

Christ's divinity is shown over and over again in the New Testament. For example, in John 5:18 we are told that Jesus' opponents sought to kill him because he "called God his Father, making himself equal with God."

In John 8:58, when quizzed about how he has special knowledge of Abraham, Jesus replies, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM"—invoking and applying to himself the personal name of God—"I AM" or "Yahweh." His audience understood exactly what he was claiming about himself. "So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple" (John 8:59).

In John 20:28, Thomas falls at Jesus' feet, exclaiming, "My Lord and my God!" (Greek: *Ho Kurios mou kai ho Theos mou*—literally, "The Lord of me and the God of me!")

In Philippians 2:6, Paul tells us that Christ Jesus "[w]ho, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped" (New International Version). So Jesus chose to be born in humble, human form though he could have simply remained in equal glory with the Father for he was "in very nature God."

Also significant are passages that apply the title "the First and the Last" to Jesus. This is one of the Old Testament titles of Yahweh: "Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of armies: 'I am the First and I am the Last; besides me there is no god'" (Is. 44:6; cf. 41:4, 48:12).

This title is directly applied to Jesus three times in the book of Revelation: "When I saw him [Christ], I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the First and the Last'" (Rev. 1:17). "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The words of the First and the Last, who died and came to life" (Rev. 2:8). "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:12–13).

This last quote is especially significant since it applies to Jesus the parallel title "the Alpha and the

Omega," which Revelation earlier applied to the Lord God: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8).

As the following quotes show, the early Church Fathers also recognized that Jesus Christ is God and were adamant in maintaining this precious truth.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

"Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the Church at Ephesus in Asia . . . predestined from eternity for a glory that is lasting and unchanging, united and chosen through true suffering by the will of the Father in Jesus Christ our God" (*Letter to the Ephesians* 1 [A.D. 110]).

"For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God's plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit" (ibid., 18:2).

"[T]o the Church beloved and enlightened after the love of Jesus Christ, our God, by the will of him that has willed everything which is" (*Letter to the Romans* 1 [A.D. 110]).

ARISTIDES

"[Christians] are they who, above every people of the earth, have found the truth, for they acknowledge God, the Creator and maker of all things, in the only-begotten Son and in the Holy Spirit" (*Apology* 16 [A.D. 140]).

TATIAN THE SYRIAN

"We are not playing the fool, you Greeks, nor do we talk nonsense, when we report that God was born in the form of a man" (*Address to the Greeks* 21 [A.D. 170]).

MELITO OF SARDIS

"It is no way necessary in dealing with persons of in-

telligence to adduce the actions of Christ after his baptism as proof that his soul and his body, his human nature, were like ours, real and not phantasmal. The activities of Christ after his baptism, and especially his miracles, gave indication and assurance to the world of the deity hidden in his flesh. Being God and likewise perfect man, he gave positive indications of his two natures: of his deity, by the miracles during the three years following after his baptism, of his humanity, in the thirty years which came before his baptism, during which, by reason of his condition according to the flesh, he concealed the signs of his deity, although he was the true God existing before the ages" (Fragment in Anastasius of Sinai's *The Guide* 13 [A.D. 177]).

IRENÆUS

"For the Church, although dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and from their disciples the faith in one God, Father Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who announced through the prophets the dispensations and the comings, and the birth from a Virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from heaven in the glory of the Father to reestablish all things; and the raising up again of all flesh of all humanity, in order that to Jesus Christ our Lord and God and Savior and King, in accord with the approval of the invisible Father, every knee shall bend of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth . . ." (*Against Heresies* 1:10:1 [A.D. 189]).

"Nevertheless, what cannot be said of anyone else who ever lived, that he is himself in his own right God and Lord . . . may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth" (ibid., 3:19:1).

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

"The Word, then, the Christ, is the cause both of our ancient beginning—for he was in God—and of our well-being. And now this same Word has appeared as man. He alone is both God and man, and the source of all our good things" (*Exhortation to the Greeks* 1:7:1 [A.D. 190]).

"Despised as to appearance but in reality adored, [Jesus is] the expiator, the Savior, the soother, the divine Word, he that is quite evidently true God, he that is put on a level with the Lord of the universe because he was his Son" (ibid., 10:110:1).

TERTULLIAN

"God alone is without sin. The only man who is without sin is Christ; for Christ is also God" (*The Soul* 41:3 [A.D. 210]).

"The origins of both his substances display him as man and as God: from the one, born, and from the other, not born" (*The Flesh of Christ* 5:6–7 [A.D. 210]).

"That there are two gods and two Lords, however, is a statement which we will never allow to issue from our mouth; not as if the Father and the Son were not God, nor the Spirit God, and each of them God; but formerly two were spoken of as gods and two as Lords, so that when Christ would come, he might both be acknowledged as God and be called Lord, because he is the Son of him who is both God and Lord" (*Against Praxeas* 13:6 [A.D. 216]).

ORIGEN

"Although he was God, he took flesh; and having been made man, he remained what he was: God" (*The Fundamental Doctrines* 1:0:4 [A.D. 225]).

