

The Person of God/Christ
Part IV: The Medieval and Reformation Church

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I. Introduction

The Council of Chalcedon, which formulated the Orthodox statement on our Lord's incarnate person, did not bring to a conclusion arduous debate on Christology. Seeberg informs us (1.273): "But peace was by no means restored. On the contrary, the history of the ensuing years is marked through its course by the records of wild excitement and horrible deeds of religious fanaticism." While the doctrine was not advanced, it was strongly, even violently, debated.

II. The Person of Christ and the Medieval Church

The medieval era witnessed two major controversies over Christology (Monophysitism and Monothelitism) and lesser conflicts such as a revival of Adoptionism.

A. In the East

1. Monophysitism, writes Orr (p. 194), "is simply in principle a continuation of the Eutychian controversy." Indeed the Chalcedonian creed proved to be "the signal for a general revolt of the adherents of the 'one nature' doctrine." The West, following Tertullian, Augustine and Leo, raised no issue against Chalcedon; it was wholly in the East.
 - a. The nature of Monophysitism. Most of those who were disturbed by the Chalcedonian definition were really opposed not to the doctrine the Council held, but to the words "in two-natures." As the East had done in the Trinitarian struggles, it used the terms "nature" and "person" as synonymous. The Monophysites affirmed the truth of Chalcedon in rejecting both Nestorianism and Eutychianism, but reacted to "two natures" meaning "two persons." These are verbal or functional Monophysites not ontological Monophysites! Severus of Antioch categorically affirmed perfect deity and humanity but insisted on a single nature.

N.B.—The *Monophysites* were also known as *Theopaschites* because it was believed that they taught the "God suffered" on the cross.

Justinian sought a solution to the Christological issues that rent the empire. In this regard Justinian called for the Fifth Ecumenical council to meet in Constantinople in A.D. 533. The hope was to bring peace by consoling the *Verbal Monophysites* and dealing with the *Real Monophysites*.

Orr summarizes the council thusly (p. 197): This fifth Council was attended only by 165 bishops, all but five of them Eastern ... The Council failed, however, in reconciling the Monophysites; rather it sealed their final separation from the Church of the Empire."

The Real Monophysites (Eutychians) as well as many verbal Monophysites passed into permanent schism (553) and have survived the centuries—Jacobites in Syria, the Coptics in Egypt and Ethiopia, and the Armenians.

2. Monothelitism was a second attempt to alter the findings of Chalcedon; this in the seventh century (633–680).
 - a. The nature of the movement: a single will in Christ.
 - b. The history of the movement

Orr writes (p. 200): "This, it is evident, was simply carrying back Monophysitism into the region of the will, while granting in words the distinctness of the natures, and it necessarily revived in a more acute form all the old controversies. Pope Martin had Monothelitism condemned at Rome in A.D. 649.

The final blow to Monothelitism came in the year A.D. 681 at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople. The Monothelites were condemned including Patriarch Sergius and Honorius of Rome.

N.B.—Honorius was also condemned at the seventh and eighth councils. Every pope until the eleventh century was required to pronounce an anathema on Honorius—an interesting event in the light of papal infallibility in 1870.

The council decreed two wills in Christ, one pertaining to each of His natures. The council states these two natural wills are not contrary one to the other (which God forbid), as the impious heretics say, but His human will follows, not as resisting or reluctant, but rather therefore as subject to His divine and omnipotent will. For it was right that the will of the flesh should be moved, but be subject to the divine will, according to the most wise Athanasius.

B. In the West

The only major eruption of a Christological nature in the west (by major we mean occasioning a movement) was the Adoptionistic Controversy of the eighth century in the context of both Carolingian Revival and Arab expulsion from Europe.

