On the Coherence of the Incarnation: 
The Divine Preconscious Model

Andrew Loke, MA Philosophy of Religion (Talbot School of Theology),  
16 Whitesmocks Avenue, Durham DH1 4HP, UK.

I. Introduction

The New Testament affirms that Jesus Christ had both human\(^1\) and 
divine natures.\(^2\) Nevertheless, many skeptics throughout the centuries have 
accused the New Testament characterization of the incarnation as being 
incoherent. For example, in his earlier works John Hick remarks that this 
doctrine is logically contradictory as a square circle.\(^3\) However, Hick has 
backed off from this claim recently.\(^4\) Commenting on this, Oliver Crisp 
argues that Hick’s later gesture is sensible, because “we cannot know a 
priori that the two-natures doctrine is incoherent without first establishing 
a) exactly what the constituents of divinity and humanity consist in... and 
b) that these constituents are mutually exclusive of one another. It is notorious-
ously difficult to determine the necessary and sufficient conditions of being 
human... even if the necessary and sufficient conditions of being divine are 
clearer because of revelation.”\(^5\)

In response to Crisp’s comments, the accuser of the incarnation might 
agree that it is difficult to determine the necessary and sufficient condi-
tions of being human and being divine based on philosophical speculations 
alone. However, he might point out that the New Testament does reveal 
what Jesus’ human properties were, and he might argue that these proper-
ties cannot co-exist with the properties of being divine in the same person 
at the same time without entailing logical contradictions. He might remind 
us that his objection is not that human and divine natures are necessarily 
imcompatible; rather, his objection is that it is the New Testament’s account 
of human and divine natures simultaneously existing in Jesus that is inco-
herent. In other words, the accuser can frame his argument as such:

---

1 This is evident from the accounts of His birth (Luke 2:7, 2:11), His growth (Luke 2:40, 2:52), 
as well as His ignorance, fatigue, spatial limitation, physicality, tempt-ability and death (see 
n. 7–12).

2 See, for example, John 1:1–3, 1:14, 1:18; 20:26–29; Col 1:15–20, 2:9; Phil 2:5–8.


5 Oliver Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge 
1. The divine nature essentially has the properties of being a. omniscient, b. omnipotent, c. omnipresent, d. non-physical, e. un-tempt-able and f. immortal.

2. Jesus exemplified human properties such as a’. ignorance, b’. fatigue, c’. spatial limitation, d’. physicality; He was e’. tempted and f’. He died.

3. For any person P,
   3.1 P cannot be “knowing all truths” (omniscience) and “not knowing all truths” (ignorance) at the same time.
   3.2 P cannot be “incapable of experiencing fatigue” (as implied by omnipotence) and be “capable of experiencing fatigue” at the same time.
   3.3 P cannot be “present at all points in space” (omnipresent) and “not be present at all points in space” (spatial limitation) at the same time.
   3.4 P cannot be non-physical and be physical at the same time.
   3.5 P cannot be un-tempt-able and be tempt-able at the same time.
   3.6 P cannot be immortal and be mortal at the same time.

4. Therefore, Jesus could not be having the divine nature while exemplifying the human properties stated in premise 2 at the same time.

Has the accuser successfully demonstrated the incoherence of the New Testament’s portrayal of Jesus? I think not, and in the rest of the paper I will rebut the argument given above. But before I begin, I will like to comment that, for a Christian who is interested in defending the coherence of the New Testament’s portrayal of Jesus, he should not reply to the accuser’s argument by simply saying that “it is possible that P be ‘knowing all truths’ and ‘not knowing all truths’ at the same time, that P be ‘incapable of experiencing fatigue’ and be ‘capable of experiencing fatigue’ at the same time... et cetera, but how that is so remains a mystery.” Such a reply would be similar to the assertion that “it is possible that a person can be aware of himself perceiving an object to have redness and no color at the same time, but how that is so remains a mystery.” The Christian (like any other person) must be careful to avoid using the term “mystery” for non-

