

Creeds as Anti-Personnel Lines

Andrew Hamilton

Abstract: The recent excommunication of Tissa Balasuriya raised the question of the propriety of requiring Christians to subscribe to credal statements specially composed to meet their case. In this article the author reflects on two credal statements imposed on Nestorius and Berengarius. Both have been regarded as notorious heretics, and the credal statements tendered to them had significant subsequent influence. An examination of the effect of the two credal statements may suggest appropriate questions to put to the more recent use of such statements.

IN DISCUSSION OF THE RECENT EXCOMMUNICATION of Tissa Balasuriya,¹ many points were raised about the processes followed. Among them was the propriety of requiring Christians to subscribe to credal statements specially composed to meet their case. In this article, I shall reflect on two notable credal statements imposed on theologians accused of heresy. I shall set both within their doctrinal and historical context, and evaluate their shorter and longer term effects in the life of the Church. The two statements, both found in Denzinger, are the "Twelve Chapters" appended to the Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius,² and the credal statement signed by Berengarius at the direction of Humbert of Silva Candida in 1059.³ Both Nestorius and Berengarius have been regarded as notorious heretics, and the credal statements tendered to them had significant subsequent influence. An examination of the effect of the two credal statements may suggest appropriate questions to put to the more recent use of such statements.

1. CYRIL, NESTORIUS AND THE TWELVE CHAPTERS

The Twelve Chapters formed a summary statement of orthodox Christology, in the form of anathemas. In order to understand their

1. See, for example, the correspondence columns in *The Tablet* on and following January 8, 1997.

2. Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum*, ed. XXXVI (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1995) 252-263 (93-96).

3. Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, *Enchiridion* 690 (227).

character and effects, it is necessary to recount their history and background, even at the risk of traversing a well trodden path.⁴ Nestorius was made archbishop of a fractious church in Constantinople in 428. The imperial court chose him because he was an outsider. He had been a monk and prominent teacher in Antioch. He ruled forcefully, and soon alienated the Emperor's powerful sister and the monks of the city. The latter tested him with a theological question – whether it was right to call Mary *Theotokos* (bearer of God) as anti-Arian tradition, liturgical practice and piety insisted – or, as Nestorius' Antiochene chaplain had asserted, she should be called or *anthropotokos* (bearer of man). Nestorius gave a pedantic ruling that satisfied no one. His supporters and critics become involved in increasingly bitter dispute.

By 429, Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, became involved in the issue on the grounds that it had agitated the Alexandrian monks. Nestorius responded dismissively to his concerns, and threatened to hear in Constantinople the cases of disaffected Alexandrian clergy from Alexandria who had claimed mistreatment by Cyril. He also enquired into the case of Pelagians who had been condemned at Rome.

By this time Cyril had entered into detailed controversy with Nestorius, based on the *florilegium* which he had compiled of the orthodox christological tradition and of Nestorius' controversial texts. He also sent these documents to Rome, where they were referred to John Cassian. The latter's muddled report, which identified Pelagian tendencies in Nestorius, was adopted in 430 by the Roman synod. It demanded that Nestorius recant his ideas and profess the orthodox Christology of Rome and Alexandria. Cyril, who was effectively made the executor of the decree, took advantage of the situation to prepare a Christological statement, to which he appended the provocative Twelve Chapters. In the course of a liturgy at Constantinople his envoys delivered the text dramatically to Nestorius who predictably rejected them. A subsequent Council at Ephesus in 431 saw the churches of the East bitterly divided, Nestorius finally go into exile, and Cyril emerge triumphant.

Even a summary history suggests that the Twelve Chapters has a complex history. Reflection on them must take account at least of the theological dispute, of the relationship between two church leaders, and of the relationship between churches in the Christian Empire.

4. In the accounts both of the Twelve Chapters and of Berengarius' oath I rely on the work of recent writers. The best recent account of the Nestorian dispute is that of J. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria: the christological controversy: its history, theology, texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 126-226. McGuckin is favourably disposed to Cyril, and makes the best possible case for the orthodoxy and prudence of the Twelve Chapters.

1.1 A theological dispute

Cyril wrote the Twelve Chapters as an intervention in a theological dispute of great pastoral and spiritual consequence. The theological debate was far more than the ideological cover for a power-play that it has sometimes been taken to be.⁵ Cyril and Nestorius were both considerable theologians: in his earlier years, Cyril had commented extensively on the Scriptures and would have retained his place in the theological canon even had he not held public office. Nestorius had come to prominence as a distinguished teacher and, like Cyril, saw himself above all as a teacher of his people.

The theological issue on which Cyril and Nestorius took divergent views emerged from the resolution of the Arian debate. This had declared that salvation, as it is offered in the Gospel, is impossible unless the Son of God who shared our human condition was fully divine. But that conclusion posed difficult questions as to how Jesus Christ could be seen both as Son of God and as genuinely human without compromising the unity of subject in Jesus Christ. The issues raised were both terminological and substantial.

Among those who opposed Arius it was common ground that the fully divine Son of God had shared fully our human condition. Furthermore, full divinity entailed impassibility. The question which resulted from this statement of faith was how the Son of God could live a human life without ceasing to be impassible. And alternatively, how the impassible Son of God could remain impassible without being distanced from the humanity which he assumed.⁶

In approaching these questions, the Alexandrian theologians celebrated the union between divine and human and the paradoxes which it entailed of an impassible Son suffering in the flesh. The Antiochenes, reacting to the extreme Apollinarian form of this position, insisted that the impassible Word needed to be distinguished from the passible humanity which he assumed. They preferred to explore modes of union which preserved difference, and to resolve paradox.

The difference between the two theological schools was muddled by the ambiguity of the terminology used to analyse individual beings. Expressions used by the Alexandrians to denote the concrete existent were often used by Antiochenes to denote the essential characteristics of a particular being.

5. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria*, 126-226, complements well the older, magisterial work of R. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon* (London: SPCK, 1953) 132-81.

6. J. O'Keefe, "Impassible suffering? Divine passion and Fifth Century Christology", *Theological studies* 58 (1997) 39-60, is correct to make the main focus of fifth century Antiochene Christology the impassible nature of God. While he perhaps downplays the extent to which the Antiochene theology emphasised the significance of human response in salvation, it is certainly anachronistic to view the Antiochene schools as the forerunners of a later "low Christology" or of a historical interest in the life of Jesus.

The liturgical description of Mary as *Theotokos* provided a natural focus of dispute. Alexandrians welcomed the epithet because it stressed the inseparable unity between divine and human in Jesus Christ. It was acceptable to Antiochenes, with the reservation that it might mislead simple Christians to believe that Jesus Christ's humanity lacked integrity. But in the heat of dispute, the Alexandrians believed that Antiochene reservations betrayed the denial of true union between divine and human in Jesus Christ.

As a theological statement, the Twelve Chapters are best seen as the imposition of an Alexandrian theology without concession to Antiochene sensitivities.⁷ The form of the document – summary statements of what was to be believed or abjured, followed by anathemas – was confrontational, and the language in which they were couched was provocative. While sympathetic hearers may have heard the unity of divine and human in Christ stated succinctly and strongly, those who already suspected that many Alexandrian Christians denied the integrity of Jesus Christ's humanity and divinity found in it confirmation of their fears. Intended as an uncompromising statement of orthodoxy, it was inevitably judged by hostile readers to be itself unorthodox.

The provocative language and the opening for misunderstanding is evident in each of the anathemas. The second, for example, states:

If anyone does not confess that the Word who is from God the Father has been united to the flesh according to the hypostasis and that Christ is one with his own flesh, that is to say that the same is at once God and man, *anathema sit*.⁸

The gap between Cyril's intent and the Antiochene understanding of it is evident in Cyril's response to the criticism of Theodoret of Cyr.⁹ While Cyril understood hypostasis to denote the individual subject, in the Antiochene tradition it denoted the essential qualities possessed by the concrete individual. So Theodoret readily saw unity in hypostasis as encouraging or reflecting the Apollinarian mixture of natures. While that was not Cyril's intention, his epithetic form and minatory tone ensured that the worst interpretation would be put on his formulation.

