A Realism of Glory
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A REALISM OF GLORY

Lectures on Christology in the Works of Protopresbyter John Romanides

James L. Kelley
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ..................................................... iii

**Part One: The Survey** ........................................ 1

**Chapter 1**
“Original Sin according to Saint Paul” ............... 3

**Chapter 2**
“Man and His True Life according to
the Greek Orthodox Service Books” ................. 9

**Chapter 3**
“Orthodox Ecclesiology according to
Alexis Khomiakov” ........................................ 17

**Chapter 4**
“The Ecclesiology of St. Ignatius of Antioch” ................. 23

**Chapter 5**
*The Ancestral Sin I* ........................................ 29

**Chapter 6**
*The Ancestral Sin II*........................................ 43
Chapter 7
*The Ancestral Sin* III ................................. 45

Chapter 8
*The Ancestral Sin* IV ................................. 57

Chapter 9
*The Ancestral Sin* V ................................. 63

Chapter 10
“Justin Martyr and the Fourth Gospel” ........ 67

Chapter 11
“H. A. Wolfson’s Philosophy of the Church Fathers” ......................... 71

Part Two: The Nestorian Metaheresy .... 79

Chapter 12
*The Nestorian Metaheresy: Fr. John’s Teaching on Christology and Its Ecumenical Implications* ......................... 81

Bibliography .................................................... 95
Introduction

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

I.

In May 1981 at Sofia, Bulgaria, the World Council of Churches organized a conference which brought together many of the world’s most respected Orthodox theologians. Papers were presented and official documents were drafted, all in an attempt to interpret and restate the Orthodox dogma about Christ and to explore its relevance to the modern world. In Dr. Theodore Stylianopoulos’ contribution to the symposium, “A Christological Reflection,” a common misconception about Orthodox Christology was mentioned:

There is no substance… to the contention not infrequently heard that an alleged emphasis
on the incarnation and the resurrection, rather than on the cross, involves the Church Fathers in a “theology of glory” over against a “theology of the cross.” The overwhelming emphasis on the cross by Protestants, reinforced by the centrality of justification by faith alone, should not be read back into the patristic tradition as neglect of the cross!1

That the question of an Orthodox “theology of glory”2 was in the foreground of the discussion at Sofia is further suggested by the conference’s agreed statement, which included an Orthodox attempt at refuting the stereotyped version of Orthodox “glory” theology:

It is important not only to keep the cross and resurrection together, but to keep the whole incarnate life of Christ as a single unit. There can be no Christian “theology of the cross” divorced from the annunciation to the Blessed Virgin, the birth, the baptism, and the public ministry ending in the resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost and second coming. It would be equally misleading to contrast a “theology of glory” and a “theology of the cross.” The cross is where Christ was glorified.3

Despite the elegance of its language, this passage fails to address the underlying question of what this glory actually is which carries so much theological weight in Orthodox Christology. It is essential to avoid separating Christ’s glory from the cross, but what is the meaning and significance of those elements — cross and glory — that we are refusing to isolate? Indeed, what is the significance of divine glory for man?

These issues were taken up by another Orthodox theologian present at the Sofia conference, Fr. John Romanides, who in his piece “A Therapeutic Theme” addressed the issue of theanthropic4 glory quite directly. For Fr. John

The primary purpose of faith in and theology and dogma about Christ and his relation to the Father and the Holy Spirit is to lead humanity

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4 From the Greek theanthropos, “Godman.”
(1) to the purification and illumination of the heart ... and (2) to glorification (*theosis*), which is the perfection of personhood in the vision of the uncreated glory and rule of Christ in and among his saints, the members of his body, the church. Faith, prayer, theology, and dogma are the therapeutical methods and signposts on the road of illumination to perfection which, when reached, abolishes faith, prayer, theology, and dogma, since the final goal of these is their abolition in glorification and selfless love.\(^5\)

Notice that Fr. John goes beyond both Stylianopoulos’ piece as well as the conference’s official statement in his linking of Christ’s glorification to a method of spiritual healing which, in turn, constitutes the basis of ecclesial communion. The idea that Fr. John’s Christology seems to “go farther” than that of most Orthodox theologians is one of many propositions which will be explored and tested in this study. But first, a note on the organization of these lectures:

Orthodox Christology, glorification, and ontology will be touched upon in the remaining pages of this introduction. Then follows the first section wherein many of Fr. John’s works published between 1955 and 1960 will be discussed, a single chapter\(^6\) be-

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\(^6\) In this text, the chapters correspond to lecture sessions, so the original presentation referred to chapters as “lectures.” For ease of reading, some references to “chapters” have been
ing dedicated to each of the articles, several lectures being allocated to the book-length *Ancestral Sin*. Each of these “survey” lectures will focus upon its specific article or monograph’s unique contribution to Fr. John’s Christocentric theology of glory. Section two presents a more synthetic discussion of Fr. John’s Christology which focuses upon a theme — the “Nestorian met Maheresy” — which runs through many of the works viewed in the preceding survey section.

left in, though the reader should consider chapters and lectures as synonymous terms in this study.
II.

“It is essential to any understanding of our relationship to God to realize that spiritual communication should not be thought of as a grant of data about the divine nature..., but rather as a matter of spiritual unity and life granted to man.”

Alexander Turner

Orthodox Christology as a “Theology of Glory.” Before pursuing our more start-to-finish, chronological section, we will round out our introduction with some insights from Romanides’ 1956 article “Christological Teaching of John of Damascus,” after which the notion of an Orthodox realism of glory will be more fully introduced:

It is important to emphasize that when dealing with the human nature of Christ and man generally within the context of original sin, salvation, and perfection St. John of Damascus, together with the whole of Patristic tradition, does not begin with any philosophical analysis of natural or extrachurch or extrachrist man and from such an analysis construct a theology concerning the humanity and perfection of Christ and of man in general.

Rather at the center of St. John’s anthropology and spirituality is the perfection of and in Christ as revealed in the Bible and in the lives of those who have reached and are reaching the threshold of theosis, or theoria, or vision of God. Natural man especially in his fallen state or state of imperfection cannot comprise the basis of theological anthropology and especially of Christology. Since the key is rather glorification and deification one must begin from the vantage point of the Logos Incarnate Himself.\footnote{J. S. Romanides, “Christological Teaching of John of Damascus,” \textit{Ekklesiastikos Pharos} 58 (1976) 244. G. D. Metallinos, in the thorough Greek-language bibliography to his Protopresbyteros Ioannes S. Romanides: ‘O ”profetes tes Romeosynes” prosopografoumenos mesa apo agnosta e ligo gnosta keina (Athens 2003), lists ‘H christologike didaskalia tou agiou Ioannou tou Damaskenou, the Greek original for the ”John of Damascus” article, as having been published in 1956.} As Fr. John here suggests, outside of Christ — the only true Word or Image of God the Father — there is no place for theology to begin. He is the Second Adam\footnote{The biblical/patristic theme of Christ as the Second Adam began with St. Paul: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22 King James Version). Met. Hierotheos (Vlachos) in his study of Orthodox Christology, \textit{The Feasts of the Lord} (Levadia, Greece 2003), explains the significance of Christ as the Second or New Adam: “It says repeatedly in Holy Scripture that Christ is the new Adam, who became man in order to correct the error of the ancestral Adam. The first Adam in Paradise, although he was still inexperienced, was in a state of illumination of his \textit{nous}}
constituted fallen humanity, thereby ending the first Adam’s bondage to death and the devil and clearing the way for His uncreated glory to abide in the purified heart of man. Of course, man must accept actively the glory of God, “stand[ing] before God with the nous in the heart” and continuing “unceasingly day and night, until the end of life.” Each Father of the Orthodox Church speaks in one way or another about this illuminative path, according to which the heart of man is purified from fantasia (passion-tinged thoughts) through a lifelong ascesis aimed because that in him which was in the image was pure and received the rays of the divine light. But after his sin, he was darkened, he lost the likeness, but did not lose the image entirely. In the patristic tradition, it says that the image in Adam was obscured, darkened, without being entirely lost. Through the incarnation of Christ and the deification of human nature, Adam came back to his former glory, and indeed rose still higher” (154).

10 St. Theophan the Recluse (1815–94): “The principal thing is to stand before God with the mind in the heart, and to go on standing before him unceasingly day and night, until the end of life.” In Igumen Chariton, *The Art of Prayer*, trans. E. Kadloubovsky and E. M. Palmer (London 1966) 63.

11 “Ascesis” comes from the Greek word *askein*, “to exercise,” and in the context of Orthodox spiritual life, it refers to the prayers, Sacraments, services, and spiritual guidance designed to purify man’s inner life. In his short but moving piece *Spiritual Life* (Etna, CA 1997), Constantine Cavarnos offers a lucid description of Orthodox ascesis/athlesis: “Askesis, the practice of the virtues, is a term taken over by the Greek Church Fathers from classical Greek philosophy. We find it in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. It means ‘training.’ The
at a greater and greater participation in the Taboric\textsuperscript{12} glory of the Lord.

Fr. John follows the Orthodox teaching that the first Adam, having been made “in the image of the Image,” was created for nothing less than union with the Godman. Worldly philosophy with its secular anthropology, being unable to deliver man from fantasies, fails to make good on its promise to put man in touch with reality. The glory of secular learning is worldly, and though it can yield a relative good, when asked to bear the weight of salvation, it falls

\textit{derivative word} \textit{asketes}, ‘ascetic,’ means one who trains himself, preparing for victory in a contest. The Apostle Paul uses as a synonym for \textit{askesis} the term \textit{athlesis} (Hebrews 10:32). \textit{Athlesis} means for him struggle, such as that in which an athlete engages in preparing himself for a contest” (5). Of course, Orthodox ascesis is by no means mechanical or magical since it is man’s cooperation with God’s prevenient grace or glory, which calls man to participate more and more in Him, but which does not coerce man or in any way curtail his freedom. Fr. Michael Azkoul has shown through his discussion of Pope St. Gregory the Great’s (540–604) writings that there was an Orthodox prevenient grace and an Orthodox predestination in the Latin West which seems to have been formulated as a self-conscious corrective to St. Augustine’s heterodox opinions (see M. Azkoul, \textit{The Influence of Augustine of Hippo On the Orthodox Church} [Lewiston 1990] 94–95).

short. Ever-leery of the Augustinian West’seligion-philosophical preoccupations, Fr. John grounds his Christology in the reality (or “realism”) of theosis, or glorification.

This realism of glory, as we have termed it, should not be confused with the many varieties of philosophical realism presented in Western philosophy. Aside from deification-based Orthodox realism, there are countless varieties of religio-philosophical “realism” which present man as an abstract, static being whose existence is bound by unchanging laws of nature, and who may or may not be a poor copy of a Platonic universal. For those in the pseudo-realist camp who

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13 “Augustinian West” refers to the non-Orthodox theology of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, as is outlined in detail below, ch. 5–9. Also included under the broad designation “Augustinian West” is the secular philosophy that has developed in Europe and North America associated with Hegel, Marx, Kant, and countless others.

choose to believe in them, these Platonic forms actually dwell in the mind of God and are somehow more “real” than anything in the material world by virtue of their immutability and their rationality. The Orthodox realism of glory, by contrast, is based on the biblical and patristic truth that man, having his origin in change (creatio ex nihilo), is not subject to natural laws but instead exists, along with the entire cosmos, as a being-in-motion. Moreover, for the Orthodox, reality does not inhere in concepts or in any Augustinian-Platonic beatitude. Rather, for those who believe in the Orthodox realism of glory, reality is not a thing that exists as a given essence or concept, but instead reality is the uncreated glory of God, which is not an intermediary, but is divinity itself. Man attains to greater and greater measures of reality as he ascends more and more into divine glory. Contrariwise, non-existence or unreality is gauged according to man's movement away from divine glory. This ontological movement of man is either toward the Image/Word by means of His glory, or away from glorification by means of the world’s glory (“the power of the enemy”\textsuperscript{15}) into an illusory ontological autonomy.

Here we should emphasize that the Orthodox realism of glory is identical to “the Way of light” spoken of in the Holy Scriptures and Church Fathers as the

As such, the Way of glory con-

On the "two ways" and the "Way of light": In the Torah, Moses elaborates on the shema by pronouncing the immanence of the Unnamable God through His Law, which pertains to the heart of man and which

is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us … (—)

But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways… (Deut. 30:12, 14–16 King James Version).

