

# **A Christological Renaissance: The Chalcedonian Turn of St. Anselm of Canterbury**

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*This paper claims Anselm of Canterbury to be the first significant writer of the Latin Church after Pope Leo I to successfully apply the Chalcedonian doctrine in a fashion that is attentive to the person of Christ while accounting for the metaphysical accord of his two natures within the salvific economy. Rather than referring to Christ's humanity only in reference to his divinity or attempting to safeguard his humanity through the employment of an adoptionist or Nestorian framework, Anselm provides a tangible soteriological model that does not compromise the unity of Christ's person. After tracing the Christology of the Latin Church from Leo to Anselm, this paper presents Anselm as the theological successor of Leo in the Latin Church as he served to orient subsequent Latin theology towards a fuller understanding of the historical and soteriological implications of the Incarnation.*

In any general consideration of his thought, Anselm's theory of satisfaction emerges as perhaps his most prominent contribution to theological reflection. But too often an unflinching eye is cast so intensely upon this theory that many other aspects of his Christology remain unnoticed. In particular, Anselm's ontological Christology is typically ignored or treated as a mere steppingstone to the theory of satisfaction. However, this ontological Christology is indispensable to his entire soteriological enterprise. As John McIntyre has noted, the true value of satisfaction cannot be fully explicated before it is established precisely who it is that can even make satisfaction to God.<sup>1</sup> The validity and worth of Anselm's soteriology rests entirely upon his ontological Christology, for it is the person of Christ that renders efficacy to the redemption.

Anselm was firmly rooted within the Latin Christological tradition stemming from Leo the Great. However, Anselm sought to go even further through the incorporation of the Chalcedonian doctrine into a soteriological model that illustrates the necessity of the Incarnation. This paper will attempt to provide a fuller scope of Anselmian Christology within its historical context in the Latin Church. After sketching Leo's doctrine of Christ, I will briefly discuss the eighth and ninth century crisis of the Spanish Church that threatened to compromise the Chalcedonian doctrine. Finally, I will provide an exposition of Anselm's Christological and soteriological doctrines, drawing attention to his fidelity to the patristic tradition and to his innovation which served to reorient the Western Church toward a fuller understanding of the work of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> John McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Re-Interpretation of the Cur Deus Homo* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1954), 115-16.

## Leonine Christology and the Chalcedonian Decree

The Council of Chalcedon was summoned by Emperor Marcian during the autumn of 451 to respond to an extreme model of monophysite Christology that threatened to eclipse the moderate teaching of Ephesus.<sup>2</sup> The Fathers of Chalcedon sought to establish a normative teaching on the Incarnation, confessing “one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in human nature, truly God and the same with a rational soul and a body truly man . . . acknowledged in two natures . . . combining in one Person (*prosopon*) and substance (*hypostasis*), not divided or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son only begotten God Word, Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup> While the Council was profoundly influenced by the Christologies of Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch, it was under the sway of Pope Leo the Great’s *Tome to Flavian* that the majority of conflicting parties at Chalcedon were reconciled. The bishop of Rome provided the decisive polemic against the false Christological doctrines threatening the orthodox faith, marking the first instance of a Latin solution to a peculiarly Eastern controversy.<sup>4</sup> But Leonine Christology was not exhausted through its service to the Chalcedonian formula. Rather, as a system it goes much further than the Council with regard to the prerogatives Christ’s natures, exemplifying a refined Latin tradition of the twofold consubstantiality of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

The starting point for Leonine Christology is the doctrine of the Son’s consubstantiality with the Father as promulgated at the First Council of Nicaea. The Son of God was “begotten as coeternal from the eternal—not later in time or inferior in power or dissimilar in splendor or different in essence.”<sup>6</sup> Leo emphasizes that Christ was born of both God and Mary, and thereby possessed two distinct natures (*duae naturae*), divine and human, within the unity of his person (*persona*). Each respective nature possesses its own properties and activities accordingly, yet “both natures and substances are kept intact and come together in one person.”<sup>7</sup> However, Leo’s prime concern does not lie solely with his explication of an ontological Christology. His thought is always profoundly orientated toward the salvific economy of Christ: God became man

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<sup>2</sup> For a background of the events preceding the convocation of Chalcedon, see Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Matthias Westerhoff (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 211-12; Donald J. Goergen, *The Jesus of Christian History*, vol. 3 of *A Theology of Jesus* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 136-41.

