, A. B. Bruce objects, "There is no human *nous* [mind], no freedom, no struggle . . . the so-called temptations and struggles recorded in the Gospels are reduced to a show and a sham, and a cheap virtue results, devoid of all human interest, and scarcely deserving the name." If one stops with the model as thus far described, then Bruce's objection will surely prove decisive. But as we shall see, the model can be enhanced in such a way as to turn back this criticism (2017, 607).

From the start of the passage we see that Craig supposes that some version of the ancient qua-move successfully banishes some of the apparent contradictions. But it is far from clear how this is supposed to work. If we say, for instance, that "As human Christ could die but as divine Christ could not die" what has been accomplished? A natural way to take statements of the form *As F, x is G* is that *because x has quality F, therefore x also has quality G*.<sup>27</sup> But this will yield the claim that one

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<sup>26</sup> It may be that omnipresence involves mentality as well, if this is understood as being aware of and being immediately able to act in any point of space. This is the position taken by Moreland and Craig (2017, 518).

<sup>27</sup> E.g. "As your boss, Carol is able to fire you."



and the same Christ can die and can't die, which is a contradiction. A full discussion would grind through all the options: instead of modifying the whole sentence, the as-clauses might be thought to modify the subjects, the predicates, or the copulas (Pawl 2016, chap. 6).

But it may be that the middle of the passage, starting with "But for other attributes" reveals what Craig is thinking. If this sort of move *doesn't* work in the case of divine vs. limited knowledge because there is only one knower, one subject of knowledge in the picture, then perhaps his thought is that it *does* work for omnipotence vs. limited strength, necessity vs. contingency, and essential immortality vs. lack of essential immortality, because in these cases we can say that the one attribute strictly belongs to one item, and the other attribute to another item in the theory. This would be to take the as-clauses to modify the subjects: Christ-as-divine would be omnipotent, while Christ-as-human would be limited in power. What sorts of things are those? Presumably, respectively: the divine nature and the human nature. But as we've seen, this doesn't work for omnipotence vs. limited strength because the self of the human nature is the omnipotent Son.

It is plausible to say that the divine nature would exist necessarily while the human nature exists contingently, but this doesn't give us one Christ who is both necessary and contingent, but rather one who is necessary only, though he comes to have a part which is contingent and to be part of a whole which is contingent. And the suggested move fails for the pair having to do with mortality. While it is plausible that the divine nature in Craig's theory (aka Christ himself) would be alive and incapable of losing his life, it is not plausible that the human nature is alive<sup>28</sup> and capable of losing his, or rather its life, as explained above (section 4).

But perhaps this interpretation of how Craig thinks that qua-language can help is mistaken. Whether it is or isn't, Craig has not shown how reduplicative predication (*qua* paraphrase) helps to banish the apparent contradictions of a divine-and-human Christ.

Nor is it clear how this thesis of "the divine elements of Jesus' personality" being "largely subliminal during his state of humiliation" helps with the worry about Jesus being truly temptable. A being who is perfect in the aforementioned ways and whose knowledge is all directly available to him would seem to be in principle untemptable, for he will never be subject to the delusion that a wrong action is all-things-considered the best choice. How does locating most of the knowledge in the subconscious mind help? As Craig notes, sometimes people's actions seem to be

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<sup>28</sup> That is, that the human nature has *human* life, which entails the possibility of consciousness. But because it is not a self, the "complete human nature" of Craig's theory is not even possibly conscious, although a proper part of it (Christ/the divine nature) actually is conscious.

guided by knowledge of which they are presently unaware (2017, 608). Perhaps Craig imagines that the incarnate Christ could not sin because even though he, in his waking consciousness, could be tempted, somehow the subconscious portion of his mind would step in and prevent him from ever acting on such a motive, doing wrong or sinning. If that's so, why would not this truly omniscient mind, in its subconscious aspect, simply prevent Christ from ever having a motive to do wrong, just as in the case of a perfect being whose knowledge is all immediately available to him? I don't know, and what little Craig says doesn't answer the question (2017, 609).

Similarly, Craig asserts that this model "explains why Jesus was capable of being perfected through suffering" (2017, 609). But it does no such thing. How does taking a divine person who is essentially perfect in his moral character and adding to him a body that he serves as the soul of result in a person whose character can be improved? How does it help to add that most of his knowledge is subconscious? Does that render him less than perfect in character? If not, then how has room been made for the New Testament Jesus, "the pioneer" of our salvation whom God made "perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10, NRSVUE)?

