



Perfectly
Attuned

FRANK ARUNDELL

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Two natures in the one
person of Christ

Cover: The oldest known icon of *Christ Pantocrator* at Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt

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451 CE Chalcedon

The doctrine of the Incarnation holds that, at a time roughly two thousand years in the past, the second person of the trinity took on himself a distinct, fully human nature. As a result, he was a single person in full possession of two distinct natures, one human and one divine. The Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) articulates the doctrine as follows:

"We confess one and the same our Lord Jesus Christ... the same perfect in Godhead, the same in perfect manhood, truly God and truly man ... acknowledged in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation—the difference of natures being by no means taken away because of the union, (hypostatic-union) but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved, and combining into one person and hypostasis—not divided or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only begotten God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ."

Modern"critics have held this doctrine to be impossible, self-contradictory, incoherent, absurd, and even unintelligible." In doing so they have made an effort to negate the beliefs of the major Christian sects who believe Jesus both God and man.

The source for the above excerpt is from The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy; sub head: Philosophy and Christian Theology first published May 13, 2002; substantive revision August 9, 2012.

What is a person's "nature"?

Webster tells us it is "the inherent character or basic constitution of a person or thing: it's 'essence.'" In humans, we would suppose that means a person's "substance" as well as his essence. It would include his or her physical, mental and moral characteristics; the most basic elements that make a person what he or she "essentially" IS. It is difficult to sum-up and describe the nature of complex human beings. The person we see, hear and touch, may be quite different from what we're "sensing" when it comes to his and her "nature." In metaphysics what is inherent is the relationship of all the attributes, elements, etc, to the subject of which they are predicated, especially if they are his/her essential constituents without which the person would not be what he or she IS.

Now, "matter" has mass and takes up space; even an electron has mass and spin (movement). Since most physicists are determinists, nothing exists that cannot be measured in one way or another; for them, *all is matter*. Matter per se also exhibits wave like behavior. A beam of electrons can be diffracted just like a beam of light or a water-wave. Matter waves are a central part of the theory of quantum mechanics, an example of wave-particle duality. In that respect all matter is simply condensed energy. An idea, they would say, is a result of the electro-chemical reaction in the human brain, neurologically and psychologically produced.

"Essence" on the other hand infers more than matter; one could say it's beyond matter for those who are able to accept metaphysical properties. Non-determinists perceive ideas, beauty, love, freedom, time, etc., things that lack a concrete nature, are as "real" as a material thing is. An idea in "essence" is real.

We should be fully aware of what a hard-determinist might say: An idea is determined, he would say, from material elements stored in the conscious and sub-consciousness memory, entangled with a posteriori perceptions for a satisfactory outcome serving a relevant purpose. So far neuroscience has not exactly figured out how this process might work, but for the hard determinist it is obviously a material-mechanical process.

Spark-notes affords us a brief overview of Aristotle's thoughts on the matter:

A summary of Aristotelian Metaphysics:

“What is known to us as metaphysics is what Aristotle called “first philosophy.” Metaphysics involves a study of the universal principles of being, the abstract qualities of existence itself. Perhaps the starting point of Aristotle's metaphysics is his rejection of Plato's Theory of Forms. In Plato's theory, material objects are changeable and not real in themselves; rather, they correspond to an ideal, eternal, and immutable Form by a common name, and this Form can be perceived only by the intellect. Thus a thing perceived to be beautiful in this world is in fact an imperfect manifestation of the Form of Beauty. Aristotle's arguments against this theory were numerous. Ultimately he rejected Plato's ideas as poetic but empty language; as a scientist and empiricist he preferred to focus on the reality of the material world.” Much of Aquinas derives from this concept.

“Metaphysics, or the parts still in existence, spans fourteen books. The early books give background information and survey the field before Aristotle's time. He also describes the nature of wisdom: it begins with sense perceptions, which must be translated into scientific expertise. Such knowledge requires

the understanding of both facts and causes, and wisdom comes only with an understanding of the universal principles and primary causes built on this science. Aristotle's work in metaphysics is therefore motivated by this desire for wisdom, which requires the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.”

