

Chapter Five: Christ and His acts

Introduction

Scripture states that ‘in the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’¹ As the *Logos* is a member of the Trinity, the divine Christ is essentially linked with the divine acts and the *Parousia* in particular. We will discuss Christ’s divinity, His role in the *Parousia* and how He projects the works of God for the benefit of parts of the universe such as human persons.

A. CHRIST AND HIS ACTS ACCORDING TO PATRISTIC TRADITION

The acts of Christ

The acts of Christ usually considered are the Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection. As Christ is God as well as man, we would expect that His acts upon earth would have a divine equivalent. Where there were no obvious divine equivalents to the acts of Christ, we should attempt to ascertain their connection with the Creation and *Parousia* which are traditionally divine acts.

The Incarnation

Christ, God and man:

St John also stated that ‘the Word became flesh and lived among us.’² It therefore appears that the Incarnation is a divine act and a gift from God. A divine act involves all members of the Trinity and accordingly St Maximus stated that ‘Father gives approval ... the Spirit cooperates in the Incarnation with the Son who effected it.’³ He also stated that ‘the divine *Logos* in His Incarnation descended into ... the earth ... while being Himself perfectly unmoved.’⁴

As the *Logos* became flesh, Christ is a union between God and a man. Christ is therefore ‘truly God and truly man’ according to the Ecumenical Councils⁵ and St Maximus describing the union in Christ as ‘the ineffable and incomprehensible hypostatic union between divinity and humanity.’⁶ As there is no change of the *Logos* in the Godhead, the distinction between members of the Trinity would not be affected by the Incarnation.

To maintain the distinction between God and the universe, there has to be a distinction between the divine *Logos* and the human Christ. Christ therefore has two natures, divine and human, in one person as confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon, 451.⁷ Accordingly, St

¹ Jn 1.1.

² Jn 1.14.

³ St Maximus, *Or Dom* 2; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 103.

⁴ St Maximus, *Gnost* 2.24; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 152.

⁵ Council of Chalcedon, 451; trans. DEC, p. 86 and the Third Council of Constantinople, 680-681; trans. DEC, p. 127.

⁶ St Maximus, *Thal* 60; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 123.

St Maximus, *Amb* 42.6; PG 91, col. 1320B; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 131: ‘Christ thus became wholly God (and) wholly man.’

⁷ Council of Chalcedon, 451; trans. DEC, p. 86.

Maximus stated that Christ is ‘one person (*hypostasis*, ὑπόστασις) composite of both natures (*physeos*, φύσεως)’⁸ and ‘two operations’ (*energeiai*, ἐνέργειαι).⁹ Because of the distinction, St Maximus defended dyoenergism¹⁰ which maintains the distinction between the divine and the limited human energies of Christ as opposed to monoenergism favoured by the Emperor Heraclius (610-641) and the eastern patriarchates at that time. For example, St Maximus stated that ‘it is not permitted to say that there is simply “one”, or a “natural”, energy common to Christ’s divinity and flesh.’¹¹

As the union between the divine *Logos* and the human Christ, Christ is a bridge across the gulf between God and the universe. However, as God is the greater party, the human Christ follows the divine *Logos* to the limits of the universe¹² and Christ ‘in no way acts through one of His natures in separation from the other but ... truly both.’¹³ In other words, where relevant, Christ’s energies must be ‘natural’ ones compatible with the divine energies and the love of God.

The Incarnation: The Two Nativities:

It is necessary to ascertain the nature of the Incarnation (σάρκωσις). In the second anathema against the Three Chapters attached to the Second Council of Constantinople, 553, it was decreed that ‘the Word of God (Christ) has two nativities, that which is before all ages from the Father outside time and without a body, and secondly that nativity of these latter days when the Word of God came down from the heavens and was made flesh of holy and glorious Mary, Mother of God.’¹⁴ The first nativity is a divine act and the second is the equivalent earthly event. Accordingly, St Maximus indicated that the human Christ accepted a twofold origin: His ‘creaturely origin’ (*genesis*, γενεσις) and His ‘human birth’ (*gennesis*, γεννήσις)¹⁵ corresponding to His real existence and actual existence.

The equivalent earthly Incarnation would make present the equivalent divine act by the power of the Spirit so that the Spirit must be involved in the earthly Incarnation. Scripture confirms this by making Christ’s earthly Incarnation dependent upon the Spirit at the Visitation.¹⁶

Also, like all acts of God in the universe, God acts without partiality through the universe rather than manipulates it. It is therefore essential that the earthly Incarnation involved the universe. Furthermore, Christ could not be human as well as divine without the human contribution provided by Mary, the Mother of God. Accordingly, St Maximus stated that ‘the *Logos* ‘has taken flesh of the Holy Spirit and the holy Mother of God ... and has become man in perfection.’¹⁷ If Mary was not truly human, Christ would be a merely a tool of God rather than a union with Him. The earthly nativity is essentially an offering of Mary to God but,

⁸ St Maximus, *Thal* 60; PG 90; trans. BL-CM, p. 123

⁹ St Maximus, *Th Pol* 6; PG 91; trans. BL-CM, p. 174 (See also *Thal* 60, col. 621A).

¹⁰ Approved by the Third Council of Constantinople of 680-681.

¹¹ St Maximus, *Amb* 5.23; PG 91, col. 1057B; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 53.

¹² St Maximus, *Th Pol* 7; PG 91; trans. LOU-MC, p. 182.

Cf. Jn 14.6: Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.’

¹³ St Maximus, *Amb* 5.17; PG 91, col. 1056A; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 49.

¹⁴ Second Council of Constantinople, 553, trans. DEC, p. 114.

¹⁵ St Maximus, *Amb* 42.3; PG 91, col. 1316D; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 125.

¹⁶ Mt 1. 18, 20: ‘Mary ... was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit ... The child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’

¹⁷ St Maximus, *Ep* 15; PG 91, col. 553; trans. Aidan Nichols, *Byzantine Gospel* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark) p. 87.

because it involves the universe, we can therefore state that Mary is an offering of the universe to God.

The Incarnation and the *Parousia*:

A union between God and the human Christ appears to show that God is acting with partiality. However, if the unity with Christ is considered in the context with the unity of all things at the *Parousia*, the objection is overcome. Because the union between God and the human Christ and between God and other things, Christ bridges the distinction between God and the universe. The divine act of the Incarnation is therefore fundamentally the *Parousia* itself.

Accordingly, St Maximus stated ‘let us become gods through Him, for on that account, He became man’¹⁸ and ‘the *Logos* (Word) of God ... became ... man ... to make men gods.’¹⁹ He therefore termed the Incarnation as ‘the beautiful exchange.’²⁰ St Athanasius stated that Christ ‘became man so that we might become God’²¹ and St Irenaeus stated that ‘the *Logos* ... became what we are, that He might bring us to be ... what He is Himself.’²² St Maximus also noted the importance of the Incarnation regarding the way to the goal by stating that (Christ) ‘consented to be embodied (so that) He might gradually *gather* those who followed Him to Himself.’²³ Accordingly, St Maximus described Christ as ‘hypostatically realizing out of *love for man* the union with the flesh.’²⁴ The attainment of the goal therefore depends on human persons themselves and not merely God.

