The Mystical Body: a study of the work of modern Roman Catholic Biblical scholars on the nature of the Church.

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ii. 'Corps, Tête et Pléthore dans les Epitres de la Captivité' in RB (1956) LXIII (cf. 'Exégèse et Théologie' II, pp. 107-153).


Abbreviations.

AAS - Acta Apostolicae Sedis.
ASS - Acta Sanctae Sedis.
BJ - Bible de Jerusalem.
EZ - Biblische Zeitschrift.
CBQ - Catholic Biblical Quarterly.
CR - Corpus Reformatorum - Opera Calvini.
CTS - Catholic Truth Society.
ET - Expository Times.
ICC - International Critical Commentary.
JTS - Journal of Theological Studies.
RThPh - Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie.
RB - Revue Biblique.
SGT - Scottish Journal of Theology.
SR - Science Religieuse.
ThS - Theologische Studien.
TL - Theologische Literaturzeitung.
TS - Theological Studies.
TwNT - Theologische Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament.
VC - Verbum Certum.
WA - Weimarer Ausgabe of Luther's Works (1833 ff.).
The Roman doctrine of the Mystical Body has its roots in the New Testament Letters which speak of the Church as 'the body of Christ'. But, using this Scriptural concept as a basis, the tradition of the Church developed, over the centuries, a doctrine of great complexity. This doctrine included elements (e.g. the Spirit as the soul of the body, the Church as the 'Whole' or 'Mystical' Christ) which seem to bear very little relation to its Biblical roots. In our own day, the Church has begun to pare away some of these unscriptural elements from her doctrine of the Mystical Body.

When we examine the New Testament thinking about the Church as 'body', we come to realise that its writers were part of a culture - both Hellenistic and Jewish - which made great use of the human body as a symbol of unity in diversity. Initially, Paul used this symbol to illustrate the dependence of members on one another within the one Church. But he also used this same symbol to highlight the unity between Christ and His Church, a unity which is strongly emphasized in the Gospels and is prefigured in much of the Old Testament thinking about God and His people. But, paradoxically, the body-image for the Church guarantees the distinction of Christ and His Church - the Church is not Himself but His body. It is the polarity which underlies all New Testament speculation about the Church as the Body of Christ i.e. Christ identifies Himself with His Church but is also distinct from her (e.g. as the Bridegroom from the Bride, the Saviour from the saved).

It is in the light of this Scriptural polarity that we scrutinize the doctrine of the Mystical Body and the accretions which have been added to it over the years. Because the Church and the Christ on Whom she is dependent are always differentiated in the New Testament, we cannot accept theories of the Church which unconditionally identify Christ with His people e.g. the Church as the extension of the Incarnation, the Church as 'Mystical' Christ. Because the New Testament thinks of the Church as 'body' in terms of faith rather than sociology, we must beware of...
'social-body' theories of the Church. And because the New Testament does not define the 'Churchly' body - even to distinguish it from the historical body of the personal Christ or the sacramental body of the Eucharist - we see no need for such adjectives as 'mystical', whether used of the body itself or of the union which binds Christ and His Church together.

This theme has direct relevance to other themes in other fields. Within the Roman Church, it raises the central question of authority - Scripture and tradition, Biblical studies and dogmatics. For all Churches, it pinpoints the relation of the Church to her Lord and their mutual relationship.
I. A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body.

A. The Early Fathers.

This history must begin with the New Testament "letters of the captivity". In Ephesians\(^1\), we read of the Church "which is Christ's Body"\(^2\). This description of the Church is, as we shall later discover, determined, to some extent, by the thinking of Paul in Romans and First Corinthians where, by making use of a classic metaphor of unity, he compares the Church to a human body\(^3\). In passing, we may note that this metaphor could still be used effectively in the post-apostolic period. Clement of Rome for example in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (dated 95 or 96) exhorts his readers to their mutual responsibilities by asking them to consider their own bodies: "let us take our own bodies: the head is nothing without the feet, as are the feet without the head .... so let our whole body be saved in Christ Jesus and let each be subject to his neighbour, as it has been determined by his spiritual gift"\(^4\). Clement goes on to show how, within the Christian community, the strong are responsible for the weak, the rich for the poor. In the major epistles of St. Paul, we find the embryo of later thought when the apostle speaks of the local congregations to which he is writing as a body, belonging to Christ. This concept is but one step away from the classical metaphor. The mature concept, however, only comes in the captivity epistles — there the Church Universal is identified with the Body of Christ. So the New

\(^1\) Eph. i:22-23.  
\(^2\) cf. Col. i:24.  
\(^3\) Rom. xii:4,5: I Cor. xii:27.  
\(^4\) Acts 37.5,38.1
Testament draws two steps away from the simple comparison of the Church and the human body - firstly, the Church is Christ's body in that we are members of Him and of one another and secondly, the Church is identified with the real Body of Christ, crucified and risen. All these ideas can be traced in the writings of the early Fathers. We find Irenaeus (c. 130-200), for example, using the image of the human body to show that the prophets were already members of Christ: "for, just as by our members the operation of the whole body is made manifest and as the figure of the whole man is shown not by one member but by all, so the prophets all prefigure the one Saviour and each, in his capacity as member, foreshadowed some aspect of Christ". Tertullian (c. 160-220) in the West also seems to be dependent on the classic fable when he writes: "the body cannot feel gladness at the trouble of any one member: it must necessarily join with one consent in the grief and labouring for the remedy". Tertullian goes on to say that the Church is Christ Who is to be found in all His members. In contrast, the anonymous writer of the letter to the Corinthians (c. 160-170) is dependent on the letters of the Captivity when he tells his readers that "the living Church is the 'body of Christ'". This reference is used to show that Christians must respect the flesh, the body, if they are to be truly spiritual. Clement of Alexandria (died c. 214) also states that the Church is the body of Christ - "the Church is, by allegory, the body of the Lord" - and goes on to say that all those called by Christ's

1. 'Adversus Haereses' iv:33,10. 2. 'De Paenitentia' x:5.
3. xiv:2. 4. 'Stromateis' VII:14.
name form the flesh of this body.