“By the fourth book he begins to attack some of the sophistry that has contaminated the field. One point that he dwells on is the “law of contradictions,” which essentially asserts that something cannot both be and not be at the same time. In particular, he is concerned with the relativism and even nihilism that would result from a metaphysics that allowed contradictions. The relationship between form and matter is another central problem for Aristotle. He argues that both are substances, but matter is potential, while form is actual. The two are not separate but intertwined, and actuality precedes potentiality. Although the actual is produced from the potential, it is the actual that makes the production possible.” (In other words “nothing comes from nothing”)

“Several of the books covering topics like contrariety, unity, the nature of mathematical objects, and others are usually neglected, as they show less originality compared with the key points of the *Metaphysics*. Book XII, on the other hand, is usually considered the culmination of Aristotle's work in metaphysics, and in it he offers his teleological (means and ends, cause and effect)) system. Before he draws any grand conclusions, he begins with the idea of substance, of which there are three kinds: changeable and perishable (e.g., plants and animals), changeable and eternal (e.g., heavenly bodies), and immutable. If all substances are perishable, then ultimate destruction of everything is inevitable. But Aristotle asserts two imperishable entities: motion and time. If time were created, then there must have been no time before the creation, but the

very concept of “before” necessitates the concept of time. On the other hand, as he argued in his works of natural philosophy, the only continuous motion must be circular. Thus he returns to the idea of the Unmoved Mover, for only such a being could generate eternal circular motion. The Unmoved Mover is the ultimate cause of the universe, and it is pure actuality, containing no matter since it is the very cause of itself. In order for the Mover to be unmoved itself, it must move in a non-physical way, by inspiring desire.”

“Aristotle gives the Mover the name of God, but this figure is unlike most standard conceptions of a divine being. Though Aristotle asserts that it is a living creature and represents the pinnacle of goodness, it also has no interest in the world and no recognition of man, for it exists in a completely transcendent and abstract state. The activity of God—if it can be called such—is simply knowledge, and this knowledge is purely a knowledge of itself, because an abstracted being is above sense and experience and can know only what is best. Some have interpreted this to mean that God, in knowing itself, implicitly knows everything else, but Aristotle flatly denied this view. In fact, he believed, for example, that God would have no knowledge of evil. Thus Aristotle's conception is full of paradoxes. God is the ultimate cause of everything in the world, but it also remains completely detached.” (Sparknotes)

Since Aristotle asserts that the Prime Mover, “God,” the most perfect divine being, is the ultimate “living creature,” one would expect that [he, she or it] has a “reason” for its causing the “actuality” of the universe; but containing no matter as the cause of itself is difficult to fathom with today’s understanding of “substance” Furthermore if God is knowledge itself— does it know it knows no evil? Oh well... The 1907 Catholic

Encyclopedia enlightens us a little with its “scholastic” point of view:

“From the theological point of view the distinctions between nature and person and between the natural and the supernatural orders are of primary importance. The former arose from the dogma of the Trinity, i.e., of one Divine Nature in three persons; and chiefly from that of the Incarnation, i.e., of the two Natures, Divine and human, in the one Divine Person in Christ. The Human Nature in Christ is complete and perfect as nature, yet it lacks that which would make it a person, whether this be something negative, as Scotists (Dun Scotus 1266-1308) hold, namely the mere fact that a nature is not assumed by a higher person, or, as Thomists assert, some positive reality distinct from nature and making it incommunicable.”

Aquinas, Pars iii, Article 1, Q2

One of the Philosopher's greatest admirers was St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), we should take a look into his Summa to see if it can help us out with some of the difficult paradoxes the great philosopher presents. Pars iii, Article 1, Q 2 gives us Aquinas supporting Chalcedon (cal-see-don) and elaborates on the Fathers' conclusions using the philosopher to prove his points:

Article 1. Whether the Union of Incarnate Word took place in the nature?

Objection 1. It would seem that the Union of the Word Incarnate took place in the nature. For Cyril says (he is quoted in the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, part ii, act. 1): "We must understand not two natures, but one incarnate nature of

the Word of God"; and this could not be unless the union took place in the nature. Therefore the union of the Word Incarnate took place in the nature.

Objection 2. Further, Athanasius says that, as the rational soul and the flesh together form the human nature, so God and man together form a certain one nature; therefore the union took place in the nature.

Objection 3. Further, of two natures one is not denominated by the other unless they are to some extent mutually transmuted. But the Divine and human natures in Christ are denominated one by the other; for Cyril says (quoted in the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, part ii, act. 1) that the Divine nature "is incarnate"; and Gregory Nazianzen says (Ep. i ad Cledon.) that the human nature is "deified," as appears from Damascene (De Fide Orth. iii, 6,11). Therefore from two natures one seems to have resulted.