Parenthesis: The Christology of the Later Middle Ages (Scholastic Period) evidence only individual aberrations from Chalcedon as the scholars attempted to buttress the faith through reason. A few examples are:

1. Abelard comes perilously close to the charge of Nestorianism by placing the union of divine and human in the sphere of will more than person, maintaining two wills.
2. Lombard appears affiliated in belief with Abelard since the Logos merely "apparently" assumed human nature. Both scholastics were condemned for rationalism and Nestorian adoptionism.
3. Seeberg summarizes the scholastic confusion within the context of maintaining the traditional credal statements when he writes (pp. 109-110): "The Christological discussions of the twelfth century were not renewed in the thirteenth. The Great Scholastics present in their Christology merely a reproduction of the traditional dogma, in which we note however the failure to emphasize that contemplation of the Man Jesus which inspired the devotional ardor of the *Imitatio Christi*."

CHRIST'S TWO NATURES: SEVEN VIEWS

POSITION	REPRESENTATIVE	DATE	HUMAN NATURE	DIVINE NATURE
Docetism	Marcion	2nd Cent.	Denied	Affirmed
Ebionitism	Jewish Cult	2nd Cent.	Affirmed	Denied
Arianism	Arius	4th Cent.	Affirmed	Diminished
Apollinarianism	Apollinaris	4th Cent.	Diminished	Affirmed
Nestorianism	Nestorius	5th Cent.	Affirmed	Affirmed but Separated
Monophysitism	Euthychius	5th Cent.	Affirmed	Affirmed but Mixed
Orthodoxy	Athanasius	1st Cent.	Affirmed	Affirmed and United

III. The Person of Christ and the Reformation Church

A. In the Roman Catholic Tradition

The Romish church agreed with their polarized opponents as to the pre-incarnate and incarnate Christ. Accordingly recent Catholic creeds do not even broach the issue.

B. In the Protestant Tradition

1. Martin Luther had no difficulty accepting the traditional creeds of the church concerning Christology, but uniquely placed a heavy emphasis on "Johannine characteristics" (humanity). Luther at times appears to coningle the two natures. Althaus writes (p. 194): "As we have already pointed out Luther adopts the traditional dogmatic doctrine of the two natures. In agreement with it he teaches the full unity of the deity and the humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, the full participation of the humanity in the deity and of the deity in the humanity. 'God has suffered; a man created heaven and earth; a man died; God who is from all eternity died; the boy who nurses at the breast of the Virgin Mary is the creator of all things.'"

How is it possible for Luther to maintain the true humanity of Christ under these circumstances? He teaches that Jesus Christ, according to his human nature, also possessed the attributes of the divine majesty, that is, that even the child Jesus was omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent."

The Augsburg Confession states traditional orthodoxy.

2. John Calvin deals at considerable length in Book II of the *Institutes* with the incarnate person of Christ, of particular interest is chapter XIV, "How the two natures constitute the Person of the Mediator." "He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we maintain, that the divinity was so conjoined and united with the humanity, that the entire properties of each nature remain entire, and yet the two natures constitute only one Christ ... Christ, therefore, as God and man, possessing natures which are untied but not confused, we conclude that he is our Lord and the true Son of God, even according to his humanity, though not by means of his humanity."

Calvin's opinions on Christology are carried throughout the Reformed Tradition in Europe and England.

- a. The First Helvetic Confession (1536)
- b. The Gallican Confession (1539)
- c. The Scottish Confession (1560)
- d. The Westminster Confession (1647) which states (VIII.2): "The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and

eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities there of, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man."

- 3. The Church of England by virtue of its *Thirty-Nine Articles* confirms traditional Christological orthodoxy.

Parenthesis: Anabaptist Christology.

The Reformation Confessions often have sections in which theological aberrants are handled. In those sections Anabaptists are usually listed. This charge is partially valid, particularly in the Schwenkfelders and Menno Simons (Mennonites of Holland). Simons, influenced by Melchoir Hoffman, advocated a docetic Christology (denial of full humanity). Simons had an "unusual view" of the manner in which the Word became flesh: "The Word did not take on flesh but himself became flesh. Jesus did not receive his body from Mary: He became a body which was received by Mary in birth and through the Holy Spirit that she might nourish Him and bring Him into the world according to the way of nature."

