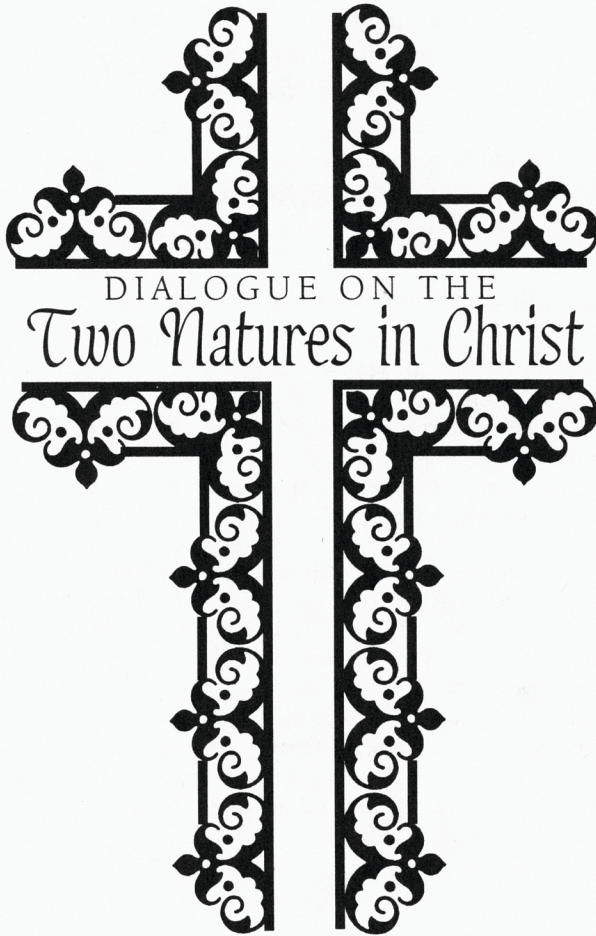


The Peter Martyr Library

Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ



The Peter Martyr Library
Volume Two



Peter Martyr Vermigli

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with Introduction and Notes by
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TO THE REVEREND FATHER AND LORD IN CHRIST, JOHN JEWEL, Englishman and Bishop of Salisbury by the grace of God, devoted to his Lord: Peter Martyr Vermigli, Professor of Sacred Scripture at the College of Zurich, sends his greeting, even complete happiness in Christ.

Those who have been involved in a lengthy controversy finally seek out judges or Palaemons,¹ who will put an end to their long quarrel by passing sentence. I have now been given the task of finding a judge for these two men, namely Pantachus and Orothetes, who have long been wrestling over a most serious problem. The judge must be beyond corruption and the sort to rule rightly on the question now at issue. So you, Reverend Father, came to mind as one whose judgment will be completely unswayed by favor or hostility. Since you enjoy such a masterly knowledge of things human and divine, ignorance can in no way cloud your mind. So it seemed good to me to submit these two men for examination by your searching judgment. I do so the more willingly [*2r] because of your outstanding command of the matter in dispute. As supreme judges the pagans had Aeacus, Minos, and Rhadamanthys.² But since you by yourself provide us with the equal of all three of them so far as justice and a sharp intelligence go, I did not have to look for anybody except you to judge between these two men who were locked in controversy, especially since in judging you are not given to employing any norm except the word of God. So I beseech you, by the humanity with which you are endowed, not to refuse to judge the dispute between them. Neither will this pair of adversaries, if they are wise, find it objectionable if judgment is passed by a man of your eminence and ability. But lest anything escape your attention, I have affirmed as far as I could what was said on each side. Hence it will be your task, peerless bishop, to examine carefully what I have written, when you have the leisure. I write this because I am not unaware that your commitments are important and sacred, so that to interrupt them, as I learned full well, is nothing less than to inflict a great and heavy loss on Christ's Church.

So that you can master more easily the arguments and reason of the antagonists and not spend a great deal of time in reaching a judgment, I have

¹Palaemon served as judge between Menalcas and Damoetas in Virgil's Third Eclogue.

