

Two Problems concerning Divine Immutability and the Incarnation

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Introduction

CENTRAL TO THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE is the proclamation that the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son, became human for our salvation. But also central to Christianity is its understanding of the divine nature, an understanding that has traditionally included the idea that God is immutable. There are some tensions here. At least at first glance, the doctrine of divine immutability raises problems for the doctrine of the Incarnation. If Christ is divine, and therefore immutable, how can he go through changes, such as walking down the street or being nailed to the Cross? And there is a prior difficulty: if the divine persons are immutable, how can a divine person have become incarnate in the first place?

Mutability, Immutability, and the Incarnate Word

We can think of the first difficulty as taking the following form. On the one hand, it seems right to say that Christ is divine and that everything divine is immutable, and from these, it would seem to follow that Christ is immutable. On the other hand, it seems right to say that Christ changes, as the Gospel accounts show him walking, becoming sad or angry, and so forth. But how can Christ be both something immutable and something that changes?

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One possible way of solving the problem is as follows. I call this solution “Tomeistic” because it draws inspiration from the so-called *Tome* of Pope Leo, a work incorporated into the acts of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Tomeistic Christology, in a rough-and-ready version, looks something like this.¹ Christ is one person with two natures. Some things are true of his human nature, while others are true of his divine nature. For example, his human nature is mutable, while his divine nature is immutable. Is he, Christ himself, both mutable and immutable? Yes. He is mutable insofar as that means he has a nature that is mutable, and he is immutable insofar as that means he has a nature that is immutable. Those specifications of what “mutable” and “immutable” mean are important. “He is mutable and immutable” might sound contradictory, but on the Tomeistic understanding, it is not: when it is said that Christ is mutable, what is meant is that he has a nature that is mutable, and when it is said that he is immutable, what is meant is that he has a nature that is immutable. There is nothing contradictory about that.

I am bringing up Tomeistic Christology mostly so it can serve as a contrast with the position I will myself be taking. Although I cannot here give anything like a full account of what is wrong with the Tomeist view, I can at least convey the gist of my concern by saying that I think it bad metaphysics. Natures are not mutable or immutable, and thinking otherwise is a category mistake. Things, substances, are mutable or immutable. If there is any sense to saying that a nature is mutable or immutable, it is this: a nature is mutable or immutable insofar as it is a principle in virtue of which this or that substance is mutable or immutable. Nor is the point restricted to the case of mutability and immutability. It is true pretty generally of features that they are had by substances, not natures, and likewise true pretty generally of actions that they are performed by substances, not natures.² Natures are not the bearers of features or the performers of actions so much as they are principles in virtue of which substances

¹ For the state-of-the-art version, see Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), esp. 190–191. Naturally, Pawl’s account is far more sophisticated than the toy version of Tomeistic Christology that I present here.

² Why “pretty generally” and not “universally”? Because there might be special features that apply to natures and not substances, like “assumed.” See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] III, q. 16, a. 4, ad 3.

have features, perform actions, and so on. A nature is a *principium quo*, not a *principium quod*.³

If this approach is problematic in the way that I have suggested, what would be a better one? The first thing to do is to reverse the priorities of Tomeism and put substance (person) into the driver's seat, where it rightly belongs. Instead of saying that Christ's human nature is mutable and that his divine nature is immutable, let us accept that, if anything here is mutable or immutable in the primary sense, it is going to be a person: not Christ's humanity or divinity, but Christ himself. He is the *principium quod* that we need to deal with, and his natures are not *principia quae* but *principia quibus*.

With respect to the person of Christ himself (not to any nature), then, let us start by affirming the most obvious relevant thing: he is mutable. He walks, he talks, he carries a cross. Then let us affirm what most obviously follows from his being mutable: that he is not immutable. (We will have reason to qualify or clarify this below.) Third, let us face our problem: is he not divine? Of course he is. So it must be that we were mistaken when we thought that his being divine prevented him from being mutable. Let us say that it is not true, after all, that every divine being is immutable. We can say it on the basis of the following argument: Christ is divine, and Christ is mutable, so therefore some divine person is mutable. (Here too we will soon have reason to qualify or clarify what has been said.)