The Cross

Death is a very ordinary event so that it has little long term significance. Even if someone underwent death for the common good, it would have no value to that person because all good works belong to God. To expect a person’s sacrifice to atone for the sins of others, the notion of the scapegoat, is therefore absurd.

Nevertheless, the principal emphasis in scripture regarding the Cross is its aspect of sacrifice. We should therefore briefly review the situation before the earthly Incarnation. At that time, while God often despaired of Israel as a whole, the God of the Old Testament was a forgiving God.²⁵ However, He expected repentance.²⁶ We would therefore expect that those who loved Him, repented of their sins, abandoned their wills to His will and worked with Him towards the fulfilment of His Plan would be forgiven their sins. We would also usually expect that forgiveness would be given by someone who has suffered loss from another in imitation of God’s love. At the very least, sin would be a warning to a person that contrary influences have weakened that person’s position on the natural path which could result in a state of ill-being and non-existence. In that case, the sinner would have suffered loss. On the other hand, God, as an infinite being, would remain undiminished although a part of His

¹⁸ St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 43; PG 90; trans. ACW-MC, p. 134.

¹⁹ St Maximus, *Gnost* 2.25; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 152.

²⁰ St Maximus, *Amb* 7.22; PG 91, col. 1084C; trans. NC-AMB1, p. 107.

²¹ St Athanasius, *De Incarn* 54.3; PG 25, col. 192B; trans. Cat 460.

²² After St Irenaeus of Lyons, *Haer* 5, pref.; PG 7, col. 1035; trans. ANF1, p. 526.

²³ St Maximus, *Amb* 33.2; PG 91, col. 1285D-1288A; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 65.

²⁴ St Maximus, *Or Dom* 2; PG 90, col. 876CD; trans. CWS-MC, p. 103.

²⁵ Isa 43.25, 44.22; Ps 86.5, 99.8, 102/103.4, Ezek 16.63; Micah 7.18.

²⁶ e.g. 1 Kings Ch 8.

universe could be lost from the *Pleroma*.

The Old Testament presents a divided opinion regarding sacrifices as while it refers to their practice²⁷ but it also states that they are unnecessary.²⁸ If the Judaic God was the God of Love and not a vengeful God, we would expect that God would not require sacrifices of the material kind. However, at the time of Christ on earth, there were still sacrifices at the temple.²⁹

A typical New Testament view is that (Christ) 'is the atoning sacrifice for our sins ... but also for the sins of the *whole world*.'³⁰ The reference to 'the whole world' implied that the Cross has a universal significance. Scripture also implied that the Cross is according to the divine Plan as it states that Christ was crucified 'according to a definite Plan and foreknowledge of God.'³¹ Similarly, scripture states that 'it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once (and) for all'³² which gives the impression that the Cross is not only part of the divine Plan but is self-sufficient for all things over all time. Other scriptural citations confirm the sacrificial nature of the Cross such as 'God put forward (Christ) as a sacrifice of atonement by His blood'³³ and 'we have redemption through ... the blood of Christ.'³⁴ It is because of this sacrifice that Christ is 'the source of eternal salvation' but, as the Cross is part of the divine Plan, it adds that it is because of the 'designation by God.'³⁵

This atoning sacrifice is a reconciliation between God and sinners as scripture states that 'God (erased) the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside by nailing it to the Cross.'³⁶ St Maximus stated that Christ is 'reconciling through the blood of the Cross what is in heaven and what is on earth'³⁷ in the context of human persons. Such a removal would align a person with 'Christ (who) is by nature sinless in both body and soul.'³⁸ Finally, Christ's sacrifice gives redemption as scripture states that Christ 'gave Himself up for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity,'³⁹ a 'redemption through His blood'⁴⁰ a redemption which is 'forgiveness for sins.'⁴¹

The concept that a sacrifice is necessary to reconcile God to a sinful world implies that there was a serious division between God and his imperfect universe which would negate any divine Plan for God to unite with the universe. Moreover, unless that sacrifice was applied universally, it would have no value. However, if it was universal, such a division would be stillborn and reconciliation would apply over all time and union with God would be possible. The universal sacrifice of Christ and the divine Plan are therefore essentially linked.

As the divine Plan is based upon divine love, the earthly sacrifice of Christ and its divine

²⁷ Ex 5.17.

²⁸ Ps 40.6, 51.16, Hos 6.6.

²⁹ Jn 2.16.

³⁰ 1 Jn 2.2.

³¹ Acts 2.23.

³² Heb 10.10.

³³ Rom 3.25.

³⁴ Eph 1.7.

³⁵ Heb 5.9-10.

³⁶ Col 2.13-14.

³⁷ St Maximus, *Or Dom*; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 103.

³⁸ St Maximus, *Gnost* 2.84; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 166.

³⁹ Titus 2.14.

⁴⁰ Eph 1.7.

⁴¹ Col 1.7.

equivalent must be kenotic in character. The divine equivalent of Christ's earthly sacrifice cannot be the death of God as He is infinite and eternal. However, a God of infinite kenotic love would be compatible with Christ's sacrifice. *The sacrifice must therefore reflect the nature of God Himself* so that the divine act behind the Cross is the universal sacrifice of God. Christ's sacrifice reflects the divine sacrifice because Christ is divine and therefore universal so His sacrifice affects all time. The earthly Cross is therefore within a larger Sacrifice that applied to the whole world.⁴² Therefore, even when the first sin occurred, the sacrifice of Christ would ensure that when God was found in the universe, He would be the God of kenotic love who forgives sin and imposes no penalties.

In other words, God never was the vengeful God because the Sacrifice of Christ is eternal. Perhaps we should ask whether we could merely state that God is the God of Love without having a sacrifice. This is however impossible because the task of the human Christ is to project the kenotic love of God as He also is the God of Love. Ratzinger accordingly states that 'the Cross ... is the expression of the radical nature of the love that gives itself completely' rather than 'a human sacrifice (to a) unrelenting ... God.'⁴³

Resurrection from the dead

We have ascertained that as God is infinitely greater than the universe and human persons are dependent upon God's infinite mercy, union with God depends upon the power of His Spirit who abides in the universe. The Resurrection of Christ is the archetype for making present the *Parousia* as scripture states that 'if Christ had not been raised ... your faith has been in vain.'⁴⁴

Consistently, it is the power of the Spirit of God which raises the human Christ. Scripture confirms this by stating that 'God raised Him up having freed Him from death because it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.'⁴⁵ It also connects with the individual by stating that 'if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through the Spirit that dwells in you.'⁴⁶ In the case of Christ, there is already a union between God and the human Christ but, by His Resurrection, He demonstrates that union for the benefit of those who accept it.

