

THE UPPER AND LOWER SON

The Dyophysite Pattern and the Two Perpendicular Pairs

Christopher E. Etter

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Abstract

This treatise sets out a structure latent in the Tree of Life and, the Corpus argues, central to it: that two of the divine figures appear at two registers each, forming two perpendicular pairs. The Son appears as the upper Son, Chokmah — the eternal Logos, the divine nature — and as the lower Son, Tiphareth — the incarnate Christ, the human nature. The Shekinah appears as the upper Shekinah, Binah — the supernal Mother, the higher presence — and as the lower Shekinah, Malkuth — the indwelling presence in the created world, the Kingdom. The two supernal members, Chokmah and Binah, form one perpendicular pair; the two lower members, Tiphareth and Malkuth, both on the middle pillar, form the other. The relation between the two natures of the Son is read here as the perpendicular intersection of the upper and lower Son — substantially distinct, united at the intersection, neither confused nor separated — which is shown to be a precise model of the Chalcedonian definition. The same structure, applied to the Shekinah, resolves a problem the Corpus has long carried: the Plotinian and Gnostic difficulty in which the third hypostasis must descend by a substantial continuum into World-Soul, Nature, and matter, placing the divine on a graded spectrum with the physical. Perpendicular ontology dissolves this. The Spirit and the physical register are substantially distinct — distinct in kind, in a single act, not by graded descent — and they meet only by dimensional intersection, which gives real presence at the intersection without any continuum of substance. The upper and lower pairs are the graphic representation of that perpendicularity.

Keywords: The Upper and Lower Son · Dyophysitism · Chalcedon · The Two Natures · The Upper and Lower Shekinah · Chokmah and Binah · Tiphareth and Malkuth · Perpendicular Ontology · The Emanationist Continuum · Plotinus · Catharturgy

I. Two Figures, Two Registers

Two of the divine figures named on the Tree of Life appear not once but twice — at an upper register and a lower one — and recognising this resolves several questions at once. The Son

appears as the upper Son and the lower Son. As the eternal hypostasis of the Trinity, the Logos, God's self-knowledge, the Son is the upper Son and corresponds to Chokmah, in the supernal triad. As the Christ, the Word made flesh, the incarnate Mediator who enters the created order, the Son is the lower Son and corresponds to Tiphareth, the Christ Centre at the heart of the Tree. The Shekinah likewise appears as the upper Shekinah and the lower Shekinah. As the supernal Mother, the higher divine presence, she is the upper Shekinah and corresponds to Binah; as the presence that indwells the created world, the glory in exile in the Kingdom, she is the lower Shekinah and corresponds to Malkuth. This double appearance is not duplication or confusion; it is the single figure present at two dimensionally distinct registers.

These four are not arranged down the two outer pillars, as one might first suppose. Tiphareth and Malkuth both stand on the middle pillar, the central axis of the Tree. The structure is rather two perpendicular pairs. The two supernal members, Chokmah and Binah — the upper Son and the upper Shekinah — form one pair, set perpendicular to one another across the top of the Tree. The two lower members, Tiphareth and Malkuth — the lower Son and the lower Shekinah — form the other pair, drawn together onto the central axis. Within each figure the relation runs vertically, from upper register to lower: the upper Son Chokmah to the lower Son Tiphareth, the upper Shekinah Binah to the lower Shekinah Malkuth. Between the two figures the relation is perpendicular: Chokmah perpendicular to Binah above, Tiphareth perpendicular to Malkuth below. Two figures, each at two registers, crossing perpendicularly at each — a fourfold structure of two perpendicular pairs.

The Son appears as the upper Son, Chokmah — the divine nature — and the lower Son, Tiphareth — the human nature. The Shekinah as the upper Shekinah, Binah, and the lower Shekinah, Malkuth. The two supernal members form one perpendicular pair; the two lower members, both on the middle pillar, form the other. Two figures, each at two registers, crossing perpendicularly at each.