<sup>3</sup> *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. E. Schwarz (Argentorati-Berolini-Lipsiae, 1914ff), II 1, 2, 129-30. Henceforth cited as ACO. I quote the text from the English translation in Henry Denzinger, ed., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loretto Publications, 1955), no. 148. Henceforth cited as SCD.

<sup>4</sup> See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol. 1 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 263-64. At the conclusion of the Council, Patriarch Anatolius wrote to Pope Leo, informing him of the Council’s essential agreement with his *Tome*. ACO II 1, 2, 52-54.

<sup>5</sup> See Roch A. Kereszty, *Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology* (New York: Alba House, 1991), 208.

<sup>6</sup> *Tomus ad Flavianum 2*. I quote from the English translation in Richard A. Norris, trans. and ed., *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 146.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 3. See Goergen, 126.

so that humanity could be saved.<sup>8</sup> For the bishop of Rome, redemption is rooted in the very person of Christ; precisely as one *persona* and two *naturae*, he is the efficacious savior of humanity: “In this way, as our salvation requires, one and the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, can at one and the same time die in virtue of the one nature and, in virtue of the other, be incapable of death.”<sup>9</sup> Because of his dual consubstantiality, Christ is capable of mediating divine salvation to sinful humanity.

Leo’s soteriological concerns emerge even more explicitly in his Letter to Emperor Leo I (*Ep.* 165), dispatched in August 453 during the struggle for the implementation of the Chalcedonian norm.<sup>10</sup> This letter, commonly dubbed the “Second Tome,” contains Leo’s most developed Christological exposition.<sup>11</sup> The mediatorship of Christ is again brought to the fore, as Leo asserts that death can be conquered only by a divine and human agent. The “Second Tome” locates the moment of salvation in the voluntary death of Christ, who is both eternal priest and perpetual sacrifice. As a guiltless victim, free from the stain of original sin, Christ was not subject to the debt of sin and was capable of overcoming the dominance of Satan. Because the Son of God assumed a concrete human nature, all humanity is incorporated into the destiny of Christ, most particularly his resurrection—all have died and risen by virtue of their bond to Christ’s humanity.<sup>12</sup> Thus, if Christ possesses only one nature (monophysitism), or if the natures operate as two loosely joined subjects (Nestorianism), his mediatorship is depreciated and salvation becomes an impossibility.

### **Christology in the West after Chalcedon**

After the Council of Chalcedon, the theology of the Latin Church was marked by the synthesis of previous patristic achievements, particularly those of the Augustinian and Leonine traditions.<sup>13</sup> The theological landscape was continually surveyed by the test of tradition, the standard of which was the universality of ecclesial doctrine. The synthesis of tradition proved to be an extremely fertile ground for a flourishing of thought, particularly in regard to ecclesiology and sacramental theology. The Western reception of Chalcedon went relatively smooth due to its Augustinian and Leonine roots, and the doctrine of the hypostatic union laid forth by Cyril of Alexandria had gained wide acceptance.<sup>14</sup> In terms of Christology, attention

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<sup>8</sup> See Aloys Grillmeier, *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, vol. 1 of *Christ in Christian Tradition*, trans. J. S. Bowden (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 466.

<sup>9</sup> *Tomus ad Flavianum* 3. I quote from Norris, 148.

<sup>10</sup> *Ep.* 165 ad Leon. aug. ACO II 4, 104, 113-31.

