

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ was perfect God and perfect Man. He “...*became flesh...*”¹ partaking of “...*flesh and blood...*”² and becoming similar in everything to us but “...*without sin.*”³ He **confirmed the Reality of this** by calling Himself “...*the Son of Man...*”⁴ manifesting in this way that He is a descendant of man. **By** adding the article “*the,*” He **revealed** that He is the perfect and pre-**eminent** Man. **In addition,** the title “*Son of David,*”⁵ which is used in the genealogies found in the Gospels,⁶ is not rejected by Christ. During His last entrance into Jerusalem,⁷ He accepted this title **when** the people addressed Him as the descendant of King David **and He used it** as the basis of His argument that, although He is the Son of David, how then **could** David **address** Him “*Lord?*”⁸

It is **of equal importance** to stress that the forth Gospel emphasizes not only the **Divine Nature** of the Word but **also** presents His human **Nature**, **which reveals** Christ **as** being tired, thirsty and asking for water, **being moved to tears**, troubled by the remembrance of death, angry against those who disrespect the Temple of His Father and compassionate **towards** His **Disciples**.

Similarly the Synoptics speak **of** His **Conception** in the Virgin’s Womb,⁹ His **Birth**, **Circumcision**, His **Presentation** on the Fortieth Day in the Temple, as well as His conversations when He was twelve years old with the teachers in the Temple. They present Him hungry, crying, in agony in the **Garden of Gethsemane** and going through all **the aspects of human emotions that** any holy man would **have experienced** in the different **circumstances** of life.

St Peter referred to Him as “*Man of God*” **Who** took up our sins on the **Cross** in His Body. St Paul calls **our Lord the** “...*Man Jesus Christ...*” **the** “...*Man Who will Judge the world in the future...*” “...*born of a woman...*” and “...*taking the form of a servant...*” since “...*He emptied Himself...*” and was tempted in all things **similar to us** but “...*without sin...*” and “...*learned obedience from what He suffered.*”

According to the above Biblical **Teaching**, the **Holy Fathers** of the Orthodox Church proclaimed that **our Lord** Jesus is the Christ, the **Incarnated Son of God**, being both God and Man, **Who** took up in reality the full human **Nature** in all **its aspects such as** hunger, thirst, tiredness, pain, tears **and** sweat but without any sin. For, **at the beginning**, sin did not exist in **the human nature of Adam** before the Fall. And as the

¹ John 1:14.

² Heb. 2:14.

³ Heb. 4:15. Cf. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 129-131. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 77.

⁴ **Matth.** 8:20; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; 13:37, 41; 16:13, 27, 28; 17:9, 12, 25; 18:11; 19:28; 20:18, 28; 24:44; 25:13, 31; 26:2, 24, 45, 63. **Mark** 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62; **Luke** 5:24; 6:5, 22; 7:34; 9:22, 26, 44, 56, 58; 11:30; 12:8, 10, 40; 17:21, 24, 26, 30; 18:8, 31; 19:10; 21:36; 22:22, 48, 69; 24:7. **John** 1:52; 3:13, 14, 16; 4:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 12:23, 34; 13:31.

⁵ **Matth.** 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9. **Mark** 10:47, 48; 12:35. **Luke** 18:38; 20:41

⁶ Matth. 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38.

⁷ Matth. 21:8-11. Mark 11:1-10. Luke 19:28-44. John 12:12-19.

⁸ Matth. 22:41-46. Mark 12:35-37. Luke 20:41-44. Psalm 109(110):1.

⁹ Ware, *Way*, pp. 100-103.

first Forefather, Adam was **directly** created by God **without any genetic** parents. Likewise the new Forefather, Christ, **was** conceived **Supernaturally** through the direct **Intervention and Creative Action** of God **because humanity** was **afflicted by sin**. The Lord, being born without **sin**, **lived** without sinning **and thus** had the right to **avoid death** **but instead** He **surrendered** His rights and gave His **Life** as a **Ransom** for the whole world, “...*having the Power to give it up and the Power to receive it back.*” Man was created as a participant of the **Nature** of God and God, through the Incarnation, participates in human nature.¹⁰

The human **Nature** of Christ was rejected by the Docites as well as other Gnostics who believed that **not having a real but an imaginary body**, the Lord dwelled amongst men. They supported the opinion that the Saviour was unable to **assume a** human and material body since matter is the basis of evil and the work of “*an evil Creator.*” St John the Apostle and Evangelist, St Irenaeus, Tertullian, St Hippolytos, St John Chrysostom and many other Holy Fathers defended the Truth **against their heretical teachings**

The teachings of the Docites **uprooted** the **Divine *Economia*** of **the Salvation** of Jesus Christ **because** if He did not **assume** human nature, **He could not rescue** the lost sheep. Arius and Apollinarius rejected the full human **Nature** of Jesus Christ **as** the former **believed** that the **Incarnate Word** was deprived **of** a human soul and that the Word replaced it, becoming the **centre** of His spiritual expressions, **whereas** Apollinarius, based upon the Platonic three-fold elements, **alleged** that the Word took **on a** human body and **an** irrational soul, **although** he denied Christ **had a** mind, which the Word replaced in Him. St Athanasius **the Great** of Alexandria, St Gregory of Nyssa and St Gregory of Nazianzus defended the Truth against the heresy of Apollinarius, which was officially condemned by the 2nd Ecumenical Synod.

The expression of St Gregory of Nazianzus “...*that which cannot be taken up is incurable, that which is united with God, is saved...*” **is classical.**

Essential influences or simple **remnants** of Docetism **are found** in the teachings of 5th Century heresies **of** the Gaianites **who were also referred to as** “*Worshippers of Immortality.*” These heretics believed that the Lord’s **Body** was like ours, **except that** its **Elements** were transformed by the **Power** of the Word. Some of these heretics were misled **into** complete Docetism and were called Actistites. St Anastasio of Sinai and St John of Damascus opposed these heresies.

1. The New Testament Teachings of the Lord’s Humanity

According to the **Holy Gospels**, the title “*the Son of Man*” is used most often. In the Gospels of St Matthew **it** is found (32) thirty two times, **St Mark** (14) fourteen times, **St Luke** (25) twenty five times, **St John** (11) eleven times and (3) three times in the **other** Books of the New Testament.

¹⁰ Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, p. 118.

