

## Some Reflections on Chalcedon

In the spring of 2010 I happened to come across several favorable book reviews of **Jesus Wars** by Philip Jenkins. Admittedly it is a snappy title which didn't appeal to me, figuring it was yet another book trying to make itself stand out from among the pack. However, I was impressed favorably by the reviews because they were enthusiastic about a subject most people don't get excited about, the development of Christian doctrine and church politics. Admittedly only a handful of experts can get worked up about this. At the same time, **Jesus Wars** centered around a topic of ongoing personal interest, the Council of Chalcedon (the year 451). This major event in the life of the early Church is fraught with so many complicated issues that only after many years until the appearance of Jenkins' book did I come across an adequate presentation of it. Chalcedon has been relegated to the realm of theological departments in universities and thus beyond the reach of most folks. Over the years I've read books and articles on Chalcedon, all complex and confusing, so much so that reluctantly I had abandoned close to all the books I had begun. It wasn't a matter of not being able to follow an account of events but of keeping them together in my mind that they might form a coherent whole. I wasn't attempting to memorize the sequence of all the events; rather, I found it close to impossible to follow even an outline of them. Somehow they made me either drift off to sleep or become restless; it was next to impossible to focus upon the subject at hand.

1. Despite these formidable problems, something fascinating remained about that ecumenical council, for it sums up all the struggles to date as how to perceive correctly the person of Jesus Christ. And when you think of it, 451 is not terribly long after the birth of Jesus Christ close to the fall of Roman civilization, the traditional date being 476. Although we're dealing with an early period of Church history, so much...in fact, virtually everything I'd consider essentially worthwhile...had been determined by that date. With Chalcedon by no means did doctrinal struggles come to an end; they continued in various forms for many a century afterwards. It was at a point of giving up on yet another technical book on Chalcedon that I hit upon the two reviews of **Jesus Wars**. I figure one more stab wouldn't hurt, so I pulled the book from a local college library. I dislike calling Jenkins' book as a cure-all to my problems, but it turned out to be the Magic Bullet I was searching for a long time. While going through it, I made yet another happy discovery: my previous reading on Chalcedon had sunken in deeper than I was giving myself credit. It was as though **Jesus Wars** assumed a type container into which automatically I poured all that pent-up information. I found the book so fascinating that I finished it well ahead of the required date of return. Not only that, I pulled two more books by Jenkins which I read in rapid succession.

It is not the purpose of this essay to review these books but only to note that they jammed together a lot of issues I've been wrestling with in my ongoing study of Christian doctrine. That study relates to the patristic period as well as up to and including the advance of Islam. Naturally enough, most interest in early Christian ecumenical councils is theological and historical. While that's perfectly fine, always I was curious to know how these men actually came up with their ideas, a point either neglected or buried under mounds of scholarly publications. The atmosphere in which such pursuits take place is mistakenly presented so rarified that vital areas of Christian teaching are relegated to experts, far from the lives of ordinary people. And so I wondered if it were possible to read texts centered around Chalcedon in the spirit of *lectio divina*, a phrase usually applied to a slow, meditative reading of Scripture. We've become so accustomed to think an event like Chalcedon as so abstruse that the revolutionary, life-giving insights it offers have become stifled. Yet texts pertinent to Chalcedon are meant to be pondered over carefully and lovingly without losing the animating spirit behind them. I get the impression that no author, including Philip Jenkins, describes how formulators of such important teachings read Scripture and drew from there insights applicable to, for example, the divinity of Jesus

Christ. Then again, that might be an inaccurate question, indicative of my desire and what I'm reading into it. Another factor that bothered me about Chalcedon and other councils was the intense politicizing that transpired, so much that theology and politics appeared one and the same, a thought inconceivable even scandalous to us moderns but perfectly normal for its time.