<sup>11</sup> See Grillmeier, *Reception and Contradiction: The Development of the Discussion about Chalcedon from 451 to the Beginning of the Reign of Justinian*, vol. 2.1 of *Christ in Christian Tradition*, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte (London: Mowbray, 1987), 149-72.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>13</sup> For an excellent overview of the development of the early medieval theology in the Latin Church, see Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*, vol. 3 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978), 9-49.

<sup>14</sup> The Scythian monks from Danube reached a moment of tension with Roman authorities with their assertion that “*unus ex trinitate passus est.*” However, with the translation of many of the works of Cyril of Alexandria by Dionysius Exiguus and the labors of Fulgentius of Ruspe, the Latin Church came to a greater acquaintance and

tended to be directed either toward terminological clarification<sup>15</sup> or to the refinement of the Chalcedonian formula according to the needs of both the Western and the Eastern churches.<sup>16</sup> The preservation and the elucidation of the Leonine tradition occupied a central role during the early medieval period, maintaining a sort of Christological *status quo*.

In the late eighth century, however, a significant dispute over the interpretation of Christ's human nature surfaced in Spain. The Spanish prelates had inherited a rich Latin tradition rooted in the Creeds of the Toledo synods and an Augustinianism expounded by the likes of Isidore of Seville and Julian of Toledo.<sup>17</sup> Drawing from this theological treasury, Elipandus, archbishop of Toledo, sought to further safeguard the human nature of Christ. He posited that while the Son of God was eternally begotten by the Father according to nature, the humanity of Christ was adopted by the Son according to grace. Elipandus' prime opponent, Beatus of Liebana, took issue with the term *adoptio*, fearing it compromised the unity of Christ's person. While both Elipandus and Beatus stood within the Leonine tradition of two natures/substances in one person, a consensus could not be reached as to precise manner the human nature was taken up by the divine Word.

For Elipandus, the question was how the humanity was given a share in the divine Sonship of the Second Person of the Trinity. He concluded that the Word had condescended to be born by adoption so that all humanity would not only share his nature, but would also be set into relation with him as co-adopted brethren. Elipandus could see no other way of upholding the integrity of the human nature. Instead of stressing the mediatorship of Christ, Elipandus preferred a soteriological model of the Firstborn among the many adopted sons and daughters of God. It was not simply Christ's consubstantiality with humanity that is the key to the salvific efficacy of the Incarnation, he felt, but the very possibility of a true relation between humanity and God.<sup>18</sup>

Beatus perceived Elipandus' thought as an illegitimate development. By stressing two types of sonship, one by nature and one by adoption, the archbishop of Toledo was separating the

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understanding of the implications of Cyril's teachings. See Grillmeier, *The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, vol. 2.2 of *Christ in Christian Tradition*, trans. John Cawte and Pauline Allen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 317-43; Studer, 228.

<sup>15</sup> It is within this context that Boethius penned his *Contra Eutychem et Nestorium* and established his important definition of *persona* as "*naturae rationalis individualis substantia*." J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae* 64:1343C. See Gerald O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 194-95.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the fifth and sixth century disputes between Rome and the Eastern churches over the implementation of the Chalcedonian doctrine, see Grillmeier, *Reception and Contradiction*, 288-317. Also see Bronwen Neil, "The Western Reaction to the Council of Nicaea II," *Journal of Theological Studies* 51 (2000): 533-52.

<sup>17</sup> See John C. Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West: Adoptionism in Spain and Gaul, 785-820* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1993), 47-49. For an excellent collection of prosopographical studies on the development of medieval Spanish theology and ecclesial structure, see Joseph M. F. Marique, ed., *Leaders of Iberian Christianity, 50-650 A. D.* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1962).

<sup>18</sup> See Cavadini, 36-37.

