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SOME TWENTIETH CENTURY ASPECTS OF THE KENOSIS THEORY

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## INTRODUCTION

The object of this thesis is to see if the kenotic theory still gives the most meaningful Christology for today. This will be attempted by discussing and commenting on the views of a range of Twentieth Century theologians, comparing those who agree with those who are against kenosis.

In an age when not only other religions are making themselves a real force in the world, but also when men are apt to make all sorts of differing statements about God, it seemed necessary to the writer to see just what is our Christian claim. Having completed the work of this thesis, the author feels as strongly as he did at the start as to what faith in Our Lord implies.

Because of this faith, Chapter I was written and placed first though in a way it should logically be last. It endeavours to set belief that Jesus Christ is unique in a context which can relate to non-Christian men in the world. Chapter II gives a brief survey of the New Testament witness to Jesus. Chapter III gives the early concept of the kenosis theory. Chapter IV is a review of the Christologies of some leading Twentieth Century theologians, criticising certain details. Chapter V concludes this thesis in a context of worship, saying that only a Christology and a conception of God which draw forth the highest devotion of man can be considered satisfactory. It is argued that only a kenotic Christology achieves this object.

ABBREVIATIONS

The only comment necessary here is to describe the method used for reference notes. These have been numbered consecutively in each chapter, and then are detailed in appendix A. In the case of chapter IV, for convenience, the consecutive numbering has been further sub-divided into sections for each theologian studied.

Where titles only are given to a book mentioned in appendix A, this is because full details are obtainable in the bibliography.

## CHAPTER I - General Considerations

The whole of the Christian Faith rests solidly on the problem "Who is Jesus Christ?" It is because the Christian Faith makes certain assertions about this that it is in fact Christian. It is quite possible to hold a view of God's general existence without a specific belief in Christ. Such a view sees God as the Ultimate Reality of the Universe, the Omnipotent Power in whom one's final destiny lies. All religion sees an Ultimate lying behind and beyond the temporal things of this world. All religion aspires in some measure to understand, or to placate, or to do the will of that Ultimate. The great question is what is the nature of the Ultimate? If we acknowledge that God does exist, then we must surely also believe that He is the one, true, sole Reality. Hence we must hold that all religion is, in some way, man's attempt to search for and apprehend Him.

What is specific in the Christian Faith is that while it can accept the fact that God reveals Himself in all sorts of ways and to men of no particular creed, or even of any creed at all, yet it says that God has acted at a specific time in history for the salvation of mankind in Jesus Christ. While all other revelation of God is valuable and all personalities in history inspired by God are valuable, yet His revelation in Jesus Christ is unique. Jesus Christ has given us an understanding of God which has not come to us from any other source.

When one approaches the Christian Faith one has to decide whether Jesus Christ did in fact live, or not. This question forms no part of this thesis. It is sufficient to state that practically all who study the Gospel accounts and who contemplate what actually happened in history agree that Jesus Christ lived; in just the same way that it is accepted that Mohammed and Buddha and Confucius actually lived.

If we accept the fact that Jesus Christ lived, then we must face the question who was He?

Before we can go further into this, we have to face a second enormous question, did Jesus Christ rise from the dead? This question is absolutely critical. If He did not, then Jesus Christ ultimately, no matter how great He was, is in substance the same as we are. If He did, then He is in a class by Himself, as nowhere in the history of the world has a religion been based on this claim. Again, it is not part of this thesis to go into this question. It is sufficient to say that all Christians say that He did rise from the dead and hence to them, there is some unique link between Jesus Christ and the Ultimate Reality of the world, God.

Perhaps at this stage it is necessary to say that because the Christian Faith claims that Jesus Christ has a unique relationship to the Reality of the Universe, this does not mean that all other religions are wrong; it means that all other religions should be seen as other men's means of approach to the One God of all, and that a Christian must treat others

in the light of the Christian belief in the character of God. A Christian must act toward all others in a truly Christian way, trusting that God Himself, in His own time, will bring about the day when all men will acknowledge Him for what He truly is. This method of approach is indeed truly following the example and light of Jesus Christ. It is then the Christian belief that the day must come, either in this world, or in eternity, when all men must answer the question who is Jesus Christ? Perhaps it is as well to say again that in regard to other religions this statement sounds very arrogant; it appears to give the Christian an immediate spiritual superiority over others. If the Christian already acknowledges Jesus Christ and all other men have finally to come to this also, then surely the Christian is in possession of some knowledge, or belief which is superior to others? But this does not necessarily have to be so.

It is obvious today that much of the world does not acknowledge Jesus Christ, nor do most of the other great religions. Whatever success the Christian missionary effort may have, and in spite of the new developments at present taking place, during our own generation it would appear that the situation is not likely to change very drastically. The answer must lie in the concept of God and eternity. When we speak of eternity, we do not think of an extension of time, but of a new existence, a new mode of being where God is apprehended as He is. To the Christian, God is seen in this

temporal world in the person of Jesus Christ. This thesis is concerned with the method by which God Himself entered into His own creation in Jesus Christ. In Him the holy love of God, the personal concern of God, the self-sacrifice and humility of God and His righteousness can be observed. The Christian sums up his understanding of God by belief in the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit. But the Christian, though apprehending God as three, is also at pains to make clear that God is also one. No Christian believes that in eternity he is going to meet God as three separate individuals. We are on the border of the mystery of God and the unknown. Surely, in God's love and forgiveness, we must believe that when we meet Him face to face, we shall meet Him simply as "God".

It seems that without in any way detracting from the person of Jesus Christ, without in any way detracting from one's own personal and traditional belief in God, it is also possible to hold that other people and other religions may through God's love come to meet Him in eternity also as He is. Surely what must matter is that each individual in the world should try to live and grow and act in an increasing understanding and belief in God, trusting that God will lead him to greater knowledge of Himself. To some individuals God may lead them to the Christian religion, to acknowledge His Son in this world. To others it may be that God will lead them in their own tradition to a state of understanding which is suitable to them to fulfil God's purpose for them in eternity. Let the

Christian then try to be the best Christian he can. Let him follow Jesus Christ in his dealings with all others. Let him guard all the precepts of his own faith, holding them as in trust from God, believing that while he should assist wherever he possibly can, he must trust that God Himself is fulfilling His own purpose throughout the world.

We have said that the Christian believes that Jesus Christ is unique and that this uniqueness is proved by the fact of the Resurrection. God set a seal on Jesus Christ at the Resurrection which has been set on no other man. It is in the light of this situation that this thesis examines the question, who is Jesus Christ?

## CHAPTER II - Brief Historical Survey

The Gospel accounts of Jesus (1) show a boy growing up under normal conditions, taught as the other children of His time. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (2). As other men of the time He received baptism from John the Baptist, He was tempted; He begins to preach, identifying Himself with the prophesy of Isaiah by reading "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach ..." (3). He has apparently normal human experiences, such as surprise at the conduct of His parents, at the unbelief of man, at the barrenness of a fig tree and the slowness of His disciples' faith (4). He asks for information and receives it (5). He lived in the constant exercise of prayer to God (6), this being according to Gore, the characteristic of human faith and trust, of which the Epistle to the Hebrews sees in Jesus the supreme example (7). This human life of Jesus becomes all the more obvious as the anxieties and terrors of the passion close in upon Him. He shows us the spectacle of true man, weighted with a crushing burden. It was because the future was not clear that He prays "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ..." (8). On the cross Jesus utters the cry "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (9). This is a direct quotation from Psalm 22, where the psalmist is describing the experiences of the trial of a soul from whom God hides His face. Together with these aspects of Jesus' life, He also expressly

says that He is ignorant of the Day of Judgement (10). In St. John's Gospel the whole tenor of the picture given of Jesus is that of the eternal Son of the Father, yet He is living and teaching under human conditions. Lastly, although Jesus exhibits insight and foresight of prophetic quality, yet nowhere does He enlarge our natural physical or historical knowledge. From this picture, according to Gore, the evidence is plain that Jesus lived fully under human conditions.

Against this picture of the human Jesus we have another picture (11). The personality of Jesus lays upon His disciples and all those who come in contact with Him a strong fascination. John the Baptist says "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose" (12). He speaks "as one having authority" (13), He takes upon Himself the authority of changing the Mosaic law, a matter of tremendous importance to a Jew (14), He claims to judge men (15) and to judge all nations (16). He claims to have power to forgive sins (17). He performs many miracles. As Gore says He deliberately trained the twelve men to trust Him utterly in His presence and in His absence, as the unerring friend, the all-powerful guide, the supreme and unfailing resource. Jesus says "and no-one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (18); also "come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (19). Again, "if any man come to me, and hate

not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (20). Jesus repudiates one who came with language of casual respect "Good Master" (21), yet deliberately encourages the disciples to a far higher devotion and accepts deliberate honours paid to Him (22). He evoked the solemn declaration of St.Peter "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (23). At the Transfiguration He reveals something of His hidden glory. Also He speaks of His mutual and exclusive knowledge of God, distinguishing Himself as the only son in the parable of the vineyard (24); He confessed His divine sonship before the Sanhedrin at His trial (25). After the Resurrection He draws forth the confession of Thomas "My Lord and my God" (26). Jesus' last words according to St.Matthew are that He has been given universal authority and that His presence will be with them "even unto the end of the world" (27). In the words of Gore, if Jesus was not the very Son of God" ... He was indeed guilty of the supreme arrogance of putting Himself in the place of God 'aut Deus aut homo non bonus'."