Before looking at Chalcedon more closely, that is, through the very narrow prism of a Greek preposition, it may be helpful to review some ideas where the same preposition played a major role in a key scriptural verse, namely, Gen 1.26: "God said 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" After we've done that, we could see if both sets of reflections might lead to a third step, a kind of synthesis which has direct application to our spiritual life and the question of immortality. The latter is inextricably bound up with the former, for anyone serious about spirituality is focused upon death. And so this article is building another essay where Gen 1.26 was examined though the hoped for synthesis has not been attained yet. As for the Genesis verse, it is the key theological foundation stone *par excellence* of our Western religious heritage and the source from which all other doctrines had sprung. The Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament is of concern here chiefly because those Church Fathers who wrote in Greek accessed it for much of their theological reflection. We leave aside the original Hebrew text which could be the subject of reflection at another time.

So let us begin with the key verse from Genesis. Sometimes a whole perception of reality and theological trend hinge upon the use of a tiny preposition, this being a classic case. Consider the preposition "in" relative to image and likeness. Entertaining that preposition suggests that we are situated with-in the reality the preposition governs. While this is an obvious fact, "in-ness" appears a bit too strong for a description of the spiritual life even though it's bantered around quite a bit. For example, refer to verses lifted from St. Paul's epistles where constantly he speaks of "being in Christ." The reason for bypassing this preposition is that it gives us little or no wriggle room. While "in" may be fine to describe deep periods of prayer, it's a bit intense to hold before us while going about our daily affairs. Besides, "in" sets us up for a fall by intimating a dualistic attitude with regard to prayer and activity. In brief, "in" implies an "out" waiting to happen, and when it happens it does so big time. While in earlier days "in" may have sufficed (and certainly it did), the complexity of modern living requires more flexibility without watering down the divine presence we're trying to present here. As for the Genesis verse, the Septuagint has the Greek preposition *kata* in place of *en* (in) which fundamentally embodies motion downward from above to a place below. In other words, a sequence of events "falls" from *kata*. One common use of this preposition is "according to" as in "the Gospel according to (*kata*) Mark." Here *kata* intimates a whole meaningful sequence about to unfold as the text is read to us or as we read it. In other words, *kata* is essential for connectivity, of not allowing each element along the line to fall into isolation. And so, *kata* turns out to be more flexible than other prepositions which could be substituted for it.

With regard to Gen 1.26, *kata* reads better as (though it may not be that smooth to translate as such): "Let us make man *according to* our image, *according to* our likeness." It seems that when you say that the image and likeness are *according to* or *in accord with* God, you get a general idea that *kata* acts like a peg from which something hangs down, if you will, as dependent upon the agent which is doing the hanging, namely, the preposition *kata*. Here is a certain flexibility as to nailing down with absolute certainty the location of this image and likeness in contrast to the more easily definable preposition "in." The expression "let us make" is responsible for creating "man" after which God divides him into two parts, if you will. As some patristic commentators have observed (especially Gregory of Nyssa), "man" is generic whereas the so-called "second creation" in Gen 1.27 has God creating man and woman, the division into two sexes. Quite a difference from the familiar static and somewhat unbending character of being made "in" the image and "in" the likeness of God. In this instance you're either in it or out, no exception. And so Gen 1.26 as making man "according to the image" and

“according to the likeness” of God, opens up a whole range of new possibilities. As for the divine, creative act, one can picture of God looking at himself and projecting what he sees onto (rather, *kata!*) both his image and likeness. As for the first person plural “let us,” it can be taken as a spontaneous gesture. Often when we do something spontaneously we’ll express ourselves in this first person plural, almost as though we wish others to share in our joy or have them present despite their physical absence. It’s something that comes naturally and can’t be explained fully. However, anyone who is familiar with the experience knows its value, and that he or she is not acting alone even if (apparently) alone. As for the divine creative power spread out during five days, each element of creation is prefaced by God saying “Let.” In other words, it’s an utterance which begets. Most likely this is God speaking in the first person singular; only on the six day do we have “Let us make,” first person plural, an expression of greater exuberance than his earlier acts of creation. Also we could say that over five days the simple “let” was building up to a climax where God was engaged in a practice of sorts until we see the fulfillment reached with “let us.” No small wonder that God required a seventh day on which to rest, to sit back and reflect upon the five “lets” and the one “let us.” I’m sure he wanted to see how both will now play themselves out.