Apparently, then, some divine person is mutable. If that seems wrong, perhaps it is because we sense that there is some important connection between being divine and being immutable. The Father and the Spirit are immutable, and surely their immutability is profoundly connected to their being divine. The feeling of unease here is quite legitimate and can be dispelled only by thinking more carefully about what it means to say that immutability is a property of divinity. Let us note that, if either the Father or the Spirit were to assume a human nature (as Aquinas says they could), then they would be mutable too.⁴ That suggests the following: when we say

³ For a contrast between interpretations of Aquinas that makes him sound something like a Tomeist and an interpretation that construes his thought more along the non-Tomeistic lines just sketched out, see my *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), ch. 6. I think that Aquinas as I there present him has the right idea. I should mention as well that, although I reject Tomeistic Christology, I do not, of course, reject Leo's *Tome*; I interpret it other than as Tomeists do.

⁴ For Aquinas on the possibility of the Father or the Spirit becoming incarnate, see *ST* III, q. 3, a. 5.

that a divine person is immutable, what we really mean (or at least should mean) is that a divine person is such that, *if it has no other nature*, then it will be immutable. And indeed, Christ himself was immutable prior to the Incarnation. So there is still a strong connection between immutability and divinity. Any being that is divine, and only divine, will be immutable. This even applies in a certain way to Christ, who is not immutable: if he were not human, then he would be immutable. The point can be stated positively as well: Christ has a nature such that, if he had only that nature, he would be immutable. If we wanted on this basis to stipulate a special sense of immutability—quasi-immutability, or whatever—then of course we could do so, and in that special sense, a sense compatible with mutability, Christ would be “immutable.” But that is a merely verbal matter. The substantive points are these: first, every solely divine person is immutable in the straightforward sense; and second, Christ, although mutable, still has it in common with the other divine persons that he possesses a nature such that, if he possessed only that nature, he would be immutable in the straightforward sense. Nor is this a trivial claim. It is true of no human being other than Christ. No human other than Christ has a nature such that, if it were his only nature, he would be immutable.

We should perhaps add one nuance. If mutability is the ability to be changed or affected, and if any divine person can become incarnate, then someone might argue as follows: “You have been trying to maintain the view that solely divine persons are immutable. But if a divine person is able to become incarnate, and if incarnate divine persons are able, say, to be crucified, then every divine person is able to be able to be crucified, which is no different from being able to be crucified. But then every divine person, even a solely divine person, is mutable.” The answer to this objection is to say that it is wrong to dismiss as unimportant the difference between being able to be crucified and being able to be able to be crucified. It makes a difference that Christ is able to be changed here and now, while the Father and the Spirit are able to be changed or affected only once they assume a created nature. Christ is, we might say, proximately mutable: he already has a nature in virtue of which he can be changed. The Father and the Spirit, by contrast, are only remotely mutable: they do not have a nature in virtue of which they can be changed, although (*ex hypothesi*) they can acquire such a nature. And being only “remotely mutable” is unproblematically compatible with being immutable, because being remotely mutable is not a way of being mutable.

To conclude this section of the article, the question of whether Christ's divinity prevents him from being mutable can be handled in a straightforward manner: first, we affirm his mutability; then we say that he is not immutable; and finally, we say that what divinity implies is not immutability, but having a nature such that, if that is one's only nature, then one will be immutable. Setting things up in this way removes the threat of contradiction from Christology while preserving a clear connection between divinity and immutability: no divine person that is solely divine is (proximately) mutable.⁵

But How Did the Word Become Human in the First Place?

We have seen that Christ's being divine does not prevent him from being mutable, and doing so has created the space for saying that, because he is human, he is mutable. In other words, his being divine does not prevent him from being mutable; if he is not solely divine, but human as well, then he will be mutable. But how did he come to be human in the first place?

This question has, in a way, already been raised. Earlier, I distinguished remote mutability from proximate mutability in order to have a way of understanding how it is that non-incarnate divine persons are not already mutable. And I relied, in making that distinction, on the obvious fact (obvious given Christian revelation) that a non-incarnate person can assume a nature of the relevant sort. But to point to a fact in order to distinguish it from another is not yet to understand the ground of that fact. To say, even with the assurance of faith, *that* a non-incarnate divine person can become incarnate is not to say *how* this is possible.

