

letters from the time of his participation in the Spanish Civil War is his growing hatred for Stalinism and disgust toward English intellectuals who served as apologists for communism. He saw them as power-worshippers who invested their need for a faith in Stalin's Russia.

Orwell told Victor Gollancz, his first publisher, that he wanted to show the duplicity of the communists in Spain. He wanted to write about what he had seen there because "the stuff appearing in the English papers is largely the most appalling lies." When Gollancz and other left-wing editors, such as Kingsley Martin at the *New Statesman*, refused to publish *Homage to Catalonia*, their devotion to Stalin began a process of alienating Orwell from many English socialist intellectuals.

DOUBTFUL ABOUT THE POPULAR RECEPTION OF **NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR**, ORWELL TOLD WARBURG **NOT TO EXPECT A BIG SALE: "BUT I SUPPOSE ONE COULD BE SURE OF 10,000 ANYWAY!"**

As World War II approached, Orwell told Heppenstall that he hoped not to become cynical, but he believed "the future is pretty grim." Russophilia was a major reason for this. When a petition was organized for the release of antifascist prisoners in Spain, Orwell was outraged because "all the leading English Socialists refused to sign."

The roots of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are traceable to Orwell's months in Spain. By the early 1940s he believed something had to be done to destroy the myth that the Soviet Union represented a revolutionary force. His letters after 1943 repeat a growing determination to expose what he called "the frightful harm to the left-wing movement in Britain and elsewhere" resulting from the white-washing of communism's reactionary character. By the last year of World War II, he believed the time was right for a satirical attack on Stalinism. "People are fed up with this Russian

nonsense," he told publisher Fred Warburg, "and it's just a question of who is the first to say 'the Emperor has no clothes on!'"

The success of *Animal Farm* freed Orwell from financial worries for the first time in his life. He could move to his island refuge on Jura in the Scottish Hebrides and begin work on the project that had percolated in his mind since the final years of the war: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Orwell labored on the novel throughout 1947 and 1948. In a typical remark, he told Warburg that he was "not absolutely dissatisfied" with it. Warm praise indeed from him. Orwell believed its execution would have even been better "if I had not written it under the influence of TB." Doubtful about the popular reception of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he told Warburg not to expect a

big sale: "But I suppose one could be sure of 10,000 anyway." Not strong evidence for the frequently claimed status of the author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a prophet: he was only off by 20-odd million copies.

Davison's annotations and notes are superb. Never obtrusive, they advance the story of Orwell's life without distracting from the letters themselves. *Orwell: A Life in Letters* should take its place beside the biographies by Sir Bernard Crick, Michael Shelden, Jeffrey Meyers, Gordon Bowker, and D.J. Taylor as an indispensable resource for understanding George Orwell and his times. ■

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[*Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years*, Philip Jenkins, HarperOne, 328 pages]

## God and Man at Chalcedon

By Bruce Chilton

CONTROVERSY OVER JESUS has rippled in academic debates since 1979, the year that saw the beginning of what has been called "The Third Quest of the Historical Jesus." Each quest has produced considerable discussion—and often fierce opposition from believers. But the underlying concerns that make scholarship on Jesus contentious have not been adequately understood. Philip Jenkins's book helps to resolve some of the misunderstandings that have plagued both academic and public debate.

Typically, scholars and commentators treat the issue of Jesus as if it were an entirely historical question. Doing so ignores the basic orientation of Christianity in its classic forms from the Nicene Creed onward, an approach that treats which Jesus not as a historical figure but as divine reality. Jenkins deals with the conflict over the basic issue of Jesus' nature: was he God or was he man?

The Nicene Creed set the stage for this debate but did not settle it or even pose the crucial questions directly. The Emperor Constantine convened a council of the most important bishops of the Church—predominantly from the prosperous east of the Roman Empire—who met at Nicea in Asia Minor in 325. That council addressed the relationship between Jesus and God. Should Jesus be regarded as fully equal in divinity to his Father, the creator of the universe, or should he be seen as subordinate to the Father?