This Mosaic formulation is echoed throughout the Old and New Testaments and in the writings of the Church Fathers, especially those of the first and second centuries. In the Shepherd of Hermas, in Barnabas, and in the Didache, we find variations on the Judaic teaching that "there are two ways, … the one of light, and the other of darkness" (Roberts, A., and J. Donaldson [eds.], The Ante-Nicene Fathers, 10 vols. [New York 1926 (1885–1887)] 1.148). In each of these sources, the stark division of the ways is followed by a good listing of the works which constitute each. Notice how practical works of asceticism are linked to the heart or to inner "glory." The works include "thou shalt not take glory to thyself," and "Thou shalt not exalt, but shalt be of a lowly mind" (Ibid.). Indeed, Barnabas identifies the weightier part of the law with man's need to know the "judgments of the lord" and to "walk in them" (Ibid. 149). In this sense, a "way" is a psychosomatic ("psycho-" including the nous) mode of life, the manner in which the whole man exists. The Way of light and good must be conceived of in its ascetic, therapeutic, and cardial aspects, as in the Shepherd of Hermas, wherein the "two ways" are said to correspond to "two angels … one of righteousness, and the other of iniquity" (Ibid. 2.24). According to man's choice, one
sists in following the Lord’s commandments within the context of the Holy Sacraments. The Way of glory is the unique ascetic therapy offered by the Church and which is constituted in the lives of the Saints and in the noetic transformation of all Orthodox Christians in the Sacraments of the Church. In the West, the great number of pseudo-realisms, which Fr. John believes are the basis of all non-Orthodox theology in the West, are bound together by their ignorance of the realism of glory’s core: The purification and illumination of the heart.

The specific therapeutic Way that leads to the realism of God’s uncreated glory is presented in Orthodox hagiography. The lives of the saints and their experience of the divine Light is open to anyone who would take up his cross and follow Christ, though this illumination is not individualistic, but rather ecclesial, since each member is deified through incorporation into a very real body of Christ. As Fr. John avers, “the key is… glorification” because correct Christology cannot be conceived apart from 1) knowledge and

or the other angel “ascends into your heart” (Ibid.). Also see Fr. Michael Azkoul’s summary of St. Hilary of Poitiers’ teaching on grace, which touches upon the “two ways,” in Augustine, 80: “For David prayed, “Take me from the way of iniquity,” that is, he prayed for the vitium to be removed and his person to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Ps. CXVIII, Daleth 8; He, 16). Grace is freely given, but the soul increases grace by overcoming sin. God grants perseverant grace to him who, with grace, conquers sin (Ps. CXVIII, He. 12; Nun, 20).”
application of the correct ascetical method of reaching perfection in Christ through spiritual fatherhood and the Sacraments, and 2) the presupposition that the inhumanization of Christ as the eternal Image of the Father is the only possible solution to the problem of fallen man’s bondage to corruption and death, since man was made to become the glorified image of the Image.  

PART ONE
THE SURVEY
Fr. John’s article on St. Paul outlines many themes that are developed further in his seminal *Ancestral Sin* (1957, see below, ch. 5–7). However, “Original Sin According to Saint Paul” is important in its own right. Certainly, in 1955, there were few theologians, Orthodox or otherwise, who could present the Orthodox views on asceticism, anthropology, and hamartology as eloquently and convincingly as Fr. John. Indeed, the St. Paul article set the tone for all of Fr. John’s subsequent work. The article combines Fr. John’s amazing ability to synthesize materials from the full gamut of history and theology with his rare talent for preaching.

For Fr. John, St. Paul’s view of man and his destiny is contrary to the Protestant/Roman Catholic anthropo-

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pological approach. According to the latter view, which many Orthodox theologians unhesitatingly name “Western,” the created world is governed by natural laws that correspond to the moral rules man must follow in order to gain merit before God. In the Western scheme, law serves as the soteriological tangent between man and God. God’s justice operates according to this natural law, so that God and man are both bound to follow it. In Fr. John’s view, the Western natural man, far from being normal, is rather enslaved to Satan, who uses man’s fear of death to keep him bound to sin. Contrary to this Western natural law anthropology is the Apostle’s teaching on man: “For St. Paul, there is no such thing as normality for those who have not put on Christ.” Instead, fallen man begins in a sub-normal ontological state, alienated from Life. “Underlying every movement of what the world has come to regard as normal man, is the quest for security and happiness. But such desires are not normal.”

4 Ibid., 21.
Fallen man believes that eternal security is found in the fulfillment of his “natural” desires. This self-centered quest for happiness is called *eudaemonia* by Fr. John, who is quick to add that man is destined to transform, through ascesis, this ailing, security-seeking self-love into the love of Christ, which “seeks not its own.”\(^5\) We should note here that Fr. John believes man can only be properly conceived in terms of his dynamic relation to his Archetype, Christ, who is both the sustainer of man’s existence as well as the very goal of man’s striving. Fr. John’s friend Fr. George Dion. Dragas affirms the dynamism of man’s connection to Christ in one of his studies of St. Athanasius. As Fr. George points out, the Alexandrian saint “[saw] man[’s existence] as a becoming and the Logos becoming man as a becoming and not as a ‘state’ of being.”\(^6\)

In “Original Sin According to St. Paul,” the Christological teaching of the Orthodox is contrasted with the West’s juridical approach to salvation in Christ.


this end, Romanides points out that the West's view of Satan and his power follows that of Augustine, who "relegat[ed] the power of Satan, death, and corruption to the background and push[ed] to the foreground of controversy the problem of personal guilt in the transmission of original sin, ... introduc[ing] a false moralistic philosophical approach which is foreign to the thinking of St. Paul." By contrast, the Orthodox take biblical demonology very seriously, particularly Paul's insistence that man is unable to save himself from "the body of this death" (Romans 7:24) because of the unshakable hold the devil has over him. Moreover, the notion often found in the West of a weak and ineffectual Satan who must abide by the rules and regulations dictated by the "natural law" is the opposite of the biblical and patristic teaching of the Orthodox that Satan holds man in bondage through fear of death. No wonder asceticism, which remains for the Orthodox a continual, strenuous, and unrelenting war that every Christian must wage against the powers of Satan, has suffered so many painful setbacks in the West.

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7 Ibid., 3.
8 Ibid., 17, "Oscar Cullman is seriously mistaken in trying to make the New Testament writers say that Satan and the evil demons have been deprived of their power, and that now leur puissance n'est qu'apparente."
To summarize, “Original Sin According to Saint Paul,” Romanides’ first major article, contributes the following insights into Christology:

1) Man comes to know Christ by participating in His own ascetic love and not by following mechanical laws.

2) Christology is not scholastic doctrine, but is rather the path of the martyrs and saints who come to know Christ. These, “of whom the world was not worthy,” were “already dead, and yet [were] living in Christ.”

3) Christology cannot be separated from ecclesiology, as the centrality of the “body of Christ” to St. Paul’s thinking attests. “The world outside of the corporate life of love, in the sacraments, is still under the power of the consequences of death and therefore a slave to the devil.”

4) Christology is the only sure foundation for anthropology, for Christ is the Second Adam, who is perfect man and perfect God, and whose theandric energy is man’s only means of achieving his destiny of deification. Man is not a static, given thing; man is a person whose purpose is eternal movement toward God’s glory. This theosis is a growth into a completely self-emptying love that is free

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11 Ibid., 18.
from all necessity. As such, true Christology, far from being based upon legalism or moralism, is concerned with the transcendence of both law and utility.

5) Orthodox Christology is based on the kenotic love of the cross, and those who co-labor with God to achieve it are progressively liberated from the need for law. Indeed, laws and the moralism they undergird are needful only for those who have not been completely delivered from fear and self-concern. One who empties himself for the sake of others, and whose “actions [are] always directed outward, toward God and neighbor, and never toward himself…”\(^\text{12}\) has indeed become a law unto himself. If Christ’s saints have no need of law, how much more is the Creator Himself free from it?

This line of thinking leads Fr. John to oppose stridently the juridical atonement Christology of the West, of which more will be said below.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 14.
“Man and His True Life” proposes to answer the query, “If man can be thought of only in relation to his destiny to become perfect as Christ is perfect, how can we characterize this perfection, especially in the context of the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church?”

First, Fr. John lays the groundwork by emphasizing the Hebraic anthropology of the Orthodox, which allows no Hellenistic dualism of soul and body, but rather sees the center of man as his kardia or heart, which is located in each part of man, and thus indicates man in his totality: soul, spirit, and body.¹ This holistic anthropology is then shown by

¹On the Orthodox conception of kardia, see The Hidden Man of the Heart (I Peter 3:41): The Cultivation of the Heart in Orthodox Christian Anthropology by Archimandrite Zacharias (Mt. Thabor Publishing 2008): “When we speak of the heart, we speak of our spiritual heart which coincides with the fleshly one; but when man receives illumination and sanctification, then his whole being becomes a heart. The heart
Fr. John to be the only Christologically sound view of man since Christ’s life was not a mere manifestation of intellectual or rationalistic truth, but the Incarnation of Life himself. The rest of the article illustrates the sacramental theology of the Orthodox Church by commenting upon the Christological basis of Holy Baptism, Holy Confession, and Holy Orders. Throughout, Fr. John’s main point is that all of the services in the Orthodox Mega Euchologion presuppose the same thing: Man is saved from Satan and his power of disunity by sharing in the “Love, Life, is synonymous with the soul, with the spirit; it is a spiritual place where man finds his unity, where his mind is enthroned when it has been healed of the passions. (—) St. Gregory Palamas says that the heart is the very body of our body, a place where man’s whole being becomes like a knot. When mind and heart unite, man possesses his nature and there is no dispersion and division in him any more. (—) However, when mind and heart are united by the grace of God, then man has only one thought — the thought of God; he has only one desire — the desire for God; and only one sensation — the noetic sensation of God. That is why repentance and tears are so much appreciated: they help us to find that healing, that state of integrity because no human being can weep having two thoughts; we weep because of one thought that hurts us. If we are hurt by the thought that we are separated from God, that ‘salvation is far from the sinner’ (cf. Ps. 119:155) and all those things that inspire this pain in our heart, then, of course, we can cry…” (12).

and Truth” of God which is the destruction of the death and corruption inaugurated by the fall and the simultaneous incorporation of each into the unique, unconquerable unity that is the Body of Christ.

Along the way, Fr. John develops the following points:

1) “Baptism…is not a negative forgiveness of guilt inherited as a consequence of the sin of Adam. On the contrary, it is a release from the powers of the devil. (—) This abolition of the power of the devil, however, does not happen with only a passive participation of the one being baptized. He must have not only faith, but also the desire to die with Christ in the waters of baptism.”

2) The actual, concrete spiritual labor required of the catechumen corresponds to an actual, concrete local community into which the Baptized enters. There is no catholic Church in general, only local centers where the Holy Eucharist is offered and where real people struggle together in a physical body against Satanic powers which operate both spiritually and materially.

3) “…[I]n the entire service of baptism there is not one statement made about the forgiveness of any kind of guilt that may have been inher-

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3 Ibid., 70.
4 Ibid., 71.
The implication here is that the Sacrament of Holy Baptism has an organic relation to the new Christian’s lifelong internal and ecclesial struggle against the devil.

4) There cannot be any *ex opere operato* version of sacraments and ecclesiology whereby the recitation of a magical formula relieves someone from corruption and enslavement to Satan. Instead, Holy Baptism, as the culmination of a long ascetic struggle fortified with spiritual instruction and corporate prayers, is “the reaching of that stage at which one can freely choose to die with Christ to the vanity of the ways of this world and live within the love of the corporate life in the body of Christ.”

5) Life in Christ is life in His Body, in the eucharistic cup. Holy Eucharist is an end in-and-of-itself, since it is participation in the kenotic (self-emptying) love of Christ. Because this love is unity in self-offering that aims at transcending any utility or necessity, no “individualistic piety” can exist within

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it. Instead, one achieves eucharistic love according to “the measure by which he fights the devil and struggles to empty himself of self-concern within the life of Christ whose body is made up of real people.”

6) Because there can be no reality higher or even on the same level as the unity of the Eucharist, there can be no “extra sacramental institutionalism,” such as a papacy. A corollary of this eucharistic conception of the Church is the notion that the Sacrament of Holy Confession, as it has developed throughout the centuries, in no way makes it possible for “a halfway spiritualistic membership in the body of Christ.” This would be a denial of the “reality of the Incarnation.” A further sub-point is the “royal priesthood” tradition, which Fr. John mentions to support the Christological basis of Orthodox ecclesiology. According to biblical and patristic “roy-

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8 The Greek philosopher and theologian Christos Yannaras in his study *The Freedom of Morality* (Crestwood, NY 1996) follows this Orthodox notion that the individual, integrated into the Body of Christ, "represents, not the relationship of a part to the whole, but the possibility of summing up the whole in a distinctiveness of relationship, in an art of self-transcendence. (—) … [T]he relationship which sums up the totality of nature in self-transcendence defies comparison…” (21).


al priesthood” teaching, each communing member of the Church who is engaged in the corporate, sacramental defeat of Satan “has his definite liturgy to perform whereby the body is being continuously formed together as a whole and not in parts.”

