

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Indian Journal of Theology* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_ijt\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_ijt_01.php)

# The Summing Up of All Things in Christ<sup>\*</sup>

J. G. BOOKLESS

In Ephesians 1:9-10, the New English Bible gives us the following translation: 'He has made known to us his hidden purpose—such was his will and pleasure determined beforehand in Christ—to be put into effect when the time was ripe: namely, that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, might be brought into a unity in Christ'. Other translations differ to a greater or less extent from this, and we may note some of the differences in translating the central word—*anakephalaïosasthai*. The R.S.V. agrees with the N.E.B. closely, and translates 'to unite all things in him'. The A.V. has 'that he might gather together in one all things in Christ', and Moffatt is similar. The R.V. uses the familiar phrase, 'to sum up all things in Christ'. Weymouth, aiming to bring out the sense of *kephale*, head, in the verse, translates 'restoring the whole creation to find its one head in Christ'. J. B. Phillips, using the greater freedom allowed to a paraphrase, gives a double translation: 'that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in heaven or on earth shall find its perfection or fulfilment in him'. In the only other instance where this Greek word is used in the N.T., Romans 13:9, the phrase is usually translated 'any other commandments are summed up in this sentence'.

In a learned note on the meaning of the word *anakephalaïosasthai*, Bishop Lightfoot declares that the word means basically the bringing of unity out of diversity; thus it can be used of bringing together a number of points in a discussion and summing them up, or recapitulating them for purposes of reminder and comprehension. It can be used, as St. Paul uses it in Romans 13:9, of summing up a large number of commands under one all-embracing command, or it can be used of reproducing compendiously in some new entity a large number of past experiences, as in the Protevangelium of James, where we find our

---

<sup>\*</sup>This article was originally delivered as a paper at a joint meeting of the staffs of Serampore and Bishop's College at Serampore in November 1962.

Lord saying, 'Was not the history of Adam summed up in me?' On the other hand, Lightfoot rejects as illegitimate translations of the word two connotations which have often been given to it in times ancient and modern: the meaning of restoration and reunion, involving the idea of returning to a former state; and also the idea of the headship of Christ in the Ephesian passage, since he says the word is derived from *kephalaion* and not *kephale*.

A considerable number of modern commentators have not followed Lightfoot in this restriction of the word's meaning, and we shall have to consider some interpretations that go beyond it.

Whether we accept the traditional Pauline authorship of this epistle, or whether with Goodspeed, Mitton and others we consider Ephesians to be the work of some follower of St. Paul, whose mind was deeply imbued with Pauline ideas, clearly we have here an important idea, and one which, even if we do not find exact N.T. parallels to the wording, has points of contact with many N.T. passages. We shall consider some of these briefly, and also notice the expositions of this idea given by some ancient and modern commentators. And we shall also consider the important question whether this writer's insight into the final purpose of God for this world has anything to say to us today.

We will begin by considering the central interpretation of the word in this passage for which Lightfoot argues, namely, that 'the entire harmony of the universe, which shall no longer contain alien and discordant elements, but of which all the parts shall find their centre and bond of union in Christ'. We shall however differ from him in including under this conception the headship and exaltation of Christ, since this does seem to be a central theme of the Ephesian and Colossian epistles, and since the majority of commentators do not exclude this meaning from the word. We shall not consider the large and controversial question of how or when this final consummation will be brought about, as that lies outside the scope of this paper.

Having introduced his readers to this breath-taking summary of the purpose of God for the universe, the writer of Ephesians does not immediately stop to develop what he has said, but passes on to point out the part which his readers have in this purpose. Later on in the chapter, however, when he is praying for his readers, he reminds them of the immense authority and dignity which God has now given to his Son; praying that they may know 'how vast the resources of his power, open to us who trust in him', he goes on to say, 'They are measured by the strength and the might which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead, when he enthroned him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all government and authority, all power and dominion, and any title of sovereignty that can be named, not only in this age, but in the age to come. He put everything in subjection beneath his feet and appointed him as supreme head to the church, which is his body, and as such holds within

it the fullness of him who himself receives the entire fullness of God' (N.E.B. translation). Here we find Christ's exaltation asserted over any other spiritual authorities in the universe, over all things, and especially over the Church. This latter point, the immeasurably high place accorded to the Church and its members as constituting the Body of Christ, receives further development in the course of this epistle, and we shall return to consider this subject later.