These verses **emphasise the fact** that the Lord is the descendant of man and the article is used to signify that He is the **Perfect** and most preeminently Man. They also assure us that Christ is “...truly **Incarnated and not by imagination.**”¹¹

In the Gospels and especially in the Synoptics, it is stressed that the Lord is the “*Son of David.*”¹² This title **was used particularly by the people** during Christ’s childhood **as well as** by all **the afflicted who sought His Help**. Although the Lord showed some **reluctance towards** this title **because** it **epitomized the** earthly and ethnic **expectations** of His contemporary Israelites, **He did not refute it**. During Christ’s last **triumphant Entrance into Jerusalem,**¹³ He appeared **to accept** the title and blessed the children who addressed Him as “*the Son of David.*”¹⁴ **He used this title as a basis of proving His Divine Origin by opening the minds of the Israelites so that they would** “... remember the **Promises... which God promised to Abraham and to David that He will raise from their offspring the Christ.**”¹⁵ The Jews awaited the Messiah as the descendant of King David, as **a powerful King and Conqueror** who **would** restore the old glory of the **Royal Throne of King David.**¹⁶

The Holy Apostles presented Christ as being relative to us in everything. St John the **Apostle proclaimed** that “...*the Word became flesh and dwelled among us.*”¹⁷ He also presented Him **as having been** tired from **travelling**, sitting at Jacob’s **Well** to rest and asking **for a drink of water** from the Samaritan woman **in order** to quench His thirst.¹⁸ He presented Him not only **as being** “troubled”¹⁹ before He **surrender to the arresting authorities** but also **as being** “thirsty” **during His Crucifixion.**²⁰ He presented Christ as **enduring** all human **sensations and emotions.** He “...*groaned and was troubled...*” as all men **are at the death** of a beloved friend, as in the case of St Lazaros.²¹ He drove out **and overturned** the tables of the money changers **as well as** the seats of those who sold doves in the Temple.²² He **referred to** Himself as “...*a Man...*” Who spoke “...*the Truth...*”²³ and expressed His **Love** towards His **Disciples.**²⁴

Contrary to the fourth **Holy Gospel**, the three Synoptic **Gospels portray** the Humanity of Jesus Christ. They speak clearly **of His Conception within** the Ever Virgin Mary,²⁵ **His Birth,**²⁶ **His Circumcision,**²⁷ **His Presentation at the Temple**²⁸ and

¹¹ Zigabinos, *To Matthew 8:20*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 129, 293. Cf. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 77-78, 142-147. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 131-132.

¹² **Matth.** 1:1, 6, 21; 3:31; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9, 15; 22:42. **Mark** 10:47, 48; 11:47; 12:35. **Luke** 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4; 3:31; 18:38; 20:41. John 7:42.

¹³ Matth. 21:9.

¹⁴ Matth. 21:16. Mark 11:10. Luke 19:38. John 12:13.

¹⁵ Zigabinos, *To Matthew 1:1*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 129, 117.

¹⁶ Acts 1:6.

¹⁷ John 1:14.

¹⁸ John 4:5-42.

¹⁹ John 12:27; 13:21.

²⁰ John 19:28.

²¹ John 11:33

²² Matth. 21:12. Mark 11:15. Luke 19:45. John 2:15.

²³ John 8:40.

²⁴ John 13:1.

²⁵ Luke 1:35.

²⁶ Matth. 1:25. Luke 2:7.

²⁷ Luke 2:21.

His physical growth.²⁹ At the age of twelve He appeared³⁰ in the Temple, listening and questioning the teachers as a disciple,³¹ “...not teaching, but simply listening...” and “...giving the example to all youth not to be insolent.”³² Appearing to be hungry,³³ “...eating and drinking...” He was accused by the Pharisees of being a “...glutton and a winebibber.”³⁴ Being exhausted from the day’s work,³⁵ our Lord slept on the boat, completely unaware of the storm.³⁶ In the Garden of Gethsemane He was extremely troubled by His approaching Death to such an extent that He literally sweated blood.³⁷ Furthermore, on various occasions, He became indignant, He became angry, He wept, He was compassionate, He was merciful and He truly experienced every sensation and emotion to which any Holy Man would be subjected. He participated in the joy and sadness of His fellow men, never refusing their invitations to sit with them at dinners or wedding feasts. After Christ’s Resurrection He allowed the Apostles to touch and feel His Wounds. Christ is perfect Man only because His Nature is in “Communion” with His Divine Nature - with Perfect God.³⁸

St Peter, addressing the Jews, referred to the Lord as the “...Man from God...” “...Who Himself bore our sins in His own Body on the tree...” so that by His “...stripes we were healed.”³⁹ St Paul assured us that “...One is the Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus...”⁴⁰ Who “...is ready to Judge the living and the dead...”⁴¹ whom He shall raise from the dead. Teaching the Christians of his time, he affirmed that “...since by one man came death, by [one] Man also came the Resurrection of the dead...”⁴² and that the Gift of Grace⁴³ came through one Man - Jesus Christ – as well. According to St Paul the Lord is the Son of God Who was Born from the offspring of David “...according to the flesh...”⁴⁴ and “...Who made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross...”⁴⁵ “...the firstborn among many brethren.”⁴⁶

St John Chrysostom, interpreting Hebrews 2:17, observed that Christ “...had to be made like His brethren...” “...not in imagination nor in image, but in Truth, because that which is ‘like’ cannot Save...” and “...as the children have partaken of

²⁸ Luke 2:22-24.

²⁹ Luke 2:40, 52.

³⁰ Luke 2:42.

³¹ Luke 2:46.

³² Origen, *To Luke 2:46*, in Trempeles, *Dogmatique*, v. II, p. 64.

³³ Matth. 4:2; 12:3; 21:18. Mark 2:25; 11:12. Luke 6:3.

³⁴ Matth. 11:19.

³⁵ John 4:6.

³⁶ Matth. 8:24.

³⁷ Matth. 26:38. John 12:27.

³⁸ Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, p. 118.

³⁹ 1 Peter 2:24. Heb. 9:28. Is. 53:4-5.

⁴⁰ 1Tim. 2:5.

⁴¹ 1 Peter 4:5.

⁴² 1 Corinth. 15:21.

⁴³ Ephes. 2:8.

⁴⁴ Rom. 9:5.

⁴⁵ Phil. 2:7-8.

⁴⁶ Rom. 8:29.