It is not simply that a question has been raised without being answered; it is that the way in which it was raised might seem to prevent its being answered. The whole point of the remote/proximate distinction was, again, to avoid having to say that the Father and the Spirit are mutable: to talk about "remote mutability" is not to talk about a kind of mutability, but instead to talk about the fact that something that is not mutable can come to be mutable. To put the point more strongly, to say that a non-incarnate divine person is "remotely mutable" is, effectively, to deny that a non-incarnate person is, at the time at which it is remotely mutable, mutable. But

⁵ For a more detailed presentation of the general approach taken in this section, examining different cases, see my "Classical Theism and the Christological Coherence Problem," *Faith and Philosophy* 33 (2016): 278–92.

how can something *come to be* incarnate if it is not mutable? Does not the ability to become incarnate presuppose mutability? Indeed, is the notion of merely remote mutability not incoherent, since it is simply impossible for anything to *become mutable*? If it is not already mutable, surely it cannot become anything, and so *a fortiori* it cannot become mutable!⁶

Our goal, then, is to explain how the Son, or any solely divine person, can become human without being mutable. But what does it mean to say that something is mutable, that it can undergo change? Anyone who understands change and mutability very broadly, such that anything that exists first in one way and then in another has “changed,” and therefore must have been “mutable,” will have to say that our goal is unattainable: on such a broad understanding, incarnation is a case of change and any divine person that became incarnate was already mutable. By setting the bar for change so low, the broad understanding sets the bar for immutability too high, almost in a way that begs the question against Christianity. So, when it is said that solely divine persons are “immutable” and that they can become human without “changing,” it must be that some narrower and more technical sense of “change” and “immutability” is in play.

Aquinas can help us understand what these more technical senses are. For him, something undergoes a *mutatio* only if it has a potency that gets actualized, and only if it comes to exist in a way in which it did not exist before.⁷ A white door that gets painted blue really does change in the technical sense: it begins with a potency to be blue, a potency that gets actualized, and thereby it comes to exist in a way in which it had not existed before, as blue.

Let us ask whether either of these two conditions is fulfilled in the Incarnation, and if so, how. Because the two conditions do not provide us with a complete theory of mutability, but only two necessary conditions of it, doing so will not give us a complete understanding of how the Incarnation is related to immutability. It will, however, enable us to see that the Incarnation does not transgress

⁶ This question is raised, albeit in the broader context of a discussion of divine timelessness, by Thomas Senor, “Incarnation and Timelessness,” *Faith and Philosophy* 7 (1990): 149–64.

⁷ For a discussion of Aquinas on change that partly overlaps with my discussion here, and partly does not, see my *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, ch. 3. For discussion of temporality as yet another aspect of mutability, see Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 154–56.

divine immutability, and it will further enable us to gain at least some positive insight into the nature of the Incarnation.

Let us begin with potentiality and actualization. Here I will follow Aquinas to a significant extent. If change requires the actualization of a potency, it is easy enough to see why a divine person—or rather, a solely divine person—cannot change, and is therefore immutable. To be divine is, among other things, to be utterly and infinitely actual, and thereby free of all potentiality. If mutability involves the ability to undergo mutation, the actualization of a potentiality, then nothing that is free of all potentiality can be mutable. It must, in short, be immutable.

Now there are at least two ways in which incarnation might seem to involve actualization. First, it might seem to involve the actualization of a potential on the Son's part to be human. Second, it might seem to involve the actualization of a potential on the Son's part to be related to the human nature that he assumes. The first of these worries is rooted in a confusion. Because a human nature is not an accident, but instead a substantial nature, it never actualizes a potency in anything; this is what is at stake when Aquinas says that a substantial nature does not have a subject. Human nature in Socrates does not actualize any potency, and neither does human nature in Christ.⁸

The second worry, on the other hand, is very serious. The point can be put as follows. Presumably, there is a real relation between Christ and his human nature, not merely a conceptual one: it is not just that we hold Christ and a certain human nature together in our minds for some purpose of our own, but that there really is some attachment between them out there in the world, independent of how we think of them. If we adopt the medieval way of thinking about relations (as we should), what this would normally mean is that each of the two related items has a relational accident in virtue of which it is related to the other. For example, if Socrates is the son of Sophroniscus, and if that is an ordinary real relation, then Sophroniscus (as subject) has a relational accident "father of" connecting him to Socrates (as term), and Socrates (as subject) has a relational accident "son of" relating him to Sophroniscus (as term). What is more, accidents actualize their subjects. And so, in the example just given, "father of" actualizes a potency in Sophroniscus and "son of" actualizes a potency in Socrates. But if we try to apply this model to the

⁸ For discussion in the context of interpreting Aquinas, see my *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, 25–27, 67, 77.