That fierce dispute combined in one argument two difficult areas of con-

tention. First, to think of Jesus as being equal to the Father obviously raised doubts about the monotheistic belief in one God. But second, according to Christian doctrine unless God has in some way actually taken on human flesh, humanity would have little hope of attaining eternal life with God. This great dispute about Christology was framed in the philosophical language of the time, but it concerned central issues of Christian faith and life.

The bishops at Nicea adopted the principle that Father and Son are equal in their divinity. This orthodoxy paved the way for the doctrine of the Trinity to emerge, according to which Father, Son, and Spirit are all united in their commonly divine being, although each has a distinctive character. And each of them is eternal, all one God. Orthodox Christianity even before Nicea had clearly understood that the Son is fully eternal, a primordial reality, God's *logos* ("word") that made the heavens and the earth and became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-18).

Jenkins deals with the inevitable question that emerged from Nicea and divided Christianity: if Father and Son are of one being, then what was the nature of Jesus? Was the person who walked the earth in Roman Palestine

God or man?

The usual answer comes in the form of reference to a later council of the Church, at Chalcedon in 451. There the attending bishops, following the lead of Leo I, the bishop of Rome, set out the doctrine of two natures. Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. Nothing about his humanity detracted from his divinity, and nothing from his divinity was removed when he became man.

Although that may seem a straightforward compromise between those who saw Jesus as simply divine and those who conceived of him as the vessel of flesh in which divinity appeared, Jenkins shows convincingly that the Chalcedonian definition of the two natures came out of profound controversy and never brought real peace to the Church. His study brilliantly illustrates the principle that theology and history need one another in order for either to be understood.

Throughout Jenkins's account, passionate, engaged personalities—with ambitions and agendas and fierce local loyalties of their own—engage in questions of eternal truth. By the end of the book, we have seen them use critical argument, *ad hominem* rhetoric, political positioning, bribery, extortion, arson, assassination, and mob violence

in order to insist upon their view of Christ's nature or natures.

Decades prior to Chalcedon, discussion had been dominated not by the teaching that Christ had two natures but by the contention that he only truly had one, a view called Monophysite. Jenkins helpfully points out that, contrary to the two-natures teaching of orthodoxy, a Monophysite orientation is more natural to any form of Christianity that sees itself as part of an epochal shift away from the ordinary constraints of flesh and toward a new, transformed humanity. After all, if Christ is indeed of one being with God, his divinity must be the most important fact about his nature, the reality that means God became man and that by following Jesus believers may be sanctified to become "participants of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). In a sense, once one uses the term "nature" for Jesus' divine identity, it is likely to overwhelm any assessment of his humanity.

To say that the Son is of one "being" with the Father, as at Nicea, addresses Jesus' standing as divine, and expresses that standing in terms of the eternal, unconditioned being that is uniquely God's. "Nature," however, refers to Jesus' existence in this world and focuses attention on how the Son manifested his divinity.

The Church in Antioch, perennially at odds with the dominant theology developed at Alexandria, had long stressed Jesus' human nature. Jesus, after all, is described in Scripture as hearing he is God's Son when the Holy Spirit descended on him at his baptism (Mark 1:10-11), as being unsure that death was God's will for him (Mark 14:36), as weeping in grief (John 11:35), and thirsting at the time of his death (John 19:28). Two natures, human and divine, must therefore form a unity, according to the teaching of Antioch's Theodore of Mopsuestia.

One of Theodore's students, Nestorius, was named as bishop of the imperial city, Constantinople. Appointment of an Antiochene to Constantinople was fraught with risk. In its jealousy to be

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seen as the preeminent seat of theology, Alexandria had already demonstrated its capacity to depose a candidate from Antioch who had been named to Constantinople. Nestorius attempted to consolidate his position by attacking, removing, and imprisoning heretics. At first, he concentrated on Arians, followers of the teacher Arius who had been repudiated at Nicea for claiming that the

Cyril deployed all his powers to get his way.