The third anathema condemns those who "divide the hypostases after union" and, denying a physical union, define the union between divine and human in Christ in terms of "a mere association in dignity or authority or power". The Antiochenes were appalled that the unity of divine and human in Christ should be described as a physical union,

7. For the text, see E. Schwartz (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum. Concilium Universale Ephesenum* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928) 1.1.6.12, (40-42). Henceforth, ACO (*Ephesus*).

8. ACO (*Ephesus*) 1.1.6.12, (40).

9. Cyril of Alexandria, *Apologia XII Capitulum contra Theodoretum*, ACO (*Ephesus*) 1.6.168.19 (114).

which they reserved to unions in the material world. Any union on the level of *physis* necessarily denoted an Apollinarian confusion and mixture of natures.¹⁰

The anathemas which deal with the human life of Jesus Christ angered the Antiochenes because they seemed to affront the integrity of his human and divine nature.¹¹ Theodoret insisted that the Incarnation had to be spoken of in terms of interrelationship of giving and receiving between the divine and the human. When the anathemas attacked the dissociation of the human Jesus Christ from the glory of the Word and the Holy Spirit, the Antiochenes heard the divine and human confused. Theodoret responded by recounting the Gospel narrative which emphasised the reception of the Spirit by Christ and his glorification.¹²

The final anathema summarises the burden of the Twelve Chapters: "If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh and was crucified in the flesh, and that he tasted death in the flesh and became the first born from the dead, being Life and giver of life as God, *anathema sit.*" From an Alexandrian perspective, the anathema is perfectly clear and guarded. But to their critics, who suspected that the Alexandrians taught a vital union between Word and flesh in which the character of each was changed, the statement implied that God was passible.¹³ Given the provocative language and peremptory demand of the Twelve Chapters, Theodoret and his Antiochene companions were not disposed to presume good faith.

At the theological level, the Twelve Chapters attempted to resolve a theological dispute on a unilateral basis. Cyril's formulations revealed no attempt to enter the opponents' world. Nor did they acknowledge that the language of theological analysis was imprecise and subject to different interpretations. The anathemas disclose a Cyril convinced that Nestorius and his theology lay beyond the borders of orthodoxy, and that they had to be deprived of any influence within the Church.

1.2 A conflict between church leaders

While they essentially made a theological claim, the Twelve Chapters also marked a conflict between two strong men. It would be misleadingly romantic to see Nestorius as an unworldly dissident overcome by the worldly-wise and violent Cyril. Cyril and Nestorius

10. *ACO (Ephesus)* 1.6.168.23 (116-117).

11. See the discussion of anathemata 7 and 9 in Cyril of Alexandria, *Apologia XII Capitulum contra Theodoretum*, *ACO (Ephesus)* 1.6.169.52-54 (130-131); 1.6.169.59-65 (132-134).

12. *ACO (Ephesus)* 1.6.169.59-65 (132-134). While Theodoret's treatment suggests the importance of Jesus Christ's human response for salvation, he is explicitly concerned with the implications for the nature of God of making the divine nature the subject of possible experience.

13. *ACO (Ephesus)* 1.6.169 (144-146).

ruled imperially as bishops by the canons of the day, and were relatively equally matched.¹⁴ Each faced opposition when elected, and dealt strongly with it; each proscribed heresy and destroyed heretical churches.

Nestorius invited dissidents to come to the palace to raise their complaints, and had them beaten up. Like other bishops, he was comfortable with having his own position endorsed by imperial force, and complained when the authorities were reluctant to use harsh measures.

For his part Cyril, who wrote strongly against Judaisers, failed to prevent a Christian mob from killing Jews. He preached against pagans and presided, probably helplessly, over the murder and dismembering of the Pagan philosopher Hypatia in a church. When his fate after the Council of Ephesus hung in the balance, he bribed the imperial officials with gold worth several million dollars at today's prices. He was constantly in dispute with the Prefect of the city, and strongly defended his entitlement to a large paramilitary force. He could also rely on the power of moral and physical persuasion provided by the Alexandrian monks.

The conflict between Cyril and Nestorius, therefore, lay between strong bishops who ruled in authoritarian ways. The Twelve Chapters are best seen as a decisive intervention, designed to humiliate and destroy Nestorius and so to eradicate the threat posed by his theology. In drafting the document, Cyril moved beyond Celestine's general instruction that Nestorius was to accept the faith of Alexandria and Rome, to impose a partisan theology.¹⁵ He also ignored the advice given Nestorius by John of Antioch to accept Celestine's demand.¹⁶ The Twelve Chapters and their dramatic delivery to Nestorius were part of the theatre of power so familiar and important in the late Roman world.¹⁷ They represented the vindication of truth in the spectacular crushing of her enemies.

1.3 A conflict over church order

The Twelve Chapters must also be seen as an attempt to resolve a dispute which divided the great churches. Disputes bore on the often difficult relations between the imperial court and the churches, and those between the major churches, particularly those of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome.¹⁸

14. See McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria*, 9.

15. Celestine to Cyril of Alexandria, *ACO (Ephesus)* 2.1.7 (6).

16. John of Antioch to Nestorius, *ACO (Ephesus)* 1.1.14.4 (95).

17. See P. Brown, *Power and persuasion in Late Antiquity: towards a Christian empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1992).

18. See McGuckin, *St Cyril*, 70-72.

Like John Chrysostom before him, Nestorius' fortunes in Constantinople depended on imperial support. With that support, he could threaten Cyril's position. When he alienated Pulcheria, he was vulnerable to his enemies within the churches.

At the same time, Nestorius' readiness to hear appeals from Alexandria and Rome threatened the position of both Cyril and Celestine. For it manifested the implications of two developing understandings of church order and of the resolution of disputes. In the West, the arbiter of disputes was the Roman Church, which under Damasus had developed a previously implicit theology to extend its office to whole Church. The theology, based on the primacy of Peter among the Apostles, had been accepted within the Western Church.

Within the East, however, a variety of forms of jurisdiction had been accepted: appeal to the Emperor, through synods and through metropolitans, and particularly the larger sees of Rome, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople. After the Council of Constantinople had declared Constantinople to be the second Rome, Constantinople had increasingly exercised jurisdiction outside its immediate boundaries, a step which had led to John Chrysostom's deposition at the instigation of Theophilus, Cyril's uncle. Despite Roman condemnation of the deposition, Cyril continued to maintain that it had been properly executed.¹⁹

Nestorius worked within this developing tradition when he pressed for a council of theologians to be held in Constantinople in order to judge Cyril. He failed to have the Council he wanted because he had alienated the court. Cyril sought the judgment of the Roman synod on Nestorius, and argued with a mixture of expediency and principle that the Roman decision was decisive. But he used the Twelve Chapters to build on the judgment, used what arguments he could to influence the Court, and, like Celestine, kept his options open when the Council was later called at Ephesus.²⁰

The Twelve Chapters thus played a part in the resolution by the universal Church of a dispute between bishops. They made a pre-emptive strike against any appeal which Nestorius might make to the Emperor, based on the prerogatives of his own See. Cyril sought in the Twelve Chapters a simple and quick solution to a complex problem.

The Twelve Chapters were intended as a decisive intervention in a dispute about the truth of the Gospel, as a personal blow to humiliate a church leader and destroy his influence, and as an assertion of the right of the Church, and particularly of the Alexandrian church, to enunciate and declare decisively her faith.

19. See Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter 33* [to Accacius] (PG 77, 159 B-C).

20. See Celestine's *Commonitorium* to his legates, ACO (*Ephesus*) 2.7.8 (25).

1.4 The effects of the Twelve Chapters

By these standards, the Twelve Chapters were a failure. They generated and made ineradicable theological divisions, made Nestorius into a rock of contradiction, and rendered an agreed church order unattainable. They became an effective sign of polarisation both in the short and the longer term.

These consequences were unnecessary. For the central point of Cyril's theology – the assertion of one subject in Jesus Christ – was accepted by the vast majority of the bishops of the day. This not only became evident at the Council of Ephesus of 431, where the Antiochene party formed a small minority, but was also demonstrated by the acquiescence of John of Antioch that Nestorius should make his peace. The Alexandrian emphasis on the narrative of the Word becoming flesh reflected the theology and devotion of the eastern church as a whole. The Antiochene theology was at its best a creative response to a one-sided presentation of Alexandrian themes.