As a resurrection would be meaningless without death, the Resurrection is essentially coupled with death.⁴⁷ The close association of death and resurrection of Christ is shown by early Christian crosses which have a circle symbolizing the resurrection superimposed upon them. Examples of such crosses include the Maltese cross found in Cappadocia, the Celtic cross⁴⁸ and the ankh cross in Egypt. As the death and resurrection of Christ are one spiritual event, we would expect that the death and resurrection of human persons would also be one spiritual event.

St Maximus also connected death and resurrection but implied that the Resurrection of Christ has a universality affecting the whole universe. He accordingly stated that Christ

⁴² Based upon St Maximus, *Thal* 36; PG 90, col. 381B; trans. VB-CL, p. 310.

⁴³ Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 1990, 2000) p. 282, 281.

⁴⁴ 1 Cor 15.14.

⁴⁵ Acts 2.24.

⁴⁶ Rom 8.11.

⁴⁷ 1 Cor 15.22.

⁴⁸ and similar Armenian crosses.

‘loosed the power of death and bestowed upon the entire world His resurrection unto life.’⁴⁹ This effect is also over all time as St Maximus stated that Christ ‘by His death ... brought (Adam) back to life again,’⁵⁰ making it clear that Adam was released from *Sheol-Hades* as shown by early Byzantine icons. Similarly, an Eastern Rite Easter vigil hymn is ‘Christ has risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and those in the tomb, He has given life.’

The universality of Christ as a union between God and all things and the movement towards that union

St Irenaeus emphasised the universality of the Resurrection even further by stating that Christ ‘recapitulates in Himself all the dispersed peoples dating back to Adam, all tongues and the whole race of humankind, along with Adam himself.’⁵¹ We conclude that as behind Christ’s earthly Resurrection is an aspect of the divine act of the *Parousia* made present and that the Resurrection of Christ is the archetype of all resurrections over all time. This has considerable support from scripture. The most direct verse is Ephesians 1.9-10:

‘According to (God’s) good pleasure that He set forth in Christ, as a Plan for the fullness of time, to gather up *all things* in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.’⁵²

This passage is notable in that it includes *all things* and not merely humankind. 1 Corinthians 15.28 also uses the term *all things* thus:

‘When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to the One who put *all things* in subjection to Him, so that God may be all in all.’⁵³

Similarly, John 12.32 states that

‘And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw *all people/things* to Myself.’⁵⁴

Colossians 1.20 is similar to Ephesians 1.10 but brings in the aspect of reconciliation. It states that:

‘Through (Christ), God was pleased to reconcile to Himself *all things*, whether on earth or

⁴⁹ St Maximus, *Lib Asc* 1.16; PG 90; trans. ACW-MC, p. 112.

⁵⁰ St Maximus, *Char* 2.93; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 60.

⁵¹ St Irenaeus, *Haer* 3.22.3; trans. Kelly-ECD, p. 173.

⁵² Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* 1.3, 1964; trans. DEC, p. 850.

Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* 7.48, 1964; trans. DEC, p. 887.

Second Vatican Council, *Ad gentes* 1.3, 1965; trans. DEC, p. 1012.

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes* Part 1, 3.38, 1965; trans. DEC, p. 1091.

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes* Part 1, 4.45, 1965; trans. DEC, p. 1099.

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes* Part 2, 2.58, 1965; trans. DEC, p. 1109.

Second Vatican Council, *Ad gentes* 1.2, 1965; trans. DEC, p. 1011.

Teilhard, *From Cosmos to Cosmogogenesis*, 1951; 7AE, p. 264.

⁵³ Second Vatican Council, *Ad gentes* 3.21, 1965; trans. DEC, p. 1029.

Teilhard, *Pantheism and Christianity*, 1923; 10CE, p. 75.

⁵⁴ Second Vatican Council, *Dei verbum* 5.17, 1965; trans. DEC, p. 978.

Teilhard, *Forma Christi*, 1918; 12WW, p. 254.

in heaven, by making peace through the blood of the Cross.⁵⁵

As Christ is both God and man, the unity in Himself must apply to the whole universe as God cannot unite with only a single part of the universe. As Christ *Logos*, He therefore possesses a universality to be the Archetype of all unions with God. Those things with *logoi* are therefore ‘raised up with’ Christ⁵⁶ and ‘made ... alive ... in Christ’⁵⁷ confirming the essential connection between the *Parousia* and the Resurrection. Kabasilas confirmed this by stating that Christ is the ‘goal of all things.’⁵⁸ He must also be involved with Creation because as He is the goal of the universe and the act of Creation determines that the universe is of a type which is able to journey towards that goal of the Universal Christ.

In a sense therefore, Christ encompasses the universe by the gathering of its parts in Himself. This is confirmed by St Maximus by stating that the *Logos* ‘encompassed the extremes of the whole creation (and) joined them around Himself’ and ‘recapitulated ... all things ... in Himself ... completed by the mutual coming together of all its members’⁵⁹ and also that ‘to fulfil the great purpose of God the Father, (Christ) recapitulated all things, both in heaven and on earth, in Himself, in whom they also had been created.’⁶⁰ We can therefore state that, at the *Parousia*, Christ would have ‘completed the whole Plan of God the Father.’⁶¹ This gathering is not limited to the *Parousia* itself but over all time as the gathering is ‘gradual’, as noted above.

Even though Christ encompasses the union between God and the universe, He does not take over the role of God the Father. The principle of the Father as Source remains despite the fact that the Universal Christ is the divine Plan or *Logos*. St Paul keeps the relationship between God and Christ in perspective by stating that ‘all things (will be) subjected to Him ... so that *God* may be all in all.’⁶²

We ascertained in Chapter Two that God shares His love with those who love Him and all things. In that sense, the *Logos* is involved with that standard because the Trinity as a whole is the God of Love. Because Christ is both divine and human, He projects that love to humankind.

Christ as Judge

God forces no one to unite with Him so some will be separated from Him. The standard of Christ is based upon the law of love which He shares with the Father and the Spirit. The separation of those with ill-being from those destined for the *Pleroma* is based upon that love. It is therefore legitimate to regard Christ as a judge without taking away that role from God the Father. While St Maximus stated that ‘the Father ... has given all judgement to the

⁵⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* 7.48, 1964; trans. DEC, p. 887.

In the same context, Teilhard uses words such as ‘restoration’ and ‘sanctified’ in *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, p. 58.

⁵⁶ Eph 2.6.

⁵⁷ Eph 2.4-5.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Kabasilas, *The Life in Christ* 6.12 trans. (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974) p. 191.

⁵⁹ St Maximus, *Amb* 41.9; PG 91, col. 1312A; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 115.

⁶⁰ Eph 1.10; *Amb* 41.6; PG 91, col. 1308D; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 111.

⁶¹ St Maximus, *Amb* 41.9; PG 91, col. 1309D; trans. NC-AMB2, p. 113.