But the case for the divinity of Jesus does not only rest on what Jesus said and did, it also rests on the effect He had on those who became His disciples and those who formed the early church. All the disciples had been brought up in the very strong Jewish belief of there being only one God, yet after contact with Jesus they quickly began to give the same

honours to Him as they had to God, without any apparent realisation of their inconsistency. St.Paul uses the Grace in the threefold name of Father, Son and Spirit, and by the very fact that no controversy arose in the church over this, it is apparent he must have been merely expressing what all others were feeling towards Jesus.

We have then these two concepts of Jesus, the human and the divine. The relationship between these two concepts has been a problem which has taxed men's minds in all generations, right to the present day.

If the human side of Jesus is overstressed, it is easy to fall into the error which the church has called adoptionism. We then think of Jesus as being an exceptional man who was so greatly endowed by God that He was able to live a perfect life; the man who by His perfect life and thorough knowledge of God could teach other men what God was like. In this view He was the great moral teacher of all time. After the great example of His life and His self sacrifice at the Cross, God lifted Him up at the Resurrection. We may go on to believe that through His perfection God incorporated Jesus into Himself; that Jesus has now become divine; Jesus Christ was adopted into divinity. With such a view we have no great problem with the historic person of Jesus Christ. He was born, possibly even by the exceptional means of the virgin birth; He grew greatly in moral capacity and wisdom. He was more and more endued with power as His life grew in perfection.

God gave Him the power to perform miracles and finally at His death by, in this view, the greatest miracle of all, God raised Him up from the dead.

Against this view we can hold the belief that Jesus Christ was in fact God. This is a simply staggering claim, yet it is in fact the claim made by the Gospel. It is supported by the statements that Christ made about Himself. It makes much more meaningful the actual events of Christ's life. It accounts for the effect Jesus had on His followers. Such a claim brings at once great difficulties, difficulties that the church all through the ages has tried to grapple with and explain. The very fact that these difficulties have inspired men to attempt to deal with them is, in itself, proof of the impact that the claim has made on many men's minds. If Jesus Christ was God, how could God possibly become man? If He was God, His existence could not have started at His birth in Bethlehem. He must have pre-existed from all time and how can this be? If Jesus Christ was God, did He know everything and have all knowledge while He was still the babe? As man, was He still in control of the whole Universe?

The attempts that men have made to answer these questions, and particularly those of the Twentieth Century, form the basis of this thesis, but before finally coming to this we must mention belief in the Trinity. From the original strong monotheistic belief of the Jewish people, together with the experience of Jesus Christ and then the experience of the

presence of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost, the early church found itself believing in God as a Trinity. Though this belief was not finally expressed in words for a long time and until after much argument and discussion, yet eventually it was accepted that only such a belief could account for the church's experience as a whole. As we discuss Jesus Christ, at all times in the back of our minds must be the belief in a Trinity. The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ and the Doctrine of the Trinity are, therefore, very closely and inevitably inter-linked.

### CHAPTER III - Kenosis, Early Concept

As we have said, the problem of Jesus Christ only really arises when we firmly believe that He was God and as such that He must have pre-existed from all time. This latter must be so, as we cannot really conceive of any essential change taking place in the Godhead at any time. What God is we believe He always was, and if Jesus Christ is part of the Godhead, then we believe He must have always been so. Only this gives the highest concept of God in accordance with the revelation given us.

The first systematic explanation of how a pre-existent Christ could live a truly human life is usually credited to the Lutheran theologian, Thomasius, who published articles in A.D. 1845, advocating that the Incarnation itself was a "Kenosis." This word comes from the Epistle to the Philippians II: 7 where St. Paul uses the Greek "<sup>Ἐ</sup>κυρών ἐκένωσεν" which means literally "emptied himself." Thomasius (1) said that Christ renounced His divine glory which He had from the beginning with the Father. He retained His divine nature, but exchanged His divine form of existence for the form of a creature. He did not cease to be God, but ceased to exist in the form of God. He so emptied Himself that His self-consciousness was human, not divine. He renounced the relations in which He stood as the Creator and Lord of the world and He possessed and used His divine Lordship only insofar as He possessed and used it as a man.

Thomasius kept the Trinity clearly in mind; he says "We are compelled through our actual relationship to God to assert that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are, at once, personally distinguished one from another, and essentially united one to another." He goes on to say "As God thus exists in a Trinity of Persons, there can be no will, knowledge or life in Him which is not determined in a triune way." Thomasius sees two aspects of the Trinity, namely the essential, immanent aspects of absolute power, intelligence, blessedness, holiness, truth and love; secondly, the aspects relative to creation, namely omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence. He says that man is personal like God Himself, but with a "creaturely" not "absolute" personality. He begins with the prime fact of Christian experience, that we have been reconciled to God through Christ and hence we are in communion with God through our personal communion with Christ. He says that every conception of Christ is in error which imperils either the reality of His Godhead, or the truth of His humanity.

To Thomasius, if the divine and human were mutually opposed to each other, then no possibility of the intimate union of God with humanity in the person of Christ could take place. The human sphere into which Christ enters is not inadequate to Him. The nature which He unites with Himself is a nature which He Himself created so that He might reveal Himself this way. To say that the divine assumed human nature is not enough, we can only explain the historic person of

Christ if we assert that the divine was self-limited. Further, if the divine nature retained its world-ruling and world-embracing powers, there could have been no true unity with the human, for the consciousness that the Son would have had of Himself and of His universal power would be irreconcilable with that of the historic Christ. God became man in the Incarnation and this involved self-limitation by the Son, a self-emptying not of His essential Godhead, but of His divine mode of existence. This is the deepest mystery of the self-denying love of God, whereby the eternal Son of the Father becomes like us, suffering and dying to reconcile us to God, so that He might make us share His majesty. To Thomasius, in the Incarnation there was no dualism, not a divine and a human consciousness, but one divine-human consciousness. The Incarnation was a manifestation of the immanent attributes of the Godhead. Yet for this to be possible the Son of God had to self-empty Himself of His relative attributes.

The kenotic theory of Thomasius has been included in this thesis as it forms the basic idea of kenosis. After Thomasius there was much discussion and criticism of his theory and many alternatives were put forward. In general the theory was dropped in Europe, but it was taken up by the English kenoticists at the beginning of the Twentieth Century and it has received much greater interest in the present day. The intention of this thesis is to take a representative number of

Twentieth Century theologians, to see what theories they have and to try to draw some conclusions from the present day position.

## CHAPTER IV - Twentieth Century Christologies

In this section contributions will be given from each theologian studied, giving a brief critical review of his position. The section is divided into those for kenoticism and those against, and these are dealt with in historical order as far as this is possible.

### Kenoticists

Charles Gore:- 1853-1932, Bishop of Oxford, outstanding Anglican theologian and author of a number of books, including of particular interest for this thesis The Incarnation of the Son of God, 1905, and Belief in Christ, 1922. Gore was one of the theologians responsible for reviving the interest in kenoticism in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries in England. In the latter book he uses what might be called the biblical approach to the subject, that is to say he investigates fully the New Testament witness, a method which Vincent Taylor uses in his modern book referred to later in this thesis.

According to Gore's metaphysic, nature is God's ordinance, it reveals the spirituality and personal qualities of God. Nature is a unity. There is progress in nature which is a progressive revelation of God. "Something of God is manifest in the mechanical laws of inorganic structures: something more in the growth and flexibility of vital forms of plant and animal; something more still in the reason, conscience,

love, personality of man" (1). This revelation reaches a climax in Christ. But Christ is not supernatural in the sense of being inconsistent with nature. Nature is a progressive development of life and each new stage of life appears supernatural from the point of view of what lies below it (2). Christ is the crown of nature (3). Christ is true nature; it is our nature with its reality of sin which is false nature (4). This new creation in Christ was unique, and as such, could leave no direct evidence of itself. What Christ has left is the possibility of union with Himself (5).

In the Incarnation we see God as personal and that the quality of this personality is love, linked with justice and truth. Further, from Jesus' reference to law and from the Old Testament, we learn that God works out a divine purpose through the whole ordered system of the universe. This purpose is God's law, both physical and spiritual. This law does in one sense limit God as it expresses His mind (6). God is not limited by any force external to Himself, but by His own being. He is thus self-limited, His very being is law (7). God's omnipotence for instance, is not "... the unfettered despot's freedom to do anything anyhow." It is "... His universal power in and over all things which works patiently and unerringly in the slow-moving process to the far-off event, ..." (8).