The division between Antiochene and Alexandrian churches, as distinct from the conflict between Cyril and Nestorius, was hardened only when the Council of Ephesus met without the Antiochenes being present. The Twelve Chapters offered Antiochene anger persuasive theological grounds and a potent symbol.²¹ The confrontational and paradoxical language of the Chapters convinced many Antiochenes, including their best theologians Theodoret of Cyr and Andrew of Samosata, that Cyril's theology was Apollinarian. It also led many of Cyril's natural supporters to waver.

The disquiet about the Twelve Chapters was so widespread that in subsequent debate Cyril tried to reassure his readers of their orthodoxy.²² He explained his theology so effectively that his Antiochene opponents believed that he had changed his position.²³ Although he continued to attack Theodoret and the inheritance of Theodore of Mopsuestia, his accommodation to Antiochene linguistic usage made possible the negotiation in 433 of the formula of Reunion with John of Antioch.²⁴

Cyril's very movement towards accommodation, however, created deeper polarisation in which the Twelve Chapters acted as a powerful symbol. Many who had supported him at Ephesus were disturbed by

21. See, for example, the Antiochene party's reference to "Cyril of Alexandria's heretical Chapters" in *Synodi Orientalium Relatio, ACO (Ephesus) 1.7.68 (78)*.

22. Cyril defends the Twelve Chapters in *ACO (Ephesus) 1.7.24, 1.6.167, 1.5.17*.

23. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria*, 228, argues persuasively that Cyril had not changed his position. But how deeply the Twelve Chapters had poisoned the wells of reception, and consequently how gratified the Antiochenes were at what appeared to be later retractions, can be seen in Theodoret, *Letter 17 (PG 83 1483A-1485A)*.

24. Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter 39 (PG 77 173A-181D)*, includes the Antiochene profession of faith.

his later conciliatory position. They saw his accommodation to the Antiochene language of two natures as undermining the authentic Christology of the Twelve Chapters. They therefore disowned those who identified with the later Cyril of the Formula of Reunion. Dioscorus, who replaced Cyril as bishop of Alexandria and ruled his church with equal forcefulness, represented the Cyril of the anathemas against the Cyril of the later explanation. With Eutyches, he attacked as unfaithful the ambiguity of the Formula of Reunion, insisting that after the Union there was only one nature in Jesus Christ. At the robber council of Ephesus in 449, he made his position normative, condemning the Antiochene Theodoret and Ibas and the theological tradition which they represented. The Twelve Chapters were naturally upheld as the basis of orthodox faith.

The subsequent Council of Chalcedon is best seen as a moment in the long dispute between bishops, who all acknowledged the doctrinal authority of Cyril but disagreed among themselves whether Cyril's genuine theology was crystallised in the Twelve Chapters or in the Formula of Reunion.²⁵ It is less helpful to describe the Council as a conflict between Alexandrian and Antiochene theologies or as a victory for Leo's western theology.²⁶

At the Council, bishops and documents extraneous to the Alexandrian tradition seem to have had little influence, despite the Antiochene sympathies of the Prefect Anatolius. Even when admitted, Theodoret and Ibas were suspect and marginal. Leo's Tome was also initially suspect, and was admitted only when it was found to be orthodox.²⁷ When the Bishops finally agreed that the Lord had spoken through Leo, the grounds of their approval were that on examination, Leo had been found to agree with Cyril. Furthermore, when at a late stage the Leonine *in two natures* replaced the phrase *out of two natures* in the text of the Definition, it was surrounded by Cyrilline qualifications.²⁸ The Christology of the Tome was incorporated into the

25. For the history of which Chalcedon was an early stage, see P. Gray, *The defense of Chalcedon in the East* (Leiden: Brill, 1979); W. Frend, *The rise of the Monophysite movement* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

26. So, McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria*, 233-40; W. Frend, *The rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 770, argues the same case. J. Pelikan, *The emergence of the Christian tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971) 264, argues for the dominant influence of Leo and Antioch in the Definition.

27. The discussions are detailed in E. Schwartz (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Omnium, Concilium Universale Chalcedonense* (Berlin: de Gruyter 1933) 1.2.92ff.

28. See McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria*, 237-40. He demonstrates the influence of Letters 45 and 46 to Succensus, and the importance of the qualification *gnwrizovmenoß* in the Chalcedonian formulation, underlining the actual unity, as distinct from the theoretical division in Jesus Christ. He confines the influence of the West to the final and late formulation *ejn* rather than *ejk* of the two natures. I agree with this view, with the modification that the Chalcedonian formula includes phrases which reflect Cyril's detente with the Antiochenes after Ephesus. So, while Cyril's Letter 46.4 provides the structure of the Chalcedonian Definition, the formulation itself echoes closely Theodoret's satisfaction

Decree because the Cyrillan majority found its formulations useful against Eutyches and his extreme version of Cyril's theology. As might be expected from such a Council, the Twelve Chapters were allowed to disappear into the background.

It might also be expected that they would not be allowed to remain in the background. They formed a symbol of resistance to Chalcedon. The dispute between the two interpretations of Cyril's Christology led to the massacre of monks, the overthrow of bishops and rolling conflict. The Emperors hesitated between the two positions. They recognised that in the East no settlement was possible which disowned the form of Cyril's theology identified with the Twelve Chapters. But they also recognised that the agreement of the Western church, which they needed, depended on the acceptance of Chalcedon. The churches, however, were so divided that the initiative to reunite Christians was increasingly left to Emperors. It bore fruit only after the original parties to the dispute had begun a separated existence.

The surviving adherents of the original Antiochene tradition were quickly separated from the wider Church. Its proponents Ibas and Theodoret had played only a minor part at Chalcedon. After the Syrian church embraced the anti-Chalcedonian variant of Cyril's theology, Ibas went to Persia and was influential in the early development of the Nestorian church.

The Twelve Chapters played a central role in shaping a separate anti-Chalcedonian church. Bishops and Emperors regularly demanded adherence to the Twelve Chapters. In 474, the usurper Basiliscus condemned the Tome and Chalcedon. He identified orthodox Christology with the two Councils of Ephesus and made normative the Christology of the Twelve Chapters. Zeno's *Henotikon* of 482 tried to establish unity by omitting reference to the Tome and to Chalcedon, while endorsing the twelve chapters as a basis for Christological faith. Ten years later Athanasius II of Alexandria negotiated reconciliation with the Roman bishop Anastasius II on the basis of the *Henotikon* and the acceptance of the Twelve Chapters.²⁹

When, in 530, Justinian tried to reconcile the party of Severus, the most significant leader of the strong Cyrillan party, their representatives refused to accept the authority of Chalcedon and insisted that the Twelve Chapters were normative. In 535, a Severan synod insisted on adherence to the *Henotikon*, and declared the *latrocinium* of Ephesus and the Twelve Chapters to be of divine inspiration.

with the Formula of Reunion: kai; tw'n fuvsewn ta;ß ijdiouvthtaß ajkratw'ß diafulavxasa. Theodoret of Cyr, *Letter 17* (PG 83 1484B).

29. See W. Friend, *The rise of the Monophysite movement*, 197. Friend adds that for his conciliatory attitude, Anastasius was placed by Dante (*Inferno*, II 8-9) in the second circle of hell.

The path toward acceptance both of the Twelve Chapters and of Chalcedon was provided by Philoxenus of Maboug who proposed as a counterbalancing symbol to the acceptance of Chalcedon the condemnation of the Three Chapters (the work of the three Antiochene theologians, Theodore, Theodoret and Ibas). Justinian tried to use this formula to reassure the Church that in accepting Chalcedon and the Tome, they were not disowning the theology of Cyril. In 553, after kidnapping Vigilius of Rome and forcing his assent to the Three Chapters, he had this resolution accepted by the Second Council of Constantinople, which also canonised as authoritative the Twelve Chapters and identified them with Cyrillian and Chalcedonian orthodoxy.

By this time, however, a separate hierarchy, identified with the Cyril of the Twelve Chapters, had been consecrated throughout the East, and the foundations of the Monophysite church were evident. It is ironical that Chalcedon was accepted throughout the East only after theological traditions that owned Cyril and Nestorius as their patrons had seceded from the Church.

1.5 Reflections

The consequences of the Creed which Cyril tried to impose on Nestorius were not those for which he would have hoped. They included a century of sustained division, bitter theological debate, and strained relations between churches. The reconciliation of churches was increasingly taken out of their own hands and made the business of the imperial court.