The spontaneous, creative nature of “let us” requires a pattern, if you will, by which to express itself, and that is where the simple preposition *kata* fits the bill. God doesn’t say simply “Let us make God *in* our image and *in* our likeness” as traditional renditions put it. Better, he makes this image and likeness *according to* his image and *according to* his likeness. It was as though he were watching himself in a mirror and liked what he saw what was always going on there. Hence, it was only natural for him to project it and do so with exuberance. That’s why, unlike the created beings both animate and inanimate of the previous five days, God made us *kata* his image and *kata* his likeness. Creativity requires a pattern which emerges spontaneously. If we stay with this need for a pattern a bit further, we could say that God employs the Holy Spirit (that would give some credence to the first person plural or ‘let us,’ a position taken by some Church Fathers though not the point here). More specifically we could say that God employs the Spirit’s special function of *hearing* as found in Jn 16.13: “For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak.” This hearing is rendered differently in the Greek, that is, *ou aph’ heautou*, which translates literally as “not from himself” instead of “authority.” Thus it seems that the Holy Spirit’s nature consists of hearing...not only that but also of speaking but speaking only what he hears, nothing from himself. So if we can visualize a divine person in this way, that means the Spirit has no identity of his own (with some legitimacy the Spirit is feminine, based in the Hebrew *ruach*). In other words, always the Holy Spirit is listening, never speaking, except what the Father and the Son are communicating among each other. The listening is so total that to conceive of the Spirit minus the Father and Son is inconceivable. This ghost-like identity makes the Holy Spirit quite difficult to detect, aptly identified with the invisible, un-catchable wind, the *ruach*. However, his nature comprised of listening gives considerable comfort that he is a good listener. On the other hand, we can approach Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospels and even the Father insofar as we acknowledge the latter as unknowable. In other words, we can acknowledge the Father’s unknowability as just out there and leave it at that. But the Holy Spirit? Can we really draw near to someone whose nature is hearing? To be honest no...he’s just as mysterious as the Father if not more so in his own brand of unknowability. Practically speaking, we’re required to become like him, hearing in the sense of being attentive, and by divesting ourselves of “authority” not unlike the Spirit, leaving behind that *ou aph’ heautou*, “not from himself.” Despite the peculiar nature of the Holy Spirit as listening and speaking what he hears, he is an ideal candidate for God the Father to employ as a template for making us *kata* his image and *kata* his likeness. And so, compared with the Son, the Spirit is much more like the Father.

So here we are made *kata* these two divine representations, image and likeness. It is two-fold and can be understood, keeping in mind what we said about the Holy Spirit, in terms of listening to the echo of

God uttering his creative “let us. This “let us” can be grasped with greater or lesser acuity as how attentive we are to being made “*kata* our image and *kata* our likeness.” If we focus upon the first *kata* (the divine image or *eikon*), we find ourselves in direct contact with the Holy Spirit’s listening. That is the stuff of which we are made, of what makes us human. If we focus upon the second *kata* (the divine likeness or *homoiosis*), we are on less stable ground, if you will. The likeness requires considerable work...of applying ourselves to being attentive...to the Spirit’s nature of listening. Or we could put it as being attentive to our *eikon* in which we’ve been made already and to which our *homoiosis* needs to be conformed. It’s great, really, to have an outline like this on which to plot our lives but another thing to implement this. After the first flush of excitement at the discovery comes genuine spiritual combat. Traditionally that has been presented as a fight between God and the powers of darkness or the devil. Keeping in mind as being made *kata* the divine image and *kata* the divine likeness, we could expand this by saying we’re in a genuine combat. Either we sensitize our hearing to the Holy Spirit or to ourselves. We’re quite familiar with the latter in that constantly we entertain thoughts centered around ourselves. Unfortunately we’re much less sensitive to a hearing which derives from the Holy Spirit. Yet with *kata* in mind and the principle behind it, we find greater flexibility and freedom compared with perceiving ourselves made “in” the two divine representations. There we’d be like fighters in a ring: either stay “in” or get knocked out, no choice. Besides, *kata*’s flexibility has a certain cunning about it not unlike this character attributed to Satan...we can out-do him with his own tricks and thus come out on top.

