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Christ Creating: A Postmodern Consideration

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CHRIST CREATING

A POSTMODERN CONSIDERATION

... and there is one Lord Jesus Christ
through whom all things come and through whom we exist
(1 Cor 8,6)

Did the Word of God becoming flesh affect non-human as well as human nature? Modern theologies of the Incarnation often have emphasized Jesus as God's salvific entry into human history rather than into cosmic creation. However widespread love for non-human nature and ecological concern engender a theological question about the Incarnation and all of creation. Does traditional Christian belief in the divine act of creation (active creation) and correlative dependence of the total, on-going created effect on the Creator (passive creation) allow for conceiving the Incarnation as a new kind of divine immanence in and solidarity with the whole of creation and not simply with all those of a human nature? "Christ Creating: A Postmodern Consideration" proposes that the Incarnation affects the human bodiliness of Jesus so as to begin to cause a new physical universe in a way that exploration of Deep Incarnation has not discussed¹.

I. POSTMODERN WORDS/WORLDS: "GREEN" TO "ECOLOGICAL"

Before Christological inquiry I'd like to explain why D. Edwards' essay in this volume and his *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* have led me to revise the vocabulary in an earlier version of this essay. I will drop "green" in favor of "ecological"². Why? In a nutshell, to highlight the

1. N.H. GREGERSEN, *The Idea of Deep Incarnation: Biblical and Patristic Resources* (in this volume), and ID., *The Cross of Christ in an Evolutionary World*, in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 40 (2001) 192-207. See C. SOUTHGATE, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil*, Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox, 2008; C. DEANE-DRUMMOND, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom*, Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 2009; and E. JOHNSON, *An Earthy Christology: For God So Loved the Cosmos*, in *America* 200 (2009), no. 12, 27-30.

2. D. EDWARDS, *Creation Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Tapping into the Long Tradition* (in this volume), and ID., *Ecology at the Heart of Faith: The Change of Heart That Leads to a New Way of Living on Earth*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 2006, 2008.

religion/science dialogue presupposed by and informing the green strand in the skein of postmodernity. "Going green" is a welcome postmodern shift in actions, affects, thoughts, decisions, organizations, and institutions toward a more respectful, less exclusively instrumental relationship with non-human nature. But is the language of "green" able to capture its own distinctive way of being postmodern?

The "Green Movement can be regarded as *postmodern* in its generally sceptical attitude toward progress"³. In small domestic and local practices, if not always in theoretical arguments on behalf of exerting political pressure, a postmodern, green habit of mind and heart contests the "logic of development inscribed in the tradition of European thought" that has been central to modernity yet not limited in scope, of course, to Europe⁴. According to this disputed logic of development, "the history of thought is a progressive 'enlightenment' which develops through an ever more complete appropriation and reappropriation of its own foundations"⁵. An underlying, green habit of mind and heart likewise is postmodern in its piecemeal, practical criticism of and movement past the West's "grand narrative" of progress and ever-increasing Enlightenment enabling humans to conquer ever more completely the natural world through science and technology.

That resistance to modernity's "grand narrative" has an affinity with another major current in postmodernism much less favorable toward reliance on science and technology. A tradition of interpretation stemming from M. Heidegger likewise and before the Green Movement challenged a modern, Western self-understanding. Nonetheless, and without denying the significance for postmodernity of Heidegger's critique of the quartet of humanism, anthropocentrism, metaphysics, and excessive technology, still the green challenge to the logic of development has not arisen from critiques of a misconceived public supremacy of natural-scientific method as the paradigm for all knowing. In a pragmatic pact with science and technology a green approach consistently has focused on harm done to

3. S. SIM, *Greens (Green Movement)*, in ID. (ed.), *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought*, New York, Routledge, 1999, 264-265, p. 265; originally *The Icon Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought*, Cambridge, Icon Books, 1998; most recently *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, New York, Routledge, 2001.

4. G. VATTIMO, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, trans. J.R. Snyder, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins Press, 1991, p. 2; originally *La fine della modernità*, Milano, Garzanti Editore, 1985. See also G. VATTIMO, *Nihilism and Emancipation: Ethics, Politics, & Law*, trans. S. Zabala, ed. W. McCUAIG, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004; originally *Nichilismo ed emancipazione: Etica, politica, diritto*, Milano, Garzanti Libra, 2003.

