

## **Nestorius was right!**

**(The difference between Jesus and Christ is consciousness.)**

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**Ch. 1: The Condemnation of Nestorius**

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The reason why it is important to jump back in time 1500 years and look at Nestorius is because he got in trouble for doing the same kind of thing Bernadette Roberts did. They both, without ever denying the unity of Christ, emphasized the distinctions between the Divine Christ and the Human Christ. (Bernadette even went further and said that the words union or unity imply a duality and that only the word “oneness” accurately described Christ.) As we will see, one school of thought (the Alexandrian) sought to emphasize the unity of Christ while the other

(the Antiochian) wanted to emphasize the duality of Christ. It's nothing more than a difference in emphasis. This difference has existed for centuries, but because of Cyril of Alexandria, you have never heard of it. He got the most outspoken proponent of the Antiochian school of thought banished, excommunicated, and anathematized. We are left in Christianity with the Alexandrian view only. And you won't find anyone (except Bernadette) sticking up for the full humanity of Jesus for fear of getting the Nestorian treatment.

The implications should be clear. Although modern scholarship agrees that Nestorius kind of got a bum rap, and probably never actually held to Nestorianism as it came to be known, Bernadette went one step further. She said something that no Christian contemplative/mystic/saint has said in centuries. Nestorius was right. The day he was condemned under spurious circumstances was the day Christianity lost Christ.

She was not saying that Nestorianism is correct. She was saying that Nestorianism is not what Nestorius actually taught. Nestorianism is still a heresy, but what Nestorius taught was actually correct. The issues are notoriously complicated. Search for political power, misunderstandings of language, new words on the scene, the authority of the pope, all these issues and many more played a role to play in why Nestorius lost the day. As we know, history is written by the victors. Most of what Nestorius actually wrote was destroyed. What we have instead is what people who were against him **said** he said. How the most powerful bishop of the time got defrocked is actually a fascinating story. It's a story you've never heard before because almost nobody is standing up St. Nestorius.

Chronologically first on the scene in our cast of characters is Pulcheria, older sister of Emperor Theodosius II who inherited the throne when he was seven. Pulcheria was fifteen and as the eldest of three sisters, she took a vow of celibacy and was declared Empress. Once Theodosius was old enough, he took the reigns but she was his teacher and mentor. She had his ear in all matters. We must remember that at this time there was no separation between Church and state. If there was unrest in the Church there was unrest in the state. The Emperor called nine out of the first ten church councils.

Next, we have St. Nestorius. He was not a bishop or into church politics but was a monk known for his orthodoxy. One day, he was yanked from his monastery and appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. This was the capital of the Empire at the time since Rome was a desolate backwater after having been sacked by the Visigoths. His writing style was overly scholastic and makes for some difficult reading. He immediately started instituting reforms.

Next, we have St. Cyril of Alexandria. He inherited the See of Alexandria from his uncle and probably grew up surrounded by church politics. He was wealthy, a prolific writer, and was jealous of Nestorius' power. He had many political connections and wanted Alexandria to be the most powerful of all the Christian churches. Right off the bat, we should probably note that we have a problem when church leaders seek political gain. Cyril only got his See because he had his own private army. Only he could ordain bishops. This was a very powerful and wealthy position.

Nestorius irked Pulcheria by having an altar cloth that she had helped design removed. Then he refused to serve her communion alongside her brother because she wasn't the Empress anymore and, technically, she was supposed to receive it **after** him and **not with** him. It was a public humiliation for her. (As we noted, he was a stickler for orthodoxy.) Meanwhile, she continued to have sway with the Emperor.

Tensions began to rise after Nestorius started reflecting on the term "Theotokos" or God-bearer, as a title for the Blessed Virgin Mary. (It's interesting to note that he continued to use the title his entire life.) Since he was morally responsible for the spiritual welfare of his flock, he simply reminded people that God, as Eternal, has no mother. It would be best to call Mary "Christotokos" or Christ-bearer. Cyril, probably more out of concern for political power than the orthodox veneration of Mary, saw this as his big chance to get the patriarch of Constantinople deposed and hence advance the prestige of Alexandria. (Again, why he was busy jockeying for position instead of washing feet remains a mystery.) Cyril pushed back and Nestorius replied. Nestorius finally had a deacon read from the pulpit, "anyone who claims Mary is Theotokos, is anathema." At that point, the line was drawn the sand.

As you will see, it was never about Mary. Cyril used Mary to champion his own Christology. It was always about the relationship between the human and divine in Christ. It still is.

## **Historical and Cultural Background**

Those who like to quote the bible to back up every idea should remember that Cyril and Nestorius BOTH came from a heavily biblical background. The essential problem is that the New Testament affirms both the divinity of Christ (John 1:1; 14:9-10; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9) and his humanity (Matt. 4:2; Luke 2:40; John 4:6; 11:35; Heb. 2:14-15, Mk. 13:32), but does not clearly explain how the two interact with or relate to each other. Various biblical statements on this relationship can be interpreted in several different ways. For example, John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” and Phil. 2:5-11 – “Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

After three centuries of surviving as an illegal religious sect within the Roman Empire, Christianity experienced a dramatic turn-around when Constantine I (306-337) issued the Edict of Milan (313), signaling the end of official state opposition to the faith. The Christianization of the Empire proceeded at a steady pace over the next several decades, resulting in the proclamation of Christianity as the official state religion in 380 by Theodosius I (378-395).

The reprieve from persecution and subsequent state sponsorship of Christianity meant church leaders could turn their attention to unresolved theological issues which had been brewing for decades. There were both religious and political reasons for doing so. Church and State were increasingly interconnected and most Emperors viewed the ecclesiastical unity of the Empire as inextricably linked to its political unity; solving theological problems had serious implications for governing the Empire. Hence, beginning with Constantine

At the Council of Nicaea (325), Emperors periodically convened ecumenical councils at which the gathered bishops debated issues vital to the doctrinal unity of the Church. It was unity, above all, that was sought.

The chief concerns at the first several ecumenical councils centered on two Christological issues: the relationship between the Son and the Father in the Trinity and the relationship between divinity and humanity in Christ. The first concern was at the heart of the Arian controversy, which was addressed at the Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381). The second issue was the core of the Nestorian and Monophysite controversies, dealt with at the Ecumenical Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

Another key factor was the increasing rivalry between the apostolic sees (or patriarchates) of Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople. Initially, there had been near equality between Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, with Rome being accorded the status of “first among equals.” However, Canon 3 of the Council of Constantinople (381) moved the new capital Constantinople into second place after Rome (a position strengthened by Canon 28 of the later Council of Chalcedon). This move particularly irked the patriarchs of Alexandria, who looked back to the evangelist Mark as their apostolic founder and had called themselves “popes” since the patriarchate of Heraclas (232-248). By contrast, any claim by Constantinople to apostolic foundation had to be fabricated (and was, in the person of the apostle Andrew). It’s like the rivalry between adolescent siblings.

The prompt and radical change in attitude of the imperial regime following the death of Theodosius II has led historians to conclude that after his demise, Pulcheria “effectively took control of the religious policy of the empire. Hers was the unseen but guiding hand at the Council of Chalcedon, which through the imperial officials who chaired the council dictated its agenda and secured the approval of a new definition which accorded with the religious policy of the government.” As the object of bribes and correspondence lobbying for her involvement in various ecclesial matters, it is evident that her influence and solidarity was sought by many throughout the church.

## **The Theological issues**

Two contrasting views on the divine-human interaction in Christ were developed in the theological “schools” of Antioch (Syria) and Alexandria (Egypt). The Antiochenes followed a literal and historical approach to biblical exegesis, while the Alexandrians favored an allegorical and philosophical approach. The emphasis that Antioch placed on the historical facts of Jesus’ life resulted in a strong focus on his humanity, whereas the more metaphysical approach of Alexandria produced a greater emphasis on his divinity. Important representatives of the Antiochene tradition include Paul of Samosata, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom and Nestorius. The Alexandrian School produced Origen, Athanasius, Apollinarius of Laodicea, Cyril of Alexandria and Eutyches (both lists contain “saints” and “heretics”).

A corollary of these different theological emphases was their approach to the role of the Logos, the pre-existent Word of God that became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Antiochenes generally spoke of the Logos dwelling alongside the human in Jesus, resulting in two logical subjects in Christ (called Logos-anthropos or “Word-man” theology). His humanity and divinity were distinguished from each other, joined in a moral union in which there was room for genuine development in Christ, including the exercise of his human will. In their biblical exegesis, the Antiochenes usually differentiated between Christological statements in the

Bible applicable to the divine Word, those applicable to the human Christ and those applicable to the two together.

In contrast, Alexandrians described the Word taking on flesh to such an extent that it became the sole logical subject of the person of Christ, with the practical result that his divinity often eclipsed his humanity in their thinking (called Logos-sarx or “Word-flesh” theology). The union was one of essence or substance, in which the human will was eclipsed by the divine will. All Christological statements in the Bible, including those about his birth, suffering and death, were ultimately ascribed to the divine Logos become flesh (and therefore to God). Not surprisingly, Alexandrians accused Antiochenes of preaching two Sons or a divided Christ, while Antioch viewed the Alexandrian reduction of Christ to essentially one divine nature as unbiblical and therefore

heretical. These two positions eventually crystallized into the Dyophysite view championed by Nestorius and the Monophysite/Miaphysite perspective inherited from Cyril.