---

6 Jas 1:13.
8 John 4:6.
9 John 11:11.
10 1 John 1:1.
11 Matt 4:1–11.
12 Matt 27:50.
13 The position I am taking here does not require me to defend the creedal statements that have been formulated by the church throughout its history, but only the coherence of the New Testament’s data concerning the incarnation. Due to limitation of space, the creedal statements will not be assessed in this paper.
14 Cf. Crisp (see above, n.5), 167–170.
sensical concepts. Since the Christian wants to make meaningful statements by affirming that the divine nature is omniscient and that Jesus did exemplified ignorance as stated by the Bible, he or she must demonstrate what is meant by saying that the divine nature is omniscient and that Jesus was ignorant. And as the Christian demonstrates what these concepts mean, he or she must also ensure that their meanings do not result in contradictions. To do that, he or she has to provide a model to show how these concepts can be applied to the person Jesus such that no contradiction results. It is important to note, however, that it is not required that the Christian come up with the actual model of the incarnation. Rather, all that is required is that he or she suggests a possible model to show how contradictions do not result. In what follows, an internally coherent model which is also consistent with the Biblical data will be provided, and the difficult questions concerning the incarnation will be addressed.

II. Definitions of Key Terms

It is important to clarify a few key terms before the discussion begins. Now one might complain that some of the following definitions are derived from human psychology, which may not be applicable to the divine mind. In response, two points should be noted. First, the Bible does describe certain characteristics of God in ways that are similar to the definitions used here. For example, the God of the Bible exhibits consciousness as defined here: He has experience of thoughts, self-consciousness, etc. Second, as long as the definitions that are derived from human psychology are not contrary to the essential attributes of God, it is possible that the mind of God exists in a manner consistent with these definitions. As mentioned above, to rebut the accuser’s argument, all that is required of the Christian is to suggest a possible model that is coherent.

It might also be objected that the definitions of divine attributes offered below are not exactly the same as what the Bible affirms of God, and that these definitions are highly controversial among philosophers of religion. In response, while it is true that what the Bible affirms of God is not exactly the same as the definitions of divine attributes given below, nevertheless these definitions are not contradictory with the biblical portrayal of God. Furthermore, while it is true that these definitions are controversial, they are nevertheless defensible.15 Hence, these definitions are possibly true of

15 For a defense of these definitions, see William Craig and James Moreland, Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 2003), 502–535. Due to limitation of space, a detailed assessment and defense of these definitions will not be offered here.
God, and they could therefore be used to formulate a possible model of the incarnation, which is all that is required in the dialectic.

The definitions of the key terms are as follows: 16

Personhood is defined as “the property of being a person,” which is “thought to involve various traits, including (moral) agency; reason or rationality; language, or the cognitive skills language may support (such as intentionality and self-consciousness); and ability to enter into suitable relationship with other persons.” 17

The mind of a person, which has the capacities for sensations, thoughts, purposes, desires, and beliefs, 18 can be potentially divided into the conscious and the subconscious. 19

The conscious, when it is active, exhibits consciousness, which is a mental condition characterized by “the experience of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, awareness of the external world and often in humans... self-awareness.” 20

The subconscious is defined as mental contents that exist “outside of consciousness.” 21 It includes the pre-conscious and the unconscious.

The pre-conscious is defined as “mental contents that are not currently in consciousness but are accessible to consciousness by directing attention to them.” 22 The relationship between the conscious and the preconscious is two-way: the preconscious can influence the conscious behavior of a person, while the person can consciously direct attention to the preconscious.

The unconscious is defined as “a part of the mind containing repressed instincts and their representative wishes, ideas and images that are not accessible to direct examination... the operation of repression prevents the contents of the unconscious from entering either conscious or the preconscious.” 23

Omniscience is defined as the knowledge of every true propositions and the belief of no false proposition. 24

At this point, it is important to note two things. First, to possess knowledge of any true proposition $y$, it is not required that the belief concerning $y$ be consciously held. For example, a person might have knowledge of

---

16 Due to limitation of space, the details concerning these definitions will not be given here; they can be found in the sources from which they are cited. What is given below will be limited to key notions that are relevant to the subsequent discussion.
19 For the possibility of the divine person possessing a subconscious, see 8–10.
21 Ibid, 714.
22 Ibid, 574.
23 Ibid, 766.
24 Craig and Moreland (see above, n.15), 517.
2 + 2 = 4 at time t, even though at t he might not be consciously thinking about 2 + 2 = 4. This true proposition can be said to be in his preconscious: when he chooses to direct his attention to it, that is, when he chooses to think about 2 + 2 = 4, he can be consciously aware of it. Furthermore, a person might have knowledge of certain true propositions in his preconscious which for certain reasons he is unwilling to direct his attention to. For example, R could be that consciously thinking about these propositions (such as the true proposition that “my dog died yesterday”) brings him sad memories.