On the contrary, It is said in the declaration of the Council of Chalcedon: *"We confess that in these latter times the only-begotten Son of God appeared in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation—the distinction of natures not having been taken away by the union."* Therefore the union did not take place in the nature.

Aquinas, What is nature?

I answer that, To make this question clear we must consider what is "nature." Now it is to be observed that the word "nature" comes from nativity. Hence this word was used first of all to signify the begetting of living beings, which is called "birth" or "sprouting forth," the word "natura" meaning, as it were, "nascitura." Afterwards this word "nature" was taken to

signify the principle of this begetting; and because in living things the principle of generation is an intrinsic principle, this word "nature" was further employed to signify any intrinsic principle of motion: thus the Philosopher says (Phys. ii) that "nature is the principle of motion in that in which it is essentially and not accidentally." Now this principle is either form or matter. Hence sometimes form is called nature, and sometimes matter. And because the end of natural generation, in that which is generated, is the essence of the species, which the definition signifies, this essence of the species is called the "nature." And thus Boethius defines nature (De Duab. Nat.): "Nature is what informs a thing with its specific difference,"—i.e. which perfects the specific definition. But we are now speaking of nature as it signifies the essence, or the "what-it-is," or the quiddity of the species. (*Quiddity: The inherent nature of someone or something.*)

Now, if we take nature in this way, it is impossible that the union of Incarnate Word took place in the nature. For one thing is made of two or more in three ways. First, from two complete things which remain in their perfection. This can only happen to those whose form is composition, order, or figure, as a heap is made up of many stones brought together without any order, but solely with juxtaposition; and a house is made of stones and beams arranged in order, and fashioned to a figure. And in this way some said the union was by manner of confusion (which is without order) or by manner of commensuration (which is with order). But this cannot be. First, because neither composition nor order nor figure is a substantial form, but accidental; and hence it would follow that the union of Incarnation was not essential, but accidental, which will be disproved later on (Article 6). Secondly, because thereby we should not have an absolute unity, but relative only, for there remain several things actually. Thirdly, because the form of such is not a nature, but

an art, as the form of a house; and thus one nature would not be constituted in Christ, as they wish.

Secondly, one thing is made up of several things, perfect but changed, as a mixture is made up of its elements; and in this way some have said that the union of Incarnation was brought about by manner of combination. But this cannot be. First, because the Divine Nature is altogether immutable, as has been said (I:9:1; I:9:2), hence neither can it be changed into something else, since it is incorruptible; nor can anything else be changed into it, for it cannot be generated. Secondly, because what is mixed is of the same species with none of the elements; for flesh differs in species from any of its elements. And thus Christ would be of the same nature neither with His Father nor with His Mother. Thirdly, because there can be no mingling of things widely apart; for the species of one of them is absorbed, e.g. if we were to put a drop of water in a flagon of wine. And hence, since the Divine Nature infinitely exceeds the human nature, there could be no mixture, but the Divine Nature alone would remain.

Thirdly, a thing is made up of things not mixed nor changed, but imperfect; as man is made up of soul and body, and likewise of divers members. But this cannot be said of the mystery of Incarnation. First, because each nature, i.e. the Divine and the human, has its specific perfection. Secondly, because the Divine and human natures cannot constitute anything after the manner of quantitative parts, as the members make up the body; for the Divine Nature is incorporeal; nor after the manner of form and matter, for the Divine Nature cannot be the form of anything, especially of anything corporeal, since it would follow that the species resulting therefrom would be communicable to several, and thus there would be several Christs. Thirdly, because Christ would exist

neither in human nature nor in the Divine Nature: since any difference varies the species, as unity varies number, as is said (Metaph. viii, text. 10).

Reply to Objection 1. This authority of Cyril (Cyril of Alexandria 376-444) is expounded in the Fifth Synod (i.e. Constantinople II, coll. viii, can. 8) thus: "If anyone proclaiming one nature of the Word of God to be incarnate does not receive it as the Fathers taught, viz. that from the Divine and human natures (a union in subsistence having taken place) one Christ results, but endeavors from these words to introduce one nature or substance of the Divinity and flesh of Christ, let such a one be anathema." Hence the sense is not that from two natures one results; but that the Nature of the Word of God united flesh to Itself in Person.