Taken to their logical extremes, both viewpoints could end up in heretical thinking. The Antiochene Paul of Samosata (d. 275), taught that Jesus was merely a man in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt, whereas the Alexandrian Apollinarius of Laodicea (d. ca. 390) argued that the human mind in Christ had been replaced by the divine mind of the Logos. The teachings of both Paul and Apollinarius were subsequently condemned by church councils. On the same basis, many scholars would also include as examples of the heretical **potential** when taken to the extreme in the two competing theological systems the names of Nestorius and Eutyches (representing Antioch and Alexandria, respectively), both condemned by the Council of Chalcedon (451).

It was Apollinarius who coined the phrase “one incarnate nature of the God Logos,” which was later used by Cyril, who thought it came from Athanasius, the great champion of Nicene Christianity. Cyril thought he was defending orthodoxy when, in fact, as we have seen Apollinarius was later declared incorrect. By stressing that Christ is a oneness of two natures, Nestorius perhaps over emphasized his position in reaction to Apollinarius.

Nestorius was accused of advocating “two persons”. Yet this only doesn’t make sense if you insist that person is consciousness. If one understands that the term means two completely different things when applied to man and God, that the term can only be used analogously in reference to God, then one can use the term while maintaining the distinction. While historians berate Nestorius for teaching there were two sons, he specifically denied the two sons hypothesis in a document called the Bazaar of Hypolitus.

Nestorius just wanted to distinguish between the natures. Distinction does not mean division, which is what he was accused of. Somewhat cheekily, when Cyril made a distinction, Nestorius accused Cyril of dividing the natures. Cyril said

natures are not acting subjects. In Christ, we have two what's (and not two who's) which is what the accused Nestorius of advocating. If the natures are subjects, then you have two persons. But the natures are **not** subjects, because God is not a being. Therefore, you don't have two persons. Yet, **grammatically** speaking, we have to subjects when we talk about two natures. However they are not acting subjects. There are not two "whos".

"One person in two natures" comes from Pope St. Leo's tome and is universally agreed upon in Christianity. Who is that one person? The Logos. But the Logos is not a "who", not an acting subject. It is a hypostasis of the Trinity. The minute you say "who" you have three gods, and that is Trithiesm.

Nestorius wanted to know if "who" Christ is is the Logos (because there is only one person) then who was Jesus? Also, how can you have a complete human nature that is not also a person? Didn't he, as a person, experience anything? It was like pulling the Christological rug out from under Cyril's feet. He was furious.

## **History of Chalcedon and its aftermath**

I am no historian but here is a brief sketch of the Council of Chalcedon from what I was able to piece together:

Cyril hit the ground running. He nearly bankrupted his church by sending gifts to neighboring diplomats. John of Antioch, who Nestorius thought was on his side, brought 43 bishops with him but he was very delayed and very late. This put a strain on Emperor Theodosius II because, as host, he had to foot the bill for the food and lodging of all these bishops trickling in over the period of several weeks. Nestorius only brought 17 bishops with him while Cyril brought 50. All told Cyril had about 120 on his side. Cyril convinced Theodosius II to start the council without John of Antioch after waiting 2 weeks. Why would Cyril push to start the council if he thought John of Antioch was on his side? Perhaps he had offered him a bribe but feared John would not accept it.



It's probably not mere coincidence that his calling and handling of the outcomes of the Council of Chalcedon aligned so perfectly with Pulcheria's interests and alliances. It's also hard to believe that the Empress gave over her control of ecclesial affairs while she continued to hold to her celibacy. This time, the bribe appears to have been successful. In the fall of 431 C.E., Nestorius was returned to his monastery outside of Antioch, and Cyril was restored to his position in Alexandria, and the Council was declared officially closed. They both excommunicated each other. Nestorius' excommunication was not approved, but neither was Cyril's. The relationship between Theodosius II and Nestorius had cooled, although the emperor still did not warm to Cyril. Pulcheria and Cyril's alliance had grown stronger. Nestorius' lesson learned: Don't piss off the Empress.

The Acts of Chalcedon record objections by certain bishops that such "errors" of transcription had occurred during the Council of Ephesus, which was problematic given that the conclusions of Ephesus were foundational sources for Chalcedon. This is particularly important for challenging the unanimity of the Council. Some historians believe that relevant debate about the two natures of Christ was omitted by the scribes in the interests of portraying church unity. For example, there are gaps of dialogue, and less detailed transcriptions during the critical session V than in other sessions.

The session begins with reference to a definition that was composed the day before, but which, the text reads, "it was decided not to include in these minutes." Thus, to begin with, there are issues of integrity at stake. Given the peremptory way in which the imperial presidency handled issues at the Council (overriding objections to producing a new definition, for example), it is not completely unlikely that they unilaterally decided not to include it, perhaps to create an image of Marcian (Theodosius II successor) and Pulcheria as the callers of an undivided Council. Remember, unity above all else.

What occurred next lays bare the extent to which the imperial agenda included the successful acceptance of Leo's theology. After the Roman church officials demanded the inclusion of Leo's Tome, the remainder of the Council objected to what they saw as a move to produce a new statement of orthodoxy.

The “most glorious officials,” (the imperial representatives) decided to take the matter to the emperor. The imperial reply was clear: The Council was to produce a Definition “so as to please everyone” or face relocation of the Council to Rome. In other words, give in to Rome on this issue, or face having the entire definition decided in Rome, with Leo at the helm. For all that the reply lacked subtlety and courtly nuance, it was effective.

Since the Alexandrians bullied, bought, and connived their way into the Emperors heart, we have inherited their Christology. Subsequently, you have probably never heard of the Logos, the second “Person” of the Trinity. Instead, you were probably taught that there is no difference between the human and divine natures of Christ. Jesus is God is the result of this Christology. If that works for you, fine. But you will have missed out on all of the amazing spiritual richness that Bernadette Roberts encountered when she dared to question the dominant Christological paradigm.

It’s a way of looking at Christianity that has been noticeably missing for the last 1,500 years. If you are interested in a deeper spirituality, perhaps it merits your careful consideration.

## **Ch. 2: Divine Christ/ The Logos**

**Christ replaced the Self**

**Christ alone dies and rises**

**Transformed into Christ**

**Christ as Eternal Form/Eternal Manifest**

**Christ replaced the Self**

Bernadette, like Nestorius, believed it was really important to distinguish between the Divine and Human Christ. The following quotes are about the Divine

Christ and not the Human Christ. Later we will see what she had to say about the Human Christ (Jesus) in contradistinction to the Divine Christ (Logos).

In the following quote, just a week before the No-Self event, she describes what she “saw” when she looked within. She realized that she was free of almost all vestiges of self and felt so light she looked down at her feet to make sure they were still on the ground.

Ens p. 23 “I realized that despite my emptiness no one else had moved in to take my place. So I decided that Christ WAS the joy, the emptiness itself; He was all that was left of this human experience. For days I walked with this joy that, at times, was so great, I marveled at the flood gates and wondered how long they would hold”

Here is probably the first of many sentences you have never read and will read before you are done with this book. It is in reference to her self. “No one else had moved in to take my place.” She was gone. The emptiness that is full, and the joy that is silent, was all that was left. In the end, Christ alone remains. This recognition brought tremendous joy to her as it may to each of us.

One way to begin thinking about the distinction between the Earthly and Divine Christ is that Jesus is an object, while the Logos is subjective.

Pns p. 116 “Apart from its revelation, Christ’s subjectivity is difficult to realize on an intellectual level; this is because Christ, as the subjective self, is not the historical Christ, but rather, the formless, mystical, eternal Christ, the Christ of grace, transformation, and the Eucharist. As the human manifestation of God, Christ is more subjective to us than the Holy Spirit, which has no human manifestation, and therefore remains as the objective still point, or light at the center. Thus, despite their unity, Christ as the subjective vessel and the Spirit as its objective interior focal point are two different experiences of God.”

The subjective self is not the historical Christ. The subjective self is the vessel and the Spirit is the objective interior focal point. The reason why it is important to distinguish these is because the Holy Spirit has no connection to matter or humanity, while Christ IS this connection.

Ws p. 177 “Rather this was a seeing and a knowing that the essential mystery of my existence or being WAS Christ.”

This is a post death/resurrection statement. She did not identify herself as Christ. One could argue that she insisted on the distinction between the earthly and Heavenly Christ because she never wanted anyone to point to her and accuse her of being Christ. Instead, the mystery of her body was Christ. Seeing and knowing are the same thing for her. The “essential mystery” of her existence was Christ. It’s not a mystery about what she had for lunch. It’s not a mystery about how long her organs will last, or about the crucifixion. It’s about what she was. This is the opposite of egotism. The important thing was what she was, after who she was, was gone.

Ws p. 134 “Christ, then, is THAT unknown mystery in or about us (all human beings) which is one with God.”

Just because it is in you (or about you) doesn’t necessarily mean it has anything to do with you. It is a universal, what we all share, that is one with God. The plan was always that we realize our oneness, then surrender it.