²These three men were assigned as judges to the netherworld by various ancient writers: see esp. Horace, *Odes*, 2.13.22; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 7.506ff., 9.434–438, 13.25; Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.564, 11.568; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.566; Plato, *Gorgias*, 523.c; *Apology*, 41.a. Aeacus was king of Aegina and grandfather of Achilles and Ajax. Minos was king of Knossos; Minoan civilization is named after him. Rhadamanthys, who presided over Tartarus, was son of Zeus and Europa.

made the question direct and clear so that you can easily [*3r] grasp the whole course of the dispute at a single glance. Aristotle once made excuses to Alexander about his issuing writings in an esoteric way [ἀκρωματικὰ] with the comment, “I published them and I did not publish them,” because only those would understand them who had heard him teaching them.³ But he wrote this way to please the king, who did not want his teachings to be made public. But I have striven with the utmost care to make this *Dialogue* of mine come out clear and direct. For it seemed better to take a little more of the reader’s time than to torture him cruelly with an obscure brevity. When it comes to important issues, I cannot agree with the Neoptolemus of Ennius,⁴ who used to say that one should indeed discuss philosophy, but only a bit. One cannot, however, entirely agree with that, for then complicated questions are not dealt with or are not fully explained. But we can hardly accomplish that with a brief and concise statement. I have always thought that we should strive for brevity, but in a way that does not harm understanding, which is sometimes wrapped in darkness because we try to state difficult issues briefly and succinctly. Augustine mentions that Alypius became very upset when a weighty and difficult question was proposed along with the request [*3r] that the whole matter be cleared up with the shortest answer possible.⁵ For he felt it was impossible to work through obscure questions without a clear exposition. He warned the person that this was quite incompatible with brevity.

Besides that, it is impossible to achieve brevity in this sort of writing because we have to elaborate our own arguments and refute those of our adversaries. The pagans made a disastrous mistake because they worshipped not only Jove but also many other Veioves; they worshipped him so that he might help them and bring them aid when they were in trouble, and they worshipped the others so that they would not hinder human affairs.⁶

³Plutarch’s life of Alexander, 7. 5. The passage reads: “Alexander sends greetings to Aristotle. You made a mistake in having your esoteric lectures published. For how will we excel others if what you have taught us becomes the common property of everybody? For my part, I would prefer to distinguish myself by the knowledge of what is excellent than by power. Farewell.” To console Alexander over his frustrated ambition Aristotle justified himself regarding his writings by saying that they were published without being so published. And it is true indeed that his treatise on metaphysics is of no use for anybody who wants to teach or learn it, for it serves like lecture notes only to disciples who have already been thoroughly trained.”

⁴See Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.156; Apuleius, *Apologia*, 13.3. The work of Apuleius is also known as *Pro se de Magia*.

⁵This reference is obscure; the concordance of Augustine’s works indicates that it is not quoted from Augustine.

⁶Classical sources usually speak of Veiovis in the singular. He was a sort of anti-Jove or non-helper. See N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 1110.

Undoubtedly this custom of theirs was perverse because there is one and only one deity who bestows innumerable benefits on mortals and likewise punishes with perfect justice the crimes of the guilty. Accordingly, that sort of divine worship is rightly and justly condemned by the devout. But in conducting our affairs we should not depart from the method of the ancients, seeing that we should strive to retain and save the true, useful, and right, while repressing and abolishing the wicked, unsuitable, and false, lest they become a hindrance. This should surely be done in all matters, and especially in religious controversies and quarrels. [*4r] Not only should we devote our whole strength to teaching and consolidating sound doctrines, but we should also simultaneously remove, refute, and destroy objections, snares, and sophistical arguments lest they do harm to careless or simple people. I have tried to do that in my *Dialogue* with every argument I could muster. So it was not right to employ the brevity that I would have liked to use and the reader would have wanted to have offered him.

I have removed biting remarks and harsh expressions so that your humane and gentle spirit will not take offense in reading this work. Indeed, I did not want to state explicitly the name of the person I am writing against because I would prefer to have him improved and set straight than assaulted by name and put to shame, seeing that I am the enemy of the error and not of the man. In my view, an argument over truth does not harm the person one is arguing against. Far be it from me to try to pump up anybody's reputation or influence by writing this. I have striven with every argument I could for this one purpose: to show that Christ's humanity is not everywhere (which Catholics will not in the least doubt is a sound and correct statement of the orthodox faith). At the same time [*4v] I have refuted with as much care as I could muster my adversary's arguments lest they deceive the uneducated and untrained. It is up to others, and you especially, to judge how well I have succeeded in this type of writing;⁷ I know for certain that affection for any individual will not sway your judgment.

