

Concerning the *Logos asarkos*: Interacting with Robert W. Jenson

OLIVER D. CRISP

Oliver D. Crisp is Professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA. Previously he taught at the Universities of St. Andrews and Bristol in the United Kingdom. He has also had postdoctoral fellowships at The University of Notre Dame and at The Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton. He is the author and editor of numerous books including for example, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Fortress, 2014); *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics* (Zondervan, 2014), co-edited with Fred Sanders; *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology* (T & T Clark, 2009); and *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge, 2007).

ABSTRACT

Robert W. Jenson has recently written a short article clarifying his argument against the doctrine of the *Logos asarkos* (Word without flesh). In this article I offer a critique of his remarks, showing that his reasoning has two consequences that are problematic. First, it implies that the Second Person of the Trinity incarnate has parts. Second, it raises significant concerns for divine impassibility.

INTRODUCTION

In a recent article, Robert W. Jenson has offered a clarification of his views on the *Logos asarkos*.¹ It provides readers of Jenson's work with a helpful addendum (though not retraction) to his previously published works on the matter of the *Logos asarkos*. This, very roughly, is the idea that the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, in some sense pre-exists his incarnate,

or creaturely state; that he exists in some sense “without flesh” or *asarkos* as well as “enfleshed” or *ensarkos*.²

Jenson is implacably opposed to the idea that there is some state prior to his being incarnate in which the Word of God exists *without flesh*. In his paper he explains that his previous work does not constitute crypto-Arianism, as some critics have claimed, because he does not hold to the idea that the Word *begins to exist* at the first moment of the Incarnation, nor that Christ *begins to exist* at the first moment of the Incarnation—provided we are careful about what we mean by such phrases. What Jenson means, it seems, is that Christ eternally exists as the Second Person of the Trinity. Christ is identical to the Second Person of the Trinity so that there is nothing above and beyond the Word Incarnate’s relation to the Father as a divine person incarnate to distinguish him from the Father. Because God does not bear relations to time in the same way that creatures do, Christ cannot be said to “pre-exist” his incarnate state as God the Son. For in “the divine life there is ... no line on which the relation describable as God’s sending and Jesus’ obedience could occupy a position ‘after’ anything. And again we must remember that antecedent to God’s life, there is no realm in which the Son/Logos might ‘pre’-exist, or not.”³ There is a monarchy of the Father’s relation to the Son within the eternal divine life, and this might be said to be conceptually prior to the relation Christ bears to the Father. But there is no divine life apart from these person-constituting relations.⁴

In this article, I argue that although Jenson’s clarification of his position does have its roots in classical Christology, and does avoid Arianism, it has two important theological costs that those sympathetic to Jenson’s disambiguated doctrine of Christ’s pre-existence may want to resist. These are, that in identifying God the Son with his human nature Jenson commits himself to the view that God Incarnate is, in some important sense, composite (a notion that he wants to avoid). In addition, Jenson’s position means God the Son cannot be immutable or impassible.⁵ I begin by recapitulating and extrapolating the central issues in Jenson’s recent paper relevant to the present concern. I then offer an argument for the conclusion that Jenson’s identification of Christ with the Word implies composition in the Second Person of the Trinity. Finally, I turn to the matter of divine impassibility, showing

that Jenson cannot hold his model of the hypostatic union and uphold the ancient theological notion that the “Impassible suffers.”

PART I

Like St. Thomas Aquinas before him, Jenson maintains that the divine persons of the Trinity are individuated as subsistent relations.⁶ That is, the Word of God is distinguishable as a divine person in virtue of his possessing a particular relation of origin, which can be expressed as his “being eternally generated by the Father.” This relational predicate, which applies only to the Word, distinguishes him from the other two divine persons. Indeed it is, as Richard Cross has recently pointed out, the *only* distinguishing feature of particular divine persons in the Godhead in the vast majority of western Christian theology.⁷ We might say that in this respect God is unique. It is not that he belongs to a class of entities that possess such subsistent relations that are person-constituting. Rather, he is the only entity for whom this is true because he is the only entity that is tripersonal.