Reply to Objection 2. From the soul and body a double unity, viz. of nature and person—results in each individual—of nature inasmuch as the soul is united to the body, and formally perfects it, so that one nature springs from the two as from act and potentiality or from matter and form. But the comparison is not in this sense, for the Divine Nature cannot be the form of a body, as was proved (I:3:8). Unity of person results from them, however, inasmuch as there is an individual subsisting in flesh and soul; and herein lies the likeness, for the one Christ subsists in the Divine and human natures.

Reply to Objection 3. As Damascene (St. John Damascene 676-749) says (De Fide Orth. iii, 6,11), the Divine Nature is said to be incarnate because It is united to flesh personally, and not that It is changed into flesh. So likewise the flesh is said to be deified, as he also says (De Fide Orth. 15,17), not by change, but by union with the Word, its natural properties still remaining, and hence it may be considered as deified,

inasmuch as it becomes the flesh of the Word of God, but not that it becomes God.

Admittedly it takes more than one reading to get the gist of what St. Thomas is telling us. Still, it shows how St. Thomas was indebted to the Greek philosophers, especially the Metaphysics of Aristotle to try to unscramble the paradoxes the early fathers found in the available gospel stories. The New Testament was not canonical until 393-397. The one early document that explains both the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation at the same time is the Athanasian Creed which we got from beginningCatholic.com and will include here:

The Athanasian Creed

This is the Athanasian Creed, as used in the Roman Catholic Church. It's used in the liturgy only rarely (sometimes on Trinity Sunday), but like all of the Church's creeds, it is still valid and respected. Although no longer officially attributed to St. Athanasius (died in 373 A.D.), it still bears his name. This beautiful creed contains a detailed meditation on the "nature" of the Trinity.

Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all, keep the Catholic faith. (A subject we will treat later)

For unless a person keeps this faith whole and entire, he will undoubtedly be lost forever.

This is what the Catholic faith teaches: we worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity.

Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit.

But the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have one divinity, equal glory, and coeternal majesty.

What the Father is, the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is.

The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated.

The Father is boundless, the Son is boundless, and the Holy Spirit is boundless.

The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal.

Nevertheless, there are not three eternal beings, but one eternal being.

So there are not three uncreated beings, nor three boundless beings, but one uncreated being and one boundless being.

Likewise, the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, the Holy Spirit is omnipotent.

Yet there are not three omnipotent beings, but one omnipotent being.

Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

However, there are not three gods, but one God.

The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord.

However, there are not three lords, but one Lord.

For as we are obliged by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person singly to be God and Lord, so too are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.

The Father was not made, nor created, nor generated by anyone.

The Son is not made, nor created, but begotten by the Father alone.

The Holy Spirit is not made, nor created, nor generated, but proceeds from the Father and the Son.

There is, then, one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits.

In this Trinity, there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less. The entire three Persons are coeternal and coequal with one another.

So that in all things, as is has been said above, the Unity is to be worshipped in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity.

He, therefore, who wishes to be saved, must believe thus about the Trinity.

It is also necessary for eternal salvation that he believes steadfastly in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.

As God, He was begotten of the substance of the Father before time; as man, He was born in time of the substance of His Mother.

He is perfect God; and He is perfect man, with a rational soul and human flesh.

He is equal to the Father in His divinity, but inferior to the Father in His humanity.

Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ.

And He is one, not because His divinity was changed into flesh, but because His humanity was assumed unto God.

He is one, not by a mingling of substances, but by unity of person.

As a rational soul and flesh are one man: so God and man are one Christ.

He died for our salvation, descended into hell, and rose from the dead on the third day.

He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming, all men are to arise with their own bodies; and they are to give an account of their own deeds.

Those who have done good deeds will go into eternal life; those who have done evil will go into the everlasting fire. This is the Catholic faith. Everyone must believe it, firmly and steadfastly; otherwise He cannot be saved... Amen.

