

Jesus: Christ of The Atonement or Christ The New Man?

(A paper written from the Biblical and Theological Angle)

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Christology and Soteriology

This topic is both Christological and soteriological in its perspective. This is in line with the New Testament where soteriology forms a unity with Christology¹. St Paul's quotation of the Christ-hymn in Phil. 2:6-11 is the best example. There are other N. T. passages which have fragments of such hymns or a few sentences of the early Christian liturgy, which include some motifs found in the above hymn:

I Tim. 3:16 includes the Incarnation and the Exaltation of Christ:
I Pet. 1:20; 3:18, 22 together includes all the motifs plus the purpose of Christ's passion:

I Pet. 2:21-24 refers to Christ's vicarious suffering:

Col. 1:13-20 refers to Christ's cosmic significance and his work of redemption:

Rev. 5:9, 12 is a song of praise to the Lamb that was slain.

(Also there can be cited from the early Church Fathers Polycarp to the Philippians 2:1 (Exaltation and the Judge to come):

I Clement 36.1f on salvation brought by Christ:

Tertullian 9.1f refers to Incarnation and Resurrection)

But we have to acknowledge that the emphasis given to soteriology and Christology varied between different NT writers. In the traditional pattern of the Dogmatics the New Testament the order was reversed. In the New Testament we find that when men were confronted with the historical Jesus their response resulted in their confessions about Jesus. That is, through *what* he did they come to acknowledge *Who* he is². The 'what' question deals with the soteriology or functional Christology and the 'Who' question deals with the Christology in ontic or value terms. The soteriological question

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¹ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, (Tr.), Vol. 2 (London: SCM, 1968), pp. 155ff.

² R. H. Fuller, *New Testament Christology*, (London: Fontana 1969), p. 15f. Wayne G. Williams, *The Gospels (Portraits of Christ)*, (Philadelphia: Westminster), p. 111.

to a great extent focuses on what Jesus brought to the believers, or Jesus' relation to the world. Christology viewed in this context will be Who Jesus is 'pro nobis', for us. The story of Jesus becomes Gospel, *euangelion*, in this context³. Christology on the other hand to be authentic in its doctrinal aspect has to deal with Who Jesus is 'in se', in himself.

Synoptics and John

According to the Synoptics we find that the Christological question was put by Jesus himself when he asked the disciples 'What do you think of me?' (Mk. 8:29; 16:15). In the Synoptics it is natural that the disciples are expected to give the Christological response on the basis of what they witnessed and expected of Jesus. This is primarily on the basis of what is his function rather than what is his nature. The functional Christology seems to mark the beginnings (Lk. 7:18-23). That means their conception of the nature of Christ is dependent upon the redemptive character of the work of Christ⁴.

This functional Christology can be noticed in the use of the Aramaic Christological terms like Son of Man, Messiah and Servant, which speak of *action*:

Mt. 11:19 the Son of Man came *eating and drinking*:

Mk. 9:31 the Son of Man will be *delivered* into the hands of the sinners:

Mk. 14:62 the Son of Man *coming* in the clouds of heaven:

I Cor. 15:3 Christ *died* for our sins:

Occasionally it is used as the *predicate* of the verb 'to be':

Mk. 8:20 You *are* the Christ:

Mk. 2:28 the Son of Man *is* Lord of the Sabbath:

In the Hellenistic Jewish Christology also we find the same functional character:

Acts 2:36 God *made him* Lord and Christ:

Rom. 1:14. . . *appointed* Son of God:

This differs from the Gentile Mission Christology which is ontic:

Phil. 2:6-11: He is *hyparchōn* in the form (*morphē*) of God: (Mode of existence):

He is (*einai*) equal with God:

He takes the form (*morphē*) of a slave:

He is born in the *homoiōma* of men:

He is found in human *schēma*:

³ L. C. Keck, 'The Introduction to Mark's Gospel', *NTS*, 12, 1966, p. 64f.

⁴ Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, (Tr.), (London: SCM, 1963), p. 3f. H. W. Montefiore, *Soundings*, Ed. A. R. Vidler, (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 9ff.