Gore traces the divinity of Christ through the New Testament. He shows the growth of the belief in the pre-

existent Son of God over the strong Jewish monotheistic belief. He points out that Jesus was constantly challenging men to think for themselves and specially challenged men to think about His own person (9). Gore goes on to say that St.Paul really interpreted the early faith for the church. In his portrayal of Jesus as the Incarnation of the pre-existing Son St.Paul was only stating what was in fact the general consensus of faith of the early church, and what was in line with what Jesus had said about Himself (10). Gore sees Jesus as the infallible guide, teacher, pattern, with no sign of the possibility of sin, nor fear of going wrong (11). He sees no evidence of hasty passion, or moral imperfection, yet there is real limitation in knowledge and a real human life, a real sharing of the current metaphysical and other beliefs and events of His time (12). Like Thomasius, Gore takes the clue to the manner of the Incarnation from St.Paul's passages in Philippians 2:5-11 and Corinthians 2:8-9 (13). The whole Incarnation was a self-emptying, an abandonment of divine prerogatives. Jesus had the right to remain with God, yet by a deliberate act of self-abnegation, He took the characteristics of a human life, yet remained an unchanged personality (14). It was more than a folding round the Godhead of the veil of humanity, as it meant that certain natural prerogatives of the divine existence were no longer exercised (15). It involved sacrifice to both the Father and the Son (16). Gore says Jesus felt as a man, strived, thought as a man, but He

knew He was the Son. He remembered how He came from God and how He would return.

In reviewing any theologian we should look to see whether as a whole his thesis seems to be consistent, and also what advance he has made on previous theories. On the first point it is one of the main advantages of a kenotic theory that it allows fully for both the humanity and the divinity of Christ, and this will be discussed later in this thesis. It is sufficient now to note that Gore speaks clearly of Christ as being the Eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity. His treatment of the Trinity, not summarised in this thesis, is entirely consistent. He speaks in deeply religious and traditional terms of the Being of God as three persons in a trinity of love and unity. Gore's metaphysic of there being a progressive revelation of God in nature prepares the way, as it were, for the possibility of a final revelation in Christ. His sense of God's dealing with the world through ordered system and law, showing that self-limitation is a requirement in God Himself, further prepares the way for a kenotic explanation of the Incarnation. To Gore this is possible because the higher power of love is shown in self-effacement. God can limit Himself " ... because the Godhead contains in itself eternally the prototype of human self-sacrifice and self-limitation, for God is love" (17).

There are two important matters that Gore does not attempt to deal with. Firstly, with reference to the self-emptying

of Christ, he does not try to explain whether this was a continuous refusal to use His divine powers, or whether it was a once-for-all decision taken before the Incarnation. And secondly, he remains silent on the question of the Son's cosmic function of sustaining the universe, the problem in this latter being how this function was continued during the period of the Incarnation. Of both of these Gore maintains that they are mysteries. He says "We do well to be agnostics, if we put our agnosticism in the right place." (18). There is no doubt that there should always be an element of mystery in human explanations of the divine. The theologian who can explain everything must inevitably have failed to realise that there is an essential element of mystery in the very Being of God Himself.

When we compare Gore and Thomasius it is difficult to say what specific advance there has been. To Gore Jesus is always conscious that He is the Son, whereas to Thomasius this is not so. To Gore the question of the Son's cosmic function is a mystery, but to Thomasius He performed no cosmic function during the Incarnation. One of the great criticisms against Thomasius was that his idea of the abandonment of certain of the divine prerogatives was thought to be crude, and that a divinity so divested could not still be divine. Yet Gore uses the word abandon in exactly the same context. It is of interest also to note that Gore does not mention either Forsyth, or Mackintosh, who immediately follow in this

thesis, though his second book was published later than theirs.

P.T.Forsyth:- 1848-1921, Congregationalist, Principal of Hackney College, Hampstead, wrote The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, being the Congregational Union lecture for 1909. Forsyth is credited with having had a large share in arresting the movement in Free Church Circles which would have reduced Jesus to a simple, though very great, leader of men. Perhaps the most dominant note in his book is the greatness of Christ, in fact one of the chapters carries this title. There is no doubt whatever in the author's mind that in Christ we are face to face with the eternal Son, God Himself in the Person of His Son. The whole book is permeated with this thought, and the subject throughout seems to be dealt with in a most reverent and worshipful way.

Forsyth says that to explain Christ and His work the early Church held two current ideas, those of the Virgin Birth and His pre-existence (1). He points out that St.Paul concentrated mostly on the latter and he says that it is better to do this in view of the fact that Jesus Himself makes no reference to His own human birth, whereas it is difficult not to believe that He did refer to His pre-existence (2). Forsyth says there are few references not because they are insignificant, but because they bulked unspeakably in Jesus' mind. They were only expressible in act, not words. He uses the illustration "The Captain is not loquacious in the

rapids" (3). Further explaining the paucity of references, Forsyth points out that though Isaiah: 53 is unique in the Old Testament, yet it is the one passage that truly connects the two Testaments. Similarly, he says the Philippians: 2 passage has an importance out of all proportion to the space given to it in the New Testament (4).

Forsyth goes on to draw out the importance of pre-existence, saying that though it was not necessarily conscious in Jesus except at uplifted moments and great crises, yet it is an essential factor to account for the worship and devotion given to Christ. He explains this by saying that such a relation as Christ now bears to the Father could not have arisen in point of time, nor could it have been acquired through moral excellence as this could not account for Jesus' power to exercise God's prerogative of forgiveness, judgement and redemption.

On the question of Christ's work, he says that our faith has much more directly to do with the benefits we have received than with the nature of His Person. As the Son He brings in a new creation which has the consummation of humanity in its scope.

Forsyth explains how a pre-existent Christ can be the historic Jesus by the theory of kenosis, similar to Thomasius and Gore, though he calls kenosis a problem of theological science, not one of faith (5). He does, however, make a number of masterly advances on the theory, the most prominent

being his treatment of the attributes. He says we should not think of certain attributes being renounced, but we should think instead of a new mode of their being, their becoming latent and potential (6). Omniscience changes from its eternal form to a discursive and successive knowledge, in potential, enlarging to become actual under moral conditions of human growth. As Christ grew in consciousness He became conscious of Himself as the eternal Son of God (7). Omnipotence does not mean that God should be able to do anything that fancy may suggest, but that in the will of love, God from His own free resource, is equal to everything involved. God is determined, therefore, by nothing outside of Himself. Similarly omnipresence means that God is not hampered by space, but can exist in limits without being unfree, or ceasing to be God (8). Omniscience is only a detailed aspect of God's absoluteness, incidental to the existence of a creation. God has "absolute and simultaneous intelligence as a necessary feature of His being. But since He created, the absolute intelligence of God in relation to the world becomes in its form omniscience, which could only cease with the removal of the world, but even then would only retire into another absolute form" (9). God's knowledge can be discrete in actual omniscience, or it may be retracted and concentrated into potentiality. We too are not conscious all the time of what we know. Christ in eternal form has all intuitive and simultaneous knowledge, but in time His know-

ledge became discursive, successive, progressive (10).

This concept of Forsyth certainly removes the big criticism, as made of Thomasius, that God could, as it were, divest Himself of certain attributes because they were no part of His essential being.

A second advance of Forsyth over previous kenotic theories is that of a "Plerosis" parallel to the "Kenosis." Forsyth points out that in the Incarnation we see the self-limited Christ, taking the form of an earthly life, sharing ignorance, limitation and even error with those of His time and place. Yet, he says whatever Christ did not know, He chose not to know, and during the life He lived He gradually regained the consciousness He had renounced. This was the corresponding plerosis (11). As the humiliation grew, so grew the exultation of the power and the person that achieved it (12). His life consisted of becoming what He was, a redintegration of an old state.

Like Gore, Forsyth says that it is impossible to say just how the limitation took place. He says it is presumptuous to try to understand in some aspects just what the Son must have gone through. It is a miracle behind all miracles. Love would not remain love if it had no impenetrable reserves (13).

Forsyth notes that Christ's experience of moral conflict was real because His self-emptying included an oblivion of the impossibility of sin (14). He also says that the essence

of humanity is conscience, which is man's relation to God. Christ's manhood, therefore, consists in the moral reality of His experience, His conflict and His growth. His identity with man lies in His assumption of man's conditions of personality and His renunciation of those belonging to God (15).

There seems to be no doubt about the greatness of this book. Forsyth's handling of the questions of pre-existence and plerosis give support to the worshipful context of the whole book. The method of dealing with the attributes is a great advance on previous kenotic theories. Yet it is interesting to note that Forsyth makes no mention at all of two problems. There is no mention of the traditional cosmic functions of the Second Person of the Trinity, a problem which was so great to Temple as we shall see later in this thesis. Secondly, there is no discussion of the Trinitarian aspect, which Thomasius had mentioned so explicitly.

H.R.Mackintosh:- 1870-1936, Scottish theologian, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, wrote The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ. The edition studied for this thesis was published by Scribner's in 1921, but Mackintosh's preface is dated 1912; this would place his book historically after Forsyth and between the two books of Gore. Mackintosh uses the biblical approach, and his book is a masterpiece of fact and lucidity of statement. Sydney Cave, professor of theology in the University of London, writing in 1925 said that this book "... is indispensable to every

serious student of the subject." (1).