So insistent was Cyril in his opposition to any division in Jesus' divine and human natures, he found himself saying not only that Mary was the *Theotokos*, but also that God had died on the cross. Logically, Cyril pressed a consistent claim, but there was little support within popular devotion for his strange new

important Christian center; led to the eventual formation of separate Nestorian, Monophysite, and Orthodox churches; provoked violence on a organized and spontaneous scale; and exacerbated the eastern empire's vulnerability to Arian Vandals as well as to non-Christian enemies such as Attila, the Sassanids of Persia, and Muslim conquerors.

Jenkins tells this story with judicious attention to detail and an engaging narrative style. From time to time, he makes useful and illuminating comparisons to contemporary debates, although he leaves implicit the relation between the "Jesus Wars" of his title and the debates about Jesus that have preoccupied recent decades. Perhaps it is useful to underline that, in addition to his argument that God had died on the cross, Cyril insisted that Jesus was a sacrifice from God to God in order to expiate sin. That teaching of atonement has long been enthroned as one of the "fundamentals" that gives modern Fundamentalism its name and involves commitment to the idea of Jesus' thoroughgoing divinity. Historical investigation by definition focuses on Jesus' human nature, seen apart from his divinity, and interferes with Monophysite faith. Jenkins's Jesus Wars are still our own, and his book marks an important recognition that debates about history may be theological at base. ■

JENKINS DEALS WITH **THE INEVITABLE QUESTION** THAT EMERGED FROM NICEA AND **DIVIDED CHRISTIANITY**: IF FATHER AND SON ARE OF ONE BEING, THEN **WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF JESUS?** WAS THE PERSON WHO WALKED THE EARTH IN ROMAN PALESTINE **GOD OR MAN?**

Son was not of the same eternity—and therefore not of the same, single being—as the Father. Persecuting Arians at this stage in Constantinople was as effective in establishing one's credentials as chasing Trotskyites out of the Politburo in the Soviet Union, and the ploy worked.

Unfortunately for Nestorius, he then overreached. Indeed, overreaching is a consistent, tragic theme in Jenkins's narrative. Not content with hunting Arians, Nestorius objected to local usage of a title attributed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, *Theotokos*. That term literally means "God-bearer," and it seemed to Nestorius nonsense to speak of a woman giving birth to God. She might be called the mother of Jesus, or Christ-bearer, but hardly God-bearer.

Nestorius faced a storm of protest, both locally and from across the Mediterranean. In Constantinople itself, the powerful sister of the emperor supported the veneration of Mary as *Theotokos* and had generally enhanced the role of women within the Church.

His trouble from her quarter, however, was modest compared to the opposition of the bishop of Alexandria, Cyril. Cyril was one of the most eloquent, powerful, and ruthless leaders of his time. His attack on Nestorius resulted in the condemnation of Nestorianism at the Council of Ephesus in 431, where

argument. In order to avoid recourse to a death-of-God theology—supported much later by Nietzsche for totally different reasons—Cyril came to a compromise statement with his counterpart in Antioch and acknowledged that two natures, divine and human, were at union in Christ.

But Cyril had set in motion a trenchant Monophysite logic that was not easily moderated. His handpicked successor, Dioscuros of Alexandria, overreached even more than Nestorius had. At another council in Ephesus in 449, vigilante squads of monks pressed their case, representations from Pope Leo back in Rome were silenced, and yet another bishop of Constantinople was deposed—and killed.

The Council of Chalcedon, under the protection of the new, vigorous Emperor Marcian—who was portrayed as a second Constantine in his propaganda—set out to undo the damage. Marcian's intervention was effective in promoting theological unity in the west of the empire, since Chalcedon substantially supported Pope Leo's position, which swayed discussion now that it could be properly heard. The west, however, was the least important part of the empire from the point of view of Constantinople. In the east, Chalcedon produced weakening divisions in every

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## Land of the Fighting Bobs

The week that Wisconsin voters threw out Russ Feingold, the only step-grandson Fighting Bob La Follette had left in the U.S. Senate, I went to hear an Upper Mid-

westerner of similar pedigree, Bob Dylan of Hibbing, Minnesota.