The thematic axis around which these keen insights into the Orthodox conception of sacraments and clergy orbit is the kenotic love of Christ. In Fr. John’s presentation of Orthodox theology, Christ is the unifying center. The key to this Christological axis is deification. Accordingly, “Man and His True Life” establishes the theoric basis of Orthodox sacramentology and ecclesiology by showing that both are constituted by a concrete unity in Christ’s self-denying love. Kenotic love is a dynamic movement of the whole man into a deeper and deeper unity with God and neighbor. This freedom in Christ is indeed


12 “Theoric” comes from the Greek theoria meaning “vision.” It is the origin of the English word “theory.” In the context of Orthodox spirituality, theoric indicates anything pertaining to glorification or union with the divine light.

13 G. D. Dragas, in his Athanasiana, elaborates on this theme of an Orthodox kenosis centered on the Cross of Christ: “The deeper the sharing of the God-man in the consequences of our sin and fall, the greater the intensity and intimacy of the Atonement of the imperfection of our creaturehood with
man’s “true life” because it transcends the relative, utilitarian freedom of philosophical abstractions, magical religious rites, and ideological institutions.

the perfection of God” (154). Note Dragas’ intentional following of St. Athanasius’ use of the word “Atonement” in a non-Augustinian, non-Western (or, more accurately, a pre-Augustinian, pre-Western) sense.
Fr. John’s article on Khomiakov was so beloved by his mentor Fr. Georges Florovsky that the latter disseminated it to a great number of his American students over the course of many years. “Orthodox Ecclesiology according to Alexis Khomiakov” builds upon the Christological insights of the earlier articles by showing the interrelations of the dogmas about unity and freedom in a Christo-eucharistic context. Though Christ was Fr. John’s focus all along, the Khomiakov article is particularly Christocentric in its emphasis on Khomiakov’s notion of sobornost. Sobornost is Khomiakov’s conception of freedom, and it is the cornerstone of his idiosyncratic “Orthodox philosophy.” Khomiakov’s sobornost/freedom does not entail capitulation to any ideological or institutional mediator, but rather indicates an absolute deliverance from necessity and self-concern brought about through a true unity in the Orthodox Church, a unity that is not a means to anything beyond itself.
As Fr. John astutely observes, the great strengths as well as the great weaknesses of Khomiakov’s conception of freedom are best illustrated by relating Khomiakov’s sobornost to the doctrinally pure notion of sobornost held by the Orthodox Church. On the positive side, Fr. John approves of Khomiakov’s critique of the West’s legalistic and individualistic worldview, which the Russian thinker calls “Kouschitism.” As Fr. John summarizes Khomiakov, “Within the usual institutions governed by Kouschit principles, the moral and spiritual factors are separated from the organic, and because the internal principle of non-utilitarian love is missing, the organic necessarily degenerates to the level of organization, law, and external authority.” What is amazing, remarks Fr. John, is that Khomiakov has maintained the core Orthodox tradition of freedom as a communal pursuit of selfless love free of all ulterior motivation, but without the corresponding Orthodox beliefs concerning 1) man’s fall, 2) the Holy Sacraments, and, most disconcerting of all, 3) Christ Himself. The root of the problem, according to Fr. John, is that “Khomiakov

2 “Orthodox Ecclesiology According to Alexis Khomiakov,” Greek Orthodox Theological Review 2 (1956) 61.
leaves unintelligible…the relation of material necessity to spiritual phenomena. (—) Yet, at the same time, he claims that necessity is proper only to phenomena and not to their root.”  Thus, at its source, creation is free from necessity, though somehow the forces of necessity are now at work everywhere except the Church. Khomiakov’s failure to explain the origin and meaning of these crippling forces has dire consequences for his ecclesiology and his Christology. As Fr. John surmises, Khomiakov

is driven to a type of dualistic spiritualism by making out material creation to be something by nature inferior, bad, and the cause of the evil of organization. His spiritualization of the resurrection of Christ is unbiblical and directly in the line of docetism and logically leads to a denial of the visible Church.

It becomes clear that, even though Khomiakov vehemently opposes the rationalistic, individualistic, and juridical interpretation of ecclesial freedom found in the West, he has missed the Orthodox meaning of unity as a particular type of “materialism” found in the actual resurrected flesh of Christ:

The patristic concept of salvation, sacraments, and Church is quite materialistic, but not in the ordinary sense. While matter itself is considered as created by God and therefore good,

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3 Ibid., 69–70.
4 Ibid., 70.
still the parasitic elements of death and corruption, both in creation and man, are understood as the work of Satan. Therefore the materialism of the Church is of a purely sacramental nature centered in the flesh of Christ, which is transforming both the faithful of all ages and material creation, and at the same time rejecting the materialism of the devil, that is, slavery to the powers of death and corruption.5

Indeed, Khomiakov’s grand project was to create a Russo-Christian philosophy of unity in selfless love that could affect a worldwide sobornost. Romanides, while pointing out the significance of Khomiakov’s sobornost as a potent refutation of the West’s notion of necessitarian unity, nonetheless insists that total freedom is not found in speculative philosophy but in the Body of Christ: “The Church as such cannot save society at large. Only the flesh of Christ saves.”6 For Fr. John, sobornost is merely one part of the positive aspect of Orthodox soteriology, which is “communion with the Source of Life only through the flesh of Christ in the corporate Eucharist epi to auto.”7 Thus,

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5 Ibid., 71.
6 Ibid., 72.
7 Ibid., 71. On N. Afanasiev’s use of the phrase “epi to auto,” see R. Gaillardetz, “The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasief: Prospects and Challenges for the Contemporary Ecumenical Dialogue,” Diakonia 27 (1994) 25–46. Also of note is Gaillardetz’s comment on the Protestant inspiration for Khomiakov’s sobornost: “Somewhat ironically,… Khomiakov’s theology is at several key points similar to that of an
Khomiakov’s sobornost fails to sum up the positive, Christo-eucharistic side of Orthodox soteriology. What Fr. John presents as the negative element of Orthodox soteriology — the “struggle against the dividing powers of satan [sic] through the life of selfless love” in the experience of the Eucharist — is wholly absent in Khomiakov’s thought. Fr. John stressed that true unity derives from the gift of Christ’s flesh that man receives only through ascetic and sacramental life. Any unity divorced from Fr. John’s theandric conception can only be based upon the fallen world’s false conception of normality.

Important figure of the West, Johann Adam Mohler, the German Catholic theologian of the Tubingen school. Both were influenced by the German idealist Friedrich Schelling. Like Mohler, Khomiakov emphasized the organic character of the church animated by the Holy Spirit. The oneness of the Church belongs to its very essence. To be one and to be catholic are two aspects of the same reality; Khomiakov conceived of catholicity as a kind of ‘full integrity.’ The Church possesses all that is necessary for its ‘wholeness.’ Catholicity is primarily then a qualitative term, with the quantitative or spatial aspect being only a manifestation of the more fundamental qualitative reality” (20). For a complete bibliography of N. Afanasev’s published and unpublished work, consult A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanasev (1893–966)* [Cambridge 1989] 227–237.

Fr. John finds in St. Ignatius an ecclesial Christology\(^1\) that maintains the nexus of, on the one hand,

\[^1\] The Christological awareness displayed in Fr. John’s Ignatius article is not present in a number of deficient treatments of the great Antiochene saint’s theology. Among those who believe they have found in St. Ignatius a weak Christology is N. Russell who, in his massive *Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford 2004), “do[es] not consider [St. Ignatius] a proponent of deification” (92). “He lacks … Paul's sense of participatory union with Christ…” (ibid.). Russell’s conclusions only get farther from the mark, especially when he detects “Gnostic overtones” in St. Ignatius’ “language … about his impending maryrdom” (ibid.). Many others also misinterpret St. Ignatius as a Gnostic, mainly because they do not understand the terminology and presuppositions of the Orthodox Church’s asceticism and Her sacramental life, and are thus in no position to judge what St. Ignatius is writing about. An example of Russell’s mishandling of biblical and patristic material is his acknowledgment that obedience to Christ leads to deification, but that St. Ignatius’ injunctions to obey the bishop who represents Christ introduces a different teaching (90–91). The Gnosticism-finding majority in Ignatian scholarship includes V. Corwin, *St. Ignatius and*
1) Eucharist, 2) clergy, and 3) life in Christ; and on the other hand, 1) asceticism and 2) demonology:

Christology is the positive aspect of the Church, but is conditioned by biblical demonology, which is the key negative factor which determines both Christology and Ecclesiology, both of which are incomprehensible without an adequate understanding of the work and methods of Satan.²

This notion that the Church has a twofold nature in no way limits the cross’s victory over Satan, but recognizes as necessary man’s concrete, ascetic acceptance of the divine gift of power over death and the Devil: “… [T]hus the Church, although already the body of Christ, is continuously becoming what she is.”³ It is interesting to note that, even though Fr. John incorporates many of N. Afanasiev’s emphases into his theology, he never espouses a “eucharistic ecclesiology” which would emphasize sacraments to the exclusion of asceticism.⁴ Instead, Fr. John sees the Eucharist as a

³ Ibid., 64–65.
⁴ Afanasiev speaks often and eloquently about “eucharistic ecclesiology,” especially in his important work The Church of the Holy Spirit (Notre Dame, IN 2006), where he states that
“manifestation” of the Church members’ “unity of love with each other in the life-giving nature of Christ.”

For Fr. John, sacramentology becomes magical when separated from an asceticism predicated upon the defeat of the power of Satan: “Participation of the love of God in union with each other … can be weakened and even destroyed by man’s inattention to the ways of Satan.” Here Fr. John gives due attention to the individual Christian whose heart, through “intense warfare against Satan,” becomes a temple of God and shares in the selfless love of Christ, though this participation in Christ remains “Sarkocentric,” and thus cannot be achieved outside of “looking steadfastly to the Blood of Christ” (St. Clement of Rome, First Clement 7) in the Eucharistic assembly.

St. Ignatius’s ethical teachings are Christocentric in that they uphold the ontological basis of morality: Moral evil is Satanic opposition to union with God in Christ. Moral good is actual union with God in His uncreated energies which are given to man through Christ’s actual flesh and blood. Christ’s deified material body bestows the gift of divine power for the defeat of the power of Satan. Far from being magi-

“[w]hatever aspect of the ecclesial life of the primitive Christianity we study, we must proceed from eucharistic ecclesiology without introducing into ancient ecclesial life an historically later understanding of the Church” (5).

5 Ibid., 63.
6 Ibid., 62.
7 Ibid.
Realism of Glory

cal, this power is a weapon that can only be wielded by Christians in a concrete local community that is continuously perfected its love through asceticism and the sacraments. Though each person must take up his own cross and wage war against Satan, this struggle within man’s heart and members can succeed only as a communal achievement, since the many become one in the unity of love in Christ. Real non-utilitarian, non-individualistic love in the body of Christ “seeks not its own”: “This love is such that Christ ‘pleased not himself’ (Romans 15:3) but ‘died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves’ (II Corinthians 5:15).”

The significance of martyrdom in the Christology of the early Church writers cannot be overstated, according to Fr. John. In an early sermon entitled “La vie dans le Christ,” we find Fr. John commenting at great length on the overcoming of the fear of death and Satan as a prerequisite for membership in the Church:

The biblical and patristic tradition is unanimous on one point: The one who is a living member of the Body of Christ is one who is dead to the power of death and who lives in the renewal of the Spirit of life. For this very reason, those who denied Christ during persecution, even after hours of torture, were considered excommunicated. Once a Christian died with Christ

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8 Ibid., 57.
in baptism, he was expected to be ready to die anytime in the name of Christ. “Whoever denies me before men I will deny also before my Father in heaven” (Mat. 10:33).9

Martyrdom is here closely associated with the overcoming of death through union with the body of Christ, and Fr. John finds this view in St. Ignatius of Antioch, who says of those who died for the Faith, “… they touched Him and believed, being supported by both His flesh and spirit. For this cause also they despised death, for they were found above death” (Smyr. 3).10 On the basis of the presuppositions of Orthodox martyrdom, Fr. John dismisses Western scholars who diagnose St. Ignatius with “eschatological enthusiasm” or “psychopathic disturbances.”11 St. Ignatius’ purpose is quite obvious to an Orthodox: He wished that other Christians not hinder him from martyrdom because his (or their) anxiety concerning his impending death would interrupt their struggle to attain to unceasing memory of God. Like all of the Church Fathers except St. Augustine, St. Ignatius understood the goal of Christian life to be a focusing of man’s inner attention upon “nothing but God only”:12 “The prince of this world would fain carry

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11 *Ibid*.
me away (or capture me), and corrupt my disposition (or opinion) toward God. Let none of you, therefore, who are in Rome help him” (Ign. Rom. 7). Thus, Fr. John’s article shows that St. Ignatius’ view of the Body of Christ keeps in focus all three parts of Christ’s threefold temple. As I have written elsewhere:

Fr. John’s coenobitic Church corresponds to Fr. Alexander Golitzin’s vision of the Church as a single Temple which is also threefold: 1) the cardial temple, where man purifies his heart to receive the Holy Spirit; 2) the physical temple, where the faithful gather to communally fight the devil; 3) and the heavenly temple, where those faithful on the other side of death ceaselessly offer “Holy things to the Holy.”