⁶² 1 Cor 15.28.

Son,⁶³ there is therefore no conflict between the roles of God and Christ at the *Parousia*.

Describing Christ as Judge is reasonable because His human nature is subordinate to His divine nature so He would be the standard for what is within time. Taken in isolation, such a standard in isolation would be practically impossible implying that the Incarnation changed a forgiving God into an unforgiving God.

However, the Councils also state that Christ has reconciled us to God with the forgiveness of sin through the Cross. A human Christ on the Cross as an earthly event could not do this but a divine Christ with the divine equivalent of the Cross could forgive sins as the divine equivalent of the Cross is the infinite kenotic love of God. There appears to be a problem with the strong contrast between the impossible standard of Christ and the *apokatastasis*, the latter implying that sin had no importance.

However, because of the kenotic nature of the divine love, anyone who rejects the love of God in favour of the slavery of self-love would not be forced by God to take the natural path towards Him. Sin is therefore important because it causes falls from the natural path and separation from God. The choice between self-love and acceptance of the divine love of all things following God and Christ would therefore be crucial.

The Second Coming:

Christ is clearly present at the *Parousia* because He encompasses it but the *Parousia* has no particular time but in the universe as it is ever imminent so it is described as ever 'near' and 'unexpected' at least as far as humankind is concerned.⁶⁴

Scripture is rather confusing regarding what is termed the Second Coming implying that it comprises two apparently linked events.⁶⁵ The first is the meeting of Christ with those who are 'dead' and the second with those 'who are alive.' Both these events appear to occur within the lifetime of this planet or at its demise.

The death of humankind as a whole would involve individual deaths and would be a making present of the *Parousia* in the usual manner. It could be argued that, in a sense, Christ would come to them as their goal. The meeting of Christ with those who are alive could be either deification prior to death or a beginning of a golden age with Christ in the universe. When scripture states that 'all who are in graves will hear (the) voice (of) the Son of Man,'⁶⁶ it could imply a general resurrection. On balance, it appears that the Second Coming is an aspect of the divine act of the *Parousia* rather than directly coupled with an earthly event.

⁶³ St Maximus, *Char* 3.54; PG 90; trans. CWS-MC, p. 68.

⁶⁴ 1 Pet 4.7: 'The end of all things is near'.

Lk 12.40: 'At an hour (one would) not expect'. Also Mt 24.44.

1 Thess 5.2: 'Like a thief in the night'.

Lk 21.27-28: 'the Son of Man coming ... because your redemption is drawing near'.

⁶⁵ 1 Thess 4.16-17.

⁶⁶ Jn 5.28.

B. CHRIST AND HIS ACTS ACCORDING TO TEILHARD

Historical background to the Universal Christ

This historical background was provided by Fr Michael Day:

Teilhard rediscovered a precious tradition which his theological training had unfortunately and perhaps significantly, in some way by-passed i.e. the tradition of the early Greek Fathers who understood the cosmic dimensions of Christianity. In Teilhard's Journal we find Teilhard beginning to rediscover, through his search for the meaning of the cosmos, the Universal Christ of St Paul. If Teilhard had studied the Greek Fathers during his course at Hastings he would not have had the same sense of being a 'novateur'. He would have found himself at home with St Irenaeus who saw the whole of creation 'recapitulated' in Christ, the 'Fulfiller' of the cosmos. He would have felt at home with St Athanasius, 'the Father of Orthodoxy' who saw Christ's work in the cosmos as a continuation of His resurrection; with St Gregory of Nyssa for whom Adam stood for 'everyman'; with Maximus the Confessor for whom 'Christ is the Centre upon whom all lines converge.'

St Clement of Alexandria, St Gregory Nazianzus, and St Cyril of Alexandria all wrote of the Universal Christ in terms reminiscent of Teilhard's later formulations.

This vital tradition, preserved in the East, was over-shadowed in the West after the eighth century; there was a kind of eclipse of the cosmic dimension in Christology. By the time Teilhard began his studies, theology, as taught in schools, had little to say about Christ's universal presence, or of the fulfilment of the creation in the Risen Christ. Had it been otherwise Teilhard would not have to work so hard to re-establish the relation of Christ to the cosmos. Instead he found in his contemporaries a basic distrust of this world inspired by an 'other-worldly' spirituality.⁶⁷

The work of the Spirit, Logos and Christ

Teilhard stated that, instead of the Spirit, 'the Word (*Logos*) penetrates matter itself⁶⁸ and the 'Redeemer penetrated all things' but the Redeemer is Christ.⁶⁹ Teilhard also stated that 'You (Jesus) have filled the universe.'⁷⁰ He also attributed this filling to the 'Centre'⁷¹ which both St Maximus⁷² and Teilhard⁷³ agree is Christ. At the union of God and the universe, we unite with God *in* Christ by the power of the Spirit but Teilhard merely states that 'Jesus is the one who unites.'⁷⁴ Moreover, we ascertained in Chapter One that, according to Teilhard, the divine energies are generated by Christ so it appears that he combined the roles of the Spirit

⁶⁷ Fr Michael Day, 'Teilhard's Rediscovery of the Universal Christ' from *Teilhard Review*, Vol 11.3, Oct 1976, p.111

⁶⁸ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 19.

⁶⁹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 78.

⁷⁰ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 89.

⁷¹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 75.

⁷² St Maximus, *Amb* 7; PG 91, col. 1081C; trans. BL-CM, p. 57.

⁷³ Teilhard, *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, p. 70: 'Jesus ... the Centre to which all things are moving'.

Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1918; 13HM, p. 205: Christ ... the universal Centre.

⁷⁴ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 109.

and the *Logos* in the latter in the form of Christ. We can conclude that Teilhard did not negate the role of the Spirit but transferred it to Christ thus coalescing the roles of the Christ *Logos* and Spirit.

The divine acts behind the works of Christ

In Chapter Three, we ascertained that Teilhard considered that there were several divine acts or Universal Events including Creation, Incarnation and the *Parousia* or Redemption. However, it appeared that the Incarnation was fundamentally an aspect of the *Parousia*. The most important works of Christ are usually regarded as the Cross and Resurrection and, as Christ is God as well as man, we would expect they would have divine equivalents.

The Incarnation and the Parousia

It is important that, while Christ is the *Logos*, His human body is essential so that He is a true bridge between God and the universe and, as a universal, He encompasses both. Teilhard regarded the Incarnation as a Universal Event in its own right and therefore regarded it as ‘an act co-extensive with the duration of the world’⁷⁵ and is an ‘unceasing operation.’⁷⁶ However, the divine act of the *Parousia* is the union between God and the universe which has an effect over all time. The Incarnation and *Parousia* must be the same divine act and from a within time point of view the Incarnation is within the *Parousia*.