II. The Two Natures of the Son

The vertical relation within the Son — from the upper Son, Chokmah, to the lower Son, Tiphareth — is the dyophysite pattern: the two natures of Christ. The upper Son is the divine nature, the eternal Logos begotten before all worlds, God of God. The lower Son is the human nature, the Word made flesh, the Christ who is born, suffers, dies, and rises at the solar centre of the created order. The Tree therefore encodes, in the upper and lower Son, the central Christological claim of the Council of Chalcedon: that Christ is one person in two natures, fully divine and fully human.

What makes the perpendicular reading exact is the manner in which Chalcedon specifies the union of the two natures: without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The two natures are neither blended into a third thing nor split into two persons; they are united in the one Son while remaining fully and distinctly themselves. This is precisely the structure of perpendicular intersection. The upper Son and the lower Son are substantially distinct — distinct in kind, the divine nature and the human nature, not the divine nature thinned by degrees into the human — and they intersect, meeting in the one person without being

confused into a continuum and without being separated into two. A continuum would confuse the natures, grading one into the other; a mere juxtaposition would separate them. Perpendicular intersection does neither: it holds two substantially distinct natures united at the intersection, neither confused nor separated. The dyophysite definition and the perpendicular structure are the same claim, the one stated dogmatically and the other geometrically.

Chalcedon: one person, two natures, without confusion and without separation. This is perpendicular intersection exactly. The upper Son (divine nature) and the lower Son (human nature) are substantially distinct — not one nature graded into the other — and intersect in the one person, neither confused into a continuum nor separated into two. The dogma and the geometry are one claim.

III. The Upper and Lower Shekinah

The opposite member of each pair carries the same two-register structure in the figure of the Shekinah, the divine presence. The upper Shekinah is Binah, the supernal Mother, the higher presence at the head of the Tree; the lower Shekinah is Malkuth, the presence that indwells the created world, the glory dwelling in — and, in the Kabbalistic reading, exiled into — the Kingdom. The pairing is classical: the upper and lower Shekinah, Binah and Malkuth, the supernal presence and the indwelling presence, have long been recognised as two registers of the one divine presence. The Corpus reads the relation between them, as it reads the relation between the two natures of the Son, as perpendicular intersection: the lower Shekinah is not the upper Shekinah thinned across a continuum but the divine presence at a substantially distinct register, intersecting the created world dimensionally.

This matters most at the lowest sphere. That the lower Shekinah dwells in Malkuth, the Kingdom, the world, means the divine presence genuinely indwells creation — this is real presence, not its denial. But it is presence by perpendicular intersection, not presence by continuous descent. The presence in Malkuth is substantially distinct in kind from the supernal presence of Binah; it does not differ from it merely by degree along a single graded axis. The two lower members of the structure, Tiphareth and Malkuth — the lower Son and the lower Shekinah — are drawn together onto the middle pillar, and their being together on the central axis is significant: the incarnate Christ and the indwelling presence are united on the same vertical line, which is where the Kabbalah has always located the central mystery, the union of the Holy One and his Shekinah. The lower pair on the central axis is the meeting of the incarnate Son and the indwelling presence at the heart of the created order.

IV. The Resolution of the Emanationist Continuum

The structure answers a question the Corpus has long carried, and that the Platonic and Gnostic traditions left unresolved or resolved wrongly. In the Plotinian system the third hypostasis is Soul, and Soul cannot remain itself: it must descend, becoming World-Soul, then Nature, then shading toward matter, each step a graded falling-off of being along a single continuum. The Gnostic

systems make the descent starker still, the divine fullness thinning through the aeons into the material world. The difficulty this poses for a Trinitarian theology is severe and has been a long-standing hesitation. If the Holy Spirit is mapped onto the third-hypostasis position, then by the logic of the continuum the Spirit stands at the top of a substantial spectrum whose lower end is the physical universe and matter — the Spirit differing from matter only in degree, connected to it by an unbroken substantial gradient. This pantheises the Spirit by continuity and makes spirit and matter differ in degree rather than in kind, which orthodox Trinitarian theology cannot accept and which is, the Corpus holds, simply false.