## 6. "Man" but not a Man

The obvious solution to many of the aforementioned problems is to understand Jesus to be a non-divine human person, a man, someone with all the eleven aforementioned limitations. Such a one can be tempted, can die for our sins, and will be forced by his weaknesses to put his faith in God.<sup>29</sup> And such a one will, since in principle he might have sinned, be such that he can be rewarded with a stupendous exaltation for his heroic obedience (Philippians 2:8–11; Revelation 5:6, 9–14).

But Craig leaves aside the Jesus of the New Testament, who is a man, that is to say, an adult, male, human person,<sup>30</sup> in favor of the creedal Christ who is "man"

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<sup>29</sup> On the New Testament theme of Jesus' faith in God see my 2017. For arguments that the Jesus of the New Testament is not fully divine see my 2021a; 2021b, and Tuggy and Date 2020, 1–33.

<sup>30</sup> See footnote 23 above. In modern times it has become common for Protestant theologians and apologists to simply refer to Jesus as "a man." But the "man" (the person called that, the divine Son) who is not a man (adult, male, human person) is needed by any catholic christology, because there is already one person or self in the theory, the divine one (the Logos or divine Son), and a man would be a second person or self, and surely no biblical faith can posit a Christ who "is" two persons or selves, as in the New Testament it is clear that "Christ," "Jesus," "the Son of God," "the Son of Man," etc. are co-referring terms, ways to refer to one and the same someone. Typically, modern Roman Catholic sources do not ignore this element of mainstream Christian tradition (Baker 2013, chap. 3; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1994, secs. 466–68; O'Collins 1995, 244–46).

(that word is predicable of him) but is not a man (i.e. a male human person). That is, Craig wants to uphold, against Origen, Tertullian, Theodore, and Nestorius, that “the complete human nature” is not a human self,<sup>31</sup> but only comes to contain a divine self by virtue of its unique union with the divine nature (2017, 606–7).

In my view Craig is correct that his theory makes this ancient claim intelligible.<sup>32</sup> On this theory, because the “complete human nature” exists only because the divine nature has made himself the soul of a particular body, this shows how that nature becomes personal (i.e. contains a person/self) even though that body and soul don’t combine to make a human person. “The *hypostasis* of the human nature is identical with the divine person” (2017, 606–7). Thus, in the incarnate Christ there are not two persons, a human one (the human nature) and a divine one (the divine nature), contra those aforementioned ancient catholic theologians. Rather, there is only one person/self there, the divine one. And he is “human” in a unique sense, a sense which doesn’t entail being a human person like you or me. This, it seems to me, is the most that can be said in favor of Craig’s Neo-Apollinarian theory, that it makes the traditional doctrine of *enhypostasia*, i.e. that the human nature “is” a *hypostasis* or person only because of its relation to the divine nature/self, intelligible (Craig 2018) while avoiding the pitfall of two Sons. But it doesn’t show how one and the same person/self can be both human and divine in the sense of having the above eleven pairs of properties.

## 7. What is this theory supposed to accomplish?

As Craig acknowledges,<sup>33</sup> at first glance *divinity* and *humanity* seem incompatible in several ways; in other words, there are properties such that *divinity* demands them but *humanity* rules them out, or that *humanity* demands but *divinity* rules out, so that in principle nothing could be both human and divine. In Craig’s view, nonetheless, in fact Jesus is both, and his account is meant to show one way this might be, a

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<sup>31</sup> For the man within Origen’s Christ see Origen 1986, 73-74 [2.9]; 2017a, 2:207-15 [2.6.3-7]; 2008, 260-61 [10.21-28]. For Tertullian’s view that the “flesh” or human nature of Christ is a man/human self, see Tertullian 1956, 19; 39; 49; 57; 71. For Nestorius’s two-self Christology see his fragments (Norris 1980, 124–25). For the similar views of Theodore of Mopsuestia see his 2009, 35-38 [ch. 3] and his fragments (Norris 1980, 115–22).