Flesh and Blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same...’’⁴⁷ because “...He was born, nourished, grown, suffered and at the end died. Tempted ‘in all points as we are, yet without sin,’⁴⁸ ‘He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the Author of Eternal Salvation to all who obey Him.’^{49, 50}

The Decree of the 4th Ecumenical Synod

“Pursuantly therefore to the Divine Fathers we all consonantly join voices in teaching outright that we confess one and the same Son or Lord Jesus Christ, perfectly the same in Divinity, and perfectly the same in humanity. Truly a God, and truly a human being, the same (composed) of a soul and body and One Who is at the same time of like Essence with the Father in respect of Divinity, and of like Essence the same with us in respect of humanity, in all respects like us, apart from sinfulness. Though Begotten before the ages out of the Father in respect of Divinity, yet in latter days born out of Mary the Virgin and Theotokos, in respect of humanity, the same for us and for our Salvation. One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten (composed) of two Natures unconfusably, inconvertibly, inseparably identifiable, there being nowhere anything removed or annulled in the difference of the Natures on account of the union, but rather on the contrary the peculiarity of each Nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Substance. Not being divided or parted into two Persons, but (forming) on the contrary one and the same Son and Only-Begotten God Logos, Lord Jesus Christ, precisely as the Prophets formerly had prophesied concerning Him and as He Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, did explicitly teach us, and the Symbol (i.e. the Creed) of the Fathers has imparted the matter to us.’⁵¹

2. The Holy Fathers On Our Lord’s Similarity to Us With the Exception of Sin

According to Holy Scripture the Son of God “...consented to be in the form of a bondservant like His fellow servants...’’⁵² “...having within Him the whole man...’’ “...becoming everything which we have, without sin.’⁵³ In other words **with** body, soul, mind...’’ **He** “...united Himself **to** that which was condemned...’’ “...in order to Sanctify man through Himself...’’ and to **free human** nature from the curse.⁵⁴ “By **Nature and Reality becoming Man, He took up the human nature and all the natural things...’’** “...not receiving another flesh, but that which had suffered.’⁵⁵ Hence “...He took up all the natural motions of man.’’ In other words, **Christ took on** all the illnesses and weaknesses **of** human nature. **However, because the human Nature of Christ does not depend on human will, being completely natural, it is therefore** free of

⁴⁷ Cf. Heb. 2:14.

⁴⁸ Cf. Heb. 4:15.

⁴⁹ Heb. 5:8-7.

⁵⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To Hebrews 2:17*, Homily 5, § 1, in Montfaucon, v. 12, p. 73.

⁵¹ Pedalion, pp. 241, 243. Kefalas, *Catechesis*, p. 259.

⁵² Cf. Phil. 2:7.

⁵³ Cf. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 132-134.

⁵⁴ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 30*, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 109 and 132.

⁵⁵ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About familiarization*, III, 69, 24, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1093.

guilt and sin.⁵⁶ These natural human weaknesses are called “irreproachable passions” being “hunger, thirst, tiredness, pain, tears, mortality, fear, agony, which is the cause of sweat and drops of blood,⁵⁷ the human weakness and the others, which by nature are found in men.”⁵⁸

Christ did not take up sin because His human Nature was “...from the immaculate and spotless Virgin, pure and without the mixing with men...” Conceived by the Holy Spirit, absolutely sinless and Holy from its Conception since the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel when he told the Virgin: “The Holy Spirit will come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest will overshadow thee; therefore, also, that Holy One Who is to be born will be called ‘the Son of God.’”⁵⁹

Christ’s sinlessness does not alienate Him from our relationship because, although He is sinless and was born Supernaturally by the Virgin Mary, He does not cease being true Man, our Brother, being the same in everything as us, bearing the same human nature but being completely without sin. This is understood when we consider that sin is unnatural, nor was it included in our nature by our Creator. Instead sin is the result of the devil’s sowing because at the Offence and afterwards, he deceived the rational nature of man by implanting sinful thoughts and establishing “...the law of sin in the nature of man.”⁶⁰ Since the Lord was sent by His Father into the world in order to restore fallen human nature⁶¹ as another Forefather and as a new Adam, it was natural to assume the human nature that “Adam had sinless from the first Creation” and this, which Adam “...threw into mortality and death...” the Lord will raise “...according to His sinless Nature.”⁶²

So the Word and Son of God did not take up another type of human nature that was different from that which He had created and the same as we have, but a healthier nature, uncorrupted by sin, which presented Him as perfect Man, as Adam had been in Paradise before the Fall.

The first Adam was from the soil of the earth while the second Adam was from Heaven. The first Adam’s creation was from Divine Grace that existed externally and which was not from himself. The second Adam, on the contrary, had Divine Grace within Himself because of the Hypostatic Union. Divine Life came to the human nature of the first man from a Source separate to him, whereas the human Nature of the Lord was received from the Source that was inseparably united with it, similar to members of a body receiving life from the head or branches receiving sustenance from the trunk of the vine to which they are naturally united. Since the human Nature of Christ directly receives from the Source of His Divine Nature with which it is inseparably and Hypostatically united, the Grace that was received was superior to

⁵⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *To Romans*, Homily 13, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 514.

⁵⁷ Luke 22:44.

⁵⁸ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the natural and incontestable passions*, III, 64, 20, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1081.

⁵⁹ Luke 1:35.

⁶⁰ St. Athanasius the Great, *About the incarnation of the Word*, § 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 109. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the natural and incontestable passions*, III, 64, 20, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1081.

⁶¹ St. Symeon, *Euriskomena*, Homily XXXVIII, pp. 179-181.

⁶² St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Apollinarius*, Homily II, § 6 and Homily I, § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 1141 and 1104.

that which the first Adam partook of, such as **the comparison of a great river to a small stream.**⁶³

Concerning the **Supernatural virginal Birth** of the Lord, St John Chrysostom **believed that** “...*the Entrance of our common Lord...*” into our world “...*had to be more decent than that of our own because it was a Royal Entrance.*” It is a common belief that “...*the Lord was born from the womb...*” as it was “...*common to us; that He was born without marriage... was higher than us.*” And as “...*the pregnancy of the Lord was without union...*” it was “...*proclaimed ... more decent than the human nature, in order to be superior...*” to ours. **However, the Holy Father did not explain how this “superiority” took place.**⁶⁴ The full explanation is given by St Irenaeus who observed that if “...*the first Adam had a father and was born from the sperm of a man...*” then it would **have been** only natural **for** the second Adam to have been born from Joseph. If Adam “...*was taken from the earth by God Who formed him...*” it was **appropriate that** “... *the One Who Regenerated him who was formed by God...*” had “...*a similar Birth.*” **The Lord, as the second Forefather and as the new Adam through direct Divine Intervention and Creative Action, had to have a similar birth to that of the first Adam.** It was **appropriate for** a new Creation to occur so that the **Regeneration as well as** the new creation of mankind who **has been** recalled, would be sinless and **perfectly** healthy.⁶⁵ Because this new beginning had to be created within the **Regenerated human race as well as that of** the old Adam, “...*God did not take dust, but made the formation from the Virgin Mary in order not to make a different formation, not different from the one being Saved...*” **and thereby** restoring the fallen man.⁶⁶ “*From a Virgin...*” the Lord “...*took up...*” “...*all which God from the beginning used for the creation of man and made without sin...*” and the **Only Begotten of God** was well pleased “...*in the fullness of His Deity...*” to raise for Himself “...*through natural birth and not to lose the union...*” of “...*the first-type of the formation of man and the making of the new from the womb of the Virgin, in order to achieve the Salvation of men.*”⁶⁷