Ignatius of Antioch (died c. 110), whatever his particular interpretations of Pauline thought (and we shall see later (see p. 5) the directions in which these interpretations led), said that believers are "members" of Christ\(^1\) and, as such, they are united in the Church as the Body of Christ, of which God Himself is the Head\(^2\). In a passage from his commentary on the Fourth Gospel, Origen (c. 185-254) brings together two New Testament concepts - there is the Church, he says, "which itself is called the body of Christ and, because of this, we are named as members of it by the Apostle"\(^3\). We ought to note, however, that Origen here reverses the sequence of New Testament thought which claims that Christians are first members of Christ and only then that the Church is the Body of Christ. Earlier in the same work, Origen sees the Body of Christ image as an eschatological concept i.e. the perfect fullness of the Church lies in the future: "then shall the members be one body, since all the members will belong to the one body"\(^4\). Here again Origen distorts the emphasis of the New Testament which constantly holds in tension the indicative and imperative sides of the Church's nature (i.e. we are the Body of Christ, but yet we must act worthily as members of the Body): this tension is removed by Origen's future reference. For him, the sequence of suffering followed by resurrection in the experience of Christ will also be found in the history of His Body, the Church. It

\(^1\) cf. I Cor. vii:15.  
\(^2\) 'To the Trallians' XI:2, cf. 'To the Smyrnaeans' I:2 and Eph. i:22.  
\(^3\) In Johannem' x:23, cf. I Cor. xii:27.  
\(^4\) x:20.
is also Origen who first tried to develop the idea of the soul within the 'Churchly' Body: "as the soul gives life and movement to the body, which otherwise would be inert, so the Word imparts to this whole Body, which is the Church, movement and power for good"1. In later writers, the Spirit was to replace the Word in Origen's idea.

Like Tertullian, Cyprian represents the Western Church at a time of persecution and schism (c. 250). His concern, arising out of his immediate situation, was the unity of the Church: "the Church .... spreads her rays throughout the world yet the light everywhere diffused is one light and the unity of the Body is not broken"2. This one Body is also the Bride of Christ and, as such, the mother of all Christians3. But Cyprian's greatest contribution lay in his exposition of how the Church's unity is guaranteed i.e. the Body has been given its own structure by its Head. This institutional form has been handed down from apostolic times and includes, among other things, the sacraments of baptism and communion4. Following from this reference to Eph. iv (and especially v. 5), the sacraments are seen as additional guarantees of unity - when properly administered5. This emphasis on institutional structure was to have a profound effect on later thinking.

We can now see that, whereas some Fathers were content to reiterate New Testament thought, there were others who channelled it into directions which its original creators can hardly have intended.

1. 'Contra Celsum' vi:43. 2. 'De Unitate Ecclesiae Catholicae' 5.
3. op. cit. 5-6. 4. op. cit. 4 which quotes Eph. iv:4.
5. see Epistle LXXI:1.
The direction with which we are mainly concerned here is that some of the Fathers tended to separate the Church from Christ on Whom she is wholly dependent: this movement inevitably means that the status of the Church is raised at the expense of Christ's prestige i.e. the Body becomes free and independent of the Head. So, while the New Testament can say that the Church is the Body of Christ, it never says that the Church is Christ Himself (with the possible exception of I Cor. xii:12). Yet Tertullian, as we have seen, makes this claim. Again, the New Testament emphasises the dependence of the Body on the Head. Yet Ignatius, in the section from this letter to the Trallians already quoted (XI:2), included these words: "The Head cannot be generated without the members, in that God is unity and has promised unity". Of this sentence, Vittorio Subilia quite correctly says, "its unity (the Church's) is no more conceived of in simple terms of relationships with Christ. Instead it becomes something guaranteed ontologically". Ignatius does not shrink from suggesting that Christ is not complete without His Church. We shall return to these tendencies.

When the Christian faith became established under Constantine (313), there was a significant shift of emphasis in the Church's thought of herself as the Body of Christ. The Pauline categories were partly overlaid and obscured by political concepts borrowed from centuries of Imperial rule: "la Rome chrétienne avait fait de la métaphore un plus grand usage, mais toujours dans le sens analogue à celui de la Rome païenne, se contentant de se substituer à elle et à son Caesar dans le

1. 'The Problem of Catholicism' p. 110.
rôle de tête par rapport à l'univers - ou maintenant à l'Église universelle - qui jouait le rôle de corps. On connaît, dès le Ve siècle, les formules célèbres de S. Prosper, de S. Leon le Grand et du Concile de Chalcedoine. Elles sont fréquemment reprises par les papes du VIe et IXe siècles: 'caput totius mundi, caput omnium ecclesiæ Dei, sancta Romana ecclesia' (Paul, Hadrian)

It was to be a long time before the Roman Church could finally free herself of the idea that the Body of Christ was a political image.

Before we consider the monumental work of Augustine in this matter, we must take note of two ways in which Eastern thought influenced the development of doctrine.

Apart from being the great opponent of Arius, Athanasius of Alexandria (born c. 285) also developed a theology of 'divinisation', as did Gregory of Nyssa (died 394). Karl Adam sums up what this theology stood for: "the original head of mankind, Adam, signified the hostile separation between God and mankind. Christ, the new head, signified their union. And so the essentials of the redemption were achieved in the moment of incarnation. Because at that moment divine life entered into flesh, the humanity was divinised and thus a reconciliation with God was objectively brought about"

In refuting Arian ideas, Athanasius stressed that the eternal God has taken upon Himself a body of flesh so that, in Christ, the Logos and flesh are one: "although the flesh itself