At the exaltation he is given the name (*onoma*) by God himself:

Jn. 1:1-14: Logos was (*en*) God: He became flesh, (*sarx*), his earthly mode was flesh:

In the *Fourth Gospel* too the person of Jesus was discussed thematically within the framework of the soteriology, but, as held by E. Käsemann, with an interest which can no longer be explained on a purely soteriological basis⁵. The internal divine relationship and unity between the Father and the Son preoccupy the mind of John throughout the Gospel (Jn. 8:42, 29; 3:35; 8:55; 10:15; 5:19, 30; 8:28; 5:22; 6:57; 4:34; 6:38; 10:18).

An Analysis of the Church's Christological affirmations

Since Jesus' story has come to us as the Good News, (*euangelion*) naturally Christology in the Gospels is given as Man's response to the historical Jesus. If that be so, it is held that the Church's Christological affirmations may not be an exact repetition of either Jesus' self-understanding or the original action of God, though a certain continuity exists between the two. This is the area where the contribution of Form-Criticism has to be recognised. Whether Jesus used a particular designation or not, and if he used any in what sense and how it was understood by the New Testament writers, has to be investigated. We have a number of instances where it is openly admitted that the sayings of Jesus were misunderstood both by the non-disciples (Jn. 2:20-24; 3:4; 4:11) and by the disciples (Jn. 4:32-34; 6:60-63; 8:31-33; 11:11-13; 14:27-29). The 'unity and difference' of NT preaching of Christ shown by G. Sevenster (*Christologie van het Nieuwe Testament*) examines this aspect of possible divergence in the N. T. Christology. In Mk. 8:27-29 we notice the Christological problem both for the people and the disciples, who lived in close contact with Jesus, in their answer in the familiar titles denoting his work. This indicated that a mutual assimilation of meanings and connotations might have occurred in the minds of the first disciples who often applied different titles to Jesus ranging between a prophet and Lord (Prophet, High Priest, Servant of God, Lamb of God, Son of God, Son of Man, Messiah, Saviour, King, Logos, Son of David, Lord). In these titles we find some which designated his earthly life, some his future, some refer to the present and some to his pre-existence. It will be helpful to note here how Prof. John Knox and Reginald Fuller reconstruct the Church's Christological affirmations on an analytical basis of the history of the development of the early Christian Christology⁶.

The *first stage* of Fuller is an addition to Knox's three-stage diagram. Here Fuller deals with the self-consciousness of Jesus. Jesus is held to interpret his mission on a purely functional basis. He initiates the Kingdom of God but it will finally be vindicated by the coming Son of Man.

⁵ Ernest Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, (Tr.), (London, SCM, 1968), p. 25f.

⁶ John Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of Christ*, (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 1-8; R. H. Fuller, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-247.

The *second stage* of development is the earliest Palestinian Christology, where the Son of Man was identified with Jesus. This was the work of the Aramaic-speaking Christian Church. This identification led to the soteriological significance of the work of Jesus.

The *third stage* is the Hellenistic Jewish Christology where the ontological categories were combined with the functional. The titles of Jesus were pushed back to his earthly life and he was viewed as exalted Lord reigning already.

The *fourth stage* is the Hellenistic Gentile Mission Christology, where it is no longer in the Jewish categories. At this stage pre-existence, Incarnational and Divine-Man Christology were added. This Gentile Mission stage completes the New Testament Christology:

Pre-existence: Kyrios, (in ontic or value sense), (Wisdom), huios (tou theou), Logos, theos.

Incarnation: anthrōpos, tou theou—huios (in an ontic sense), huios, sōtēr, theou.

Exaltation: Kyrios (in an ontic sense), huios (tou theou) sōtēr, theos.

From these Christological tables we are given to understand that Adoptionist views were subsequently retrojected to form Incarnational views. That is, that Jesus as 'God-sent' was the climax of Christological formulations of the Church. The Fourth Gospel with its Incarnational emphasis must then belong to this later stage of the Christological development of the Church. As this coincides with the Gentile Mission, naturally the influence of Paul, the chief Apostle to the Gentiles, should be expected (Gal. 4:4-7). The only discernible difference between Paul and John is that for Paul it is 'kenosis' (Phil. 2:5-8) while for John it is only a different mode of existence of the pre-existent Christ, an epiphany (Jn. 1:14, 18; cf. I Tim. 3:16). (The other aspect we notice in these Christological tables is that Christology is what the Church claimed for Jesus. Whether these claims tallied with Jesus' self-vocation is a topic at issue today in N.T. circles. Bultmann denies any messianic consciousness of Jesus. He follows the liberal thinking of Harnack that what Jesus proclaimed was God the Father and His Kingdom, and his Gospel did not include the Son. Gunther Bornkamm, a pupil of Bultmann, does not ascribe any kind of messianic title of majesty to Jesus, while other N.T. scholars like C. H. Dodd, T. W. Manson and O. Cullmann do find Jesus applying the Messianic titles to himself.)