3. The Lord's Own Will and Authority

Since the new Adam of Grace “...*committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth...*”⁶⁸ **He had** the right to enjoy the same life **without any suffering or pain as that of** Adam before the Fall. Born **of** the Virgin in a condition “...*with the possibility of not dying...*” (“*posse non mori*”), He did not face death **as being unavoidable and necessary as we have to do and although** the Divine Saviour “...*was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, [so] that you, through His poverty, might become rich.*”⁶⁹ Consequently, **surrendering** His rights **that** were offered because of His sinlessness, He became a “...*partaker of our irreproachable passions,*” in order to achieve our **Restoration, having “appropriated”** as the **Incarnated Word** “...*those things of the flesh...*” in order to wipe **them** out “...*and henceforth [for] men not to remain in their*

⁶³ Scheeben, *Les Mystères*, pp. 330-331.

⁶⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, Homily 49, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 54, 416.

⁶⁵ St. Symeon, *Euriskomena*, Homily XXXV, pp. 167-170.

⁶⁶ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 21, § 10, in *B*, v. 5, p. 151.

⁶⁷ St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Apollinarius*, Homily 2, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 1140.

⁶⁸ 1 Peter 2:22. Is. 53:9.

⁶⁹ 2 Corinth. 8:9.

own passions as sinners and lifeless, but according to the *Power of the Word*, to be raised and remain *Eternal and Immortal*.⁷⁰ Hence it is understandable how the Lord's Death was absolutely by His own Will, and it shines light upon the words that He Himself spoke: "I lay down My Life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."⁷¹ These words are not addressed to us who, when we fall "...into the hands of those who wish to kill us, we do not have the power to lay down..." our life "...or not..." "...but without our will they slay us..." whereas the God-man "...had the Power not to lay down His Life..." by abolishing every adversity and hostile power.⁷² These words were also spoken in reference to the "...possibility of not dying..." ("posse non mori"), which through sinlessness would be replaced with True Immortality. Christ at His glorious Transfiguration had the Power, if He Willed it, to enter into the Glorious Immortality and Theosis (Deification) even without Sacrificing His own Life but then human nature would not have been Saved. Our Lord spoke of this Salvation with the two Prophets, St Moses and St Elias "...who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem..."⁷³ "...speaking among themselves about the Mystery of the Divine Economia of the Incarnation and the Redeeming Suffering on the Cross."⁷⁴ "The Lord being Immortal..." has the Power to make His "...mortal flesh..." Immortal and "...with authority as God..." as well as being the new, sinless Adam "...to depart from the body and again to take it back..." surrendered Himself to death by His own Will for our sake.

Thus the Lord achieved the "...natural and essential..." "...familiarities..." of our nature. He "...became experienced with our ..." "...irreproachable passions..." and the "...personal and relative..." aspects of life. "He took up our personality and, taking our place..." as our Guarantee, He sacrificed His Life willingly "...and became familiar with our curse and abandonment and the rest of these things which are not natural..." for although He was not accursed Himself He became so for us.⁷⁵

4. Those who Renounced the Lord's Humanity and the Holy Fathers who Opposed Them

At the end of the first century various heresies renouncing Christ's Humanity began to surface.⁷⁶ Among these were:

1. Docetism about whom St John the Apostle, Evangelist and Theologian mentions in his 1st Epistle: "Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has

⁷⁰ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, 2 *Apology*, 13, 4, in *B*, v. 3, p. 207. St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, Homily III, § 33, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 393.

⁷¹ John 10:17-18.

⁷² St. John Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 59, 330.

⁷³ Luke 9:31.

⁷⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, in Migne, *P.G.*, 72, 653.

⁷⁵ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About familiarization*, III, 69, 25, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1093.

⁷⁶ St. Ignatius, *To Ephesians*, 7, 1, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 88. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle* 101, in Migne, *P.G.*, 37, 177. St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 4, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 43. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, XII, § 32, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 765. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book I, ch. 27, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 688. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 167. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcianem*, I, 19; IV, 6, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 292 and 397.

come in flesh, is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”⁷⁷ According to them, Christ was simply a higher spirit **who** dwelled among men with an imaginary **but** not a real body. Hence they did not partake of Holy Eucharist because they did not accept that the **Consecrated Bread** is the Body of Christ.

2. Some of the Gnostics based their teachings **on the belief that matter opposes the spirit** because of the evil **that** exists in matter. **Consequently they** did not accept that the Redeemer was able to take up material flesh, which is the basis of evil. Thus they were led to Docetism and believed that the Body of Christ was a deceptive body and not real. (Marcion⁷⁸ and Basilides⁷⁹) Others **ascribed** a celestial and **Heavenly Body** to Christ. (Apelles and Ualentinus⁸⁰)

3. St Ignatius the Theophoruos opposed **their beliefs** in his writings. Tertullian **also** wrote special **articles criticising** them as **did** St Irenaeus, St Hippolytos and many other Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries.⁸¹

The fact that these heretical beliefs are without solid **foundations**, **has** been **proved** by Biblical narrations **concerning the Death as well as** the Life of Jesus Christ **in general**. **Our** Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was “...*conceived by the Virgin Mary...*”⁸² and “...*came from the Virgin’s flesh...*”⁸³ according to the **Testimonies of the Angel** who assured the Virgin Mary that she would “... *conceive in the womb and bring forth a Son...*”⁸⁴ and **who** appeared in St Joseph’s dream **declaring** “...*for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*”⁸⁵ St Paul **also stated** that Christ was “...*born of a woman...*”⁸⁶ thus sealing the mouths of those who say that Christ passed through the Virgin **as through a channel**.