Teilhard however implied that the opposite was the case. For example, he stated that the Incarnation is responsible for the unification⁷⁷ and completion⁷⁸ of the universe. Also, he stated that *Parousia* is the culmination of the Incarnation.⁷⁹ These citations implied that the Incarnation was the prime divine act rather than the *Parousia*. This is however a fine point as they are fundamentally the same act. Also, he stated that the Incarnation is the ‘final term’⁸⁰ of Creation but it is surely the *Parousia* is the goal of the universe. Perhaps he was trying to emphasise the role of Christ in the *Parousia*.

Teilhard concluded that ‘the Universal Christ of St Paul, has neither meaning nor value in our eyes except as an expansion of the Christ who was born of Mary and who died on the Cross.’⁸¹ As the Universal Christ encompasses the universal union between God and the universe, He must therefore be the Archetype for all such unions following the union of the Incarnation.

Similarly, Teilhard stated that the Incarnation underlies progress,⁸² transforms⁸³ the universe, and links all movement⁸⁴ while it is actually the power of the Spirit which unites in Christ and movement is due to relationships with God, the power of the Spirit according to the Way of Christ. In these citations, his use of the term Incarnation could be regarded as

⁷⁵ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 64.

⁷⁶ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 20.

⁷⁷ Teilhard, *Sketch of a Personalistic Universe*, 1936; 6HE, p. 91.

⁷⁸ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 20.

⁷⁹ Teilhard, *Two Principles and a Corollary*; 11TF, p. 153: ‘The mystery of the Incarnation culminates ... in the unique supreme event ... the *Parousia*.’

⁸⁰ Teilhard, *Historical Representations of Original Sin*, 1922; 10CE, p. 53.

⁸¹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 79.

⁸² Teilhard, *The Place of Technology*, 1947; 7AE, p. 162.

⁸³ Teilhard, *Pantheism and Christianity*, 1923; 10CE, p. 73.

⁸⁴ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 25.

being so broad that its meaning may be thought to have lost its precision.

The Cross and Resurrection of the dead

There was some logic in Teilhard's omission of the Cross from his Universal Events listed in Chapter Three because it is difficult to define an divine equivalent even though scripture regards it as universal. Nevertheless, he regarded the death of Christ as coupled with the divine act of Redemption⁸⁵ which is the removal of all impediments to union with God reflecting the infinite mercy of God. Furthermore, Teilhard regarded Redemption as an aspect of the *Parousia*. As Redemption is an act of mercy and the *Parousia* is the act of union representing the fulfilment of God's love for the universe, we must conclude that Teilhard understood that Cross is coupled with the divine love.

Apart from its revelation of God, a characteristic of the Cross is its close coupling with the Resurrection. Teilhard acknowledged that the Resurrection of Christ is the Archetype for the resurrection of the human person by stating that 'Christ has conquered death only ... by reversing its sting.'⁸⁶ Also, he coupled the death of Christ with 'Redemption.'⁸⁷ He also stated that 'Christ ... vanquished death.'⁸⁸

We ascertained in Chapter Two that Teilhard considered that the Resurrection as an aspect of the *Parousia*. Consequently Teilhard stated that the Resurrection is 'something ... much greater than that (as) it is a tremendous cosmic event'⁸⁹ something (but) it is something ... much greater than that (as) it is a tremendous presumably assuming that the Resurrection would make present the *Parousia*. There appears to be no reason to doubt that Teilhard's view of the Resurrection was any different from the understanding according to scripture and the patristic tradition.

In the context of death, Teilhard stated that there will be a 'loving fire to consummate our *completion* in union' for a human being.⁹⁰ Such a 'fire' would usually be associated with the Spirit. He also stated that 'death ... can become a marvellous instrument of spiritual fulfilment and union.'⁹¹ As the *Parousia* is the union between God and a human person on the natural path, the death of a person makes the *Parousia* present within time. Moreover, Teilhard coupled death with the other attributes of the *Parousia* such as deification, eternal life and resurrection. For example, in the context of death, he stated that God will 'finally penetrate us'⁹² implying *deification*. He also states that 'death becomes a *resurrection*.'⁹³ He also stated that 'death is turned into *life*'⁹⁴ thus linking the two. He also regarded death as a *victory*⁹⁵ which implies more strongly that death and *completion* are coincidental. We conclude that the Resurrection is equivalent to the *Parousia*.

⁸⁵ Teilhard, *Some General Views on the Essence of Christianity*, 1939; 10CE, p. 135.

⁸⁶ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 43. Cf. 1 Cor 15.55.

⁸⁷ Teilhard, *Some General Views on the Essence of Christianity*, 1939; 10CE, p. 135.

⁸⁸ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 63.

⁸⁹ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 63.

⁹⁰ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 59.

⁹¹ Teilhard, *The Sense of Man*, 1929; 11TF, p. 32.

⁹² Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 50: 'God must ... make room for Himself ... emptying us, if he is finally to penetrate us ... It will put us into the state needed if the divine fire is to descend upon us.'

⁹³ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 75.

⁹⁴ Teilhard, *The Priest*, 1918; 12WW, p. 213.

⁹⁵ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 46: 'We are like soldiers who fall during an assault which leads to peace. We are therefore part of the victory' .

The Universal Christ as Archetype of union and movement towards it

Unlike St Maximus, Teilhard did not use the terms *Logos* and *logoi*. He referred to Christ frequently but not as *Logos* so it is difficult to ascertain whether he is referring to the *Logos*, the human Christ or both. Usually, he means both.

Teilhard described the 'Body of Christ' as being 'in motion ... as St John'⁹⁶ implying that he recognised that eschatological movement resulted from the principle of the *Logos*. Strictly speaking, the 'Body of Christ' should have read 'Universal Christ' because 'Body of Christ' is only His human aspect. Teilhard particularly emphasised the Pauline epistles⁹⁷ regarding the Universal Christ, who has 'a cosmic body that extends throughout the universe'⁹⁸ and is 'co-extensive with physical expanse of time and space.'⁹⁹

As Christ is the incarnate *Logos*, He must be not only the Archetype of union but also of the movement to that union. Accordingly, Teilhard frequently quoted St Paul¹⁰⁰ who stated that *in Christ* 'we live and *move* and have our being.'¹⁰¹ Teilhard showed in His person the compatibility of the divine and natural energies demonstrating that God can work through human persons.

Teilhard stated that 'in a sort of participation in the divine life, each individual will find, by conscious union with Supreme Being, the consummation of his own personality.'¹⁰² The context of this citation is that the Supreme Being is not God but Christ. Teilhard defined the *Pleroma* as 'an intimate union with our Lord Jesus Christ'¹⁰³ rather than one with God in Christ. However, Teilhard defined the *Pleroma* as the 'mysterious synthesis of the uncreated and the created, the grand completion ... of the universe in God.'¹⁰⁴ While Teilhard often failed to differentiate between God and Christ, this citation showed that it is God not Christ who unites at the *Parousia*. Finally, Teilhard indicates that 'the union (is) *in Christ*'¹⁰⁵ and the world will be completed 'in *Christo Jesu*.'¹⁰⁶ He described the union as 'hypostatic'¹⁰⁷ bringing it into line with the union of God and man in Christ. The nature of the *Parousia* is further clarified by St Paul who states that 'we will be transformed so our bodies may be conformed to the body of His glory'¹⁰⁸ implying that we shall be like Christ who is Himself a union between God and man.