Clearly, it would be too simple to blame all this on the Twelve Chapters. But this imposed Creed played a significant role in subsequent division. It accentuated the polarisation between Alexandrians and Antiochenes after the Council of Ephesus, provided Eutyches and Dioscorus with a symbol of fidelity to the tradition of Cyril, and remained a symbol either of Cyrillian orthodoxy or of anti-Chalcedonian zeal throughout the next century. Without such a symbolic focus the claim that an intransigent anti-Chalcedonian theology was alone faithful to the theology and legacy of Cyril would have been implausible.

While Cyril's passion for truth and for the integrity of faith may have motivated his preparation of the Twelve Chapters, his deployment of them was an exercise of power to humiliate his opponent and to effect his destruction.³⁰ The Twelve Chapters were a powerful instru-

30. McGuckin, *St Cyril*, 9, correctly draws attention to the pastoral concern which may have motivated Cyril, and also to the differences between the standards governing church conduct in the fifth century and those of our own day. The implicit appeal to moral

ment for resolving definitively a theological dispute without requisite processes to secure mutual understanding and to negotiate an agreed terminology.

The use of power to impose truth led predictably to an intractable dispute marked by resentment, polarisation, and the canonisation of the opponent as martyr and patron. Furthermore, since the Twelve Chapters were so evidently part of the theatre of power, they contributed to a climate where the resolution of disputes within the Church was seen to be an act of power. Because effective power lay with the Empire, imperial authorities became increasingly involved in the resolution and reconciliation of doctrinal disputes.

2. HUMBERT, BERENGARIUS AND THE OATH

Little is known of Berengarius.³¹ He came from a prominent family in Tours, and may have taught at St Martin's abbey before 1040. He was certainly archdeacon of Angers in that year, and so involved in diocesan administration. He gained a reputation there for his reflection on the Eucharist, in which he insisted on the symbolic reality of the Eucharist. Many came to suspect that he confined Christ's presence to a figurative and mental reality.

Concern was first expressed about his views at the Synod of Paris in 1050, led by scholars of Chartres and more implacably by those from Normandy. A private letter of Berengarius to Lanfranc was delivered to the Council, casting doubt on the orthodoxy of both men. Lanfranc dissociated himself from Berengarius' theories, the writings of John Scotus Eriugena, to which Berengarius had appealed, were condemned, and Berengarius was provisionally excommunicated in his absence. But he was unable to attend the Synod of Vercelli which would have heard his case.

In 1054, he appeared before a Synod in Tours, presided over by the papal legate, Hildebrand. He failed to clear his name. Under Nicholas II, Berengarius was obliged to sign the formulation of eucharistic orthodoxy in 1059 at the Council of Rome. This formula was drawn up by Humbert of Silva Candida, appointed curial cardinal as a proponent of reform, and long opposed to Berengarius' views. Berengarius later claimed that he had signed only under duress.

His views on the Eucharist were again examined in the Council held in Rome under Gregory VII in 1079, and he was obliged to sign another formula of faith. In contrast to the former one, which Nicholas II had

relativism as an excuse for distasteful behaviour is as ambiguous in issues of the use of power as it is in the uses of sexuality.

31. The indispensable source is J. Monclos, *Lanfranc et Bérenger* (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1971). A brief presentation of the Berengarius affair is found in H. Chadwick, "Ego Berengarius", *Journal of theological studies* 40 (1989) 413-45.

disseminated widely, the later oath was little known. After his death he acquired a reputation as one of the great heresiarchs, the begetter of all suspect teaching about the Eucharist.

2.1 Theological Dispute

Even more patently than the dispute between Cyril and Nestorius, the case of Berengarius turned on theological issues. It only secondarily involved political and personal issues. To make of him a hero takes a great leap of the romantic and historical imagination, but his career and writings suggest that he was strongly committed to spreading and defending his views of the Eucharist.

Berengarius' theological interests appear to have been focused on the theology of the Eucharist. He attacked a naively realist understanding of the Eucharist, perhaps because of its pastoral consequences. In the process he drew attention to the different strands of earlier traditions of Eucharistic teaching. His own theology drew heavily on an Augustinian theology of the sign as he found it represented in a work of Ratramnus, which he attributed to John Scotus.³² His opponents drew on the Eucharistic realism of Ambrose and Paschasius. Both sides had available the florilegia of Patristic texts which were used to support the divergent presentations of Ratramnus and Paschasius two centuries earlier.³³

Berengarius himself was preoccupied with the relationship between the earthly and the heavenly reality of the Eucharist, and its counterpart within human beings in the relationship between soul and body. He argued that as the body needed physical food, so the soul needed spiritual food. In the Eucharist, the earthly bread and wine were sacraments of the heavenly nourishment of the soul by Christ. He insisted that after the consecration of the elements, the reality of the bread and wine as sign remain, indeed must remain, for otherwise, Christ could not be present. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist depended on the existence of the bread and wine as sacrament.³⁴

Underlying the conflict which Berengarius' ideas provoked may have been different ways of imagining the relationship between the reception of the Eucharist and salvation.³⁵ Many of his opponents shared an Alexandrian vitalist image of the relationship. As the Word of God was joined salvifically to the human race by taking human flesh

32. See G. Macy, *The theologies of the Eucharist in the early scholastic period* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984).

33. See Chadwick, "Ego Berengarius", 419-20. He expands on his reflections in "Symbol and Reality: Berengar and the appeal to the Fathers", in P. Gay, R. Huggens and F. Niewoehner, *Auctoritas und Ratio: Studien zu Beerngar von Tours* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990) 25-46.

34. See Macy, *The theologies of the Eucharist*, 39.

35. See Macy, *The theologies of the Eucharist*, 44ff.

and soul, so we are joined salvifically to the Word of God by being united with the flesh of the Word of God in the Eucharist. The physical eating of the body of Christ enables us to be united with his divinity. This vitalist metaphor of Eucharist demands a strongly realist account of Christ's presence.³⁶

Berengarius, on the other hand, followed strands of Augustinian thought in emphasising the spiritual character of salvation. We are saved by faith and united with God in spirit. The effective reception of the Eucharist supposes a lively faith and the ability to discern the divine reality within the signs. In the Patristic tradition these images were not contrasted, but Berengarius' criticism of a naive realism led to a polarisation. He was therefore accused of holding a purely symbolic understanding of the Eucharist similar to that later adopted by Zwingli.

Seen against this background, Humbert's oath imposes a theology radically opposed to Berengarius' own. The Creed is reproduced with the significant sections in italics.

I Berengarius the unworthy deacon of the Church of St. Maurice, Angers, recognising the true Catholic and Apostolic Faith, anathematise all heresy, especially that of which up to this point I am publicly accused which attempts to maintain that *the bread and wine placed on the altar, after consecration are only a sacrament, and not the true body and true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and cannot in the sacrament only, be perceptibly (sensualiter) touched or broken by the hands of the priest, or ground by the teeth of the faithful.*

Moreover, I agree with the Holy Roman and Apostolic See, and with mouth and heart I profess to hold that belief in the Sacrament of the Lord's Table, which the Lord and venerable Pope Nicholas and this holy Synod, by evangelical and apostolical authority delivered and confirmed to me; namely that *the bread and wine which are placed on the altar, after consecration are not only a sacrament, but the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and perceptibly (sensualiter) not only in the Sacrament, but in reality (in veritate) are touched and broken by the hands of the priest and ground by the teeth of the faithful.* I swear by the holy and consubstantial Trinity and thought this holy Gospel of Christ.³⁷

36. Cyril's anathema contains a fine expression of the vitalist image: If anyone does not confess that the flesh of the Lord is life-giving and that it is the flesh of the Word of God himself who is from the Father, but (regards it) as the flesh of another than Him, united with Him in dignity or possessing only divine indwelling, and if he does not confess that it is life-giving, as we have said, because it has become the flesh of the Word himself who has the power to enliven all things, anathema sit. An earlier summary of the image is found in the tenth century treatise of Gezo of Dertona, *De corpore et sanguine Christi* 301 (PL 137 406B): *Accepit itaque Christus carnem nostram non phantasticam, sed naturalem, ergo et nostra caro naturalis, unde sumpta est illa. Sed et illa naturalis, que uniret utrasque, et faceret connaturales connaturalis et ipsa.*

37. Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, *Enchiridion* 690 (227). The translation is mine.

