

TWO CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO CHRISTOLOGY

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In his review of 'The Cullmann-Bultmann Discussion',¹ René Marlé suggests both that these two theologians raise fundamental questions which should prompt additional reflection on the part of their listeners, and that the 'dialogue' between the two is 'between speakers who are deaf to each other' (p. 269). The implication is that difficulties are encountered when the position of either 'speaker' is measured according to the requirements of a full Catholic theology (especially, for example, on christological issues) and that the divergence which exists also between both New Testament scholars is of such character as to render any 'parallel study' of their affirmations unfruitful. Yet, with these reservations, Marlé believes a comparative analysis of these two positions to be not without benefit, since such interrogation leads (at least indirectly) to more exhaustive and far-reaching formulations.

It is the task of this paper to suggest a project in comparative analysis which might serve as a next step not only in clarifying the Cullmann-Bultmann 'discussion' but also those other frequent 'dialogues' which find spokesmen on the same subject remaining 'deaf to each other'. Utilizing that which each regards as in some sense fundamental, i.e. *Christology*, and that issue on which each regards the other as vulnerable, i.e. the interpretation given to *time*, we seek to identify certain formal variations in their respective positions. We propose that the peculiarities of the two christological perspectives reflect alternative methodological choices, which, when elaborated, become almost equivalent to an explication of the respective orientations themselves. Our access to the differentiating characteristics is gained through an analysis of the alternative conceptions of time. Hence we intend a kind of 'motif-research', the characteristics of which will be brought out in the examination which follows.

It is evident that the comprehensive project which Oscar Cullmann has

¹ HJ III (1962), pp. 267-71.

undertaken is a description of the *normative character* of the faith of the primitive Christian community. In his *Christ and Time*,¹ for example, he inquires as to the specifically Christian element of the New Testament revelation (as opposed to general philosophic and religious themes). In *The Earliest Christian Confessions*,² he undertakes to determine the 'essential content of the Christian faith according to the earliest formulas.' Realizing that the oldest confessions express themselves mainly in christological terms, and that theological thinking in general (for the first Christians) proceeded from Christ rather than from God, Cullmann turns to an analysis of the question 'Who is Jesus?' in *The Christology of the New Testament*.³ The same attempt to discover core elements, and to relate these, is manifested also in *The Early Church*,⁴ and in other of his writings.

As a result, certain themes are given marked emphasis. A focus upon the normative also involves differentiation, for that which is specifically 'Christian' in each case is determined by its lack of correspondence, its discontinuity, with other fields with which it stands in relation. Prompting this is the concern to establish the relation between the perspectives of the primitive tradition and all succeeding centuries. The work is a result, therefore, of the application of historical methods to the problem of unity and diversity—not only in the New Testament writings themselves nor solely with respect to the relation between 'universal history' and *Heilsgeschichte*—but also within the process according to which the formative character of faith became conceptualized and institutionalized. Cullmann repeatedly seeks to clarify these themes by invoking a distinct formulation of the relation between what the ancients called 'the one and the many'.

What has appeared, therefore, is a synopsis of the distinctiveness of a world perspective which is fundamentally orientated by the normative character of Christian faith. What is asserted is that Christianity implies a distinctive view of time and history—although Cullmann would repudiate any attempt to imply by this a 'philosophy'—with respect to which faith itself must be described. Time is rectilinear rather than cyclic, one-directional, unending, with fixed and chartable boundaries, progressing at a constant measurable tempo. Eternity is not therefore opposed to time, but is all-inclusive time. The dominant emphasis is placed therefore upon events and factual occurrences rather than on ontological and metaphysical principles. Thus provision is made for the utilization of a historical-chronological method to support the thesis that the normative character of

¹ Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, trans. Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia, 1950).

² Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, trans. J. K. S. Reid (London, 1959).

³ Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (Philadelphia, 1959).

⁴ Cullmann, *The Early Church*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Philadelphia, 1956).

faith—and salvation itself—can be described in terms of certain significant divine accomplishments which have occurred in a carefully chartable manner upon a time line. The Christian norm is a unique understanding of history: God reveals himself, not as a transcendent datum lying beyond all history, but within and upon a straight line of ordinary historical processes in such fashion as to regulate and control the entire continuum.