Second, it is not essential to God that the mode of divine knowledge follows a perceptualist model, according to which God knows true propositions by seeing what is there. Rather, the mode of divine knowledge could be a conceptualist model, according to which God does not know something by perception; rather, His knowledge is self-contained, like a mind’s knowledge of innate ideas. Moreover, there is no good reason, biblically or philosophically, to think that it is essential to God that the divine knowledge be contained in the conscious awareness of the divine mind such that He cannot freely choose to let part of that knowledge reside in a preconscious part of His mind if He so desires.

For the purpose of the present discussion, it is important to note that, since having propositional knowledge of a given thing does not require a constant conscious awareness of the true propositions known, and since it is not essential to divinity that God’s knowledge be in His conscious awareness, divine omniscience does not require a constant conscious awareness of all the true propositions known. In other words, it is not essential to divinity that God eternally has a complete conscious perspective of everything all at once. It should be noted that if God chooses to limit the extent of His conscious awareness of true propositions, it does not follow that His knowledge would be incomplete or errant. This is because the knowledge of all true propositions would still be in His mind, just not in His conscious, and there is no good reason why He could not ensure that His limited conscious awareness contains only true propositions and no false ones. Neither does it follow that His control of all things would be limited if He chooses to limit His conscious awareness. This is because, just as a human body can perform many physiological functions without requiring its mind be consciously aware of them, God can exercise control of all things through His subconscious without requiring His mind be consciously aware of all things.

Omnipotence at time t is understood as the ability to “actualize any state of affairs that is not described by counterfactuals about the free acts of
others and that is broadly logically possible for someone to actualize, given
the same hard past at t and the same true counterfactuals about free acts of
others.” As Craig points out, there are a few motivations for such a de-
definition. Firstly, by defining omnipotence in terms of the ability to actualize
states of affairs that are broadly logically possible, it counters the problem
of whether God can make a stone too heavy for Him to lift. This is because,
“given that God is essentially omnipotent, ‘a stone too heavy for God’ to
lift describes as logically impossible a state of affairs as does a ‘square tri-
gle’, and thus it describes nothing at all.” Secondly, such a definition
allows for omnipotence to co-exist with creaturely free actions.

More important for the purpose of this discussion is that, given such a
definition, omnipotence does not require a conscious exercising of the abil-
ity. Furthermore, omnipotence does not require the ability be continuously
exercised in all the acts that the person performs. Just as a weightlifter can
freely choose not to use his powerful muscles to lift up a 5 kg bag in his
hands, while simultaneously lifting up a 30 kg weight that is tied to his
right leg, an omnipotent person can freely choose not to use his omnipo-
tence to perform certain acts, while simultaneously using it to perform other
acts. For example, he can choose not to use his omnipotence to enable him
to walk from Judea to a town in Samaria effortlessly (cf. Jn.4:3–6), while
simultaneously using it in holding the universe together effortlessly. In other
words, such a self-imposed restriction of the use of his power in his walk
from Judea to Samaria does not imply that he has ceased to be omnipotent.

Finally, omnipresence is understood as the knowledge of and the abil-
ty to be causally active at every point in space. Such a definition retains the
idea that “everything is in His presence.” The definition of omnipresence
as being present at all points in space (premise 3.3), which would entail the
problem of saying that God is actually in the objects of His creation (for
every example, in the chair on which I am sitting), is therefore unnecessary.

III. A proposed Model

Having defined some of the key terms, a possible model of the incar-
nation will now be provided. According to this model, the Second Person