Word of God from the human nature. If there is a division or separation of natures, Christ's mediatory role is decimated and the doctrine of Chalcedon is contradicted. Beatus also argued that the term "adoption" is proper only to those redeemed and incorporated into Christ. To insinuate that Christ was adopted in any way was to place his sonship on the same level as all those redeemed by him. Elipandus' mistake was to predicate sonship of nature rather than strictly of the one divine person. Following tradition, Beatus emphasized the assumption of a human nature by the Logos, not a human person; there were not two sons, but one Son.<sup>19</sup>

At the turn of the ninth century, Elipandus found a strong ally in Felix, bishop of Urgel. While the venue changed from Spain to the Carolingian empire, the dispute remained the same. Alcuin, the preeminent Carolingian theologian of the day, launched a series of attacks similar to those of Beatus on Felix's adoptionism, decrying the deviation from orthodox teaching.<sup>20</sup> Soon after the commencement of Alcuin's polemics, adoptionism was formally condemned by Pope Hadrian I in 793 and by the Council of Frankfurt in 794.<sup>21</sup> Both the pope and the council appealed to the tradition of the Latin Church in their decrees, accentuating that the doctrines of Elipandus and Felix had never been taught by the Church and were therefore dangerous innovations to the ecclesial tradition. It was emphasized that recourse to the Leonine model of Christology was the only proper method in expounding the dual natures of Christ. Though the flames of the crisis were quenched, the potential for heresy remained. As Jaroslav Pelikan notes, "Despite the anathemas pronounced on the adoptionists . . . the problems raised over the doctrine of the two natures were not to be resolved until the doctrine of the person of Christ was incorporated into a comprehensive interpretation of the work of Christ in which the redemptive function of the human nature received its due."<sup>22</sup> That due would be effectively rendered by Anselm of Canterbury nearly three hundred years later.

### **Anselmian Christology**

Anselm marked a new a direction in the history of Christological thinking. His thought is thoroughly Leonine, embodying the very heart of the Chalcedonian doctrine.<sup>23</sup> He writes, "For as there is one nature and several persons in God, and the several persons are one nature, so there is one person (*una persona*) and several natures (*plures naturae*) in Christ, and the several

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<sup>19</sup> See Pelikan, *Growth of Medieval Theology*, 55-57.

<sup>20</sup> See Donald A. Bullough, "Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven: Liturgy, Theology and the Carolingian Age," in *Carolingian Essays: Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies*, ed. Uta-Renate Blumenthal, 1-69 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1983).

<sup>21</sup> SCD, nos. 299, 311-314.

<sup>22</sup> Pelikan, *Growth of Medieval Theology*, 66.

<sup>23</sup> The patristic roots of Anselm's Christology have been duly noted in D. Bentley Hart, "A Gift Exceeding Every Debt: An Eastern Orthodox Appreciation of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*," *Pro Ecclesia* 7 (1998): 333-49, in Kevin McMahon, "The Cross and the Pearl: Anselm's Patristic Doctrine of Atonement," in *Saint Anselm—His Origins and Influence*, ed. John R. Fortin (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 2001), 57-69, and in Eugene R. Fairweather, "Incarnation and Atonement: An Anselmian Response to Aulén's *Christus Victor*," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 7 (1961): 167-75.

natures are one person.”<sup>24</sup> Anselm unwaveringly adheres to Chalcedon, yet incorporates much of Leo’s own developments into his thinking.

Anselm’s conception of the two natures of Christ is rooted in the post-Chalcedonian tradition of the Latin Church. The divine nature of Christ is solely derived from the Eternal Son of God, the divine Word. Responding to the infamous accusation of Roscelin,<sup>25</sup> Anselm demonstrates that plurality in the Godhead in no way compromises its unity. While God is one according to nature (*natura*), God is three according to person (*persona*): Father, Son and Spirit. No single person of the Trinity possesses its own nature, for each shares the same divine nature. Each person is distinguished by what is peculiarly proper to it—the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. And yet it is necessary to affirm that the Father is God and that the Son is God according to nature. The divine nature does not lose its singularity, and the divine persons, or relations, do not lose their plurality.<sup>26</sup>

But what precisely constitutes “the Son” for Anselm? In his *Monologion*, Anselm understands the Son to be the one Word of the Supreme Essence (*summa substantia*) through which all things were created.<sup>27</sup> This Word is “consubstantial” (*consubstantiale*) and like the Supreme Essence in all ways.<sup>28</sup> The former is begotten eternally from the wisdom, consciousness and essence of the latter. Thus, it is proper to call the Word “truest Son” and the Supreme Essence “truest Father.”<sup>29</sup> While the Father and the Son are different entities, or persons, together they share one divine nature in wisdom, power, truth and justice. Hence, this plurality allows the assertion that, of the three persons in the Godhead, it was the Son alone who became man. This aspect of Anselm’s theology serves as a salvo against any accusation of subordinationalism or modalism.