1. 'Corpus Mysticum' by Henri de Lubac, p. 101, (a book on which I am dependent for much information about the Roman doctrine of the Mystical Body).
2. 'The Christ of Faith' p. 370.
is something created, it has nevertheless become the body of God. We do not worship this body in such a way as to separate it from the Logos nor worship the Logos in such a way as to tear Him out of His flesh. Because God has become man in Christ, through Him also, man may become God: "God created Christ for our sakes, preparing for Him the created body, as it is written, for us, that in Him we might be capable of being renewed and made gods ( resolve σωμάτος." This kind of theology opens the door to two speculations, at least, about the nature of the Church, both of which we find in the writings of Emile Mersch. The first is that, if Christians are those who have been 'divinised' in Christ, then the Church is a divine society: "in Christ and in Him alone, the whole of humanity has access to the whole of the divinity and the supernatural society of men is united with the divine society of the three persons Who are but one God." But Mersch's point of view here depends on a misunderstanding of Athanasius' concept of 'theiosis'. Here we are not concerned with any idea that man is 'deified' or 'divinised' any more than we can think of the Incarnation as the humanisation of God. Athanasius meant rather that man, through the Spirit, is made to participate in the saving acts of God and, while remaining a creature, thereby comes into contact with God Himself Who institutes these acts: "by 'theiosis' the Greek Fathers wished to express the fact that in the new coming of the Holy Spirit we are up against God in the most absolute sense, God in His ultimate holiness or Godness." An examination of Athanasius' writings

1. 'Letter to Adelphius' 3. 'Contra Arianos' 11.47.
reveals that he regarded 'divinisation' as our union with Christ and thereby our sanctification in Him\(^1\). The second speculation is that, if the Church is the Body of Christ, it shares His divine-human nature: "just as Christ is the God-man, so, in Him, and by Him, His mystical Body is at once human and divine"\(^2\).

The other development in the Eastern Church refers to the relationship, already noted in Origen, between the Body of the Church and the Body of the sacrament. John Chrysostom (c. 398) states in his commentary on first Corinthians: "when we communicate, we do not simply receive a part (of the body), but we are united with Christ. For just as this body is united with Christ, so by this bread we are all united with Him\(^3\). Cyril of Alexandria (died 444) echoes this thought almost exactly: "through one body, He blesses, by a mysterious communion, (\(μυθική\) μετάληψις) those who believe in Him, and He makes them corporeal with Himself and with one another"\(^4\). This effort to define the relationship between participation in the body of Christ through the sacrament\(^5\) and unity in the body of Christ which is the Church was to become the study of later thinkers.

More than anyone else, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) dwelt on the concept of the Church as Christ’s Body and laid down the lines for later theologians to follow. We must recognize his influence in four directions:

1. 'Contra Arianos' I, 38 ff, II, 47 ff., 59 f, 65 ff., 74 ff. etc.


3. XXIV, 4.

4. 'In Johannem' XI:11.

5. see I Cor. x:16.
1. The Spirit, for him, is the soul of the 'churchly' Body. We have already seen that Origen thought of the Word, the Logos, as the life-force of the otherwise inert body of the Church. Augustine replaces the Logos with the Holy Spirit: "and so you have an invisible spirit, a visible body .... do you wish then to live in Christ's own Spirit? Then join yourself to the body of Christ .... Christ's Body could not live were it not for the Spirit of Christ in it". This idea was to have immense influence within the Church and was to make an appearance in such thinkers as Thomas Aquinas and Bellarmine. In our own day, as we shall see, the Church has recognised the harm done by this concept and has dropped it from her ecclesiology (see pp. 143 ff.).

2. He emphasized the essential connection between the sacramental body of Christ in the Eucharist and the body of Christ which is the Church: "He would have this meat and drink to be understood as meaning the fellowship of His own body and members which is the Holy Church".

3. He laid down important distinctions between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. In 426, Augustine completed his most famous treatise, 'The City of God', which is a philosophy of history written to prove that the advent of Christianity did not cause the downfall of the Empire. Since man's first act of disobedience against God, "two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly (civitas terrena) by love of self, even to the contempt of God: the heavenly (civitas Dei) by the love of God, even to the contempt of self". This latter, "that most blessed and exalted city".

1. 'In Johannis Evangelium' - Tractatus XXVI:13.  
2. Ibid. XXVI: 15, cf. Sermo 227, 229 and 272.  
4. 'Enchiridion' 53.
has members on earth in the visible Church which was the Catholic Church infused by the Holy Spirit. But "even in the Catholic Church, not all are in the way of salvation: that is a mixed company, of good and bad"¹. So the Church, in Augustine's language, is a "corpus permixtum" which would only achieve its full glory in the future resurrection when it would become "blessed, mystical (mystica) and great"². At the final judgment, therefore, God will have to judge between the good and the bad, the elect and the rejected, the wheat and the tares³. We have here, quite clearly, the seeds of the Reformation doctrine of the visible/invisible Church. In passing, we may notice that the term "mystical body" (μυστικόν ὅμοιον) made its first appearance in the writings of a contemporary of Augustine, Theodoret of Cyr (although it does appear much earlier in the writings of Hippolytus of Rome (160-235) as an epithet of the eucharistic body). He used the term as a description of the elect in heaven, Augustine's city of God.

4. Augustine was the theologian who made the doctrine of the Whole Christ ("Tutus Christus") explicit in Roman ecclesiology and thus created a concept which has been influential in theology ever since. This doctrine claims that the Whole Christ is created by head and body taken together, "for Jesus Christ is one with His Head and Body, the Saviour of the body and the members of that body, two in one flesh, but with one voice and one emotion"⁴. At another point, he answers the question "What is the Church?" by saying that it is the Body of Christ and then continues, "Join to it the Head and you

2. Sermo 252,7. 3. See 'City of God', 20:2. 4. 'In Psalmum LXI', 4.
have one man: the head and the body make up one man. Who is the Head? He was born of the Virgin Mary .... And what is His Body? It is His Spouse, the Church .... The Father willed that these two, the God Christ and the Church, should be one man1. Elsewhere, Augustine writes: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, like a whole and perfect man, is head and body .... His body is the Church, which extends over the whole earth .... This is the Whole Christ: Christ united with His Church"2. Even although he united head and body so closely within this image of the Whole Christ, Augustine yet realized the need to keep them distinct. In encouraging his readers to listen to Christ, he warns them to hear "the head as the head and the body as the body. Persons are not divided, but there is a distinction of dignity. For it is the Head that saves, the Body that is saved. Let the Head show mercy, let the Body beseech it. The Head is for the purging, the Body for the confessing of sins"3. Despite this attempt to differentiate Head and Body by stressing their relative status within the Whole Christ, this concept tends to blur the vital New Testament distinction between Head and Body. In addition, this image also carried Roman thinking further along the direction we noted earlier (see p. 5) i.e. of obscuring the dependence of the Church in its relation to Christ and, consequently, of glorifying the Church at Christ's expense. In the Whole Christ, Christ, the Head needs His Church to be perfect and the body, by extension, shares in that perfection. "We belong to Christ: and because we are His members and body, we are one Man with our Head"4. Augustine