27 Craig and Moreland (see above, n.15), 527–529.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
31 The main insight for the model proposed here is derived from the works of Millard Erickson [see Millard Erickson, The Word Became Flesh: A Contemporary Incarnational Christology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 558–565; and Millard Erickson, Christian Theology (Grand
Rapids: Baker, 1998), 789–790], as well as the “rehabilitated Apollinarianism” proposed by
William Craig [see Craig and Moreland (see above, n.15), 610–612], though this model
of the Trinity (the «Logos») was an undivided divine mind without any human body prior to the incarnation. At the incarnation, the divine mind was divided into two parts: the conscious and the preconscious, and the divine attributes of His mind “submerged” into the preconscious. What this means is that properties such as the knowledge of all true propositions were transferred from the conscious into the preconscious (this preconscious would become part A of Jesus’ preconscious). In other words, at the incarnation He no longer had properties such as the conscious awareness of all true propositions; rather, properties such as the knowledge of all true propositions resided in the preconscious. And as the conscious was “emptied” of these divine properties, it simultaneously acquired newly created human properties, such as the capacity to experience physical pain, while at the same time a complete human preconscious (which would become part B of Jesus’ preconscious), as well as a human body were also created. It is important to note that although His conscious after incarnation was qualitatively different from His conscious pre-incarnation, they were numerically the same as His conscious after incarnation was merely a new stage of His conscious pre-incarnation. This model is therefore not asserting that an existing human person with his own conscious was taken up by the Logos at incarnation, which would be the heresy of adoptionism. Rather, this model asserts that it was the same divine Person who became a man while retaining His divine nature.

Thus, after incarnation the Logos had a human conscious, a preconscious that had two parts (part A having the entire attributes of divinity while part B having the entire attributes of a human preconscious), and a human body. He had a complete human nature in His human conscious, human preconscious and human body. He had a complete divine nature in part A of His preconscious, which existed alongside His human preconscious and influenced His human conscious in a certain manner, which will be discussed below. By “submerging” His divine properties into the preconscious at incarnation, He was able to retain His divine nature while being fully human, which will be demonstrated below. He remained a single Person in the sense of having one agency, rationality, intentionality and self-consciousness.

differs from that of Erickson’s and Craig’s in some important details. In particular, this model cannot be considered as a form of Apollinarianism, as will be shown by the discussion in the following pages.

32 Since the incarnation took place in the womb of Mary, and since the conscious of the Logos assumed human attributes at the incarnation, His consciousness would be temporarily “switched off” until the fetus developed the appropriate nervous system.

33 According to this model, the mind of Jesus would not have an unconscious part, which by definition would include mental contents that He would be unable to access. The absence of the unconscious is not a problem, for there is no good reason to think that the existence of the unconscious is essential to the human mind.
At this point, two objections might be raised against this model, which I shall call the Divine Preconscious model. First, it might be objected that Jesus would not be fully human according to this model, for humans cannot have a preconscious that is divine. Conversely, Jesus would not be fully divine, for God cannot have a conscious that is human. In response, it should first be noted that what the New Testament affirms of Jesus is that He was made like humans in the sense that He was able to experience the desires, limitations and hence the temptations which humans face, and that He was able to experience death. As will be demonstrated below, the possession of a divine preconscious does not make these impossible. Furthermore, the possession of a divine preconscious is not necessarily contrary to the essential property of being human. As Erickson notes, our concept of humanity drawn from our inductive investigation of existing human beings might not be what humanity essentially is. Rather, we should take the case of Jesus into consideration when we try to understand what is essential to being human. Hence, while it is clearly not essential to humanity that a human possess a divine preconscious, it can be argued that what the case of Jesus shows is that it is not essential to humanity that a human cannot possess a divine preconscious.

Conversely, there is no good reason to think that the possession of a conscious that is divine is essential to the divine nature. It can be argued that the possession of attributes such as omniscience, omnipotence, etc is sufficient for divinity; in other words, any person who has these attributes has a divine nature. It is not essential to divinity that these attributes reside in the conscious part of the person’s mind. As noted previously, not having these attributes in the conscious does not mean that the person would have incomplete knowledge, be errant in his conscious awareness, or be limited in his control over all things. There is therefore no good reason why an omnipotent and perfect Person of the God-head could not have chosen to “submerge” His divine attributes to His preconscious and possess a human conscious, so as to accomplish His perfect salvation for mankind. Therefore, Jesus could have a divine pre-conscious and a human conscious without being less than fully human or divine at the same time.

Secondly, one might object that since Jesus would remain as human from the point of incarnation till eternity according to the Scriptures, and since the possession of a finite conscious is essential to being human, Jesus would have to be without a divine conscious from the point of incarnation till eternity according to this model. In response, there is nothing in the Bible that affirms that Jesus would possess or regain a divine conscious.

