

centre of the picture are two trees with an empty space between the trees. The irony is that the empty space is not empty and when following the contours of the inside of the two trees Napoleon emerges. Irony is the awareness of the narrative character of reality, and that our stories will always be incomplete interpretations of reality due to the fact that part of narrative reality is constructed within the narrative itself.

Prickett gives an excellent overview of two ways of knowing reality i.e. a fundamentalist understanding or an ironic understanding. In a nuanced way he manages to trace the roots of irony back to the seventeenth century and even beyond, and illustrates how this perception of knowing reality has its tentacles rooted in philosophy, literature, religion and science as the prominent domains that engage with the search for an understanding of reality.

Chapter one deals with the post-modern understanding of story-telling that is aware of the subjective constructiveness of any version of reality and therefore the rejection of any grand narratives. Chapter two discusses the naïve understanding of reality within the context of the sciences that has prevailed at the beginning of modernity. The scientific worldview then was to see reality as an objective and external reality, but the detection of paradigms within any scientific theory brought the notion of irony within the scientific context closer home. Chapter three reflects upon the shift within literature as the fragmentation of reality became more apparent, hence the prominence of the 'I' as subject in literature. Chapter four reflects how Christianity became the Grand Narrative of religion, but as the notion of irony stretched its tentacles, the way people reflect upon religion also changed. Not only has the detection of the role of paradigms in the construction of theories had its effects upon the scientific world but also in the context of religion, as well especially with regard to theories of language. Chapter five then is about language and how meaning is structured within the parameters of our language. Chapter six is about the influence this had on the way we 'structure' theology. The notion of irony and the awareness of the provisional and constructed character of language have its influence on how we speak about God as an objective reality. Finally, chapter seven (is there some biblical symbolism in the fact that the book has seven chapters – an irony?) gives an overview of the current situation regarding an ironic understanding of the world. With the prominence of irony as a way to perceive reality in contrast to the fundamentalist view the modern scientist became partakers in this story-telling culture. A rediscovery of metaphors and the new understanding of language is symptomatic of the fact that scientists realise more and more that they have to 'read God's other book, the book of nature' in a way that attest to the fact that our understanding of reality even in the context of science is about ever-changing stories on the nature of our world. For Prickett this is in itself a consilience of a special kind. In the context of this growing disregard for

Grand Narratives and growing tendency towards fragmentation, consilience regarding the ironic understanding of the world is ironically a consilience of a special kind as it moves against fragmentation. Prickett's point, however, is that the fabric of the 'narrative universe' is not hospitable to fundamentalists of any hue.

This is an excellent book, and reveals Prickett's exceptional interpretation of the current perception of reality. As Christians, who for obvious reasons have a tendency towards fundamentalism, this is a good reminder that God's 'narrative universe' is not hospitable to fundamentalists of any shade. Rather we should be aware of the ironic reality of our understanding of God than to stray into a false fundamentalist's understanding as if we could possibly know anything, let alone God, in an exhaustive way.

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***Divinity and Humanity:  
The Incarnation Reconsidered  
Current Issues in Theology***

**Oliver D. Crisp**

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**SUMMARY**

Oliver Crisp's *Divinity and Humanity* is a technical and constructive account of Christology that takes its starting point from the Chalcedonian marker that Christ is both 'truly God and truly man'. From here Crisp probes, tests and analyses important doctrines, particularly as they are understood in reference to the relationship between the divinity and humanity of Christ. These include perichoresis or interpenetration, the hypostatic union of Christ, kenotic Christology or self-emptying and the issue of whether or not Christ assumed a sinful nature.

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

Oliver Crisp's Buch *Divinity and Humanity* ist eine technische und konstruktive Darstellung der Christologie, die ihren Ausgangspunkt in der chalzedonischen Kennzeichnung Jesu als „wahrer Gott und wahrer Mensch“ nimmt. Von dort prüft, testet und analysiert Crisp wichtige Dogmen, insbesondere im Hinblick darauf, wie sie mit Verweis auf die Beziehung zwischen der Gottheit und Menschheit Christi verstanden wurden. Behandelt werden u. a. Perichorese oder gegenseitige Durchdringung, die hypostatische Einheit Christi, kenotische Christologie oder die Selbsterniedrigung sowie die Frage, ob Christus ein sündiges Wesen annahm oder nicht.