You should know that in writing this I was not stirred by rashness or the pleasure of controversy (for it is you, if anybody, who knows very well that I

⁷The *Dialogus* is the last work Vermigli completed before his death the following year. Although this is the only time in a long literary career that he used the dialogue format, his skill in using the genre is impressive.

am far from that).⁸ In the first place the brethren and fellow clergy of this holy church of Zurich asked me again and again to do this. Without jeopardy to our relationship I could not reject their decision and wish; otherwise they could have joined hands and summoned me to justice and forced me to promise through their influence. Another consideration was what you wrote me in your second last letter, that some people even in your country have now begun to give consideration to ubiquity.⁹ But you added something which gives me great pleasure, that there is no fear that a belief in such a dogma would ever crop up in your renowned kingdom and church. Well said! You made me very happy. These then are the reasons why I have labored over this study, such as it is, and why I wished it to be addressed to your illustrious name. Not of course that I had set myself to teach you anything new [**ν*η] or to draw your soul to love me. You hold the other articles and teachings of our religion and this one above all along with the others, and for many years you in your goodness have been my companion with incredible and special love.¹⁰ In this dedication I have aimed at this above all: that against those martyr-floggers [Μαρτυρομάσι γὰς] of whom I think there are many as it happens in human affairs, I might have a strong, wise, and dear patron who would be prompt and steadfast in defending me from the detractions and venomous carping of the malevolent. In providing me with this service you are urged on not only by the love you have for me but also by your outstanding devotion and almost incredible learning—two sterling qualities that by God’s favor you possess to a marvelous degree. Nor have I any fear that in so judging you there will be fulfilled that saying of Theophrastus, “the lover is blind as regards the beloved” [τυφλοῦ τὸ φιλοῦ περὶ φιλούμενου]¹¹ Hence because of your outstanding learning you could have no trouble in refuting such a gross error with your very sharp ability.

⁸Elsewhere Vermigli wrote, “This is by far the worst of all kinds of swordplay. I do not condemn calm discussion about religion, but I do object to quarrels and uproar over abstruse and erudite questions,” *In Duos Libros Samuelis Prophetarum ... Commentarii*... (Zurich: Froschauer, 1567) fol. 188r. In fact Vermigli was a veteran polemicist, like most theologians of the Reformation era. Before tangling with Brenz he had been involved in controversies over the Eucharist against his Catholic opponents in the Oxford Disputation and later against Stephen Gardiner; over celibacy against Richard Smith, and against Protestants such as Johann Marbach at Strasbourg and Theodore Bibliander at Zurich over predestination.

⁹Jewel’s letter to Vermigli of 6 November 1560 is printed in *The Works of John Jewel*, Parker Society Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1850), 4:1240.

¹⁰Jewel and Vermigli first became friends at Oxford during the reign of Edward VI. Jewel salutes Vermigli as “my very dear father and more than half my soul”; see Jewel, *Works* 4:1197.

¹¹The statement does not seem to be found in Theophrastus, but the idea is expressed by Plato, *Phaedrus*, 233 A; 239 A.