When we turn to the generally accepted Pauline epistles, we find the closest similarities with this section of Ephesians in the epistle to the Colossians, especially 1:15-20, containing what is sometimes called the 'great Christology' of St. Paul. Prof. C. F. D. Moule calls Paul's description here of Christ's position in relation to the universe and to the Church 'the single most striking aspect' of this letter, and draws attention to the astonishing fact that it was written only about thirty years after Christ had been crucified on a Roman cross. Yet one epithet after another is piled up in St. Paul's description; 'He is the image of the invisible God' (cp. 2 Cor. 4:4 and Heb. 1:3), gathering up in himself, in a fuller sense than ordinary man could ever do, the various degrees of likeness to God found in man or nature. 'His is the primacy over all created things', a remarkable phrase for which some parallels can be found in the O.T. (cf. Psalm 89:27) and Rabbinic writings, and which is expanded in the next verse to include Christ's instrumentality in the creation of all the spiritual and angelic powers in the universe, and therefore his superiority to them. 'He exists before everything, and all things are held together in him', phrases which find parallels in Wisdom writings and in Hebrews. 'He is the head of the body, the Church', a phrase which occurs twice in both Colossians and Ephesians, but not in earlier Pauline epistles, and which presumably includes partly the idea of Christ's supremacy over the Church, and partly that of the next phrase, 'He is its origin, the first to return from the dead, to be in all things alone supreme', where Christ is represented as the first-fruits of God's new creation as well as the head of the whole creation. The passage ends with the statement that God chose that his whole being should dwell in Christ, and that through Christ's death the whole universe should be reconciled to him. Whatever may be said by those commentators who are concerned to underline the differences between Ephesians and Colossians, we clearly have here some striking parallels to the thought and expression of Ephesians 1, and some indications as to how we may begin to expound the idea of the summing up of all things in Christ.

In one of those pregnant prepositional phrases which he occasionally uses, St. Paul in Romans 11:35-36, after beginning a section with the cry, 'O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!', ends the chapter, 'For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever.

Amen'. We seem to find in the N.T. a gradual extension of application of the activities of God the Father to our Lord. Thus, in a similar phrase in 1 Cor. 8:6, 'from whom are all things and for whom we exist' is said of God the Father, while 'through whom are all things and through whom we exist' is said of our Lord. A similar position is given to Christ in 1 Cor. 15:20ff., where the final reign of Christ is described, the resurrection of all men in him, and the subjection of all his enemies; and finally, 'then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father', and Christ himself becomes subjected to God, 'that God may be everything to everyone'. Something similar to this pattern seems to lie behind the thought of Ephesians and Colossians in describing God's final purpose for the universe in Christ. But the thought of these epistles goes further in attributing to Christ a much fuller share in the Father's glory and deity. 'In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell' we find in Col. 1:19 (cf. 2:9), words which may find a parallel in Eph. 1:23, which *could* be translated with the N.E.B., 'the Church, which is his body and as such holds within it the fullness of him who himself receives the entire fullness of God'. While other epistles do not go to this extent in speaking of Christ's deity, they do make frequent mention of his exaltation to the right hand of God, and in the famous passage, Phil. 2:5-11, this exaltation is spoken of as following on his obedience and humility in his earthly life and death. Here in Ephesians this connection is not so explicitly made, for the thought of the epistle is concentrated much more upon the heavenly Christ (cf. 1:4; 2:6, etc.). Yet another thought found in Phil. 2 is clearly stated in the first chapter of Ephesians, namely that it was *God the Father* who raised Christ from the dead, made him sit at his right hand, gave him dominion over every other power, and made him the head of the Church. The exaltation of Christ, in fact, is consistently spoken of as something which he has received from the Father, not something which he has attained independently of the Father.