This has bearing upon the question of the putative pre-existence of Christ because, according to Jenson, it is only as a subsistent relation within the Godhead that the Word exists. There is nothing more to his “pre-existence” because there can be nothing more primitive standing “behind” the Word, in this respect. God just *is* Father, Son and Spirit, and the Son as the Word of God is distinguished from the Father by being eternally generated—and nothing more.⁸ This encapsulates an important deliverance of what is sometimes referred to as the Latin model of the Trinity, which provides for a rather austere account of divine personhood over and against the so-called Social or Relational models of the Trinity, which typically have thicker accounts of the “distinctions” they apply to the divine persons of the immanent Trinity.⁹

Thus far, Jenson’s comments represent a helpful clarification (perhaps even, development) of his previous views. To this disambiguation, Jenson adds the claim that when we speak of Christ, we are speaking of that which is identical to the Word. He writes, “we must not posit the Son’s antecedent subsistence in such a fashion as to make the incarnation the addition of the human Jesus to a Son who was himself without him” and later, “It is not as an individual instance of humanity as such, not as one among many who have the same human nature, that Jesus is the second hypostasis of the

Trinity.”¹⁰ What is more, “it is Jesus’ relation to the Father—and not Jesus as a specimen of humanity—which is the second hypostasis of Trinity. The Father’s sending and Jesus’ obedience are the second hypostasis in God.”¹¹

It appears that the copula “is” stands in for the relation of identity in these passages. Christ just *is* the Word enfleshed (i.e., *ensarkos*); there is no meaning to be had in the claim that there is a state of affairs in which Christ is also *asarkos* (i.e., without flesh). Or rather, as Jenson repeats at the end of this paper, if there is a meaning to it, it remains obscure, “a *Vorstellung* in search of a *Begriff*.”¹² Christ’s “pre-existence” (if we may use such a locution) just is his Trinitarian state as the Second Person of the Trinity, nothing more; that much is simply classical orthodoxy. Nevertheless, it seems that there may be problems for Jenson’s account when one sets his claims about what I am calling Latin Trinitarianism against what he says regarding the identity of Jesus with God the Son.

Several distinctions will help make the matter clearer. In his latest paper Jenson does not identify Christ’s human nature with God the Son, he identifies Jesus with God the Son. The referents are Jesus, and God the Son. That seems right. We want to say that there is only one person involved in the Incarnation, namely, the Second Person of the Trinity. Jesus is not an additional person, a sort of human person adopted or assumed by God the Son. Conceding that would involve embracing unorthodoxy in the guise of adoptionism and Nestorianism, and Jenson is not enamored of either. So perhaps what Jenson can say is that at the Incarnation the person of God the Son either (a) begins to exemplify the property of human nature, or (b) acquires a new relationship to a particular hunk of matter he did not have previously, one of metaphysical ownership. Note that in each of these scenarios one-and-the-same person is involved. The claim is not about whether God the Son is identical to *his human nature*, but whether God the Son is identical to *Jesus*. Suppose we think that incarnation involves some sort of transformation in God the Son.¹³ He begins to exemplify human nature. He has the properties necessary and sufficient to be human in addition to his divine nature. Then, on one way of construing things, it looks like Jesus is identical to God the Son because the Incarnation is a matter of God the Son being transformed into a human—without ceasing to be a divine person, which is of course non-negotiable for the two-natures doctrine of ancient orthodoxy. He instantiates humanity, expanding, as it were, so as

to encompass a particular human life in addition to his divine life. In some respects this may be akin to the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly: the caterpillar begins to exemplify the properties necessary and sufficient for being a caterpillar. Perhaps he does this without losing his essential “caterpillar nature,” whatever that might entail. Something similar could be said regarding the Incarnation, the relevant changes having been made.