Accordingly, for the sake of that most holy devotion which burns so brightly with greatest zeal for God's pure worship, do not [*57] allow these unsound teachings (I say nothing harsher) to spread or wander about freely in your churches, lest they put down deeper roots. With absolute conviction I hold in the same regard which I have for you your other colleagues and brothers who are now playing the role of bishops in England, a country that God loves dearly. Everybody must agree, whether they want to or not, that through God's generosity these men have been endowed with devotion and learning to a signal degree. But, Reverend Bishop, I ask you, since you shine forth like the brightest star among them all,¹² to bend your best efforts that the doctrine of the Supper be preserved among you pure and solid.¹³ You have seen that when it is obscured, profaned, and corrupted how many frightful monsters and foul omens have invaded and horribly devastated the Church of the Son of God. Neither does it escape you that the goal of this new ubiquity is nothing less than to persuade the unwary with some murky reasons and arguments that the Lord's body and blood are, as they say, truly, really, bodily and substantially in the holy Supper in a heavenly, secret, and ineffable way. For if it is established that Christ's human nature exists as present everywhere, what room is left, I ask, [*67] in the subjects we are dealing with and debating, for our reluctance to admit that it is present in the bread and wine? Every single one of us who worships Christ with a pure and sound faith should strive with hands and feet that the vineyard of the Lord should at last be purged of filth, thorns, thistles, and snakes so that it can produce rightful, sweet, and bountiful fruit for its owner.¹⁴ But it seems that this is even more the fitting and proper task of bishops, pastors, and teachers. Hence it is necessary for you, along with the others who by God's choice command and steer the same ship of the Church, to remain watchful lest Christ's inheritance be subverted by some new sort of error.¹⁵ The devil fears nothing so much as pure and chaste preaching of the holy Gospel of God's Son in the Church. So in reformed congregations he tries his hardest, both openly and by trickery, that true teaching may be mixed with false and that with a deceitful, honey-coated lie he may force upon Christ's faithful new and absurd dogmas for belief and

¹²Jewel was, in fact, easily the best theologian on Elizabeth's bench of bishops.

¹³Jewel reported to Vermigli on 7 February 1562 that the doctrine of the English Church did not differ from Vermigli's teaching "by a nail's breadth" and that there was no danger that the ubiquitarian theory would catch on; Jewel, *Works*, 4:1245.

¹⁴See Matt. 21:33–43.

¹⁵Jewel's treatment of ubiquity in his *Controversy with Mr. Harding* (Jewel, *Works*, 1:480–506) compares closely with Vermigli's teaching.

profession and so hold them up for the ridicule and contempt of their sworn enemies, namely the papists, and of wise men. So that [*6v] I may not fall short of my duty, I have done what I could about this matter. But I recognize the weakness of my abilities and I see myself turning the matter over to you as something begun but not finished. So it is your task to return it complete and perfect in every respect. Do it by filling out and adding anything you notice that I have missed.

You should not think that it is divine Scripture alone that warns us to cultivate carefully the Lord's vineyard; we are encouraged to that by the wise example of the pagans as well, as I think has not escaped you. For as that very ancient writer Marcus Cato testified quite frequently (as Aulus Gellius relates in book 12, chapter 12 of his *Attic Nights*), "If anyone should allow his field to decay by tending it with too little care, neglecting to plow and weed it, or should leave his orchard or vineyard uncared for, he should by no means be let off without punishment but should be reduced to the lowest rank of citizen by the censors."¹⁶ The same censors even took the public horses away from the Roman knights if they found the horses thin, emaciated, scrawny, and unkempt; and they removed from their position and rank as knights those they marked down for negligence or, as he writes, for unpolished manners. I write this to show that I have not overstepped my duty [*7r] in writing this dialogue so that the Church may emerge more cleansed from stains of this sort and be rendered more attractive. You will not be failing in your episcopal duties if you devote your whole energy to driving foreign and false opinions of this sort out of Christ's Sheepfold. There are two ways for you to accomplish that: protecting my book (if it merits it) from its critics and replacing weak parts in it with better and more solid ones.¹⁷

I have already explained succinctly what I would like from you, as a respected and learned man. What now remains is for me to commend and praise your virtues to the whole world, as is usually done in the dedication of books. Were I to put my mind to carrying that task through, my speech would fail me before my subject matter. Quite likely nobody else could be found who could discuss with more truth and certainty than I your virtues and upright and incorrupt life. For I would not be advancing things heard and picked up secondhand, but what I saw with my eyes and was present to witness and experience. I pass over your talent, eloquence, energy, hard work, and

¹⁶Vermigli's reference to Gellius is inaccurate; it should read book 4, chapter 12.