A closer examination of Gen 1.26 can be helpful to appreciate the Council of Chalcedon’s teaching on the two natures of Jesus Christ, that is, the union of two natures in one person. Helpful because those of us familiar with Christianity have grown so accustomed to hear the elements of its doctrine and terminology repeated (primarily through the liturgy) that we’re tempted to overlook its uniqueness. When we think of those responsible for this definition, there comes to mind the image of a solemn assembly—all men in long white beards—whose job, it seems, was to make pronouncements of an absolute nature which we must accept or be branded as heretics. This is an immature though admittedly abiding image we have when it comes to matters of religion. So if we can shake off pre-conceptions and prejudices and take a fresh look at the person of Jesus Christ (which reached a definitive plateau with the Council of Chalcedon), we hit upon something that no one in his wildest imagination could have conjured up. Should we divest ourselves of these preconceptions for a moment and try to imagine someone walking around...Jesus Christ...with two diametrically opposed natures and wills under one roof, if you will, one person, we come across something unfathomable. The two sets (divine and human natures and wills) are unmixed and unconfused which makes visualizing this next to impossible.

Actually, we have four elements: a divine nature, a divine will, a human nature and a human will. The situation is compounded when we consider more carefully the term “divine” which is bantered about quite freely with little consideration as to what that means. Divine applies to God, obviously, but what in the world does that mean? All in all it’s a mystery, something completely unknowable. At the same time this unknowability doesn’t belong to a never-never land but has a way of setting everything else against it...not in opposition but in contrast...and that everything else is what we know. It’s obvious that in an advanced society as ours some people can’t accept unknowability, especially because knowledge is essential in this modern world. Asking someone to subscribe to unknowability is tantamount to asking him to subscribe to ignorance and thus be relegated to the fringes of society. Still, if we substitute that which is unknowable for the divine, we come closer to a working understanding of the issue at hand. So according to Chalcedon, unknowability is united to that which is human, and a chief feature of that which is human is an unlimited capacity for knowledge. Chalcedon describes the way these two jibe by employing negative terms such as unmixed, unconfused and so forth. How else can you jam two radically different realities into one person? Once you’ve done that best as possible, try to

imagine what the will or the capacity for volition would look like for that which is unknowable. That might amount to someone or something willing unknowability which, in a sense, isn't far off the mark biblically speaking; God never reveals himself or better, never does he reveal his nature. The final step is to consider the other will, the human one, as belong to Jesus Christ. He had that plus, according to Chalcedon, that which was just described in terms of unknowability or in more familiar terms, his divinity. And when we come down to it, can we imagine a person, Jesus, walking around with two wills and two natures? According to Chalcedon he did. But attempting to imagine it, what the experience must have been like, is beyond us. Then again, it may not be as far-out as we had thought.

Perhaps we could see a relationship between Gen 1.26 and Chalcedon, that is, in conjunction with the Greek preposition *kata*, according to. In this way we can realize better what it means to be made *kata* the divine image and likeness. The five instances of where *kata* occurs are italicized:

“Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father *as regards* his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us *as regards* his manhood; like us *in all respects*, apart from sin; *as regards* his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet *as regards* his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.”

Now we may isolate the five instances of *kata* ('as regards' and 'in all respects') and outline them as follows, keeping in mind that the words "according to" inserted as a substitute for the existing phrases in order to keep them in line with the *kata* of Gen 1.26:

2. 1. of one substance with the Father *according to* his Godhead.
2. at the same time of one substance with us *according to* his manhood.
3. like us *according to*, apart from sin (This sounds a bit awkward in English).
4. *according to* his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages.
5. but yet *according to* his manhood begotten for us men and for our salvation.