34 Heb 2:14–17, 4:15; Rom 8:3.
35 Erickson, Christian Theology (see above, n.31), 752–753.
36 Heb 7:17 states that Jesus is a priest forever, and since according to the author of Hebrews a priest must be a man (Heb 5:1), Jesus must therefore be a man forever.
after His incarnation, and possess it eternally. Moreover, the idea that Jesus would have to be eternally without a divine conscious from the point of incarnation till eternity is actually quite acceptable theologically; in fact, such condescension on His part would be an eternal demonstration of His love for mankind through His continuous sharing of mankind’s conscious experience.\textsuperscript{37}

\textbf{IV. Comparison with other Models}

It is important to distinguish the Divine Preconscious model from three other models of the incarnation.\textsuperscript{38} First, this model differs from Apollinarianism, which asserts that the mind of Jesus consisted of only the divine Logos. In contrast, the Divine Preconscious model proposes that the mind of Jesus included a complete human mind which was formed at the point of incarnation.\textsuperscript{39} Among the problems with Apollinarianism is that, if the mind of Jesus consisted of only the divine Logos, then it would not be tempt-able, as God cannot be tempted.\textsuperscript{40}

Second, this model, which asserts that Jesus had only one conscious and one range of consciousness, differs from the model which asserts that Jesus had two ranges of consciousness, one divine and one human.\textsuperscript{41} Morris, a proponent of this “two-consciousness” model, claims that “no person is identical with a particular range of conscious experience,” and he proposes that an asymmetrical accessing relation exists between the divine mind and the human mind of Christ, such that the divine mind has imme-

\textsuperscript{37} Stephen Evans (see Stephen Evans, “The Self-Emptying of Love,” in Stephen Davis, Daniel Kendall and Gerald O’Collins (ed.), The Incarnation: an Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 265–266) suggests the same reasons for the possibility of Christ’s eternal condescension, though as a Kenoticist the nature of the condescension he proposed is different from mine. See 16 for a brief assessment of Kenoticism.

\textsuperscript{38} Due to limitation of space, only a broad generalization of these models can be offered here.

\textsuperscript{39} For Apollinarianism, see J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines 5\textsuperscript{th} rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1978), 289–297.

\textsuperscript{40} Richard Swinburne, The Christian God (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 224. A further objection that has been raised against Apollinarianism is that Christ would not have a complete human nature if His mind were supplied by the divine Logos. In response, Craig argues that the divine mind possessed the properties sufficient for human personhood, lacking only corporeality prior to the incarnation. See Craig and Moreland (see above, n.15), 608–609.

On the Coherence of the Incarnation: The Divine Preconscious Model

The immediate access to all that the human mind does, but not vice versa. Nevertheless, the “two-consciousness” model suffers from the criticism that Jesus would then have two self-consciousness-es. For according to the two-minds model, Jesus having His human range of consciousness was consciously aware of Himself being consciously unaware of the day of His coming (Mark 13:32). At the same time, Jesus having His divine range of consciousness was aware of Himself being consciously aware of the day of His coming. Thus according to this model, Jesus was aware of Himself being consciously aware of the day of His coming, and aware of Himself being consciously unaware of the day of His coming at the same time. He would have self-consciousness SC1: “I am aware of Myself being consciously aware of the day of My coming,” and simultaneously self-consciousness SC2: “I am aware of Myself being consciously unaware of the day of My coming.” It is clear that SC1 and SC2 are not identical. In other words, Jesus would have two different self-consciousness-es at the same time. But how is having two different self-consciousness-es at the same time different from two different persons? Surely the unity of a person should be understood as involving the unity of the self-consciousness either in timelessness or at any given time t. To say that Jesus had two different self-consciousness-es at the same time and yet one person (i.e. one self) is a contradiction in terms. Hence, what follows from the “two-consciousness” model is that Jesus would be two persons as asserted by the heretical Nestorianism.

Third, this model differs from ontological Kenoticism in that this model asserts that the divine nature and human nature of Jesus could have existed alongside each other without losing any of their attributes. The obvious problem with ontological Kenoticism, which asserts that Jesus laid aside essential divine attributes (omniscience, omnipotence, etc) and took on human attributes at the incarnation, is that the divine nature of Jesus would not be divine anymore once these essential attributes were laid aside. Some have tried to resolve this problem recently by saying that, instead of essentially having omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc, God essentially has the property of “being-omnipotent/omniscient/omnipresent, etc-unless-freely-choosing-to-be-otherwise,” and that this freedom to be otherwise is in fact entailed by God’s omnipotence. Aside from the problems...
concerning the ontological status of such contrived properties, the Scriptures affirm that the fullness of the divine nature dwell in Christ (Col 1:19, 2:9), which implies that there was no setting aside of the attributes of God that are associated with full divinity (such as omniscience, omnipotence, etc) at the incarnation.