If it is appropriate to speak of Christ as exercising 'dominion' over the other powers in heaven and earth, and 'headship' over the Church, it is perhaps more suitable to speak of his function with regard to the universe as a 'bringing into harmony or unity' of its various parts. There are indeed some commentators who doubt whether, when Eph. 1:10 speaks of 'bringing into a unity all things in Christ', there is any reference intended to the material universe. J. A. Allan in his 'Torch Commentary' seems to incline to this view. But the comprehensiveness of the expression used—'all things in heaven and on earth'—seems to force upon us the conclusion that the writer intends to include the material as well as the human and spiritual parts of creation. As F. W. Beare has written, 'If we believe that in Christ there is incarnate the Logos through whom all things were made, we must hold that all things, and not sentient beings only, find their true

home in him'. Beare also suggests that the word *anakephalaiousasthai* should be translated 'to bring to a focus in Christ', and he points out how this theme of harmonious unity in Christ, of Jew and Gentile, of God and man, of the celestial powers or *exousiai*, or of the various parts of the universe, forms a central part of this epistle. Even if the writer does not express, to the same extent as St. Paul in Colossians, Christ's work of creation or his ministry of reconciliation, yet he does give to Christ this supreme position as the integrator of all that is, the fulfiller of the age-long purpose of God for the whole of creation. In the Ephesian epistle the words *fullness* and *fulfil* come frequently in a variety of meanings and applications, and as J. Armitage Robinson has written, 'This fulfilled and completed universe is in truth the return of all things to their creative source, through Christ to God . . .'.

In Ephesians a very prominent place in the consummation of God's purposes through Christ is given to the Church; so much so that, as already mentioned, some people think that the phrase we are considering should not be understood as referring to a *universal* purpose of God in the strict sense, but simply to his purpose for mankind through the Church. This topic of the headship of Christ in the Church we shall leave for later consideration, but here we must point out that the consummation of God's purpose through Christ for the universe is closely connected with his purpose for his people, for his Church: in Romans 8:18ff., St. Paul is discussing how the creation is at present subject to futility, but he affirms that it will be set free from its bondage to decay only when the sons of God are revealed: it, without us, will not be made perfect. Perhaps this gives another illustration of the statement of Colossians 1:17, 'In Christ all things hold together', the fragmented universe finds its unity and cohesion in him as its unifier. Moreover, as Rawlinson points out, the renewal of the whole creation, which began with the resurrection of Christ, who is 'the first to return from the dead' (Col. 1:18), continues as men are made new in Christ and as a 'new creation' takes place in them (2 Cor. 5:17), and awaits its final consummation when he will be 'in all things supreme' (Col. 1:18). This theme of fulfilment or consummation in Christ is something which is also worked out in various ways in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which in the opening verses Christ is declared to be the heir to the whole universe, and God's agent in creation, to reflect the glory of God, to be the creator and upholder of the universe, and to be seated at God's right hand after making purification for sins, with a position far superior to that of the angels. However, although Christ is clearly shown to be the fulfiller of God's redemptive purpose and of all that has gone before in the O.T. scriptures, the idea of a final eschatological and cosmic consummation in him is not prominent in this epistle, though it is hinted at in Heb. 1:3 and 10:13. Another hint of this final

consummation is also found in Acts 3:21, where St. Peter says of Christ, 'He must be received into heaven until the time of universal restoration comes, of which God spoke by the holy prophets'. There is evident in this verse, as elsewhere in the N.T. when the final consummation is under consideration, an element of tension between that which is already fulfilled, that is the triumphant exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand, and that which still awaits fulfilment, the subjecting of all things to him, and the restoring of all things by him. Cullmann indeed speaks of two victories of Christ, that which has already taken place over death at the crucifixion and resurrection, and the final destruction of death and other hostile powers which is referred to in 1 Cor. 15:26, and which takes place at the end of time. This line of thought is rather different from that of Col. 1:20, which speaks of a *reconciling* of all things to God through Christ: 'Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross—to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone'. Perhaps Cullmann, like Bishop Aulen, is too much concerned to emphasize the 'battle' and 'victory' metaphors used of Christ in the N.T. They are undoubtedly there, and are frequently used of Christ's dealing with the rebellious spiritual powers, but they are not the only pictures used to bring out the final consummation of all things in and through Christ: the ideas of the fulfilment, integration and unity of all things in Christ also form an important part of the N.T. picture of the end.