Alternatively, the Incarnation is about coming into a particular relation with another entity. The assumption of human flesh involves the assumption of a concrete thing that comprises human nature. Suppose that is a human body and human soul, rightly configured. Then, in becoming Incarnate, God the Son acquires a particular relation to a concrete particular, that is, his human nature. On this view the human nature is not another person, but the natural endowment that would normally form a human person absent incarnation. (It cannot be another *person* on pain of Nestorianism.¹⁴)

Now, in the case of the transformation model, it looks like Christ is identical to God the Son, who “expands” himself to include a human nature within his life, so that he has a phase of his life that is without human nature, and a phase that includes a human nature. These two phases need not be chronological; they could be merely conceptual or logical, like the conceptual distinction between the morning star and the evening star, which both refer to the same thing at different times of the day, that is, Venus. This certainly seems to fit better with what Jenson says about the identity of Christ and God the Son, though he doesn’t align himself with a transformational model of Incarnation. But, in any case, this view comes with a theological cost attached: it requires that God the Son has parts, including physical parts. If one wants to retain a Latin account of the Trinity according to which there are no real distinctions in the Godhead and no parts in God because he is metaphysically simple, then this looks like this cost could be significant. Jenson does endorse the key claim of Latin Trinitarianism when he says that the eternal existence of God the Son is predicated upon the relation of origin he bears to the Father. But then, what should be said about the parts God the Son acquires in becoming incarnate, including human parts?

Alternatively, on the relational model, God the Son is not necessarily identical to Christ. On one way of construing this model, Christ has God the Son as a component, in fact, the most fundamental component because God the Son is the person who becomes incarnate. But in addition to God

the Son there is his human nature, a concrete thing comprising a human body and soul, rightly configured. In which case, God the Son is not identical to his human nature, nor is he identical to Christ strictly speaking. Rather, God the Son taken together with his human nature comprise Christ. The idea seems to be that at the moment of incarnation the metaphysically simple Second Person of the Trinity comes to have metaphysical ownership of his human nature so that his human nature and he, taken together, constitute God Incarnate. The composite whole is Christ. But, clearly, God the Son is only one component part of that whole, so God the Son is not identical to Christ just as I am not identical to my hand, though my hand is a part of the mereological whole that is me. Let us call this view *Christological compositionism*, since it is a view about the composition of Christ (i.e., mereology), in which the component “parts” of Christ, that is, God the Son, his human body and human soul, are said to be “concrete” things like artifacts in the world around us, not merely “abstract” objects, like properties.¹⁵

Such Christological compositionism will not appeal to Jenson precisely because it cannot accommodate his central Christological claim that God the Son and Christ are identical. At one point, almost in anticipation of such a view, he says that,

The Apologists’ creation of the ‘Logos Christology’, which presumes the *Logos* as a religious/metaphysical entity and then asserts its union with Jesus, was an historic mistake, if perhaps an inevitable one. Great genius has subsequently been devoted to the task of conceptually pasting together God and the Son/*Logos* and Jesus the Son/*Logos* of God, and we may be thankful for many of the ideas posted along the way. But the task itself is wrongly set and finally hopeless.¹⁶

However, there is an alternative version of Christological compositionism that goes back at least as far as St. Thomas Aquinas. It is also a concretist model of the hypostatic union. But unlike the first version of compositionism just outlined, it can accommodate Jenson’s claim that God the Son and Christ are identical.¹⁷ The idea seems to be this. At the Incarnation God the Son “expands” or “grows” to include his human nature as a proper part of himself, so that from the first moment of incarnation onwards, God the Son is composed by his divine nature and his human nature. The idea is intuitive even if there are not many cases of persons that expand in this manner. We

can conceive of scenarios in which a patient has a new limb graft, which acquires the right neurological connections to become a working addition to the rest of her body. According to this second version of compositionism, something akin to this happens at the Incarnation. God the Son has a human nature grafted onto himself, so to speak. Thereafter, he has his human nature as a proper part of himself. In which case, unlike the first version of compositionism, this version does imply that Christ and God the Son are identical. God the Son acquires a human nature (that is, a human body and soul rightly related) which become parts of his divine life; he owns this nature; he grows into it, as it were, to include it as part of his life in a way analogous to the addition of a new limb grafted onto a living organism.

However, this second version of compositionism has other drawbacks that make it a poor candidate for Jenson's Christology. Although it satisfies his desiderata that God the Son be identical to Christ, it comes at the cost of imputing parts to God the Son, which sits ill with his claim that the only distinctions in the Godhead are the relations of origin. For if this second version of compositionism is right, then God the Son is also distinguished from the other divine persons by having a human body and soul, and, therefore, by being a composite entity.