C. In the Non-Protestant Tradition

Within the Protestant tradition emerged a movement that began in Michael Servetus and spread rapidly with a "rationalistic hermeneutic" giving rise to Socinianism and Unitarianism (England and America). As the tradition of Servetus seriously altered Theology Proper, it impaired and reconstructed Christology. (This is why Calvin reacted to Servetus.)

- 1. Servetus and Christology. In essence Servetus held to a quasi-Eutychianism that denied both true humanity and deity.

The Gallican Confession states: "In this we detest all the heresies that have of old troubled the Church, and especially the diabolical conceits of Servetus, which attribute a fantastical divinity to the Lord Jesus, calling him the idea and pattern of all things, and the personal or figurative Son of God, and, finally, attribute to him a body of three uncreated elements, thus confusing and destroying the two natures."

- 2. Unitarianism and Christology. Servetus' views effected the "Protestant Enlightenment Tradition" in Socinan Unitarianism in England and Unitarianism in America. A representative example of Unitarian Christology is William Ellery Channing, America's leading nineteenth century Unitarian, as seen in the famous ordination address of Jared Sparks (1819), *Unitarian Christianity*. He states

(Works, p. 373): "We believe that Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God. We complain of the doctrine of the Trinity ... This corruption of Christianity, alike repugnant to common sense and to the general strain of Scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth of Jesus."

From the scriptures he argues absolute silence on the presence of two natures, as well as the silence of Jesus. Theologically he argues the mystery of the God-Man's death and the seeming change in his being relative to immutability. He writes: "When pressed with the question whether they really believe that the infinite and unchangeable God suffered and died on the cross, they acknowledge that this is not true, but Christ's human mind alone sustained the pains of death. How have we, the, an infinite sufferer? This language seems to us an imposition on common minds, and very derogatory to God's justice, as if this attribute could be satisfied by a sophism and a fiction."

IV. Conclusion

Christology has not progressed, only retrogressed since Chalcedon. The Medieval Age witnessed the politically-theologically motivated Monophysite revival of Eutychian thought, the ramifications of it in Monothelitism, and the Adoptionist-Nestorian issue in the Carolingian Revival. In the Reformation era the Romish Church and the Reformers agreed in the Chalcedonian formula, but the teachings of Servetus (later Channing) was a heralding of a return to a Monarchian Christ that became essential to the "Religious Enlightenment" with its "rationalistic hermeneutic."

The Person of God/Christ
Part V: The Modern Church

Summary:

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I. Introduction

The doctrine of Trinitarianism and the doctrine of the Person of Christ was formulated in the Ancient Church period. In the Medieval and Reformation periods Christology was not advanced, although in the fringe of the Reformation Period harbinger of change became evident in the teachings of Servetus and resultant movements such as Socinianism and Unitarianism. It would appear correct to say that if one has a misconception of the pre-incarnate Christ, the error will proceed to the incarnate Christ!

The setting for this study, is the nature of the Enlightenment. The point to be seen is that the philosophic shift (a la Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, and Kant) forged a reorientation of theology. The mind was set free from objectivity (out there) for an inward quest for truth.

II. The Person of Christ and the Nineteenth Century German Theologians

A. Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

1. Schleiermacher and Religion. Schleiermacher was influenced by Kant and anticipates the turning to subjective experience as the beginning point of theology. Religion to Schleiermacher is "the feeling of absolute dependence" on God—the stress is not upon God but upon human consciousness, a god-consciousness most perfectly displayed by Christ.
2. Schleiermacher and the Person of Christ. In brief Schleiermacher asserted the "divinity of Christ" and stressed that he was the "ideal of humanity" in that Christ possessed true god-consciousness. Mackintosh writes (II. 385): "The Redeemer, then, is like all men in virtue of the identity of human nature, but distinguished from them all by the constant potency of His God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in Him."

N.B.—The degree to which one is god-conscious is the degree to which he is sinless (sin is a lack of god-consciousness).

