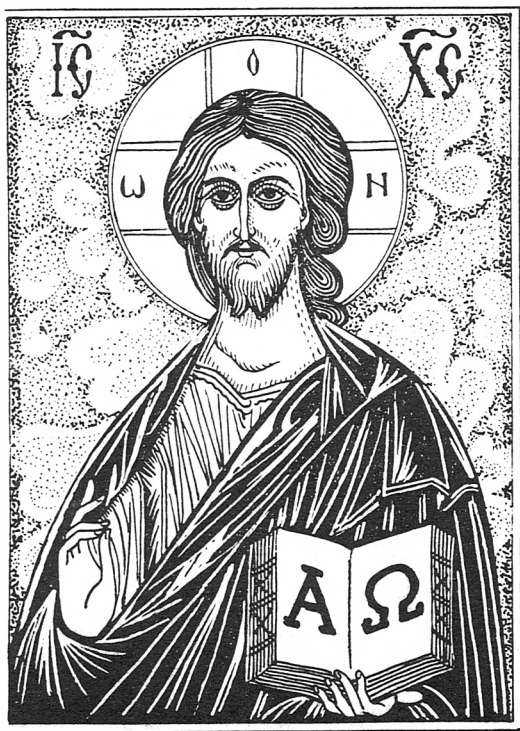


# the Christology of Teilhard de Chardin



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# The Christology of Teilhard de Chardin

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**S**PEAKING OF THE place of Christ in his evolutionary *Weltanschauung*, Teilhard says:

Christ coincides (notwithstanding its deepening still) with what I have called above the Omega point.

Christ consequently possesses all the superhuman attributes of the Omega point.

These two propositions resume in my mind the passionate expectations and advances of our Christology which are already in progress.<sup>1</sup>

The above text, as well as a number of others that could be cited, witness to the Christocentricity of Teilhard's thought. So strong is this accent, that his entire position and system stands or falls with his belief in Christ, the cosmic Pantokrator, the Omega point, who gives his unified vision its consistency, meaning, and foundation, as well as constituting its ultimate end. Therefore, it is my contention, perhaps exaggerated, that only a good theologian with a solid scientific and philosophical background, can understand the ultimate implications of Teilhard's thought.

However that may be, it is undeniable that the vast majority of Teilhard's theological works focus on Christology. The others contain so many Christological references that they can be viewed as Christological corollaries.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Super-Humanité, Super-Christ, Super-Charité," (1943) in IX, 209. (Translations are the author's.) Karl Adam remarked correctly that "our entire religious position stands and falls with the belief in Christ," *The Christ of Faith* (New York: Random House, The New American Library, 1962), p. 18. This, in a much higher degree, is true of Teilhard's position, because of his striking Christocentricity.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Claude Cuénot, *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Paris: Plon, 1958), Premier essai de bibliographie, pp. I-XLI.

Further, of all the neologisms Teilhard created, and here he is probably next in line to Tertullian, the founder and inventor of Latin theological terminology, the most numerous, most striking, most exact and all-embracing are Christological coinages.<sup>3</sup> It is, indeed, possible to feel in all his works that everything he does or says, and the reality he comes in contact with, bears a Christological seal and dimension. All his paleontological works, for example, are nothing else than a study of a particle of the Christogenesis or the Christosphere. They serve the one main purpose of showing or substantiating a direction in the general drift of the universe, evolution's striving toward its ultimate goal, the Omega point, or the universal and cosmic Christ in his Pleroma.

This tendency goes so far as to lead Teilhard to postulate a third, "cosmic," nature in Christ, which seems to have a universal extension, which touches, penetrates, and almost absorbs all created reality, serving as its main unifying, natural, and supernatural principle. It is for this reason that any treatment of the place of Christ in Teilhard's system involves all other theological areas of consideration. And it is for this reason, therefore, that in treating of Teilhard's theology, we have chosen to treat primarily of his Christology.

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING TEILHARD'S CHRISTOLOGY

##### 1. *On the general characteristics of Teilhard's Christology*

For the time being it is very difficult to speak authoritatively of Teilhard's Christology. We do not yet possess the necessary prerequisites, for example, a critical edition of all his works in chronological order, with exact indexes and bibliographical notes. What is possible are only provisory and superficial sketches, outlines, and remarks.<sup>4</sup> Teilhard does not, of course, attempt to construct a

<sup>3</sup> Almost any term Teilhard uses has a remote Christological dimension, but of 383 terms listed by C. Cuénot (*Lexique Teilhard de Chardin*) at least 45 are directly Christological. A profounder investigation of Teilhard's terminology and neologisms is badly needed.

<sup>4</sup> During the elaboration of this paper I learned that Fr. Christopher Mooney, S.J., submitted a doctoral dissertation in theology on the Christology of Teilhard de Chardin at the Institute Catholique in Paris. [Soon to be published by Collins (London) and Harper (New York) under the title *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ*. Ed.]