PART II

To this point, the advocate of a Jensonian position might simply shrug her shoulders. Jenson is clear that his own position is not compositional (a matter that he has underlined in personal correspondence).¹⁸ So attempting to repair or extend Jenson's account with a version of compositional Christology is unlikely to make much headway. In any case, compositional Christology has its own, not insignificant problems, and is often thought to be Nestorian, given its strong division between the Word and the human nature he assumes.¹⁹ At the very least, it appears that the defender of compositional Christology exchanges one set of problems, namely, how to speak of the Word Incarnate without implying he has parts whilst also upholding a traditional Latin Trinity, for another set of problems pertaining to the orthodoxy of one's Christology. The cure may well be worse than the disease, so to speak. Such are the vicissitudes of dogmatic theology.

However, the Christological question is a pressing one for Jenson. Not only

does his identification of Christ with the Word raise problems with respect to composition and divine simplicity. It also generates problems with the traditional doctrine of the impassibility of the Son. In another recent paper, "*Ipse Pater non est impassibilis*," he argues (amongst other things) that the notion of divine impassibility is a paradox. If the phrase, "one of the Trinity suffers in the flesh" is true then, he contends, this must mean what it says: God suffers in the flesh. Since God the Son is identical to Christ, this can only mean that God the Son suffers. Yet the biblical God is not passible, avers Jenson. "What are we to do? We are of course dealing with paradox" he replies.²⁰ "Perhaps, *in divinis*, '*x est passibilis*' is not the right contradictory to '*x est impassibilis*,'" he says. "Perhaps '*x non est impassibilis*' with the double negative is, *in divinis*, the precisely right stipulation."²¹ This is very puzzling. Let us put it in plain language. If some entity is capable of suffering, then it cannot be said to be incapable of suffering; an entity cannot be both passible and impassible at one and the same time on pain of contradiction. If an entity is not incapable of suffering, then, possibly, it suffers. That is, it is possible for it to suffer, which is just to say that it is in principle passible. So if God is said to be not incapable of suffering (i.e., *non est impassibilis*), then possibly he suffers; he is capable of suffering.

Now, a paradox is a contradiction.²² Plainly, several central Christian doctrines are *apparently* paradoxical. Clearly that is not the same as claiming that these doctrines are *actually* or *really* paradoxical. No *real* paradox can be true because no contradiction can be true. Yet Jenson is clear that the doctrine of divine impassibility is a paradox (he does not qualify this as an apparent paradox, but simply restates that "It is a paradox"²³). Yet when he comes to explain what he means by his use of paradox here, he ends up not with a paradox at all, but with the admission that God is in principle passible.

This lines up with what we have already seen of his doctrine of the Incarnation. If Christ is identical to God the Son, then it is very difficult to see how Jenson can insulate the divine person of the Son from the significant metaphysical changes his human nature undergoes. For if God the Son is identical to his human nature as Jenson supposes, then God the Son cries, suffers and dies; he is passible.

One common strategy deployed in order to avoid this implication is to claim via the doctrine of reduplication that when Christ suffers, we should understand by this that Christ's human nature suffers. His divine nature

cannot suffer, because it is impassible. Nevertheless, Christ suffers *qua* human. But Jenson cannot avail himself of this strategy if he affirms that (a) God the Son is identical to Christ in the way he does in his “Once more the *Logos asarkos*” paper, as well as claiming that (b) God is capable of suffering, which is the upshot of his “*Ipse pater non set impassibilis*” article. In the first of these papers he writes, it “is not as an individual instance of humanity as such, not as one among many who have the same human nature, that Jesus is the second hypostasis of the Trinity.” Rather, “a divine hypostasis is ‘a subsisting relation,’ that is, a relation that is its own term, and so is not an instance of anything at all.” What is more, “it is Jesus’ relation to the Father—and not Jesus as a specimen of humanity—which is the second hypostasis of Trinity. The Father’s sending and Jesus’ obedience are the second hypostasis in God.”²⁴ There is not a *Logos* independent of, logically prior to, the human nature of Christ according to Jenson. For what could such an entity be? There is just Jesus who is (identical to) the Word Incarnate. To put this rather starkly, it appears that he believes Jesus is a subsisting, person-constituting relation within the Godhead. But he also clearly affirms the notion that God is capable of suffering, that “*non est impassibilis*” applies to the divine life. So reduplicative language isn’t going to do much work for Jenson because there is no Word independent of Jesus, no divine person distinct from his humanity, and, in any case, God is capable of suffering.