V. A proposed Solution to the apparent Incoherence

The rebuttal of the accuser’s charge of incoherence will now given by using the proposed model.

Concerning premise 3.1, this model asserts that Jesus was omniscient in His incarnated state, in that He had the ability of utilizing the knowledge concerning all true propositions and no false proposition. This body of knowledge resided in part A of His preconscious, which was subdivided into part A1 and part A2. Part A1 was the part of His preconscious which for certain reasons He was unwilling (but not unable) to direct His attention to. According to the Scriptures, He would be His desire to experience what humans have been experiencing (Heb 2:14–17, Rom 8:3), including their experience of limitation in their conscious awareness of truths. Hence, Jesus was “ignorant” in the sense that He did not have conscious awareness of every true proposition, such as the day of His coming (Mark 13:32). Such “ignorance” can co-exist with omniscience in the same person, for, as noted previously, omniscience does not require a constant conscious awareness of all the true propositions known. Nevertheless, there was another part of His divine preconscious (part A2) which He was willing to access; this part of His preconscious accounts for the moments of supernatural insights that characterized His life, such as His awareness that Lazarus was dead (John 11:11).

As for the growth of Jesus’ wisdom (Luke 2:40, 52), the model suggests that He grew in wisdom by assimilating knowledge into part B of His preconscious (part B of His preconscious being the human preconscious which He was willing to direct His attention to). Even though He had knowledge of all true propositions in part A of His preconscious, He chose to assimilate knowledge into part B of His preconscious by human means so as to be like humans in the way they grow in wisdom and in the way they assess information that resides in their preconscious. Thus, when He was an infant

47 For discussion, see Craig and Moreland (see above, n.15), 607–608.
48 By asserting that Jesus refrained from directing His attention to a certain part of His divine knowledge and that He freely refrained from utilizing His omnipotence when He carried out certain activities (see next page) and hence, in a certain sense, He concealed His omniscience and omnipotence, the Divine Preconscious model can be classified as a modern version of the divine krypsis view. For a discussion of this view, see Crisp (see above, n.5), 148–153.
He did not have conscious awareness of the skills of carpentry, but He had to learn them as humans do.

The accuser might press further with his objection by arguing that it is highly plausible that God’s knowledge includes matters which human beings are intrinsically incapable of having conscious awareness of; if so, these matters would be unconscious rather than preconscious for Jesus, and He would not be omniscient after all.49 In response, the defender of the Divine Preconscious model asserts that the Second Person could direct His attention to these matters if He so chooses, only if He were to do so His conscious would cease to be human. Since He could direct his attention to these matters, these matters would be in the preconscious and not in the unconscious. Ceasing to be human is not a metaphysical problem since the possession of a human nature was not essential to Him; rather, the possession of a human nature was the result of divine free choice.50

Concerning 3.2, this model asserts that Jesus was omnipotent in His incarnated state, and He utilized His omnipotence in holding all things together even in His incarnated state (Col 1:17). As noted previously, the definition of omnipotence does not require a conscious exercising of the ability. Just as a human body can perform many physiological functions without the mind being consciously aware of them, the act of holding all things together could be performed by Jesus’ divine preconscious without Him being consciously aware of all things. Of course, His divine nature had knowledge of all things. But, as noted previously, knowledge of a thing does not require that the true belief concerning that thing be consciously held. Furthermore, as noted previously, having omnipotence does not imply that Jesus could not have freely chosen not to utilize that ability in doing other acts while still retaining His omnipotence. Thus, by freely refraining from utilizing His omnipotence when He carried out certain activities, such as walking to a town in Samaria (John 4:3–6), He did these activities by the finite strength of His human body. Hence, His human conscious, which was connected to and influenced by His physical body, could experience fatigue as humans do.