The Recapitulation view:

This last stage of N.T. Christological development as detected by Fuller led to the 'Recapitulans' theory of the early Church Fathers like Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian: 'God might recapitulate all things in Christ Jesus'. With Athanasius, whose orthodoxy led to the shaping of the Nicene creed, the 'Recapitulans' came to be established as: 'He (Christ) was made man, that we might be made divine' (*Incarnation*, 54.13). Only by the real Godhead coming in union with full manhood in Jesus could the transformation of the human into

divine be accomplished in him. By the time of the Chalcedon Council the views of Athanasius were influential among the Church leaders. The conception of the work of Christ is dependent upon how one understood his nature. To Athanasius the person of Jesus was integrally related to man's salvation. He illustrates aptly that just as the presence of the king in a city keeps off the bandits, so too Christ the Word (Logos) keeps off death from us. In spite of Athanasius' chief interest in the earthly life of Jesus, he refers still to the idea of Jesus satisfying the debt of man's sin by his death.

The Expiation view: (a) Jewish

This trend in the fourth century shows a marked shift of emphasis in the interpretation of the work of Christ of the early Jewish Church, whose interpretation of the work of Christ was expiatory. This is clearly noticed in the New Testament writings. Though Incarnation, Passion, death, resurrection and exaltation constituted the work of Christ, yet we find that the major emphasis was placed on the passion and death of Christ⁷.

His suffering (*paschein*) Mk. 8:31; Lk. 24:46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; Heb. 2:18; 9:26; I Pet. 2:19, 21.

His sufferings (*pathēmata*) Col. 1:24; I Pet. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1; Heb. 2:9 f.

His Cross. . . Col. 1:20; 2:1; Eph. 2:16.

His death as sacrifice (*thusia, prosphora*) Eph. 5:2; Heb. 7:17; 9:26, 28; I Cor. 5:7; Mk. 14:27 para. Heb. 10:10, 12; 13:10.

Sprinkling (*rantismos*) with his blood I Pet. 1:2; Heb. 9:13; 10:22; 12:24.

The blood of Christ (in general): Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Col. 1:20; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; I Pet. 1:2; 19; Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:11f; 10:19f; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 19:3; Jn. 1:7; 5:6-8.

The idea of expiation is expressed in such terms as: *hilastērion* (Rom. 3:25); *hilasmos* (I Jn. 2:2; 4:10); *hilaskesthai* (Heb. 2:17).

However we have to note that for Judaism of Jesus' time the idea of the Messiah suffering for sinners was foreign⁸. This is clearly expressed by the disciples' misunderstanding in all the three formal Passion predictions in Mark 8:31f; 9:31 ff; 10:33f. This does not mean that the interpretation of Jesus' death as expiatory sacrifice for sins was unnatural to Jewish thinking. The temple and the sacrificial system afforded the necessary background and fostered the idea of the expiating power of the suffering of the righteous person⁹. It

⁷ R. Bultmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 46f.

⁸ G. F. Moore, *ICC.*, pp. 551ff. G. Dalman, *Der Leidende und der Sterbende Messias der Synagoge*.

⁹ W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judens*, 3rd Ed., pp. 198ff.

could be that the discovery of the vicarious suffering (as held by Bultmann¹⁰) did not take place in the very earliest period of the Church, and started only from the time of the Aramaic-speaking Church's identification of the Son of Man with Jesus and augmented by the added motif supplied by Isaiah 53. (cf. Acts 8:30-36).