For Anselm, the Son of God “assumed a human being (*hominem*) into the unity of his person.”<sup>30</sup> However, this is not to say Anselm taught a variant of Nestorianism. He is careful to note that the term “human being” does not refer to a human person, but to that nature common to all humanity.<sup>31</sup> By assuming a human nature into his person, the Son of God becomes flesh, but

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<sup>24</sup> *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* 11. *Sancti Anselmi Opera Omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Rome/Edinburgh: Nelson, 1939-1961), 2.28.24-25. Henceforth all Schmitt references will be cited as S, followed by the volume, page and line numbers.

<sup>25</sup> See R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 174-81; G. R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 99-111.

<sup>26</sup> *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* 16. S 2.34.27-35.1-3.

<sup>27</sup> *Monologion* 12. S 1.26.26-33.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 35. S 1.54.6-8.

<sup>29</sup> “*Vellem iam quidem et forte possem illum esse verissime patrem, hoc vero esse verissime filium concludere.*” *Ibid.* 42. S 1.58.17-18.

<sup>30</sup> *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* 9. S 2.24.9-10. *cf. Meditatio redemptionis humanae.* S 3.87.84-88.

<sup>31</sup> “*Nam cum profertur ‘homo’, natura tantum quae communis omnibus est hominibus significatur.*” *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* 11. S 2.29.4-6. Thus, the criticisms leveled by Symeon Rodger that Anselm’s formulations are “frequently awkward or contradictory” and “almost appear Nestorian, rather than Chalcedonian” are quite unsubstantiated. “The Soteriology of Anselm of Canterbury, An Orthodox Perspective,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 34 (1989): 22-24.

remains one divine person (*una dei persona*).<sup>32</sup> Following the Chalcedonian doctrine, Anselm proclaims Jesus Christ as “true God and true man, one person in two natures and two natures in one person.”<sup>33</sup> There is no question of two persons or two sons in Anselm’s Christology. The human nature of Christ is never treated or considered apart from his divinity as if it was as an individual subject.<sup>34</sup> Thus, there is no place for the admission of an adopted human nature, for Jesus Christ is the true and natural Son of the Father in both natures. From the moment he becomes man, Christ is always full of God, being God himself, and the Son of God and the son of the Virgin are identical.<sup>35</sup> The integrity of each nature is fully preserved in their union in the person of Christ.

Anselm’s definitive statements in ontological Christology occur in the seventh chapter of the second book of the *Cur Deus Homo*, and are worth quoting at length:

For it is not the case that divine nature and human nature are mutually interchangeable so that divine nature may become human or human, divine; nor can the two be mixed so that some third nature might arise from them, a nature which would not be divine—not at all—and not human either. To sum up, if it were possible for one nature to be changed into another, the result would be someone who would either be God and not man, or man and not God. Alternatively, if they were mixed so that a third nature was produced as the consequence of inter-contamination of the two natures, the result would be neither man nor God.

If, furthermore, these two natures, as wholes, are said to be somehow conjoined to a limited extent whereby man and God are distinct from one another and not one and the same, it is impossible that both should bring about what it is necessary should happen.<sup>36</sup>

What is necessary, according to Anselm, is the redemption of humanity, and no other Christ—be that of docetists, Arians, Nestorians, Monophysites, or adoptionists—can accomplish it. Only the Christ confessed, decreed and made known by the Council of Chalcedon can save humanity from its sin. For Anselm, it of absolute necessity that the Redeemer be that one person—perfect God and perfect man, possessing the

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<sup>32</sup> *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* 9. S 2.24.21-22.