It is of course a commonplace of Biblical study that we find in the N.T., and especially in Christ himself, a fulfilment of many of the expectations of the O.T., and this fact is illustrated by scholars using various types of typology, analogy, and even what Phythian-Adams calls 'homology', since he considers that analogy does not convey a close enough impression of the correspondence implied in the preparation-fulfilment motif. But a point that is not so frequently made, and that is relevant to our present study, is that in the O.T. we also find a continuous looking forward to the end of the age, part of which is fulfilled no doubt in the coming of Christ and in his life and death and the gift of the Spirit, but some of which seems to look forward to a still more distant consummation. Canon Alan Richardson has well expressed this when he writes of the prophets, 'The insights of the prophets into the character and purpose of God, coming to them through divine revelation amidst the critical situations in which they were involved, penetrated to the inner meaning of the events of contemporary history, and therefore carried with them profound implications concerning the purpose of God in all history, and concerning the goal of history itself'. The apocalyptic writings, as he points out, whatever may be said of the weirdness and extravagance of some of the imagery they employ, do bear a

striking witness to this expectation of a final *dénouement*, when the purposes of God will reach their final consummation at the end of time. It is true, as Richardson points out, that this insight into a distant future, based upon the events of the past and present, has to express itself in analogical and mythological terms, for that is the only way in which this pattern of correspondence can be expressed. It does at least point to the fact of a long line of expectancy in the O.T. writers of a consummating purpose of God in history, part of which purpose we can see already fulfilled in the person and work of our Lord in the N.T., and part of which still awaits fulfilment.

The theme of the fulfilment of God's purpose all through the ages in Christ, is one of the favourite themes of Irenaeus. In mentioning this writer, we introduce ourselves to a fertile new line of interpretation of the *anakephalaïosasthai* concept, if not to several lines, for in Irenaeus's writings the word, in its Latin translation *recapitulare*, comes very frequently, and is used in a bewildering variety of senses. According to the Roman Catholic theologian Mersch, Irenaeus uses the word in different places of 'a *résumé*, a taking up of all since the beginning, a recommencement, a return to the source, a restoration, reorganization, and incorporation under one head'. In particular Irenaeus goes beyond the interpretations we have already considered in this emphasis on a return to an original plan of God, a return to the source. Sometimes he expresses this in strange ways, as when he says 'Our Lord Jesus Christ in the last times was made man that he might join the end to the beginning, that is Man to God' (*Adv. Haer.* 4.24.4). Irenaeus himself acknowledges that he has borrowed part of his thought on the subject of recapitulation from Justin Martyr, and it may well have formed a part of the climate of theological thought current in Asia Minor in the second century.

Irenaeus is at pains to point out that Christ has been at work among men from the beginning. He writes 'From the beginning the Son of the Father declares him, inasmuch as he was with the Father from the beginning; who did also show to the human race prophetic visions, and diversities of gifts, and his own ministrations, and the glory of the Father, in regular order and connection, at the fitting time, for the benefit of mankind' (*Adv. Haer.* 4.20.7). But it is particularly of Our Lord's identification with man, with the human race, that Irenaeus is concerned, and he is always showing the significance of the Incarnation against a background of God's desire to unite mankind with himself: thus he writes, 'On account of his infinite love he became what we are, in order that he might make us what he himself is' (*Adv. Haer.* 5. Preface). Or again: 'Christ Jesus our Lord . . . came in fulfilment of God's comprehensive design and consummates all things in himself. Man is in all respects the handiwork of God, thus he consummates man in himself: he was invisible and became visible;



incomprehensible and made comprehensible; impassible and made passible; the Word, and made man; consummating all things in himself' (*Adv. Haer.* 3.16.6). Not satisfied with using the language of Ephesians in *this* sense of Our Lord summing up or representing human life in himself, he also makes great use of the possible backward-looking sense of the word *anakephalaïosasthai*, more clearly shown in the Latin *recapitulare*, seeing Christ as summing up all the different ages of man's life, and the whole history of man: 'Wherefore also he passed through every stage of human life, restoring to all communion with God . . . God recapitulated in himself the ancient formation of man, that he might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and give life to man' (*Adv. Haer.* 3.18.7). Elsewhere Irenaeus says that Christ passed through each stage of human life—evidently he believed that he lived at least to the age of 50—sanctifying each in turn (*Adv. Haer.* 3.18.1, etc.). Not only in his life, but even more in his death, Christ has shown himself the consummator and perfect representative of mankind: 'By summing up in himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end', he says, 'he has also summed up its death'. 'The Word of God came to his own in a visible manner, and was made flesh, and hung upon the tree, that he might sum up all things in himself' (*Adv. Haer.* 5.23.2 and 5.18.3).