5. VATTIMO, *The End of Modernity* (n. 4), p. 2.

non-human nature not to the human subject, and has limited criticism of progress, modernity, anthropocentrism, and technocentric ideals to operational self-understandings and technological practices that heedlessly exploit nature and harm the environment.

Green concerns arise from an eco-crisis that only comes into full view as an inter-related network of planetary conditions on the basis of compiled scientific measurements, findings, and projections. In general, green attitudes, themes, practices, art, architecture, and literature characterized as postmodern do not consolidate into a complete renunciation of modernity that in imitation of modernity imagines itself inaugurating a whole new era in history. Postmodernity is not the next stage after but the complication of modernity. Green skepticism about the narrative of progress, criticism of anthropocentrism, and commitment to the health of Earth take full account of natural, physical conditions studied scientifically. Consequently, the Green Movement is a distinctive postmodern current whose own most apt vocabulary is that of ecology since this language raises to the surface a presupposed dialogue between religion and science in distinction from a presupposed hermeneutical-philosophical analysis of Western culture, however indispensable that too is.

II. THE INCARNATION AND NON-HUMAN NATURE

Historical consciousness need not prevent reconnecting with Chalcedon in seeking to understand the Incarnation in relation to all of creation. A postmodern, ecological Christology need not adopt a presumption that undoubted gains elevate modernity to an Archimedean theological platform from which to problematize Christology in late antiquity as irretrievably other. Nor does reception of modern biblical study lock systematic theology into self-assurance that temporal distance between the biblical context and Chalcedon, between biblical and classical contexts and the present, leave the council an inferior resource anymore than exegesis would inconceivably spurn Scripture as a theological source.

In broad outline it is surely correct that, as A.M. Clifford observed, New Testament creation motifs belong to a reflection on the meaning of Christ in which, "salvation is looked upon as a renewal of the original creation through the saving presence of God in Jesus"⁶. J. Morales similarly sums up the New Testament picture in stating that, "The New

6. A.M. CLIFFORD, *Creation*, in F.S. FIORENZA – J. GALVIN (eds.), *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Vol. 2, Minneapolis, MN, Fortress, 1991, 195-248, p. 209.

Testament texts accept the teachings of the Old on the subject of creation but view and interpret them in a Christological framework”⁷. More recently, although not focused on creation, L. Hurtado identifies the pre-Pauline emergence among strictly monotheistic Jewish followers of Jesus in Jerusalem of “devotion” or reverence for Jesus as somehow associated with divinity, as somehow worthy of reverence heretofore accorded only to the God of Israel Whom Jesus spoke to as “Father”⁸.

Equally remarkable is what Hurtado does not underline, that this reverence for Jesus also somehow involves a link between Jesus and Israel’s God not only as transcendent divinity but also as Creator of all. Recent exegesis of creation themes in the Hebrew Scriptures reinforces the interpretation that the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures construes Israel’s covenant as with a Creator God⁹. The Father, the covenanted God of Israel to Whom Jesus turned in prayer and obedience and in proximity to Whom the earliest Christians placed Jesus in their devotion, is the Creator.

The shift of C. Westermann past G. von Rad’s derivation of creation themes from God’s saving deeds is well known. H.H. Schmid’s step beyond Westermann probably is less familiar. He argues that creation was not only independent from soteriology but was the central concept and overall horizon within which Israel understood salvation and history. The divine act of creation founded “righteousness” as first of all an inherent world or cosmic order that included human relationships ordered by politics and law. Maintaining this original cosmic order by opposing chaos in social and individual existence brought peace (*shalom*) and righteousness (*seddaqah*) to society. Sin damaged creation’s cosmic order. Order had to be re-established by atonement or other means. In this view Israel saw its special history with Yhwh “as the completion and realisation of that creation order”¹⁰.

Then in 1992, unremarked by Paas, R. Murray went beyond Schmid’s argument for a divinely arranged, immanent order in creation. Murray thought there were clues in many scattered references leading not only to Schmid’s conclusion but further, to a cosmic harmony between heaven and earth that had the structure of a covenant joining God and creation.

7. J. MORALES, *Creation Theology*, trans. M. Adams – D. Clearly, Portland, OR, Four Courts Press, 2001, p. 30; originally *El Misterio de la Creación*, Pamplona, Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1994.

8. L. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2003.

9. S. PAAS surveys twenty years of exegesis on creation in the Hebrew Scriptures in *Creation and Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets*, Leiden, Brill, 2003, pp. 1-20.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Murray called this the “cosmic covenant”, that is, a “divinely willed order harmoniously linking heaven and earth” that was broken by human sin, then restored for all of creation in the Creator’s covenant with Noah¹¹.