These heretics contradict their own teachings, **for**, if they accept the **Birth**, they must also accept that the Lord took flesh and blood **from the Virgin Mary** because birth and flesh are **so** closely related. Furthermore, flesh **cannot** exist without birth, nor can **birth occur** without flesh.⁸⁷ **Thus**, if they do not accept that the Lord took up flesh from the Virgin then “...*what is the purpose of the womb?*”⁸⁸ **It would be unnecessary for** “...*His descent in Mary. For what was dwelling in her, if He was not to be conceived by her?*”⁸⁹ They also contradict the teachings of the **Prophets** that the Christ **would** be from the offspring of King David. Now, “*If Christ came through a pipe,[channel] how is He from the root of Jesse? How [is He the]rod? How [is He the] Son of Man? How [did] Miriam become a mother? How [is He] from the*

⁷⁷ 1 John 4:3.

⁷⁸ Cf. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book I, ch. 27, §§ 2-4, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 97-98.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, *Heresies*, book I, ch. 24, § 3, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 92-93

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, *Heresies*, book I, ch. 1-10, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 44-66.

⁸¹ Tertullian *De carne Christi* and *Adversus Marcionem*. Mogilas, I, 38, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 612.

⁸² St. Ignatius, *To Ephesians*, 18, 2, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 92.

⁸³ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 4, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 43.

⁸⁴ Luke 1:31.

⁸⁵ Matth. 1:20.

⁸⁶ Gal. 4:4.

⁸⁷ Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, ch. 1, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 799.

⁸⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 4, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 43.

⁸⁹ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 22, §§ 1 and 2, in *B*, v. 5, p. 152. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 252-253.

offspring of David? How [did] the Word become flesh? How [is it that] St Paul speaks in Romans: that Christ is from (the Jews) according to the flesh?”⁹⁰

St Ignatius the Theophoros, opposing Docetism, proclaimed that “...our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary according to God’s Plan, both from the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit. He was **Born and Baptised...**”⁹¹ by St John the Baptist in order “...to fulfill all **Righteousness by Him.**”⁹² **Moreover** “...He was truly nailed in the flesh for us under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch...” “...and He truly **Suffered as He truly Raised Himself - not as certain unbelievers say, that He suffered in appearance only.**”⁹³ “For if these things were done by our Lord in appearance only, then I am in chains in appearance only.”⁹⁴ “But if, as some atheists (that is, unbelievers) say, He suffered in appearance only (while they exist in appearance only!), why am I in chains?”⁹⁵ And **he urged:** “Be deaf, therefore, whenever anyone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, **Who was of the family of David, Who was the Son of Mary; Who really was born, Who both ate and drank; Who really was persecuted under Pontius Pilate, Who was crucified and died while those in Heaven and on earth and under the earth looked on; Who, moreover, really was Raised from the dead when His Father Raised Him up, Who – His Father, that is – in the same way will likewise also Raise us up in Christ Jesus who believe in Him, apart from Whom we have no True Life.**”⁹⁶

Tertullian, referring to the details of the Annunciation of the Theotokos and the **Birth**, the worship of the three **Wise Men** from the east, the **Circumcision** and the **Presentation** in the Temple, **proclaimed** the historic reality of the **Conception** of the Lord in the womb of the Virgin and all that followed His **Birth.**⁹⁷

St Irenaeus correctly observed that if the Lord did not receive anything from **the Ever Blessed Theotokos**, then “...He did not receive from the earth’s food, from which the body is nourished...” **and** neither would He **have become** hungry after forty days of fasting in the desert “...since the body was demanding food...” **nor would** the Apostle have written: “Jesus, tired from the journey, sat...” besides Jacob’s **Well**; **nor would** the Lord **have** shed tears “...on Lazarus; neither **would He have** sweated blood; neither would He **have** said ‘My soul is troubled...’” **and** when His **Side** was pierced **neither** would blood and water **have** come out.⁹⁸

St Cyril of Jerusalem, criticising the followers of Docetism and referring to the events of the Lord’s **Conception** and **Birth** **commented:** “Even if the heretics contradict the **Truth**, they are criticised by the Holy Spirit; the **Power** which overshadowed the Virgin will be angry; Gabriel will be replaced on the Day of Judgement; the place of the **Manger**, which received the Master, will disgrace them; the **Shepherds** who were then evangelized, bear witness and the army of **Angels**

⁹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 4, § 3, in Migne, P.G., 57, 43.

⁹¹ St. Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*, 18, 2, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 92.

⁹² Cf. Matth. 3:15. St. Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans*, 1, 1, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 110.

⁹³ St. Ignatius, *To Smyrnaeans*, 1, 2 and 2, 1, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 110.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, *To Smyrnaeans*, 4, 2, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 111.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, *To Trallians*, 10, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 100.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, *To Trallians*, 9, 1-2 in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 110.

⁹⁷ Tertullian, *De cane Christi*, ch. II, in Migne, P.L., 2, 800.

⁹⁸ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 22, §§ 1 and 2, in *B*, v. 5, p. 152. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 252-253.

glorifying and singing.”⁹⁹ Referring to the Presentation of the Lord on the fortieth day after His Birth, he concluded: “Christ saying: ‘Why are you seeking to kill Me, a Man Who has told you the Truth’¹⁰⁰ should seal their mouths, those who oppose the Humanity (of the Lord). For they oppose Him Who said ‘Feel Me and see for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.’”^{101 102}

St John of Damascus remarked: “...if by appearance was achieved those things by Christ, then the Mystery of the *Economia* was a put-on and *scheme*; and in appearance and not in reality was the Lord Incarnated; and in appearance and not in reality we have been Saved.”¹⁰³ “...Our faith then is false and an *illusion* of everything in which we hoped from Christ.”¹⁰⁴ “...For, if the Incarnation was a *fantasy*, then a *fantasy* was the *Salvation*.”