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“Here we can grasp one of the most characteristic features of anthropological philosophy. (—) If we wish to grasp its real meaning and import, we must choose not the epic manner of description but the dramatic. For we are confronted, not with a peaceful development of concept or theories, but with a clash between conflicting spiritual powers. (—) It is not concerned with a single theoretical problem, however general its scope; here the whole destiny of man is at stake and clamoring for an ultimate decision.”

Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay On Man* ¹

Christos Yannaras, in *Orthodoxy and the West*, writes that Fr. John’s *Ancestral Sin* “estab-

lished — for the first time in Greek — that the legalism of Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, officially adopted by the Western Christian denominations, was not an isolated heresy but the root of successive misinterpretations of every Christian doctrine, radically distorting the Church’s Gospel.” Yannaras, after pointing out that the book’s “pivotal theme” is “humanity’s sin and salvation,” goes on to list a number of themes covered in the text. He names uncreated energies, Trinitarian dogma, human freedom, as well as the “ecclesial body,” but fails to mention Christology. Our analysis of Fr. John’s most celebrated work seeks to fill in this gap by focusing on Ancestral Sin’s teachings concerning Christ, and will further seek to relate them to the themes and concerns in Fr. John’s earlier writings. The reader should bear in mind the enormous importance of Ancestral Sin, which was a required textbook at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School in the 1950s and the 1960’s, and which remains one of the most influential volumes of Orthodox theology to appear in modern times.

3 Ibid., 276.
4 J. S. Romanides, Ancestral Sin, 11.
5 The centrality of Ancestral Sin to the “Orthodox revival” centered around 1950’s Greece is noted by V.N. Makrides, “Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: The Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas,” in Byzantium and the Modern Greek Iden-
Accordingly, we will spend an ample amount of time detailing its unique features.

*Ancestral Sin* calls into question the Western notion of original sin through a full presentation of the Orthodox teachings about the fall of man. As E. Stephanou remarks, Fr. John’s book seems to give hamartology a backseat to other related themes, despite its title: “Although the book is entitled *To Propatorikon Hamartema* (Original Sin), Father Romanides devotes most of his study to such related doctrines as creation, demonology, divine energies, grace, and the *imago Dei.*” Though like Yannaras, Stephanou does not list Christology as a prominent theme in *Ancestral Sin*, passages such as the following show that Fr. John’s presupposition in *Ancestral Sin* that the significance of the first Adam’s sin can be understood only in light of the Second Adam’s incarnation, death, and resurrection: “Any attempt to understand the fall would be futile without a correct understanding of the world’s original destiny which...”

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at first was lost but later was achieved in Christ.”7 In support of this Christocentric hamartology, Fr. John quotes St. Athanasius, who spoke of the incarnation as God’s long-suffering response to the fall of man.8 However, one cannot simply skip over the particulars of Adam’s experience before and after the fall, nor can one avoid a deep examination of how man is saved from the ancestral sin, because “for those to whom the cause of death is unknown, to them the Creator of the nature of man is also unknown.”9

In the introduction, Fr. John indicates in general terms the position of Western Christianity on salvation in Christ and also briefly traces the development of soteriology in the West. Fr. John holds that in both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism there is no belief that “Christ’s continuous and real presence in the Church is… essential.”10 1) Calvin’s predestination, 2) Luther’s “faith alone,” and the 3) Roman Catholic system of created, merited graces, which are present at the priest’s command and only during particular parts of the Mass, are all indicators that the West has followed a particular deviation in salvation-theology,11 and Fr. John spends the rest of his intro-

7 J. S. Romanides, Ancestral Sin, 112.
8 Ibid., 17.
9 Ibid., 175. Here Fr. John is quoting St. Justin Martyr, Greek Questions, 28, BEPES, Vol. 4, p. 186.
10 Ibid., 18.
11 Ibid., 18–19.
duction tracing soteriological branches of this Western innovation to their warped Christological root.

Augustine of Hippo, according to Fr. John, is the source of the deviant soteriology — and thus of the wayward Christology — of the West. The African bishop's misunderstanding of the purpose and affects of the Incarnation and his belief that death is the result of a decision by God to punish man led him to formulate a new theory about Satan.12 This "abuse of

12 For a balanced account of Orthodox attitudes toward St. Augustine, including reflections on Fr. John's views, see G.C. Papademetriou, "Saint Augustine in the Greek Orthodox Tradition," in P.A. Chamberas, Agape and Diakonia 143–154.

The Roman Catholic A. Nichols, in his piece "St. Augustine in the Byzantine-Slav Tradition," (Scribe of the Kingdom: Essays on Theology and Culture, Vol. I [London 1994] 113–126.), dismisses Fr. John's critique of St. Augustine's theology as a rehashing of the anti-Augustinianism of some eighteenth-century "Yale converts" to Anglicanism, who had an inexplicable aversion to the African bishop (124–125). Nowhere does Nichols give theological support for his disapproval of Fr. John's views, and one wonders how long it took for Nichols to locate an American anti-Augustinianism which he could then, without adequate support, pin on Fr. John and all of American Orthodoxy along with him. Does it occur to Nichols that Fr. John differs radically from the Yale Anglicans in his theology, or that an Anglican critique of St. Augustine may have little in common with an Orthodox one? At any rate, Nichols' strategy of theological deflection when speaking of Fr. John, which skirts the real theological issues in favor of obscure and unfounded "influences," blemishes his otherwise valuable scholarship. See his earlier Light From
power” theory\textsuperscript{13} held that Satan was commissioned by God to administer justice to the dead souls of men, but that Satan overstepped his bounds by “attempting to take custody of the Son of God and bring Him under his own domain of death. Thus, Satan was guilty of an unjust venture against justice, and God punished him by removing the captive souls of the dead from his custody.”\textsuperscript{14} Such a story, Fr. John avers, could only appear where the original Orthodox teaching — that Satan is the source of evil, death, and sin — has been forgotten. Satan was never the right-hand man of God, but was always the enemy of God and man. God is not the author of evil, but is long-suffering. Indeed, God loves the sinner as much

\textit{the East: Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology} (London 1999) 74–90, where he dubs Fr. John’s theology “Photinian” without bothering to define his flashy coinage. Ultimately, Nichols disappoints all who are looking for a sober account of the important theological issues Fr. John fastens upon in his writings on St. Augustine, for Nichols finds it sufficient to cite Fr. John for “the virulence of his polemics” (78) before moving on toward Orthodox thinkers who are more open to the West. Unfortunately, Nichols seems to think his pointing to both 1) Fr. John’s belief that the Orthodox Church holds the only true faith and salvation, as well as to 2) Fr. John’s supposedly unrestrained condemnation of St. Augustine (83), is sufficient to refute Fr. John’s theology. Hopefully, Nichols will at some point write a developed piece on Fr. John’s theology which will focus less on Fr. John’s attitude and will actually deal with his theological contentions.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, 25.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, 24.
as the saint, though some Protestants and Roman Catholics believe otherwise. Augustine’s ignorance of the Orthodox Christian teaching about Satan and about Christ’s total war and victory over him led the African bishop to see the fall of man as a punitive act of anger which changed God’s loving disposition toward man.

Fr. John contends that Augustine’s dual error was 1) his displacement of Satan from his true role as inaugurator of evil, sin and death; and 2) his invention of a spiteful God who must be placated by man’s meritorious works. These deviations from the tradition of the early Fathers led to a crisis in Christology which has set the terms for Western theology throughout the Middle Ages and even up to the present day. For the West, which accepted Augustine’s presuppositions about God and the fall, the teaching of the early Fathers about the incarnation as a trampling down of the devil did not seem justified. The Augustinian emphasis on God’s wrathful disposition toward a fallen creation drew attention away from the incarnation, and for many in the West its meaning was obscured: “Since God is considered the cause of death and Satan is his servant, it is a dilemma to explain why the Logos ‘shared in the same [flesh and blood] that through death he might destroy him that had the

15 It should be obvious to all that Christ would not command man to love his neighbor if He was incapable or unwilling to do the same Himself.
power of death, that is, the devil.” In the Middle Ages, the problem was posed bluntly by St. Anselm, who wrote a book entitled *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why the God-man?*). For Anselm, the question of why Christ was needed at all had become quite desperate, since theologians such as Abelard were contending that Christ was merely a good moral example for man to follow. Anselm’s answer was simple: Man’s Augustinian fall from utter perfection to total degradation could only have been undone by an ultimate, infinite sacrifice. This was the meaning of the cross, which atoned for man’s infinite fall.

For Fr. John, modern Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians remain frozen within the narrow presuppositions and false solutions of Augustinian Christology. Thus, for the Roman Catholic J. Pohle, the resurrection of Christ is at best a secondary cause of our salvation, and for the Protestant E. Brunner, it is simply not important whether or not Christ’s body “decomposed in the grave.” Most alarming is the tendency of modern liberal biblical critics to explain away the demonological content of the Scriptures as either the residue of non-Christian eschatology or the personal opinions of the biblical writers. It is obvious to Fr. John that Augustine’s discarding of the original teachings about the centrality of spiritual warfare

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with Satan even influences those modern Bible scholars whose techniques of scriptural interpretation allow them to stratify the Bible into acceptable and unacceptable teachings:

In this manner, then, every critic of the Bible is free to search in his favorite philosophical lexicon to explain everything according to his own tastes and prejudices, and he can call anything in the Bible that is dissonant with his theories either superfluous or an error on the part of the Apostles themselves. The Gnostics were first to apply this method of explanation.\(^\text{19}\)

*Ancestral Sin*’s opening chapter outlines the general worldview of “Greek philosophy,” which Fr. John wishes to compare with that of the Augustinian and post-Augustinian West.\(^\text{20}\) Both Greek philosophy

\(^{19}\text{Ibid.}\)
\(^{20}\text{It should be borne in mind that Fr. John is not here condemning philosophy *per se*, Greek or otherwise. Rather, Fr. John is rejecting the view that secular learning is a self-sufficient end. A. Casiday, in his review of A. Sopko’s *Prophet of Roman Orthodoxy*, casts doubt on Dr. Sopko’s assertion that Fr. John, in contradistinction to the West, did his theology with “no philosophical presuppositions”: “Worth puzzling over is Sopko’s rather bizarre claim for Romanides’ Dogmatics, that it is ‘the first contemporary Orthodox dogmatic theology with absolutely no philosophical presuppositions contained within it and completely dependent upon the Tradition of the Church’” (Casiday 202). In fact, Fr. John agrees with his teacher Fr. Georges Florovsky that human culture, which includes secular philosophy, has been and continues to be Christified by the Church, which transforms rather than oblit-
and Western Christian philosophy find it impossible to distinguish between “the wholly positive creation of the world and the fall of the world.” Examples abound in Protestantism of a belief in death as a natural occurrence, and also of belief in a ghostly afterlife in heaven with an immaterial Christ. Such misunderstandings of salvation in Christ have much in common with the Hellenistic notion of death as deliverance from the world of matter. An equally striking feature common to Greek philosophy and Augustino-Platonic Christianity is the ethics of eu-
dae monia, or happiness, which is common to Western Christianity and Greek philosophy. According to this model, man’s selfish desires find greater and greater fulfillment as man ascends through his intellect closer and closer to God’s essence, which man can “search out” and envision. Since matter is mutable and thus ephemeral, man must ascend the chain of being to the only immutable Being, the Unmoved Mover who is moved only toward Himself.22

eras the cosmos’ meaning-bearing structure. Thus, Sopko is saying that Fr. John has no merely philosophical presuppositions which would inevitably distort the truth of his message.21 J. S. Romanides, Ancestral Sin, 42.