1. Sermo 45,5.  
2. 'In Psalmum XC', sermo ii, l.  
3. 'In Psalmum XXXVII'.  
4. 'In Psalmum Cl.'.
naturally felt free to identify even Christ and His disciples within the Church: "if we consider ourselves, if we think of His body, we shall see that He is ourselves. For if we were not He, it would not be true that what is done to us, the least of His brethren, is also done to Him (Matt. xxv: 40). If we were not He, Acts ix: 4 would not be true. Therefore we too are He, because we are His members, because we are His Body, because He is our Head, because the Whole Christ is Head and Body"\(^1\) cf. "we are made Christ"\(^2\).

B. The Mediaeval Period.

Thus far, we have only noted one example of the term "mystical body" applied to the Church and that was in a special sense (see p. 10). The next stage of development which we must examine is that in which this phrase became a popular and a technical epithet for the Church. This process actually began in the Latin writers of the early Middle Ages whose prime concern was not the Church, but the Eucharist. In thinking of the Sacrament, these writers were fond of coining complex formulae for the eucharistic body e.g. "sacramentum corporis", "mysterium corporis", "sacramentum carnis" and "corpus mysticium". This trend was halted by the scandal of Berengar (died 1088) who claimed that there was no "transsubstantiation" in the sacrament, that, although the whole Christ was present in the elements, this did not mean a change of substance. His opponents and even those who wished to dissociate themselves from his unorthodoxy were thereafter content to replace these complex terms with the simple word

1. Sermo 133, 6. 2. 'In Johannis Evangelium' - Tractatus XXI:8.
"corpus". The result was that the epithet "corpus mysticum", so long used of the eucharistic body and now abandoned by most theologians, was free to be used of the ecclesiological body. Hand in hand with this process went another. Before Berenger, thinkers like Gottschalk were fond of drawing a distinction between Christ's historical body and His risen body, as well as between the sacramental and 'churchly' bodies of Christ: later writers were less precise in their terms and "corpus Christi" was used indiscriminately e.g. "on that day, none of the faithful should be banished from the body of Christ (a corpore Christi) which is the Church, that is, on the day when the Church receives the medicine of her reconciliation - the body and the blood (corpus et sanguinem)". Yet, in all this, there was an attempt (which we have already observed in Chrysostom, Cyril and Augustine) to relate the sacrament and the Church (in the words of Remi of Auxerre, for example, "all Christians are one body because of the oneness of Christ's body" cf. I Cor. x: 16-17). We have already noted that thinkers tended to create intricate epithets in their attempts to define the sacramental "corpus Christi" and exactly the same process was at work in relation to the Church as the Body e.g. "corpus unum Ecclesiae", "corpus Ecclesiae Spiritu vivificatum". At first, however, the adverb "mystice" seems to have been preferred to the adjective "mysticum" as a description of the "corpus Christi quod est Ecclesia". So Rabanus Maurus, in the ninth century, wrote: "the Catholic Church, which is mystically the Body of Christ": two centuries later, Gregory of Bergamo expanded the thought of Rabanus: "in the Eucharist .... the Body of Christ, which is the Church .... is set forth mystically or sacramentally". One who used the phrase 'corpus

1. Sermo 17 of Ivo of Chartres. 2. In Psalmum 103. 3. 'De Universo' 5, 10. 4.
mysticum' of the Church and who related this body to the eucharistic body was Peter Lombard (d. 1160). In his fourth book of Sentences, he says that the seven sacraments were instituted by Christ, either directly or through the Apostles, and all convey grace from Christ the Head to the members of His mystical body, the Church. Without the sacraments, says Lombard, there can be no effective or true union between Christ and His people. Lombard's influence was considerable and was felt most strongly during the Reformation. So, by the second half of the twelfth century, the phrase "corpus mysticum" began to be commonly used of the Church.

This early usage, however, did not pretend to be technical - it said nothing very precise about the nature of the Church and theologians tended to prefer phrases like "corpus Ecclesiae" and "corpus Christi" as descriptions of the Church. But the generation of thinkers immediately prior to the great Scholastics began to develop theories of the Church's being based on this epithet. Once again, however, the problem of exact definition and differentiation arose: if the Church is the "corpus mysticum" how are we to describe the body of Christ in the Eucharist? In the writings of William of Auxerre, of S. Bonaventure and others, this latter body came to be called "corpus verum". Parallel with this distinction, there was also an attempt to echo the teaching of I Cor. xii, as when S. Bonaventure\(^1\) speaks of the "corpus mysticum", in terms of the "corpus naturale". Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) stressed the same point when he wrote: "so the whole Church is said to be a mystical body by comparison with the physical human body"\(^2\). Thus the phrase "corpus mysticum" had

\(^1\)'In IV Sent.' 20. \(^2\) Summa, Part III Q.3, art. 1.
now come to be used as an accepted epithet for the Church. So, in 1302, Pope Boniface VIII could issue a Bull ("Unam Sanctam") containing the words, "one holy Church .... which is likened to one mystical body, whose head is Christ".

At this point we ought perhaps to deal with the thought of St. Thomas, inasmuch as his theology has become so authoritative in the Roman Church. It is possible to trace Thomas' contribution to the doctrine of the Mystical Body from Eph. 1:22 - "God has appointed Him as supreme head to the Church". On the analogy of the role of the head in the human body, Thomas claims three functions for Christ in relation to the Church. Because of his unique relationship to God, He is pre-eminent over the Church; since He has received God's fullness, He is the perfection to which all the members are striving and, through the authority He has been given, He communicates grace to all the members. Thus Christ illumines the baptised so that they know the truth, and filled with His grace, they are made fruitful with that wealth which leads to good action. In many ways, Thomas' emphasis lies most heavily in this area - the influence of Christ, the Spiritual Head, upon the members of His Body: "as aqueducts go their separate ways from a single source to make the ground fertile, so from Christ there come differing forms of grace to establish the Church (Eph. iv: 11)." But there is one other area where Thomas' authority is still felt to-day - the tension between the inward and outward aspects of the Mystical Body.