According to St Irenaeus, as through man who was defeated, our kind fell into death, likewise again through Man Who is victorious, we will return to Life. And as death ruled over us through man, likewise again we, through Man, will rule over death.¹⁰⁵ If Christ was not true Man and if He had not really suffered then He appears to have deceived us when He urged us to turn our other cheek to him who strikes us on the one. And if He deceived those who slapped Him on His Face by appearing to be what He was not, likewise now He deceives us by urging us to suffer those things which He has not suffered Himself.¹⁰⁶

St John Chrysostom stated that if “...Christ came as through a *channel*...” from the Ever Blessed Virgin, receiving nothing from her, then His flesh “...was another...” and “...not from our dough...” and He then ceases carrying the lost sheep on His shoulders.¹⁰⁷

St Cyprian assured us that if Christ, Who carried all of us and took up our sins, had remained in Heaven, then this alone would have been enough to cancel our Salvation. Furthermore, if we wanted to believe that the Lord was Crucified and Raised in appearance only and not in reality, then He would have not really died and we would have been deprived of the most precious Price of Salvation. If Christ was merely a phantom, then He would not have had the same essence of a Body with which He could offer for our bodies.¹⁰⁸

The Fathers of the Orthodox Church used Biblical verses against Docetism such as: “The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from Heaven...”¹⁰⁹ and “...God ... by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful

⁹⁹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, XII, §§ 32 and 33 in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 765 and 768.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. John 8:40.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Luke 24:39.

¹⁰² St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, IV, § 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 468.

¹⁰³ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About mortality and corruption*, III, 72, 28, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1100.

¹⁰⁴ Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, ch. V, § 3, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book V, ch. 21, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 1179. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 395.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 18, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 936. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 242.

¹⁰⁷ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 4, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 43.

¹⁰⁸ St. Cyprian, *Epistle* 58, 13.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Corinth. 15:47.

flesh, on account of sin... condemned sin in the flesh.”¹¹⁰ St John Chrysostom **noted that**: “...the Lord from **Heaven**...” does not mean “...the nature, but the perfect **Life**.” St. Gregory of Nazianzus also stated that the human **Nature** of Christ, being in fullness the same **as** that of the first Adam before he sinned, **by** saying “...from **Heaven**...” we must understand that this reveals the perfect union of the human and **Divine Natures of Christ**.¹¹¹

Concerning the second verse, Tertullian observed that Christ was “...in the likeness of the flesh of sin...” not because He took **up flesh** in appearance **only** and **therefore did not have a true Body**, but through “...the likeness of the sinful flesh...” **he** wanted to signify that the **Flesh** of Christ was **sinless**.¹¹² The term “...sinful flesh...” was used “...because he spoke about sin. For Christ did not have **sinful** flesh but (although) similar to our sinful nature, (He was) **sinless**, and in nature the same **as** ours.”¹¹³ In other words, he did not simply **say** “...in the likeness of flesh...” **but instead** “...in the likeness of sinful **flesh**, in order for us to learn...” that “...the likeness’ was used...” because our Saviour was free “...from all sin...” **and He only took up** “...the human nature, which was ruled by sin, but (He) was not **bound** by its bondage.”¹¹⁴

Didymus the Blind, referring to St Paul’s words, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”¹¹⁵ **also used** another Biblical verse to oppose the teachings of Docetism **by** observing that “...from this **Apostolic phrase** are cast out...” as heretics “... those who criticize the **Flesh** of the Master from **Heaven**, proclaiming that **It was not human**...” because if the Master’s **Flesh** was not human, how **could** we become **Its** members?¹¹⁶

5. Those Who Renounced the Integrity of the Lord’s Human Nature and Those Who Opposed Them

If the Docites **completely** renounced the reality of Christ’s human **Nature**, Arius (+336), **like** Apollinarius of Laodicea (+ about 390), renounced its integrity.

Arius supported the opinion that “...instead of the inner man, that is, the soul, the Word **became in the flesh**.”¹¹⁷ The **Incarnated Word** was deprived of a human soul since He replaced it and was the **Source** of the spiritual expressions and life. Arius believed that **by** introducing such teachings, he would prove that the Word was created.

Apollinarius, although agreeing to the Nicene Creed and enjoying **the eminent** respect and fame among **Orthodox Theologians**, **supported the opinion** based on the **Platonic Trilogy**, (body, soul and spirit = man). **He believed** that when the Word was

¹¹⁰ Rom. 8:3.

¹¹¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 101 to Cledonius*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 37, 176-189.

¹¹² Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, ch. XVI, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 826.

¹¹³ St. John Chrysostom, *To Romans*, Homily 13, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 515.

¹¹⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *About the incarnation of the Word*, I, in Migne, *P.G.*, 75, 1429.

¹¹⁵ 1 Corinth. 6:15.

¹¹⁶ Didymus the Blind, *About the Trinity*, III, 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 849.

¹¹⁷ St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Apollinarius*, II, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 1136, 1137.

Incarnated He took up only body and irrational soul, the mind or spirit **being unnecessary** for Christ, since the Word was united to the **Divine Mind**, **replacing** the soul or the human mind. Apollinarius' intention was not to **diminish** the God-Man Jesus but rather to honour Him, believing that through his teachings he was supporting and strengthening the **Unity of the God-Man Person of the Lord and His sinlessness**; **believing** that "*Nature*" and "*Person*" are inseparable and that consequently he who accepts two perfect **Natures** in Christ, must **also** accept two **Persons** in Christ. **Furthermore**, he also supported the **belief** that the **Incarnated Word** has "*...one Hypostasis and one Person.*" He taught that the Word of God has "*...not two Natures, but one Incarnated Nature...*" **merely** because "*...two perfects cannot make one.*"¹¹⁸

St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria (*Against Apollinarius, books I and II*): **and others such as** St Gregory of Nyssa (*Homily objecting to the teachings of Apollinarius*) and St Gregory **the Theologian** of Nazianzus (*To Cledonius Epistle 101, and Homily 51*) **through their various writings contested** the heresy of Apollinarius, which was **eventually** condemned by the 2nd Ecumenical Synod. (381 A.D.) The opinion of the **Holy Fathers** was supported by St Cyril of Alexandria as follows: "*He did not merely take up Flesh without rational soul, He is truly Born from a woman and is revealed Man, He Who Lives and Exists and is Co-eternal with God the Father, God the Word Who took up the likeness of a servant, and is as in the Deity perfect, likewise in humanity is perfect, not only being from Deity and flesh one Christ and Lord and Son, but from two perfect (Natures), humanity and Deity, in one and the same united paradoxically.*"¹¹⁹

Apollinarius tried to find a basis for his heresy in the verse of St John's **Holy Gospel**: "*...And the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us...*"¹²⁰ in which **he explained** that "*...many times the whole is expressed through the part, and by the soul, the whole man is called, by the flesh, the whole animal is expressed.*"¹²¹ **Similarly** in the following verses: "*...As you gave Him Authority over all flesh...*"¹²² "*...For all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they are Mine: the soul that sins, it shall die...*"¹²³ "*...And the Glory of the Lord shall appear, and all flesh shall see the Salvation of God...*"¹²⁴ and "*...All flesh will bless His Holy Name.*"¹²⁵ It is obvious **from** these verses the word "*flesh*" manifests the whole man.