Pns p. 150 “The great plan was to bring everyone to the unitive state because, once we get this far, Christ takes over; ‘what’ goes beyond the self is obviously not the self; rather, it is Christ’s subjectivity that remains when the self falls away. Thus, when the self dies or disappears it is Christ’s journey all over again; it is the same vision and the same resurrection.”

This is why I think something either went drastically wrong along the way, or we are just still relatively very young as a species, or both. On a geological level, Jesus was born just a blink ago. She does claim that the unitive state is irrevocable. Once the ego is really gone and the acclimation process is over, it never comes back. It is at that point that one is, so to speak, spiritually home free. One is then “confirmed in grace”. The rest of the journey entails Christ gradually taking over more and more of your consciousness until it is gone and only He remains.

Ff p. 55. “Thus, Christ replaced the true self as ‘that’ mystery in me that was one with God. So Christ was not my true self, on the contrary, Christ replaced my true self. Remember, God replaced the ego Center, and so too, Christ replaces the unknown true self.”

If we picture consciousness as a doughnut, after the no ego event it becomes clear that God has replaced the center of the doughnut (the ego) with itself. There is still plenty of self left, but that which used to seek the glory of self, now seeks the glory of God. The very innermost part of the doughnut touches the empty center. Unlike normal doughnuts, the doughnut of consciousness is consumed from within. The inner rim, the deepest part of her self, she now saw being replaced by Christ.

You might wonder, “If Christ is bound to replace our self, why were we there in the first place?” I’m not positive, but I think the gift of consciousness was given so that we could have the privilege of choosing God.

Ws p. 138 “Inquiring into the true nature of Christ, the unknown link or middle term between self and the divine, is a major turning point of the journey, one that occurs toward its ending – unbeknown to us, however, except in retrospect. This is when we realize that we ourselves never were one with God, that the love we experience is not now and never was our own, and that from beginning to end the whole unitive experience was beyond ourselves. At this point, the mystery of Christ emerges as never before, with the impending impression that the burning flame (love between Christ and the Father) is about to completely consume or burn up the remaining self-experience leaving no self at all...It is overwhelming love, then, that finally consumes all self.”

It’s interesting that she relates that this turning point occurs later in the journey. Apparently, the love for God she was experiencing was so “overwhelming” that she wondered where it came from. It was beyond her. She was consumed by this otherworldly love. She called this Christ, and realized that It had been replacing her self all along. She did not call it the Holy Spirit because there was an element of humanness in it, for all its lofty heights.

### **Christ alone dies and rises**

Pns p. 213 “Christ alone can span the void beyond object and subject; this is his return journey to the Godhead, which he repeatedly makes for each one of us. It is a journey beyond self and the unitive life, wherein the unitive bond dissolves

to reveal that its underlying reality is the Trinitarian bond between Father, Son, and Spirit. Thus, union ultimately gives way to the greater reality of the Trinity – the Oneness of the Godhead.”

Only Christ can span the void between the human unitive bond and the Trinitarian Oneness of the Godhead. Why? Because only Christ “knows” the way. This transition, this hand over of consciousness, could only be handled by something human and divine, and altogether beyond us.

Ws p. 160 “This is the point at which consciousness, its whole potential for self-knowledge and divine knowledge, has been spent or fulfilled, and, like a balloon that can expand no more, consciousness or self gives way, dissolves forever. But ‘who’ really dies here? For some people the answer is difficult to understand. The answer is that only Christ dies – and only Christ rises. ‘That’ which spans the great void between man and the divine is not man; it is not self or consciousness. Rather, Christ alone can span this void because only Christ, having come down, knows the way back; only Christ is man’s guarantee of the Father’s (Unmanifest) heavenly estate. The only way man can get to this eternal estate is by Christ dissolving our consciousness or self in his own divine nature.”

(Here she uses the word dissolving where elsewhere she uses the word replacing.) Why can only Christ span the void? Because we don’t know the way. Consciousness can’t find the way. Consciousness can’t transcend itself. In the end, something else takes over.

Are you familiar with the pre/post fallacy in regards consciousness? It states that life pre-consciousness was the same as what life will be like post-consciousness. I am sure there are some similarities, but from the simple evidence that Bernadette wrote seven books post consciousness, while a fetus basking in amniotic fluid never could, indicates not just a difference in quantity of lack of consciousness (presumably the same) but in the quality of the body/brain after a lifetime of the body getting used to working with consciousness.

That’s probably another sentence you’ve never heard before. She wrote seven books post consciousness. You may reasonably claim that is impossible. Maybe she just meant self-consciousness. Yet she wrote detailed accounts of losing not just self-consciousness but any experience of a body, any experience of being or life. She said all consciousness is self-consciousness so, when all self

goes, all consciousness goes. How, then, did she write seven books? Maybe the body is smarter than we think.

Ws p. 192 “As the divine underlying everyone’s reality, Christ belongs to no one, not even to himself. In the end, then, there is just Christ, and no one to be a Christian.”

More sobering words for all the Christians hoping to have a huge block party (of Christians) in heaven. There are no Christians in heaven because Heaven IS Christ.

Ecc p. 108 “it is Christ who makes this journey for us. Christ alone returns to the Father, thus Christ is all of us.”

Interesting how she says Christ is all of us because Christ alone returns to the Father. The implication seems to be that only the eternal part of us is our true self, and that true self is Christ. We are all Christ living over and over again the passage of consciousness until we are handed over to the Father.

You might intelligently ask, “What is the “eternal part of us?” if the body we see rots, and consciousness is on its way out, and there seems to be a death of the soul experience, etc. Seems pretty pointless. That which was united is eternal. Nothing else. There is no eternal life unless it comes directly from God. What was united was our essence, our human nature, and we don’t really know what that is.

Ws p. 177 “At bottom, then, Christ was the whole mystery of the unitive state, and thus oneness with God was Christ’s experience and not my own. Later of course I would see the difference between ‘experience’ and ‘Reality,’ see that while the experience had indeed been mine, the underlying Reality of oneness with God belonged only to Christ.”

The difference between ‘experience’ and ‘Reality’ is one is the process as viewed by consciousness, and the other is the process as it exists beyond consciousness. The experience of oneness had been an experience of consciousness, but the reality of that oneness was only known beyond consciousness.

## Transformed into Christ

RC: Thesis, “God’s plan and the goal (or end) of everyman’s human nature, then, is to become God’s own human nature, and this eternal union of the essence of God’s divine nature with the essence of man’s human nature, this is the revelation of the ‘eternal Christ’.”

What does it feel like to become God’s own human nature? What do those words even mean? They mean a human nature that belongs completely to God. It feels like not belonging to oneself.

Rc p. 257, “Thus, man is not transformed into ‘who’ Christ is, but into ‘what’ Christ is – i.e. God’s own human nature beyond that of any particular human being or person.”

This idea definitely represents a shift in meaning of the word Christ. This is what she wanted. She didn’t want people to get stuck on the man Jesus and think that only he was Christ. Everyone thinks of a ‘who’ when they think of Christ because of the mind’s need to make one thing out of everything it considers. It has been said that only a truly great mind can hold two opposites in tension. You can call it whatever you want, but at some point, we have to get used to the idea that we are becoming Christ, which is not a person. This is one of the ways in which Bernadette Roberts will save Christianity from the Christians. She was saying we have it all wrong. There are no pearly gates, no persons to meet, only Christ to become.

Rc p. 317 “So the human nature man begins with, is not the human nature man ends with. Man is radically changed, transformed, even recreated, into what God destined him to become from the beginning, this Omega point being everything we know and call ‘Christ’.”

She says elsewhere that wrong beliefs are one of the main causes of spiritual retardation. The belief that we are not radically changed, transformed, and recreated is just such a belief. We are not merely improved. We begin with egoic human nature and most people think that is the end of it. Little do they realize that first the ego will be consumed, then we will cease to be ourselves, and we will be only Christ, which is not a “who”.



Rc p. 322 “Thus it is not we, ourselves ‘who’ are eternally one with God, rather it is God’s own (essence) of human nature that is eternally one with Itself. Whatever makes for individuality and particularity (differences) has never been one with God.”

In other words, it is what was assumed in the Incarnation, universal human nature, that is eternally one with God, not you or me. Not only that, but neither you nor I have ever been one with God. God is not interested in who you are. She claimed that Mary is interested or concerned for the self, who you are. God is interested in what you are. Only Christ, the deepest part of your unconsciousness, is one with God.

Ens p. 110 “Once beyond the passageway, however, there was no seeing of either Oneness or multiplicity, only the seeing of what Is, which is beyond the relative plane and, there, beyond even the One and the many. Thus, on a strictly non-relative plane, what Is is the Eye seeing itself and wherever it looks it sees only Itself and nothing else.”

This is another truly remarkable passage. What could it possibly be like to “see” neither oneness, nor multiplicity? Neither the one, nor the many? Apparently, there is only the “seeing” of what Is. Christ is beyond the one and the many. You could almost say Christ is All AND Nothing.

Ecc p. 84 “For us to be totally transformed into Christ, however, does not mean our human nature ‘becomes’ the uncreated Logos, rather, it means our human nature is transformed into Christ’s deified human nature to become one with the divine Logos – that is, enter into His same Hypostatic union. I think the theological fear, however, is less with what is lost (few people actually know what self is) than with what is gained by this loss, namely, complete identity with Christ, no different from Christ.”