A very prominent note in Irenaeus is Christ as the Second Adam. Here he depends heavily upon the statements of St. Paul in Romans, where, following a line of thought popular with the Rabbis, Paul holds up Adam as the typical, representative man, not only in his original humanity, but also in his sinfulness; and then points to Christ; a second typical man, but representing man in the new possibility of freedom from sin and of new life. Sometimes Irenaeus expresses this by using rather fanciful comparisons between Adam and Christ: 'As Adam was first made from untilled soil and received his being from virgin earth, . . . so he who existed as the Word restored in himself Adam, by his birth from Mary who was still a virgin, a birth befitting this restoration of Adam'. Earlier in this passage Irenaeus has been speaking of Christ's obedience to God as reversing the effect of Adam's disobedience, and the 'recapitulation' here seems almost to mean a re-enacting of the original action of Adam in sinning in a new act of obedience. As he says elsewhere, 'In obliterating the disobedience of man originally enacted on the tree, he became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross, healing the disobedience enacted on the tree by obedience on a tree' (*Adv. Haer.* 5.16.3).

Thus, the great message which Irenaeus teaches is of the creation of a new humanity by the human life and death of the new representative man, Jesus Christ. He says of Christ: 'He was incarnate and made man; and then he summed up (or 'consummated' or 'recapitulated') in himself the long line of the human race, procuring for us a comprehensive salvation, that we

might recover in Christ Jesus what in Adam we had lost, namely, the state of being in the image and likeness of God' (*Adv. Haer.* 3.18.7). True, it is not only humanity which, in the thought of Irenaeus, is included in the restoring work of Christ; as Kelly points out, he interprets Eph. 1.10 as meaning that 'the Redeemer gathers together, includes or comprises the whole of reality in himself, the human race being included'—included, one might add, as the particular focus and example of the purpose of God for the whole universe in Christ. Later writers repeat and sometimes develop some of the ideas we have noticed in Irenaeus; thus Tertullian gives even clearer expression to the idea of recapitulation as a return to the beginning: 'therefore in Christ all things are recalled to the beginning' he writes (*de Monog.* 5), while the Vulgate translation of the Ephesians text is *instaurare omnia in Christo*, to renew all things in Christ. Perhaps none of the later writers comes closer to Irenaeus than Athanasius, who says in one passage, 'He (that is Christ) took to himself a body, in order that this, being the body of the Logos which is over all, might satisfy death for all . . . thus he abolished death at a stroke from his fellow-men, by the offering of that which stood for all. For the destruction which belongs to death has now no more place against men, because of the Logos, who through the one body indwells in them' (*De Inc.* 9). Here we have the complete identification of Christ with man tellingly expressed; while the idea of the restoring of man and nature to an original state or purpose is well brought out by Cyril of Alexandria, when he writes that *anakephalaïosasthai* means 'to bring back and convey back to an original state those things which have fallen away towards a different goal'.

This idea of recapitulation, then, as it is developed in different directions by Irenaeus and others, prepares the way for the 'physical' or 'mystical' doctrine of the atonement. But it is a mistake to think, as Harnack and others have done, that this type of approach to the atonement necessarily means that the Incarnation of Christ, rather than his death and resurrection, constitutes his saving work, and that his atoning sacrifice is little stressed by those who expound the atonement in this way; both Irenaeus, as we have seen, and also Athanasius and others who make plentiful use of this line of thought, also give very great importance to the saving effect of Christ's death, as the supreme way in which the mischief caused in human life by sin has been undone. Dr. Kelly, indeed, goes so far as to suggest that this theme of recapitulation is the note which underlies almost all the attempts to explain the redemptive work of Christ in the Fathers—except in so far as that idea, in some of the Fathers, is extended to include the deification of human nature through the Incarnation of Christ. Christ as fully man—as representative man, undertaking on man's behalf what man by