So, in addition to the problem about composition generated as a consequence of Jenson’s strong account of the identity of Jesus with the Second Person of the Trinity, we have a problem regarding impassibility. Here a brief analogy might be helpful. Suppose one thinks humans are composed of bodies and souls, rightly related. Now, Jones is weeping on account of some terrible news he has just received. If a bystander were to ask, Who is weeping, Jones’ body or Jones’ soul? We might be forgiven for thinking that an odd question. Clearly, Jones’ body is doing the weeping; his soul cannot weep because his soul is not physical, has no tear ducts, and so on. However, if pressed, we would surely say Jones is crying. Jones is sad. Not Jones’ body, but Jones himself; the person. Why would we say this? Surely because we think Jones is identical to the person, Jones. Yes, it is by means of his body that he expresses his sadness in tears. But it is not his body that is sad; he is. Transpose this onto Jenson’s account of the Incarnation. If Christ is identical to God the Son, then when he weeps in the Garden of Gethsemane, or at

Lazarus' tomb, it is the person "in" Christ that is sad. Certainly he weeps in his body; his human soul and divine nature cannot weep because they are not physical objects. Nevertheless, it would be strange to say that Christ is sad in his human nature and not in his divine nature, given Jenson's account of the Incarnation and his willingness to countenance the prospect of divine passibility.

This, I think, is a serious problem for Jenson. It raises other worries about the Cyrillian tenor of his Christology. But, for now, this seems problem enough.

CONCLUSION

In summary: Jenson's clarification of his own position is helpful. He demonstrates that his view is compatible with an ancient model of the Trinity that has the weight of the Augustinian tradition behind it. However, when he affirms that Christ and the Word are identical, he generates particular problems for his own position, problems that (I think) are not easily resolved. Chief among these is implications this has for a doctrine of divine simplicity, which is normally thought to be a correlate of the subsistent-relation account of the individuation of the divine persons of the Trinity. It also means that there appears to be no way of insulating Christ's divine nature from the substantive changes incurred in the Incarnation. So it would appear that Jenson has to give up divine impassibility and immutability if he is serious about his Christology. There is an irony here. Jenson's latest foray into the issue of the *Logos asarkos* is largely about showing how his position is of-a-piece with orthodoxy: his doctrine of the eternal existence of Christ is Augustinian alright, but does not imply a species of *Logos asarkos* doctrine because he refuses to distinguish between the Word and the Christ in such a way that on his rendition (it seems that) Christ just is a subsistent divine relation.²⁵ However, this insistence upon identifying the Word with his human nature means he ends up committed to a position contrary to the doctrine of divine simplicity and/or divine immutability and impassibility (at least, as they have often been understood in the tradition). Thus, rather surprisingly perhaps, Jenson's Christology requires a substantive revision to traditional ways of conceiving the hypostatic union and, by implication, the eternal existence of Christ.²⁶

