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Bruce Lindley McCormack
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The Humility of the Eternal Son

The Chalcedonian Definition of 451 never completely resolved one of the critical issues at the heart of Christianity: the unity of the “person” of Christ. In this eagerly awaited volume – the result of deep and sustained reflection – distinguished theologian Bruce Lindley McCormack examines the reasons for this philosophical and theological failure. His book serves as a critical history that traces modern attempts at resolution of this problem, from the nineteenth-century Lutheran emphasis on Kenoticism (or the “self-emptying” of the Son as ‘de-potential’) to post-Barthian efforts that evade the issue by collapsing the second person of the Trinity into the human Jesus – thereby rejecting altogether the logic of the classical “two-natures” Christology. McCormack shows how New Testament Christologies both limit and authorize ontological reflection, and in so doing offers a distinctively Reformed version of Kenoticism. Proposing a new and bold divine ontology, with a convincing basis in Christology, he persuasively argues that the unity of the “person” is in fact guaranteed by the Son’s act of taking into his “being” the lived existence of Jesus.

Bruce Lindley McCormack is Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology at the Princeton Theological Seminary.

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Reformed Kenoticism and the Repair of Chalcedon

BRUCE LINDLEY MCCORMACK

Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey



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For Catriona Keyes McCormack

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For God's Being-ever-greater [*das Je-immer-grösser Gottes*] is shown precisely [in denying Himself] in the mystery of redemption, in which He empties Himself ever more [*das Je-immer-mehr-Nichts-wird*] (Phil.2:7), and in that He is the one who ascends ever higher [*der Je höher Aufsteigende*] as the one who descends ever more deeply [*der Je tiefer Absteigende*] (Eph.4:9). Thus, one transcends oneself [*das je-über-binaus des Menschen*] to the degree that one descends with Him and in Him, the one who descends ever deeper, in "service" to the ever greater God.

— Erich Przywara, *Crucis Mysterium*, 48. Translation by John Betz.

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