<sup>32</sup> The doctrine of *enhypostasia* was developed in the sixth century by Leontius of Byzantium (Relton 2002, 69–93). It was in effect endorsed by the council at Constantinople in 553, which forcefully rejected two-natures christologies which include a man, like those in note 31 above (Tanner 1990, 1:114–15; Olson 1999, 247).

<sup>33</sup> See the quotation near the start of section 4 above.

“plausible model of the Incarnation,” so that “objections to the coherence of that doctrine will have been defeated” (2017, 603).

Despite these aims, in the end Craig does not show but merely assumes that *divinity* and *humanity* are compatible. His first move is that “We postulate with Chalcedon that in Christ there is one person who exemplifies two distinct and complete natures, one human and one divine” (2017, 603). As we’ve seen, he then postulates, against creedal orthodoxy, that Christ was always human. This might be seen as solving a problem if one is worried that a divine person becoming a human one is impossible, but it only assumes the point at issue for one focused on the seeming incompatibilities between *divinity* and *humanity*. There’s nothing wrong with theorizing in this order: setting forth a seemingly incoherent theory and then gradually showing that it is coherent after all. But while Craig takes a stab at smoothing over some of the seeming incompatibilities, he doesn’t even try to address them all, and the attempts he does make seem unsuccessful.

One may object that all the considerations in section 4 above are question-begging, as Craig simply will not grant that there is any property essential to *humanity* which is incompatible with *divinity*, citing his assertion that the divine Son was always human (2017, 606). In reply, it is clear that Craig has been influenced by Thomas Morris’s trenchantly argued *The Logic of God Incarnate*. Morris argues, in effect, that Christians shouldn’t compartmentalize their thinking about human nature from their thinking about Incarnation. Morris asks, “what forces a Christian to count as essential any common human properties which would preclude a literal divine incarnation”? He answers, “I can think of nothing which would do this” (Morris 1986, 64). For my part, I can think of many such things, namely the widely shared intuitions noted in section 4 above regarding limits seemingly implied by being human. (Lest one scoff at mere intuitions, let us recall that such are also the basis for our reasoning about what sort of features a perfect being would have to possess.) But let’s look more closely at Morris’s defensive move. It’s really a tale of clashing arguments. Morris suggests that any Christian ought to reason like this:

- M1. Someone is both human and divine.
- M2. If someone is both human and divine then there are no incompatibilities between being human and being divine.
- M3. Therefore, there are no incompatibilities between being human and being divine.

This is surely a valid argument. But there is another valid argument afoot:

- I1. There are incompatibilities between being human and being divine.
- I2. If someone is both human and divine then there are no incompatibilities between being human and being divine.
- I3. Therefore, it is not the case that someone is both human and divine.

Morris is urging that all Christians, as such, know M1. And we all agree that the shared premise I2/M2 is an obvious necessary truth. Since each argument is valid, then, the issue then comes down to this: which do we have more reason to believe, M1 or I1? It is a question, I think, which Morris mostly conveniently avoids.<sup>34</sup> So does Craig. To be specific, he avoids most of the considerations in section 4 above in favor of humanity entailing some limits which most agree are incompatible with divinity.

Further, Morris is mistaken about M1. It is false that all Christians have known M1 because it is false that all Christians have believed M1. Some Christians, past and present, have thought that Jesus is divine but in a lesser sense than the Father, so that Jesus does not have all the essential divine attributes. Historically, this includes all those historians call "logos theorists." For example, Irenaeus holds that the "divine" Son who is "God" is less than perfect in knowledge (2012, 90-92 [2.28.6-8]), and Origen holds that the "divine" Son is not good in the way that the Father, the one true God, is good, and that the Father is greater than the Son (1986, 272 [5.11]; 1979, 114 [15.4]; 2009, 100 [13.151]; 2001, 293 [4.10]; 2017b, 1:65 [1.12.13]; 2008, 85 [1.253-55]).<sup>35</sup> Again, for Justin, the Father is too transcendent to be incarnate on the earth, but this is not true of the divine Son, the Logos, "another god" (or another "God") who is distinct in number from "God, the Creator" (2003, 189-92 [Chs. 126-27]; 85 [55.9-11]; 95 [62.2]). Novatian, a mainstream theologian in mid-3<sup>rd</sup>-century Rome, held that the Logos/Son lacked some divine attributes, and so was less divine than the Father (2015, chaps. 1-8; 30-31; Lloyd 2020, chap. 7). And more radically, some Christians have held that Jesus, being a man, has human nature, but although God empowers and works through him, Jesus himself doesn't have divine nature. In an ancient context we call these Christians "Dynamic Monarchians," and in a modern context we call them "unitarian Christians" or "biblical unitarians."<sup>36</sup> Saying that all Christians, as such, know that there is a godman is as mistaken as asserting

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<sup>34</sup> For the little that he says on this see Morris 1986, 64-70.