himself could never do—Christ as the Second Adam, restoring to man all that had been lost due to the sin of Adam, and acting, like Adam, as a second typical man,—these are themes which are ever recurring in the work of the early Fathers, and which recur again at other periods of Church History, notably at the Reformation. Luther says, in words recalling Irenaeus and Athanasius, ‘He took what was ours’—that is human nature, with its long history of sinfulness and failure—‘that he might confer upon us what is his’—that is, his new manhood, perfectly obedient to the Father. Modern writers have also made use of Irenaeus’ ideas, though one would not expect them to repeat all his emphases. One example of a modern theologian, who has been greatly influenced by Irenaeus, is R. C. Moberley. He lays great emphasis on what he calls Christ’s inclusive humanity, and says ‘If Christ’s humanity were not the humanity of Deity, it could not stand in the wide, inclusive, consummating relations in which it stands, in fact, to the humanity of all other men’. Moberley’s own original doctrine is that of the vicarious penitence of Christ: ‘We saw revealed in Him’, he says, ‘the meaning of a life of perfectly obedient dependence on God, which is the realization of human holiness, the crown of the proper meaning of the life of man. And we saw, revealed in him, the meaning of penal death . . . death which, in its awful surrender both of body and spirit, is itself the consummation of the sinner’s contrition . . . The fullness of that consummation of obedient and penitential holiness which constituted in him a perfect atonement, is by his Presence consummated also in ourselves’ (*Atonement and Personality*, pp. 280, 283). We do not find here, it is true, that thoroughgoing correspondence which Irenaeus draws between the life of Christ and the whole life of man, yet Moberley, like some other modern writers, has been much influenced by Irenaeus.

Coming back now to our text in Ephesians, we have seen that, while this has often been interpreted to refer to a comprehensive summing up of the whole of the universe, including the life of man, within God’s final purpose through Christ, it has also been taken, by a long line of interpreters from the early Christian centuries onwards, to refer to the summing up carried out by the incarnate Christ, and already fulfilled in him, of the original purpose of God for human life in particular, the instrument for carrying out this purpose being the humanity of Christ which recapitulates in itself the whole life of man. We must now consider whether, or how far, our text may be taken to have a particular reference to God’s purposes for, and through, the Church. There are two main grounds for thinking that the writer had the Church particularly in mind at this stage: one is that within the word *anakephalaïosasthai* there may well be a suggestion of the word *kephale*, head, one of the key expressions used in this epistle and in Colossians for the Church; and even though

it is admitted, with Lightfoot, that it is more immediately derived from the word *kephalaion*, that word itself, as Lock points out, can be used of the 'head' or 'leading man' of a state. Then there is also the consideration that, when in the rest of this epistle, and especially at the end of this chapter, the writer begins to expound his theme in more detail, it is with the Church, as the focal point of God's purposes for men through his Son, that he is mainly concerned. It is the Church which is described as the fullness of Christ (or of God); the Church which is the building into which Gentile and Jewish Christians are to be built, with the apostles and prophets as its foundation, and with our Lord himself as the foundation-stone; it is through the Church that God is to make known his wisdom to the spiritual powers of the universe; it is the Church which receives gifts from the ascended Christ, the Church which grows up into Christ as his body, and the Church towards which Christ stands as a husband towards his wife.

Within this Church, Christ is the Head. Some writers have felt that this statement, found only in Colossians and Ephesians, marks such a great change from the earlier Pauline conception of 'the body of Christ', that it must either be borrowed from some extraneous, non-Biblical circle of ideas, or at any rate not be a Pauline idea at all. But as Moule has pointed out, a variation in the metaphor is something far less surprising than that Paul should have used this type of metaphor at all. The Church that Paul and his contemporaries knew, and of which they were members, cannot have been a very impressive body either socially or spiritually, to judge from some remarks in the epistles. 'Few of you are men of wisdom, by any human standard', he tells the Corinthians, 'few are powerful or highly born . . . He has chosen things low and contemptible, mere nothings, to overthrow the existing order'. He continues, 'You are in Christ Jesus by God's act' (1 Cor. 1:26ff.). It is with some of the implications of what it means to be 'in Christ', both individually and corporately, that this Ephesian epistle deals; membership of the Church, as this epistle expounds it, is not simply belonging to a human organization, not merely an imitation of Christ, but an actual organic incorporation into him, so that the measure of true manhood within the Church now becomes nothing less than the full stature of Christ, and the Church itself grows into 'a holy temple in the Lord . . . into a spiritual dwelling for God' (Eph. 1:21-22).