Numbers one and two form one pair and numbers four and five a second pair, both with regard to the chief tenet of Chalcedon, the union of divinity and humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ. So if we ponder slowly Gen 1.26, *kata* our image (*eikon*) and *kata* our likeness (*homoiosis*), we can see a parallel. Obviously we are of a different order than Jesus Christ, yet the Chalcedon phraseology allows us to posit *kata* our image as an analogue to Jesus' divinity and *kata* our likeness with reference to his humanity. Actually the latter...our likeness...is required to conform to the former, our image. Image is stable, never changes, whereas likeness requires continuous adjustment, of holding itself up to the mirror of the image in order to conform to it better. A traditional way of accessing our divine *eikon* is by cultivating a recollection or *anamnesis* of it. This Greek word much favored by Plato and others of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition is difficult to translate, so a quick look at its etymology might help. We have the root noun *mneme* (memory) to which is prefaced the preposition *ana* which takes

the genitive, dative and accusative cases. *Ana* variously translates as on, upon, throughout, up, upwards as well as back, backwards. Thus the preposition embraces a lot more than a backward gesture as popularly understood. In a nutshell, *ana* is more referential and quite dynamic. It's as though the process of recollection contains two gestures: first we make a gesture back and second, move in an upward (as well as an upon) direction. Thus we have a motion which connotes ascending a height in order to get a more comprehensive view of reality. *Mneme* or memory may be equated with *eikon*, the "form" in which we are created and which makes us human whereas *homoiosis* assumes a role not unlike the preposition *ana* in that it aims toward (upward, upon) *mneme/eikon*. Often it's said that we are made of memories though something deeper is intimated here. Since those Church Fathers who wrote in Greek though in these philosophical terms, it was only natural that they saw them as convenient aides to develop their theology. That's why a reading of the Chalcedon definition in Greek is so striking despite the formal terminology. Easily one can see how it dovetails with, for example, the Septuagint translation and thought behind Gen 1.26.

As noted at the beginning of this essay, **Jesus Wars** by Philip Jenkins was significant insofar as it served to bring together a complicated array of ideas and politics that reached culmination in the Council of Chalcedon. Several months after having read it, I decided it might be worthwhile bringing together reflections upon Gen 1.26 and the council's definition as outlined above. Surely this is fertile ground for further insight, and it will continue to occupy me in one form or another for the foreseeable future. Though I am generally cautious of dogmatic pronouncements, Chalcedon captured my attention years ago with the same question I had asked then even though it were less crystallized. That question runs as follows: How in the world can you jam together into one being...one person...that which is unknowable with that which is human and allow this being to have existence? It's bizarre, no question about it. But as time passed, I grew in realization that Chalcedon offers us a liberating message which forms the basic theme of this essay. If you have under one roof (that is, within one person, Jesus Christ) the two most important things in the world, there's no need to strive for anything else because it's all there. While that pertains to him, we share as much of it as we can being made according to (*kata*) God's image and likeness. We have one half of the equation, human nature, so that's familiar to us. Even so, human nature is unfathomable. And if this weren't bad enough, the other half of the equation...divinity...is joined to human nature. At the risk of being repetitive, that means we have human nature united with divinity or that which is unknowable, both living together under one roof, the roof of one person. Granted, we're dealing with words and concepts which are inadequate and run the risk of devolving into mind games. However, words and concepts are all we have to work with. Besides, it's enjoyable unpacking such rich theological material and applying it as best you can to your own life.

The biggest personal lesson I gained from Chalcedon is that if Jesus Christ consists of the two most coveted things in the world united in one person, what else is there to ask for? Or to put it better, since we're made *according to* God's image and *according to* his likeness, we need not look further, for already this coveted reality forms our very constitution. That means we don't have to go anywhere, search it out nor worry about hanging on to it in dread of losing it. Automatically we have the Whole Package by our birthright, if you will, or perhaps better, by baptism. So if we have this Package, how do we access it or make it real in our lives? There also arises another question. If this is so fantastic, why hasn't it been communicated better or communicated with greater zeal? That's a loaded question and briefly may be put as a certain hesitation to cultivate the contemplative dimension of life. Hopefully consideration of Gen 1.26 and elements from Chalcedon offer a solution, though it should be noted these are personal reflections, by no means done in a professional manner. As for realizing both elements, we could take them in another direction, if you will, by exploring some passages from St. Paul pertinent to life here and now as well as the fulness of this life which had been promised to us. To be sure, Chalcedon set the tone for all this by providing an extremely stable platform and balance

between the two natures of Jesus Christ and those same two natures as reflection in us as the divine image and likeness.