HIPPOLYTUS

"Only [God's] Word is from himself and is therefore also God, becoming the substance of God" (*Refutation of All Heresies* 10:33 [A.D. 228]).

HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME

"For Christ is the God over all, who has arranged to wash away sin from mankind, rendering the old man new" (*ibid.*, 10:34).

NOVATIAN

"If Christ was only man, why did he lay down for us such a rule of believing as that in which he said, 'And this is life eternal, that they should know you, the only and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent?' [John 17:3]. Had he not wished that he also should be understood to be God, why did he add, 'And Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,' except because he wished to be received as God also? Because if he had not wished to be understood to be God, he would have added, 'And the man Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;' but, in fact, he neither added this, nor did Christ deliver himself to us as man only, but associated himself with God, as he wished to be understood by this conjunction to be God also, as he is. We must therefore believe, according to the rule prescribed, on the Lord, the one true God, and consequently on him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ, who by no means, as we have said, would have linked himself to the Father had he not wished to be understood to be God also. For he would have separated himself from him had he not wished to be understood to be God" (*Treatise on the Trinity* 16 [A.D. 235]).

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

"One who denies that Christ is God cannot become his temple [of the Holy Spirit] . . ." (*Letters* 73:12 [A.D. 253]).

GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER

"There is one God, the Father of the living Word, who is his subsistent wisdom and power and eternal image: perfect begetter of the perfect begotten, Father of the only-begotten Son. There is one Lord, only of the only, God of God, image and likeness of deity, efficient Word, wisdom comprehensive of the constitution of all things, and power formative of the whole creation, true Son of true Father, invisible of invisible, and incorruptible of incorruptible, and immortal of immortal and eternal of eternal. . . . And thus neither was the Son ever wanting to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son; but without variation and without change, the same Trinity abides ever" (*Declaration of Faith* [A.D. 265]).

ARNOBIUS

"Well, then, some raging, angry, and excited man will say, 'is that Christ your God?' 'God indeed,' we shall answer, 'and God of the hidden powers'" (*Against the Pagans* 1:42 [A.D. 305]).

LACTANTIUS

"He was made both Son of God in the spirit and Son of man in the flesh, that is, both God and man" (*Divine Institutes* 4:13:5 [A.D. 307]).

"We, on the other hand, are [truly] religious, who make our supplications to the one true God. Someone may perhaps ask how, when we say that we worship one God only, we nevertheless assert that there are two, God the Father and God the Son—which assertion has driven many into the greatest error . . . [thinking] that we confess that there is another God, and that he is mortal. . . . [But w]hen we speak of God the Father and God the Son, we do not speak of them as different, nor do we separate each, because the Father cannot exist without the Son, nor can the Son be separated from the Father" (*ibid.*, 4:28–29).

COUNCIL OF NICAEA I

"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. Through him all things were made" (*Creed of Nicaea* [A.D. 325]).

"But those who say, 'There was a time when he [the Son] did not exist,' and 'Before he was born, he did not exist,' and 'Because he was made from non-existing matter, he is either of another substance or essence,' and those who call 'God the Son of God changeable and mutable,' these the Catholic Church anathematizes" (*Appendix to the Creed of Nicaea* [A.D. 325]).

PATRICK OF IRELAND

"Jesus Christ is the Lord and God in whom we believe, and whose coming we expect will soon take place, the judge of the living and the dead, who will render to everyone according to his works" (*Confession of St. Patrick* 4 [A.D. 452]).

CATHOLIC ANSWERS

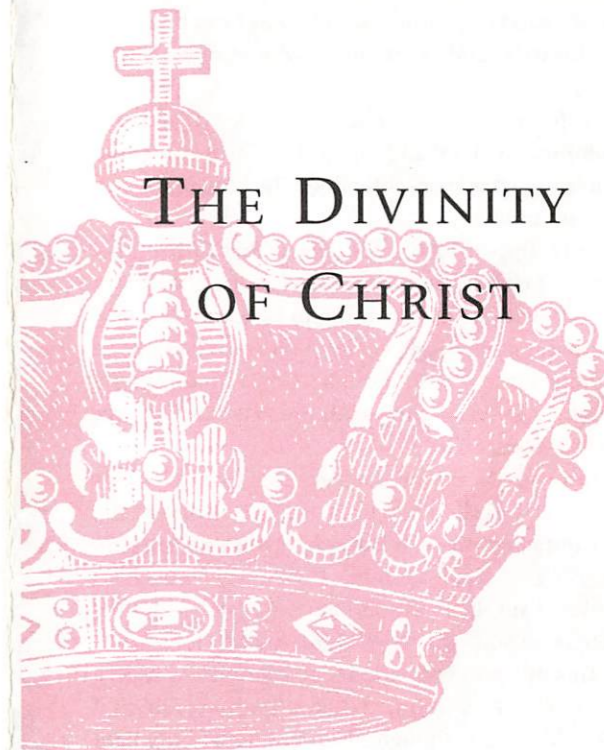
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