Perpendicular ontology dissolves the difficulty at its root, and the upper-and-lower structure is its graphic representation. The Spirit — Binah, the upper Shekinah — and the physical register, down to Malkuth and matter, are not two ends of a single graded continuum. They are substantially distinct — distinct in kind, in a single act, not arrived at by a descent through intermediate dilutions — and they meet only by dimensional intersection, perpendicularly. There is no spectrum, because there is no shared substance graded across the distance; there is a substantial distinction that intersects dimensionally. This refuses the continuum without denying the presence. The divine presence genuinely meets and indwells the created register — the lower Shekinah is truly in Malkuth, the world truly intersects the divine — but the meeting is perpendicular intersection, real at the point of intersection and distinct in substance everywhere, not a thinning of the same substance from top to bottom. The Spirit is present to matter without being on a continuum with matter; present by intersection, distinct in kind.

The Plotinian Soul must descend by a continuum into World-Soul, Nature, and matter — placing the Spirit, if mapped there, on a substantial spectrum with the physical. Perpendicular ontology refuses this: the Spirit and matter are substantially distinct, in a single act, not by graded descent, and meet only by dimensional intersection. Real presence at the intersection; no continuum of substance anywhere. Present to matter without being on a spectrum with it.

It is worth noting that the same perpendicular structure that resolves the continuum problem for the Spirit is the structure that models the two natures of the Son. Chalcedon's without-confusion guards against exactly the continuum the emanationist tradition falls into — the blending of distinct natures into a graded third thing — while its without-separation guards against the opposite error of mere juxtaposition. Perpendicular intersection satisfies both at once: substantial distinction (no confusion, no continuum) together with real meeting at the intersection (no separation). That the one geometric structure answers both the Christological question of the two natures and the cosmological question of the Spirit and matter is itself a mark that the perpendicular ontology is doing genuine work and not merely supplying a convenient figure. Distinct in substance, intersecting in dimension: the same answer to the Son's two natures and to the Spirit's relation to the world.

V. The Fourfold Structure

Stated in full, the structure is fourfold: two figures, the Son and the Shekinah, each present at an upper and a lower register, forming two perpendicular pairs. The upper pair, Chokmah and Binah

— the upper Son and the upper Shekinah — stands across the supernal head of the Tree. The lower pair, Tiphareth and Malkuth — the lower Son and the lower Shekinah — is drawn together on the middle pillar, the central axis. The vertical relation within each figure, upper register to lower, is the two-register descent: for the Son, the two natures, divine and human, the dyophysite pattern; for the Shekinah, the supernal presence and the indwelling presence. The perpendicular relation between the figures, at each register, is the meeting of distinct substances at their dimensional intersection — Chokmah and Binah above, Tiphareth and Malkuth below. Throughout, the governing principle is the same: substantial distinction with dimensional intersection, never substantial continuum.

This is why the upper and lower pairs are not merely a tidy symmetry but the graphic representation of the Corpus's perpendicular ontology applied at the highest level. The two natures of the Son, the two registers of the Shekinah, and the relation of the Spirit to the physical world are all the one structure: figures and registers substantially distinct in kind, meeting and present to one another at their perpendicular intersections, never graded into one another along a continuum. The Tree, read this way, is a diagram of how the divine can be genuinely present at every register — incarnate as the lower Son, indwelling as the lower Shekinah — without ever ceasing to be substantially distinct from what it is present to. The oldest difficulty of emanation, that presence requires continuity and continuity dissolves distinction, is answered: presence is intersection, and intersection preserves distinction. This treatise and its companion describe the structure as it stands whole, in Christ — the two natures in perfect hypostatic union. The same structure as it stands in the fallen human, where the union is fractured and the image shattered into the qliphothic husks, and the work of its repair, are taken up in the companion treatise 'The Shattered Image: The Fallen Human, the Broken Vessels, and the Work of Catharturgy.'

References and Related Papers

The Council of Chalcedon (451), the Definition of the Two Natures: one person (hypostasis) in two natures, 'without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.'

Plotinus, *Enneads* (the three hypostases: the One, Intellect, and Soul; the descent of Soul to World-Soul and Nature); with the Gnostic emanationist systems (the descent of the divine fullness through the aeons).

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