The Creed was constructed negatively in order to annihilate Berengarius' criticism of the defects of a realist theology of the Eucharist and to exclude Berengarius' own theology. The effect was to canonise a crudely naturalistic theology by destroying the validity of all countervailing arguments and to exclude a symbolic theology, however nuanced.

The scope of the oath can be seen in its construction. Berengarius was first required to abjure two positions which had been attributed to him: that the bread and wine placed on the altar after the consecration are only a sacrament and not the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and secondly, that it is not in reality but only in the sacrament, that the body of Christ is perceptibly touched and broken by the hands of the priest and ground by the teeth of the faithful. He was then required to affirm the converse of these statements. The second and most striking of the propositions condemned was drawn from a letter to Hildebrand from Geoffrey of Anjou in support of Berengarius.³⁸

The oath was a crude response to Berengarius' theology. Berengarius did not hold the first proposition that the bread and wine after the Consecration were only a sacrament. Moreover, by demanding that Berengarius subscribe to the converse of the statement, Humbert unwittingly canonised his opponent's theology, and rendered his own oath self-contradictory. For he effectively asserted that the bread and wine remained on the altar as a sacrament while being also the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The formulation embarrassed Lanfranc and other early controversialists.³⁹

Secondly, by asserting the converse of what Berengarius had denied: that the body of Christ was ground and broken in reality and not simply in sacrament, Humbert canonised a crudely natural view of the change which had taken place in the Eucharist at the consecration. By asserting that the body of Christ was *in truth*, as against *in sacrament*, ground and broken, he sharply opposed sacrament to reality, and understood Eucharistic reality in terms of physical nature. So the natural presence of Christ in the Eucharist was opposed to the symbolic. Subsequently, reflection on the Eucharist would be almost forced by the terms of Humbert's victory over Berengarius to begin with natural reality and to move only then in carefully qualified ways to the sacramental. The formulation canonised a crude vitalism and ensured that the theology of the Eucharist would have to develop within the discussion of nature and not of symbolism and ritual.

The oath was also an act of power designed to humiliate an opponent. To take an extreme position which Berengarius had attacked, to make him disown the criticism and then to go further to

38. See the analysis of Monclos, *Lanfranc et Bérenger*, 171-5.

39. Lanfranc, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* 5 (PL 150 414D-415D).

canonise the position which he had disowned, was a deep humiliation. Its criticism was based on a crude misunderstanding; the theology enshrined was exactly the caricature by which Berengarius had sought to exclude his opponents' theology. It was the imposition of a crude theology based on misunderstanding of a more subtle theology.

2.2 Church Centralisation

Berengarius' fate and Humbert's oath need also to be set within the ecclesial and social context in which they lived, and particularly within the powerful movement that called for reform and the right of the Church to order her own affairs.⁴⁰ Underlying this movement was the absence within the German social fabric of the institution of corporate ownership of land, a practice taken for granted in the East. In the West, the feudal lord who built the churches was understood to own them and to be responsible for appointing and ordering the people, including clergy, who worked there. The goal of the reform movement was to free the Church from secular control, and to emphasise the priority of the spiritual over the temporal. The Papacy, which was territorially independent of the local rulers, was a central symbol both of church autonomy and of the priority of the spiritual.

The Reform movement was necessarily one of centralisation in the Church. Its proponents also commonly assumed that uniformity of practice and of formulation was essential, while divergence indicated corruption. After the Normans took Sicily from the Greeks, the Synod of Siponto in 1050 insisted that the churches of Sicily adopt Roman practices. In turn, the Greek Emperor and Patriarch condemned Western practices and insisted that in Constantinople that all communities follow the Eastern traditions. In the subsequent controversy, each side accused the other of unevangelical practice and of heterodox theology.

The impetus both to church autonomy and to uniformity helped decide Berengarius' destiny. He depended on protection by Geoffrey Martel and the Angevin rulers. The case brought in Rome in 1050 provided the reformers with an opportunity to strike at Geoffrey. Subsequently, Henry I of France prevented him from going to Vercelli because he regarded him as Geoffrey's agent. The strong opposition to Berengarius from Guitmund and other Norman theologians may also reflect the common interests shared by the Papacy and Normandy at the time.

By 1059, Berengarius' most committed enemy was Humbert. He had been appointed to the Curia to further the Reform. His passion for both

40. See H. Cowdrey, "The Papacy and the Berengarian Controversy", in Gay, *Auctoritas und Ratio*, 109-38

orthodoxy and uniformity was shown most notably in controversy with the Eastern church. His crowning gesture was to place the Bull excommunicating the Patriarch on the altar of Santa Sophia in 1054.

Controversy with the Greeks may also have affected Humbert's response to Berengarius.⁴¹ In debate with Nicetas, Humbert identified one of the roots of Greek error as a symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist, by which they identified the leaven with the Holy Spirit, and saw unleavened bread as inanimate.⁴² Humbert saw as latent in this view the Theopaschite belief that the Spirit as well as the Son had become incarnate. He may have seen reproduced in Berengarius the root error of the Greeks: that bread and wine, together with their natural symbolism, continue after the consecration.

By 1079, Gregory VII, who had shown himself admirably patient with Berengarius, had entered into conflict with Henry IV. The latter spread the rumour that Gregory himself shared the heterodox views of Berengarius. Gregory's requirement that Berengarius pronounce a new oath of orthodoxy and his readiness to have it confirmed by torture may indicate how dangerous the affair had become for him.

Within the context of the Church of Berengarius' day, the oath imposed by Humbert and the manner of its imposition were clearly attempts to end a complex dispute by silencing and humiliating a persistent opponent. It was an assertion of the authority of the Council and of the Roman Curia and, to that extent, it was also a coded message to rulers, especially those under whose protection Berengarius was able to propagate his ideas. The widespread dissemination of the oath by Nicholas II gave it an authority that the subsequent and largely unpublicised oath of 1079 lacked.⁴³

In the short term, Humbert's oath was effective because it eroded Berengarius' support; his opponents, beginning with Durandus in 1053, also ensured that every daring or doubtful speculation about the Eucharist was identified with him, including those which he showed to be implied in his opponents' theology.⁴⁴

Later, however, Berengarius acted as a symbol that encouraged dissent. Groups as different as the Cathars and the followers of Zwingli

41. See Macy, *The theologies of the Eucharist*, 40.

42. See Humbert, *Adversus Graecorum calumnias* 31 (PL 143 950B-C): Taliter praeparatus azymus fideli invocatione totius Trinitatis, fit verum et singulare corpus Christi; non sicut Theopaschitae volunt, corpus Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.

43. Lanfranc, for example, quotes but does not comment on the Gregorian oath, while emphasising the authority of Humbert's formulation: Nicolaus Papa, gaudens de conversione tua, jusjurandum tuum scriptum misit per urbes Italiae, Galliae, Germaniae et ad quaecunque loca fama tuae pravitatis potuit pervenire. *De corpore et sanguine Domini* 2 (PL 150 411D-412A). See H. Chadwick, "Ego Berengarius", 434-6. In their collection of church documents, J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Church teaches* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1973) 364, quote only the oath of 1079.

44. See G. Macy, "Berengar's legacy as heresiarch", in P. Gay, *Auctoritas et ratio*, 47-68.

found in Berengarius the encouragement to explore Eucharistic belief, and identified themselves with him as victims of prejudice and repression. Even though the use of power, symbolised by Humbert's creed, was effective in the short term, in the longer term it encouraged resistance and dissent.⁴⁵

2.3 The Consequences

While influences upon theological development are notoriously elusive, I would argue that the influence of Humbert's creed was far-reaching and deleterious. The theological weaknesses of the oath were already evident in the previous development of the vitalist image following Paschasius' work. The theologians who worked within the framework provided by Humbert's oath drew on the arguments derived from Paschasius and his interpreters.⁴⁶ While the vitalist analogy between the saving transactions in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist had the merit of linking the theology of the Eucharist to a strong Christology and soteriology, Humbert's oath suggested that physical nourishment through eating was not only an effective symbol of spiritual nourishment through the Eucharist but also offered a recipe to explain what happened.