For him, the Mystical Body is the visible institution, the Roman Catholic Church: but this institution is seen through its essentially spiritual dimension i.e. through the fact that it is animated by God's Spirit. So the Church is a society, but in a special sense: although the members of the Body have responsibilities in the functioning of the Body (as in any other society), their unity comes from the activity of Christ, their Spiritual Head. Thomas also stresses that this Body of which Christ is the Head has the Holy Spirit as its soul. It is these characteristics which set the Church apart from other societies. We shall see that this point of view was later to lead in directions which Thomas had never envisaged.

The remainder of the story is more easily told. Once the epithet had been coined and been given general usage, only refinement and embellishment remained. Whereas the question had once been, "Is the Church the Mystical Body of Christ and, if so, in what sense?", it now became, "Since the Church is the Mystical Body, what more can be said?". It was not long before this latter question was asked and answered with surprisingly different answers by two groups of theologians - those whose patrons were the temporal princes and those who felt that their first loyalty was to the Church. This difference of viewpoint led to different emphases on the relative authorities of State and Church, of Emperor and Pope. The theologians of the princes said that, since the Church is the Mystical Body with the Pope as its earthly head and since the temporal power must also have a function to fulfil within the Church, this function can be seen as

1. see in Hebr., 188. 2. see 'Expositio super symbolo apostolorum', art: credo sanctam Ecclesiam, cf. Hugo of St. Victor, 'De sacramentis' II. 3. see in Col. 129.
that of the heart within the body. The theologians of the Church, on
the other hand, said that, if the image of the Church as a body was to
have a rational meaning, the Church could not be a freak and must have
only one earthly ruler, namely the Pope (see, for example, the point of
view of Antoine of Roellis, c. 1440). One of those who advocated the
absolute authority of the Pope within the Church — he called the Pope "una
fontalis origo totius potestatis ecclesiasticae" — was the Spanish Cardinal
Juan de Torquemada. In his 'Summa de Ecclesia' (written in 1448-9), he
laid the foundation for later thinking when he said that the member of the
Church is bound to his head Christ through faith and if this faith is lost,
then membership of the Body ceases. Torquemada quoted Matt. xvi:18 in
support of this assertion. In refuting such opinions, the princes'
theologians then produced a supplementary argument — the Church was, indeed,
the Mystical Body of which the Pope was the earthly head, but the "corpus
naturale" i.e. mankind in general might be supposed to have its own head,
namely the Emperor. The Italian poet, Dante (1265-1321), took this point
of view, claiming that the preservation of peace was the function of the
Roman Emperor while the Roman Pontiff had the task of leading men to eternal
blessing. Dante believed that Emperor and Pope both received their authority
from God and neither should interfere in the sphere of the other.

Before we turn to the Reformation, we must mention one tendency
which, in its own way, gave an impulse to that religious and political
movement. In the twelfth century, there arose within the Church certain
sects which, because of their determined and unorthodox points of view,

1. see Bk. ii, chs. 102, 241.
were outlawed by the hierarchy e.g. the Cathari (or Albigenses) who espoused a form of neo-Manichaeism: the Waldenses and Humiliati, both of whom were attracted by ideals of penance and poverty. The two factors these splinter groups held in common were, firstly, that they took the Bible as their rule of life (this led the Synod of Toulouse in 1229 to forbid the laity having access to the Scriptures) and, secondly, that they were very suspicious of the 'hierarchical' element in the Church. These two factors can be traced in the thinking of several men who were instrumental in preparing the way for the Reformers. William of Occam (d.c. 1349), whose works Luther studied up to 1509 and to whom the German Reformer owed much of his thinking (e.g. about the two natures of Christ), and Marsilius of Padua (d.c. 1342) both thought of the Church as the whole company of believers whose final authority was the New Testament. The former indeed was especially influential in his emphasis on the Church as a community of the faithful rather than a hierarchical institution. John Wyclif (d. 1384) and Jan Huss (b. 1373) showed elements of both these factors in their thinking. Although they both point back to Augustine and the Middle Ages more than they point forward to the Reformation, Wyclif and Huss did expose the corruption of the Church as an institution and the need to exalt the Bible as the rule for the Christian life.

C. The Reformation.

When the Reformation finally came, its principal leaders made

1. see King, 'Structures of the Church', p. 283 (which, along with his later book, 'The Church', is a valuable source for the history of Roman doctrine about the Church).
two points of vital importance about the Church. Firstly, the Reformers claimed that the Church had only one Head, Christ Himself, and that no earthly head could usurp His pre-eminence. So, for Luther, the true Church of which Christ is the Head can be called 'regnum Christi'\(^1\) and, for Calvin, the Church is controlled by Christ through His Spirit\(^2\). This teaching requires no explanation because it is simply a return to the emphasis of the New Testament. Secondly, the Reformers, to greater or lesser extent, internalised the true nature of the Church.