¹⁷After Vermigli's death, Jewel seriously considered writing a book to defend the *Dialogus* from Brenz's published attack on it. See Jewel, *Works*, 4:1258.

moderation. I knew when I was back at Oxford how richly you were endowed with these qualities.¹⁸ [*7v] We did not live at all close together there, so that very many people could suspect that I was speaking falsely or dreaming up things. Clever men sometimes put up a front of many virtues while inwardly they are steeped in vices under their skin. But later when you migrated from England to Germany and lived many years with me under the same roof and at the same table, every day we conversed pleasantly, took exercise, and worked together.¹⁹

I think that I alone above all can judge your sincere faith, upright behavior, straightforward spirit, and open heart without the possibility of mistake. I say nothing about your genial personality, inward learning, and steady and sound judgment, qualities which I am absolutely certain you possess from my own experience and my being [ἀντόπη]an eyewitness. Besides, if I now wanted to launch into exploring these very pleasant topics and make public what I think about you, I would not only exceed the capacity of a letter, but I would also offend your ears, which have always been shut tight against listening to your own praises. So I will say less than the subject requires and point to the record, since you will gain a brighter and better renown by your good teaching, upright life, and the faithful fulfillment of the office that has been committed to you [*8r] than you can by being praised and commended in men's writings. So in my judgment you have already reached or are just a little short of what Jerome in the prologue to the second book of his commentary on Hosea relates to Pammachius about Marcus Cato, drawing on Livy. He says, "No one enhanced his reputation by praise nor lessened it by condemnation, although very talented men did both. He was referring to Marcus Cicero and Gaius [Julius] Caesar. The first of them wrote to praise the man, the second to condemn."²⁰ For this reason I have decided that this is the time to break off from a task that is impossible, useless, and not very welcome to you.

Nonetheless I will end by asking you, "my sweet honor,"²¹ pillar of Christ's Church and its splendid ornament, not only to think well of this little gift of mine but also to receive it with grateful heart. But if I have omitted

¹⁸Vermigli was regius professor at Oxford from November 1547 to October 1553 when Jewel was a tutor at Corpus Christi College.

¹⁹Both Vermigli and Jewel fled England for religious reasons during the reign of Mary Tudor. From 1554 to 1558 Jewel lived in Vermigli's household as a guest while Vermigli taught at the academies of Strasbourg and Zurich. Jewel returned to England shortly after the accession of Elizabeth I, who appointed him Bishop of Salisbury.

²⁰PL 25:861.

²¹Vermigli addresses Jewel with the same phrase Horace used of Maecenas, "dulce decus meum"; Horace, *Odes*, 1:1, 2.

many things which could have been said about this subject, please recognize that I did so because I was forced to weave together the warp, woof, and thread of my Pantachus. But should, perchance, somebody else come after me and want not only to repeat and reinforce what I said, he should add something more sinewy and solid, the better to exterminate this new plague. Happily Henry Bullinger, a splendid person and the leading minister of the Zurich church, my much honored father and brother in Christ, is very skilled on this question. To prevent my redoing what has been done, I had to pass over or touch very lightly on what he explains quite clearly. I could have skipped this task altogether, but after he had issued his book *On the Heavenly Mansions*, the book was published to which I was asked and asked urgently to respond (as I explained at the beginning).²² I have one final request, and I ask it over and over on the basis of our now long-standing friendship: by your prayers obtain for me from our heavenly Father the rich and saving fruit of my calling, that I may not have run in vain but that I may advance the building up of Christ's Church according to the small amount of wealth my Master has entrusted to me.²³ Farewell Reverend Bishop. May God keep you safe for the sake of your kingdom and church for as long as possible.²⁴ Dated August 15, 1561, at Zurich.

²²Henry Bullinger led the Zurich church from the death of Zwingli in 1531 until his own death in 1575. The book Vermigli refers to is Heinrich Bullinger, *Tractatio verborum domini in domo Patris mei*, Zurich, 1561).

²³See Matt. 25:14–30.

²⁴Jewel replied on 7 February 1562 to Martyr's dedicatory letter: "May I relate my thanks to you for your Orothetes. I have no doubt that the person whom you point out, were he wise, should consider himself greatly in debt to you. But maybe he will buck up his spirits and defend his Pantachus; he will get himself ready to respond and will repudiate you and your Palaemon. I don't accept the praises that you confer upon me in such abundance. I know that they belong to you and are fitting for you alone. But, my father, as the saying goes, it is pleasant to be praised by you since you are a man worthy of praise. It serves more as a testimony of your love for me than of your good judgment. I don't deserve it in other respects, but I certainly will in my love for you." Jewel, *Works*, 4:1245.