<sup>33</sup> “*Sed dominum Christum IESUM verum deum et verum hominem, unam personam in duabus naturis et duas naturas in una persona.*” *Cur Deus Homo* I.8. S 2.59.20-22.

<sup>34</sup> See Burnell F. Eckardt, “Luther and Anselm: Same Atonement, Different Approach,” in *Ad fontes Lutheri: Toward the Recovery of the Real Luther: Essays in Honor of Kenneth Hagen’s Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Timothy Maschke, Franz Posset and Joan Skocir, 63-64 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001).

<sup>35</sup> “*Quapropter cum dicimus quia homo ille, qui secundum unitatem personae, sicut supra dictum est, idem ipse est qui filius dei, deus . . .*” *Cur Deus Homo* II.17. S 2.124.3-4.

<sup>36</sup> *Cur Deus Homo* II.7. S 2.101.24-102.6, 102.11-3. I quote here the English translation by Janet Fairweather in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 320-1.

wholeness of the divine nature and the wholeness of the human nature, true Mediator between God and humanity—Jesus the Christ.<sup>37</sup>

### **Anselmian Soteriology**

In his exposition on ontological Christology, Anselm finds himself in good company with Beatus and Alcuin. The post-Leonine tradition is again upheld as the standard Christological model for the Latin Church. However, Anselm does more than simply reiterate the Chalcedonian doctrine and its Leonine interpretation. Rather, Anselm grounds the ontological statement of Chalcedon into a functional Christology, providing a tangible soteriological model.

In the *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm's purpose is to provide a rational defense of the necessity of the Incarnation. It would be helpful to sketch the argument here. Through the sin of Adam, humanity failed to uphold the moral order established by God. The divine ordering of creation, or *rectitudo*, was violated, and the honor of God was consequently put asunder.<sup>38</sup> Adam forfeited the original justice in which was created, and all of his descendents inherit his state of *iniustitia* as a consequence: "the human race, clearly his most precious piece of workmanship, had been completely ruined."<sup>39</sup> According to Anselm, one who does not render to God what is demanded by the moral order dishonors God. Because God himself is infinite, such an offense constitutes an infinite degree of injustice. The sinner then must make satisfaction for the crime, which entails not only due submission to God, but restoration of the very honor stolen.

But cannot God just simply forgive the offence out of pure mercy? For Anselm, such an idea is an absurdity, for God as supreme justice (*summa iustitia*) would be acting in an unjust manner, which is unfitting to his nature. Anselm is not speaking of human justice but of that supreme justice expressed in the divine order of the cosmos. This justice is an attribute of God's nature, not merely a way in which God deals in circumstance.<sup>40</sup> According to God's design, humanity is obligated to make satisfaction. But the state of sin renders any attempt futile since a sinner cannot justify a sinner. Only God is capable of providing an infinite restitution, something which exceeds in value anything in the created order. But if humanity is left to sin and death it will never achieve the end for which it was ordained, that is, "blessed happiness" in God.<sup>41</sup>

The immutable goodness and justice of God will not permit the frustration of his plan. While the necessity for satisfaction lies with humanity, only God can provide it. Thus the necessary solution to this quandary is the God-Man (*Deus homo*), Jesus Christ. As a man, Christ

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. S 2.102.17-21.

<sup>38</sup> For an analysis of Anselm's understanding of rectitude as moral order, see Alister E. McGrath, "Rectitude: The Moral Foundations of Anselm of Canterbury's Soteriology," *Downside Review* 99 (1981): 204-13.

<sup>39</sup> *Cur Deus Homo* I.4. S 2.52.8-9.

<sup>40</sup> See McGrath, 210. To label Anselm's theology of atonement "juridical" or "legalistic" is to overlook the metaphysical order of the cosmos as reflection of God's own nature.