Here she is distinguishing between being transformed into Christ and being transformed into the uncreated Logos. She doesn’t deny that the later event is possible. She even stated that many of the Fathers thought it was inevitable. She simply says that to be transformed into Christ is enough. Whatever happens after that is up to God. Entering into His same Hypostatic union means entering into the union that is only possible beyond consciousness. While consciousness is still operative, we can only know the unitive state of theosis. Instead of receiving

innumerable individual Jesuses in the Eucharist, believers received the essence. So too, the Logos does not receive innumerable individuals after our transformation into Christ has been complete, It receives our essence.

Rc p. 287 “Another way to put it, this archetype (Christ) stands for human potential – what human nature is to become.”

Christ is what we become once we get over ourselves. The “potential” we are destined to become is what we shall be once individualism has been completely eradicated. As the Alpha and Omega, Christ stands for what we were before we were and what we shall be after we are not. Our potential is to transcend ourselves, go beyond consciousness, to the wisdom of the body which is perfect because it is free of all admixture of self.

Ecc p. 90 “Despite innumerable sensible hosts, their essence or identity is the One same Christ. So too, our ultimate identity is ‘what’ we are (or shall be), not our individuality or ‘who’ we are among the many. Our identity is beyond the multiplicity of individual selves. So, loss of self is not the loss of identity, but rather the finding or revelation of our true and final identity – Christ.”

She understood the Eucharist as what Christ is, and not who Jesus is (or was). Either way it is the identity of Christ, beyond any individual self. This will become our identity, or better, will be understood to have been our true identity all along.

Pns p. 117 “We often take him for the still point, the center of being, the Holy Spirit; this is all right, since they are one, but it still falls short of God’s purely human manifestation in ourselves. The failure to overcome this duality and realize this identity is a great stumbling block that keeps us from realizing in what way Christ is manifest in us, here and now, as our true self.”

Here she is making a distinction experientially between the Holy Spirit, which for her was a powerful interior presence, and Christ. There was nothing human about the interior power. Christ however is humanity in union with divinity. Christ is not an experience but that which exists before and after experiences. She calls it the ultimate nature of humanity.

Pns Xv “Beyond self, what is actually revealed – cosmic soup? An impersonal principle? a brilliant light? Beyond self, the revelation is not of an

immaterial soul or spirit but, rather, the revelation of the true nature of the body as part and parcel of Christ's eternal Mystical Body. The Mystical Body dwells in the glory of the Father and its enlightenment is the Holy Spirit. If this is not a sufficient destiny, then what is? Faith in Christ eventually casts out all fear of loss of self, for where self leaves off, the eternal Christ begins."

Here she is basically equating the terms "Mystical Body" and "eternal Christ". Whatever there is beyond self, dwells in the glory of the Father and its enlightenment is the Holy Spirit. It is a greater destiny than many of us dare to hope for. Yet we can't imagine it because self can't imagine its own non-existence.

### **Christ as Eternal Form/Eternal Manifest**

Ws p. 197 "But take away created consciousness or self and all its experiences, and then take away the senses and the physical body it knows, and now what is man? Is there anything left? Whatever is left is what I call the ultimate nature of man (not human nature) or 'that' from which man was created in the first place; 'that' of course is the divine Christ."

If her definition of man is consciousness, then that from which consciousness was created, namely human nature pre-consciousness, (which looks similar to, but not identical to, human nature post-consciousness, and which she calls the ultimate nature of man and the divine Christ) is the same as that from which man is created. We are created in the image of Christ to become that image.

You might ask, "When does consciousness start?" Obviously, it's sometime after conception and before talking. It clearly doesn't happen overnight. I'd guess it depends on how you define it. Sensory perception clearly arises before self-consciousness. In any case, our transformation into Christ seems to entail a return to our original condition, or as a Buddhist might say, to our original Buddha nature.

Ws p. 149 “The divine clay from which we were made is not changed or affected by any temporary structure of function.”

This is a reference to the Logos, or what she calls Eternal Form. She is saying that it is unaffected by whatever form or function it may take.

Ff p. 62 “As it happens, from God’s ‘absolute silence’ God utters one silent Word – Christ. Thus, before we can come upon this divine Word we first have to encounter God’s absolute silence.”

The Father “speaking” the “word” Christ into existence happens from absolute silence. Perhaps this happens both in a way that is beyond time (the eternally begotten one) and within time (in human consciousness). That, at least, would give credibility to an ancient hermetic principle, “As above, so below”. It’s very similar to “on earth as it is in heaven”, except it’s just a statement of fact about how reality is, and not about a union of wills.

Rc p. 356 “Christ is the eternal oneness of two disparate natures, God and man.”

It is important to remember that, for Bernadette, the word eternal means beyond time, not a long time. The eternal state of being is the state of being beyond the experience of space or time.

Rc p. 126 “Outside the Trinity, as said, there is no Christ, for Christ exists eternally in and with the Trinity. It could even be said Christ is the oneness of man and God *ad intra* – one in the very essence of God, that is.”

The human Christ had an intimate relationship with “Abba” (or Daddy). This is God *ad extra*, or as known by consciousness. The Divine Christ is the oneness in the very essence of God because, once consciousness has been removed, there is only God left.

Ws p. 187 “But the unmanifest is not all there IS to the divine; rather the unmanifest is eternally one with the manifest, which is why we say Christ is all that is manifest of the unmanifest. Too often we think that Christ was only ‘manifest’ at the time of the incarnation, but the incarnation was only the revelation of the manifest divine. The divine manifest Christ is from all eternity; the incarnation was only the revelation of this Truth to man.”

She is using the word Christ in a slightly different way here. She is referring it to the Logos when she says it is the manifest of the unmanifest, and the manifest divine, and from all eternity. She is saying the Logos and its connection to matter (the bridge, if you will, between the created and the Uncreated) is what was revealed in the incarnation. The truth that was revealed was that Jesus was possible, Christ is possible, even though the great divide between Heaven and earth remains.

Ws p. 185 “In other words, whatever we are made of – we do not know its essence, which is forever beyond the scientific mind – IS Christ.”

Here she is basically defining Christ as that from which we are made, and which must forever be beyond the scientific mind. I think different religious and scientific traditions would have different ways of talking about what that means for them. The mind has limits on many different levels. We can't comprehend nothingness, everything, eternity, infinity, Being, or many other things. The scientific mind is intentionally dualistic. That's why it's not a recommended method to arrive at the nondual. Once the duality creating reflexive mechanism of the brain has ceased to function, what was once beyond the domain of science is now suddenly in your ken.

Ws p. 184 “The revelation, then, is that the divine or Trinitarian Christ IS Eternal Form. This Form, however, is not what the ordinary senses see as form, or what the mind knows as form (including Platonic form or an idea in the divine mind), or what consciousness experiences as form. Rather, Eternal Form is concrete, material, physical, the underlying substance of all matter. Without it there would be no universe and no one to see it. So Eternal Form is not apart from what we see, yet it is also not what we see. In order to come upon Eternal Form, all form must first be an absolute void where nothing can possibly be relative to it; it is only from this position that Eternal Form can be revealed. By definition the divine or Absolute is ‘that’ which is nonrelative, and the only thing that can be nonrelative is a void of voids. This void of voids or absolute nothing IS Christ.”

We generally think of the “void of voids” as an absence somehow even more absent than normal. Yet another way to understand the term is that there are no more voids, the condition is absent of void, or fullness. She probably

wasn't teaching that two negatives equals a positive, yet she did find in the void of voids, Christ.

Ws p. 184 "Absolute Truth can never be revealed TO someone or to an individual; rather, absolute Truth IS the revealed. So too, Christ is not the revelation of Truth to anyone; Christ IS this Truth – Truth beyond its revelation to others. (See Jn. 14:6) As absolute Form, Christ existed before there was anyone around, an 'who' or self. This knowing or seeing lies on the other side of the void of voids when there is no mind, no consciousness, no self or anyone around to grasp or understand it."

Two things here. First, she is claiming to be trying to communicate something about what lies on the other side of consciousness. Second, she is reminding us that consciousness didn't always exist. She was experiencing what life was like before consciousness evolved in humans, and what it is likely to be like after consciousness has outworn its use for each of us as bodies. Christ could not be a "who" if it existed before there were any "who's" around.

Ws p. 185 "The ultimate nature of the body is Eternal Form or Christ; it is the true nature of the divine Manifest or Trinitarian Christ. Form and the Formless, Father and Christ, are one from all eternity. We say God made all things from nothing or that all things arose from the void of voids, but this nothing or void IS Eternal Form or Christ."

Christ is the Eternal Form or Divine Manifest. That sounds a lot like the Logos. The Logos is "through whom all things are made" and "all things arose from the void of voids". The divine Christ is the Logos and is void of anything that can be known to the scientific mind.

Ws p. 184 "The wrong notion of the void of voids is that it means form is void of the divine or empty of the divine; this is false. The void of voids means that form itself IS void or is THE VOID. Form is not other than the void; it is not something that can be full or empty of anything. It does not emerge from something or give way to something; there is nothing beyond, above or behind it. There is nothing besides it. Form then IS void and this void IS form; there is no distinction possible. If there is any distinction possible, then we have not gone far enough because the void would only be relative to some or other. The day of

dawning was the simple recognition that all form, or the voids of voids, that remains beyond all self or consciousness, that form IS Christ.”