The Athanasian Creed, deciphered only by faith of course, is the nuts and bolts of most Christian belief. It is fairly obvious that we must assimilate the creed along with a few of the gospel narratives so that the early fathers are not seen as inventing, out of “whole cloth,” the mysteries of faith. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit with whom they honestly believed they were working and with whom they arrived at their conclusions, by the grace of God held by faith, was the immutable “scriptural” truth was gathered and recorded from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What ever enhancements were included were mandated by the Lord to preach the Good News “to the whole world” by way of apostolic succession which has continued to this day despite some unfaithful men through the centuries. For the vast majority of Christians the faith has still not lost its vigor.

“God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.”

The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah—that is, Christ—is coming; and when he comes he will explain everything.’ Jesus said, ‘That is who I am, I who speak to you.’” (John 4:24-26)

“Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’” (Matthew 20:18-20)

“Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?’ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe it on the evidence of these works.” (John 14:9-11)

“In truth I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18)

“The Father and I are one.” (John 10:30)

“Peace be with you. ‘As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.’”

“After saying this he breathed on them and said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.’” (John 20:21-23)

Literary Criticism

It must be said here that modern scholarship challenges the gospels in many “scientific” ways. For many the bible has lost its status as Sacred Scripture. Secular Culturists around the world have been lowering standards on most things that were once considered sacred and have fallen prey to the “dictatorship of relativism,” where right can be called wrong and good– evil or at least outmoded. With regard to the bible scholarship Benedict XVI; tells us:

“When I was growing up— in the 1930s and 1940s— there was a series of inspiring books about Jesus: Karl Adam, Romano Guardini, Franz Michel Willam, Giovanni Papini, and Henri Daniel-Rops were just some of the authors one could name. All of these books based their portrayal of Jesus Christ on the Gospels. They presented him as a man living on earth who, fully human though he was, at the same time brought God to men, the God with whom as Son he was One. Through the man Jesus, then, God was made visible, and hence our eyes were able to behold the perfect man.” (Like us in every way save sin)

“But the situation started to change in the 1950s. The gap between the ‘historical Jesus’ and the ‘Christ of faith’ grew wider and the two visibly fell apart. But what can faith in Jesus as the Christ possibly mean, in Jesus as the Son of the living God, if the man Jesus was so completely different from the picture that the Evangelists painted of him and that the Church, on the evidence of the Gospels, takes as the basis of her preaching?”

“As *historical-critical* scholarship advanced, it led to finer and finer distinctions between layers of tradition in the Gospels, beneath which the real object of faith— the figure [Gestalt] of Jesus— became increasingly obscured and blurred. At the same time, though, the reconstructions [re-contextualizations] of this Jesus (who could only be discovered by going behind the *traditions and sources* used by the Evangelists) became more and more incompatible with one another: at one end of the spectrum, Jesus was the anti-Roman revolutionary working— though finally failing— to overthrow the ruling powers; at the other end, he was the meek moral teacher who approves everything and unaccountably comes to grief. *If you read a number of these reconstructions [re-contextualizations] one*

after the other, you see at once that far from uncovering an icon that has become obscured over time, they are much more like photographs of their authors and the ideals they hold. Since then there has been growing skepticism about these portrayals of Jesus, but the figure of Jesus himself has for that very reason receded even further into the distance.”

“All these attempts have produced a common result: the impression that we have very little certain knowledge of Jesus and that only at a later stage did *faith* in his divinity shape the image we have of him. This impression has by now penetrated deeply into the minds of the Christian people at large. This is a dramatic situation for faith, because its point of reference is being placed in doubt: Intimate friendship with Jesus, on which everything depends, is in danger of clutching at thin air.”

Benedict XVI, Pope, (2007) *Jesus of Nazareth . The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

What use to be known as “gospel-truth” has continuously been under attack since about the middle of the 19th Century with the advance of scientific investigations into every phase of human development. Faith, the central principle and means of religious belief in an uncreated and unseen God began to be strongly criticized as not being empirically viable. At the same time the divinity of the Son of God with two “natures” was loosing to Jesus; “a brilliant Jewish preacher from the “back-water of Galilee” crucified for blasphemy. Pope Pius X (Guiseppe Melchiorre Sarto) in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907) (*The Doctrines of the Modernists*) wrote:

Gravity of the Situation (From *Pascendi*)

2. “That We make no delay in this matter is rendered necessary especially by the fact that the partisans of error are to be sought not only among the Church’s open enemies; they lie hid, a thing to be deeply deplored and feared, in her very bosom and heart, and are the more mischievous, the less conspicuously they appear. We allude, Venerable Brethren, to many who belong to the Catholic laity, nay, and this is far more lamentable, to the ranks of the priesthood itself, who, feigning a love for the Church, lacking the firm protection of philosophy and theology, nay more, thoroughly imbued with the poisonous doctrines taught by the enemies of the Church, and lost to all sense of modesty, vaunt themselves as reformers of the Church; and, forming more boldly into line of attack, assail all that is most sacred in the work of Christ, not sparing even the person of the Divine Redeemer, whom, with sacrilegious daring, they reduce to a simple, mere man.”