The central difficulty therefore that the oath created was that it drew so sharp a contrast between symbol and reality in the Eucharist, and so overwhelmingly made central the analysis of natural change and of natural presence, that the theology of the Eucharist inevitably became focused on God's power and on the unreliability of the empirical world. In the process, the rich patristic symbolism of the Eucharist as body of Christ in its varying senses, as bread for sinners and the weak, as foretaste of the heavenly banquet and as ritual became marginal to theology and devotion.

It appeared to provide a complete and adequate description. As symbolic accounts became suspect on the grounds that they did not touch reality, the transformation of the believer who received in faith was made secondary to the believer's faith that the bread and wine had undergone a natural transformation.

The emphasis upon natural change inexorably led theologians to follow Humbert down trivial and scatological paths, as they tried to explain how union with Christ took place.⁴⁷ If they accepted with Humbert that the body of Christ was physically chewed by the faithful,

45. The appeal made to Berengarius and Ratramnus by the English Reformers is noted by A. MacDonald, *Berengar and the reform of sacramental doctrine* (London: Longmans, 1930) 406.

46. See, for example, Gezo of Dertona, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* (PL 137 371-406); Gerbertus (Silvester II), *De corpore et sanguine Domini* (PL 139 179-188).

47. See Macy, "Berengar's Legacy as Heresiarch", 55.

they had to field curious questions about the further stages of digestion.⁴⁸ Theological reflection ended inevitably – although with embarrassment and recrimination – in the sewer. Some, like Alger of Liege, were led to the desperate expedient of asserting that the apparent corruption of the species was no more than an appearance.⁴⁹ These and similar questions about mice which ate Eucharistic crumbs humiliated their theology. The crudity which they displayed was not an index of unformed minds, but was consecrated by Humbert's oath.

Not all theologians were infected by Humbert's crude vitalism. In the school of Laon, for example, William of Saint Thierry grounded his theology in the rich symbolism of the threefold body of Christ as crucified, life-giving and as Church.⁵⁰ He insisted on the sacramental nature of Christ's presence and of the breaking it entailed, and developed a richly symbolic account of the Eucharist.⁵¹ But while such theologians departed from the clear intent of Humbert's oath, its influence was decisive in making the analogy of natural change primary in discussion of the Eucharist.

The difficulty in studying the Eucharist through the lens of natural change lies in the absence of the empirical evidence for change that is indispensable in the study of nature. To deal with this difficulty, the theologians after Berengarius adopted three interlocking arguments. They appealed to the power of God to effect a real but imperceptible change. They appealed to the unreliability of perception to identify the reality which appearances concealed. Finally, they appealed to miracles that both displayed the power of God and revealed the reality which lay hidden beneath the Eucharistic appearances.

Among those who defended Humbert against Berengarius, Guitmund of Aversa supports the claim that Christ's body is truly ground by the teeth of the faithful on the grounds that, while this may be

48. Humbert had previously accused the Greeks of Stercorianism in *Contra Nicetam* 22 (PL 143 993A-B): O perfida Stercorianista, qui putas fideli participatione corporis et sanguinis Domine quadragesimalia atque ecclesiastica dissolvi jejunia, omnino credens coelestem escam velut terrenam per aqualiculi fetidam et sordidam egestionem in secessum dimitti, plane sentis cum Ario. The charge was taken up by Durandus of Troarn, who characteristically blames Berengarius for holding a position to which he had reduced his opponents, in *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, 1 (PL 149 1377B: Ipsas quoque substantias divinae oblationis adeo corruptibiles et corrumpentes delirant esse quatenus, et in digestionem communium cibium perire, et amplius aequo sumentes in crapulam et ebrietatis furorem queant vertere.

49. Alger of Liege, in *De sacramentis corporis et sanguinis Dominici* 2.1 (PL 180 813C), argues that appearances of corruption in the Eucharist are just appearances. God makes things so appear to punish Christians for negligence of the consecrated elements, to demonstrate the truth of faith or to confirm the unfaithful in their lack of faith.

50. William of Saint Thierry, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* 12 (PL 180 361C).

51. *Credere debemus, ipsam carnem crucifixam et sepultam sub suo item sacramento non occidi a nobis, non discerni, non devorari more communis carnis, sed sub specie panis incorruptibiliter tractari, incorruptibilitur frangi et immolari, et numquam consumi.* William of Saint Thierry, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* 10 (PL 180 358B).

humanly impossible to human beings, it is possible to God. The theology of the Eucharist rests on God's power to do what he wills.⁵²

Guitmund also emphasises the unreliability of appearances, arguing that the consecrated Eucharistic elements are in fact never corrupted. In his plain man's defence of Humbert, Abbaudus extended the reach of this argument. He claimed that the authority of the Gospel is to be preferred to the testimony of the eyes,⁵³ since reality as God sees it is quite different from reality as we see it.⁵⁴ He therefore commends humble acceptance that our knowledge is limited and that Christ's body can be truly broken.⁵⁵

Lanfranc and Durandus of Troarn support the appeal to divine power and to the untrustworthiness of Eucharistic appearances by accounts of miracles in which the veil of appearances is drawn aside to reveal the actual flesh of Christ.⁵⁶ In his bracket of Eucharistic miracles, Durandus quotes Jerome's story of a monk who prayed to see the reality hidden in the Eucharist, and subsequently saw a baby on the altar. The baby was slain by an angel with the sword, and was rent limb by limb in communion.⁵⁷

The twelfth century canonised the triple appeal to God's power in order to show how something can be that appears not to be so, to the concealment of reality beneath appearances, and to miracle which discloses both God's power and the nature of things. In his sermons against the Cathars, for example, Egbert of Schoenau distinguished

52. Guitmund of Aversa, *De Corpore et sanguine Domini* 2 (PL 149 1431B): Non enim vere Deus est qui quod vult non potest.

53. Abbaudus, *De fractione corporis Christi* (PL 166 1346D): superius sane fractionem Dominici corporis evangelica atque apostolica auctoritate defendimus; testimonium oculum nostrorum interius omisimus.

54. Abbaudus, *De fractione corporis Christi* (PL 166 1346B) Quod ergo apud nos fractum est, quia localiter divisum est, apud Deum integrum manet, cui omnia loca unus locus est.

55. Abbaudus, *De fractione corporis Christi* (PL 166 1346B): Desinat ergo homo, qui proprii corporis infirmitates investigare atque enumerare non sufficit, de Dei corpore alta sapere; discat humilibus consentire.

56. Lanfranc, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* 7 (PL 150 427A-B): Non est enim tibi necessarium ea quae abscondita sunt videre oculis tuis. Divina tamen potentia mirabiliter operante fieri posse concedit. Nec defuere quibusdam dubitantibus digna miracula, quibus rerum visibilium atque corruptibilium ablati tegumentis, sicuti vera est, appareret corporalibus oculis caro Christi et sanguis, omnipotente Deo misericorditer sanante infirmorum imbecillitatem, et terribiliter damnante atque evertente omnium haereticorum detestabilem pravitatem.

57. Durandus of Troarn, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* 8.29 (PL 149 1419 A-C). Durandus transcribes, with minor variations, the story from *Vitae Patrum* 5.18.3 (PL 73 978 D-980A) which he attributes to Jerome. The Eucharistic language used in the story so exactly follows the debate in which Paschasius was involved that it is difficult to believe it long antedates the controversy. Some of the stories cited by Durandus had already been gathered by Gezo of Dertona, *De corpore et sanguine Christi* 42-44 (PL 137 393B-396B), in his development of Paschasius, *De corpore et sanguine Christi* 14.4 (PL 120 1318A), who also includes the story from the *Vitae Patrum* in the second (844) edition of his work. See N. Mitchell, *Cult and controversy: the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* (Pueblo: New York, 1982) 78.

between inner reality and outer appearance in the Eucharist. Against the intent of Humbert's oath he argued that the breaking of the bread touches only the species and the sacrament.⁵⁸ In reality the body of Christ remains unbroken. Egbert then uses the image of concealment to describe the relationship between the real body of Christ and the appearances.⁵⁹

From this perspective, the central questions about the Eucharist are how it was possible for the body of Christ to remain hidden beneath the appearances, and why God should have chosen to conceal himself in this way. Egbert appeals to God's power. By showing that Christ could walk on water and appear through closed doors, the Gospels prove that he could do anything he liked with his body.⁶⁰ For Egbert, then, the central narrative of the Eucharist is that of a God who paradoxically uses his power to conceal rather than to reveal himself.