22 Ibid., 43–44. Having had the great Fr. Georges Florovsky as his mentor, Fr. John most assuredly was not ignorant of the relative truth, however ambiguous and incomplete, found in Greek philosophical notions such as the Aristotelian eudaemonia. Indeed, the Eastern Fathers used “happiness” terminology occasionally, but this should not surprise us, since no

E. Stephanou, in his review of Ancestral Sin, takes serious issue with what he terms Fr. John’s “eudaemonistic psychology”: “Can we not say… that theosis leads man into happiness in the sense of blessedness? To seek self-fulfillment in this regard cannot fairly be described as ‘selfish’ in a moral connotation. (—) The concepts of athanasia-zoe and thanatos-fthora can have meaning only when interpreted as states of joy and sorrow respectively” (176). Obviously, Stephanou is missing the point, since he associates theosis here with the replacement of one emotional state with another, supposedly pleasurable one. Stephanou’s eudaemonism contradicts Orthodox spiritual teaching, which insists upon the cultivation of a “joyful sorrow” (Saint John Climacus, Ladder of Divine Ascent [Boston 2001] 70–80) which transcends totally any human conception of desire or fulfillment. Indeed, the transcendence, via Orthodox ascetical therapy, of the pleasure-pain dichotomy, is the key notion in the Philokalia.

As the foregoing indicates, terminology is not the decisive factor in issues such as these, but rather what we mean by the terms we use. In Ancestral Sin and elsewhere, Fr. John’s priority is to clear up the muddy waters of twentieth-century theological discourse by separating the Christology of the Augustinian West (with its basis in secular philosophy) from the true philosophy of the Christian East, which is based on life in Christ and nothing else. Having said this, Fr. John’s seem-
The next chapter—“God’s Relations With the World”—shows the connection between the eudaemonistic God of the West, whose energies are focused on the archetypes within his essence, and the purely Western notion of God’s “created graces.” Fr. John holds that, in contrast to the Western God who saves through created means, the Orthodox God creates, sustains, loves, and saves all of creation through His own uncreated energies.23 This means, among other things, that 1) only God is immortal by nature; 2) there are no universals in the essence of God; 3) God does not love Himself, but rather loves

ingly facile and/or generalizing accusation of “Augustinian eudaemonism” needs to be followed up by more research into the relationship between secular philosophy and Orthodox theology. The recent scholarship of David Bradshaw (2004) stands out as an example to be followed.

For corroboration of Fr. John’s negative view of eudaemonia, see Ch. Yannaras, Postmodern Metaphysics, trans. N. Russell (Brookline, MA 2004) 12–15. D. P. Payne aptly sums up the anti-eudaemonistic connection between Fr. John and Yannaras: “Yannaras, like Romanides, argues that the problem essentially began with Augustine’s credo ut intelligam and was developed by Descartes. (—) Yannaras argues… that such an understanding of human society is not authentic to human flourishing, for it essentially denies the hypostatic freedom of humanity within community, replacing it with an understanding of humanity in its sinful state. The West in its eudaemonistic pursuit of truth, adopted a cataphatic understanding of reality, which limited human freedom” (The Revival of Political Hesychasm 56).

23 Ibid., 66.
creation; 4) human selfish desires are not natural; and 5) no natural law exists in creation. What has Greek philosophy and uncreated energies to do with Christology? For Father John,

the entire basis of Orthodoxy’s dogmas regarding the Holy Trinity and Christology is the revealed fact that God alone, without any created means, creates, foreknows, gives life, and saves. (—) The fact that God does not save by created means bears witness to the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, that is, to the one nature of the Holy Trinity, and proclaims the hypostatic union in Christ.24

The preoccupation with the uncreated, hypostatic energies in Ancestral Sin’s second chapter is continued in the third. This lengthy chapter is arguably the heart of the book, because it outlines in detail the nature of the war between Christ and the devil that is obscured and even ignored in the Augustinian version. Along the way, this substantive third chapter shows the biblical notion of “justification/vivification” to be identical with theosis. The immeasurable gulf between Orthodox theosis-justification and Anselm’s atonement model is thereby illustrated. Most importantly, the Orthodox notion of justification is presented not as an arid set of creedal propositions, but rather as a way of ascent which is at all points centered completely on the person of Christ,

24 Ibid.
though never Christomonistically, for to be united to Christ is to be united to the hypostatic energies of the Holy Trinity. The Church is Christ’s body, and Christ is both the life and the way to life. However, the demonological aspect of theosis-justification — the fact that the kingdom of God is announced by the casting out of demons — is given an equal place in Fr. John’s presentation, as is indicated by the chapter’s title: “Satan.”
In “Satan,” Ancestral Sin’s chapter on demonology, Fr. John first looks to the Gospel books for the truth about the devil. The synoptic Gospels are identical in their emphasis on the defeat of satanic powers through the power of Christ as the establishing of the kingdom of God (basileia ton Theou). In the synoptic Gospels, “the practice of casting out demons before baptism is deeply rooted in Christ Himself.”¹ Fr. John sees the Christo-demonological theme in all three synoptics, most saliently in the Gospel of Mark. Here the prophecy that Satan would be destroyed is fulfilled in Christ’s battle in the wilderness with the devil. The defeat of Satan by Christ in the Spirit is then expanded as His disciples disperse unclean spirits, heal the sick, and even raise the dead. This demonological focus is absent in the Gospel of John, but the situation is explained by the latter’s post-baptismal, non-catechetical context.²

¹ Ibid., 74.
² Ibid., 72–73.
As for Satan himself, he is the source of all evil, God having allowed angels and men the choice to follow His divine will or their own. But this “freedom of evil,” far from diminishing the omnipotence of God, actually safeguards the eternal goodness and freedom of God, for “God does not war against evil by force or by depriving creatures of freedom but by being long suffering through love and justice.” In his discussion of Satan, Fr. John emphasizes the same close association of sin, death, and the devil that he stressed in “Original Sin According to St. Paul.” Because he is readying the reader for an explication of the Orthodox notion of theosis-justification as unmitigated spiritual war with Satan, Fr. John counterbalances the “rule” of Satan in this age with the greater power of God’s providential love for the world, which is constantly expanding Christ’s defeat of the demons.

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The justice of Christ is not a coercive intervention that saves man from his total depravity by means of an ultimate sacrifice, as Anselm and the entire atonement tradition of the West would have it.¹

¹ In G. Barrois’ article “Palamism Revisited,” we find a pithy thumbnail sketch of the Western scholastic development of Augustine’s teachings on the fall, “created grace” and the beatific vision of God’s essence. Though Anselm is not named, note that the doctrine of “added grace” is seen as a necessary prerequisite for Anselm’s notion of Atonement. Essentially, Anselmian Atonement was an attempt to rescue the Western Church from its contradictory anthropology and soteriology, both of which automatically imply a false Christ who saves through created means: “During the Middle Ages, the teachings of St. Augustine in matters of anthropology gained a considerable momentum by reason of the Aristotelian categories in which the western schoolmen, especially Aquinas, framed them. Man was defined as a rational creature, his rationality being the necessary and in principle sufficient feature to distinguish him from other creatures. The fall of man, whether due to natural fallibility, errors of judgment, yielding to temptation, preferring
Rather, the justice of Christ is *vivification*, or the imparting of life through His personal, uncreated energies, which are Trinitarian and not monohy postatic.\(^2\)

an immediate good to the ultimate *telos*, or human self-will pitched against the will of God, remained unexplained. God's revealed determination to save mankind seemed to demand an entirely new departure, rather than carrying on the original, indeed unbroken, plan.

The key to the process of redemption according to Catholic tradition was the ‘infusion’ of a free gift of grace (*gratia*) which would help and in some measure restore man's native ability to correspond to God's design for him. Grace was believed to have been present prior to the fall as an additional endowment beyond the 'purely natural,' and it would again be offered to the sinner as a healing remedy to wounded nature. This grace is deemed to be a quality not essential to human nature as such, a conditioning or reconditioning modality, an interposed reality, a *metazxi*. It may seem too blunt to speak of grace as *created*, but such a locution is inescapable as long as one does not recognize in grace God's essential energy unto man's *theosis*.

The same should be said of the (controverted!) notion of the *lumen gloriae*, to account for the alleged vision of the divine essence by the saints in glory" (225–226). For St. Augustine's role in separating human society and asceticism ("spiritual disciplines") from the cosmic order, and the resulting narrowness of Western soteriology, see S. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago 1990) 67–69.

It may surprise some that Fr. John’s Protestant friend, the great biblical scholar C. H. Dodd, evinced a deep understanding of St. Paul’s Orthodox interpretation of Christ’s justice. In fact, Dodd’s insights are extensively drawn upon by Fr. John to sum up *Ancestral Sin’s* central thesis about salvation in Christ as *thes-osis*-justification. Fr. John’s willingness to hinge his most important chapter in *Ancestral Sin* on Dodd’s writings shows his unhesitating acceptance of Orthodoxy (right opinion) wherever it is found. Dodd’s knowledge of and fidelity to the spiritual background of St. Paul’s writings led him to

*commen[t]* that, for Paul, the word justice has the same meaning that it has in the Old Testament. Dodd says that, unlike the Greek philosophers and Western theologians, the Jews did not understand divine justice in any way to be some divine or cosmological attribute. Rather, it is an energy of God which presupposes the prevalence of injustice and evil in the world. Consequently, when Paul writes, “The justice of God hath appeared,” he means that God appears in Christ and destroys evil, dissolves injustice, and restores the righteous who were unjustly held captive by what is evil.3

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1 *The Ancestral Sin*


Here Dodd has preserved the biblical/patristic truth, denied by Augustine and his followers,⁴ that righteous men lived before Christ’s incarnation. Fr. John goes much farther than Dodd, however, holding that St. Paul’s references to the Law — “the letter kills,” etc. — do not allow for any opposition of the Torah to the justifying grace of Christ, but rather indicate the real meaning of the Old Testament as the Way (Torah) of vivification completed by Christ’s Incarnation and its Christological extension: the harrowing of hell (sheol). The Old Testament righteous were unjustly held by Satan, and Christ’s incarnation brings justice to them, a justice which is both the imparting of the life of Christ to man and the destruction of the devil’s power of death. This Orthodox notion of justification as 1) theoric vision and immortalization of the saints of all ages in Christ, and 2) destruction of the power of Satan through human co-working with divine energy, is completely alien to the atonement Christology of Anselm, according to which God requires a sacrifice on the cross from Christ and meritorious works afterward from man which together constitute a literal deus ex machina for the vexing Western problem of how God, his absolute justice offended by the fall, could change his hatred of man back to love.

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⁴Ibid., 124.
Fr. John’s restating of the Church Fathers’ teachings about justification as a Christocentric and theoric bestowal of life on the saints of all eras leads naturally to the question “What is the nature of this life in Christ?” Christ himself demands of his saints that they become perfect as the Father himself is perfect. Here we are approaching a theological theme that has received more attention than any other in twentieth century Orthodox theology — perfection as deification, or theosis.

In Ancestral Sin, Fr. John gives a full treatment of deification in his chapter entitled “The Destiny of Man.” For Fr. John, the key to deification is found in the patristic interpretation of the “image and likeness of God” in man. Tatian, the early Christian ecclesiastical writer, assumes that the image of God refers to perfection in Christ. As Fr. John summarizes him, “Man is not by nature a likeness of God because,

\[5\text{Ibid.}, 112. Fr. John gives the following Scriptural references as pertaining to man’s perfection in the Father: Matthew 5:48, Ephesians 5:1, Colossians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:14, 1 John 3:2.}

\[6\text{For a recent and detailed bibliography on theosis, see “Resources on theosis with Select Primary Sources in Translation,” compiled by J. A. Wittung, in Chistensen and Wittung 295–309.}

\[7\text{See V. Lossky Vision of God (Crestwood, NY 1997) and In the Image and Likeness of God (Crestwood, NY 2001) for the nexus of the two themes 1) deification and 2) “image and likeness.” Typical is the comment of G. Barrois in “Palamism Revisited”: “The way of the Greek Fathers and of St. Gregory Palamas starts from a theology of the image and leads to theosis” (228).}
among other things, the image of God presupposes the moral perfection of man." Many Western commentators see "semi-Pelagianism" in this notion that man can achieve the perfection that Christ demands of him. However, Tatian, along with the Fathers of all ages, never viewed man's ability to follow the commandments of God, indeed to "choose immortality," in isolation from Christ, the source and telos of man's ascesis. This is why an early patristic term for deification was "Christification." To combat the false opposition of works versus grace that lay underneath the West's "semi-Pelagian" accusation, Fr. John emphasizes the inseparability of the moral and the ontological aspects of man's perfection in Christ: to be perfected is "to be formed in the image of Christ, not only morally but bodily also."