Mackintosh has a metaphysic not unlike that of Gore. He says that nature is the body of the infinite spirit; in a perfectly real sense creation is an Incarnation. Hence "... there is no problem raised by the idea of God manifest in the flesh as to the relation of the divine nature to the human in the unity of one person, or as to the historical origin of such a relation, i.e. its beginning in time; or as to the action of the limited manhood on the illimitable Godhead, which is not equally raised by the inter-relations of God and nature" (2).

He points out that humanity is not self-sufficient, it requires the divine as its very life (3). To him the soteriological aspect is foremost, God's redemptive thought is as eternal as His creative thought. There is an organic unity of "redemption and creation" (4). Mackintosh traces the development of the concept of pre-existence, and he says that we must remember in regard to this that "eternal" is only a way of referring to the divine existence; it is not an extension of temporal time (5). "Detailed speculations on the pre-incarnate life, like professedly minute descriptions of the divine self-consciousness, betray in fact a culpably Gnostic tendency ..." (6). Again from the soteriological aspect, only God can save, but Christ is Saviour; therefore, Mackintosh says, in eternity Christ is one with God (7). "A Christ who is eternal, and a Christ of whom we cannot tell

whether He is eternal or not, are positively and profoundly different, and the types of faith they respectively call forth will differ correspondingly both in spiritual horizon and in moral inspiration" (8). Belief on this subject must follow faith in Christ Himself, not precede it, and the Church has always clung to the view that Christ is not the perfect saint, but the Son sent forth by the Father (9).

Mackintosh summarises, saying Jesus is divine, an object of faith. He is eternal, for being part of God, His pre-mundane being must be real. He lived an unequivocally human life. We cannot predicate of Him two consciousnesses or two wills, as this is not the New Testament indication, nor is this psychologically possible. Hence, he says, we must have some form of kenosis; no human life of God is possible without a prior adjustment of deity (10).

Mackintosh's theory of kenosis follows Forsyth very closely, often quoting direct. His great asset is his clearness and scholarship. He does perhaps bring out one or two clearer points. For instance, in regard to the divine self-consciousness, he says that whatever may have been involved, it must always have been "an object of faith" for Jesus (11). Secondly he says we do not go into the question of the "Word" or "Son", apart from the Incarnation, as we do not have sufficient biblical facts. The "Word" incarnated is only known through the story of Jesus (12). This point will be of importance later in this thesis.

Vincent Taylor:- 1887-date, formerly Principal of Wesley College, Headingley, Leeds, is a modern New Testament scholar and the author of many books, including The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching, 1958. This is a most up to date book, and the subject is very clearly presented. It follows the method of Gore in that it investigates the whole of the New Testament witness, in fact this is the main purpose of the book. This it does in great detail, using the results of modern textual criticism and biblical exegesis. It is not desirable to attempt to summarise this book in this thesis. It is sufficient to say that the general picture obtained of the historic witness seems to be thoroughly factual and objective. It is basically the same as that given by Gore, and as very briefly stated in Chapter II of this thesis. Vincent Taylor ends his book with a brief Christology, or as he heads his chapter "Towards a modern Christology" (1). He is careful to point out that his book is not a fully developed Christology; what he is giving is his judgement on what he considers the New Testament teaches. He does this, he says, because "Progress in theology cannot be made unless theologians are ready to be found wanting in the endeavour to make constructive statements" (2).

Vincent Taylor, much like a modern Gore, or Mackintosh, says that the Christology which seems most in accord with the New Testament is that in becoming man, " ... the Son of God willed to renounce the exercise of divine prerogatives

and powers, so that in the course of His earthly existence, He might live within the necessary limitations which belong to human finitude" (3). Like Forsyth he says that the divine attributes became latent because no longer in exercise. The knowledge of His heavenly origin and divine nature were given Him by revelation and intuition, particularly at His Baptism, Temptation and Transfiguration and during seasons of prayer and communion with His Heavenly Father. "These experiences were remembered and formed the undertone of His life and ministry, but they were not always so central in His consciousness as to preclude the frustrations, disappointments, and trials of a truly human life" (4). It is within this human life that one must find His divinity. Vincent Taylor says that Our Lord's consciousness of divine sonship did not always burn with complete clearness; there were also many times when, in the words of Mackintosh it was "an object of faith" (5). Nevertheless, at all times He receives through communion with His Father an impress upon His human consciousness which is the secret of His moral elevation and of His power to do "mighty works." "The subject of His consciousness is divine, but it is expressed within the compass of His human life" (6).

Vincent Taylor now considers five particular questions. First, (7) is the Ego of Jesus human, or divine? He says "His personality manifests itself as human, and must indeed do so, but this fact does not necessarily imply that it is

human and nothing more. All the revelant facts compel us to affirm that the subject of the human life of Christ is the Logos, the Eternal Son, but in the form and under the conditions of human existence." It is not enough to say that the Logos added humanity to His divine nature; this tends to suggest that either the human form is merely a guise, or that the humanity was impersonal. "The unity of Christ's Person is complete. It is as a man, and within the limitations of manhood, that the Son of God is incarnate. Only by the exercise of a self-limitation, imaged and illustrated in the self-limitation of God in the creation of the world, can the Ego of the Son be operative in the conditions of time and space."

Second, (8) to make this self-limitation possible, it is necessary to infer a pre-temporal act of will, whereby all that is alien to His ministry of humiliation and redemption is set aside. Vincent Taylor says we should not read too much into either the Philippians or Corinthians passages, but we should acknowledge that St. Paul does presuppose such an act and that this is borne out in the Johannine Christology.

Third, (9) the divine attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence became latent; they were not destroyed, they are part of His essence. The Gospel account makes manifest that these powers were not normally used, but what was renounced were not the powers, but their conscious

exercise. Vincent Taylor points out that although the illustration is not adequate, yet there are many cases in human life in which powers are latent, either by an act of will, or because their presence is not known. "Conscious life is the progressive discovery of powers which in earlier stages are not suspected."

Fourth, (10) a kenotic Christology presupposes one Christ, who is not cut off from the life of God and yet consents to live on earth within the bounds of human finitude. His human nature is the life He leads as a man, His divine nature is the existence which He shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The uniting bond is His divine will, which in His human life is limited and confined by the conditions appropriate to that life, but is unlimited and unconfined within the triune life of God. The human will is the divine will restrained by conditions which are accepted fully and completely. His will is the subject of His divine life and by self-limitation is also the subject of His human existence. This concept of a divine will which can function in both realms, yet is limited in its expression by human conditions, overcomes the traditional problem of the "two wills."

Fifth, (11) we should not consider that a kenotic theory can answer every question. We should agree with Gore that there are matters within the mystery of God upon which we know nothing at all. We cannot describe the life of the Incarnate Son within the fellowship of the triunity of God.

We cannot answer how to relate a limited condition of the Son with His cosmic function. We should admit that theological reflection can reach limits after it has explored every possible angle. We should agree with D.M.Baillie that "the paradox of the Incarnation" has its parallel in "the paradox of grace" (12).

Vincent Taylor gives an inclusive modern restatement of the kenotic theory. He seems to deal with questions in the traditional manner, yet expressing these very clearly. He follows the general line of thought of previous kenoticists, yet he uses any advances which have been made, such as in the case of the divine attributes where he follows Forsyth. He makes advances to the theory in several places. Notably, his analogy that every man has some latent powers within is important; so also his treatment of the two wills is an advance on previous theories and will be discussed later.

These views of Vincent Taylor will not be discussed at this point, but they will be taken as the basis for a discussion on the merits of the kenotic theory against other theories at the conclusion of this thesis.

#### Non-Kenoticists

William Temple:- 1881-1944, theologian, philosopher, Archbishop of Canterbury, was the author of a number of books, and a man of great influence. Among other things he is particularly known for his "sacramental" view of the universe, where he sees all things as possible vehicles for God's truth.

Of interest to this thesis, he wrote Christ the Truth published in 1924. It is not possible here to enter into his metaphysic of grades which he gives in this book, except to say that he works this out in great detail and it seems to give a very meaningful concept. He arrives at a point, not unlike Gore, where only in Christ do we see man in his truest nature. But also since Christ is the one adequate presentation of God, through His perfect nature, the Incarnation is the deification of the whole human race (1). In the Incarnation we do not find a human being taken into fellowship with God, but God acting through the conditions supplied by humanity (2). Jesus lived a real human life (3), His prayers were real prayers, His agony was real agony, yet divine love, power and knowledge flood through. He knows He is in the Father and the Father in Him. As His human personality reached its complete development, being made perfect through suffering, "... it reveals itself as having never been the ultimate fact about this human life" (4). The Divine Word itself lies behind. He had subjected Himself, emptied Himself as St. Paul says. We cannot say He was denuded of divine attributes, but we may justly say that there is not only sympathetic understanding of our state and of death itself, but a real experience (5). The purpose of the Incarnation was firstly revelation, Jesus Christ had to be truly God and man; and secondly Atonement, the human experience as conditioned by sin had to become the personal

experience of God the Son, not an object of external observation, but one of inward feeling (6).

Except possibly for this last remark the position so far would seem to be entirely kenotic. But Temple now goes on to express his main objection to kenoticism.