Whether or not and how the New Testament sustains those specific outlooks within reception of the Hebrew Scriptures on creation is a matter for NT exegesis and studies of the early Church to determine. Hurtado’s work neither verifies nor falsifies the Schmid and Murray interpretations. But he does advert to New Testament texts linking Jesus to divine creation. New Testament texts present Christ’s act or role in creating not as originating but mediating (*diá hou tà pánta* in 1 Cor 8,6) the divine causality formerly attributed to the God of Israel alone. In accord with an historical method he does not explore this agency theologically. He sums up Christ and creation texts (Jn 1,1-3; 1 Cor 8,6; 2 Cor 5,17; Eph 2,15; Col 1,15-20; Heb 1,1-4; Rev 3,14) in reference not to their intrinsic theological meaning and truth but to their function in reflecting early devotion to Jesus.

Commenting on Jn 1,1-3, Hurtado observes that, “[b]y attributing this central role in creation ... to the one through whom redemption comes as well, the text reflects belief in a direct link between redemption and creation”¹². But in methodological principle he passes over discussion of implications of the link¹³. Hurtado interprets Jesus’ agency in creation as attribution by the earliest Christians to celebrate Jesus’ glorious, exalted status¹⁴. Presumably their attribution did not exaggerate or apotheosize Jesus, but the validity of the attribution lies outside Hurtado’s purview. He recognizes but does not expound what must have been the most startling part of veneration for Jesus as divine, namely that Jesus, so evidently human, has a role in creating.

Hurtado does not advert to linking Jesus to God as Creator as the most acute form of the early monotheistic problem arising from devotion to and belief in Jesus as divine. In light of and in response to this problem, the Prologue to John can be read as not simply incorporating a hymn of early high Christology associating Jesus with God but as solving an acute problem introduced by Christian monotheism. The Johannine solution was to affirm and distinguish the pre-existent Word in Jesus, to conceive

11. R. MURRAY, *The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical Themes of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation* (A Heythrop Monograph), London, Sheed & Ward, 1992, p. xx.

12. HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ* (n. 8), p. 368.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 640-641.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 508. See also P.C. BOUTENOFF, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2008, pp. 35-38.

Jesus' humanity as flesh of the Word, to propose the Incarnation. Jesus is the Word/Logos. As Word Jesus mediates the divine creating act. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed installed this in the second article of faith. Edwards too appropriates the Johannine distinction. The pre-existent Word, he notes, has an originating relationship with all that has come to be, "the Big Bang, the primordial hydrogen, star formation, the Milky Way galaxy, planet Earth, bacteria, clams, frogs, and chimpanzees"¹⁵. The meaning of the act of creating by the Logos is that "everything that has come to be in the long history of creation exists only in and through the Word"¹⁶. Edwards does not emphasize this but Jn 1,1-3 also means that the relationship between Word and creation continues after the Incarnation, since the Word made flesh remains an agent in creating all things. All things have a creature/Creator relationship with the Word/Logos become flesh.

Does this relationship have ecological meaning? I think much can be gained by living with and thinking from Chalcedon, as J. Dupuis's fruitful reflections have shown¹⁷. An appropriation of Chalcedon on the two natures of Christ grounds thinking about a zone of further meaning. The hypostatic union makes a difference in the human flesh of Jesus and through it to non-human nature. The theological position known as Deep Incarnation holds that the Incarnation links the flesh of the Word to the whole material universe and to all biological life. The following considerations support that ecotheological theme, first in regard to the uninterrupted act of creating by the Logos in the flesh, and second with reference to the newness of Jesus' flesh as prelude to a coming newness in all flesh.

1. Chalcedon: Christ Creating and Non-Human Nature

According to Chalcedon's two-natures principle the divine Logos assumed, took to itself, and entered into union with the human nature of Jesus without ceasing to be divine and without changing¹⁸. Accordingly,

15. EDWARDS, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (n. 2), p. 55.

16. *Ibid.*, in reference to Jn 1,1-14.

17. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1997; *Id.*, *Le Verbe de Dieu Jésus Christ et les religions du monde*, in *Nouvelle revue théologique* 123 (2001) 529-546; *Id.*, *Universality of the Word and Particularity of Jesus Christ*, in D. KENDALL – S.T. DAVIS (eds.), *The Convergence of Theology: A Festschrift Honoring Gerald O'Collins, S.J.*, New York, Paulist, 2001, 320-342.