- 1 Robert W. Jenson, "Once more the *Logos asarkos*", *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 13.2 (2011): 130-133. As with Jenson's other writings, this short paper bears careful scrutiny.
- 2 See especially Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 141-144, as noted by Jenson himself in "Once more."
- 3 Jenson, "Once more," 133. Jenson's account of the relation of time to the divine life is notoriously difficult to grasp. For an illuminating and charitable interpretation, see Scott R. Swain, *The God of The Gospel: Robert Jenson's Trinitarian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013). Swain is particularly helpful in plotting Jenson's account of divine eternity, which I am unable to do here.
- 4 Jenson, "Once more," 133.
- 5 This is a little complicated and some commentators maintain that Jenson denies divine impassibility, e.g., Thomas Weinandy, "God and Human Suffering: His Act of Creation and His Acts in History" in James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White, eds. *Divine Impassibility and The Mystery of Human Suffering* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 99-116. In the same volume Jenson responds to Weinandy directly. See Jenson, "*Ipse Pater Non Est Impassibilis*", 117-126. He does not seem to entirely reject impassibility, but the form of his doctrine is rather difficult to discern. We shall return to the issue presently.
- 6 "Now distinction in God is only by relation of origin ... while relation in God is not as an accident in a subject, but is the divine essence itself; and so it is subsistent, for the divine essence subsists. Therefore, as the Godhead is God so the divine paternity is God the Father, Who is a divine person. Therefore a divine person signifies a relation as subsisting." *Summa Theologiae* I q. 29 a. 4, trans., The Brothers of the English Dominican Province.
- 7 "[T]he vast consensus in the West is inclined to hold, that the *only* distinguishing features of the persons are their relations—that, in the standard terminology, they are subsistent relations." Richard Cross, "Two Models of the Trinity?", *Heythrop Journal* 43.3 (2002): 287.
- 8 But what work is the copula "is" doing here? How is God just Father, Son and Spirit? This is an important theological matter as well. Jenson does not say exactly what he means by it, but what he says is consistent with the "is" of Latin Trinitarianism, according to which the divine persons are subsistent relations within the Godhead, and he does affirm that much in the paper and his other works. These divine subsistent relations do not "compose" the Godhead when taken together. Rather, they are said to be subsistent relations "in" God.
- 9 It is Cross' contention (amongst others) that the Latin and Social models are really not two distinct models as is often thought. See "Two Models of the Trinity?" Whether that is true historically speaking, it is certainly the case that one can find instances of "Latin" and "Social" models in the contemporary literature that are distinct and incommensurable. For present purposes, I mean by the Latin account of the Trinity the notion that the relations of origin are subsistent, person-constituting relations within the Godhead. I make no further claims about the Latin account, its historicity, or its relation to other distinct doctrines of the Trinity.
- 10 Jenson, "Once More," 130 and 133, respectively.
- 11 *Ibid*, 133.
- 12 *Ibid*. In other words, the *Logos asarkos* doctrine is an idea that still requires explanation.
- 13 I owe the distinction between transformational and relational models of the Incarnation to Jonathan Hill. See his Introduction to Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill, eds. *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 14 Brian Leftow elaborates upon this point in "A Timeless God Incarnate" in Stephen Davis, Daniel Kendall and Gerald O'Collins, eds., *The Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 273-299.
- 15 For more detailed discussion, see Brian Leftow, "A Timeless God Incarnate;" *idem.*, "The Humanity of God" in Ana Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill, eds., *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, 20-44 and Oliver D. Crisp, "Compositional Christology without Nestorianism" in *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, 45-66.
- 16 Jenson, "Once More the *Logos asarkos*," 130.
- 17 For a recent outline and defense of the Thomist account, see Jonathan Hill, "Aquinas and the Unity of Christ: A Defense of Compositionism," *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion* 71.2 (2012): 117-135.
- 18 Personal communication to the author in 2010.
- 19 I do not think it is Nestorian, and have argued that point in "Compositional Christology without Nestorianism." See also Leftow's "The Humanity of God." Objections to compositional Christology can be found in, e.g., Thomas Senor, "The Compositional Account of the Incarnation," *Faith and Philosophy* 24.1 (2007): 52-71, and Robin Le Poidevin, "Identity and the Composite Christ: An Incarnational Dilemma," *Religious Studies* 45.2 (2009): 167-186.
- 20 Jenson, "*Ipse Pater non est Impassibilis*," 120.

²¹ Ibid., 120-121.

²² I discuss paradox in Christian theology more fully in "Donald Baillie, Paradox and Christology," *Revisioning Christology: Theology in The Reformed Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), ch. 1. The most substantial (and helpful) recent treatment of this topic is found in James Anderson, *Paradox in Christology Theology: An Analysis of its Presence, Character, and Epistemic Status* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

²³ Jenson, "*Ipse Pater non est Impassibilis*," 120. Things get even more complicated later in this paper when Jenson attempts once more to clarify his doctrine of divine eternity, with (in my view) no greater clarity than his previous attempts.

²⁴ Jenson, "Once more," 133.

²⁵ A further worry: if Christ is identical to God the Son and Christ, not God the Son, is a subsistent relation (as Jenson avers) then we might wonder how an entity that includes a corporeal part (Christ's human body) and a human soul can be a subsistent relation.

²⁶ I am grateful to Robert W. Jenson and Scott R. Swain for comments on earlier drafts of the paper, which greatly improved the argument.