Schleiermacher speaks of the divine and human natures in Christ as historically set forth in the creeds with disdain, the product of "heathen" influence though possibly of unconscious influence.

The union of the "two" (?) natures (god-consciousness and humanity) is resultantly but one human Jesus with an elevated consciousness of God.

Schleiermacher rejects the concept of two natures for a human Jesus who has become overpowered and dominated by "a feeling of godness." The "feeling" makes the person of Christ "supernatural." This "feeling" is what is meant by the "virgin birth." The birth was natural, but supernatural in that it was sinless (not lacking in god-feeling).

Finally in summary Schleiermacher writes: But appellations which express the unity of the divine and the human in so definite and unambiguous a way as the later 'God-man' do not occur in Scripture; all the predicates which can be cited in this connexion are more or less uncertain in meaning. So, too, as far as the divine attributes are concerned, it is natural that, since Christ is always spoken of as a man, only such attributes are ascribed to Him as express exalted humanity, so that it is easy to explain them as nothing but very permissible hyperbolical expressions.

N.B.—Thus Schleiermacher has a two-natured Christ which in reality is one. His humanness is swallowed in godness. Godness is not actual but implanted at his "supernatural" birth. In reality his Christ is a god-intoxicated man; an example for men to follow! This is not far from contemporary "New Age" christologies.

B. Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872)

Here we meet an "anti-theologian's" concept of Christ. As Feuerbach projected himself into infinity, he objectified the reality of God. The extension of his thought was the idealized Christ; that is in the projected idea of Christ we encounter the projection of ourselves as God. Of Christ he writes: whoever loves man for the sake of man, whoever rises to the love of the species, to the universal love adequate to the nature of the-species, is a Christian; he is Christ himself."

N.B.—Hence the incarnation is the mystery of the love of God to man(which really is the love of man for himself). The resurrection of Christ is "the fulfilled longing of man for an immediate certainty of his continued personal existence after death."

C. Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889)

The nineteenth century had a Christ who was human, but one who witnessed to the power of God in his life. Christ, as a man, was our "window into the ways of God." His claim to deity, however expressed, was not native or eternal but came upon him. Ritschl, and the entire Ritschlian School follows in the same views. Jesus is the Christ because he most perfectly

cooperated with God in bringing forth God's purpose—the kingdom of God on earth.

Christ is a unique person from an internal viewpoint to Ritschl, that is he most consistently aligned with God's purpose (his vocation). Christ, as a man, had marvelous insight into the ways of God thus he became the elevated one. Jesus attributes to His life as a whole, in the unity which for His own consciousness it possesses, the worth of being the instrument of *the complete self-revelation of God*. This is the purely *religious type of self-judgment*.

Christ's relationship to godness is functional (economic), not ontological!

The origin of the Christ-man which Ritschl conceives as a unity of purpose, not being, is uncertain and unknowable. He writes: "As Bearer of the perfect revelation, Christ is given us that we may believe on Him. When we do believe on Him, we find Him to be the Revealer of God. But the correlation of Christ with God His Father is not a scientific explanation. And as a theologian one ought to know that the fruitless clutching after such explanations only serves to obscure the recognition of Christ as the perfect revelation of God."

Christ is the Christ because we trust what he is doing, not what he is. Swing writes: "We worship Jesus, not because we see in Him a control over cosmic forces, but because in Him we see all the same ethical and moral self-end which belongs to God."

Of Christ's eternal relationship to the Father, Ritschl asserts that something is "real," but "our scientific explanations are limited in all such problems." The eternal Godhead of Christ is only in the mind of God and only "apparent" or "seemingly" so to us. He writes: "the eternal godhead of the Son, in the sense here described, is perfectly intelligible only as object of the Divine mind and will, that is, only for God Himself."

N.B.—Thus the Christ of Ritschl, the Ritschlians, and the nineteenth century was human; yet once elevated by virtue of his personal piety and vocation to receive the title "Son of God"—a title signifying unity in vocation, not essence!