**RÉSUMÉ**

Voici un ouvrage technique et constructif traitant de la christologie en prenant pour point de départ les affirmations de Calcédoine selon lesquelles Christ est à la fois vrai Dieu et vrai homme. Crisp explore, évalue et analyse



ensuite des doctrines importantes en considérant en particulier comment elles s'articulent avec l'affirmation de la divinité et de l'humanité de Christ. Il s'agit de la périchorèse, de l'union hypostatique de Christ, de la christologie kénotique ou de la manière dont Christ s'est dépouillé en devenant homme, et de la question de savoir si Christ a adopté une nature pécheresse.

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Oliver Crisp's *Divinity and Humanity* comes as the fifth instalment in the 'Current Issues in Theology' series and takes up the task of Christology. It is a technical and constructive account that takes its starting point from the Chalcedonian marker that Christ is 'truly God and truly man'. From here Crisp probes, tests and analyses important doctrines, particularly as they are understood in reference to the relationship between the divinity and humanity of Christ. These include perichoresis, the hypostatic union of Christ, kenotic Christology and the issue of whether or not Christ assumed a sinful nature. This task involves Crisp bringing these doctrines into dialogue with the concerns and questions of "philosophical theologians." As he goes about the process of negotiating the meaning and validity of these doctrines, his goal is to clarify any ambiguity surrounding them and in so doing, to establish the plausibility of the doctrine of Christ's Incarnation.

In chapter 1, Crisp's discussion of the relation of Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union includes what one might expect: an appeal to the doctrine of the communication of attributes. Yet in addition to this, Crisp argues that an account of perichoresis will remove any residual uncertainty, especially when it comes to making sense of Christ's omnipresence in relation to his humanity. The argument runs as follows: if Christ is truly divine and assuming that one of the essential properties of divinity is omnipresence, how is it that Christ, in his divinity, can be everywhere, including his own human nature, yet doing so without compromising it? To this Crisp responds with nature-perichoresis which means that in the "hypostatic union Christ's two natures are united in such an intimate fashion that the divinity of Christ because of his omnipresence penetrates the humanity of Christ, but the converse is not the case (p. 34)."

In chapters 2 and 3, Crisp deals more specifically with the nature of Christ's humanity. He begins his argument in chapter 2 from the same point of departure made in the first chapter, though here he takes a significant detour from Chalcedon (AD 451) via the Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (AD 681). From this, Crisp defends the simple proposition that Christ is one person with two wills (dyothelitism). After giving a brief historical-theological context, he moves quickly to interact with the works of Alvin Plantinga and Michael Rea, showing how the positions of each square with his own proposal. In chapter 3, Crisp adds more precision to the argument he has already established in the previ-

ous chapter by clarifying the *an-enlypoptasia* distinction vis-à-vis the accounts set forth by Plantinga and Rea, respectively.

Turning to the topic of Christ's human nature and whether it "had the property of fallenness" or "the property of unfallenness (93)," chapter 4 is a bold and rigorous argument. As can be expected, Crisp returns faithfully to the tradition and argues that contemporary notions affirming Christ's human nature as fallen but yet denying its sinfulness is a patent failure to deal with the traditional understanding that fallenness is the condition of being sinful (which includes guilt and corruption). To say that Christ has a fallen human nature, therefore, is to say that Christ's human nature is morally corrupt.

Divine kenosis is the theme of chapter 5 and while this doctrine may not have the force or appeal it once had, Crisp turns his attention to a specific school of philosophical theologians who have recently found this doctrine to be a valuable way of "explaining how Christ could be 'fully God and fully man' at one and the same time (p. 119)."

While the chapters thus far have dealt with various ways of explaining a Chalcedonian Christology, in the final chapter Crisp addresses the influential work of John Hick, who proposes to replace Chalcedon with a 'non-incarnational theology', that identifies Jesus merely as a human being. This account understands the incarnation as a metaphor that can readily be applied to, or found, in other religions.

*Divinity and Humanity* makes a significant contribution to the study of Christology, particularly as Crisp's exploration of perennial questions provides important clarification of the fundamental philosophical issues. Yet, since the majority of Crisp's conversation partners are restricted to the philosophical, the scope of the discussion inevitably becomes quite narrow. In such a way, the aim of demonstrating the plausibility of the incarnation takes on a mode of argumentation that is more defensive in tone, where one might have preferred an account furnished with scripture as well as church doctrine and also included connections with other important loci. With that said, Crisp models a confident display of theology in negotiation with philosophy. He is not reluctant to engage the concerns of the latter and in so doing he obtains a good deal of conceptual clarity that moves the dialogue in a positive direction and leaves the reader grateful for the labour.

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