<sup>41</sup> *Cur Deus Homo* II.1. S 2.97.4-98.5.



owed perfect obedience to God, so obedience alone would not suffice for satisfaction. But due to his sinlessness, Christ was not obligated to die, since death was the wage of sin. The death of Christ went beyond what was required of him, and the cross was endowed with the value of satisfaction. This satisfaction is of infinite value because Christ was not only man, but also God. The death of the God-Man provides a satisfaction of such abundance that it extends to all humanity across space and time.<sup>42</sup> Humanity itself is then crowned by the mediated achievement of its Redeemer.

## Beyond Chalcedon

In the scope of the history of theological thought, the achievement and worth of Anselm's meticulous labor is found in his novel theology of atonement. The ontological Christology of Chalcedon is pressed into the service of a functional Christology. For Anselm, no other Christ can save humanity from its squalid condition of sin and death than the Christ proclaimed by the Fathers of Chalcedon. While it is true that both Beatus and Alcuin were staunch defenders of the Chalcedonian doctrine, it was not until Anselm that its precise function within the salvific economy was elucidated. Like Leo, his theological predecessor, Anselm fully distinguishes the two natures of Christ while convincingly maintaining that the Son of God suffered no duality of subject or person. Yet Anselm moves beyond Chalcedon and Leo, rendering to each nature a vital and indispensable role in the redemption that extends beyond mediatorship. Chalcedon is buttressed with the biblical images of sacrifice and satisfaction, revealing the core meaning behind the Incarnation.<sup>43</sup> In expounding the value of satisfaction, Anselm never loses sight of the holistic reality of the Incarnation. There is no possibility for salvation apart from the God-Man, the one divine Son of God.<sup>44</sup>

The end result of Anselm's innovation is a true Christological renaissance within the Latin Church. In the work of Anselm, traditional Christology is given a fresh prospective as it fused with a biblical soteriology that truly emphasizes the powerful dimension and consequence of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Soteriology is fortified, but not severed from Christology. Due to Anselm's thought, subsequent Latin Christology was primed to give more attention to the reason and the result of the historical presence of the Son of God made man.<sup>45</sup> In an historical

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<sup>42</sup> *Cur Deus Homo* II.16. S 2.118.20-3.

<sup>43</sup> Some contemporary scholars are beginning to appreciate the biblical foundations of Anselm's theology of atonement. See Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 219-21; Karl Adam, *The Christ of Faith: The Christology of the Church*, trans. Joyce Crick (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 372; Prosper Hartmann, *Le sens plénier de la réparation du péché* (Louvain: Apostolat de la réparation, 1955), 189-90.

<sup>44</sup> For Anselm, the value of satisfaction is inseparable from the holistic reality of the Incarnation.

<sup>45</sup> See O'Collins, *Interpreting Jesus* (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983). For a glimpse of the influence of Anselm's thought on subsequent Christology, see Jay Rubinstein, "The Impact of *Cur deus homo* on the Early Franciscan School," in *Anselm: Aosta, Bec and Canterbury: Papers in Commemoration of the Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop, 25 September 1093*, ed. D. E. Luscombe and G. R. Evans, 334-47 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); D. E. Luscombe, "St Anselm and Abelard," *Anselm Studies: An Occasional Journal* 1 (1983): 209; Derk Visser, "St. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* and the *Heidelberg Catechism*," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 607-34; John D. Hannah, "Anselm on the Doctrine of Atonement," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135

context, Anselm is the veritable successor to Leo in the Christological tradition of the Latin Church. For Leo, the Chalcedonian Christ dictates his soteriology; for Anselm, soteriology demands the Chalcedonian Christ. Thus, Anselm's contribution to Western Christology cannot be limited to simply his theology of the redemption; it must be likewise acknowledged that he became the first significant thinker after Leo to advance and codify the doctrine of Chalcedon. No longer was Christ to be conceived solely in the abstract; Anselm reminded the Church of the concern, fidelity and love of God towards his creation, and the ultimate cost of salvation *propter nos et propter salutem nostram*.

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(1978): 333-44; Romanus Cessario, *The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1990); Eckardt, "Luther and Anselm."