Parenthesis: An outgrowth of Ritschl's teachings on the kingdom was the "History of Religions School" under Herman Gunkel (1895d) and Adolph von Harnack (1851-1930). The school of thought sought to find revelation history (man gaining insight into himself!) and developed the "Kernel," the essence of Christianity—the truth of the Bible covered over with Hellenism and Mythology. To Harnack Christ was not unique as to his person, but in that he exemplified the principles of the Kingdom (Son of God = knowledge of God, divinity = filial vocation). He stressed the religion of Jesus (what he lived and taught) not the religion about Jesus. The religion of Jesus, and his "disciples of progress," was an ethical, moral kingdom.

N.B.-This same line of thought (existentialism, the Kerygma) is clearly evident in Rudolph Bultmann, who, like the History of Religions School, attempted to demythologize the Bible.

III. The Person of Christ and Rudolf Bultmann

Birth: Aug. 20, 1884, influenced by Harnack, Gunkel (Form Critic), and Heidegger's (Marburg) existential philosophy. Bultmann taught at Marburg as professor of N.T. and Early Church History (1921-51). Bultmann used existential philosophy and form criticism to subjectively reduce Christian dogma to non-supernatural Kerygma (proclamation).

Bultmanns' scheme:

1. Demythologize - remove all elements of supernaturalism
2. Kerygma - the proclamation remaining after demythologizing. Authentic existence will be affirmed as we proclaim freedom and love.

A supernatural worldview or epistemology is inappropriate in a scientific age. Therefore, supernatural elements of christology must also be removed. Mythological material can be identified via form critical analysis. This material is not of historical factual value, but does reflect self-understanding which we can identify with (ex. the cross is a symbol of authentic decision making which proclaims freedom from peer pressure and materialism). Truths of self-understanding (kerygma) are to be accepted, but their mythological expression/framework is to be rejected. The interpreter must use existential philosophy to distinguish the meaningful truth about life from its mythological chaff (de-mythology). The N.T. is not to be totally rejected, for a core of acceptable kerygma remains. Orthodox Christology, however, must be dismissed, or at best redefined.

- * Christ understood mythically (supernaturally) is to be rejected
- * Christ understood existentially (naturalistically) is to be accepted

Note: The uniqueness of Christ will ultimately be denied by Bultmanian followers and "The Myth of God Incarnate" Theologians, his uniqueness being viewed as the greatest barrier to religious unity. Christ will be reevaluated as an extraordinary human who:

1. Exemplified his values for his movement and community in a moment of crisis.
2. Realized more fully than others his innate divinity.
3. Was a model of love and existential self-realization.

On the secular and liberal scene, this will pave the way for:

1. A merging of western and eastern philosophies via New Age Christologies (strongly pantheistic or panentheistic).

2. A continuance of western secular humanism and its denial of supernaturalism and a fully divine Christ.

Below is a summary of the eastern mystic attack on Christ, an attack which in many ways is analogous to the Process Christology of A.N. Whitehead.

Christianity Under Attack

Major attacks on the person and work of Jesus Christ today:

1. In the West (Atheism/Agnosticism/Humanism/Cultism/Occultism)
2. In the East (Pantheism)

The Pantheistic Attack on Jesus Christ

(Believe Jesus was a master occult magician with unusual powers by virtue of being indwelt by the Christ spirit.)

A. Pantheistic attacks on the identity and nature of Jesus

1. Pantheists attack Jesus' claim to be God.
2. Pantheists attack Jesus' claim to be the Christ.

Type of gnosticism similar to that of the early church variety.

Compatible with Mormon teaching and New Ageism which says that we are evolving toward Godness.

3. Pantheists believe there are many other names for Christ: Hercules, Hermes, Rama, Mithra, Vyasa, Sankaracharya, Krishna, Buddah, Lord Maitreya, the Christ.
4. Pantheists believe many Gurus are God in human bodies. (Jesus just one of many gurus.)
5. Pantheists attack Jesus' claim to perform unique supernatural acts.

(Jesus was a magician, one especially in touch with the Force.)