In other words, “Hop on board kids! She became a zombie, and if you act right away, you can too!” I can see it now, “Zombies for Christ!” Well, not exactly. She is saying that Christ is all form and that form is the void of voids. Let’s unpack this a little. First, let’s look at form. The forms we see arise from the Logos or the eternal, unchanging form of God. She is saying that the Divine Christ is this Logos and that for the void of voids to be possible, this Logos must also be void. After all, if it is not, then she had not come upon an absolute, and non-relative, void of voids. Let’s see if we can understand what she means by saying that form is void. She says form “is not something that can be full or empty of anything.” Form “is not something that emerges from something or gives way to something.” There is nothing above, beyond, behind it, or beside it. In other words, it is all that is.

Now for the word void. It is not something that can be full or empty of anything. Void is not something that emerges from something or gives way to anything. There is nothing beyond or above or beside it. Otherwise it wouldn’t be real void. She is saying that absolute nothing, and absolute everything, have a hell-of-a lot in common. She says elsewhere that she would prefer the heresy that Christ is All or Nothing to many other heresies circulating around the pool halls and spas.

Ws p. 158 “Christ’s link with consciousness, then, is the unknown substance of our physical body that underlies the function and energy of consciousness along with all its experiences.”

This could also be rephrased the following way: Because Christ is the unknown substance of our physical body that underlies the function and energy of consciousness, Christ’s link with us is through consciousness. Christ is not consciousness, but it’s opposite. That’s why consciousness must be relinquished to Christ. Yet while it remains, it is our connection to Christ who is consuming it from within.

Ws p. 143 “The Eternal Manifest means that Christ’s eternal divine nature always was and always will be. It is from this Eternal Manifest that all is created, and because of this the created and Uncreated (Eternal Manifest) are one. In

other words, we were not created from nothing, but from the Eternal Manifest...what is eternal about the created is 'that' from which it was created – the Eternal Manifest Christ.”

The Eternal Manifest is the Logos. Christ is the connection between the Logos and universal human nature. Through the Logos the universe was (or is, the verdict is still out) created because it is the bridge between the created and the uncreated. We were created from the Logos and, on our return to the Logos, we first become Christ.

Pns p. 195 “When the unitive life falls away, however, we do not suddenly become God; God does not suddenly disappear. All that happens is that we finally take our rightful place with Christ in the Trinity as part and parcel of God – God manifest. The ultimate realization of no-self is not its identity with Father or Holy Spirit – the omniscient unmanifested Father or the omnipotent manifesting Spirit – rather it is the realization of our true nature, our true identity as the manifest aspect of the Trinity – Christ in this breakthrough.”

This is interesting because elsewhere she says that God **does** suddenly disappear. In that moment, she was talking about her lack of experience of God, and in this moment, she is being objective. This seems to imply that consciousness was responsible for preventing the body from taking its rightful place with Christ in the Trinity.

Ens p. 207 “In other words, what flowed forth from God in the act of creation (or with creation) was some unknowable aspect of Himself. Thus, if we were created from nothing it can only mean nothing knowable to the mind, which is the truth, since God’s essence is intellectually unknowable. Yet the experiential understanding of how this works is possible once self has fallen away.”

She comes pretty close here to a panentheistic position when she says that what flowed forth from God was some unknowable aspect of Himself. After all, if that means simply unknowable to the human mind, well that’s about 99.99% of the universe. Yet while it is not intellectually knowable, it is experientially understood post self by the body.

Ens p. 151 “With the dissolution of Christ’s human form – seemingly into air or a cloud – Christ suddenly becomes everywhere. No longer limited to a single



form, Christ is the One Eternal Form from which all multiple forms arise and into which they ultimately dissolve.”

In the Ascension, Christ dissolved to demonstrate that “He” was the form of everything. We call this the Cosmic Christ. It also demonstrated to the Apostles that they would need to stop clinging to anything they could see, including the historical visible man, to prepare themselves for Pentecost.

Enns p. 91 “The true nature, then, of what remains beyond self is Eternal Form – the act and manifestation of the formless and unmanifest. ...This identity can never be communicated because it is the one existent that can never be either objectified or subjectified.”

This is a big problem with the Hindus. They believe that Eternal Form or the manifestation of the Unmanifest can be subjectified. Buddhists, however, don’t speak of an eternal self.

### **Ch. 3: Kenosis**

Kenosis is an ancient Greek word and it means self-emptying. Paul uses it in reference to the process by which the Logos “became” man. His letter to the church in Philippi states, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but 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.”

Kenosis refers to the “humbling” of Christ. It’s interesting to note that in the earliest church communities this verse was sung as a hymn. In other words, it was a credal statement of belief long before there was any creed. That the nature of love is to empty itself seems to have been important to the earliest Christians. Of course, it still is today. How they understood this kenosis we will never know. Paul doesn’t write very much about it and neither does anyone else go into much detail about it. Today, it is generally regarded as Jesus taking on limitations in the Incarnation.

Bernadette, because she actually experienced it (along with a handful of Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist tradition), had a different take on it. It's important to remember that Bernadette only wrote about her direct experience. She did not claim to know, or be an expert on, anything else.

Bernadette made a big deal about the Kenosis because she experienced it. Her body experienced coming down out of the glorious divine air into this world. She called it "God-awful" because there was no person left for whom it might have been awful. We would never have an inkling about the horror of the kenosis without her firsthand account. Compared to the void of voids, the kenosis was indescribably more difficult because there was nothing human about it. It put into stark relief the enormous difference between the human (conscious) and divine (beyond conscious) dimensions of being.

Ws p. 157 "In itself a heavenly state cannot be manifest, and thus it can never be form or the manifest."

The heavenly state is incompatible with the earthly state. To be manifest is to be subject to the laws of space and time. The heavenly state is not. That's why it cannot be manifest.

Rc p. 306 "Kenosis, then, actually affirms the tremendous difference between the essence of man's eternal union with God and an individual person's union with God."

Since the consciousness of Jesus did not exist prior to receiving a brain from Mary, Jesus did not undergo the Kenosis. He was the end result of the process.

Rc p. 305 "To reveal this truth, however, the feat was God's own human nature forfeiting its glorious life in God to live an inglorious life in this world. This kenosis (emptying) was solely on the part of God's universal human nature, certainly not on the part of God's divine nature, nor on the part of any individual or particular person."

Kenosis is the process of going from a universal to a particular. It is a condensation, rather than an expansion. After the Resurrection experience, she felt like she had one foot in heaven. After the Ascension, she felt like she had both feet in heaven, yet, for some reason, the door did not close behind her.

Then came the awful reality of being forced to take on sensory awareness once again.

Rc p. 306 “Thus because it was no one’s ‘experience’, it can best be regarded as an ‘inhuman event’ – ‘inhuman’ because it was not the experience of any individual human being. Rather, kenosis was man’s universal nature becoming an individual person.”

It was because her body experienced Kenosis that it felt compelled to affirm the tremendous difference between dimensions. To think that Jesus simply forfeited Omniscience and Omnipresence doesn’t quite cut it. Rather, the Eternal Logos took on the human dimension (consciousness) and became Jesus.

Rc p. 305 “To reveal this truth, however, the feat was God’s own human nature forfeiting its glorious life in God to live an inglorious life in this world. This kenosis (emptying) was solely on the part of God’s universal human nature, certainly not on the part of God’s divine nature, nor on the part of any individual or particular person.”

This relates to Nestorius insisting that the natures must always remain distinct. There is nothing in common between the two different dimensions. It wasn’t just that Jesus consciousness was clouded or temporarily limited. The kenosis was a process undergone by universal human nature, and not on the part of God’s divine nature because God remained unchanged and transcendent throughout.

Rc p. 306 “It is because the human nature God united to Itself was not that of a particular human being or person, that in order to reveal this union it was necessary man’s universal nature become an individual person in this world. How else could God reveal this eternal (heavenly) union to man in this world?”

#### **Ch. 4: The Human Christ: Who do you say that I am?**

##### **Incarnation**

##### **Universal Human Nature**

## **Recapitulation**

### **Unitive State**

### **Not Divine Christ or God**

## **Incarnation**

Ecc p. 21 “The incarnation reveals God’s oneness with creation, and were this not true, the Logos could not have become incarnate.”

In other words, it is one thing that the Incarnation happened. It is another thing entirely that it was even possible. This was the revelation: God is already one with the universe. As many of us have read in Acts 17:28, “In Him we live and move and have our being.

Ws p. 203 “Since the advent of Christ, man’s realization of oneness with the divine has expanded in depth (the psyche) as well as in width (numerically). Union is no longer a realization limited to a few rare, privileged souls. Thus, before the incarnation, man’s encounter with the divine was an outstanding supernatural event, but now, after the incarnation, everyone can get into the act. It might be said that when the realization of oneness with the divine has become ‘natural’ to man and not something ecstatically extraordinary, humanity will have caught up with the incarnate Christ. Beyond this, however, only the divine or Trinitarian Christ can take us.”