Incarnation, we will run into trouble, since divine persons have no potencies and cannot be actualized. While it might well be acceptable to say that the assumed human nature has an accident relating it to the Son, we cannot say that the Son has an accident relating him to the assumed nature.

From Aquinas's point of view, this difficulty is not unique to the Incarnation. A similar problem arises with any issue about how God is related to creatures. If God really, and not just conceptually, is the creator or governor of every creature, then does that not mean that there is a relational accident in each creature and, for each creature, a corresponding relational accident in God? For Aquinas, the way to avoid this unappealing conclusion involves seeing that there is a middle ground between a purely conceptual relation (a situation in which two things are "related" only in the sense that we think of them in connection with one another) and a paradigm case of a real relation (a situation in which each of the related things has a relational accident to the other as term). In between, there is what can be called a "mixed" relation, which is like a conceptual relation with respect to one related thing but like a real relation with respect to the other. Imagine that Socrates is thinking of Xanthippe. In him, there is a relation of "thinking of" with Xanthippe as term, but in her, there is no corresponding relation "being thought of" with Socrates as term. We can say that Xanthippe is being thought of by Socrates, but all the metaphysical machinery will be on Socrates's side. Aquinas encourages us to think of creation and similar matters along these lines. There can be no relational accident in God in virtue of which he is, say, the creator, but there are relational accidents in creatures in virtue of which they depend on him, and this is sufficient for his being their creator.⁹

Not only does Aquinas use this kind of thinking to make sense of creation; he also uses it for the Incarnation. There is no relational accident joining the Son to the assumed human nature, but there is a relational accident in the assumed human nature joining it to the Son. On this way of thinking, although there is a relation between the Son and the assumed nature, the establishing of this relation does not involve any actualization of a potency in the Son, and therefore it is not a mutation of the Son, and therefore it does not violate divine immutability.¹⁰

⁹ See, for example, *ST* I, q. 45, a. 3.

¹⁰ Other discussions of this approach to the Incarnation—discussions that vary in how highly they value the approach—include the following: Marilyn McCord

It is important to realize that the relation between an ordinary creature and God is not entirely the same as the relation between the assumed human nature and the Son. God creates a cow, and the cow is related to God by a mixed relation, but God does not therefore become bovine. When a bovine nature comes to be, it comes to make some substance bovine, but its coming to be is concomitant with the coming to be of the substance that it makes bovine, a substance distinct from any divine person. The Incarnation has to be different from this. In the Incarnation, a human nature comes to be, but instead of giving rise to some non-divine human person, it makes a divine person human.

Indeed, what else could it do? The assumed nature is a principle of a person, and of course, the person of whom it is a principle must be the person to whom it is joined to “in person,” the Son.¹¹ Or, to put it differently, if the assumed nature is joined in person to the Son, the only alternative to seeing it as constituting him as human is seeing it as metaphysically otiose, a principle that accomplishes nothing, which seems wrong. So, the assumed nature is joined to the Son in such a way as to make it (the nature) a principle of existence and action for the Son himself. It is a principle in virtue of which the Son personally exists and acts. In the Incarnation, then, we have to do not merely with a mixed relation, but with a special kind of mixed relation. What comes to be is not a being, but a principle of a being, not an agent, but a principle of agency, not a *principium quod*, but a *principium quo*. The assumed human nature really does constitute the Son as human.