To the quibble of the Apollinarians, according to which in Christ "*...two Perfects cannot be contained...*" in other words, the perfect God and the perfect Man, St Gregory of Nazianzus answered: "*Where is the perfect mind of man or Angel...*" **when compared** to the **Deity** "*...in order that the other can be cast out by the Supreme One?*" Our mind is perfect **for ruling the** soul and body but compared to God, it is "*...a servant and a pawn but not co-princely nor equal.*" Moreover, the **inseparability**

¹¹⁸ Trempeles, *Dogmatique*, v. II, p. 74.

¹¹⁹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *About the incarnation of the Word*, ch. I, in Migne, *P.G.*, 75, 1220.

¹²⁰ John 1:14.

¹²¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *About the incarnation of the Word*, ch. XVIII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 75, 1448.

¹²² John 17:2.

¹²³ Ezek. 18:4.

¹²⁴ Is. 40:5. Luke 3:6. Is. 52:10.

¹²⁵ Psalm 144(145):21.

that applies to the material and physical, does not apply to the Bodiless and Intellectual.¹²⁶

St Gregory opposed another argument that the Apollinarians presented whereby “...our mind is condemned...” and was therefore not fit to be received by the Incarnated Word. Their belief that the flesh was condemned was far worse than their belief that the mind is condemned because if “...the worst was received...” by the Word “...in order to be Sanctified through the Incarnation...” would not the Supreme Mind be received so as to be Sanctified through the Incarnation? If the flesh which came from dust “...was mixed and a new dough was made...” which consists of the Image of God in us, would it not be mixed with God in order to be Deified through the Divinity? Moreover, because the mind in us is the Image of God, being closer to God and more susceptible than that of the body, it is easier to be united with the Word.

The Apollinarians ended up in madness by insisting on tying God to flesh, as they believed that the mind was the middle wall that prevented the true union of the two Natures of Christ. On the contrary, “...the Mind...” (the Word) Who was Incarnated is closer and more relative “...to the mind...” of man. Furthermore, the mind that “mediated” between the “Divinity” and humanity is absolutely simple, spiritual and of the flesh. Accordingly the Bodiless God is united in a perfect manner with the flesh-bearing human nature.

St. Gregory observed: “That which cannot be received and is incurable, when united to God is Saved.”¹²⁷

Tertullian noted that “...in order for Christ to make the soul (of man) whole and healthy, He received a perfect human soul within Him...” and “...the soul (of man) would not have been healed if Christ had not taken up a perfect human soul. Consequently our soul would not have been freed because the soul of Christ is not of flesh, but our soul is.”¹²⁸

St Irenaeus clearly proclaimed that if the Incarnated Word did not become whatever we are, then Christ would not have accomplished anything important for which He suffered and endured.¹²⁹ Neither would He truly have saved us by His own Blood, if He had not become truly human.¹³⁰ Consequently, in order for the Lord to Save the human race He took “...upon His shoulders all the lost sheep, not only the sheep’s skin.” In reality, what makes man “an intellectual sheep” is his mind. Should this have been absent, we would not have had an intellectual existence but merely “a skin” of an intellectual sheep. However, Christ “...had not left anything of our nature which He did not take up...” and “...in order to make whole the Man of God, He mixed the soul and body with the Deity.” If truthfully only “...half of Adam sinned...” He would have taken up that half because “...the half would have had need of

¹²⁶ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 101 to Cledonius*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 37, 176-189.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, *Epistle 101 to Cledonius*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 37, 176-189.

¹²⁸ Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, ch. X, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 818.

¹²⁹ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 22, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 956. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 252-253.

¹³⁰ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book V, ch. 2, § 1; ch. 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 1124. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 363-364 and 371-372.

Salvation.” Since the whole of Adam sinned, “*all*” with the body and the mind “...in all He [Christ] is *Born and United and thus Saves.*” It was so necessary for the *Incarnated Word to take up* our mind, as the mind “...not only sinned in Adam, but first suffered, as the doctors say about the ill.” For the mind “...received the *Commandment...*” from God although it thought about and decided to commit the *Offence* “...and did not *keep the Commandment.*” Since Adam dared to disobey the *Commandment* “...he also needed *Salvation...*” and exactly for this reason “...it was taken up...” by the Word Who, as He partook of flesh “...for the flesh which was condemned...” and a living soul “...for the soul...” likewise He partook of the mind “...for the mind.”¹³¹

Finally, *St Gregory answered* the argument of the Apollinarians that “...the *Deity was enough, instead of the mind...*” and that it was possible for God “... without the mind to *Save man...*” He accepted the possibility of Christ *Saving* mankind even “...without flesh, and only through His Will, as everything He made [was] without body.” He then added that since the Word was well pleased to be *Incarnated*, He also took up our mind. For “...the *Deity only with the flesh is not a full man...*” but neither with “...only the soul...” is He fully *Man*. In fact, neither with “both,” - in other words, flesh and soul - “without mind,” is He completely *Man because* the mind of man is more than the flesh and the living soul. He believed that to truly benefit from the *Incarnation, it is necessary to* “...keep the man...” whole “...and mix the *Deity.*”¹³² *St Cyril of Alexandria concluded that* if “...the *Nature which was taken up by the Word did not have a human mind...*” then He Who fought against the devil was not a *True Man*, but God. However, in the event of God having gained the *Victory*, man would then not have benefitted at all from this *Victory, resulting in* the devil *boasting* that “...he was struggling with God and by God he was defeated.”¹³³

6. The Worshippers of Incorruptibility and the Struggle Against Them

One finds relics or influence of Docitism in the teachings of the Gaianites who were named after their first *Bishop*, Gaianos, while others referred to them as “*Worshippers of Incorruptibility*” or “*Julianites,*” being named after their most important Theologian, Julianos, Bishop of Alicarnassos.

Clement the Alexandrian, although accepting that Christ had a real *Body, Blood* and a human *Nature that could suffer,*¹³⁴ also considered it ridiculous to believe that “...the *Body of Christ demanded as body, the essential needs.*” His belief that although the Lord had no need of food He “...ate not for sake of the body...” but for the sake of those who were with Him, in order for them not to “...believe that He was in appearance” only. He also believed that Christ was truly without any “...emotion of suffering or pleasure or sadness.” Nevertheless Clement proclaimed that “...the *Word, the only One Who is both God and Man...*” benefitted us as God and as Man.¹³⁵

¹³¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, II, in Migne, P.G., 45, 545.