Bernadette did not rely on the Bible for truth or support in her spiritual life. Her references to it always shed the passage in a COMPLETELY new light. For example, when she refers to Jesus not having a place to lay his head, she relates that to her own inability to focus on individual concrete things after her consciousness had died.

Similarly, one could read Romans 5:10 “...having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” as support for her idea that, beyond the human Christ, only the Resurrected Divine Christ can take us.

She was keen on the idea that Jesus ushered in a new era of grace. He was born in, or achieved early on, the unitive state. When we achieve that same state, we have simply caught up with him. Maybe he had a head start. Maybe he got a little extra push at the beginning. It's not a competition. What matters is that we catch up and live how we were meant to live – loving the mystery more than ourselves.

Rc p. 206 “So while the Incarnation was God's own created (common) human nature, yet we could say Jesus was the Logos' earthly human person. Since person is said to be a 'property' of human nature and not human nature itself, it could be said Jesus was the property or human person of the Logos' human nature.”

She is emphasizing here that the important thing is “the Logos' human nature” because person is just a property, and not of the essence of the nature. When we say God became man that does not mean there was a shift in bodies with a consciousness perduring throughout. It means the Logos became what we are, and not who the man Jesus was. God united Itself to the essence and not to any property, much less to any “accidents” of nature (what an unfortunate scholastic term).

Ws p. 193 “That the Absolute can incarnate itself confronts us with a step in belief that may never satisfy the intellect or lend itself to simple intuition. But this possibility is the mystery of Christ, a mystery that not only boggles the mind, but may even bother it.”

It's interesting that she says the possibility is the mystery of Christ. It may bother the mind because It is the oneness of spirit and matter, even when we wanted spirit to be above matter. It boggles the mind because the terms are generally regarded as opposites.

Rc p. 332 “The true nature of the Incarnation was not God joining Itself to human nature, but creating human nature from Itself and for Itself alone. This is no type of 'union' man knows of, much less, could ever attain of himself. In fact, because it is not man's and solely God's, only God knows this hypostatic oneness.”

She wants to make the point that the Incarnation was a creating and not a joining. God creates no person and hence was not united to the person of Christ hypostatically, but only united to the person of Christ at the level of will. That's how we can say the human nature belongs to God. God is united to what It creates. It is not united to what we create from our free will – who you are.

Rc p. 194 “In other words, whatever in human nature God did not unite to Itself – in the Incarnation – is not saved. To deny Jesus a soul, mind and will of his own, was to deny the salvation of every man's human nature.”

If the Divine in the man Jesus all but overwhelmed the human soul of the man so as to make it practically inoperable, then humanity is not “saved”. To be “saved” is to let go and let God. This is the final act of will. It is because Jesus' consciousness was not united hypostatically to the Logos (but only on the level of will) that it was not saved.

Rc p. 264 “We might add that the mind's need for some image is better known to God than it is to man himself. Indeed, one wonders how God could have revealed 'Christ' without using an earthly concrete human being to do so.”

For this reason, she says Christ was in the plan for man from the beginning of his creation. God didn't just send a prophet to convey the message of oneness. It was manifested in time and space because that is way more convincing.

Rc p. 298 “The one born was a human being that, like everyone born in this world, is one with the Logos, but unlike everyone else, was born one-with-the-Spirit (theosis), which is why he was aware of his oneness with God from birth.”

Of course, this is all speculation. Nobody knows who was born one with what. She's getting this from the idea that just as his body was one with the Logos, his soul was specially created to be one with the Spirit. You could rightly ask, “What do you mean by soul?” The honest answer is, nobody knows. The Hebrew word relates it to the body, but most Christians think of it as a spiritual reality that gives life to the body, perhaps like an immaterial version of blood or oxygen. Perhaps it meant one thing to fourth century theologians, and another thing to ancient Jews, and another thing to Bernadette, and means yet another thing to you.

Bernadette said it was basically what we don't know about the body. Then she made a remarkable statement. She said that the body is what we don't know about the soul. In other words, they are two sides of the same coin. You could maybe say that when a person touches your body, they also touch your soul, and when they touch your soul, they also touch your body.

Rc p. 309 "It could be said he was deliberately born of a 'Virgin' so he would know from birth he had no other 'Father' but God."

Here she uses the word "could" and puts the word 'Virgin' in quotation marks and doesn't explain why. It leaves one to conclude that she at least admitted the possibility other than the literal one. Whatever the case may be, the fact that he BELIEVED that he had come directly from God must have been a tremendous advantage to him. At least that's what B. believed. One can see that it might be true that knowing that one is united to God from birth could be spiritually advantageous.

Rc p. 400 "Because the Logos' human nature was never in need of purgation and illumination, it began its human condition in union with God."

The point here is that normally the process is purgation, then illumination, then union. However, for the Logos to start in union it obviously had no need to undergo purgation or illumination. In fact, it never took on any purgation and only forfeited as much illumination as was necessary to get around in this world.

The consciousness of the human Christ must have been keenly aware of its universality. That's why he called himself Son of Man. The Logos knows the universality of the species. The Logos sustains and guides the body. To have the mind of Christ is to know oneself as the Logos knows oneself. To know as the human Christ knew himself is to know one's universality. Faith is the inner eye that sees God. It's the same faith that Jesus had.

## **Universal Human Nature**

Rc p. 269 "The human nature God created as Its own can never be the human nature of any particular human being or person. This means God's own

human nature was not that of Jesus any more than it was that of Mary, Moses, or any particular human person.”

Here again is a different understanding of the Incarnation. Jesus did not “come down” from Heaven. The Logos did not “come down” from Heaven. Just because Jesus said in Jn. 16:5 that he was going “back” to his Father doesn’t mean that “back” is up (or that forward is down for that matter). Remember, in Heaven there is no space or time. If anything, the Logos came “up” from the world in the form of a human in much the same way that a fruit tree bears fruit. God created a human nature for Itself from Itself. This human nature belonged to no person because there was none around yet.

The activity of grace saves us as the human Christ is incarnated over and over again in each human nature which is freed of person to become God’s universal human nature.

Rc p. 289 “The human nature God created for Itself was nobody’s human nature, but solely God’s human nature and not that of any person or ‘who’ someone is.”

It was nobody’s human nature because there was no person there yet. Jesus developed his sense of personhood after he was conceived. Therefore, the Incarnation was with what we all share before person is developed. The orthodox position is that no person was assumed.

Rc p. 268 “There is no such thing as a ‘particular’ human nature – ‘what is common to all is particular to none’.”

It wasn’t Jesus’ human nature. It was the nature that belongs to all of us.

Rc p. 373 “What does it matter ‘who’ you persecute when human nature is the same for all? To persecute Jesus, Paul, Sally or Ted, is all the same, at least in the eyes of God. As said, God is no respecter of ‘persons.’”

She claimed that this was the lesson Paul learned after he was knocked off his “high horse” on his way to Damascus. We know he took his time contemplating what had happened because he stayed in Damascus for three years after the life changing event. She believed that Paul somehow understood



that when you persecute another, you are persecuting Jesus because there is only one human nature. (Mt. 25:40 and Mt. 25:45) You could say we are one thing.

Rc p. 461 “Only God knows the true essence of human nature, and it is this unknown universal nature that is one with God. If one could only understand it is not his human nature (or person) that is one with God, they could also understand why it was not Jesus’ human nature or person that was one with God. The one universal human nature God created and united to itself was not the human nature of this or that human being or person.”

It is pre-person which is united to God. It’s not necessarily that human nature is some Platonic form or abstraction. It is simply the natural way for man to act based on what the body/brain has learned so far, and apart from the silly influences of consciousness. The essence exists before the person (for many months in fact). Our return to the Logos (death) entails a return to this pre-conscious state.

### **Recapitulation**

Central to Bernadette’s thoughts about Jesus was the idea that, “how it went for him is how it will go for us.” In the places where she writes about him, she often uses the word Christ. For example,

Ff p. 97 “uniting our sufferings with those of Christ is the way it is supposed to go.”

This is just one of many instances where Bernadette uses the word Christ when she obviously meant Jesus. As she said, there wasn’t a lot of Jesus talk in her household. She much preferred the word Christ.

Ws p. 205 “Another term for manifestation might be ‘Reality.’ Where man takes his reality from his experiences, underlying his experiences is Reality. Thus, while we experience Reality, the experience itself is not Reality in itself or as it stands independent of our experiences. In short, experience is once removed from Reality or manifestation.”

Should we say that we experience Christ as our deepest self, while Christ is the reality or manifestation? “Once removed” means that while Jesus was the manifestation or “Reality” of Christ, our experiences are our own.

Ws p. 207 “Christ is the manifestation that man only experiences. While this manifestation is revealed in our experiences, our experiences are not the Reality or Actuality of the manifestation: this alone IS Christ.”

Interesting that she is actually referring to Jesus the Human Christ here and not the Divine Christ. We experience the reality of Jesus but our experiences are not that reality, they are us. The implication is that we experience the same interior life as Jesus when the manifestation of Christ is revealed in our experiences. This is probably what Jesus meant when he said in Mt. 7:16, “You will know them by their fruits.” Our thoughts are not very important. What we are, and what we do, are important.