Egbert then shows why it was reasonable for Christ to hide himself in the Eucharist. He argues that faith in God's hidden power is more meritorious than a faith based on sight. Christ's presence under the appearances of bread and wine also respects our natural repugnance at eating flesh, and preserves us from the mockery of Jews and pagans for alleged cannibalism.⁶¹ Egbert re-inforces the themes of power and concealment by a classical miracle story, recalling the occasion when the sacrament consecrated by Pope Gregory was seen under the appearance of flesh.⁶²

Egbert's sermon demonstrates how Humbert's emphasis on the natural presence of Christ and the suspicion of symbolism also distorted the larger Eucharistic narrative. The reasons for the institution of the Eucharist became trivialised. The large story of a God who had given himself in the death of Jesus Christ and continued that giving in the church-making ritual of the Eucharist, was overtaken by the smaller story of a God who had chosen to give himself under the form of bread and wine instead of the form of his physical body. Instead of the great motive of love came contrivance.⁶³

58. Egbert of Schonau, *Sermones contra Catharos* 11.4 (PL 195 86B): At postquam panem illum Dominus benedixit, non erat ibi vera substantia panis, sed species panis, et sub illa specie verum corpus Christi; et non erat illa fractio in substantia corporis Domini, sed in illa visibili specie panis.

59. Egbert of Schonau, *Sermones contra Catharos* 11.12 (PL 91C-D): Fractio ibi videtur, sed ea in sacramento est tantum, id est forma visibilis panis...ipsa autem substantia dominici corporis, quae in sacramento latet, integra manet et incorrupta.

60. Egbert of Schonau, *Sermones contra Catharos* 11.3 (PL 195 85B): de corpore suo potuit facere quidquid voluit.

61. Egbert of Schonau, *Sermones contra Catharos* 11.13 (PL 195 92B).

62. Egbert of Schonau, *Sermones contra Catharos* 11.16 (PL 195 94A): hoc precibus a deo obtinuit, ut appareret ibi caro dominica sicuti erat, et ostenderetur his qui aderant in specie carnis, quae prius illic erat in specie panis.

63. See P. Fitzpatrick, *In breaking of bread: the Eucharist and ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993) 170-71.

The primacy of the analogy of natural change, commended by Humbert's oath, ensured that the image of concealment became dominant in Eucharistic theology. The plasticity of the natural world and its concealment of reality is developed with considerable subtlety by the able theologian and man of letters, Alan of Lille. He deals summarily with Humbert's oath.⁶⁴ Alan's understanding of reality is plastic, and he finds emblematic of the broader concealment of reality behind appearances the angels who appear in human form.⁶⁵ Alan is alert to the risk that an unqualified emphasis on Eucharistic concealment can call into question God's moral consistency, and argues that while qualities like the odour and heat of the Eucharistic elements belong only to the world of appearances, their appearances are not deceptive, because God's purposes in concealment are to instruct.⁶⁶

The images which Alan uses accentuate the fragmentary and untrustworthy character of the empirical world. To show how the body of Christ can be received whole in each part of the broken bread, he uses the figure of a broken mirror each of whose parts reflect a total image.⁶⁷ He deals with the familiar Eucharistic mouse by claiming that it eats only the form of bread and not the substance. Therefore it is miraculously nourished by the form, analogous to the way in which a man may get drunk simply by sniffing wine.⁶⁸ Finally, Humbert offers the Eucharist as an image of the Eucharist. Just as in the Incarnation the divinity of Christ is concealed beneath the humanity, so in the Eucharist Christ's humanity is concealed beneath the form of bread. Christ's divinity can appear only under another form.⁶⁹ Alan's world consistently conceals more than it displays.

Modern commentators who concede the inadequacies of Humbert's oath, nevertheless excuse it, and sometimes Berengarius' theology as well, on the grounds that it was the grit that eventually formed the pearl-like doctrine of transubstantiation.⁷⁰ The eleventh century debate was a junction on the line that led to the crowning achievement of the nuanced and subtle Eucharistic theology of Aquinas and Trent.

64. Alan of Lille, *Theologicae Regulae* 108 (PL 206 679A): *improprie dicitur videri corpus Christi in altari, cum non videatur mediante sua forma, improprie dicitur frangi, vel dentibus atteri, quia hoc non corpori Christi sed formae convenit.*

65. Alan of Lille, *Contra Haereticos* 1 58 (PL 210 361B).

66. Alan of Lille, *Contra Haereticos* 1 58 (PL 210 362A): *Sapor et calor videntur esse in sacramento altaris, nec tamen ibi est praestigium, quia hoc non fit ad decipiendum, sed potius ad instruendum, et in sacramentum.*

67. Alan of Lille, *Contra Haereticos* 1 58 (PL 210 362C).

68. Alan of Lille, *Contra Haereticos* 1 58 (PL 210 361D).

69. Alan of Lille, *Contra Haereticos* 1 62 (PL 210 365B): *sicut ratio fuit, ut sub humanitate lateret divinitas, ita ut sub forma panis lateret humanitas. Sicut enim divinitas sine velamine nobis apparere non potuit, ita glorificata humanitas, nisi mediante aliena forma, nobis mortalibus et infirmis apparere noluit.*

70. See, for example, Monclos, *Lanfranc et Bérenger*, iv.

This position has some merit, especially when it is recognised that the later theologians who developed the theology of transubstantiation were grappling with the problems created by Humbert's oath rather than by Berengarius' theology. They succeeded in purifying its crudity and in developing a terminology which distinguished between sacrament and reality. The later development of Eucharistic theology was the neutering and cross-dressing of Humbert's crudely realist theology.⁷¹

But it still must be asked whether the theology of transubstantiation was itself the splendid railhead of Eucharistic theology, or the elaborate terminus on an unprofitable theological branch line. Was the doctrine more than a highly elaborated and subtle answer, admittedly preferable to the alternatives, to a question unfortunately posed? I would regard it as the later, because it accepted the view that Eucharistic theology was properly and best discussed through the metaphor of natural change, and that a symbolic account was weaker and less real.

Indeed, the theology of transubstantiation, as distinct from the dogma for which it provided words, enshrined precisely the same appeals to God's power and to disguise that characterised theology after Berengarius. But because the theology was more elaborated its effects were more dangerous. It provided a verbal solution to real incoherence, but the solutions which it offered metastasised into other areas of thought.

The temptation to seek verbal reconciliations of systematic incoherence was built into Humbert's oath. For although it was authoritative, it was difficult to defend. So writers like Innocent III saved the truth of the oath by interpreting it in an opposite sense.⁷² After arguing that the form of bread was broken and ground, but the form of Christ was consumed and eaten,⁷³ Innocent defends Humbert's oath by quoting Augustine's remark that the fraction of the body of Christ was sacramental.⁷⁴ That was precisely the position which Humbert sought to exclude by his oath.

When Aristotelian categories were used in Eucharistic theology, the difficulties created by addressing the question of the Eucharist as one of nature were also resolved only verbally. The Aristotelian distinction between substance and accidents applied to physical change in the perceived world and applied most directly to accidental change. This analysis presupposed that substance and accidents were to be

71. See Chadwick, "Ego Berengarius", 445.

72. See Chadwick, "Ego Berengarius", 441.

73. Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio* 4.10 (PL 217 862C) *Forma panis frangitur et atteritur, sed Christi sumitur et comeditur.*

74. Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio* 4.10 (PL 217 862D-863A): *Nec quando manducamus de illo partem facimus, quod quidem in sacramento sic fit.*

distinguished only in theory, and could have no separate existence. The utility of the theory depended on the terms of analysis not being reified.

On the other hand, the theory of transubstantiation presupposed that accidents could exist without a substance within which to inhere. Such a theory was analytically incoherent, a special case that contradicted the analytical framework which generated the terms.