Thus Luther, on the one hand, took over the ideas of Augustine about the two Kingdoms and adapted them for his own thinking about the Church. According to him, there is an invisible Church, the spiritual community of all those in whose souls faith has been created by the Word of God\(^3\). It is the Church seen in this light that is the Mystical Body of Christ – an epithet which the Reformers all accepted as a valid part of Christian tradition. The members of this unseen body, whose Head is Christ, are known only to God: in addition, this Body is created and constituted by the Word of God i.e. by that Christ Who Himself became incarnate in a historical body. So the spiritual Church, the Mystical Body, is invisible, transcending the visible, tangible world. But it is obvious that the Church also exists as a seen entity within society. This visible Church Luther calls 'corpus naturale'\(^4\) and it is to be seen as a 'corpus fidelium'\(^5\). Three things can be said about this visible Church. Firstly, despite its visibility within society, its true nature as the

1. see WA 43, p. 582, 39/2, p. 281.  
2. CR 30, 381f.  
3. WA 2, pp. 752 ff.  
4. WA 4, p. 289.  
5. WA 4, p. 191.
'corpus vivum' of Christ, the Word of God, remains hidden: "l'Eglise visible ne peut être identifiée avec cette Eglise véritable, car elle renferme des individus qui, bien que baptisés, n'ont pas la foi .... Le corps mystique du Christ existe donc réellement ici-bas mais les hommes ne peuvent en dénombrer les membres". The second part of this quotation leads on to the second and third points we must make about the visible Church. So the visible Church, since it is involved in 'the earthly Kingdom', has worthy and unworthy members, those who are true to Christ and those who are false. Eleven centuries before Luther, Augustine had faced this dilemma and had claimed that the unworthy member, by his conduct, automatically expelled himself from the true Church e.g. "they seem to be within but they are actually outside". Remembering that Luther said that the real being of the Church could only be discerned 'spiritually', it is interesting to note that Augustine uses the phrase 'spiritually separate' of those unfaithful members of the Church. But, thirdly, although human eyes cannot discern it, Luther claimed that the Mystical Body was to be found "immersed" in the visible Church. Since God and He alone knew who truly belonged to the Mystical Body and where it could be found, men were forced to look for certain "marks" by which to test the validity of the visible Church: "wherever the Word of God is preached and believed, there is the Church". Luther said that it was this Word of God, made flesh in Jesus Christ, which created and established the Church.

3. Sermon 354, 2. 4. WA 2, pp. 203, 239.
In consequence, the true Church was to be found where this Word was
proclaimed in word and deed i.e. through preaching and the sacraments
(Bucer in Strasbourg added "discipline" as a third "mark" of the Church).

Calvin's doctrine of the Church, as set out by van Buren in
his book, 'Christ in our Place', was more firmly based in Scripture and
in Christology than was Luther's. All that Christ did through His death,
resurrection and ascension was done for us: taking our human nature as
His own, Christ our Mediator stood before God in our place. In so doing,
He brought us into union with Himself: "Christ, when He enlightens us with
faith by the power of His Spirit, at the same time ingrafts us into His body,
that we may become partakers of all His benefits". This union Calvin calls
our "incorporation" into Christ and is achieved by the Spirit: "the secret
influence of the Spirit is the bond which unites us to Christ". This
union is not corporeal and involves no blending of substances - Christ
remains our Lord and we remain totally dependent on Him. Calvin could not
countenance any idea which suggested an identity between Christ and His
people. Yet, by the action of the Holy Spirit, this union or incorporation
takes place: "Christ is not without us, but .... by a certain wonderful
communion unites Himself with us daily more and more into one body, until
He becomes altogether one with us". Because this union means union with
Christ's ascended body, that very body in which His redemptive work was
achieved, that work becomes effective for us: "the powers .... of the
unity of the Son with the Father .... must be diffused through the whole
body of believers". Since Calvin's thinking about the Church is so

1. CR 30, 427. 2. CR 30, 1034. 3. CR 30, 418. 4. CR 75, 387.
firmly Christological, it follows that he should give the Church high status in his system and that he should also regard Church membership as obligatory. Commenting on I Cor. xii:12, Calvin says: "it is a passage full of special consolation, in that he calls the Church 'Christ' for Christ .... is willing to be esteemed and recognized, not merely in Himself, but also in His members". But Christ remains Head of the Church and the members of His Body, although united to Him in that one body, do not add anything to their Head "lest anyone suppose that any defect would exist in Christ if He were separated from us". Yet, by their common incorporation into the body of Christ, these members are made brothers one to the other: "we are not a mere civil society, but, being grafted into Christ's body, we are truly members of one another". This, then, is Calvin's attitude to the "spiritual and secret body of Christ" and this attitude must be seen as clearly rooted in what Calvin believed to be the Biblical doctrine of Christ's work and person.

D. Roman Catholic Reaction.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) has little to say about the doctrine of the Mystical Body, perhaps because the Reformers had not made this teaching a point of dispute between themselves and the Roman Church. In fact, as we look back at the pre-Reformation history of Roman doctrine, we are very forcibly struck by the lack of consideration which seems to have been given to ecclesiology in general and to the Mystical Body in particular.

1. CR 77,501.  
2. CR 79,160.  
3. CR 77,505.
Two of the principal pre-Reformation theological treatises are the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard and the 'Summa Theologica' of Thomas Aquinas — neither of them contain a specific doctrine of the Church. This is all the more surprising when one remembers the vast amount of Patristic thinking on the Church. One possible reason for this fact is noted by Hans Küng in 'Structures of the Church': "thus, to a great extent, ecclesiology was formulated as a reaction to specific denials of claims or to specific heresies". In other words, Roman thinking about the Church developed pragmatically in response to heretical opinion within or outside the Church. Since the Reformers did not attack the doctrine of the Mystical Body, the Council called to combat their "errors" felt little need to say anything on this subject: "historiquement, le Concile de Trente n'a défini ni doctrine de l'Eglise ni doctrine de l'Etat". Although all this is true, the Council did make two positive steps forward.

Firstly, by taking up a point we have already noted in the writings of Torquemada (see p. 17), the Fathers claimed that the true reality of the Church was hidden to all but the eyes of faith. "We understand the origin of the Church, its gifts and status not by human reason but we appreciate these things by the eyes of faith (sed fidei oculis carnere)". Later in the same section the Catechism goes on to say: "so by faith only we understand (fide solum intelligimus) that in the Church are the keys of heaven and that to her has been confided the

power of remitting sins, of excommunicating and of consecrating the real body (verum corpus) of Christ"¹. Later Roman statements about the Church were to repudiate this thesis that the true Church could only be seen through the eyes of faith by maintaining that the real Church founded and established by Christ, through His Spirit, was identical with the visible ecclesiastical institution we know as the Roman Catholic Church e.g. "the divine Redeemer (gave) the community of human beings founded by Him the constitution of a society perfect (societas perfects) in its own order, and also, (had) it enriched by the Holy Spirit with heavenly gifts and powers"². So with the words "fide solum intelligimus" the Fathers of Trent made a step forward, despite the fact that some of their successors have been unwilling to make that same step.