(b) Classical

This Jewish interpretation of the work of Christ as expiation led to the formulations of the Classical interpretations of the work of Christ as seen in the works of Origen, Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa. By his suffering Jesus paid ransom (*apolutrōsis*, Rom. 3:24; I Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:12, 15). Victory over Satan was also included, which set men free. The Orthodox theory of Atonement with its juridical, or penal and substitutionary views (the chief exponent of the juridical was Anselm of Canterbury) is still under the same expiatory interpretation (*hilastērion*), though the shift has come from payment made to Satan, to God. This trend also gave rise to the Sacrificial theory that through perfect obedience Jesus offered universal expiation for man's sin: (Vincent Taylor is the modern exponent of this theory, among others).

(c) Modern (Objective and Forensic emphasis)

The modern exegetes who took up the objective aspect of this expiation point of view in juridical perspective among others are Ethelbert Stauffer¹¹ and A. Kopling¹², who took up the views expressed at the beginning of the 20th century by N.T. scholars like H. Windisch (*Taufe und Sünde*, 1908), A. von Harnack (*kopos ZNW*, 1928) and so on. Stauffer titles one of the chapters of his N. T. Theology dealing with this topic 'The Coming of Christ and the world's distress'.¹³ The question raised was how the advent of Jesus affected the world's condition. The state of things of Nature as well as history seem to remain the same in spite of the coming of Christ. The Jewish eschatological symbolism and the identification by the disciples of Jesus as the harbinger of the new aeon seemed to be unfulfilled. But does this mean that the work of Christ had no effect on man? Stauffer maintains that what determines the destiny of man is his standing before God, who at the end of the age delivers His verdict when He takes his judgement seat. That is, we are what God judges us to be. What does He think of man in the light of God's work? In the N.T. there are a number of phrases and concepts that belong to this particular Biblical question, like *logizesthai*, *areskein endokia*, *dektos, para theō, enōpion, enantion, emprosthen tou theou*. God is the measure of all things and in the eyes of God how a thing is weighed decides the importance of any historical event: e.g. I Kings 16:10ff; Esth. 3:13; Micah 5:6; Zach. 9:9; 1 Cor. 1:27; Rom. 2:9. In Christ God has

¹⁰ R. Bultmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 46f.

¹¹ E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, (Tr.), (New York, Mcmillan, 1959), pp. 140ff.

¹² A. Kopling, *Neuschöpfung und Gnadenstand*, 1946.

¹³ E. Stauffer, *op. cit.*

forgiven us. This is God's 'Yes' to man. So though we are sinners we have a new standing before God: 'The man who is "cleansed" remains unchanged in his essential nature, but he is clean forensically'¹⁴. This is substantiated with the old Biblical conception of the sacraments, which are seen as strongly theonomic, avoiding any kind of magic or moralistic interpretation: e.g. Lev. 11; Num. 19; Ps. 51:9; Ezek. 36:25; Dan. 3:39; Ex. 4:16; Ps. 2:7 etc. This viewpoint in essence gives no weight to 'actuality': there is no change in the essential nature of man. This category makes atonement a cosmic drama, without any involvement of man in it. In line with Anselm, Stauffer holds that the effect of Christ's work is on God: God is now willing to offer forgiveness and receive sinful man. This shows that the atoning work is entirely objective.

The Rejection of the Expiation View: (a) Ethical emphasis:

During the later part of the nineteenth century, the work of Albrecht Ritschl (*Justification and Reconciliation*) was a landmark in the interpretation of the Atonement in that it categorically denied the expiatory or substitutionary role of Jesus. Influenced by Schleiermacher, Ritschl dwelt on the vocation of Christ, though he did not emphasise the ethical aspect of the work of Christ: 'Christ is at once the perfect revealer of God and the manifest type of spiritual lordship over the world. . .': with these characteristic words he begins his interpretation. H. Hermann (1846-1922) (*Communion with God*) takes up this trend of thought in the twentieth century. He maintains that revelation is in the 'inner life' of Jesus, as preserved in the N.T., which makes an impression upon us. This leads one into communion with God and submission to the moral command.

(b) Social emphasis

Shailer Mathews of U.S.A.¹⁵ takes up this trend of thought in the latter part of the nineteenth century under the banner of the social gospel. He maintained that the teaching of Jesus had the implications of the Kingdom of God on earth as a distant goal with manifestation of the brotherly love of the ideal society: generic relationship exists between men of this new society. He differed from Ritschl in that the Gospel was no new collection of moral precepts to be forced upon a world already surfeited with good advice, but a power that should make toward righteousness. (This is similar to the new mutation or evolution of the new society through rebirth in the Spirit, as expounded by Chenchiah of India).