The lordship of Christ, as Cullmann has pointed out, is something which extends much more widely than the bounds of the Church, as verses like Matt. 28:19, Phil. 2:10, and Col. 1:20 show. Indeed in Col. 2:10, St. Paul can say 'Every power and authority in the universe is subject to him as Head'. But it is particularly of the Church that he is Head: to quote Cullmann, 'On the one hand, the Church is the body of Christ himself, the

highest possible reality on earth ; on the other hand, the Church is subjected to Christ its Head, just as are all the other parts of Creation included under his lordship'. But the Church is not something everlasting, at least in its present empirical form ; it lasts between the time of Christ's first coming and the End, when it will find its consummation in him. In the meantime, it is that part of the Creation which knows about Christ's lordship, and acknowledges it, and is even called in its own measure to share in it as a 'royal priesthood'. It represents, as Beare says, the primary stage in the fulfilment of God's ultimate purpose ; it is the token and the earnest of the total work of redemption. A sentence of Bishop Gore eloquently expresses the same idea : 'The Church of the reconciliation is God's elect body to represent a divine purpose of restoration far wider than itself, extending in fact to all creation'. In the light of these considerations, we can safely say that it is very probable that in using the expression we are studying, the writer of Ephesians has in mind God's purpose through the Church, not indeed as the exclusive idea, but certainly as a very prominent idea within this tantalizingly comprehensive phrase. Perhaps we may find a helpful pointer as to how the complex of ideas included in the word *anakephalaiousathai* may hang together, and of the part that the idea of the Church plays within it, given in the old Gelasian prayer : 'O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favourably upon thy holy Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery, and by the tranquil operation of thy divine providence carry out the work of man's salvation and let the whole world feel and see that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are returning to perfection through him from whom they took their origin, even through our Lord Jesus Christ'.

We must try to draw together some of the threads of our discussion, and to ask if there are any particular ways in which this grand conception of the summing up of all things in Christ can be applied in the thought and life of the churches today. To begin with, it is surely necessary in our study of the Bible that we should bear in mind, not only that in Christ Incarnate we find the fulfilment of the O.T. hopes and expectations, but also that both the O.T. and N.T. await a final consummation of God's purposes in Christ glorified, though the details of this expectation may not be very clearly discernible. Walter Lock has pointed out how, in chapters 9 to 11 of Romans, we find an outline of sacred history which leads up to such a consummation ; early in chapter 9 we are reminded of the chosen people of God in the O.T. and their privileges : 'They are Israelites ; they were made God's sons ; theirs is the splendour of the divine presence, theirs the covenants, the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them, in natural descent, sprang the

Messiah. May God, supreme over all, be blessed for ever'. As we read on through these three chapters, we are told of the rejection of Israel, the admission of the Gentiles in full strength, and the final salvation of the Gentiles; as Lock comments on the passage, 'the world will then see the fulness of the whole, one complete picture to which every part contributes, the unity of man's history, and as the secret spring of all, the Christ—pre-existent, incarnate, risen, the centre of all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon earth'.

It is not only in our Biblical study that we need to have before our minds the thought of Christ's consummating work. The same applies to our study of Christian doctrine, for it is not only the doctrine of the Last Things that comes within the scope of our subject; it is also of considerable importance for our study of the doctrines of the Person of Christ, of the Atonement and of the Church, for none of these are unaffected by what we believe about the final consummation of all things in Christ. In particular, since we have made some mention of the Headship of Christ over the whole Church, of the incorporation of Christians into him within his body, and of the Church's place in the fulfilment of God's purposes in Christ, should not these considerations impel us, living in the age between the foundation of the church and its consummation, to strive with all our powers both for its unity and its growth? It may be true to say that the unity of the Church is something given, and that it is not destroyed by the actual disunity among Christians; however that disunity does certainly have the effect of hiding from the unbelieving world, as well as from many within the Church, the fact that the Church is itself the reconciled and reconciling body, that through which the whole of mankind is to be brought within the scope of Christ's redemptive work, and through which the universe also, in some mysterious way, may find its final unity and fulfilment within the divine purpose. Another consideration within the realm of doctrine which is deserving of serious consideration, is that we do not seem to have today a satisfactory correlation in our thinking of the realms of Nature and Grace. There has been, it is true, a revival in recent years of the Thomist views on this subject, but neither St. Paul, in Colossians and other epistles, nor Irenaeus and the thinkers who have followed his line of thought, make the kind of distinctions between these two that Thomas Aquinas made. In this connection some striking words were said at the New Delhi Assembly of the W.C.C. by Prof. Sittler of Chicago: 'Is it again possible to fashion a theology catholic enough to affirm redemption's force enfolding nature, as we have affirmed redemption's force enfolding history? . . . We are being driven to claim the world of nature for God's Christ just as, in the time of Augustine, the Church was driven to claim the world of history as the city of God, for his lordship and purpose . . . The theological magnificence of cosmic Christology lies, for the most part, still tightly folded in the