B. Pantheists attack the bodily resurrection of Christ

1. Pantheists reject physical bodily resurrection.
2. Pantheists believe in reincarnation.
3. Pantheists deny Jesus really died.
4. Pantheists sometimes argue for telepathic visions of the dead.

IV. The Person of Christ and Karl Barth

Barth caused German theology to swing back toward the conservative spectrum. (This is clear in his doctrine of Christ's pre-incarnate being.) The question before us is how did Barth conceive Christ on earth. Quite obviously with his view of the pre-incarnate Christ, his

view of the Christ-man will be radically different. In brief answer Barth writes (1, 2, 132): "We understand this statement as the answer to the question: Who is Jesus Christ; and we understand it as a description of the central New Testament statement, Jn. 1:14: 'The Word was made flesh.' Therefore this New Testament verse must guide us in our discussion of the dogmatic statement that Jesus Christ is very God and very man."

A. Barth and the human Christ

Barth is abundantly clear that Christ, the eternal one, became flesh and dwelt among men. He writes: "That the Word was made 'flesh' means first and generally that He became man, true and real man, participating in the same human essence and existence, the same human nature and form, the same historicity that we have. God's revelation to us takes place in such a way that everything ascribable to man, his creaturely existence as an individually unique unity of body and soul in the time between birth and death, can now be predicated of God's eternal Son as well... What in fact makes revelation revelation and miracle miracle is that the Word of God did actually become a real man and that therefore the life of this real man was the object and theatre of the acts of God, the light of revelation entering the world."

And again: "'The Word became flesh' means primarily and of itself, then, that the Word became participant in human nature and existence. Human essence and existence became His ... In so doing He did not cease to be what He was before, but He became what He was not before, a man, this man."

B. Barth and the God-man

Barth conceives of Christ in the Orthodox form of the Chalcedonian creed. Christ is at once God and man in unity of a single person. He writes: "If we paraphrase the statement 'the Word became flesh' by 'the Word assumed flesh,' we guard against the misinterpretation already mentioned, that in the incarnation the Word ceases to be entirely Himself and equal to Himself, i.e., in the full sense of Word of God. God cannot cease to be God. The incarnation is inconceivable, but it is not absurd, and it must not be explained as an absurdity. The inconceivable fact in it is that without ceasing to be God the Word of God is among us in such a way that He takes over human being, which is His creature, into His own being and to that extent makes it His own being ... And it is by the paraphrase, 'the Word assumed flesh' that the second misunderstanding is also guarded against, that in the incarnation, by means of a union of divine and human being and nature, a third is supposed to arise. Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and man is not a third, midway between the two. In that case God has at once ceased to be God and likewise, He is not a man like us. But Jesus is the Mediator, the God-Man, in such a way that He is God and Man. This 'and' is the inconceivable act of the 'becoming' in the incarnation.

Parenthesis:

1. Barth and Impeccability. Barth affirms the sinlessness of Christ, but at the same time He was not "a sort of superhuman quality." He writes: The meaning of the incarnation is that now in the flesh that is not done which all flesh does. 'He hath made him to be sin for us' (2 Cor. 5:21) does not mean that He made Him a man who also sins again—what could that signify 'for us'?—but that He put Him in the position of a sinner by way of exchange."
2. Barth and the Virgin Birth. Barth affirms the virgin birth. He inseparably links as historic events the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection: "Now it is no accident that for us the Virgin birth is paralleled by the miracle of which the Easter witness speaks, the miracle of the empty tomb. These two miracles belong together. They constitute, as it were, a single sign, the special function of which, compared with other signs and wonders of the New Testament witness, is to describe and mark out the existence of Jesus Christ, amid the many other existences in human history, as that human historical existence in which God is Himself, God is alone, God is directly the Subject, the temporal reality of which is not only called forth, created, conditioned and supported by the eternal reality of God, but is identical with it.