¹³² St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 101 to Cledonius*, in Migne, P.G., 37, 183.

¹³³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *About the incarnation of the Word*, XV, in Migne, P.G., 75, 1444.

¹³⁴ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, III, 17, in Migne, P.G., 8, 1205, 1208. Ibid, *Stromata*, VI, 19; VII, 17, in Migne, P.G., 9, 292, 553. Ibid, *Pedagogus*, I, 2, 6, in Migne, P.G., 8, 252, 301.

¹³⁵ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, VI, 9, in Migne, P.G., 9, 292. Ibid, *Stromata*, III, 7; *Protrepticus*, III, 1, in Migne, P.G., 8, 1161, 61 and 557.

Worshippers of Incorruptibility believed that the **Body** of the Lord was the same as ours and that “...it was not by nature without suffering and incorruptible.” They also believed that the **Body** became **free of** suffering and incorruptible “...through the *Union with God the Word.*” Some of these heretics supported the opinion that the body of the **Ever Blessed** Virgin Mary “...was transformed and was changed from its nature by the *Power of the Word...*” and thus the nature **that** was received from her womb “...was different...” **to ours because** the virgin blood **was** changed **and** “...the *Flesh of the Lord became Incorruptible.*”

Generally speaking, they believed that the **Flesh** of Christ “...at the time of *Conception, as soon as He touched the virgin flesh and blood, what was Conceived was made Incorruptible...*” because it was **impossible for** the **Body** of Christ, rather than **abandoning** the corruptible nature, **to be** “... united with the *Incorruptible Word.*” **In addition, they** believed that Christ suffered in the flesh **although** “... not necessarily by *nature, but because of the Economia of the Word Who allowed (Himself) to suffer.*” **Despite accepting** that Christ suffered “...hunger and thirst and tiredness...” they did not believe that He suffered these “...in the same manner as we do.”

There **was** also another group of Incorruptible-Docetism under Ammonios who believed that the **Body** of the Lord was not **created immaterial as the Divine Essence**, and hence they were called “*Actistites.*”¹³⁶ The Emperor of Byzantium, Julianos, wanted to enforce the heresy of Incorruptible-Docetism upon the Orthodox Empire¹³⁷ but his death prevented more serious problems **for** the Church.

As **it is apparent** in the Homily of Eusebios of Thessalonica against someone by the name of Andrew, of which part is saved in the Myriobiblos of St Photios,¹³⁸ among the Incorruptible-Docetis, some believed that Adam was formed “...*Incorruptible and Immortal by nature and without suffering.*” Based on this opinion, one concludes that Christ’s **Body** as the second Adam, “...was mortal by *Nature and could suffer, but through the Divine Grace it was preserved Immortal and without suffering until the Offence stripped it.*”¹³⁹ The body of the **Forefather [Adam]** had the possibility of **Immortality** and the susceptibility of **Incorruptibility** (“*posse non mori*”), but by nature it was mortal and after the moral perfection of Adam, it would have become **Incorruptible**. According to the Orthodox **Teachings**, if we accept that the **Body** of Christ was **Incorruptible**, then it ceases to be **of** the sameness (*homoousion*) **as** ours, which is corruptible.¹⁴⁰ It is obvious that we have a **slight objection to** this answer **when** we **recall** the words of St Paul **stating** that at the **General Resurrection** “...we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last Trumpet. For the Trumpet will sound, and the dead will be **Raised Incorruptible**, and we shall be changed. For this

¹³⁶ Leon Byzantius, *Homily 2, Against Impershable-docites*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 86, 1325.1328-1329. St. John of Damascus, *About heresies*, § 84, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 756. Timothy the Presbyter, *About those who enter the Church*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 86, 44.

¹³⁷ Euagrius Ponticus, book VI, ch. 39, in Migne, *P.G.*, 86, 2781.

¹³⁸ Eusebios of Thessalonica, in St. Photios, ch. 162, in Migne, *P.G.*, 103, 452 and 453.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 162, in Migne, *P.G.*, 103, 452.

¹⁴⁰ Leon Byzantius, *Comments from the voice of Theodorus ... Act X*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 86, 1260. St. Anastasius of Sinai, *Guide*, ch. 23, in Migne, *P.G.*, 89, 295. St. John of Damascus, *About heresies*, 84, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 756.

*corruptible must put on Incorruption, and for this mortal must put on Immortality.*¹⁴¹ Consequently, that the Body of Christ after His Resurrection appears to be Incorruptible and Immortal, as our bodies will become after the General Resurrection, does not mean that before His Resurrection His Holy Body was Incorruptible, neither does it mean that if it was Incorruptible, it was substantial (*homoousion*) to our body.

The abovementioned heretics in order to support their teachings used the Biblical verse “...for *Thou* will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will *Thou* allow *Thy* Holy One to see corruption.”¹⁴² Julianos of Alicarnassos believed that the term “*corruption*” meant complete dissolution, and supported the opinion that if the Lord did not know corruption, He did not know the way that leads to it, which is through corruption. We must accept that His Flesh, from the moment of its union with the Word, became Incorruptible.¹⁴³

But this verse, according to the God-inspired interpretation of St Peter, was fulfilled in the Body of Christ after His Death.¹⁴⁴ According to the observations of Didymus the Blind, “... the *Body of Jesus* did not see corruption manifest, not that He did not die; for He had died and was placed in the Tomb; but it means that it did not decompose.”¹⁴⁵ Obviously death is already corruption. Hence St John of Damascus, distinguishing between the two meanings of corruption, observed that “...the term ‘*corruption*’ has two meanings.” It means the irreproachable human passions such as “...hunger, thirst, tiredness, the perforation of the nails, the death; in other words the separation of the soul from the Lord’s *Body*, for He took up everything willingly.” It also means “...the corruption and the perfect dissolution of the elements of which the body is composed of.” This [physical] corruption “...the Lord’s *Body* had not experienced...” according to the Prophecy of King David.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ 1 Corinth. 15:51-53.

¹⁴² Psalm 15(16):10.

¹⁴³ Severi Antiocheni, *Adversus Julianum Halicarnassensem*, in Mai, *Spicilegium romanum*, p. 192.

¹⁴⁴ Acts 2:31.

¹⁴⁵ Didymus the Blind, in Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. II, p. 80.

¹⁴⁶ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About mortality and corruption*, III, 72, 28, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1100.