This leads us to our next question, one for which Aquinas seems not to offer us much help. As we saw earlier, something’s changing involves its coming to exist in a new way, and likewise, something’s mutability involves its ability to come to exist in a new way. And this aspect of change and mutability seems, at least at first glance, to be found in the Incarnation. It seems that, if a solely divine person

Adams, *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126–28, 141–43; Oliver Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 128–30; Richard Sturch, *The Word and the Christ* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 32–34, 175–76; Thomas Weinandy, *Does God Change? The Word’s Becoming in the Incarnation* (Still River, MA: St. Bede’s, 1985), 67–100.

¹¹ By a union “in person,” I mean what Aquinas means: a union that results in just one person, as distinct from a union between two persons (see my *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union*, 46–52).

is going to become incarnate, then that person will thereby come to exist in a way that he did not before. And, indeed, it seems obvious that, in the Incarnation as it has actually occurred, the Son did come to exist in a way in which he had not existed before: as human.

Now, the fact that the Incarnation seems to share something with ordinary cases of mutability is not itself a problem. As noted, change and mutability involve at least two necessary conditions: actualization and coming to exist in a new way. Since we already know that the Incarnation does not involve actualization of a divine person, that is enough to conclude that divine immutability is preserved. And yet we have a difficulty nonetheless. Prior to the Incarnation, the Son was divine. Does not every divine person, in virtue of being divine, already possess the fullness of being? How, then, could the Son, or any divine person, come to exist in a *new* way? Is not any possible way of existing a way that every divine person already has? How can a solely divine person come to have something new if it already has everything?

When considering actualization, our approach was to flat-out deny that the Incarnation involves the actualization of a divine potentiality. Here, our approach has to be more nuanced, since it seems problematic simply to deny, without qualification, that the Incarnation brings it about that a divine person exists in a new way. If we say that, in the Incarnation, a new human nature comes to be and that it comes to be joined to a divine person by a mixed relation, and if we then add that this makes absolutely no difference to the way in which the divine person exists, then, although we will have saved divine immutability, we will have pretty much abandoned the truth of the Incarnation (even if we have not abandoned the verbal formulations thereof).

To handle this problem, we should begin by granting that there is indeed a crucial sense in which the Incarnation does not “add” anything to God. It really is true that God already has the fullness of being, and so there is no sense in talking about his having more than he had before. So, any sense in which we say that the Incarnation involves God’s “coming to exist in a new way” will have to be a sense that is compatible with the fact that God already has every perfection.

Let us reflect more thoroughly on the fact that a solely divine being exists in a completely unlimited way, on the fact that there are no borders to the divine nature, no line such that one can say, for example, “the Father’s divinity goes thus far but no farther.” Things are otherwise with creatures: to exist in virtue of a created nature is

to exist in a limited way. To be canine, for example, is (among other things) to lack wings, to lack gills, and so forth: having a canine nature or any other created nature is inseparable from having limits (*fines*), from being finite. But it is precisely a created, and therefore finite nature, that the Son assumes in the Incarnation. What is “new” in the Incarnation, then, is that, in addition to possessing all the fullness of being in a completely unlimited way, the Son also comes to have a limited nature. And since, for him, to have this nature is for him to exist in virtue of it, then, in some sense, it is for him not only to exist in an unlimited way, but also now to exist in a limited way. Before, there was no sense in which his being was limited; now, although he retains his infinite being, he also has a mode of being that is limited, kept within borders, finite.

For example, insofar as he is God, the Son is able to act at any location in the universe. After the Incarnation, he is still able to do this, but it is now also true that he has a set of powers—his human powers—that cannot be exercised except in one location. Christ cannot, for example, humanly make physical contact with just anyone or anything, regardless of its location. Insofar as he is exercising his human powers, he can make physical contact only with people or things that are sufficiently near him. If he is to touch the little children, they must first be brought to him. Or, to pick another example, as God, Christ has a divine mind, but in the Incarnation, he also comes to have a human mind, a mind in virtue of which his knowledge is limited. He can therefore think in two ways, one unlimited and the other limited. This human knowledge is, in one sense, nothing new: it does not give him access to any truths he did not already have access to. And yet there is something new here, for in the Incarnation, Christ has and exercises a limited mode of knowledge, a cognitive faculty that gives him access to some things and not others.¹²

Some number of years ago, there were TV advertisements meant to raise awareness of the plight of asthma sufferers, advertisements in which the voice-over said, “It’s like breathing through a tiny straw.” In the Incarnation, one might say, the Son comes to exist and act through a tiny straw, meaning a created nature. The difference between the Incarnation and asthma is that someone suffering from

¹² For exploration of Christ’s human and divine knowledge, see my “Personal Unity and the Problem of Christ’s Knowledge,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 74 (2000): 175–86.

an asthma attack does not simultaneously breathe freely, whereas Christ exists in a limited way while simultaneously existing in an unlimited way, as God.