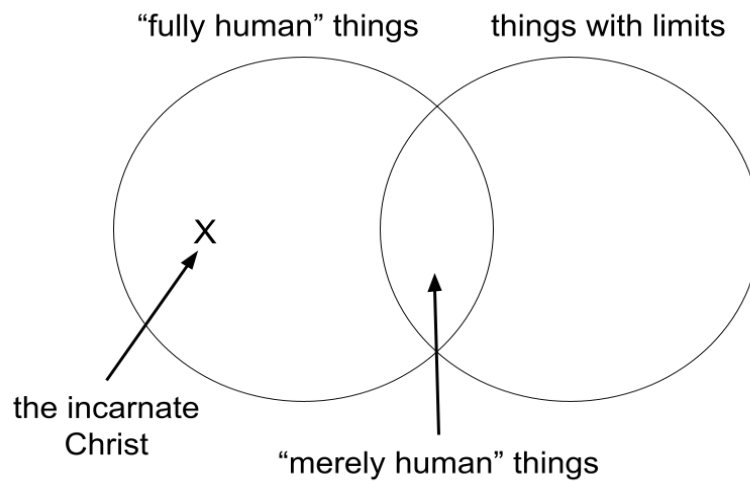
<sup>35</sup> Peter Martens (2022) gives an accurate general account of Origen's ontological subordinationism about the Son/Logos.

<sup>36</sup> For the views of the ancient Dynamic Monarchians and an extended argument that theirs was the earliest christology see Gaston (2023). For recent defences of such a christology see Irons, Dixon, and Smith 2015; Tuggy and Date 2020.

that all Christians, as such, know that babies should be baptized. We don't all know it because we don't all believe it.

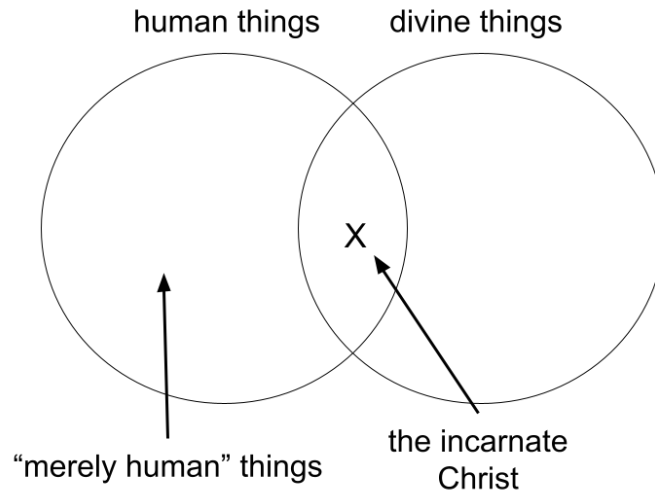
But as we've seen, Craig does better than Morris, in that he doesn't, in the fashion just shown, merely assert that no Christian has any reason to agree that human nature requires any limits at all which are incompatible with divinity. Craig at least raises the questions of how a divine person could also have the sorts of limits which most of us think are required by being human. And he boldly announces that he's going to give us a theory on which there seem to be no contradictions implied by a divine-and-human Christ. It's just that he does not actually accomplish this, leaving eleven contradictions on the table.

Morris also deploys some then-novel and since widely repeated rhetoric about traditional christologies. The Chalcedonian teaching, we're told, has always been that Jesus is "fully human," not that he is "merely human" (1986, 65). By "fully human" Morris just means what most Christian philosophers mean by "human," i.e. something which has the essence *humanity*, something belonging to the natural kind *human*. What is it to be "merely human"? It is to be human ("fully human") but also to have some limitations which any divine being must lack. Being "merely human" thus entails being "fully human" but not vice-versa. Morris's thinking can be illustrated with a Venn diagram:



**Figure 3: Morris's "fully human" vs. "merely human" distinction**

This way of talking, though, tends to obscure the problems inherent in traditional two-natures christology. The limits in question are those incompatible with being divine. Thus, what would be outside the class of “limited” beings? Divine ones. Thus, more perspicuously, the two main classes in question are divinity and humanity.