Neither of the objects of revelation or atonement, he says, require that God the Son should be active only in Jesus of Nazareth during the days of the Incarnation (7). "He who is always God became also Man, not ceasing to be God the while" (8). Temple says that regards "the consciousness of Jesus during the Incarnation "... we can have simply no knowledge whatever" (9). He goes on to criticise kenosis. His main objection seems to be expressed in his question "What was happening to the rest of the universe during the period of our Lord's earthly life?" He says "To say that the infant Jesus was from His cradle exercising providential care over it all is certainly monstrous; but to deny this, and yet to say that the Creative Word was so self-emptied as to have no being except in the Infant Jesus, is to assert that for a certain period the history of the world was let loose from the control of the Creative Word, and 'apart from Him' very nearly everything happened that happened at all during thirty odd years, both on this planet and throughout the immensities of space" (10).

Temple says this problem can be avoided if we suppose that God the Son, in living the life recorded in the Gospel,

added this aspect to the other work of God. This, he says, would be possible without any self-emptying (11). To make this possible "The limitations of knowledge and power are conditions of the revelation, without which there would be no revelation to us at all; but the person who lives under those limitations is the Eternal Son ..." "Certain attributes or functions incompatible with humanity are, in this activity of the Eternal Son, not exercised ..." (12). "The limitations are the means whereby the Eternal Son, remaining always in the bosom of the Father, lays bare to us the very heart of Godhead" (13).

What we seem to have, for I do not see that Temple is very clear, is a theology in which the Eternal Son always at the Father's side is also the human Jesus, so that the human Jesus shows forth part of the Son, that is to say He shows forth the Son under limited conditions.

In criticising Temple, one has to say at once that in all his writings there is a deep sense of worship together with a great appreciation of the immanence of God in all things. These two factors alone would make it worth while to read any of his books, but of course, as a theologian, he has far more to say than this.

In his presentation of Our Lord's person he seems to make it quite clear that here we are face to face with someone who is unique. Yet in his determination to show this, criticism does arise.

It is possible that the deep sense of the religious in

Temple has been the reason why he wishes to insist on the Word remaining at the Father's side during the Incarnation. By holding to this aspect of thought, there then appears to be no depreciation in the Godhead during the Incarnation. This sense of the divine unity could also be the reason why he attaches such importance to the question of the cosmic functions of the Son. It would seem that because Temple attributes the sustaining function to the Second Person of the Trinity, he has then to think in terms of the latter as always remaining within the Godhead.

This problem of cosmic function is also brought up in the Christology of D.M.Baillie as we shall see later in this thesis, and really it raises the whole question of 'function' within the Trinity. Can we really subscribe any particular function to each Person of the Trinity in any absolute manner? It would seem that it is only the redeeming function of Our Lord's life that has been clearly revealed to us in a definite way. When we come to cosmic functions such as the creation and sustaining of the universe, we are really in an area of speculative thought. Even in the case of Our Lord's life, we cannot say that this was lived outside the eternal functions of the Trinity. There does not appear to be any reason why we should not consider function as being indivisible, lying within the total mystery of God. By this means we would avoid all speculation, and the question which Temple raises would no longer be an argument against a kenosis theory

of Christology.

Another argument can be brought against Temple's position and this should be mentioned here even though the discussion above could be said to deal adequately with the matter. Temple can be criticised for appearing to think of the period of the Incarnation as being a definite time section taken out of eternity. But surely here we are in the deep mystery of the Eternal, and we are not free to think like this. Although man's affairs all take place within a temporal scheme, and the Incarnation appears to be within such to man, yet we cannot use this as a logical argument when we are speaking of eternal matters. It would seem safer to think in terms of time as being taken up into the Eternal, this being an aspect once again of mystery, yet one which we use often enough in other areas of our faith.

When Temple explains in his Christology that the Son is living under limited conditions this is precisely what the kenoticist also says. The difference lies in the fact that to the kenoticist Jesus was the whole Son, living under limited conditions, while to Temple Jesus shows forth only part of the Son. But it does not seem that Temple adequately deals with the implications of this. Are we to think of the Ego of Jesus as being absorbed in or replaced by the Ego of the Eternal Son, or should we think of the Ego of Jesus simply as being the divine? In either case we should immediately question whether Our Lord had any humanity at all.

Or again are we to think of Jesus as having only a part Ego, part of the Son being manifested in Him. If this latter is really Temple's view then we have here a concept in which no human experience can enlighten us.

Surely it is true to say we can understand to some extent the possibility of a limited consciousness such as the kenoticist advocates, but to understand a part personality we have no indications at all from human experience. Temple seems to dismiss the problem when he says that as regards the consciousness of Jesus "we can have simply no knowledge whatever." This statement itself does not seem to be the best interpretation of the facts presented in the New Testament, and as laid out for instance by Vincent Taylor.

Lionel Spencer Thornton:- 1884-date, of the Community of the Resurrection, Anglican theologian, wrote The Incarnate Lord published in 1928. This is a deeply philosophical book, over 450 pages, but it is most difficult to know what can be said about it, or what can be drawn from it as an argument against kenosis. The whole book was carefully studied and summarised for this thesis, a considerable task. Yet my own first impression was that it had not presented its Christology in a convincing way. The book might be described as an attempt to get away from the traditional discussions of the Incarnation in terms of human and divine consciousness, and from the historical doctrine which has been built up around Our Lord, and to lift the whole concept into one of philosophy. This

is done in great detail and with great learning. The basis of the philosophy is the organic conception of the universe. This conception has grades, like those thought of by Temple, yet the whole is conceived as being dynamic. Everything in the universe is considered as being built up from parts with transformations continually taking place from one level to another. The organisms at each level, and the whole, are subject to their respective principles of unity. There is a significant upward movement in everything and at the head of the series stands man. Essential to the scheme is the continual influence of the eternal. At every stage in the ascending series there is an entry of creative activity and an emergence of new factors and conditions which are the products of that activity. From this concept the title "emergent" is given to the type of Incarnation theory that is built on this philosophy. Thornton builds up his system in terms of concreteness and greater individuality of the eternal, together with the importance of observing the historical. He concludes his philosophical interpretation of the universe with the statement "Thus the meaning of the organic process of the universe is seen to be a movement of ascending activity towards fulfilment in the pure actuality of God" (1).

To Thornton Christ is a new principle of unity entering into the system. He is "Absolute Actuality incorporated into history in the form of concrete individuality" (2). Fortunately for those of us who do not always deal in these

philosophical terms, Thornton also makes clear that this is the divine Son of the Father. He ties this in with a long and useful discussion on the meaning of the Trinity.(3). This he sees in the traditional concept of the Three Persons, yet he brings in the difficult idea that the Son possesses His individuality supremely, both humanly and also within the Trinity, because in the eternal, individuality is at its highest. Through the new principle of unity man can now transcend his previous limits, through fellowship with Christ.

What does Thornton say as to how the Eternal Word can express Himself through a human organism? He points out that since the Eternal enters creation continually at all levels there is no greater problem here than at any other level (4). This same point is made by Mackintosh. But Mackintosh resolves this in terms of God limiting Himself in creation, for there to be a creation at all, and then he goes on to discuss the Incarnation in terms of limitation as defined by kenosis. Thornton resolves this through his philosophy, that is to say through principles of unity and the highest law of being, through developing concrete individuality. Although this is done in great detail yet we are in the realms of deep philosophy. We seem to be a long way from the personality of Our Lord as given in a kenotic theory. A statement such as Thornton makes, "He became finitely individual in His human organism, because the formative principle of individuation in creation flows from Him" (5), cannot to my

mind, give us a satisfactory interpretation of Jesus' human life.

Thornton criticises kenotic theories very briefly, saying that they sought "... to solve the problem on too narrow a basis and which were sometimes crudely external in their treatment of the divine attributes" (6). Yet personally I do not see that Thornton's own position is very meaningful, although of course there is much detail that can be learned from his book, and his concept of the new emergent does emphasise the importance and uniqueness of Christ. He does not deal with any traditional aspect of the cosmic function. He does not produce any clear picture of Our Lord's humanity except one statement which I think is of value. He says "Developing wholeness of vision is the type of perfection proper to the human organism on the side of knowledge. Similarly developing wholeness of response to that vision is the type of perfection proper to man on the side of conduct" (7). These two phrases can be used with value in a kenotic Christology.

D.M.Baillie:- 1887-1954, Scottish theologian, late professor of systematic theology in the University of St. Andrews, was one of three brothers, one other of whom, John Baillie, also being a theologian. These two brothers are both well known for their books and influence. Of interest to this thesis, D.M.Baillie wrote God was in Christ. The preface to this book was written in 1947, and the book was republished in 1961

including this time an appendix which was written in 1954, just before the author's death.

Baillie is concerned to show the truly human aspect of the Incarnation. He starts his book by pointing out that it is common ground to consider the human nature of Jesus as being "homo-ousios" with our own, meaning that it is essentially the same (1). He supports this by saying His knowledge was not omnipotent (2), the miracles were works of human faith in God (3), and He lived a human religious life. All this presents much the same picture as that of the kenoticist. Baillie's significant difference is that he explains this in terms of "paradox", and because of the importance of this theme it will be dealt with fairly fully as now follows.