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8 J. S. Romanides, Ancestral Sin, 109. Interestingly enough, both Fr. John (Outline 35) and M. Aghiorgoussis (269–270) agree that it is Augustine who first deviated from the Orthodox teaching of man "in the Image." Augustine says that man is "the image of God," and that man is "in the image of the Trinity." Both Fr. John and Aghiorgoussis hold that Augustine's confusion and/or equation of divine energies and hypostatic properties were a total deviation from Holy Tradition.

9 Peter D. Carras, in his insightful piece "St. Augustine and St. John Cassian on Human Destiny, Human Will and Divine Grace," points out that the term "semipelagianism" is a latter-day invention of Roman Catholic polemicists in the sixteenth century, and is thus alien to the patristic mind (248).


11 Ibid., 112.
But what is the meaning of man’s moral/ontological deification in Christ, and how can we recognize or describe it? Once again, Fr. John returns to the image of Christ in the Bible as interpreted by the Fathers. For Fr. John, the entire purpose and meaning of both Testaments is the proclamation that there is a Way (Torah) to perfection, and this Way is not a mere book, but a Person, the “door of Jesus,” who broke down all barriers between fallen man and Himself through His Incarnation.

The primary context for Fr. John’s discussion of the Way to perfection is the biblical/patristic theme of the “two loves.” The Western God of scholasticism, according to Fr. John, is based upon the first love, *eudaemonia*, or love of self. While some may be alarmed at Fr. John’s harsh and absolute condemnation of the philosophical notion of *eudaemonia*, which has undeniable spiritual overtones and which — it may be argued — has had a palpable propaedeutic influence on Orthodox spirituality, it should be understood that Fr. John speaks of *eudaemonia* not in terms of its affinities with Christianity, but rather bases his rejection of “happiness” on an Orthodox teleology which spurns any goal short of deification in the image of Christ as a suitable *telos* for man.\(^\text{13}\)


\(^{13}\)On eudaemonism in Fr. John’s writings, see Chapter 4, n.
In fact, we can only recognize the deficiency of the eudaemonistic first love through an understanding of the second love, which is the love of God, the love that “never fails” and which God radiates toward creation: “God is love.” Fr. John illustrates the difference between the two loves by contrasting the individualism of the first love with the kenoticism of the second love. If attaining to the likeness of God is
to incline toward the highest good and to find self-contentment in it, what kind of relationship can the soul have with secondary being if it should ever achieve its goal? If the soul becomes totally satisfied by its union with the One, how can it also be inclined toward other beings like itself, or even lower being, and maintain a relationship of love with them also? 

10, above. Helpful toward understanding Fr. John’s seeming contrariness in rejecting eudaemonia is the definition of happiness given by R. B. Brandt in P. Edwards (ed.), The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. 3 (New York and London 1972 [1967]) 413–414. Here Brandt points out the two main ideas which constitute the Western notion of eudaemonia: 1) One’s disposition of satisfaction toward the main aspects or pattern of one’s own situation in life, and 2) “the occurrence (or nonoccurrence) of certain feelings or emotions” (413). Note the absence here of a total deliverance from self-concern, and the absence of a perpetual, dynamic transcendence of human capacity which is incompatible with anything like self-satisfaction. Bearing these features in mind, the reason for Fr. John’s stark opposition of “happiness” to glorification becomes clear.

The Augustinian West’s view of God as an unmoved mover, whose only possible movement of love could be toward Himself finds its correlation in an individualistic, self-serving humanity.

The second love, which is that of Christ, the Bible, and the Fathers, is predicated upon the dogma “Each man’s relationship with his brother in Christ ought to be an image of his relationship with God and Christ.”\(^{15}\) However, Christ’s teaching was truly revolutionary in its promise that men were created to become deified, and to thus be progressively delivered from all necessity, law, and constraint. The content of deification, indeed, is the second love, which “seeks not its own,” and by which man acquires “the nous of Christ.” The love of Christ and unity in Christ are a single reality, and one cannot love Christ and at the same time hate his brother.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) It should also be pointed out that Augustinian eudaemonia is based upon the dual epistemology of analogia entis/analogy fidae. According to analogia entis, there is an analogy of being between man’s finite mind and the infinite mind of God. This mind of man/mind of God tangent allows man to ascend the rungs of created beings, to reach the “forms” of created beings, and finally to arrive at a beatific vision of the essence of God. Analogy fidae is the notion that God gave us the Bible as a great book of revealed propositions. In the hands of one whose intellect is guided by the Spirit, philosophical methods of reasoning can be used to tease out and develop new teachings which are latently present in the Bible. In this ultra-rationalistic conception of revelation, the Bible
Though we will have to wait until his middle and late period writings for a full-bodied presentation of the ascetic path that carries one from the first love to the second, Fr. John does give us a picture in *Ancestral Sin* of the meaning of the second love. A particularly Romanidesian quotation from St. Clement of Rome, who is himself explicating a passage from the Torah concerning Moses, gives us a clear notion of this second love: “Moses said, ’Lord, pardon the sin of this people, else blot me also out of the book of the living.’ O marvelous love! O insuperable perfection! The servant speaks freely to his Lord and asks for either forgiveness for the people or that he himself might perish along with them.”17 Fr. John follows with a quotation from St. Justin Martyr that shows the early Church to have been a “cenobium” of non-possessors, further indicating the ascetic basis of the second love.18 Finally, Fr. John links his discussion of the two loves with freedom from fear, keeping in mind the book’s prominent theme of the fall becomes God’s great tome of axioms. This epistemology is idolatrous to the Orthodox, who proclaim that there is no analogy of being between the essence of God and creation which could allow man to attain to the uncreated essence of God. The Orthodox also oppose *analogia fidae*, for the Bible is not a magical, uncreated tome, like the Koran is supposed by some to be, but rather the Bible is a sacred book because of its use in liturgical and ascetical contexts.

as bondage to Satan through fear of death: “perfect love casteth out fear.”¹⁹ The second love was lost in the West during the Middle Ages, and Fr. John views the perennial Western dilemma “faith versus works” as a by-product of this loss:

The West’s two formulations about salvation are products of a eudaemonistic, self-seeking mentality that ignores the New Testament’s teaching about unselfish love, the love that gives no thought to itself. Man can offer neither solam fidem nor meritorious works to the throne of God in order to buy salvation. (—) Neither faith nor works save. Only God saves, but not arbitrarily without the will of man or by necessity because of man’s works, but only when these are accompanied by love.²⁰

For Augustine, hamartology turns out to be an inscrutable mystery, though perhaps not in the intended sense. It should have been easy, Augustine believes, for Adam to “keep the commandment,” since he began with an “utterly perfect” mind.\(^1\) Man fell because he violated the “penal code” in the essence of God, and both the breaking and the following of this iron law are both viewed as purely legal “transactions.”\(^2\) Perfection in the image of Christ is absent from the Augustinian picture of the fall. Adam, indeed, already begins in a perfect state, without Christ’s incarnation and without ascetic tempering. Who, indeed, is this Godman?

\(^1\) *Ibid.*, 124.

\(^2\) “… [T]he law laid down by God in paradise was on His [Christ’s] account…” St. Gregory Palamas, Homily 7, in *Grigoriou tou Palama Omiliai* 22, ed. S. Oikonomos (Athens 1861) 259. Quoted in P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 36, who notes that the law in Eden on “Christ’s behalf,” the second Adam’s behalf, is ultimately for the First Adam’s salvation.
In the Christological context of Orthodox hama-
rtology, a different answer to the cur Deus homo is
found: “Adam is understood through Christ. The first
Adam is not the key to the New Testament. The sec-
ond Adam, however, is the key to the Old Testament.
The veil of the Old Testament ‘is abolished in Christ’
only.”\(^3\) As St. Theophilus of Antioch and St. Irenaeus
of Lyons taught, Adam in the garden was born in an
intermediate state, neither perfect nor imperfect, but
rather a mutable creation destined without coercion
to become immutable through ascetic perfection in
love. The soul of man is not immortal by nature, but
rather by participation in the Holy Spirit, which con-
forms man to the “nous of Christ.”

Fr. John holds that the West’s misconceptions
about Adam and the fall have had severe consequenc-
es in all areas of Western theology, but most saliently
in the Western notion of the “image of God.” Because
of their eudaemonistic presuppositions about man,
most Western theologians make no distinction be-
tween “people who live according to death and people
who live according to Christ.”\(^4\) These non-Orthodox
scholars are prone to the dualistic readings of St. Paul
that Fr. John first decried in “Original Sin According
to Saint Paul” (see ch. 1).

Fr. John critiques the Hellenistic mind-body du-
alism of Western theology through the subtle lens of

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid., 133.
Orthodox eschatology. However, Fr. John’s broadly conceived notion of the “last things” is a far cry from that of the Western theology manuals, and rather anticipates the Christocentric eschatology typical in Orthodox writing since the fifties. The souls of the Old Testament righteous were in sheol, that is, asleep in their bodies, when “Through the resurrection of righteous souls in Christ there came a kind of separation of soul and body that, in a manner of speaking, is unnatural; it is, however, altogether temporary. This separation is not metaphysical or dualistic in nature but eschatological.” Thus the fundamental anthropological distinction is between man’s created being with its natural energy and the uncreated, saving energy of Christ. No opposition exists between man’s soul and his body, as if the latter were a prison and the former the “real man” made in the image of God. Rather, there is an “eschatological distinction between those who … are presently participating in the Lord’s victory over death unto eternal life and

6 J. S. Romanides, Ancestral Sin, 138. Emphasis mine. See also p. 156, “... [T]he writers of the first two centuries understood that justice is eschatological. God does not will the present unjust activity of Satan and man but only tolerates it so that those who would be saved can be tried and perfected through temptations.”
those who do not participate in it and are therefore on a path to eternal damnation.”

The eschatological distinction between those in Christ and those under Satan is at the heart of the Orthodox teachings about the resurrection. The first resurrection is the Pentecost in the heart of man that is man’s life in the body of Christ. This resurrection is the “thousand year reign” of Christ in the hearts of His saints which is also the imparting of life to His body through the sacraments. On this side of the grave, those who have been baptized have the “betrothal of the Spirit,” and are struggling against Satan to fulfill their vows. Unlike the saints on the other side of the grave, who have conquered Satan and are merely awaiting the final victory, those still in this life must wage total war against demonic forces to become more and more conformed to the image of the Son. The second resurrection will precede the last judgment. It is truly the “last” judgment because it is the joining of all men’s souls with their bodies, both the blessed and the damned. Man is not a disembodied soul; therefore, the defeat of Satan which the saints have wrought through Christ is only consummated once all men become like the resurrected Christ, their passionless souls reunited with their immortalized bodies. Thus, Satan’s trial does not take place in some court of jurisprudence in the sky, but

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Ibid., 139.
is rather cosmic in scope, being the inevitable result of the already accomplished defeat of death in the body of Christ. This eschatological perspective makes sense of St. Paul’s seemingly contradictory references to the resurrection as both something in the past (first resurrection) and as a future event (second resurrection).\(^8\)

\(^8\) *Ibid.*, 142.
Fr. John’s “image of God” theology is the key to his Christology, his soteriology, and thus his hamanrtology. In “Spiritual Man in the Image of God,” Ancestral Sin’s penultimate chapter, Fr. John uses St. Irenaeus’ “second Adam” theme to illustrate the deeper implications of the incarnation: Christ “became Himself what was His image, and He reestablished the likeness in a sure manner by conforming man like unto the invisible Father. It is Christ ‘Who is the image of God.’ ‘Those whom [God] did foreknow, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.’” If Christ is the image of God the Father, then man is the image of Christ, or the “image of the image.”

1 Ibid., 152. The Scriptural quotations are 2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15, Romans 8:29.
2 On man as the “image of the image,” see P. Nellas, Deification in Christ, 23ff. The Roman Catholic T.G. Weinandy in Athanasius: A Theological Introduction (Aldershot, Hampshire 2007) does a superlative job in summarizing the “image of the Image” theme as propounded by St. Athanasius the Great:
A longer quotation from *Ancestral Sin* lays out the anthropological implications of the second Adam’s recapitulation of the cosmos:

Therefore, just as Christ was born an infant and subsequently grew bodily, matured, advanced, and was perfected…, the first-made

"For Athanasius, the Word is the perfect divine image of the Father and for human beings, then, are ontologically in the image of God because they are ontologically in the image of the Word. Athanasius equally implies that it is precisely because God created human beings through his Word that human beings have taken on the likeness of his Word, and so his own likeness as well.