Teilhard appeared to equate Christ with the *Pleroma* by stating that 'Christ (is the)

⁹⁶ Teilhard, *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁷ e.g, Eph 1.10.

⁹⁸ Teilhard, *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, p. 58; Also, 13HM, p. 127: 'I believe everything around me is the Body and Blood of the Word.'

⁹⁹ Teilhard, *Sketch of a Personalistic Universe*, 1936; 6HE, p. 91.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Teilhard, *Pantheism and Christianity*, 1923; 10CE, p. 75.

¹⁰¹ Acts 17.28.

¹⁰² Teilhard, *Social Heredity and Progress*, 1945; 5FM, p. 34.

¹⁰³ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p.8.

¹⁰⁴ Teilhard, *The Awaited Word*, 1940; 11TF, p. 97.

¹⁰⁵ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927, 4DM, p. 14: 'Complete the world in *Christo Jesu*'.

Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927, 4DM, p. 19: 'Completed in union'.

¹⁰⁶ Teilhard; *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Teilhard, *Pantheism and Christianity*, 1923; 10CE, p. 69.

¹⁰⁸ Phil 3.21.

synthesis of the created universe and its Creator.¹⁰⁹ We should perhaps add that the Universal Christ encompasses the idealised universe excluding its imperfections relative to God. Christ is therefore the goal of eschatological movement at the *Parousia* but, as Christ is universal, that goal is also universal. We ascertained in Chapter Three that the *Pleroma* is dynamic. Teilhard expressed this in terms of the Universal Christ by describing Christ as the ‘active centre of the *Pleroma*.’¹¹⁰ He therefore described it as a ‘living structure’¹¹¹ and a ‘living unity ... in Christ’¹¹²

Teilhard stated that ‘through (Christ) everything is ... sanctified’¹¹³ although strictly speaking it would be preferable to say that it is the Spirit sanctifies. Teilhard also stated that ‘through Your own Incarnation, my God, *all matter is henceforth incarnate*’¹¹⁴ although he should have said *potentially* incarnate. These two citations imply that the universe is moving towards God and is therefore not fundamentally flawed. As Teilhard stated that *all matter* will be incarnate, he implied that the universe as a whole will unite with God. In that case, the nature of Creation must be of a type which would permit such a union.

Because the universe will unite with God in the Universal Christ, it must move towards that unity according to *Logos* theology. Teilhard accordingly stated that the ‘universe (is) in the process of transformation’¹¹⁵ and ‘unification’¹¹⁶ in the Universal Christ. As this movement is towards a goal in Christ, it is accordingly described by Teilhard as a ‘convergence towards Christ’¹¹⁷ even though Christ is already present. Similarly, Teilhard termed Christ as a ‘Centre of Universal Convergence’¹¹⁸ and states that the Ultra-Centre of convergence ... is not simply potential but actual.¹¹⁹ He also stated that ‘Christ ... gathers up the whole of Creation’¹²⁰ thus showing that the Universal Christ is the Centre and Archetype for the natural energies. These citations therefore agree with the principle that the universe is in a state of becoming.

Teilhard received much praise from his later followers. For example, Francoeur stated that ‘it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Teilhard has invested the belief in the Second Coming (*Parousia*) with an importance and significance it has not possessed since the end of the first century.’¹²¹ Similarly, Raven pointed out that ‘Teilhard ... is in fact calling us not to a novelty but to ... the earliest ... Christian doctrine; to the religious mysticism of the prologue to the Fourth Gospel’¹²² presumably meaning *Logos* theology. These statements confirm that belief of eschatological movement to a goal in the western tradition was rare and the loss of that belief was a deviation from the patristic tradition. What was lost was the

¹⁰⁹ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1918; 13HM, p. 201.

¹¹⁰ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 84.

¹¹¹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 114.

¹¹² Teilhard, *The Humanity of Christ and the Faithful*, 1920; 10CW, p. 19.

¹¹³ Teilhard, *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, p. 58.

¹¹⁴ Teilhard, *The Mass on the World*, 1923; 13HM, p. 123.

¹¹⁵ Teilhard, *Christianity and Evolution*, 1933; 10CE, p. 78.

¹¹⁶ Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 1940, rev 1948; 1HP, p. 213.

¹¹⁷ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 70; Also 12WW, p. 208.

¹¹⁸ Teilhard, *Some Reflections on the Conversion of the World*, 1936; 9SC, p. 122; Also, 5FM, p. 136; 9SC, pp. 34, 53; 12WW, p. 171; 13HM, p. 50.

¹¹⁹ Teilhard, *Outline of a Dialectic of Spirit*, 1946; 7AE, p. 146.

¹²⁰ Teilhard, *The Christic*, 1955; 13HM, p. 93. Cf. Eph 1.10.

¹²¹ Robert T. Francoeur, ed., *The World of Teilhard* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961) p. 183.

¹²² Canon Charles Raven, ‘Orthodoxy and Science’, ed. Neville Braybrook, *Teilhard de Chardin: Pilgrim of the Future* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1964) p. 53.

essence of the dynamic aspect of the patristic tradition which made Christianity the most exciting religion that humankind has ever discovered. Accordingly, Thomas King states that 'Teilhard ... has made Christianity the most exciting thing on the block'¹²³ although the notion of movement is actually based upon the prologue of St John's gospel as developed by the early fathers.

Teilhard's transforming Christ

We have discussed Teilhard's 'transforming' God but we also have to discuss his 'transforming Christ' in order to ascertain whether or not Teilhard is compromising the distinction between God and the universe. Teilhard stated that 'Christ continues to develop,'¹²⁴ 'Christ first made Himself cosmic and then ... absolute,'¹²⁵ and 'Christ ... has not reached the peak of His growth'¹²⁶ and also used the term 'ever-greater Christ.'¹²⁷ He also states that 'it is through collaboration (with us) that He (Christ) stimulates in us that (He) is consummated and attains His plenitude,'¹²⁸ and 'with ... our works, we labour ... to build the *Pleroma* ... to bring Christ (to) completion.'¹²⁹ Teilhard also stated that 'Christ gains *physically* from the earth's processes.'¹³⁰ Considering that God and the *Logos* are both divine and unchangeable, it is necessary to ascertain what Teilhard means by Christ in the context of movement. For example, it is possible that, by Christ, Teilhard actually meant the Universal Christ excluding the *Logos* Himself. This tentative conclusion is supported by the fact that, after examining the context of the statement by Teilhard that 'who *was* and who *is* (and) *shall* be,'¹³¹ it is not God whom he is describing, but the material aspect of the Universal Christ.