Ecc p. 26 “Here the surprising revelation is that ‘that’ in us that loves God is not our self, but rather, it is Christ’s own love of God. This, then, is how our transformation goes, punctuated with unflattering revelations for self, but at the same time, the surprised unfolding of the mystery of Christ. Obviously, Christ is replacing self – not taking it over, not replacing it with some other self, but rather, gradually rendering it totally unnecessary.”

Christ is not replacing the self with some other self because “He” is replacing our self with “His” self which is No-Self. Practically speaking, it is exactly the same thing as our self being rendered unnecessary, and dying from atrophy. You may wonder, “Why do we exist in the first place if our goal is to have no self? It’s a gift to be given the option to choose God because once we do so freely, we can genuinely enjoy the union we share because we earned it. Not that you can earn or merit Grace which is a gift. But only you can humble yourself so low that the floodwaters of Grace rush in because nature abhors a vacuum.

Ens p. 128 “Off and on during the journey, I wrote about Christ because I felt I was beginning to see him in a totally new light – beginning, perhaps, to see as he had seen.”

She didn’t contemplate Jesus very often, or try to be one with Jesus. Yet, at times, she would be suddenly surprised to find that her experience aligned with

his. For example, she felt a keen affinity with him in the “void of voids” or “descent into Hell”.

Ws p. 192 “As the divine underlying everyone’s reality, Christ belongs to no one, not even to himself. In the end, then, there is just Christ, and no one to be a Christian.”

When there is no self, there is only Christ. We are one body. (See 1 Cor. 12:27.) There are not billions of souls in Heaven. (See Jn. 3:13) There is only Christ because that is what remains when there is no longer the experience of having (or being) a soul.

Ws p. 139 “While we might call the Holy Spirit the ‘link’ between the Trinitarian Christ and the Father – the link between Form and Formless, Manifest and Unmanifest – yet the incarnate Christ stands on man’s side of the Holy Spirit as the love that consumes all self. This is the way it worked in the incarnate Christ, and this is the way it works in us. The divine flame is not ourselves, but the incarnate Christ’s consuming love for the transcendent Father, a fire in which self will be totally consumed. If we have never come upon this distinction (an incarnate and non-incarnate love), we may never be able to understand how or why the eventual no-self event comes about.”

Interesting that she doesn’t just say it isn’t our love. She specifically states it is the incarnate Christ’s love. In the language of Bernadette, that means Jesus’ love. There is no room in this love for self because it is the nature of love to give of itself, until there is no self left.

Ws p. 159 “Because self or consciousness is the essence of person or personal, it follows that man longs for a personal, close, subjective God, one that can help him fulfill his personal life (self or consciousness) in the best way possible. This longing is so innate in the deepest nature of consciousness that the instant God created consciousness the incarnate Christ was in the making. There is no greater assurance of God’s caring or closeness to humanity than that God should take on consciousness or self and walk among us as a fellow human being.”

It’s as if to say God gave us Christ not to worship, but to model our own lives after and, like him, worship God. The risk was idolatry, and to the extent

that people worship Jesus and not God, the risk was poorly taken. At least that's the way it seems.

Ws p. 160 "In one sense Christ is the unfolding of our own lives; we are the truth of Christ because in the very movement of our passage, Christ is revealed again and again; his passage is lived over and over in each human being – if only we had eyes to see how this worked."

This must somehow relate to how she says we are made in his image, while he was his own image. This is the first of three differences she makes about Jesus in relation to the rest of humanity. She states he was unique among all men in three ways. Once removed, manifestation and experience, and reverse process are what they are called. You need to read her book, What is Self? to get the details.

Christ is the movement and unfolding of our lives. Christ is revealed again and again every time we choose to go beyond ego toward what is best for everybody.

Ws p. 173 "So I realized the priority of coming to Christ's own intense love of the Father; everything else, including love of neighbor, was seen as secondary."

We can understand most of these concepts intellectually. But understanding Christ has nothing to do with that. It is knowing from experience what it feels like to love God above all else. This is what Bernadette set out to do, and what most of us haven't. Most of us focus (if on anything in the spiritual life) on love of neighbor. She was saying that is a big mistake. It's not that loving one's neighbor is a mistake, obviously. It's that choosing to love one's neighbor **over** loving God is a big mistake because there are too many kick-backs in it for the self.

Ws p. 190 "At his birth, however, Christ begins his return home, and in the return takes all men with him."

Since she said elsewhere that Jesus did not pre-exist the Incarnation. Here we have to assume she was talking about the Divine Christ, Christ beyond humanity. First, she says this Christ has a "birth" in this world. Then he takes all of humanity with him in his "return". Maybe because he was the first to be pushed so far so fast that he set a new standard for what was possible for any

human, and, in so doing, paved the way for each of us to follow along (somewhat more slowly).

Rc p. 314 [recapitulation] “means going through the whole incarnational process of transformation necessary to become Christ. Thus, if we think of this as recapitulating Jesus’ own interior life with God, then recapitulating his spiritual life is the ‘way’ man becomes Christ, becomes God’s own human nature. If someone thinks of Jesus as Almighty God, then of course, there is no human model.”

And when we are robbed of a human model, we are robbed of everything. Recapitulating Jesus’ interior life with God means being constantly tested and proving one’s trust. When Jesus threw the money changers out of the temple it was not an act of rage. It was premeditated. Perhaps he had even scouted out the scene the day before. He had enough time to make a whip. He probably intuited that God wanted this done, but knew it would be dangerous. So, he took in a weapon. Point is, it still took an awful lot of courage, and it obviously pissed a lot of people off. He was putting his life on the line to demonstrate his trust (as he would again, not too many days later) and if we are to recapitulate his spiritual life then we are to put our lives on the line to demonstrate our trust. Not jump-out-of-an-airplane-with-no-parachute type of trust. There are other words for that. But courage, because we believe that even if we die, everything will be o.k.

## **Unitive State**

Pns p. 91 “Hundreds of examples can be given of how the unitive state works; the point here is to show how it is a deeply joyful state, and in no way stoical or uncaring; indeed, when you are so well taken care of yourself, your first concern is for the other. It is a state that knows no anger, revenge, jealousy, greed and those hundred-and-one feelings indicative of self-centeredness.”

Hundreds of examples could be given from the life of Jesus and hundreds of saints who lived for significant portions of their lives in the unitive state. When you feel so loved, so well taken care of, the only direction is outward. You are

finally home free. You are finally free of worry, animosity, and all the emotions that take you for a roller coaster ride while the ego is in charge.

Pns p.99 “Some transformed souls will be likeable and others will not, but one thing they have in common is that they do not care if they are liked or not. These souls, we are told (by St. John of the Cross), execute their works ‘without thought of what others will say or how their work will appear,’ and the saint adds, ‘few spiritual persons reach such daring and determination in their works’ (Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 29). Few, that is, dare to be themselves without putting on roles or playing social games. What the deified soul is, then, is a soul that is authentic, whole, natural, spontaneous, fearless, and strongly itself in every event and situation. God has not fashioned a wimp, weasel, or robot.”

This is all a description of consciousness in the unitive state. Post unitive state there are some robot-like elements to the type of “life” one would lead if one was destined to cheat death. This could just as easily be a description of her phenomenal self. Spontaneous, fearless, strong she certainly was. Likeable? Not by some. She said she would rather spend time with people who hated her, than with those who would hang on her every word. Maybe that’s why we never became very close.

Pns p. 161 “In leaving others free we also become free, and in this mutual freedom there is true relationship and communication. But to give this freedom to others, we must first be secure within ourselves, and the purpose of the unitive life is to give this security, give this necessary freedom.”

We can only give others their freedom if we feel secure because we are in the unitive state. The purpose of the unitive state, then, is to give us the freedom to give others their freedom. Of course, they already have their freedom anyway. Yet interiorly we throw a temper tantrum at the idea of people around us acting freely. We are afraid of what they might do. In the unitive state, there is no fear.

Ws p. 135 “The sole purpose of the unitive state, however, is eventually to penetrate the furthest mystery of Christ and the moment we have done so will be the same moment the unitive state comes to an end – falls away.”

The purpose of the unitive state is to penetrate the mystery. It is to be enjoyed, but it has an end. Christ is the mystery of our oneness with God.

Initially, it is barely perceptible. Eventually, it is overwhelmingly obvious. The “furthest mystery” is when Christ dies in us. This is the end of the unitive life.

Pns p. 200 “In other words, to go beyond the self, we must first realize the self in its oneness with God, because in the exercise of this unitive self lies the mechanism of transcending the self, of going beyond it to realize Christ’s final destiny. Union first, then death and resurrection. This was the way Christ showed us; this was the movement of his life.”

The mechanism of self-transcendence lies in the exercise of testing one’s trust. This is the way by which we transcend the self. We demonstrate that we trust by putting ourselves in challenging situations when righteousness demands it.

## **Not Christ or God**

The following quotes distinguish between Jesus, Christ, and God.

Rc p. 135 “Even centuries later, after the Trinity had been formulated, the man Jesus was never understood as the Uncreated Logos or one of God’s triune modes of existence. While Jesus was the human ‘person’ of the incarnate Logos, prior to the incarnation the man Jesus never existed.”