I actually saw some heads without hoarfrost, a pleasing contrast to the last time I paid a column's wages to sit in a hockey arena and listen to music. When my brother and I attended a Bruce Springsteen concert a couple of years ago, we surveyed the crowd and figured we must have wandered into a tour stop by the Ray Conniff Singers.

Lord knows I loved Bruce back in the "Darkness on the Edge of Town"/"Neb-raska" days, after he had shed his early Dylan mimicry and set out to be the John Steinbeck of Freehold, New Jersey. My buddy Chuck and I would snake around town in his old jeep yowling, "If she wants to see me /You can tell her that I'm easily found..." Alas, while we were easily found, she sure didn't want to see us.

Politically, Bruce was nowhere near as interesting as the early punks or even that Mormon-Jewish hybrid Warren Zevon. (From Crystal Zevon's warts-aplenty 2007 portrait of her ex-husband, *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead*, comes this account of the Zevons' child-custody dispute: "Warren got on the phone; he was obviously drunk. ... He said, 'I'm to the right of your father and Ronald Reagan and if you think I'm going to let my daughter be raised by some f---ing Communist hippie, you're sadly mistaken.'" But really, who can resist a songwriter who begins a lyric, "I went home with the waitress /The way I always do /How was I to know /She was with the Russians, too?")

Dylan, on several other hands, has been a Goldwater admirer, born-again Christian, and proponent of agrarianism as the "authentic alternative lifestyle." He was formed in Minnesota before he ever saw Greenwich Village. In his memoir *Chronicles*, the singer, mindful of his roots in that frozen ground, writes of Charles Lindbergh, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Eddie Cochran, Sinclair Lewis, and Roger Maris as men he "felt akin to," freethinking sons of the North Country who "followed their own vision, didn't care what the pictures showed them."

Lindbergh's congressman father, whom the *New York Times* tagged the "Gopher Bolshevik," was a fierce critic of Wall Street, Woodrow Wilson, and the war machine. Charles Lindbergh Sr. was

empire. There were giants in the earth in those days.

When the Masters of War—"even Jesus would never forgive what you do"—requested the presence of American sons at the blood orgies of 1917, 1941, 1950, and 1964, it was the Upper Midwest, with its Non-Partisan Leagues and retro-Progressives and Sons of the Wild Jackass, that brayed, "No!" Where are their offspring? I don't mean to be impertinent or importunate, Dakotas and Minnesota and Wisconsin, but we look to you for La Follettes and Nyes and McGoverns and you give us Al Franken and Ron Johnson? Turn off the goddamn television, would you please, and turn on Wisconsin!

Feingold had his flaws but he was the only member of the Senate with the guts to vote against the Patriot Act. As Jesse Walker of *Reason* writes, he also "voted against TARP, was decent on the Second Amendment, and was one of the rare lib-

### TURN OFF THE TELEVISION, WOULD YOU PLEASE, AND TURN ON WISCONSIN!

a progenitor of a vigorous Minnesota antiwar tradition that found expression in men such as Senators Henrik Shipstead and Eugene McCarthy before degenerating into the boring Cold War social democracy of Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale or the Republican polenta of Pawlenty.

Bob Dylan is very much in the Lindbergh-McCarthy tradition, as Norwegian academic Tor Egil Forland explained in a 1992 *Journal of American Studies* paper titled "Bringing It All Back Home or Another Side of Bob Dylan: Midwestern Isolationist." But then Dylan is 69, old enough to remember when the people of his place looked askance at

erals to reach out to the Tea Parties instead of demonizing them." He was neither red nor blue—each a scoundrel hue.

Senator Feingold quoted Dylan in his concession speech: "My heart is not weary /It's light and it's free /I have nothing but affection for those who have sailed with me." Dylan closed our concert with "Ballad of a Thin Man," rasping, "Something is happening here /But you don't know what it is /Do you, Mr. Jones?"

I'm no more perceptive than Mr. Jones, but one thing is all too clear: the Upper Midwest, historic home of the American peace movement, has come down with an awfully bad case of laryngitis. And it's gettin' dark—too dark to see. ■