(c) Psychological emphasis

Taking up the same question raised by Stauffer that nothing has altered in nature or history with the advent of Christ, Paul Tillich gives his interpretation of the work of Christ¹⁶. He holds that the

¹⁴ A. Buchler, *Atonement in the Rabbinical Literature*, 1928.

¹⁵ Shailer Mathews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, (New York, Macmillan, 1897), pp. 191ff.

¹⁶ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, (Chicago, Varsity Press, 1957), pp. 118ff.

disciples, instead of accepting the breakdown of their hope with the death of Christ, altered the content of their hope, by identifying the New Being with the new being of Jesus the crucified. The Synoptics show that the disciples themselves resisted Jesus' identification of messianic expectation with violent death at first, though Easter and Pentecost provided the necessary faith for this paradoxical nature. He holds that it was Paul who provided the necessary theological frame for this paradox by dividing the advent of Christ into first and second. The latter though will provide the new state of things, but in between the two, the New Being is held to be present in Jesus. He is the Kingdom of God. The eschatological expectation is fulfilled in him. Those who participate in him participate in the New Being though fragmentarily and in anticipation. The essential being conquering the gap between the essence and existence is the New Being, and this is what is meant by new creation in 2 Cor. 5:17. The New Being is the actual restorative principle which conquers the estrangement of human existence, and so to participate in the New Being is to experience the power in Jesus which has conquered estrangement.

Biblical background (*for the New Community's actualisation*).

Though both Stauffer and Tillich took up the same problem, yet the solution offered by Tillich is subjective, while Stauffer's is objective. Tillich's subjective approach is different from the Moral Influence theory (subjective approach) of Abelard in that Tillich speaks of a 'restorative principle' which really effects human obedience. We have Biblical basis for the formation of the new society. It is biblical in the sense that the Old Testament not only looked forward to the making of a new covenant (Jer. 31:31) and new Heaven and earth (Is. 65:17; 66:22) by the imparting of the new Spirit (Ezek. 11:9; 18:31; 36:26). Accordingly the N. T. claimed that the new age has already broken in and manifested itself in Jesus and his church (Heb. 6:5), the new covenant sealed in the death of Jesus (Mk. 14:24; Heb. 9:4); the new Spirit has been given (Acts 3:19), and the new creation has been achieved (2 Cor. 5:17; 6:15; Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10). Tillich's concept of the New Man makes emphasis on the 'actuality' of the change in man, though we cannot accept his analogy of the psychoanalytic practice of inducing an abreaction in order to gain catharsis. His major drawback is in reducing atonement to the category of psychology.

Human Involvement in Atonement (*Christological perspective*).

(a) *Historical Jesus*: The emphasis on the human involvement in this above interpretation is to regain the 'Co-incident' (K. Barth's phrase) aspect of God and man in Atonement. The work of atonement is no private affair of God. Jesus is not only Word of God to men but also a 'believer' (T. F. Torrance's phrase): '...that revelation is not only an act of God in man and from the side of man, but real act of man achieved through human obedience to the Word of God'.¹⁷

¹⁷ Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction*, (London: SCM 1965), p. 130f.

This means laying emphasis upon the humanity of Jesus as abstract but not the mere historical Jesus himself. Paul, the chief Apostle to the Gentiles, in whose mission to them the Incarnational Christology was developed, makes little effort to expound the historical Jesus in his writings; he does not bring out the teaching of Jesus exactly, for his quotations are taken chiefly from the tradition of the Church about Jesus (I Cor. 7:10f; 1:14; 11:23; I Thess. 4:15); nowhere does Paul speak of the Rabbi from Nazareth, the prophet and miracle-worker who ate with tax-collectors and sinners; or of his sermon on the mount, his parables of the Kingdom of God, his encounters with the Pharisees and Scribes. Paul's letters do not even mention the Lord's Prayer. Paul never met the historical Jesus, and from a human point of view, he regarded Jesus no longer (2 Cor. 5:16). In contrast we find that Peter refers to Jesus' miracles (Acts 2:22), his teachings (Acts 3:22), and in one passage even gives an outline of the life of Jesus (Acts 10:34-43). Of these there is no trace in the Kerygma of Paul. The only exception is the speech of Paul at Pisidian Antioch which has a number of allusions to the episodes in the Gospel story (Acts 13:16-41). C. H. Dodd¹⁸ holds that Paul might have some kind of recital of the facts of the life and teaching of Jesus if the Gospel conforms to the general Christian tradition as seen from the book of Acts. This apparent neglect of Paul does not, on the other hand, indicate that he has abandoned the historical Jesus, who is the bedrock of the early Church's faith. As shown by Gunther Bornkamm¹⁹, to Paul Jesus is not a man like other men appearing in the course of past history, but he is one who has to be viewed in terms of God's dealings with the world with all the difference between time and eternity.