Secondly, these same Fathers reiterated an important point which had been made by the early Fathers and whose basis is found in Col. ii:19 ³. This point stresses the fact that Christ, as Head of His Body, gives power and life to that Body: "Christ Jesus Himself constantly infuses (influit) His power into those who have been justified, as the Head infuses power into its members and the vine its branches. This power precedes, accompanies and follows their good works - without it, these works can, in no manner, be pleasing to God"⁴. Yet, as early as the beginning of the 16th century, one or two writers were already going further in this direction than the Council

¹. ibid., cf. Karl Barth, 'Church Dogmatics' IV/1 pp. 658-9.

². 'Mystici Corporis' of Pope Pius XII, para.63. ³. cf. Eph. iv:16.

⁴. see session vi, cap. 16, cf. 'Mystici Corporis' para. 47.
Fathers were later to do. John Paul Nazarius (c. 1519), for example, wrote: "Christ is, as it were, the 'persona' of His mystical body. It is evident that the action of both head and members is to be attributed to that one person to Whom both head and members belong." So, for him, it is not simply that Christ enables the members of His Body to act and empowers them to do so - He, in a sense, acts in and through them.

Cardinal Cajetan, the papal legate who interviewed Luther at Augsburg in 1513, made the same point in some of his writings. But, while John Paul found his source in I Cor. xii:12, Cajetan drew on Gal. ii:20. In passing, it is interesting to note that, despite the apparent similarities between this point of view and the doctrine of the Whole Christ, the consequences which flow from them are different. While the latter tends to heighten the status of the Church by making it indispensable to the wholeness of Christ, the former minimizes the importance of the Church by claiming that Christ stands 'in loco membrorum'. Yet both ideas, by tending to identify Christ with His Church, mean that the Church's identity and individuality are dissipated. But, strangely, it was not the Council of Trent which was to have the last word on this theme for nearly three hundred years, it was an individual called S. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621).

E. Bellarmine and Vatican One.

We have already seen that Aquinas tried to face up to the question of the Church as a visible institution within society which had, at the same

1. see his 'Commentaria et Contraversiae in III Partem S. Thomas'.

2. see 'Mystici Corporis' para. 50.
time, an inward and spiritual nature. When Thomas thought of the Church as a "society", he was thinking in terms of order, of giving Church-members the best possible structural environment for their personal development. Bellarmine also thought of the Church as a "society", but his motives and aims were entirely different. He was reacting against the Reformed thinking of the visible/invisible Church by asserting the necessary visibility of the Church: "the one true Church is that community of men brought together by profession of the true faith and communion in the same sacraments and under the administration of recognized pastors and especially the sole Vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff". In order that no one should be in any doubt, Bellarmine added, "The Church is a community (coetus) of men, as visible and tangible as the community of the Roman people or the Kingdom of France or the republic of Venice". The Mystical Body is now a society of men with its own guaranteed hierarchical structure. The Thomist point of view has been distorted: "la société chez saint Thomas se conçevait surtout en fonction de la notion de l'ordre .... A partir du XVI siècle, la société apparaissait, au contraire, toute fondée sur le pouvoir, l'autorité, le point de vue juridique". Le Guillou has to admit that Bellarmine's point of view has persisted down to the present day. Bellarmine also adopted a distinction of Augustine who claimed that the Church had both a body and a soul - the latter were the charismatic gifts found within the Church, whereas the former were the public profession of faith and participation at the sacraments. For future reference, we may

1. 'De Controversiis', 11, iii:2.  
2. ibid.  
note that Bellarmine, in a sermon preached on the Nativity Sunday of the Virgin, drew fantastic conclusions from the idea of the Church as a body—"the head is Christ, the heart, the Holy Spirit, the neck, the Holy Virgin, the shoulders, the bishops etc."¹.

The Vatican Council (1870) was most preoccupied with the question of the papacy, but it did give its attention to ecclesiology: "that Council started at a point which Trent had left in abeyance— the doctrine of the Church"². The Schema "De Ecclesia Christi" which was presented to the Council Fathers began with the following definition of the Church: "Ecclesiam esse corpus Christi mysticum" i.e. without qualification, the Church is the mystical body of Christ. So Roger Aubert, in his book, 'Vatican I' can describe the Schema as follows: "il débutait en présentant l'Eglise comme étant tout ensemble le Corps Mystique du Christ et une société visible"³. The Council Fathers, however, were astonished at the boldness of this definition—some found it "obscure", other "metaphoric", other "too abstract and mystical". Despite the fact that the Schema went to great lengths to explain the Biblical roots of its definition, the Fathers were dismayed. Although de Lubac⁴ suggests that the reason for this was their over-long familiarity with the Protestant distinction between the invisible and the visible Church, the more likely reason was their own Church's pre-occupation with the 'body of Christ' as a sociological, rather than a religious metaphor. A goodly number of Fathers demanded that a more precise definition be found and so neglected the fact that the Schema justified its definition most precisely—this is the most common Biblical image of the Church, it expresses

the divine nature of the Church, it rebuts the Protestant jibe that Romans are only concerned with externals, it emphasizes the inner form of the Church (interna Ecclesiae species) and it reiterates an idea, too little understood, in a carnal and worldly universe. Only Chapter XI (of the Schema) was debated and a revision produced by one Council Father defining the Church as 'coetus fidelium atque verae societas' did not even get to the deputation on faith. None the less, this Schema marks a real attempt to remove unworthy accretions from the doctrine of the Mystical Body and recover true New Testament insights: "assuming the form of our body, Christ appeared in visible guise in order that earthly and carnal man, putting on the new man who is created according to God in justice and holiness of truth (Eph. iv:24) might make up a Mystical Body of which He Himself should be the Head". The one major criticism of this Schema is mentioned by Aubert - "l'absence complète d'une théologie du Peuple de Dieu qui fait au laïc sa part légitime" (a mistake rectified by Vatican II - see King, 'The Church!' p. 12). This omission means, of course, that the Schema has been able to avoid taking the Old Testament as seriously as it might have done. Twenty-six years after Vatican I, we find Pope Leo XIII speaking very much in the terms we noted at the Council of Trent: "in Scripture, the Church is often called a body or the body of Christ (I Cor. xii:27). Because it is a body, it is visible to the eyes of men: because it is the body of Christ, it is a living body, active and growing, for it is sustained and animated by the power which Jesus Christ communicates to it, almost as the vine nourishes and renders fruitful the branches that are united