We have examined the key verse of Gen 1.26 (again, 'Let us make man according to...*kata*...our image and according to...*kata*...our likeness') and have suggested the possibility of drawing parallels between it and key phrases from the Council of Chalcedon which have also the preposition *kata*. Along the way we took into consideration what may be called the true nature of the Holy Spirit, namely, that he consists of hearing. This is based upon Jn 16.13: "For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak." We saw that the Greek words *ou aph' heautou* translate literally as "not from himself" instead of "authority." Though I had some hesitations about dwelling upon the preposition *kata* as a starting point for this essay, with further reflection I discovered that it opened up new avenues. These avenues do not belong to theology as we consider it today but more properly to the spiritual life and how we can live it more fully and in accord with scripture and tradition. However, I was curious if we could take this a step further and include death, the Ultimate Reality we all face. It seems that all real philosophical and spiritual reflection come down to death, so why not include it. So given my propensity for Greek prepositions, I turned to yet another one, *meta*, whose primary meaning is "after" though it can signify being in the midst of. There comes to mind the well-know *metanoia* (repentance) which consists of *meta* prefaced to the verb *noeo* (to think), a kind of placing the mind (*nous*, derived from *noeo*) after...*meta*...which turns out to be a change of one's mind. The reason for this shift from the preposition *kata*? *Kata* is superb for allowing us insight into how we're constituted according to the divine image and likeness as well as seeing how the two natures relate to each other within one person, Jesus Christ. Also it gives much greater flexibility when dealing with things spiritual, thereby avoiding the unfortunate tendency of becoming rigid in our thinking. Thus *kata* is more descriptive than definitive and requires actual trying out in the field to see if it works. The same applies to *meta* which we will examine now.

While *kata* may apply to our life here and now, *meta* (in the sense of being after) can be used as pointing toward death and what lies beyond...after or *meta*...it. Not that we can describe that state (or even that it exists), but *meta* is a way of pointing in the direction of such an inexorable mystery. We looked at the well-know *metanoia* as an introduction. However, two key words intimate there's more to life than this current existence. The first verb (*metamorphoo*) is found in the Gospels and in St. Paul whereas the second verb (*metaschematizo*) is in St. Paul only.

*Metamorphoo* is found in the account of Jesus' transfiguration in Mt 17.2 and Mk 9.2, the former being cited here: "And he *was transfigured* before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light." As for St. Paul, see 2Cor 3.18: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, *are being changed* into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." As for the verb itself, we have the verbal root for *morphe* (form or that by which something strikes our vision, an external appearance) prefaced with *meta*. The verb could read literally, to change after; "transfigured" is not fully accurate, *trans* suggesting that which goes across. Thus *metamorphoo* means to change into another form...a *morphe*...which comes after the previous one. It suggests a series or line of succession which may or may not have an end. With this in mind, we could say that when Jesus was transfigured, not only did his human *morphe* assume a new or divine one but afterwards linereturned to its previous (human) *morphe* and was ready to repeat the process should that have been necessary. As for 2Cor 3.18, it seems to intimate continuous change after death though such change can begin beforehand. In other words, the *metamorphoo* is eternal and not a sign of degeneration. As for when *metamorphoo* commenced, we have no indication from the text at hand. One gets the impression that it had a beginning which could be physical birth or perhaps at baptism. Another option is that a person has to become aware of *metamorphoo* as opposed to simply living with it, an unfamiliar undercurrent to our regular lives. It seems to be activated, if you will, upon one condition which intimates Jesus' transfiguration and so

excludes physical birth: “beholding the glory of the Lord.” The condition for such beholding is to have our faces unveiled, perhaps a way of saying that we must open up to the divine reality at hand. Note that emphasis is upon the faculty of sight; the verb for “beholding” is *katoptrizo* from which is derived *katoptron*, mirror. Thus we may read it as “mirroring the glory of the Lord.” Such mirroring is not a passive reflection but an incorporation of divine glory into our lives.