We must admit that as much as Jesus was never regarded as one of God’s triune modes of existence, neither was he regarded as fully human. It was a mystery that they were trying to figure out. How a bunch of old men sitting around a cathedral could decide what is true for the rest of us is beyond me. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, and political influences held much more sway at the end of the day. We must remember that the Emperor called all but one of the Church councils because these issues caused so much unrest. After the initial wrong turns were made, Christianity gradually slipped into monophysitism – the heresy that Christ is one (divine) nature. This is not to say that Christians are heretics. We are all human. We are **still** trying to figure this shite out. Whatever happed with Jesus has ramifications for all of humanity. Be they big ripples or small remains to be seen, and is up to us.

There was a switch from saying the “son of God” referred to Jesus, a man, to saying that the “son of God” referred to the Logos as the only begotten. Now instead of saying we worship a man, we can say that we worship God (the Logos). If this is what the fathers wanted to do, then why doesn’t anybody worship the Logos? It’s much easier to worship the man we think we know than to worship the source, beauty, intelligence, and end of nature.

Rc p. 135 “The sole reason for this switch was to avoid the accusation of anthropolatry – the worship of a human being as God.”

The “switch” she is referring to here is from the understanding of Jesus as “son” to Logos as “son”. Now, all of a sudden, the “son” is God (Logos), when originally it simply referred to the miraculous conception of the man (which could not make him God). Virgin birth was a common motif in the ancient world.

Rc p. 35 “It was because Jesus had no human father that his soul, coming directly from God, made it like no other soul of man. That Jesus’ ‘father’ was God, made his soul all but divine. They could not, then, connect Jesus’ soul with their own or with that of any other human being.”

No other soul came directly from God. His was the only sinless one. It is not like my sinful soul at all. This was the thinking. If he was born in the unitive state, then that certainly is a significant difference. But the will is not the only aspect of the soul. God held his will, so he never sinned. That is a big difference. But that was not the entirety of his soul. There is also the memory and the intellect. In other words, consciousness is a function of the body, and the will is a function of consciousness. It is not the entirety of consciousness. Yet they probably had so little experience with anyone in the unitive state that they assumed that his soul was of an entirely different kind, and not just vastly more mature.

She calls “manifestation” and “Reality” the same thing. It is universal, while experience is always particular.

Ws p. 205 “manifestation is universal, whereas experience is always and everywhere limited to the individual.”

Christ is manifested as a universal. Jesus’ experience of Christ was limited to him, as it is for each of us. But it is the same universal manifestation that we



each experience. It is the manifestation of universal human nature beyond person.

Rc p. 211 “The fact Christ is the union of natures does not preclude Jesus from being a human person.”

People intuit that if Christ is a person, and you can't have two persons, then the person is probably in God, and not in the man Jesus. They don't realize that it was because it was WHAT he was that was united to the Logos that left WHO he was free to be who he wanted. It's not either/or. It's both. Both a union of natures and Jesus is a full human person. This is all Nestorius was trying to say.

Rc p. 245 “When people think of Christ as a divine person ‘who’ are they thinking of? They are not thinking of God – nobody knows God as a person – they are thinking of the man Jesus as a divine person!”

In other words, it's because people don't distinguish between Jesus and Christ that when they try and think of the person of Christ (the Logos), they invariably think of Jesus. It's not quite good enough to just distinguish between the Incarnate and Resurrected Jesus because that leaves out the pre-Incarnate Christ (the Logos). We must always remember St. Hillary of Poitiers admonition to not mix up the three states of Christ- before, during, and after Incarnation.

Rc p. 258 “Not only is the man Jesus not God, but Jesus is not Christ – because no human being has dual natures. Even God (the Logos) is not Christ – because God also has no dual natures. Of himself, no man is Christ, nor of Itself, is God, Christ.”

She's talking about terminology here. She's using the term Christ here in a sense that supersedes it being merely a title for anointed. She's referring to what that anointing means. Christ is the union of man and God. Jesus is man. God is God. And we don't mix up the terms (which she sometimes does).

Rc p. 255 “All believed only God could save man, but along with Paul, believed God used the man Jesus as God's ‘instrument’ for doing so. Since the messiah was God's anointed emissary for this mission, Jesus was called ‘the Christ’ – or “Jesus the Christ”. So ‘Jesus Christ’ was solely a reference to a man sent by God to save man, and any worship of ‘Jesus Christ’ – the man sent by God to save man – is not the worship of God, but the worship of a man sent by God.”

Again, this is the distinction that Nestorius was trying to make. He was not an iconoclast. He knew that Jesus was the icon through whom the “Father” could be known. This is orthodox. That’s how icons function. They are windows to Heaven. The problem is people don’t venerate Jesus like they do an icon- to worship the God that transcends him. They worship the human being. That is called an idol, not an icon. How do we distinguish in practice between veneration and worship? It’s a problem.

This is the question she would have liked to ask the pope: Who experienced the life of Jesus?

Rc p. 244 “While God certainly orchestrated the events in the human life of Jesus, God never experienced any of it!”

As we know, there were big fights over “who” suffered and died on the cross. Some people said it was the man. Others said it was God. The notion that God suffered is called Theopassism and contradicts the doctrine of God’ impassibility. Bernadette gives a clear statement against the doctrine of Theopassism. Gregory of Nyssa was a great theologian, but probably went farther than any other of his contemporaries in his rhetorical style to advance Theopassism. God doesn’t feel or suffer or talk because those things pertain to consciousness, and God’s way of knowing far surpasses that.

Rc p. 208 “As a person, then, Jesus was the ‘property’ of the Logos’ human nature, but not the ‘property’ of the Logos’ divine nature. Like everyone else, Jesus was the owner (person) of his own human nature, it was only after it died that he found out otherwise.”

In other words, he was free to be his own person. To be a person is to think that one “has” a body. After that sense of ownership dies, the body remains and realizes that it was contributing an awful lot to consciousness and can actually function without it. Remember, consciousness is different from the brain. It is a function of the brain. All the other functions continue. In other words, Jesus found out that “he” wasn’t necessary for the body to function.

Rc p. 404 “Jesus’ earthly oneness with God was not a hypostatic union, not man’s eternal and glorious estate in God. Those who maintain man’s earthly and heavenly oneness with God are the same, with no radical change, really do not

know what they are saying. These are two totally different dimensions of existence -earthly and heavenly – so different, that a virtual chasm lies between the two.”

It’s basically the same chasm that lies between Lazarus and the rich man. The chasm is Self. Jesus’ earthly oneness was in his consciousness. The heavenly oneness is known by the body post consciousness. The “chasm” between earthly and heavenly is actually the death of Self followed immediately by Resurrection.

Rc p. 213 “It was the hypostasis of the divine Logos that was the sole divinity of Christ, while the Logos’ human nature -being no different than that of any other individual human being – was, indeed, its own unique person, the man Jesus.”

The Logos was the Divinity, while the man was his own unique person. She, like Nestorius, was just trying to keep the natures distinct. Don’t mix them up!

Rc p. 245 “Since the Logos had no need to experience Jesus’ sufferings to know them, why did the Alexandrians think it necessary to say God suffered and died? The reason is this: in their view, since the death of a mere human being could not merit redemption for mankind, they had to find some way to justify saying God was the one who suffered and died.”

As if killing just one man could never be enough? If God would have wanted that, that’s what would have happened. Notice the distinction she is making here between knowing the suffering of Jesus and experiencing the suffering of Jesus. The first one pertains to God, the second one to the man.

Some of the early Fathers, with notable exceptions like Nestorius, went along with a doctrine called the Communication of Properties (here the C of P). It stated that it was verbally permissible to not distinguish between the natures.

Rc p. 242 “It simply eliminated the man Jesus as a human person, and so doing, missed the whole purpose of the Incarnation – the revelation of man. The C of P was one way, at least, to relieve theology of having to deal with Jesus’ human nature, now all Jesus’ thoughts, words, and deeds could be attributed to the divine person -God.”

It was a usurping of sorts and if Jesus were still alive, he would probably take umbrage. All the things he experienced are now to be attributed to God? Of course, he sought the Father's will in all things. But that doesn't mean he didn't have the experiences. They were not the Logos' experiences. How to deal with his human nature? Throw it out! He was dismissed. Maybe it's time we give the guy some credit.

Rc p. 222 "For the Antiochenes (God-man school), it was Jesus' oneness with God (theosis) that made him a whole human person, thus they saw no disparity between God's human nature and Jesus' human nature. It was God's human nature and Jesus was its human person – no problem"

In other words, Jesus was the person he was BECAUSE it was God's human nature. He was whole, unafraid, devoted, compassionate, etc. His theosis didn't make him God, it made him human.

Rc p. 261 "But what is responsible for this mental demand [to make Christ one thing]? The culprit, of course, is the senses. The senses are only capable of apprehending individual 'ones', of perceiving only discrete material 'things'; they are incapable of apprehending any oneness – more especially in this case, the dual natures of Christ."

This statement should be read in conjunction with what she says about "pure sensory awareness" such as it is after Self has fallen away. When the senses are **not** working in conjunction with consciousness, they relay (and don't perceive) oneness. What is relayed when the senses **are** working with consciousness, is perceived as things.

## **Ch. 4: Consciousness and Christ**

### **Introduction**

**What the experience of losing consciousness was like**

**The role of consciousness in the spiritual life**

**The implications of these ideas for Christian Theology**

**The body's way of knowing post consciousness (and some other stuff)**