

It is not simply false to say that the constitutive Christian confession, "Jesus is the Christ," entails the two dogmas of the triune nature of God and of the divine-human natures of the one person Jesus Christ. In truth, these two dogmas formulate necessary presuppositions and implications of the confession, not merely necessary consequences of this, that, or the other earlier formulation of it or of the assumptions made in so formulating it. But since the dogmas formulate these presuppositions and implications only by developing and seeking to harmonize a plurality of earlier formulations, they are entailed by the Christian confession—not simply as such, but—only as thus formulated.

Fully recognizing this, however, one may still say that the necessary implications of the Christian confession could not be adequately explicated unless one could assert, in some formulation or other, both that God is (materially) of the same substance as Jesus and that Jesus is (formally) of the same substance as God—or, as I sometimes put it, using Marxsen's terms, both that God is the One who decisively becomes event for us through Jesus and that Jesus is the one through whom God decisively becomes event for us. One may argue, then, that the Nicene doctrine of the triunity of God formulates the first assertion consistently with the one fundamental presupposition of radical monotheism, while the Chalcedonian doctrine of the divine-human natures of the one person Jesus Christ formulates the second assertion consistently with the other fundamental presupposition of Jesus' real historicity and genuine humanity.

One may also suggest that, if modalism upholds the first presupposition of radical monotheism only at the expense of the first assertion, Nestorianism upholds the second presupposition of Jesus' real historicity and genuine humanity only at the expense of the second assertion. Contrariwise, tritheism makes the first assertion only at the expense of the one presupposition of radical monotheism, while Eutychianism makes the second assertion only at the expense of the other presupposition of Jesus' real historicity and genuine humanity.