18. A new edition of the texts of Chalcedon is *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon: Volumes 1-3*, translated with an introduction and notes by R. PRICE – M. GADDIS, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2007. For controversies leading to Chalcedon, see

the act of creation that belonged to the pre-existing Logos did not cease during or after the Incarnation. The person of the Word continues to be that through which all comes into and is sustained in being. This creating Word has become flesh. But Jesus did not and cannot create in and through his humanity. Creating is not and cannot be a theandric act. The Logos's act of creating cannot be communicated to or received by Jesus' created human nature, since the act of creating cannot be an act by a creature. Jesus' human nature is created through the Logos. The kenosis of divinity in the Incarnation comes into view. Nor did the Resurrection and Ascension that exalted Jesus in a transfigured humanity in unprecedented communion with divinity remove a permanent difference between Jesus' humanity and the act of creating by the Logos.

Consequently, the Logos' divine act of creating uninterrupted by the Incarnation cannot be mediated to non-human creation through Jesus' humanity even though the Logos made flesh acts in and upon creation, often with participation in divine power. The act of creating was not and is not part of divine self-communication to Jesus' humanity in the hypostatic union. An uninterrupted, divine act of creating by the divine Logos with constant cosmological effect exceeds the capacity of Jesus' contingent human nature (*Logos ensarkos*).

Diaphysite affirmation that neither divine nor human nature changes into something else in the Incarnation means that the human nature of Christ cannot wholly receive and mediate the totality of the divine Logos. Dupuis explored the significance of the *Logos asarkos* for effects of a salvific sort outside historical Christianity, while the focus here falls on the significance of the *Logos asarkos* for creating/creation, and for non-human creation. In holding the two-natures principle there can be no escape from incommensurability between Creator and creature within Jesus, between his divine and human natures. His divine nature is the person of the Logos acting not only in and through but also in excess of

A. GRILLMEIER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Volume 1: *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. J. Bowden, London, Mowbray, 1975, and for an overview of many of them see R.A. NORRIS, JR., *The Christological Controversy*, Philadelphia, PA, Fortress, 1980. See also A. GRILLMEIER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Volume Two: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)*. Part One: *Reception and Contradiction: The Development of the Discussion about Chalcedon from 451 to the Beginning of the Reign of Justinian*, trans. P. Allen – J. Cawte, London, Mowbray, 1987, pp. 3-14 and 319-337; ID. with T. HAINTHALER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Volume Two: *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)*. Part Two: *The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, trans. P. Allen – J. Cawte, London, Mowbray, 1995. Contemporary studies of Chalcedon can be found in S.T. DAVIS – D. KENDALL – G. O'COLLINS (eds.), *The Incarnation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

the human capacities of Jesus in the cosmic and universal scope of creating.

2. *Incarnation and Jesus' Activity*

Incommensurability, however, seems at first to militate against the Incarnation bringing about a new divine immanence in non-human nature. The Logos was creating before, during, and after the Incarnation. So the newness of the Incarnation is not the creating act of the pre-existent and continuing Logos but the becoming flesh of the Logos. The Incarnation would seem not to introduce a new divine immanence in non-human nature but rather to bring about a new humanly mediated presence of God to non-human nature. True enough, Jesus in his humanity participated in exercises of divine power to affect created realities in what used to be disparaged as nature-miracles.

If they ever suffered a loss of credibility nature-miracles have regained it in light of Hurtado's research into the very early origin of conviction about Jesus as divine. Instantaneous changing of water into wine at Cana, calming the turbulent Sea of Galilee, healing a leper, walking on water, and forgiving sins can be recognized as earliest Christianity's conviction that Jesus performed theandric acts, and separating out nature-miracles becomes superfluous. In these and other theandric acts Jesus' humanity was, to use Aquinas's concept of causality, an instrumental cause influenced by, "used by", the principal cause, his divinity.

Though indispensable and freely active, his human subjectivity was not the ultimate source of divine power in theandric acts. The ultimate source was the divine nature of the Logos. When Jesus at his human discretion in obedience to the Father exercised divine power in his public ministry his humanity was disproportionate to the effects. Human nature does not have a capacity to multiply loaves of bread at a thought, or to walk across water at will. And yet such theandric acts involve Jesus' human nature in a way that remains within the capacity of his humanity. A human intention to multiply loaves – an intention toward an effect known to be beyond ordinary human capacity – and likewise an act of walking are nevertheless human acts expressive of Jesus' human intention and instrumental to the principal cause, which is his divine nature.