Concerning 3.3, it has been noted previously that the knowledge of all true propositions resided in a certain part of Jesus’ preconscious according to this model. Therefore, He had knowledge of every point in space in His

49 This objection was suggested by a previous anonymous referee.

50 Cf. Erickson, Christian Theology (see above, n.31), 789–790, which states that the attributes of the Logos such as His omniscience resides in the unconscious part of His personality. The problem with Erickson’s view is that since a person is unable to assess the unconscious part of his personality, it is difficult to conceive in what sense is the Logos still omniscient after the incarnation if He cannot assess that “infinite body of knowledge” (I thank Ray Yeo for pointing this out to me). To maintain that Christ remains omniscient at the incarnation, one has to speak of Christ being unwilling rather than being unable to assess this infinite body of knowledge.
incarnated state. Furthermore, it has been noted above that His divine preconscious held all things together. Thus, He had the ability to be causally active at every point in space in His incarnated state. It follows that Jesus’ divine preconscious was omnipresent. His divine preconscious was spaceless and was not limited to His brain or human body. His physical body, however, was limited (localized) to a certain area. So was His human conscious. Although His human conscious was not spatially extended, nevertheless it was localized in the sense that it controlled only the body of Jesus, and it obtained sensory input only through the sensory organs of Jesus’ body. Therefore, 3.3 is false; based on the reworked definition of omnipresence, the preconscious of a person P can be omnipresent in having the knowledge of and the ability to be causally active at every point in space, while the conscious and the body of P can be present at only a few points in space (spatial limitation).

Concerning 3.4, this model asserts that Jesus’ divine preconscious were immaterial, while His human body exemplified physicality.

Concerning 3.5, Jesus’ divine nature could not be tempted, and if He were to possess only the divine nature, He would be untemptable. Nevertheless, He did possess a human nature as well: His conscious was human and had the capacity of experiencing physical pain such as hunger. He would thus experience desires such as the desire for food, and hence genuine temptation when such desires conflicted with the will of God. In His human conscious He would therefore be learning obedience (Heb 5:8) as He yielded His desires to the will of God.51

Finally, concerning 3.6, Jesus’ divine nature could not have suffered death. Nevertheless, His human nature was able to die: He died when His human mind was separated from His human body. What this separation means is that Jesus’ human mind no longer manipulated Jesus’ body and obtained sensory input through the sensory organs of Jesus’ body at His death, and there was a cessation of vital functions in His body.52

---

51 The impeccability of Christ is understood as the inability of Christ to sin despite the reality of the temptations felt in His human consciousness. According to this model, this would be due to the influence of His divine preconscious on His consciousness (as noted previously, there is a two-way relationship between the preconscious and consciousness of a person). This ensured that He would always choose to rely on the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to overcome temptation.

52 According to Luke 23: 43, there was an intermediate state between death and resurrection in which the mind of Jesus existed apart from the body. See ERICKSON, *Christian Theology* (see above, n.31), 545.
VI. Conclusion

The model proposed in this paper provides a helpful and lucid way of thinking about the incarnation of Christ. Although it is only a possible model and not necessarily the actual one, it does demonstrate how the apparent contradictions can be resolved. The profound doctrine of the incarnation is thus shown to be coherent. A Christian is therefore not irrational in believing and proclaiming that Christ was both fully man and fully God as testified by the New Testament. 53

SUMMARY

Many skeptics throughout the centuries have accused the New Testament characterization of the incarnation as being incoherent. The reason is that it appears impossible that any person can exemplify human properties such as ignorance, fatigability, and spatial limitation, as the New Testament testifies of Jesus, while possessing divine properties such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence at the same time. This paper proposes a possible model which asserts that at the incarnation, the Logo’s mind was divided into conscious and preconscious, and the divine properties were transferred from the conscious into the preconscious, which became part A of Jesus’ preconscious. Simultaneously, the conscious acquired newly created human properties, while a human preconscious which would become part B of Jesus’ preconscious and a human body were also created. It is demonstrated that this model does not suffer from the problems that beset other models such as Apollinarianism, two-consciousness Christology, and ontological Kenoticism, and that based on this model the full attributes of divinity and humanity of Jesus as testified by the Scriptures could have simultaneously coexisted in one person without contradiction.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG


53 I wish to thank William Lane Craig, Robert Saucy, J.P. Moreland, Ray Yeo, Mary Lim, and the anonymous referees for their helpful insights and comments concerning the ideas presented in this paper.