Aquinas' solution to the difficulty of detached accidents was one whose shape would have been familiar to Guitmund and his successors. To hold the accidents in existence without a subject in which to inhere, he appealed to God's power. But here it seems that God's power is invoked to heal the inconveniences of conceptual muddle. It was not mystery that was at stake, but the inappropriate use of a metaphysic to resolve questions which were peripheral to a balanced Eucharistic theology.⁷⁵

The concept of floating accidents, too, was always liable to turn into a metaphysics of disguise in which reality lurked beneath deceptive appearances. Moreover, because the Eucharist was the most favoured part of physical reality, Eucharistic theology subtly influenced the way in which the material world was seen.

These tendencies can be seen in the highly systematised catholic treatises written after the Reformation. The seventeenth century Jesuit, cardinal and theologian, De Lugo, for example, who regarded Humbert's oath as a blunt means to the good end of showing that Berengarius' Eucharistic theology was heretical,⁷⁶ created a world of nature in which the substance of things lies far beneath their empirical surface. Bodies are not bound to place,⁷⁷ and the world of qualities forms a network inhering in the master quality of corporeality that by God's power can exist independently. In contrast to Vasquez' supposition that a special act of God is required every time there was any slight change in the position or quality of the Eucharistic elements,⁷⁸ De Lugo confines the need for such special action to the support of the accidents and to the creation of prime matter before the elements underwent what would be further substantial change.⁷⁹ But the world which both men describe is one in which appearances mask

75. See Fitzpatrick, *In breaking of bread*, 16.

76. J. De Lugo, *Tractatus de venerabili Eucharistiae sacramento*, 6.3.49 [J-P. Migne, *Theologiae Cursus Completus*, Vol. 23, (Paris, 1867) 226]: *Locutio usurpata a Berengario in confessione fidei, non debet intelligi in sensu omnino proprio. Oportet autem Berengarium illo termino uti ut manifesta fieret abjuratio sui erroris negantis veram Christi praesentiam in Eucharistia.* De Lugo's most enduring (and endearing) claim to fame was his popularisation of Jesuit bark (quinine) by making it available free of charge to the poor.

77. De Lugo, *Tractatus de venerabili Eucharistiae sacramento*, 5 1 6 (140).

78. De Lugo, *Tractatus de venerabili Eucharistiae sacramento*, 10 1 3 (371ff.).

79. De Lugo, *Tractatus de venerabili Eucharistiae sacramento*, 10 30 (381-382).

reality, have a solidity and complexity that parallel the world of our experience, and are the playfield of God's arbitrary activity.

It is difficult to imagine that such a division between the real world and the world of experience in the most privileged point of human and natural reality did not have some effect on philosophies of the natural world. It is attractive to seek some correlation between the need to give verbal solutions to real problems and nominalism, between the emphasis on God's will and the voluntarism of Scotus.

But the later movements from the recognition of external reality surely owe much to the view of the world that developed out of Eucharistic theology. If the world disclosed in De Lugo's Eucharistic theology is the real shape of the natural world as a whole, we can readily understand how Descartes might find it necessary to appeal beyond the unreliability and arbitrariness of the external world to the thinking self. The Kantian distinction between the phenomenal world and the noumenal world, and Hume's dismissal of the importance of the noumenal world behind the phenomena, too, are natural responses to a view of the world that emerges out of Eucharistic theology.

This point can be made clearly by considering Hopkins' translation of Thomas Aquinas' Eucharistic hymn:

Godhead here in hiding whom I do adore,
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more,
see Lord at thy service, low lies here a heart,
lost all lost in wonder at the God thou art.⁸⁰

If we take these lines out of their religious setting and treat them as the mind's hymn to reality, we can see the roots of Kantian scepticism about ever knowing the real world, the roots of Hume's determination to concentrate on what we can know – the shadows – and the movement within the knowing subject made by Descartes. The verse makes the mystery of the Eucharist one of concealment and encourages the belief that the world is not only more than we perceive,⁸¹ but quite other than we can perceive. An ironical scholastic observer might conclude that here the defence of theological truth has generated philosophical heresy.

The effects of the oath imposed on Berengarius were theologically destructive, because it opposed reality to symbolism, and saw Christ's presence in Eucharist primarily in terms of natural and vital presence

80. Adoro te devote, latens deitas, Quae sub his figuris vere latitas. Tibi se cor meum totum subicit, Quia te contemplan, totum deficit. Hopkins' translation itself indicates the progressive etherialization of Eucharistic language. *Figurae* which for Ambrose denoted concrete events and things which found their full meaning in the next life have by now become "bare shadows, shape and nothing more". The translation represents fairly the sense of the Paschasian distinction between *in figura* and *in veritate*, but here is associated with the metaphor of concealment.

81. This point is well developed by Fitzpatrick, *In breaking of bread*, ch. 4: Signs and Disguises, 133-74.

and only secondarily as symbolic and ritual presence. While subsequent theologies corrected and contradicted the clear intent of Berengarius' oath and rescued the theology from itself, the need to explain the Eucharist in terms of natural presence remained. It inevitably created a gulf between reality and appearances and encouraged an appeal to God's power to resolve the conceptual incoherences to which it led.⁸²

3. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The visible consequences of the Creeds imposed on Nestorius and on Berengarius were of a different character. The Twelve Chapters bred division within the Church, polarisation between churches and their theologies, and the increased power of the State within doctrinal discussion. The consequences of Humbert's oath were more narrowly theological, but perhaps also can be seen in the development of an Enlightenment culture.

While their consequences were deleterious in different ways, however, the actions by which creeds were imposed on Berengarius and Nestorius were similar in character. In the imposition of both credal statements, truth and power intersected. In both cases, the Creed was a powerful intervention intended to end debate about the implications of Christian faith. In both cases, we should presume good faith. Both sides of each debate were committed to the defence and establishment of the truth, and political considerations were of secondary, although real, importance. Furthermore, those who imposed the Creeds were convinced that the pastoral welfare of Christians and their home within the truth were being affected.

The cases of Nestorius and Berengarius, however, suggest that this use of power was not effective in commending the truth. Nor was it pastorally helpful in enabling Christians to live the christian life in truth. Ultimately, it caused great damage. At the heart of the imposition of creeds on Nestorius and Berengarius was a contradiction: Creeds, which are instruments of christian truth, were used in inhumane and therefore unchristian ways. The exercise of power was designed to humiliate and crush the person and to impose on him a

82. Guitmund of Aversa, *De Corpore et sanguine Domini* 3 (PL 1486D-1487A), had defended the authority of Humbert's oath as that of a Council with a Pope as president. The terminology appears to have been used at Lateran IV simply to assert the real presence of Christ against the Albigensians. But Scotus and Ockham, who could find not compelling reasonable argument against consubstantiation, appealed to the authority of the Council. See J. McCue, "The Doctrine of transubstantiation from Berengar through Trent: the point at issue", *Harvard theological review* 612 (1968) 403. The historically unjustified appeal to the authority of the Lateran Council was generally accepted without discussion in the debates at Trent.

partisan theology that did not meet the challenge he represented. The objicient was identified totally with his perceived error.

The failure of this strategy was inevitable. For it led to resentment on the part of the persons against whom it was directed, and attracted support from those who were angered by the injustice which they perceived. It also drew attention to the ideas that were proscribed so unpersuasively, and established a dynamic by which the forbidden became the more attractive for being so strongly proscribed.

When power became inextricably linked with the cause of truth, the issues which were at stake initially were not resolved. The use of credal statements sharpened the divisions which they were meant to heal, and ensured that polarisation continued. This led to renewed dispute in the case of the Twelve Chapters. It led to an inadequate and less than honest Eucharistic theology in the case of Humbert's Oath. Subsequent theology, church life and perhaps a view of the natural world suffered markedly as a result of the imposition of the creeds. The authority and power of creeds and not their truth became the issue.

The confusion of power and truth makes credal statements unsuitable for use against persons. Creeds are properly agreed and considered statements of the gathered Church. Even when they are composed in order to resolve authoritatively a dispute within the Church, their goal is to gather the whole Church in the truth. Their power is transparent. In the Fourth Century Athanasius' early silence about the Creed of Nicaea and his mockery of the credal statements produced by a series of synods to resolve the Arian dispute showed a proper appreciation of the seriousness and dangers of creeds.

Credal statements directed against persons prove highly unsatisfactory and subvert the truth which they are designed to defend. The stories of Cyril and Humbert suggest that they are like anti-personnel mines sown to defend a home. They remain in the earth to maim family and strangers alike, and threaten to turn home into desert.