By contrast, the act of creating lies absolutely beyond the capacity of Jesus' humanity to be an instrumental cause, no matter how elevated by participation in the divine Logos and endowed with the Holy Spirit, and no matter the saving mystery of Jesus' theandric deeds so beautifully prolonged and so powerfully effective in the sacramental economy of redemption in the Church.

So far, then, it looks as if the Incarnation brought no new divine immanence into non-human creation, since Jesus' humanity lacked a capacity to mediate a new immanence of the Logos to non-human nature over and above that of the already creating Logos. It looks as if in the Word becoming flesh all the novelty lies on the side of the created and now incomparably perfected, free and active human nature of Jesus in manifesting and freely cooperating in theandric activity with the immanent but invisible Logos. The next section explains why that is not so.

III. THE BODILINESS OF JESUS

The bodiliness of Jesus was marked not only "used" by the Logos in a way that supports but adds to Deep Incarnation. The physical newness in Jesus' bodiliness is that matter and energy, subatomic, atomic, molecular, and evolved organic compounds are a new effect from the creating power of the Logos. This affirmation endorses yet expands Deep Incarnation's idea that the flesh of the Word links Jesus to biological life of all sorts, and to all of non-human nature. A Chalcedonian approach, while agreeing with Gregersen *et al.* points to Jesus' flesh not only as revealing divine solidarity with all biological life, all the evolved cosmos and non-human nature but also as initiating the physical redemption of non-human nature and the cosmos. How is this?

In Jesus' physical being there comes about a new divine immanence in, a new solidarity with, non-human nature. Christ's bodiliness is a physical reality new in a way that doesn't remove Jesus' humanity from that of all other human beings. The new Adam is a new thread in the vast, intricately interwoven fabric of the material cosmos, a mustard seed of new physical being destined to grow into a whole eventually transfigured universe. The newness is that divine creating power in the Logos now resides in unfathomable hypostatic union with something – the created, bodily human nature of Jesus – that has come to be through that creating power. There is an immediate relation between Jesus' bodiliness as effect and the creating Logos as cause. Nothing stands between them, or intervenes, not even Jesus' human soul or spirit. In the fourfold Aristotelian-Thomist axiology, as a substantial form the human soul is the formal cause not the material cause of its bodiliness.

The enlivening, organizing formal cause that pours itself out bodily does not also become the material cause. The material cause is biological material pre-existing Jesus' conception. In conception a new, actual formal cause enlivens and organizes but does not produce the pre-existing

organic material. Divine creation of an individual, total, living, embodying, human soul or spirit does not mean that this divine act created living matter *ex nihilo* for that individual. Procreation involves living germ cells. But the whole human being is the effect of divine creation, not only the soul. So Jesus' physical bodiliness, not only his soul and subjectivity, directly depends on and is related to the creating power of the Logos. The divine power of the Logos in Jesus touches as it were the biological matter of his bodiliness. Jesus' bodily, biological humanity came into existence as an ongoing effect of the Incarnate Logos. His bodiliness, his flesh, directly depends on the creating Logos Whom he is¹⁹.

Never before, not in the original emergence of humanity as *imago Dei* or since, had the creating act of the Logos been united in "person" with any created reality of any sort or kind. The material world out of which Jesus emerged and which he bore within himself in the Incarnation was unpredictably, unexpectedly, suddenly different. Now subatomic, atomic, molecular, and organic matter and energy in Jesus that had evolved out of the Big Bang as effects of the creating Logos were in a different, unprecedented, immediate union with the Creator. In Jesus' physical reality the hypostatic union already and prior to the Resurrection irreversibly changed matter and evolutionary pre-history. The new divine immanence to matter in Jesus' bodiliness makes his flesh the imperishable seed of permanent and eventually triumphant resistance to dissolution, death, and non-being in the physical universe. The Resurrection and Ascension reveal a physical triumph over the dissolving of Jesus' flesh that the Incarnation began. To conclude from Chalcedon's two-natures principle: in the Incarnation a change occurred in the human flesh, bodiliness, of Jesus that has implications for non-human nature.