Also, Teilhard stated that 'Christ is physically active in order to *control* things.'¹³² This could imply that Christ as *Logos* is forcing the *Parousia* upon the universe with acts within time. This would be an interference with time so that *Logos* would not be God.

Even if the problem is due to a misconception of time, we should regard Teilhard's apparent error as a serious lack of care. Teilhard should have made it clear that the transformation of Christ is from a point of view within time and therefore not in the Godhead and that the universe that strives towards God is imperfect until it achieves union with Him. He should have stated that the Universal Christ is the union of God and the *idealized* universe.

Teilhard appeared to compromise the distinction between God and the universe when considering the divine aspect of Christ. Also, we have noted that he appeared to coalesce the roles of the *Logos* and Spirit. While these errors tended to confuse the principle of the Universal Christ, there was no doubt that Teilhard believed in the principle with great enthusiasm.

¹²³ Thomas M. King, *National Catholic Reporter*, 22 Apr 2005.

¹²⁴ Teilhard, *Introduction to the Christian Life*, 1944; 10CE, p. 152.

¹²⁵ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, p. 54.

¹²⁶ Teilhard, *Cosmic Life*, 1916; 12WW, p. 54.

¹²⁷ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, p. 55.

¹²⁸ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 20.

¹²⁹ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 20.

¹³⁰ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 59.

¹³¹ Teilhard, *The Heart of Matter*, 1950; 13HM, p. 56.

¹³² Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 59.

C. CHRIST AND ACTS CONTRARY TO THE PATRISTIC TRADITION

Ps 129/130.3: If You, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?

Threats to the humanity of Christ and the Mother of God

We have ascertained that the divine act of the Incarnation depends upon the *Logos* and Spirit. The earthly nativity which makes present the divine act depends upon the Spirit working through Mary, Mother of God as a co-worker with God. If Mary was not truly human, the earthly nativity would not be a true making present of the divine act of Incarnation.

The holiness of Mary became established in the early church as it was thought that otherwise she would be unworthy to bear a sinless Christ. However, the notion of original guilt discussed in Chapter Two causes difficulties in Mariology. If original guilt existed, it would be logical that she would always be free from it. The opinion of Duns Scotus (ca 1266 - 1308) was that she was preserved from original guilt by the merit of her Son. Both original guilt and merit were part of the judicial approach to sin. She would then not transmit sin from herself to her unborn child.¹³³ After much controversy, this principle became established in the western tradition.

The exemption of the Mother of God from original guilt would be a direct interference with the universe by God rather than working through it. Mary would not therefore possess a natural *human* strong love of God and a desire to fulfil her part in His Plan on her own account. Under these circumstances, she would therefore not be truly human. Such a notion would threaten His humanity. Furthermore, the angel would not have said that ‘you have found favour with God’ if He had already ensured that it would be so.¹³⁴ The notion that the Mother of God is an empty vessel appears to be confirmed by the Latin translation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed as follows:

Greek:	ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου
English equivalent:	from the Holy Spirit <i>and</i> the Virgin Mary
Latin:	<i>de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine</i>
English equivalent:	of the Holy Spirit <i>from</i> the Virgin Mary

Regarding her sainthood, there was never any impediment to it as it appears from scripture that she was always aware of her role in salvation history.

Christ as a sacrifice for the sin of Adam

Teilhard opposed the notion that the Cross as the expiation of the offence to God caused by Adam’s sin.¹³⁵ Teilhard stated that ‘in spite of the repeated assertion of St Paul and the Greek Fathers, Christ’s universal power over creation has hitherto been considered by theologians primarily (with) extrinsic and juridical aspect.’¹³⁶ He also stated that ‘the Cross is constantly

¹³³ See Anselm, *Virg Con* 17, Hopkins, p. 449.

¹³⁴ Lk 1.30.

¹³⁵ Teilhard, *Some Reflections on the Conversion of the World*, 1936; 9SC, p. 123.
Teilhard, *Christ the Evolver*, 1942; 10CE, p. 146.

¹³⁶ Teilhard, *Super-Humanity, Super-Christ, Super-Charity*, 1943; 9SC, pp. 165-66.

held up before us to remind us of our world's initial miscarriage'¹³⁷ because it was believed that 'the Cross ... is the expiation of (that) offence.'¹³⁸

According to Bernard of Clairvaux, Christ's death was therefore the means of 'rendering satisfaction to the Father' and 'the price of our redemption.'¹³⁹ This approach is also judicial as it implies that Adam's sin has a value which can be offset by another act with an equal or greater value. If Adam's sin required a sacrifice by Christ who is God, that sin must have a particularly greater significance rather than a typical sin. It is also based upon the assumption that the value of good and bad deeds were opposite. Such an approach is akin to Gnosticism in which good and evil are equal forces. We have already explained that the value of good deeds cannot be measured because they are due to God. Similarly, bad deeds have no value because the person committing them is no longer in the universe-with-God but in a universe of their own making. Likewise, the earthly event of the Cross would have no value but if the Cross has a universality, its effect would be over all time and infinite compared with both the sin of Adam and any other sin. If the Cross had no universal effect, Christ would not be universal and therefore not divine.

The above notion of Christ becoming incarnate because of Adam's sin contrasts with the position of Duns Scotus who believed that if original sin had not taken place, Christ would have become incarnate anyway, in order to unite created being and the divine nature. Similarly, in modern times, Gerry Hughes stated that 'Jesus ... became one of us ... not because of the Fall but because God is love and wants to be with us in ... our lives'¹⁴⁰

The diminished Christ

Ideally, a belief in Christ should enhance our relationship with God and His Plan. However, such an enhancement would only succeed if it is believed that God is both fully God and fully man. If the divinity of Christ is allowed to wane so that the advantage in believing in Christ is lost as the core belief suffers. The loss of belief in the full divinity of Christ can arise in a number of ways.

Neglect of the Universal Christ:

Teilhard implied that the Universal Christ was neglected by his circle by stating that 'the Church will only be able to resume ... the great theological effort of the first five centuries (when it) starts to rethink the relations ... between Christ and the universe.'¹⁴¹ Teilhard also stated that he had 'been reproached as being an innovator' by advocating the Universal Christ but it would be Teilhard's circle who were the innovators¹⁴² as the Universal Christ is a part of the patristic tradition.

Maloney also stated that, after St Maximus, 'there was an eclipse of the cosmic dimension

¹³⁷ Teilhard, *The Christic*, 1955; 13FM, p. 98.

¹³⁸ Teilhard, *Introduction to the Christian Life*, 1944; 10CE, p. 162.

¹³⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep* 190.5.14; PL 182, col. 1065; trans. Pelikan, p. 152.

¹⁴⁰ Gerry Hughes, *Cry of Wonder*, p. 234.

¹⁴¹ Letter by Teilhard to Bruno de Solages dated 2 Jan 1955, *Lettres intimes de Teilhard de Chardin à Auguste Valensin, Bruno de Solages, Henri de Lubac, André Ravier*, 1919-55, pbk (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1972) p. 450.