Baillie investigates the meaning and place of paradox. He points out that this comes into religious thought simply because God cannot be comprehended purely in human words (4). He quotes Father Bulgakov, of the Eastern Orthodox Church, who says that while the mystery cannot be stated in words without contradiction, it is actualized and lived in religious experience. Hence "There should always be a sense of tension between the two opposite sides of our paradoxes, driving us back to their source in our actual religious experience or faith" (5). He shows that the doctrines of Creation and Providence both involve paradox. In the former he points out that the Christian idea of Creatio ex Nihilo is quite distinctive. It is not a re-arrangement of chaos, it is not a

pantheistic manufacture out of the material of God Himself. Theology drives us to believe that all things were made out of nothing, yet such a statement is entirely paradoxical (6). Similarly in the case of the doctrine of Providence, in this, on the horizontal level of life it seems that we are determined by all sorts of empirical causes and effects, yet the Christian believes that everything comes from God, even when apparent evil comes. Hence here again we have a highly paradoxical situation (7). Yet Baillie says that the Christian can quite easily accept all paradoxes in faith and worship, that is in experience.

Particularly he goes into the question of the paradox of grace (8). To the Christian every good thing in him is somehow not wrought by himself, but by God. The grace of God is prevenient, the good was His before it was ours. Yet "We are not marionettes, but responsible persons, and never more truly and fully personal in our actions than in those moments when we are most dependent on God and He lives and acts in us" (9). Baillie says that this paradox of grace, of which we have only fragmentary experience points the way to a better approach to the mystery of the Incarnation.

Baillie now traces the connection between the "paradox of grace" and the "paradox of the Incarnation" (10). He says "it is plain that we find in the New Testament both the very highest claims for the divine revelation in Jesus and the very frankest recognition that He was a man." Yet throughout the

story we get the impression of one who, with all His high claims, kept thinking far less of Himself than of the Father. The Man in whom God was incarnate would claim nothing for Himself as a Man, but ascribed all glory to God. "On the one hand there is Jesus making His human choice from moment to moment, a choice on which in a sense everything depends ... on the other hand, all His words and all His choices depended on the Father" (11). Baillie asks is this not due to God's grace, which is simply His personal and loving action upon or within us? He says this grace of God in Jesus is of the same type as we experience in fragmentary form. "If God in some measure lives and acts in us, it is because first, and without measure, He lived and acted in Christ."

Baillie says if we understand there is a paradox of grace, where we say "not I, but the grace of God," then this same type of paradox, taken at the absolute degree, can be a clue to the Incarnation. "... we say that it was the life of a man and yet also, in a deeper and prior sense, the very life of God Incarnate" (12). He sums up by saying "The whole problem of the Incarnation is contained in the old question ... was Jesus divine because He lived a perfect life, or was He able to live a perfect life because He was divine?" (13). He says this is not really a dilemma, since in the last analysis human choice is wholly dependent on the divine pre-venience. In Christ this divine prevenience was "Incarnation." He lived as He did because He was God Incarnate (14).

Certainly what Baillie says about paradox is something of great value that we must never forget. It seems to me that this brings in a factor which should be brought clearly into kenoticism, and it will be brought in again at the conclusion of this thesis. But his statement in regard to the continuous choices from moment to moment seems to be a little doubtful. Life does not consist only of a series of choices, we act according to emotion and other factors besides choice. Often our actions do not seem to be particularly related to either, and if Jesus lived a truly human life He must surely have also had these other motivations. It seems more meaningful to think of Jesus acting as a divine person, reacting to all the normal human motivations rather than to purely a series of choices.

But a more important criticism is that Baillie has not yet explained the Incarnation. We are at liberty to question the two statements, namely that prevenience was Incarnation, and yet He was God Incarnate. What do these mean? Do we have the whole of God Incarnate? We look for an answer to this in Baillie's discussion on the Trinity, but all we find is a statement which is very like that of Thornton, that "God is the only perfectly personal being" (15). "Jesus Christ is the One in whom human self-hood fully came to its own and lived its fullest life, as human life ought to be lived, because His human self-hood was wholly yielded to God, so that His life was the life of God" (16).

It is when Baillie discusses pre-existence that we really find what his Christology is. He says that there is a sense in which it is impossible to do justice to the truth of the Incarnation without speaking of it as the coming into history of the eternally pre-existent Son of God (17). But the human personality was in no sense pre-existent. "... it was the eternal Word, the eternal Son, the very God of very God, that was Incarnate in Jesus" (18). It is of this eternal background of which St.Paul is thinking when he says "for your sakes He became poor." This, Baillie says, deals with the relation between the temporal and the eternal and is, therefore, figurative and symbolic in expression (19).

Now this is exactly the problem that the kenoticist deals with, namely the way in which the Eternal Son can become Incarnate in Jesus with the obvious limitations that a human life implies. Baillie does not deal with this problem. His explanation of the operation of grace is satisfactory to show how a man can be led and endowed by God, but this is not a sufficient explanation of how the Eternal Son can become man. Baillie's criticism of kenosis seems to be mistaken. He accepts the idea of St.Paul that "For your sakes he became poor." He accepts the Russian Orthodox use of kenosis as something eternal in the life of God (20). Yet he criticises kenotic theories strongly, and particularly from three aspects (21). Firstly, he raises the same question of cosmic function that Temple did; and which has been shown, it is hoped, in

this thesis to be not quite so formidable as at first thought. Secondly, he says kenotic theories appear "... to give us a story of a temporary theophany, in which He who formerly was God changed Himself temporarily into man, or exchanged His divinity for humanity" (22). Thirdly, he asks the question was the kenosis temporary? If Christ is successively divine then human then divine again, where is the traditional doctrine of the permanent manhood in Christ? (23).

The point of the permanent manhood will be taken up in the conclusion of this thesis, but for the other points I think it is safe to say these opinions are based on an extremely crude form of kenoticism. Not one of the kenotic theologians discussed in this thesis could possibly be said to advocate God changing Himself into a man.

W.Norman Pittenger:- 1905-date, Professor of Christian Apologetics at the General Theological Seminary, New York, is an Episcopalian and calls himself a catholic and a modernist. He has written two books on Christology, firstly, Christ and Christian Faith published in 1941, and secondly, The Word Incarnate published in 1959.

Both books were studied for this thesis, but really the latter gives Pittenger's views adequately and will be taken as the basis for these comments. These will be given in some detail as his book is a very learned, modern exposition of the subject. His views are not unlike Temple, but he is at

much greater pains to stress the humanity of Our Lord. From the different theologians studied in this thesis, though one can learn points from each, yet in my opinion Pittenger is the only serious contender with Vincent Taylor. The present issue for or against kenoticism rests between the two views as expressed by these two men.

Pittenger starts by saying that all Christian believers acknowledge that in some sense Christ is divine (1) and also they agree salvation has not been wrought by man, but by God in and through a human historical existence (2). He says that salvation should be considered in its widest sense as meaning wholeness of life, " ... which comes through a radical adjustment to God made known and available to men in the emergent life of Our Lord." He says that the relationship actualised in Jesus Christ must be potential in man, however sporadic, if the full meaning of the Incarnation is to be preserved (3). Pittenger discusses the apprehension of divinity, saying that no single aspect of Our Lord's life was divine, it was all human. The divinity lies in the wholeness of His humanity. This is apprehended by faith (4). "The deity of Our Lord cannot be demonstrated by historical study; it can only be apprehended by an act of faith, and for us that means a sharing in the faith which the church puts in Him" (5). Christology should be built on the whole New Testament picture, not on itemised details and it should include the importance of the Jewish eschatological setting,

namely the faith that the world is the field where God is at work (6). Pittenger says many people think that Jesus Christ is God who "transformed Himself into man" or else He is God "who replaces whatever is the operational centre of human life with His own person" (7). Our Lord is "... One who is truly divine, truly human, truly a personal unity in which these two are comprised. But the judgement that He is so is a judgement of faith" (8).

Pittenger goes on to develop some of the tenets for his own Christology. To him "Jesus as embodying and conveying the reality of God to men" is the centre of the abiding experience of the Christian fellowship throughout its history. Christian devotion is centred in the divinity of Christ yet, he says, it is equally true that the starting point for the historical evaluation of Him as divine was the human life which He lived among men. To His first disciples Jesus was known as a man, whatever else they may later have come to believe about Him (9). Jesus' mind was human, His psychology was human. He had no resources not common to Man (10).

Pittenger criticises Temple who said that Jesus' conscience was so different to our's that we cannot even imagine it. He says this is denying the reality of the manhood. Yet where Temple says if the special indwelling of the Word was withdrawn we should still have a complete human life, this is correct. But, Pittenger says, Temple has not seen that he has stated a contradiction (11). He draws attention to the

fact that God can never be a historic person, and those who met Jesus could not say "that is God." He quotes R.C. Moberly as being correct in saying that "the Incarnation never left His Incarnation." Hence there is no visible deity, it is discovered by faith (12). "The works of healing are the work of a man, related to God as intimately as man can be related" (13). His knowledge of God, the consciousness of His love and care, the reality of His religious experience, are all human. "... the principle of the Incarnation, which means the mediation of God through and in man, is in agreement with the picture of Jesus which serious scientific study will disclose to us" (14). Jesus is divine; whatever is divine about Him is identical in essence with God (15).

