

14. The Progressive or Gradual Incarnationists

Isaac August Dorner (A.D. 1809-1884) is regarded as the main representative of the Mediating School in the doctrine of the Person of Christ in Germany (the Mediating School stood between the rationalists, represented by Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus, and those who held to confessional orthodoxy, represented by Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg).

Dorner held that the Logos is the precreation divine principle which had a need to express itself in creation and revelation, and (in view of sin) in redemption. Christ was a man, but not a fallen man. His was a new humanity, in which receptivity for the divine developed and gradually increased throughout his lifetime. The Logos principle joined himself to Christ initially at His conception, and then gradually throughout His lifetime, reaching completion at His resurrection. Thus the incarnation was not an act, but a gradual process; and the measure of incarnation was determined by the degree of receptivity of the human nature of Christ for the divine.

Thus the Logos-Christ was the God-man from His conception, but only in a partial sense; He gradually became the God-man in ever increasing degrees throughout His lifetime; and became the God-man in the complete sense at His resurrection. Of course, this view appeared to be almost Nestorian, except for the question whether the Logos principle was a divine Person in Its/His own right.

Progressive Incarnationism