**Figure 4: Morris's assumption**

This has been the claim of the ecumenical creeds all along, that the incarnate Christ is both human and divine, not that he is “fully human” but not “merely human.” As best I can tell, Morris’s “fully human vs. merely human” distinction is merely a distraction from the actual issue, the claim that someone is both human and divine, which as we’ve seen seems to imply many contradictions, which is strong evidence that it is false.

The Chalcedonian project in christology aims to say both that Christ is “truly human” and also that he is “like us in all respects except for sin” (Tanner 1990, 1:86).<sup>37</sup> Suppose Craig, or any Chalcedonian, addressed us in this way:

*Since the Incarnation, Christ is truly and fully human, while still being fully divine. But in saying that he is truly and fully human, I don't mean to imply a single one of the following things: that Christ was created, less than perfect in knowledge, less than perfect in power, capable of moral improvement, dependent rather than self-existent, metaphysically contingent, capable of coming into existence, less than omnipresent, subject to death, subject*

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<sup>37</sup> The authors are referring to this New Testament passage: “Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:14–15, NRSVUE).

*to temptation, or in principle capable of wrongdoing. Moreover, while he should be called "man" because of his mysterious union with a complete human nature (a body and soul which don't constitute a human person), he is not a human person or self.*

We should say, first of all, that the content of our concept of being a human has been thoroughly hollowed out.<sup>38</sup> What is left to being human, other than in some sense working through or inhabiting a human sort of body? Such is not sufficient for being "truly and fully human"; a divine person in a human type of body will not be anywhere close to being "like us in all respects except sin." In Craig's words, this Christ lacks "the human limitations evinced by Jesus of Nazareth according to the Gospel accounts" (2017, 607). Further, being truly and fully human implies being a human person; but the tradition, it seems, must deny that Christ is a human person.<sup>39</sup> The so-called "godman" will *arguably* be a god (or at least a divine person), but about the "man" part, he seems to be at most something which could easily be mistaken for a man (human being, human person). But this does not sit well with the clear New Testament theme that Jesus is a man.

### **Conclusion: A Failed Theory**

Craig's "Neo-Apollinarian" christology is offered as an apologetic defence. The idea was that we can't rule out that "the Incarnation" amounts to this, and this, Craig has urged, *does* seem to be coherent (2017, 609). And so, the hope is, we can't rule out that "the Incarnation" – whatever Chalcedon is trying to say about the two-natured Christ—is coherent after all. But the model does *not* seem to be coherent. Craig tells us that, "If the model proposed here makes sense, then it serves to show that the classic doctrine of the incarnation of Christ is coherent and plausible" (2017, 609). But it does no such things, as the antecedent of the statement is false.

We're told explicitly that this Christ is both fully divine and fully human (2017, 603; 610). But when we examine the theory in detail, we see its implications that this Christ is neither fully divine nor fully human. Despite his intentions, Craig has only given us a contradictory Christology,<sup>40</sup> a Christ who is and isn't divine and who is

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<sup>38</sup> Compare with Craig's reasonable complaints about some kenosis theories and the concept of divinity (Moreland and Craig 2017, 604–5).

<sup>39</sup> See footnote 30 above.

<sup>40</sup> Like most Christians, Craig does not think it is reasonable to believe an incoherent (contradiction-implying) Christology, against Beall (2021). Oddly though, Craig starts his chapter with the quotation "The Person of Christ is the bankruptcy of human logic" (2017, 595; quoting Relton 2002, 234; 265), and Relton opines that "This, logically, may be a contradiction, but it is none the less the whole truth revealed [about Christ] in the Gospel narratives" (2002, 247–48; cf. 265–66). For my



and isn't human. And while it is meant to be both biblical and creedal, it seems to run into some serious problems on both of those fronts as well. A thinking Christian will have to find somewhere else to rest her mind when it comes to the seeming necessary falsehood that there is a godman, a person with both a divine nature and a human nature. As Craig has said, "if anything appears to be a contradiction, surely this is it!" (2017, 595)

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