In criticising D.F. Baillie's Christology Pittenger points out that he starts from the aspects of humanity and proceeds to those of faith, using the concept of the logos, and that this is the correct way (16).

Pittenger in his metaphysics agrees that the concept of emergent is correct and that there is always the appearance of the genuinely new. Yet, he says, God never intrudes in the world for He is already there at all levels, and the world is in Him (17). God and man are in continual and intimate relationship, and Our Lord is no intruder (18). Our Lord is the "... decisive expression of the Eternal Reality in human nature ..." He is divine in that He actualises that transcendental divine principle which is at the root of man's

being (19). The union of deity with man in Our Lord is part of the whole revealing movement of God (20).

"... a Man is born who in the full integrity of His manhood is so open to the Word of God that that Word possesses in that manhood the adequate, sufficient, fully surrendered, yet at the same time entirely human, instrument through whom He can operate in the realm of human affairs" (21). He says that the Word, or eternal self-expression of God, who alone pre-exists, for the human life of Jesus was born in time and thus came into existence in time, clothed Himself with humanity in such wise that a complete human life, including a human person in our modern sense, was open to his action. Here we have the full actualisation of that which by definition is potential in manhood as such, and which in divers manners and in times past has had its partial realisation and its suggestive adumbration (22). On this point, see Pittenger's comments on the "holy ones" later in this thesis.

Pittenger says we can agree with Tillich and speak of Our Lord as essential manhood become existential (23), that is the Logos of man made actual in human experience. By this means we do not have to assume that all of God, or even all of the Eternal Logos is contained in or manifested through, and active in the humanity of Jesus (24).

Pittenger continues with his view on the Trinity (25). He says the action of God in self-expression, revelation and

redemption is always seen in classical theology as the special economy of the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. The response to the self-expression is always seen as the special economy of the Third Person, the Holy Spirit. The God of Israel is indeed the Ultimate Reality, who in the man Jesus works through His Eternal Son, the Logos, securing a response from men by the Spirit who is the great Response in creation. The Trinity known in the mission of the Son, received by men through the Spirit, points to the reality in the Godhead of such distinctions as may be phrased thus: "God the Ultimate Source, God Self-Expressive both in Himself and in Creation, God Responsive both in Himself and through Creation." Hence we must reject outright any idea of a pre-existence of Jesus and along with this rejection an incredible amount of pious error and confusion (26). What did pre-exist was the Eternal Word of God. The Word is not a human consciousness, nor does He supplant the human consciousness of Jesus; it is not His soul, His mind, or His human ego. The Word subsists for ever at the Father's side. The Trinity is first seen as God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit; but this concept grows as it is realised that this is also God transcendent, God ever beside us and God ever within us. Finally we come to see the Trinity as God the Source, God the Expression and God the Response.

Pittenger asks four Christological questions. First (27), is the difference between the presence and action of God in

the person of Christ in degree or in kind from that presence and action in others? He says that he agrees with Collingwood, as expressed in his *Essay in Philosophical Method* (28) that in a world in which there is organic consistency and co-inherence there can in fact be no absolute difference in kind between finite realities, or between divine operations in them.

However, he says if he has to answer the question he would say that numerical difference can be such that though we do not in fact have a difference in kind, yet to all practical extents we do have such a difference. Our Lord was immeasurably different to us. What is unique in Our Lord is what He does for us. If the Incarnation gives us the clue to the nature of God, should we not also see in it a clue to the divinely intended nature of man himself, this being already partially realised in the great and holy ones of our race? Second, does the concept of actualisation in Christ imply that man accomplishes his own salvation? (29). Pittenger answers by saying that the actualisation in Christ was not a natural unfolding, but the direct operation of the self-expression of God. In Jesus the Word is operative in man in full measure. It was God's action. In Christ, what "that" man did in "that" place is now available to every man in every place. Third, is the principle of Incarnation applicable only to this planet? (30). Fourth, is the Incarnation only for sin? (31). To the last question Pittenger replies it is really the crowning of creation.

Pittenger says that the Christian faith is "definitive" (32), it is not like others, just "a religion", it is a life (33). It is inconceivable that Our Lord will be superseded. We should say "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift" (34). The Church (35) is uniquely significant because in and through the humanity which God has taken to Himself in Christ, God is bringing man into the body which in the end is to be the fulness of Christ.

These then are Pittenger's main views. The main aspects will be discussed against the views of kenosis in the conclusion of this thesis, but meanwhile it will be best to summarise certain points here.

It is clear that we have great stress on the humanity of Our Lord. He is our brother, living a life just as ourselves, and surely this is an aspect which must never be forgotten. In a way this is the emphasis of the original Antioch school of Christology, who always stressed the human side of Our Lord's personality. Together with this, Pittenger's views on salvation in its widest terms of wholeness of life seems to be very meaningful. But when he says "the relationship actualised in Jesus Christ must be potential in man however sporadic" this raises a problem. Does this mean that other men could attain the same position as Christ? This language could be taken to mean this. It is not unlike the point of Baillie that the grace which operated in Christ is the same grace which operates in us. Pittenger also says "whatever is divine

about Him is identical in essence with God." Does this mean that there are aspects of Jesus that are not divine? Again, he says, He is divine in that He actualises that transcendental divine principle which is at the root of man's being. It does seem what Pittenger is saying is that the Eternal Word of God took a man and operated through him, in fact he says "a man is born who in the full integrity of his manhood is so open to the Word of God that that Word possesses ..." We have then a Christology of the Word, where the Word "subsists for ever at the Father's side" yet it is operative in full measure in Jesus. This is a Christology where only part of the Eternal Logos was manifested in Jesus, as in fact Pittenger says. This, therefore, is similar to the Christology of Temple, and this has already been criticised in this thesis, but we shall refer to it again in the conclusion.

I do not see that Pittenger is correct when he says that Jesus had no resources not common to man, for surely this does not agree with the New Testament witness. It seems to me that Pittenger is so concerned to emphasise the oneness with humanity that he has to minimise all the traditional divine aspects. For instance when Pittenger is speaking about the Incarnation as giving a clue to the intended nature of man himself, which he says is being partially realised in the great and holy ones of our race, he is ignoring the fact that Jesus never gave any admission of His own sin, whereas the great and holy ones have always said they were conscious of

theirs. It would seem better to resolve this problem on the lines of Baillie's paradox. We could say that in Jesus we are face to face with the Son of God, who in this sense therefore is totally unlike ourselves, yet paradoxically He calls us, who are human, to be one with Him, to be sons of God. This is a mystery which cannot be explained, but can only be stated in terms of paradox.

Pittenger's point that the divinity lies in the wholeness of the humanity is good, also that the divinity could only be seen through the eyes of faith. This we know must have been true, for many men were in contact with Our Lord during the Incarnation, but only some came to know Him as He was.

We cannot leave Pittenger's views without referring to his criticism of kenotic theories. He says they maintain the humanity more adequately, but fail very seriously in other respects. Firstly, they are not Cyrillian orthodox as they imply a change in God the Word. He quotes the Ecumenical Documents of the Faith "we do not say that the nature of the Word was changed, and became flesh, nor that He was transformed into a complete human being, I mean one of body and soul" (36). Pittenger says in this God is not conceived as having lowered His deity by the act of Incarnation (37). Secondly, Pittenger says kenotic theories suggest a fancied transaction in the heavenly places by which the Eternal Son of God divested Himself of the so-called metaphysical attributes. Thirdly, he says that it is doubtful if any such

divested deity, Incarnate, can really be said to be a deity at all, and that the theory creates a new set of problems about the being of God Himself, more serious than the problems being solved (38). He agrees that Forsyth should be appreciated as having stopped the movement in the Free Churches reducing Jesus to a leader of men; but when he says Jesus is either our God, or our brother, Pittenger says this is wrong as He is both. Further, it is wrong to describe Jesus as "God", it is precisely for the purpose of making clear that it was the Word of God, one of the three hypostases in God, that was made Incarnate, that the Church devised the doctrine of the Trinity (39).

The question of the Cyrillian orthodoxy will be taken up in the conclusion of this thesis, and so also will Pittenger's comments on the doctrine of the Trinity. But for the rest of his criticism, it seems that once again we are back on the old question of a divested deity which surely Forsyth has adequately answered. It is no credit to Pittenger for him to criticise this aspect and yet make no comment on Forsyth's masterly interpretation of it. Again it is rather remarkable that though Vincent Taylor's book was published in January 1958, and was the latest exposition of the kenotic theory, yet Pittenger, whose book was not prefaced until August 1958, and not published till 1959, makes no mention of it.