(b) *The Humanity of Christ*: Soren Kierkegaard was right when he said that in order to be Christians we have to be contemporaneous with Christ, for we can have no relation with one who is separated from us in space and time, and known to us only in memory²⁰. But we cannot agree with Kierkegaard that contemporaneity should be viewed only in terms of faith apart from the historical. Rather it should be in the continued humanity of Jesus, made possible by his resurrection, which resurrection formed the basis for the contemporaneity with Jesus for the early disciples. It is in the humanity of Jesus we meet, yet not in the humanity confined to space and time, but a humanity that can achieve true humanity for us. For this we have to note that Jesus was no 'Christian', in the sense that he had no sense of guilt and hence no need of redemption. George S. Hendry truly observed that the mission of Jesus was clearly to bear the divine forgiveness to men, and that he did this not only in dying but also in living²¹. This answers those who hold to the forensic interpretation

¹⁸ C. H. Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*, (New York: Harper, 1958), pp. 224ff.

¹⁹ Gunther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, (Tr.), (New York: Harper 1960), pp. 55-59.

²⁰ Soren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* (Tr.), (Princeton, 1958), pp. 44ff.

²¹ George S. Hendry, *The Gospel of Incarnation* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press 1959), pp. 148f.

of Christ's role. But he also added that the Church is not in itself the extension of the incarnation but the continued incarnation is in the presence of the Spirit in the Church. This answers those who lay excessive emphasis on the historical Jesus. We need a human response so as to make it very clear that Jesus was no Christ to the animals (Shailer Mathew's phrase)²², but to men, a human response 'enhyposstatic' in the word of revelation, a divine revelation which already includes within it a true and concrete human response. On the other hand, the capacity for revelation is not to be judged in terms of the receiver only; it should be definitely in terms of the Giver of salvation, the Father of Jesus who acts upon us by His spirit²³.

Conclusion

The passage in Luke 1:52-53, called the Magnificat, is the prophetic song which began its fulfilment from the time Jesus announced at the synagogue at Nazareth the Manifesto of the New Age, (Lk 4:18-19). Jesus the Liberator here takes on the humanity seriously, the here and now of God's work among mankind, and the Holy Spirit aiding him to achieve the formation of this new community. We should not forget that in the early Church's belief Jesus is not only the Saviour but the Mediator of creation²⁴ (I Cor. 8:6). One of the few ancient formulations in the NT confessions shows this aspect, where it does not show God as the Creator and Christ as the Saviour but shows both involved in the act of creation. The difference lies only in the prepositions used, *ex* and *eis* used with God and *dia* (*di'houta panta*) with Christ, (cf. Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:10). Like the illustration of the potter and clay demonstrated to Jeremiah (Jer. 18:1-6) taken up in Rom. 9:19-26 by Paul, we see that Christ the creator can remould or restore the humanity into a New Society. The Church (*ekklesia*) should be viewed not only as the community of the redeemed but also as the regenerated.

We should note that the Church failed or refused to develop a doctrine of the Atonement similar to the doctrine of the Person of Christ. This indicates that either they did not face any serious issue in this area or they intentionally allowed various interpretations as long as those remained within the given Christological framework of the Church's faith. Dealing with Christ of the Atonement or Christ the New Man in isolation is dealing fragmentarily with New Testament Christology. For a rediscovery of the wholeness of the Gospel, theology needs to reintegrate the Incarnation and the Atonement with the Incarnate life, and bring into one perspective the events and significance of Bethlehem and Calvary.

²² S. Mathews, *op. cit.*

²³ T. F. Torrance, *op. cit.*

²⁴ O. Cullmann, *op. cit.*