[Also], human beings are able, after the likeness of the Word, to know and so be in communion with the Father. Having been ontologically created by the Word and in the Word’s own image, human beings are thus naturally empowered by that same Word to share equally in their epistemological ability to know the Father. Because of ‘this likeness (homios) to himself’ humankind is able to know God ‘even of his own eternity.’ Having been given god’s own power ‘from the Word of the Father,’ humankind is able to ‘rejoice and have fellowship with the Deity,’ and even ‘beholds, by his purity, the Image of the Father, God the Word, after whose image he was made.’ In contemplating the word humankind ‘sees in him also the Father of the Word.’ Thus, for Athanasius, humankind, in being created in the image of the Word, possesses the ‘purity of soul’ that is in itself ‘sufficient to reflect God’ and so come to know him” (14, author qu. from St. Athanasius *Contra Gentes* 2.3).
men were also made children in order to grow, mature, and become perfect in body and soul. Christ was born without sin or deficiency. Yet He advanced and was perfected. Likewise, the first men were made sinless and without deficiency in order to advance and become perfect.³

In the next two articles published by Fr. John — “Justin Martyr and the Fourth Gospel” and “H. A. Wolfson’s Philosophy of the Church Fathers” — we find a growing emphasis on an Orthodox realism of glory. The Justin article is an expansion of the discussion, first found in Ancestral Sin, of the twofold Gospel tradition of pre- and post-baptismal instruction. The distinction between the Orthodox catechetical and post-catechetical teachings is shown in the synoptic gospels on one hand, and in the Gospel of John on the other.

The synoptic gospels emphasize moral precepts that are always linked to the destruction of demonic power in a concrete situation. The catechesis of the synoptic gospels is also grounded in parables that both indicate and hide the mystery of life in Christ. Moreover, the synoptic gospels preach a transfigurational vision of God, which is experienced only by those who have progressed from being a slave
of God and hearer of His word to being a friend of God and doer of His word. On the other hand, the Johannine Gospel is a post-baptismal instruction book that is designed to deepen the understanding of the Mysteries for those who are already members of Christ’s body: “The fourth gospel is a continuous play on the divinity of Christ as witnessed to by the divine activities which He shares in common with the Father and the Spirit and which are eventually understood by those who are defeating the devil but continuously misunderstood by those blinded by the prince of darkness.”

The Christological key to the twofold Gospel tradition of “hearers” and “partakers” is the Transfiguration, where Peter and the Sons of thunder ascended Mt. Tabor with Christ and were afforded a vision of the uncreated glory of God. Fr. John explains the significance of the Transfiguration as the fulfillment of Christ’s kingdom promise: “Amen I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here who shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom [or rule] of God come in power.” Fr. John finds it significant that all three synoptic gospels jump ahead in time to Mt. Tabor directly after Christ’s kingdom promise is recorded: “The promise of Christ that some shall see the kingdom of God come in power… was fulfilled

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2 Ibid., 121.
in the vision of the glory in the transfiguration of Christ which took place after the pattern of God’s self revelation to Moses in Exodus.”

Also noteworthy is Fr. John’s recognition that the terms such as basileia ton Theou, energeian, and doxa are synonymous in the Bible, all indicating the uncreated glory of God, made accessible to man through Christ. Life in Christ is sharing in His basileia, or “ruling power” which is simultaneously 1) uncreated energy of God, 2) deification of man, and 3) the final defeat of Satan and the fullness of the kingdom. There is a clear discrimination, for Fr. John, between baptism by water and baptism in the Spirit in the gospels, the former corresponding to the sharing of the “mystery of the reigning power of God” enjoyed by all of the Apostles, and the latter being experienced by the three pillars—Peter, James, and John—on Mt. Tabor. That the vision of Christ’s glory is the destiny of all Christians is indicated by Christ’s prayer in John 17:24 that “all may see His glory.”

3 Ibid., 122.
4 Ibid., 122-23.
5 Ibid., 124.
Fr. John next delivers a masterful critique of Dr. H. A. Wolfson's *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (1956), a book that treats the writings of the Church Fathers as philosophical tracts full of specula-tion about the being of God. Wolfson's rationalistic approach is contrasted with Fr. John's “soteriological approach,” which is based upon the Church Fathers’ sharing of the “prophetic experience” of the saints of the Old and New Testaments. Here, Fr. John establishes the radical distinction between the rational knowledge of philosophers and the apophatic knowledge of the Bible and the Fathers:

The correct interpretation of Scripture belongs to those who have been incorporated into the same soteriological experience as those who wrote the Scriptures. Both Old and New Testa-

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ments deal with the revelation of the glory of God. For a Biblical critic not to have seen the glory of God simply means he does not know the very object of his study.  

This article on Wolfson stridently singles out the experience of the glory of God as the epistemological key to Orthodox soteriology. In Fr. John's analysis, it is Wolfson's false epistemology that precludes him from understanding the Scriptures and the specific “reality” which they speak about.

The subject matter of the [Old and] New Testament[s] is … the mighty acts of God. The divine essence is beyond the reach not only of human experience generally but of the prophets and apostles also. It is the glory and not the essence of God which is revealed in Christ. The Logos did not become flesh to reveal the divine nature but to destroy the works of the devil by bringing man back into permanent communion with the glory of God.

This view of Scripture as the chronicle of the glory/energy/work of God which reveals to the prophets of both the Old and New Testaments that creation cannot know rationally the essence of God is sharply opposed to Wolfson's philosophical approach. Wolf-

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2 Ibid., 56.
3 For a wider context in which to place this notion of an Orthodox realism of glory, see part two of the “Introduction,” p. 12–23.
son searches in vain for a philosophical exposition of the Trinity in the New Testament. Indeed, Fr. John is appalled at Wolfson’s utter disregard for the meaning and purpose of the New Testament. The twofold Gospel tradition so emphasized in the Justin article is again drawn upon by Fr. John to illustrate Wolfson’s approach: “To try to find depth theology in works intended for catechumens, for example, is like finding fault with a book on simple arithmetic because it does not contain trigonometrical formulas.”

Contrary to Wolfson’s point of view is that of Fr. John and the biblical writers themselves, for whom the true purpose of the Bible is the disclosure of “a method of instruction intended to lead those being taught into a definite soteriological experience.” In Fr. John’s later works, commented upon below, the

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5 Ibid., 60.
6 Ibid. For Orthodox Christianity as a method for salvation rather than a system of abstract truths, see B.N. Tatakis, *Christian Philosophy in the Patristic and Byzantine Tradition*, trans. G.D. Dragas (Rollinsford, NH 2008): “…Christianity is not simply an abstract knowledge of the truth,…. but an effective method for the salvation of mankind. It may, perhaps be argued that this is also the way in which the ancient philosophers saw their philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle, but also the Stoics. (—) It was like that, of course, until the second century, when Christian philosophers discovered that the various philosophical systems, even though sometimes they might have right views, could not in fact provide an effective method for guidance in life, on the contrary, only Christianity could do so” (31–32).
pastoral/therapeutic nature of Church writings is fleshed out as a complete theory of knowledge — an Orthodox epistemology — which contrasts with the non-Orthodox epistemology of scholastic metaphysics. Though Fr. John does not here develop the ecclesiological or ascetic contexts of this biblical/pastoral methodology, one might argue that the ascetic and eucharistic spheres are already implied in his description of the goal of biblical therapy as “discrimination of energies”: In the Bible, “one sees a series of spiritual exercises calculated to free the mind and body from demonic oppression and to lead the catechumen to a spiritual condition whereby he is able to distinguish between the acts of creatures and demons and the uncreated acts or glory of God.”7 Accordingly, the realism of the Bible and the Fathers is based upon ascetico-ecclesial methods that allow man to cooperate with the uncreated glory of God. This cooperation is a synergy of man and God, and it, therefore, restores man to normality, which is life in Christ, the second Adam. The centrality of the incarnation in man’s deification allows us also to say that the realism of glory is the union of man with the Godman, so that the former can be called a God since he co-reigns with Christ.

Unlike Wolfson, whose metaphysical presuppositions lead him to seek reality in concepts about the Absolute, the biblical writers knew that man does not

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possess or apprehend reality merely by his own natural intellect or energies. Rather, man was created to participate in the only source of reality, the life of God that is made available to man only through the glory of God. Because of the incarnation, the actual glorified humanity of Christ is communicated to the faithful in every generation, including all of the saints and prophets who lived before the incarnation. The glory of God is the unique source of life and incorruption in which man participates in reality. We must stress, however, that this reality which is given to man through the glory of God is not exterior to man, but is interior to man, since the first Adam was created in a state of noetic communion with God, though this communion was not initially at the higher levels of participation.

True “reality” is self-constituted. Something that is truly “real” cannot be ontologically dependent upon some other, higher, “more real” foundation. In accordance with the above presuppositions about reality, it must be boldly asserted that the Orthodox “realism of glory” is equivalent to the dogma of creatio ex nihilo, the bedrock Christian teaching that God creates, sustains, and saves all of creation through His glory alone, and not through any created medium or fiat. Not only is there nothing higher than God; one must further hold that nothing can be compared to God. God is uncreated and everything outside of God was created by Him. God creates all things by glory, but His essence remains unchanged and inaccessible.
The West’s reduction of God’s essence to rational, knowable concepts violates the strict Orthodox realism of glory which goes hand-in-hand with that most foundational of dogmas, *creatio ex nihilo*. What is amazing is that many non-Orthodox believe that reality is apprehended through man’s rational intellect, which is supposedly aided in its quest by created grace from God. In opposition to Western rationalistic “realism,” the Wolfson article hammers home the Orthodox teaching that man’s encounter with reality is not a matter of a mere rational ascent to intellectual forms and concepts, but is based instead upon an actual encounter with God Himself through His uncreated glory. Even those who experience this glory cannot circumscribe it in words, though these prophets are inspired to describe methods of purification which constitute therapies for neophytes. These methods of purification are the basis of Orthodox realism because they enable man to open himself to God’s uncreated glory, the experience of which gradually bestows upon man the ability to differentiate demonic energy from uncreated, divine energy. These methods of purification are not mystical in

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*For a Western religious philosopher’s valiant effort at broadening the West’s arid anthropology of “rational mind plus emotions,” see J. Herlihy, *Borderlands of the Spirit: Reflections On a Sacred Science of Mind* (Bloomington IN 2005), esp. chapter three, p. 50–67, which lays out a more cardiocentric anthropology than usually holds in the West.*
the Western (or Far Eastern) sense, nor do they have anything in common with New Age out-of-body experiences. Instead, the Orthodox realism of glory is based upon the concrete defeat of Satan in the hearts and bodies of actual men. This defeat of demonic energy is the simultaneous experience of God's uncreated glory, which is a reality beyond the senses and beyond the intellect.
PART TWO

THE NESTORIAN METAHERESY
For Fr. John, all types of non-Orthodox Christology—whether Nestorian, Samosatene, Arian, etc.—share an essential feature, the “presupposition that the uncreated God cannot unite himself by nature with human nature since such a union would be a necessary union imposed upon God.”¹ This widespread Christological error, which appears—in a multitude of guises—again and again from the patristic period to the present, we will term the “Nestorian metaheresy.” Historically, so Fr. John holds,² the Nestorian metaheresy emerged in the Oriental diocese of the Roman Empire, in the heart of Syriac Christianity. To combat deterministic philosophical and ethical views that were then widespread, some Syriac Christians in the second century erected a

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² In fact, Fr. John never used the term “Nestorian metaheresy,” a phrase introduced by the author.
metaphysical system that privileges what is done by will over what is done by nature. This system presupposes that man is saved by meritorious, “ethical” behavior in this life, and that, in the afterlife, man’s reward for following this divine law code is a kind of blissful stasis enjoyed as a negation of human mutability. As is turns out, due to the presuppositions of Hellenistic philosophy which these Syrian Christians shared with the rest of the Mediterranean world, man’s changeableness — which in turn is associated closely with man’s moral imperfection — was viewed as being rooted in the very category of human energy and activity. This Syrian world-view also implies that no “natural” or “hypostatic” union is possible in the incarnation of the Logos, nothing being truly assumed, nothing being truly healed. It would be a short leap to arrive at the later formulations of the Antiochenes which deny that the incarnation was accomplished through the “natural” union of two natures, the human one not pre-existing but rather being the Logos’ own humanity. However, before flashing forward to the classic Chalcedonian conflict with those who deny “natural” or “hypostatic union,” we must first trace the ancient line of proto-Nestorian Syriac Christianity with its moralistic philosophical presuppositions. We will then see that the reason behind Fr. John’s preoccupation with the Nestorian metaheresy is its underscoring of the fundamental presuppositions behind all non-Orthodox Christology
from the age of the Ecumenical Councils to the present day.