CHAPTER V - Conclusion

The kenotic theory states quite clearly that the Ego of Jesus Christ is divine, He is the Third Person of the Trinity. As Vincent Taylor says this seems to be the witness of the whole New Testament picture. Because God Himself uses self-limitation for there to be a creation at all, it is quite possible for the Son to do so also, in order for Him to take the form of a human life. Though the subject of the human life is divine, yet its divinity can only be seen in the wholeness of the human life, and even then it must be seen through the eyes of faith. As a unity of one person, the Son lives a human life with all its problems and difficulties, yet through His divine nature He shares His existence with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In the early days of Christology one of the main ways found of explaining Christ's person was to think in terms of two natures or wills, lying as it were side by side. At times one nature predominated and at times the other. This Christology was in existence at the Fourth Oecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria had considerable influence at this Council and his views very largely prevailed.

It is these views of Cyril that Pittenger quotes as being a possible argument against a kenotic theory. Cyril said that in taking the form of a servant the pre-existent Logos

was the same Person, unchanged in His essential deity. Pittenger claims that this means that the Logos could not be "limited" as this would involve change, and hence He could not become man in the manner that the kenoticist advocates. But surely this is not a good argument, for there is a difference between theology and faith. Many would say that the Council of Chalcedon produced a statement of faith which is still relevant today, but that the theology by which this was expressed is now outmoded. The context in which Cyril's statement was made was that of stressing the divinity and unity of Our Lord's person, against those who were stressing His humanity. It is very largely accepted that the Council produced 'guide posts' to faith and not a satisfactory working theology. To take Cyril's statement and apply it to a modern theological argument appears to be using it for a different purpose to that for which it was made.

It is this old concept of the two wills which Mackintosh rejects in his summary of the reasons why a kenotic theory is necessary. The position of Vincent Taylor that Jesus had only one will, but that this too became limited under the conditions of the Incarnation, seems to satisfactorily settle the problem.

The kenotic theory deals quite clearly with the question of pre-existence. The kenotic Christ was pre-existent, and at a point in time He took the form of a man. The limitations which He accepted included an oblivion of any direct knowledge

of His pre-existence. In opposition to this Pittenger deals with the whole question by saying that it is only the Eternal Word of God which pre-exists. In Jesus, he says this Word is not a human consciousness, it is not His soul, not His mind, not His human ego; hence Jesus did not pre-exist and we must reject outright "an incredible amount of pious error and confusion." It may be true that many people are confused over the matter, yet Pittenger's views seem equally full of confusion. From his statement, is Pittenger talking about two separate persons, the Word and Jesus? This is extremely near a straight adoptionist point of view. Other statements of his are equally close to this point of view, for instance "... a Man is born who in the full integrity of His manhood is so open to the Word of God that that Word possesses in that manhood the adequate, sufficient, fully surrendered, yet at the same time entirely human, instrument through whom he can operate in the realm of human affairs."

As mentioned in Chapter two of this thesis, the church has always rejected adoptionism as a heresy. In general it would seem that such a view does not give an adequate appreciation of the personality and status of Jesus. Though Pittenger's views bring into prominence the importance of Our Lord's example to all men, and the possibilities that lie within our own human nature, and there is very much else of great value to learn from him, yet I think that his Christology tends to suffer in the way the church has traditionally

rejected. To take only one example, as Mackintosh says, there is a big difference in the types of faith called forth from a Christ who is eternally one with God and one of whom we cannot tell whether He is eternal or not. Pittenger's statement that Jesus did not pre-exist, but only the Word did so, does not seem to me to clear the issue at all. I think this is only confusion compared with a kenotic Jesus, who quite simply, is the Word, only operating within the mystery of the Godhead in such a way that we see Him and comprehend Him by faith.

In the Christologies of Temple, Baillie and Pittenger, Jesus manifests part of the Eternal Word. These theologians give emphasis to the Eternal Logos, always at the Father's side. But we are at liberty to question how we know anything about this Eternal Word? This seems to me to be a fundamental fault in this type of theory. As Mackintosh pointed out "we do not go into the question of the Word or Son, apart from the Incarnation, as we have no other biblical facts." It is because we have learned about God through the person of Jesus that we are able to talk meaningfully about the Eternal Word. Through the impact of Jesus' person men used the concept of the Word to philosophise about the eternal being of God. This concept is of value providing we always remember that it developed from the New Testament witness, where Jesus Himself always lives and speaks in terms of the Son and the Father, and not in terms of the Word.

This brings us to the most crucial point between different Christologies. Man must know from both the point of view of his own salvation and of his worship just who it is that he meets in Jesus and in the Risen Lord. Does Jesus show us the Father fully? In Jesus Christ does man encounter God fully? It seems to me that a Christology that shows that only part of the Word of God is manifest in Jesus, is not truly fulfilling these requirements, as we can ask what is the other part like. According to a kenotic Christology, in Jesus we meet the Eternal Son of God, wholly so, though operating under limited conditions. What Jesus says and does comes straight from the heart of God, for as the Person of the Son, He is God. Only this concept, I believe, can satisfy the longing that is in man's soul. But a kenotic Christology adds another factor. It puts great emphasis on the importance to God of individual persons and human personality in particular. Unlike the other Christologies, kenoticism gives the highest possible value to human personality. This has been so constructed by God, and has been thus so endowed with possibilities, that He Himself in the Person of His Son was able to take and fully express Himself through such a personality.

On this question of personality we are brought into contact with the Christian doctrine of man. Just what does it mean to be in the divine image? Surely Pittenger is right in emphasising the potentiality that lies in man, and also

when he identifies Jesus with this potentiality. If we take the doctrine of man seriously, surely we must say that God created the world so that He could make persons. The outstanding thing about man is that he has the potentiality of becoming what he is not. Jesus used His personality to the full, in accordance with God's will, but man uses his personality partly for his own ends and partly, by God's grace, to do God's will in an imperfect way. When we speak of the permanent manhood of Christ, we do not mean that He took some concrete part of humanity to God which was never there before, for God Himself always had all things in eternity. We mean that Christ's human life experience, what He did, His friendships, all that involved Him as a human person has been taken to God on a permanent, eternal level. Because these same factors are present in all men we say that in Christ humanity has been lifted up to God.

We cannot leave a discussion of Christology on any other terms than that of worship. For to whatever extent one goes into Christological questions, one is constantly coming to places where there are no answers, or at which there are problems that one simply has to leave, as Baillie would say "as paradoxes." I think the right place to leave a discussion, such as this thesis, is on aspects concerning the Trinity. Christology can only have meaning in so far as it ties in with our doctrine of God. The kenotic Christology gives us a picture in terms of the Son, and the Father. Through the Son

we have come to believe in God the Father. As St. Paul says, the Father is the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because we have seen the Son that we have learned something of the Father. Kenotic Christology, as Vincent Taylor says, could be formulated on any of the three main views of the Trinity; namely that of hypostasis and personae, or of modes of being in accordance with the view of Karl Barth, or of the organic unity of Three Persons as given by L. Hodgson. But it is the latter that seems to be the most servicable. This does give emphasis to the Three Persons of the Trinity, but this is what the New Testament seems to do. We can believe that Christ shows us a God of Three Persons completely interrelated. The Christology of Pittenger gives us a Trinity of God the Source, God the Expression and God the Response. In accordance with this view, we should have to read the words of St. John as being that God the Source so loved the world that He gave God the Response to die for it. Personally I find this meaningless in comparison with a Trinity of Three Persons. But more important still, if our kenotic Christology is right, and we can therefore say that God puts such enormous value on personality, then it seems logical to suppose that God Himself is personality in its highest sense, far above all the limits of our own personality. We stand in awe at the wonder of His personality in Three Persons. But we are only enabled to do this because He has made our personality in His image. God has made our personality in terms

and in a framework, such that in its incomplete and sinful way it can still recognise some of its own features in Him. It is only because of this factor that man is able to ascribe "worth" to God, and this is the basis of worship. A kenotic Christology is the only one which deals adequately with the personal interpretation of the Trinity, and only this interpretation calls forth the deepest levels of worship from man.

APPENDIX A - REFERENCESCHAPTER II

1. For whole section see Charles Gore - The Incarnation of the Son of God pp 157-163
2. St.Luke 2: 40, 52.
3. St.Luke 4: 18.
4. St.Luke 2: 49, St.Mark 6: 6, 11: 13, 4: 40, 7: 18, 8: 21, 14: 37.
5. St.Luke 8: 30, St.Mark 6: 38, 8: 5, 9: 21, St.John 11:34.
6. St.Luke 3: 21, 5: 16, 6: 12, 9: 18, 10: 21, 22: 32, 42.
7. Hebrews 2: 13.
8. St.Matthew 26: 39.
9. St.Mark 15: 34.
10. St.Matthew 24: 36, St.Mark 13: 32.
11. For whole section see Charles Gore - The Incarnation of the Son of God pp 11-18.
12. St.Mark 1: 7.
13. St.Matthew 7: 29.
14. St.Matthew 5: 21, 22.
15. St.Matthew 7: 22, 23.
16. St.Matthew 25: 31-46.
17. St.Matthew 9: 6.
18. St.Matthew 11: 27.
19. St.Matthew 11: 28.
20. St.Luke 14: 26.
21. St.Mark 10: 17.
22. St.Matthew 23: 7-10, 26: 6-13.

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23. St.Matthew 16: 16.
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26. St.John 20: 28.
27. St.Matthew 28: 17 to the end.

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