Accompanying this rigid methodology is the twofold historical discovery: (1) that 'early Christian theology is in reality almost exclusively Christology';¹ and (2) that the heart of the early Christian confession is 'Jesus is Lord'.² By a process of reduction and synthesis, Cullmann asserts that Jesus as Lord is not only linked to the entirety of redemptive history, but that neither exists without the other.

Again, even christologically, it is uniqueness which Cullmann seeks (and not the Jesus who can be placed 'in a general human category')³. That which characterizes Jesus as Lord is not his nature or substance,⁴ but his activity, function and work. That is, his activity is inextricably bound up with those events which are constitutive of the continuum of redemptive history. Indeed, all points along the redemptive line must be related to the one historical fact at the midpoint; but it is only through this historic midpoint that forward and backward can be perceived. The entirety of history is to be understood in relation to the historical fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus. *Heilsgeschichte* is the 'Christ-line': 'Therefore all Christology is *Heilsgeschichte*, and all *Heilsgeschichte* is Christology'.⁵ Simultaneously, 'all theology is Christology'.

Just as the redemptive line is divisible into boundaries and segments, so too, correspondingly, is the function and work of Jesus. Seeing the entirety once again from the perspective of the midpoint, and progressing according to the principle of grouping inherent within *Heilsgeschichte* itself, Cullmann is able to illumine each constitutive unit by elucidating the appropriate titles which have been ascribed to that phase of activity. For example, the *earthly* work of Jesus is referred to by such christological titles as 'Prophet', 'Suffering Servant of God', and 'High Priest', the *future* by 'Messiah' and 'Son of Man', the *present* by 'Lord' and 'Saviour', and the pre-existence by 'Word', 'Son of God', and '“God”'. The assumption is that the mediator in creation, the fulfiller of the election of Israel, the ruler in the present, and he who is to return to consummate the entire occurrence and mediate a new creation, are held together in proper balance by the awareness that Jesus rules as present Lord over the Church, the world and each believer, the essence of which belief constitutes the earliest

¹ Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, pp. 2, 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

Christian confession. (And this perception was provided by a coincidence of (a) the activity of Jesus especially from Good Friday to Easter, (b) the presence of Jesus as Lord in early Christian worship and (c) subsequent reflection concerning the relation of this Lord to the rest of revelation.) A further stage in the development is achieved by discovering that which is most unique—and, therefore, according to Cullmann's own principles, most characteristic—within each segment of redemptive history. Restricting such analysis to activity and function (rather than to 'being' and 'substance'), the author emphasizes 'High Priest' (earthly), 'Son of Man' (future), 'Lord' (present), and 'Word' (pre-existent). The unity within diversity, or the relation of the one to the many, is maintained via the redemptive line, its principle of representation, and a spatialized chronology: according to successive periods in time, the many are progressively reduced to the one and then increased correspondingly to the many, from creation to Christ and thence to new creation; and he, who became flesh at the centre of the line, is also representatively at work both before and after, so that the events of the Incarnation provide the perspective for the vision of salvation in both directions.

In summary, the structure of the Christology of Oscar Cullmann is shaped by his intent to provide description of the normative character of Christian faith as this would appear via a process of differentiation. A formulation of distinctiveness is sought, but as implying continuity—a delicate balance dependent upon the validity of such principles as representation, one-one correspondence between time and history (as made possible by their bases in sequential, successional moments and events), and a repudiation of ontological entailment. The distinctiveness within continuity is then interpreted by that which is fundamental to the earliest Christian confessions. The result: 'Jesus is Lord' is the fundamental motif of Christology and *Heilsgeschichte*, since to characterize the former is also to regulate the latter.

One need merely recall what has been judged the 'most painful defect' in Cullmann's position—'the temporality of eschatological existence'¹—to introduce the alternative approach of Rudolf Bultmann. Indeed, for Bultmann it is not the correlation between temporal successive functions in the history of salvation which constitutes the basis for Christology, but the correspondence between the *kerygma* of Jesus, i.e. the proclamation of the decisive act of God in Christ, and faith itself. To focus upon *Heilsgeschichte* rather than on the message of Jesus is, for Bultmann, to turn 'the theology of the New Testament into a Christian philosophy of history'.²

¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, ed. Schubert M. Ogden (New York, 1960).

² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

To place faith in this environment, definable normatively by these categories, is to violate the very nature of theology. Nevertheless, Bultmann and Cullmann deal in alternative ways with a similar question.