It seems to us that things have only gotten worse over the 112 years since Pascendi was written, especially since the decade of the 1960s and 70s where many of us began to believe that “freedom” meant being free *from* responsibility— rather than *accepting* responsibility for ones actions. “Just do it” says Niki. To make things even worse the drug-culture ascended from the bowels of hell to shackle the young. The *lie, from the father of lies*, for many of today’s population is seen as truth. One has only to observe those who believe the destruction of a human person in the womb is okay, “It’s not a person, it’s just a bundle of cells.” People are being taught to lie to themselves! Lately it has been suggested that we should accept the fact that a woman and her doctors could terminate *life* outside the womb. “Thou shall not kill” appears to have no relevance in much of today’s culture. The sad thing about it is that many of these people believe they are doing the “right” thing.

Uncertainty

In 1925 Werner Heisenberg [1901-1976] gave us the “Uncertainty Principle” in quantum physics, it states that the more precisely the position of some particle is determined, the less precisely its momentum can be known, and vice versa.) For an empiricist like Einstein it was hard to accept any “uncertainty” concept. As a “Pantheist” he said: “Quantum theory yields much, but it hardly brings us close to the Old One’s (*God’s*) secrets. I, in any case, am convinced He does not play dice with the universe.” In the “real” world, so to speak, we are generally dealing with “Newtonian Physics.” There is no need to bring too much quantum-mechanics into a case for faith. It is really quite enough [in terms of faith] to at least be sincerely and honestly convinced you’re believing what is essentially and substantively *true* rather than relatively true.

“The [so called] Copenhagen interpretation considers two realms: there is the macroscopic, classical realm of our measuring instruments governed by Newton's laws; and there is the microscopic, quantum realm of atoms and other small things governed by the Schrödinger equation. (Erwin Schrödinger, 1887-1961) It argues that we never deal *directly* with the quantum objects of the microscopic realm. **We therefore need not worry about their physical reality, or their lack of it.** An ‘existence’ that allows the calculation of their effects on our macroscopic instruments is enough for us to consider.” Source: ThoughtCo. The particle-wave paradox in quantum physics has injected uncertainty into “reality.” Can we have faith in reality or not?

“According to Niels Bohr (1885-1962), the solution is to recognize that we are not allowed to ask questions such as ‘what is light?’ and ‘what is an electron?’ Instead we must

confine ourselves to asking how things are observed to behave under a specified set of circumstances. As the light is either in the process of traveling to its destination, or it has arrived at its destination and is giving up its energy, we can't be asking both questions at the same time.”

“We therefore have no need to use the words ‘wave’ and ‘particle’ at the same time. Hence the problem is solved – according to Bohr. But such a solution would mean that **we are confined to talking about the way we observe the world. We would for ever be denied the possibility of saying anything meaningful about a world that was not being observed – the world as it might be in itself.** Einstein, as we have said, was among those who could never accept this limitation. Eighty years from his famous arguments with Bohr, we seem to be no closer to a resolution. Perhaps we never shall be.” Source: OpenLearn. Open Learn University.

The Gospels

In our estimation there are few people who know more about the earliest organization of New

Testament texts than Dom Henry Wansbrough, O.S.B., M.A., S.T.L., L.S.S., a celebrated biblical scholar, member of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Oxford, and the General Editor of The New Jerusalem Bible, from which all our biblical notations are taken. We will insert a paragraph here from his wonderful book *Introducing the New Testament*:

“It is significant for what would become the gospels that from the earliest times the memories of Jesus were always understood against the background of scripture. This is evident both in the first two accounts of evangelization (Lk. 24.27; Acts 8.35) and in Paul’s memorized text (the text stresses that the

events were ‘according to the scriptures’, 1 Cor. 15.3 and 4); it will be reflected in the gospels. Memorization was extremely important in education at that time, when books were rare and expensive, whole passages being memorized for use as examples of style. It has been suggested that, when the Twelve thought it would not be right for them ‘to neglect the word of God so as to give out food’ (Acts 6.2), **they were unwilling to put aside their work of garnering and developing the traditions about Jesus.** The teachers in the early Christian communities (Rom. 12.7; 1 Cor. 12.28–9, etc) will also no doubt have engaged in this process. Our earliest Christian writers tell of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis at the end of the first century, eagerly listening to the traditions about Jesus from the elders or those who had known the Twelve, and – a few years later – of Polycarp of Smyrna passing on what he had learned from John ‘concerning the Lord, his mighty works and his teaching’ (Eusebius, H.E. 3.39.3; 5.20.4). At some stage it must have been thought appropriate that such traditions should be gathered together, and this is how the gospels came to be written.”

Wansbrough, Henry, (2015) *Introducing the New Testament* (pp. 37-39). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

What is important about this insertion is that much of the material about Jesus’ pronouncements that was gathered were from people who knew the Apostles or others once removed. It would be difficult to believe that even the most severe critic or skeptic would think the bulk of the material false, or “fake-news” rather than the good-news the gospels brought to the world about the Kingdom of God. One would hope that modern scholarship, secular or otherwise would at least be as honest in terms of its goals as the gospels. In much of our reading lately we find a great bias against spirituality and religion. Faith in

God is under siege by the people who have none. One is reminded of Anselm's remark: *"For I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe-that unless I believe I shall not understand."*

A case for "faith."

What exactly is faith? Is it a thought process? Is it an abstraction? Is it a personal bias against ignorance or a leap into the unknown? In every human being there is the potential to know what is essentially true because "truth" has a direct relationship to reality, some say: the really-real. Knowing what is essentially real or actual can be acted upon with a greater degree of certainty; however, nothing in reality's sphere can demand absolute certainty, unequivocal surety. Everything in reality is in a state of flux. (continuous change) Change is the "actuality." As Aristotle says: "There are two imperishable entities: *motion* and *time*. If time were created, then there must have been *no* time before the creation, but the very concept of "before" necessitates the concept of time." So we suppose there is a "forever" according to the philosopher. What then is the "ex nihilo" out of which everything came to be? Was Lemaître's primeval atom eternal or could Lemaître's primeval atom be called The Mind of God?

There is a wonderful quote from St. John Henry Newman in the *The Grammar of Assent*: *"That there are cases, in which evidence, not sufficient for a scientific proof, is nevertheless sufficient for assent and certitude, is the doctrine of Locke, as of most men. He tells us that belief, grounded in sufficient probabilities, "rises to assurance;" and as to the question of sufficiency, that where propositions "border near on certainty,"*

then we assent to them as firmly as if they were infallibly demonstrated.”

Can this really be counted as “true” faith? “Sufficient probabilities” usually leaves occasional lingering doubt. Can’t true faith simply be absolute trust in the truth of God, through Christ in the Spirit, in his church and in us? Unfortunately in an imperfect world there’s a lot of equivocating going on this side of paradise. We suspect that “true” faith is reserved for the most innocent and the living saints among us. Most of us hope to recognize the grace of God that continuously flows our way.

We are a coincidence-of-opposites; trying find the right path leading to the “narrow gate” of *true* faith but burdened with *crucial* means-ends decisions. Every favor for order, every subliminal call for loving kindness and sincerity regarding others by exercising the spirit of good will is actually sharing in the life of God, ie.: grace. Faith *finds* itself in grace. Faith is a human decision to share in the goodness and love of God the Father through the Son in the Spirit. One does not *get* faith, one *makes* an act of faith, reacting to the gift of God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

The source of grace is the spiritual phenomenon of revelation. God revealing himself to humanity in the very nature of creation itself through the process of evolution. The human race has been gifted with the special brain to mind transition and eventually to a union of spirits with the person of Christ. The nearer we are to Christ the nearer we are to the ultimate source of grace. The two “natures” of Christ was the permanent bond between the Trinitarian God and humanity. The saving power of God was made manifest in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and only the grace of God can inform this faith. The preeminence of our reason and will, the

reality of our freedom to choose with informed consciences, allows us to share in the promises of Christ. The world has been totally changed and eternal life offered to all those who hear the Word of God and keep it.

Jesus said: "I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him." (John 14:6)