Or, for another similitude, think of keys in a corporate or academic building. Often some building administrator has a master key, a key that can open all the locks, while other users of the building have what are called “change keys,” keys that open only one lock. A solely divine person is like someone with a master key: he has unlimited door-unlocking power. A creature is like someone with a change key: he has limited door-unlocking power, a power that is confined to one specific lock. An incarnate divine person is like someone with a master key who also comes to have a change key. He still has a master key and can still open any door, but he also has a particular change key with which, if he so chooses, he can open one particular door. The building administrator who had a change key to my office could choose to enter my office with that change key rather than with the master key (we can imagine that he might do so in order to show solidarity with me, or out of humility). Obviously this is only distantly related to the situation we are really discussing in this article, the Incarnation. One important difference between this case and the Incarnation is that, in the key example, the administrator who humbly uses a change key must use it instead of the master key. In the Incarnation, by contrast, Christ always acts by his divine power, but sometimes he acts by that power alone, and at other times he acts by that power and also by his human power, in such a way that the human power is an instrument of the divine.

One last remark about the question of existing in a new way is in order. When we say that a solely divine person has all perfections, we mean that he has them eminently, in a mode that is free of imperfection. In the Incarnation, the Son comes to have one of those perfections in a non-eminently way as well. While retaining his infinite possession of whatever is perfect about being human, Christ comes also to possess humanity in a finite way.

To sum up: the main question of this section, the second main question of the article, was how divine immutability is compatible with the Incarnation. To answer that question, I laid out two necessary conditions of change or mutation: being actualized and coming to exist in a new way. With respect to the first, I adopted Aquinas’s proposal that, in the Incarnation, the assumed nature is related to the Son only by a mixed relation, which ensures that the Son is not actu-

alized by the relation with the assumed nature. If the Son is not actualized, then the Incarnation is not a case of mutation, and therefore divine immutability is preserved. With respect to the second condition, I granted that, in some sense, the Son has to come to exist in a new way, since, otherwise, the Incarnation would be at best nothing different from creation, and at worst metaphysically otiose. Then I raised the question of how the Son could come to exist in a new way, given that he already has the fullness of being in virtue of his divinity. To handle that problem, I pointed out that the Son comes to “exist in a new way” not by coming to have access to types of perfection that he did not have before, there being no such types, but instead by coming to have one particular type of being in a created, limited fashion. Of course it is crucial to insist at the same time that this happens in such a way that he retains his unlimited mode of being. A divine person is necessarily divine. When he emptied himself, he remained full.

Conclusion

Divine immutability raises two distinct problems for the Incarnation. The first is that it seems that divine persons are immutable but that Christ, a divine person, is mutable once he has become incarnate. I addressed this concern by saying that it is not actually true that all divine persons are necessarily immutable. Instead, we should say that all divine persons have a nature such that, if that were their only nature, they would be immutable. So Christ is mutable and divine, and there is no inconsistency here at all: there would be an inconsistency only if Christ were solely divine. The very humanity that raised the problem by giving rise to mutability is also the solution to the problem, inasmuch as it makes Christ not a solely divine person.

The second problem concerns not whether it is acceptable to say that Christ is mutable consequent upon the Incarnation, but whether it is acceptable to think of Christ becoming incarnate in the first place, given that becoming incarnate seems like a change, while the immutability of a solely divine person (which Christ was before the Incarnation) obviously rules out change. I addressed this concern by saying that the Incarnation involves no actualization of the Son, and therefore no change in him, and I further proposed a way of thinking how the Son could “come to exist in a new way” in spite of the fact that he already has every possible perfection.

There is more to ask and more to say about the Incarnation and

divine immutability. In future papers, I may find it possible to say more of it. But, of course, the world is not big enough to hold the papers that would be needed to say it all. N-V