Bultmann, as both a student and a critic of Adolf Harnack,¹ is with him involved in the question of the relation between the perspectives of the primitive Christian tradition and that of subsequent centuries of Christianity. But unlike his teacher, who gave primary emphasis to the struggle of the Church with the Gnostics as fundamental to the process of establishing doctrinal formulation, conceptualization, and institutionalization,² Bultmann advances the descriptive thesis (resembling that also of the historian of doctrine, Martin Werner)³ that early Christianity is characterized by an eschatological vision, and that the transition in early centuries implied the loss of such vision and its replacement by institutional forms appropriate to the historical world.⁴ Thus normative faith (as Cullmann thinks of it) can, for Bultmann, be determined only via a process of de-historicization and de-conceptualization, i.e. by a project which reaches back, as it were, to pre-theology or to that which constitutes theology's presupposition: the *kerygma* of Jesus.

Whereas Cullmann rejected any theological dependence upon metaphysical or ontological categories, Bultmann insists that ontology is necessary in order to illuminate the presuppositions of theology. Employing two preliminary conceptions—'Fragestellung' (or the putting of the question) and 'Begrifflichkeit' (or the context of ideas expressed in the terminology utilized in the understanding of a given subject)—Bultmann is confident that the question to which the reader seeks an answer (via the Scriptures) is the question of human existence in relation to God, a question which can only be properly answered in reference to the appropriate categories. The task of the theologian has been created by the situation, i.e. that of relating the historic faith to the contemporary concern. But this is possible only to the degree that a one-one correspondence exists between the idea of 'being' presupposed in the contemporary question and that implicit in the thought of New Testament writings. It is at this point that Bultmann employs Heideggerian concepts. Not contending for an *apologia* for the faith, Bultmann nevertheless asserts that the presuppositions of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

² Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (New York, 1900).

³ Martin Werner, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine* (London, 1957).

⁴ Werner says, for example, that 'the Church abandoned, owing to the need of deschatologizing, its primitive heritage, where this became absolutely imperative. However, it claimed to hold fast to this heritage by reinterpreting it with the help of what was deemed appropriate in the religious content of contemporary Hellenistic syncretism and by seeking to substitute for it something analogous, constructed from such material. This procedure was indefensible.'

theological thinking are clarified and secured by a philosophy of the existentialist type which discloses man to himself as an existing being in the world. And the contention is not only that the philosophy of Heidegger provides categories appropriate to theological methodology, but that this existentialist position also most accurately represents the biblical interpretation of human existence.

The point of correlation is *eschatological existence*, and the fundamental question concerns the authenticity of the individual as opposed to mere nothingness. For the philosopher, man exists in a permanent tension between the past and the future: either he immerses himself in the concrete world of nature and thus inevitably loses his individuality, or he must abandon all security and commit himself unreservedly to the future and thus alone achieve his authentic being. From the Christian perspective, man exists authentically when his original possibilities, belonging to his being as man, are fulfilled. In brief, the answer to the question is to be found in Christian revelation, which understands human existence according to the decisive activity of God in Jesus Christ. And what is emphasized in that revelation—as in the message of Jesus himself—is the eschatological reign of God, the future which God opens, the victory over the powers of bondage, the fulfilment of God's will and the demand for man's decision against every earthly tie. Jesus, therefore, is conscious of standing 'at the brink of the End': the awareness of the absoluteness of God's will is so overpowering that the world seems to sink away, and man is placed directly in God's presence. And by faith one perceives that the intangible reality opens a new future, giving life rather than death. To be delivered from clinging to tangible realities in a visible world is to be given a new existence, an eschatological existence. The authentic life is, therefore, the abandonment of all self-contrived security. Faith becomes the disposition of genuine humanity, the means by which man enters upon the life for which he was originally created via the proclamation of the event of redemption which was wrought by God in Christ.

Theology itself issues from this controlling disposition. Indeed, theology 'is nothing other than the scientific self-consciousness of one's own existence as appointed through God'¹—a kind of phenomenology of faith. And Christology is an aspect within the 'unfolding of those ideas by means of which Christian faith makes sure of its object, basis, and consequences'.² A Christology is implied in the call to decision.³ That is, God is made present to man 'in his own little history'⁴ in the proclamation of the Word,

¹ Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen* (Tübingen, 1933), p. 89.

² Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. I (New York, 1955), p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

that in Jesus Christ God has reconciled the world to himself.¹ The *kerygma* is, therefore, a witness to the meaning of Jesus, i.e. the act of God by which transcendence is made a possibility of human existence.² And the interpretation of the Christology therein implied ensures the faithful understanding of the New Being. Explication is, indeed, self-consciousness.

By calling the *kerygma* a 'presupposition' to the theology of the New Testament—rather than a component of the theology itself³—and by establishing theology as a reflective awareness issuing from a right disposition in one's relation with God (the essence of which is faith)⁴, Bultmann affirms that 'Christology' possesses two categorical positions within the total scheme: (1) the occasion for theology by virtue of its association with proclamation or announcement (*Verkündigung*); and (2) a component of the theological description given to the new self-understanding in faith. That is, the 'decisive activity of God in Christ' is not only of such regulative character as to occasion theology (which is indeed the case), but also of such constitutive character as to be required by any theological formulation. Christology implies, and serves as explication of, the self-understanding of one's existence as appointed through God. Methodologically it functions both as 'efficient cause' and as 'regulative principle'.

The very interests within Cullmann's and Bultmann's work presuppose alternative assumptions concerning the nature of the theological task itself. Bultmann's concern issues from the correlation he intends: the application of the significance of the primitive Christian message to contemporary man's quest for a meaningful existence. From this follows the necessity to de-mythologize, to de-historicize and to demonstrate the inevitability of the rejection of any form of worldly security by an exhaustive application of the doctrine of 'justification by faith'. What is intended is the emancipation of eschatological existence (i.e. meaningful existence) from Jewish-apocalyptic and Gnostic mythology so that the 'age of salvation' may already dawn for the believer and the life of the future become a present reality—or, 'an existentialist unmythological interpretation of the Christian understanding of Being'.⁵ The thesis is that 'the only true interpretation of eschatology is one which makes it a real experience of human life',⁶ and that in the *kerygma* one encounters Jesus as the Christ

¹ Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, p. 267.

² James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Naperville, 1959), p. 84.

³ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 3.

⁴ Bultmann, *Jesus and Mythology*. (New York, 1954).

⁵ Bultmann, 'New Testament and Mythology', in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Hans W. Bartsch (New York, 1961), p. 22.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

—‘the eschatological phenomenon *par excellence*’.¹ Cullmann, by contrast, inquires as to that which is specifically representative of New Testament revelation (as this is understood within a religious-philosophical context). The overall intent in Cullmann’s instance is not the removal of mythical elements to ensure that the ‘skandalon’ to faith be indeed a real one, but the recovery of that core element according to which Christianity (in its New Testament setting) might be most adequately characterized.

The issue between the two New Testament theologians cannot be resolved by deciding between *Heilsgeschichte* and *kerygma* as two alternative possibilities for the ‘core element’ of the primitive tradition. Equally, *eschatological existence* and ‘Jesus is Lord’ cannot be judged each with respect to an appropriateness to self-understanding. An evaluative question proper to one orientation may constitute an illegitimate criterion when utilized to assess the validity of another approach. In this regard, it is significant that Bultmann most severely criticizes Cullmann for his ‘defective’ way of presenting the ‘temporality of eschatological existence’,² and Cullmann typically asserts that Bultmann’s ‘faith in Christ is fundamentally different from that of the early Church’.³ Each criticizes the other for a lack of correspondence to his own perspective.

What is necessary, therefore, if any attempt towards mediation is to occur, is the discovery of some fundamental motif which is essential to each perspective, whose conceptual position and function is identical but which is nevertheless variously conceived. This controlling motif or structural element must be indicative of a basic hypothesis or fundamental presupposition. A difference in theological result, in other words, must be attributed to alternative dispositions towards a factor necessarily present in an approach, or, for that matter, in any attempt at conceptualization, i.e. the category of *time*. Both *eschatological existence* and *Heilsgeschichte* (each within their own contexts) depend upon clear and distinctive interpretations of the status of time—be it that of the primitive tradition or of technological man.

It would appear that at least four distinguishable conceptions of time have been present in western thought from the classical era through modern times. For example, the Platonist understands time as a moving, projected image of eternity, circling about according to number: a constant field of passage. For the process philosopher (beginning with Heraclitus, and modified also to suit a Bergson or a Whitehead), time is likened to a ‘flowing river’, a radically intense process of one-directional continuation. For the Aristotelian, time is ‘the number of motion according to before and

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

² Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, op. cit., p. 288.

³ Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, p. 8.

after': the measure of organic development and the manner according to which seasons are synchronized and celestial motions traced. Atomistically, time has been conceived as the succession of distinct moments—serial periodicity—analysable into minimal entities or parts. Briefly, and with obvious additions and modifications, time has been characterized as: a cycle, directed tension, organic growth, and serial succession.¹

Clearly it is the sequential series of moments (reflecting the Atomist's orientation) which is employed in Oscar Cullmann's approach to Christology. There is the *time line* with markable 'moments' and boundaries, points of time selected for emphasis; eternity is endless succession (not a transcendence of time as in Platonism): unlimited time as opposed to limited duration. Christologically, eternity is not conceived to invade time, but rather 'in Christ' time has reached 'its midpoint' so that all points on the redemptive line are related to the moment of incarnational fact. Varying 'levels' or 'dimensions' of time are irrelevant: the uniqueness of the Christian message does not involve an entrance into another 'realm' wherein some differing order of time is allowed to operate, but is simply the predisposition toward an historical line of ordinary processes as the means of divine revelation and universal salvation. By the same stance 'nature' and 'person' are rejected in favour of that which is descriptively reducible to a linear line, i.e. function, work, and activity. Indeed, even 'pre-existence' is characterized temporally, and in terms of function. If they become the crucial alternatives, Cullmann habitually (and necessarily) selects that which supports *continuity* over that which might entail transcendence. Perhaps by this he can present what purports to be a definitive statement on Christology without seriously attempting to penetrate the inner struggles of faith. To devote more than incidental attention to the believer himself might require some utilization of ontology!

Bultmann, by contrast, employs a basically 'Platonic' distinction between eternal and temporal realms (without, however, including all the metaphysical ingredients often associated therewith). Time, a component of the 'temporal realm' (but not a cyclic phenomenon, as for Plato), is described in terms of the process formulation. Existential time is a kind of becoming, a directed intensity involving past, present, and future. Man does not exist in time; rather, man *is* temporality, and temporality is man's bondage: human existence requires fulfilment, and this implies self-transcendence.

Hence, the stress for Bultmann is upon insight and disclosure; an understanding of temporality is created by the penetration of a present inner

¹ See John F. Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), and Robert S. Brumbaugh, *Plato on the One* (New Haven, Conn., 1960). I am indebted to the latter for the particular classification used here.

tension which, by definition, is descriptive of human existence. By this approach, the awareness of an inner, directed proclivity toward emergence is a person's closest approximation towards the description of time itself. Existence, therefore, is a standing before possibilities, a consciously responsible projection of oneself upon chosen possibilities (the repetition of which constitutes one's history). The unity of history is based upon the pattern formed by the clearly repeatable existential possibilities.

Over against temporality stands eschatological existence, i.e. God's graciously bestowed possibility open only to faith. In the Now, or the 'moment' of decision, temporality is redeemed by the new life present in the proclamation of the *kerygma*, and ceases to be unresolved bondage. The future implied in eschatological existence is non-temporal (although a present reality) in the sense that in the new aeon of deliverance the burden of time is transcended.

Traditionally, the Platonic debate concerns the status of the temporal world as a realm of appearances. By apparent structural similarities with the Platonic understanding of time (with appropriate modifications as earlier indicated), the theology of Rudolf Bultmann also appears most controversial at those points where it would seem conceptually appropriate to relegate all not belonging essentially to eschatological existence to a realm of non-being or irrelevance. What is almost impossible for a strict Platonist, the traditional 'skandalon' of Christianity—that the eternal should be conceived as somehow depending upon the historical—is also a crucial issue for Bultmann (and is implied in criticisms of de-mythologization and de-historicization). But Bultmann deals neatly with the matter by reversing the order of scandal: no longer is it that the historical is contemptible to the eternal (in that the former implies a regulated imperfection of the latter), but it is the lack of historical certainty which *provides for faith* by destroying all false security. Faith is made possible by the absence of historic legitimization.

Hence, the relation between eschatological existence and temporality cannot be adequately described by reference to an assumed analogy between Platonic forms and particulars. The relation is rather that between *authenticity* and *inauthenticity*. But to restrict validity—even subjective—to transcendence implies the ascription of some 'lesser status' to temporal existence, and thus to history, the world, and time as a necessary ingredient.