How might that change, that newness, be conceived in reference to non-human nature? An initial answer is a further question. Might theology find assistance in this answer drawn from Chalcedon from natural-scientific knowledge that didn't exist in Chalcedon's context? It goes without saying that Jesus is like all human beings in his human bodiliness. But he also is not uniform with human physical normality predicated on an assumption of uniformity that precludes the possibility of a fulfilled human bodiliness that is a singularity with a universal future. So, to be direct, was the second law of thermodynamics operative in Jesus the same way as in

19. F. Schleiermacher directed theological attention to inward experience of creaturely dependence, and to a moral argument for God's existence, not to the physical dimension of creaturely dependence on God. Perhaps it would be timely to re-examine Aquinas's often discarded cosmological proof for the existence of God.

all other physical realities? According to this law of (ordinary) nature, complex orderings of matter tend to resolve toward a simpler equilibrium. Order tends toward dissolution into a flat equilibrium.

In living beings that tendency is mortality and its end is death. Once emergent through evolution, living beings tend toward dissolution in death. This is the physical phenomenon known as entropy. Mortality is the manifestation of the second law of thermodynamics in living organisms²⁰. May it not be conceivable that the tendency of living matter to dissolution is precisely what the Incarnation overcomes in Jesus' bodiliness? This alters the usual understanding of salvation toward an inherently physical redemption that includes the human spirit and subjectivity but which cannot be received or conceived as if not essentially physical, however much how this is so remains as much a mystery of faith as does the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus' body is the epicenter of an irreversible change in the evolved material of the universe. This new kind of material bodiliness has overcome a limit otherwise universal in matter and physical nature, a limit that causes death in all living organic bodies, including vegetal.

In Jesus the divine source of creation has countered the limit in Jesus' body that is the second law of thermodynamics. The Incarnation overcomes physical entropy in Jesus' flesh so that he becomes forerunner, pioneer, and cause of a transfigured cosmos. The Resurrection manifests but does not all by itself cause the resistance of Jesus' bodiliness to the otherwise universal tendency to physical dissolution. The Resurrection is not a miracle whose pre-condition had to be death on the cross. Rather the Resurrection completes what had been underway but could not be fully manifest apart from Jesus' transient, temporary death.

This perspective explains why New Testament eschatology, far from being merely fanciful wish-fulfillment and contrary to a scientific projection based on universal entropy, foretells a consummation of creation and history in a transfigured universe that has become the kingdom of God in Christ. Would that promised outcome not make most sense if it was irreversibly underway already in the flesh of Jesus? The Incarnation halts an otherwise uniform tendency toward dissolution of order. The Resurrection reveals in accomplished mode that the Incarnation pushes back against entropy. Jesus physically embodies resistance in a sui generis way to the otherwise absolute grip of the second law of thermodynamics. This is why Jesus' bodiliness re-defines the physics and future of the cosmos.

20. A. PEACOCKE, *Creation and the World of Science: The Reshaping of Belief*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979, 2004, pp. 97-103.

Obviously, the new relation between matter and Creator in Jesus' bodiliness did not remove his mortality as vulnerability to death inflicted by external acts: Jesus is the crucified one. But newness did prevent dissolution and decay, and did eventuate in Resurrection and Ascension. The Incarnation, Resurrection and Ascension have never been received in Christianity as Jesus' privileged, private fate but always as revealing, and I would add, causing, a new future for all creation, human and non-human.

IV. CONCLUSION

All animal species equally with Socrates have a date with death. Exemplifying a logical syllogism it was often said: all men are mortal, Socrates is a man, and therefore Socrates is mortal. This is extensible. All living beings are mortal, this individual animal or plant is alive and therefore it will die. Whereas Socrates argued to the immortality of the human soul, and Christianity absorbed that truth and transformed it in light of Jesus to bodily resurrection, non-human animal species were supposed to be nothing but mortal, their death a return from being to non-being.

What may be seen to follow from the Incarnation and Resurrection as material victory over entropy is that living organisms of other species too have an unknown future in which they too may well have a place in a cosmos whose future is not determined by entropy but by the incarnate and risen Jesus' bodiliness. Though in evolution death continually clears space for new species and individuals, it does not seem congruent with divine creating and with the Incarnation as bringing forth what had not existed that a massive extermination of being should occur. To the contrary, the newness of Jesus' flesh radiant in a completed, eschatological condition that Jesus shares with Mary, as the Assumption reveals, and somehow with the blessed, makes Jesus not only the new but also the final Adam whose flesh will have caused a transfiguration of all flesh and life, not only human beings. The interim causal communicability of newness in Jesus' flesh remains to be considered, but the fact of it belongs to the meaning of the Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension, and Parousia of the Word made flesh.

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