¹⁴² Teilhard, *How I Believe*, 1934; 10CE, p 129.

in the study of Christology'¹⁴³ and therefore the Universal Christ. In contrast to the west, 'the east ... has always sought to see the Christian faith in a cosmic ... perspective' according to Ratzinger.¹⁴⁴ Mahoney and Ratzinger thus imply that there has been little understanding of the Universal Christ in the west since the time of St Maximus.

The tragedy of a Christ who was not universal would be that He would not reflect the union of God and the universe in Himself. If God united with a single man and not the universe, God would show partiality and would not be God. Also, if the Universal Christ did not represent the union between God and the universe of the *Parousia*, He would also lose His universality and therefore His divinity. The value of the universe would also be diminished. However, Christ is either God or He is not. There is no middle way. A Christ who happens to be a God but was not fully God and fully man is not therefore an option. A denial of the Universal Christ would therefore be a serious error. If the universe had no goal in the spiritual sense, it would be unlikely that it would have eschatological movement. However, there also an option that human persons are not truly part of the universe and could therefore find a goal outside it.

Neglect of the divine equivalents to Christ's human acts:

As Christ is fully divine, all major works of Christ must have a divine equivalent because they depend upon the divine energies as well as human energies. Failure to consider this would tend to diminish Christ's divinity and relegate Christ's acts to purely earthly ones. Teilhard found this neglect was prominent in his time. He found that those around him regarded the acts of Christ as 'fleeting accidents occurring sporadically in time.'¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Wildiers noted that in 'traditional theology, all important moments appeared to be in the past: Creation, the Fall, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. Eschatology, on the other hand, generally received little attention.'¹⁴⁶ He also reminded us that if there was no divine act behind the Resurrection, it would be no longer an archetype for the resurrection of others. Teilhard fully realised that 'we are often inclined to regard the resurrection (of Christ) as an isolated event in time ... some small individual triumph over the tomb.'¹⁴⁷ He also stated that 'we persist in saying that we keep vigil in expectation of the Master, but in reality we should have to admit ... that we no longer expect anything'¹⁴⁸ This implies that the principle of future union between God and the universe had been lost.

A factor in the deterioration of the importance of Christ's acts may have partly due to the fact there has been no tradition in the west regarding the distinction between the divine and the *energima* as discussed at the local Council of Constantinople in 1351 which is generally accepted by the eastern tradition. In this study, the term 'natural energies' is used instead of *energima*. With such a tradition, the divine energies of Christ might have been better emphasized in the west.

Subordination of the Spirit

¹⁴³ George A. Maloney, SJ, *The Cosmic Christ from Paul to Teilhard* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968) p. 15.

¹⁴⁴ Ratzinger, p. 85.

¹⁴⁵ Teilhard, *Historical Representations of Original Sin*; 1922; 10CE, p. 53.

¹⁴⁶ Norbert Max Wildiers, *The Theologian and His Universe* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982) p. 206.

¹⁴⁷ Teilhard, *My Universe*, 1924; 9SC, p. 63.

¹⁴⁸ Teilhard, *The Divine Milieu*, 1927; 4DM, p. 115.

The disciples were moved by the Spirit¹⁴⁹ and even the human Christ depended on the Spirit for the Incarnation and the Resurrection.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, despite this, the role of the Spirit has been subordinated to Christ both in the Godhead and the *economia*.

That problem of subordination was made worse because there was no differentiation in Latin between the procession (*ekporeusis*) or primordial origin of the Spirit from the Father and the coming forth (*proienai*) of the Spirit from the words of Christ in the *economia*. However, the *filioque* clause was added to Creed of 381¹⁵¹ after ‘proceeding forth from the Father’ at the local Council of Toledo of 589 during the reign of the Visigoth ruler King Reccared. While it was thought that emphasising the divinity of Christ *Logos* would counter Arianism, this was at the expense of that of the Spirit. The addition of the *filioque* therefore became a dispute between east and west. The *filioque* dispute is explained in more detail by the North American Agreed Statement.¹⁵²

The concept of the Trinity should make clear how God works in the universe but, if it is altered, the understanding of the work of God becomes confused. One way of understanding the Trinity is to regard it as two dualities, one between the Father and the *Logos* and Spirit together and the other between the *Logos* and Spirit,

Because of the loss of emphasis of the Spirit relative to Christ *Logos*, there was a tendency to assume that Christ takes over both roles. As a result, some people relate to Christ rather than the Father as the principle of the Trinity. This can therefore lead to the neglect of both Father and Spirit. This was particularly noticeable at the time of Teilhard and he himself tended to do this. In recent years, although there has been a recovery of emphasis of the Spirit in the west, the recovery of the role of God as origin of the Trinity and also the procession of the Spirit from the Father is not yet complete. The solution of St Maximus to reconcile the three-ness and oneness of the Trinity is therefore still under threat.

¹⁴⁹ Jn 20.22: Christ ‘said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’

¹⁵⁰ Rom 8.11.

¹⁵¹ First Council of Constantinople, 381: ‘The Spirit ... proceeding forth from the Father,’ trans. DEC 24.

¹⁵² *The filioque: A Church dividing issue? An agreed statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation* (Washington, DC: Saint Paul’s College, 27 Oct 2003).

D. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The notion that a mere man on earth can change the nature of the universe absurd as its spiritual nature is determined by God. If God changed the nature of the Mother of God at her conception, her humanity would be threatened thus also threatening that of Christ. Also, the *filioque* dispute threatened the interdependence and equality of the *Logos* and the Spirit and consequently there was a decline in the understanding of the role of the Spirit.

Regarding the acts of Christ, both St Maximus and Teilhard agreed that the Incarnation is a divine act and closely associated with the *Parousia*. Other acts of Christ such as the Cross and Resurrection were also considered universal and associated with divine acts. When Christ acted with universality, He would act as the Universal Christ. In that role, they agreed that He is the Archetype for the *Parousia* particularly because He is a union between God and a part of the universe. Unfortunately, Teilhard was not always careful in describing the Universal Christ.

The principle of the Universal Christ had been lost by the time of Teilhard so that loving acts of Christ were reduced to mere fleeting events without an equivalent divine event. Consequently, Teilhard felt that he was alone in advocating the Universal Christ. If the universality of Christ was lost, so also would be His divinity so that He would be reduced to a mere prophet. We conclude that Teilhard discovered a serious schism.

A further problem was that the Cross was regarded as the expiation of the offence against God for Adam's sin. If the expiation was by the human Christ, it would be unable to restore the change of nature of all things caused by Adam. If the expiation was by the divine Christ, the fact that Christ was unable to prevent the change of the nature of Adam, would imply that the divinity of Christ was inadequate.

As many denominations over-emphasise Christ at the expense of God the Father, it is particularly important that it is affirmed that Christ is fully God and fully man. In order to understand how God works through the universe, it is important to understand the role of all the members of the Trinity.

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