*Metamorphoo* is with respect to “into his likeness” which is inaccurate in English, *eikon* (image) being used in the Greek text. Be that as it may, *eikon* is appropriate for the person of Jesus Christ, for as in our own case being made *kata* the divine *eikon*, simply we are mirroring by our divinely created substance that which belongs to Jesus. In the paragraph above it was noted that the idea of transfiguration suggests a change of *morphe* which is more or less indefinite. Something akin to this is borne out by the words “from one degree of glory to another.” *Metamorphoo* relates specifically to this (the words ‘one degree’ are lacking in the Greek). At the same time this verb is dependent upon “beholding” or *katoptrizo*, i.e., that mirroring already noted. And mirroring suggests a lining up of a mirror to the object which it reflects and keeping it steady in order to retain a proper reflection of this object.

All in all, the words relation to Mt 17.2 and 2Cor 3.18, not to mention Gen 1.26, intimate the faculty of vision, of sight. At the same time we introduced Jn 16.13 where the Holy Spirit was defined as hearing: “For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak.” Although the Spirit is not mentioned in the references just considered, certainly he is present in the background, as providing the framework in which the activity takes place.

As for *metaschematizo*, it has no Gospel references, the key verse being “Who *will change* our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself” [Phl 3.21]. Literally this verb can read as to assume a certain form after. The verb *schematizo* is the root for *schema*, form, shape, figure, the characteristic property of something. Compared with *morphe*, *schema* suggests a *habitus*, a comportment, behavior or condition and thus runs deeper than the notion of physical (or not so physical) shape. Thus *schema* makes the verb *metaschematizo* considerably broader than any conventional idea about change. Note that this verb has two objects in view: “our lowly body” or more literally, “body of lowliness” and Christ’s “glorious body” or “body of glory.” Obviously the intent is to change the former into the latter, not the other way around. So we’re dealing with a change of *schema*, of beginning with the way the “body of lowliness” comports itself which isn’t very flattering. Somehow *schema* parallels the “body of glory” if we keep in mind the two “unmixed” natures of human and divine in one person, Jesus Christ. Despite the two incredibly opposites, a close parallel exists between the two, and that parallel consists in the external, physical actions in and by themselves devoid of mental and moral constructs we may impose upon them. Wondrously to say and minus these constructs, the former can be an accurate reflection of the “body of glory.” Let’s assume that this latter body has something akin to movement; after all, St. Paul freely speaks of change relative to things divine in conjunction with *metamorphoo*. Those with insight into this *metaschematizo* or change of *schema* know that their divine *eikon* and *homoiosis* are not static but dynamic. Though this dynamism is not in accord with place-to-place movement, it is rooted in desire or *eros* (Plato would call this *epithumia*).

“By the power (*energia*) which enables him to subject (*hupotasso*) all things to himself.” *Energia* pertains to action and is the source of change, of *metaschematizo*. And this power is akin to the ability to subjugate...*hupotasso*...all things to Christ, a connection made clear by the relative pronoun “which.” *Hupotasso* does not mean subjection in the negative sense...enslavement against one’s will...but an ordering done out of desire to have Jesus Christ govern one’s life. As for the verse at hand, actually it is an incomplete sentence, the full one beginning in vs. 20: “But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” So in order to understand *metaschematizo* and

*hupotasso*, both must be viewed in light of this “commonwealth” or *politeuma*. This word suggests not so much a state but the administration and body of citizens as well as the way this corporate unity comports itself relative to other independent states. It comes from the ancient Greek city state, small in size, yet can apply to a nation. The location of our *politeuma* is not on earth but in heaven and is not realized yet as indicated by the words “we await” and the future tense of *metaschematizo*.