N.B.—Again Barth reveals himself to be remarkably orthodox concerning our Lord. Christ is not the "man" with "feeling" for God and God's kingdom plans; He is the incarnate God, the God man. He writes: "This is the revelation of God in Christ. For where man admits his lost state and lives entirely by God's mercy—which no man did, but only the God-Man Jesus Christ has done—God Himself is manifest. And by that God reconciled the world to Himself. For where man claims no right for himself, but concedes all rights to God alone—which no man did, but only the God-Man Jesus Christ has done—the world is drawn out of its enmity towards God and reconciled to God."

V. The Person of Christ and the Twentieth Century American Theologians

The German theology of the nineteenth century has been reproduced in the United States in Classic Liberalism (1890-1940) and Neo-Liberalism (1940-) with little, if any, change in Christology. The "Radical Theologies" of the 1960's are a product of post-Bultmannianism (Bultmann's thought was not popular in the U.S. until after his death, then only in radical forms).

A. Tillich and "The Theology of Being"

Paul Tillich (1888-1965) referred to "Jesus as the Christ" but rejected the term "Jesus Christ"; He prefers to think of the "anointed one," who became Christ. He rejects the term "divine nature" when applied to Christ; for Christ, unlike God, is not beyond essence and existence. He simply redefines theological terms to create a god-adopted man. Tillich prefers the assertion that in him 'the eternal unity of God and man has

become historical reality.' He is the 're-established unity between God and man.' The concept 'the divine nature' in him is replaced by the concept 'eternal God-man-unity.' This way of expressing the matter, Tillich argues, replaces a static essence with a dynamic relationship. And instead of 'human nature,' we must speak of the Christ as 'essential man.' God chooses to 'adopt' the man Jesus as the Christ, and Jesus chooses to accept his adoption through obedience.

The assertion is that God-man is a nonsensical statement because it cannot mean what it says ("a mythology of metamorphosis"). Tillich has not said, nor will he say with the 'incarnational' Christologus of Nicaea and Chalcedon, that Jesus was 'truly God and truly Man.' No it is the adoptionist position to which he holds with greater consistency. God chose Jesus, Jesus became the Christ."

N.B.-Tillich at this point repeats Schleiermacher and, more particularly, Ritschl!

B. Whitehead and "Process Theology"

Process Theology, finds its philosophic roots in Alfred N. Whitehead's belief that reality was creativity, becoming. This wave was carried into the theological realm by Charles Hartshorne. Process Theology places stress on Jesus' uniqueness, but in such a way to reject historic Orthodoxy. Christ has a unique relationship to God: the union of God and man in Jesus is more like what we know of personal relationship ... than it is like anything else.

Christ is a mere-man who was given a "subjective aim," that is to realize himself. Christ is unique among men by virtue of the accomplishment of the "aim." Pittenger writes: "The greatest single factor in determining that specialty is the way in which, with a high degree of awareness of what was going on, the man Jesus as the centre of the event accepted his vocation, made his decision and his subsequent decision, and set about fulfilling the aim which was his own."

N.B.-Again a return to the Jesus of the nineteenth century!

VI. Conclusion

The Germans of the previous century retreated into an "adoptionistic" posture as had the "Radical Theologians" of America. Christ is merely a god-intoxicated, and hence elevated, ideal of the temporal and eschatological hopes ("feelings") of the theologian and philosopher. He is a man who has achieved and the example of the hopes of a struggling humanity. Karl Barth is a gasp of rarefied theological air in the interum betwixt the centuries defending Chalcedon, a sinless God-man, and an objective Virgin Birth. Modern theologians have lost the Christ of the Bible by misappropriating and misapplying the rationalistic hermeneutic of the scientific method.

Contemporary Christology

Existentialism

Experiential Divinization

Syncretism

Ecumenism

Mythological Interpretation
(Rudolf Bultmann)

**WESTERN
SECULARISM
(humanism/
antisupernaturalism)**

**EASTERN MYSTICISM
(pantheism)**

THE WORLD -- an evolving phenomenon
THE BIBLE -- a Judao-Christian interpretation
THE CHRIST -- an influential humanitarian/guru