The Syriac notion that *in both God and man, nothing praiseworthy was done by nature, but only by will* is prominent both in the precursors to Nestorianism — be they the Lucianists Paul of Samosata and Arius, or the latter’s followers Eunomius and Aetius — as well as in ecclesiastical writers commonly designated Nestorian, such as Theodore of Mopsuestia. For Paul of Samosata, union of God with man was by “good will,” and there was no “natural union” in Christ to speak of. “What prevails by reason of nature merits no praise. But what prevails by the relationship of love is praiseworthy…”3 In fact, there was no Trinity or incarnation at all in Paul of Samosata’s theology, only an indwelling by adoption of an ordinary man whose human will was swallowed by a divine will.4

For Arius and his followers, the same Syriac notion used by the Samosatene — that natural relation is necessary union — is carried into Trinitarian relations. Viewed from this perspective, we are no longer constrained, as are many who write histories of dogma in the West, to accuse Arius of stubborn sophistry in his contention that “Unless He has by will come to be, therefore God had a Son by necessity and against

His good pleasure.”5 Rather, Arius was led to believe that the Logos was of a different substance than the Father because if the Logos was Son by nature, then God was subjected to necessity in begetting Him. Since nothing that is essentially good or that affects good can be done by nature, Arius is compelled by his necessitarian inner logic to speak only of a Logos created by the will of the Father.

The Eunomians further refined the conclusions of Arius by denying the distinction between energy and essence in God6 and even obliterating the difference between hypostasis and essence. The essence of God, for Eunomius, is only the hypostasis defined by the term “Father.” Eunomius’ Father-God is similar to Arius’ “Unbegotten” Father in that both perform all works by will, including the willing of the Son and the Spirit into existence ex nihilo. However, Eunomius flips the radical unknowability of Arius’ agennetos on its head, for man can come to know the essence of the Eunomian Father-God through the unlikely medium of language itself,7 specifically through certain

7 See J. S. Romanides, “Christological Teaching,” on the particularly Western-Augustinian fixation on terminology which
philosophical terms, which have for the Eunomeans a strange mystico-intellectual significance.

Once we arrive at Theodore of Mopsuestia, the “Father of the Nestorians,” we see several of these proto-Nestorian strands coalescing into a well-defined system. A lengthy quotation from Fr. John outlines the prominent features of the fully developed system, for which Fr. John never provided a name, but that we have called the Nestorian metaheresy:

Faced with the need to combat determinism in both its ethical and cosmological or philosophical forms, it seems that a Syrian theological tradition was created which emphasized the superiority of what is done according to will as over against what is done by nature. What is done by nature can neither be praised nor rewarded nor justly punished, whereas what is done by will is indicative of a higher form of life. A man who realizes his own freedom to will what is good can occupy himself with meritorious works, on the one hand, for the reward of eternal life, and at the same time become instrumental for the betterment of society. Such a moralistic foundation would overcome the pessimism of pagan religions and philosophies and at the same time would be conducive to building up the moral stamina of the Roman Empire. Within such categories there would automatically be a strong tendency to think of divine adoption perhaps finds a later echo in Occamism and even in Luther’s sola scriptura.
primarily as a reward which comes at the end of a process of meritorious living and the Biblical doctrine of grace and sin would become subordinated to this principle. The grace of God would not be so much a gift bestowed upon man in order to liberate him from the enemy, but a reward bestowed upon him because he has fulfilled the law. The destruction of Israel’s enemies would not be the work of God’s glory, but rather the work of Israel who would thereupon be rewarded with the glory of God for such meritorious efforts. Such an inversion of the Biblical pattern is perhaps the most characteristic feature of Theodore’s Christology. In this respect Galtier is entirely wrong in claiming that the sole initiative for the incarnation lies with the Son of God. For Theodore, God unites Himself by will to the assumed man, but this union is dependent on God’s foreknowledge of the assumed man’s merits. Theodore could not imagine that one could preserve both the freedom of God and Christ otherwise.\footnote{Ibid., 168.}

The notion that God can be defined in a positive manner as immutable truth is the keystone in Theodore’s system. Indeed, for the Mopsuestian, God’s truth is based on His immutability and simplicity, His lack of motion and purity from change. In terms of human salvation, this means that man is sinful because he is mutable. True freedom is, paradoxically, giving up one’s own will and freedom through a pursuit of a
good that satisfies, and thereby negates, all desire and will, since pure immutability is experienced through a vision of God’s changeless essence.⁹

Here Fr. John makes an important connection between 1) the Nestorian tradition, which includes Arianism and Paulicianism, and 2) the Augustino-Platonic tradition, which is the root of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Both Nestorians and Augustinians believe that salvation is the pursuit of happiness or _eudaemonia_ through both meritorious good works and irresistible predestination. However, _eudaemonia_ is not only the way or means to salvation, but also constitutes the goal of the journey, the very substance of “heaven.” This happiness-heaven is a vision of God’s very essence, and is a sharing in the attributes of this divine substance: Absolute Stasis, Pure Realization, and total self-contentment.¹⁰

The sterile motionlessness achieved by means of this human-divine merger, however, does not in any way involve the transformation of the inner man (_nous_, _eso anthropon_) from a self-loving and demonized love to a love that “seeketh not its own” in the image of Christ. The fact that such a non-glorification soteriology, with its substitution of eudaemonic glory for the Orthodox/Chalcedonian realism of glo-


¹⁰ For a brief description of Dante’s Scholastic cosmology and its _eudaemonia_-heaven, which is typical of the Augustino-Platonic tradition, see H. Butterfield, *Origins.*
ry, is found in Arianism, Eunomianism, and Nestorianism on the one hand, and in the Augustino-Platonic tradition (itself the root of all non-Orthodox Christian theology in the West) on the other, is the basis for the term “Nestorian metaheresy,” which indicates the affinities which cut across (Gr. meta, across) non-Orthodox theological systems which are generally thought to be opposed, such as Augustinianism and Nestorianism.

Most importantly, Fr. John’s shocking realignment, which places the entire Western Christian edifice on the non-Chalcedonian, non-Nicene side of the patristic fence, is based upon Fr. John’s insistence that the determining factor in theology is not rational reflection upon patristic terms, as the Augustinian West would have it. Rather, the real question is one of glory (doxa). What is the truth about the glory into which all men are created to be deified? Indeed, what constitutes “right glory” (orthodoxia)?

11 See P. Galadza, “Restoring the Icon: Reflections on the Reform of Byzantine Worship,” Worship 65.3 (May 1991) 240: “The term [‘orthodox’] which means ‘right belief’ or ‘opinion’ eventually comes to be understood as ‘right worship’ (literally ‘glorification’). By the time of the Slavic missions this transposition has triumphed. Hence the Slavonic pravoslavie, which can only be understood as ‘right glorification.’” Kenneth Leech’s remarks in his introduction to T. Colliander, Way of the Ascetics: The Ancient Tradition of Discipline and Inner Growth, trans. K. Feree (Crestwood, NY 1998 [1960]) viii–ix: “For Orthodoxy is not primarily a system or a correctness of doctrinal formulations. Doxa means glory. Orthodoxo
Is this glory created, and does it lead man into a state of “fulfillment of every desire” after a worldly regimen of merit-garnering works? Such a glory, viewed from the standpoint of the Orthodox Fathers of the Church, is both idolatrous and demonic. To be more specific, the Nestorian metaheresy’s eudaemonistic glory is fantastic, based as it is in fantasia, which are thoughts colored by passion-inspiring illusions. Fantasia come from the devil and his minions, and they constitute the “snares” and “wiles” of the devil, as well as his “wisdom.”

Thus all variations of the Nestorian metaheresy have in common a similar soteriology, one characterized by the absence of theosis and its replacement with eudaemonism — a belief in salvation through either merited or unmerited divine grace. This soteriology of philosophical moralism, according to Fr. John, appears wherever Christians lose contact with the true spiritual tradition of purification of the heart and glorification of the whole man in Christ.  

is therefore concerned with 'right glory,' and it is therefore rooted in the sense of theology as inseparable from human transformation. The purpose of theology is nothing less than the transfiguring of human life 'from glory to glory.'

12 J.S. Romanides, *Outline*, 101: “In all the systems of the Franco-Latin, Roman Catholics and Protestants, good works, whether they are worthy of merit in themselves, or worthy of merit on account of a preceding, irresistible grace, or whether they are indications of the saving predestination, which causes them, are the means, through which the faith-
Here we should also connect these startling conclusions with Fr. John’s earlier comments in the seminal *Ancestral Sin*, where *eudaemonia* is linked to general philosophical notions present at all times in history:

The immutable and inactive One of Greek philosophy is rather a projection of the human thirst for a secure understanding of the meaning of existence itself and for *eudaemonia*. It is the object of man’s intellectual desire for an entirely natural certainty of salvation but without a real revelation and the gradual saving energy of God in the world. It is also a self-centered principle imaginatively constructed according to the desires of man.13

Now that we have placed the Nestorian metaheretical views on soteriology in their proper Orthodox perspective, we will examine the Christological beliefs of the Nestorians. For Theodore, Nestorius, and their followers, Christ must have only a single will and energy, because “two wills and energies in Christ would clearly presuppose a lack of immutability on the human side and therefore some measure of imperfect acquisition of their desires and, hence, their neutralization through the vision of the divine essence. The vision of the divine essence is the prize or the merit for the good works, or the result of the first establishment of the reasoning faculty in the journey towards eudaemonism. Yet, it is not viewed as an internal change of a self-interested love into selfless love by divine grace.”

tion and sinfulness.” Here we see the Hellenistic presupposition that mutability is equivalent to imperfection and sin. Indeed, at one point, Theodore, in his desire to portray a “real” single will, comes close to imputing sin to the pre-resurrection Christ. Two things become obvious from such a perspective: 1) If there is no energy and will in the human nature of Christ, then our wills and natures cannot be healed but rather must be nullified, obliterated, or otherwise ended through submission “not to the will of God, but to some sort of stiff and impersonal and motionless immutability,” and 2) the muted determinism resulting from this non-theosis Christology is reflected in the countless misunderstandings amongst the non-Orthodox about demonology, sacraments, asceticism, and eschatology.

Perhaps the most unexpected conclusion Fr. John draws from the Nestorian metaheresy concerns the Oriental Orthodox Christians. In his Outline of Orthodox Patristic Dogmatics, Romanides’ discussion of the Robber Council at Ephesus leads him to conclude that “[t]he heretical aspect of the Robber Council lies in its rejection of the Reconciliation reached between Cyril and John and its exclusive insistence on adopting the Alexandrian terminology of one nature and hypostasis in Christ.” Here it is plain that, for

15 Ibid.
16 J. S. Romanides, Outline, 61.
Fr. John, the Oriental Orthodox of today are outside of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy because of a fundamentalist adherence to Cyrillian terminology much like the Fathers at the Ephesian Robber Synod. The important thing for Fr. John is the positive and ecumenical truth that Dioscorus and all Oriental Orthodox who follow him to this day proclaim the anti-Nestorian and pro-Chalcedonian dogma of the dual consubstantiality of Christ, who is both consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with humanity:

They accept, as Dioscorus did, that the one, who was born from the Virgin, is coessential with the Father with respect to Godhood and coessential with us with respect to manhood. Their doctrine, although still remaining unclear, states that Christ has two natures before the union, but one after the union, without this implying that his humanity is canceled out. This doctrine, however, is open to the charge of possibly leading to Nestorianism. For in saying the humanity is not canceled out, and in identifying nature and hypostasis, it appears that they accept two hypostaseis and two persons in Christ, which amounts to nothing else but Nestorianism!17

This is an unflinching but nonetheless diplomatic line for Fr. John to take regarding the Oriental Orthodox issue, for he is pointing out that if the Oriental Orthodox accept Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, they

17 Ibid.
would be 1) throwing off their Christological confusions, 2) uniting with the larger Orthodox communion, and — most enticingly — 3) eradicating any suspicion of Nestorianism from their theology. Elsewhere, Fr. John points out that the Fourth Ecumenical Council was Cyrillian and not Leonine, and that the view of some Western scholars that Pope Leo was the criterion of Orthodoxy at Chalcedon is part of a Nestorian historiography which some have named “Neo-Chalcedonianism.” Overall it is clear that Fr. John’s notion that an overarching Nestorianism pervades all non-Orthodox Christology is not intended to drive a further wedge between Orthodox and non-Orthodox, but rather to build a bridge toward those who have unwittingly fallen prey to Christological confusions.

And to the One God in Trinity,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Be Glory, Amen.
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To God Be Glory, Amen.