At this junction it may be helpful to recap what had been presented. We began with consideration of the Septuagint translation of Gen 1.26 which uses the preposition *kata* (‘according to’ instead of ‘in’) with respect to the divine image and likeness in which we were fashioned. Actually this issue had been touched upon in another article, so what is presented fleshes here out a bit more the significance of *kata*. Next we moved to another use of *kata* relative to the two natures in Jesus Christ in the light of the Council of Chalcedon. Such a move seems natural, no real problem, and a fine way to delineate our spiritual constitution. However, the third and final stage was a leap outside these first two connections, if you will, and that was effected by considering two Greek verbs with the preposition *meta* prefaced to them. The reasoning behind this jump was to see how the notion of *kata* might achieve its perfection laying in the future or more precisely, realized after death. That’s a realm of intense interest to everyone yet when you come right down to it, nobody (regardless of what they may claim) has experience of that realm. Still...and this must be stated carefully...some intimation of the “other side” may be intuited as by perceiving the form of what lies there. And that form lies hidden in mystery though at the same time is perceptible by cultivating what it means to be made *kata* the divine image and likeness and seeing where that leads us.

This seems to be in line with the general spirit of Christianity as linear, of moving from the past into uncertain though ultimately glorified future. It sounds fine, but a danger lurks here, of neglecting the present in favor for this future. That would disavow the Incarnation and all that flows from it. The emphasize upon *kata* as according to does not intimate this future oriented view but looks at how we are made. And that is two-fold as stated often here, *kata* the divine image and *kata* the divine likeness. So perhaps instead of looking forward as taken to some extreme by a few Pentecostal denominations we can see how we embody Jesus Christ *kata* these two ways. Better put, we can shift emphasis from this future orientation toward the divine likeness, *homoiosis*. We can “forget” the image for now since that’s indestructible. However, *homoiosis* is subject to waxing or waning. Yet instead of striving to be like Jesus Christ we consider the possibility of being *kata*...according to...him. And that *kata* includes a whole range of possibilities waiting to be tried out.

In conclusion, this brief article originally was intended as a supplement or appendage to the earlier one entitled The Importance of Kata. It was an experiment not only to connect the two uses of *kata* in Gen 1.26 and the Council of Chalcedon but to see if it could be used with those two verbs beginning with the preposition *meta* (after). In other words, it was an attempt to shift from what it means to be constituted *according to* something to what it means to be *after* something. And that after is after physical death. Something made with such care—according to our image and according to our likeness—doesn’t seem destined for disposal but for an ultimate transformation of which we have a glimpse. This may be some kind of wishful thinking, but anyone is free to experiment with this *kata* business. In other words, to see if theoretically it makes sense by trying it on. You don’t come to a quick and easy transformation but begin to know there’s a reality larger than the one in which we function. As noted above, one example of the preposition *kata* is “according to the Gospel of St. Mark.” St. Mark nor the other three Gospels (which begin with *kata*) do not give us a picture of Jesus Christ whole and entire like some divine being who fell from heaven and returned there. No, “according to St. Mark” suggests a story which has a beginning and an end. One can visualize it also as a slide rule alone which we move as when we listen to excerpts from Mark on Sundays or read his Gospel in the spirit of *lectio divina*. Actually, *lectio* is a fine way to bring these somewhat disparate elements together. I have wondered by this phrase hadn’t been rendered *lectio sacra*, for sometimes *lectio* is

translated as sacred reading. The adjective *sacer* applies to things set aside for worship and the like, so why not apply it to *lectio*? However, the adjective modifying *lectio* is *divina*, and anything divine pertains to God directly. For example, you refer to the “sacred” vessels of the altar, not the “divine” vessels of the altar. So if we’re engaged in a *lectio* which is *divina*, we’re into something awesome which will teach us new and wonderful things in a manner we haven’t known before. And so, Gen 1.26, the Council of Chalcedon, *metamorphoo* and *metaschematizo* are pondered in the spirit of *lectio divina*, divine reading. That’s the only way they make sense or point in that direction.