Church's innermost heart and memory . . . For it is true of us all that the imperial vision of Christ as coherent in *ta panta* (in all things), has not broken open the powers of grace to diagnose, judge and heal the ways of men as they blasphemously strut about this hurt and threatened world as if they owned it . . . We have not affirmed as inherent in Christ—God's proper man for man's proper selfhood and society—the world political, the world economical, the world aesthetic, and all other commanded orderings of actuality which flow from the ancient summons to tend this garden of the Lord. When atoms are disposable to the ultimate hurt, then the very atoms must be reclaimed for God and his will'. It is true that this kind of language opens up vast horizons of contemplation which do not easily come within the focus of immediate Christian action: yet perhaps we do need to contemplate more the vastness of what it means for *all things* to be summed up in Christ, if our complicated and variegated life in this world is to be brought more fully under his yoke.

One more line of thought seems to suggest itself for exploration in this connection, though we can only mention it briefly. In an address prepared for delivery at Rajpur shortly before his death, the late Dr. Devanandan wrote: 'The Christian hope, of which we have assurance in the Resurrection of our Lord is that all things will be summed up in Christ, and that includes the religions and cultures of the world'. This introduces us to a very large subject; but it is becoming increasingly admitted today that somehow—in ways which certainly elude our understanding—it must be within the purpose of God that the other religions should not simply be destroyed and consigned to the limbo of forgotten things, but that in some sense they must find their fulfilment in Christ. This does not mean, as Bishop Neill has pointed out, that we take the highest and most 'Christian' thoughts in a particular religion, and baptize them into Christ; indeed it may be that the first word that is said regarding them will be one of judgment, of negation, upon all the claims that they put forward for their own authority among men; but in spite of this, as Neill says, 'We may be sure that God, who has worked so long and so patiently among the nations, will see to it that, if the nations and their faiths in the end turn to Christ, nothing of value will be lost, and that whatever of worth the other religions have gathered in the course of their separate pilgrimage will in some way be brought into the riches of his everlasting city'. More than this it is difficult to say, but even to say so much marks a considerable advance on what Christians have often said and thought in the past on the subject of other faiths and their members. At least it ought to safeguard us from any attitude of patronage or arrogance when we approach our fellow-men of other faiths and seek to reveal to them the riches that are in Christ.

We cannot do better than close our treatment of this whole subject by quoting again from Irenaeus, in a passage where he

seems to sum up in a very full and compendious way the various lines of thought we have been pursuing, and to expound God's final purpose for this world through Christ: 'That, as in things above the heavens and in the spiritual and invisible world the Word of God is supreme, so in the visible and physical realm he may have pre-eminence, taking to himself the primacy and appointing himself the head of the Church, that he may draw all things to himself in the due time'.

---

## Editorial Note

It is with much regret that the Editorial Board must record the resignation of the Rev. V. C. Samuel, M.A., B.D., S.T.M., Ph.D., who since early in 1961 has been its Secretary and the Literary Editor of this *Journal*.

Dr. Samuel brought to his work as Literary Editor a very high standard of scholarship, especially in the fields of Christology, Faith and Order, and neo-Hinduism. This scholarship marked all his own contributions to these pages, but it also combined with his sensitively Christian appreciation of the contributions of others to enable him to secure and publish many valuable articles from different points of view. In addition, all who shared in any way with Dr. Samuel's work were constantly impressed by the painstaking attention to detail with which he carried out all his duties, including particularly the preparation of MSS. for the Press. In all these ways he has set a very high standard for others to follow.

Dr. Samuel has resigned on his departure from Serampore College to return to the Christa Sishya Ashram, Tadagam, in Kerala. We extend to him our very warmest thanks and good wishes for his further service, and also record our lively hope that the pages of the *Indian Journal of Theology* may from time to time be enriched by further articles from his pen.

The Rev. Kenneth Jennings of Bishop's College is in the meantime carrying on the work of Literary Editor and Secretary. More permanent arrangements will be announced later.