When Bultmann states that the message of Jesus is a presupposition for theology and that faith did not exist until there was a Christian *kerygma*, he is implying that Christology is to be given conceptual association neither with temporality nor with transcendence, but as the 'efficient cause' which effects transition from the disposition of the one to the

other. A Christology is therefore to be recognized as valid not by virtue of simultaneous involvement in and incorporation of temporality and transcendence, so that all 'decisive events' must be as truly historical as they are eschatological, but by virtue of its 'occasional efficacy'. That is, the *kerygmatic proclamation* is viewed in its occasional capacity to accomplish its intended purposes, i.e. the bestowal of authentic human existence, and in that perspective is understood and interpreted. Had the nature of redemption required a synthesization of temporality with eschatology, instead of the transformation and liberation of the former by the latter, then the christological formula would have stressed 'historicity' equally with 'transcendence', and would have erected a differently ordered 'skandalon' to faith. What is fundamental to Bultmann (according to the pattern of 'self-disclosure', penetrative awareness, 'insight', etc.) is the *proclamation* itself, and 'Christology' effectually achieves that which pure philosophers have attempted by intuition.

As the examples of Oscar Cullmann and Rudolf Bultmann show, the theological enterprise witnesses a variety of specific intents and purposes which (1) necessarily involve dispositional axioms, working analogies, and appropriate conceptual schemes, and (2) contain proper schematic positions for the formulation and utilization of christological principles. In seeking to represent the realization of the possibility of transcending historical existence, Bultmann will not be aided by employing an atomistic conception of time which restricts one's vision to events and occurrences, and establishes the permanence of temporality, thereby correlating redemption with ordinary historical processes. Cullmann, who attempts to reach back to primitive Christianity's 'core element' as in a context of unity and difference, would be quite partial to a scheme which would allow both selective attention to a particular segment and ensure historical continuity—rather than one which requires 'growth towards' or 'emergent becoming'. By the same mode of analysis, it is as conceptually 'proper' for Cullmann to identify Jesus Christ with his discovered 'core element' as it is for Bultmann to associate Christ with the effectuality presupposed by the life of faith. It is equally conceivable that some other perspective, e.g. a thoroughgoing mechanistic outlook, might systematically exclude any possibility of a 'christological inclusion'.

This would imply that Christology is indeed an interpretative discipline which attempts to clarify, represent and communicate; as a conceptual discipline it has available a number of alternative interpretative schemes, the suitability of which, in each case, is determined by the nature of the task or the specific question or concern. The final evaluation concerning

Cullmann's achievement, for example, cannot be established according to the validity of identifying Jesus Christ with redemptive history until the preliminary judgement is made concerning the applicability of the entire perspective to the Christological concern. It is a question not of logical rigour, consistency, and internal reliability—although these might also be appropriate—but one of basic propriety. If New Testament Christology, for example, does indeed repudiate ontological entailment while affirming redemptive continuity, what status is to be given to the 'later confessions' which quite visibly employ such words as *substance*, *nature*, *person*, and the like, in an age which Cullmann also subsumes under 'Jesus is Lord'? Or if metaphysical implications are denied a place of their own, how is Cullmann to understand his own conception of time which gives evidence of 'eternity' and in that seems to imply a distinctive formulation of *being* and *becoming* by functioning as the locus of stability in a field where all else is discontinuous? Or, if it be assumed that Christology is an answer to the human existential question, does Bultmann (or *Dasein* itself) possess sufficient insight and authority to pose the question which will enable the gracious reply to be received with fitting appreciation? If Christology itself is to be more than a strictly private affair—as well as God's reconciliation of the world—then the normative disclosure present to one's 'own little history' requires a basis of correlation with corporate history, as does *kerygma* with creed, existence with institution.

Since 'Christology' is also a kind of *logia*, differences between approaches to its mystery will also be of a formal, categorical and structural nature. Christological difference is therefore an inevitable conceptual accompaniment, since the formalizing of religious affirmations implies the use of those interpretative schemes upon which human understanding, clarification, and communication depend. Because of the way in which expression itself is ordered, theology (especially in an age conscious of ecumenical concerns) must assume the critical task of distinguishing in given instances the affirmations of faith and the conceptual elements necessary to their formalization, the interrelations between these, and the creative and/or limiting influence of each upon the other. But in the instance of Christology, that critical task is not only an academic exercise; it becomes also, as appropriate to that mystery, a means of release from any untoward regard for a conceptual mediation. In an examination which is at the same time an assertion, this has been our thesis.