1. 'De Ecclesia Christi' Ch. 1. 2. op. cit. p. 154.
to it". The restraint of these words contrasts strangely with the speculation contained in an Encyclical of Pope Pius X which appeared only eight years after the Encyclical of Leo: "we may say that Mary bore within her womb, not Christ only, but also all those whose life was contained in the life of the Saviour .... Hence it is that, in a spiritual and mystical sense, we are called children of Mary and she is called Mother of us all .... Mary is the channel or the neck, whereby the body is joined to the Head and through which the Head transmits its power and virtue to the body."

F. The Modern Period.

We have now moved into our own century when the interest in the doctrine of the Mystical Body has increased immeasurably, especially in the years between the wars: "a period of extraordinary growth began in 1920. Between 1920 and 1926, as much was written on the subject as during the whole twenty years previously. Between 1925 and 1930 this output was doubled". Two characteristic works appeared during this time - in 1933, 'Le Corps Mystique du Christ' of Emile Mersch and in 1937, 'Corpus Christi Quod Est Ecclesia' by S. Tromp. While both these works were strongly traditional, three influences have been at work to change the emphasis of Roman thought:

1. The birth and development of the modern ecumenical movement raised the problem of the Church in an inter-confessional context. From the Lambeth Conference of 1867 to the formation of the Friends' World Committee

for Consultation in 1937, Christian groups all over the world were becoming more self-conscious. Parallel with this movement went the growing awareness by each of these groups that they were only part of the universal Church. This double movement quite naturally threw the whole question of the nature of the Church into relief. In France, for example, a turning-point in the relations between Protestant Churches was the publication of a paper by Pastor Fallot entitled, "What is a Church?". Yet Roman Catholicism was not left untouched by this ferment and so Roman Catholics have become aware, as never before, of the work of Protestant scholarship. We shall deal later with the influence Protestant Biblical studies have had on Roman attitudes, so here we shall restrict ourselves to the realm of theology. In this field, one man has been pre-eminent in reformulating the evangelical and reformed doctrine of the Word, namely Karl Barth: his theology is thoroughly Christological and his thinking about the Church must be seen against this background. Barth's dogmatics have raised once again all the points of dispute at stake at the Reformation and it is no wonder, therefore, that he should have had such an effect on Roman Catholics: "Karl Barth has, in fact, so changed the whole landscape of theology, Evangelical and Roman alike, that the other great theologians of modern times appear in comparison rather like jobbing gardeners." But two particular works of Protestant scholarship pinpointed the doctrine of the Church as body - Traugott Schmidt's 'Der Leib Christi' (1919) and K. L. Schmidt's article on 'Ekklesia' in TWNT (1938). The latter writer was a contemporary of Barth

1. see 'Breve Histoire d'Eoumenisme' by Paul Concord, p. 66.

2. T. F. Torrance in his introduction to Barth's 'Theology & Church' p. 7.
at Bonn and was influenced by him, both in his early writing and in the article cited. Both these writers isolated the one feature of the body-doctrine which is primary to all else, namely the relationship of Christ to the community, e.g. "Der Gedanke ist also der, dass, wie ein Mensch, so auch Christus einen Leib besitzt, die Ecclesia. So ist Christus das "Ich der Gemeinde, eines Leibes", er "verkörpert" sich in ihr. Damit ist der Übergang zu einer anderen Form unseres Gedankens gefunden, nämlich zu der Vorstellung der Gemeinde als einer Gesamtpersönlichkeit, die sich in Christus befindet und so mit ihm eins ist". "Ekklesia as the body of Christ is not a mere fellowship of men. The true meaning of the gathering of God in Christ can never be understood from the stand-point of social science. The one essential is communion with Christ." This latter quotation is echoed in the writings of Cerfæux: "this means that the idea of 'body' is never connected with the Church as a social body. The word refers to the Church only by means of an always perceptible reference to the real body of Christ".

2. Perhaps under this first influence, the Roman Church has begun to re-examine the Scriptures with new vigour and insight. Inevitably this exegetical study has led to a certain tension between the point of view of those engaged on it and those who maintain the traditional dogmatic viewpoint. We might, for example, compare the exegete Benoit ("nous avons vu comment l'Apôtre avait retouché l'image du corps mystique: le


3. p. 344.  4. see the art., 'Roman Catholic Biblical Scholarship' by the then Abbot of Downside in ET, Jan. 1961.
Christ n'est pas identifié à ce corps, il en est la tête, et une tête qui est assez distincte du corps, puisqu'elle dirige sa croissance et que le corps semble s'élever vers elle" - i, p. 515) and the traditional Mersch ("the faithful are not merely in Christ, nor are they merely one in Christ: they are Christ Himself, the one Christ, the Mystical Christ" - 'The Whole Christ', p. 139).

3. One man more than any other has been responsible for a shift in Roman thinking on our subject - Karl Adam. Speaking as a theologian, he refused to accept that the Mystical Body had sociological overtones and reiterated two of the basic emphases of the New Testament. Firstly, he stressed that the Pauline use of the body-metaphor illustrated the interdependence of members within the Church which yet remains a unity: "the Body of Christ is and must be an organic body, .... it works by its very nature in a manifold of functions and .... this manifold is bound together by the one Spirit of Christ into an inner unity"1. In other words, the roots of the body-idea are not to be found in sociology, but in the fact that God's Spirit gives varying gifts to members of the Church, yet binds them all into a unity. Secondly, he places Christ as the supreme authority within the Church: "so the aim of the Church .... is simply to secure that great and primary Christian idea that there is properly only one authority, only one teacher, only one sanctifier, only one pastor: Christ, the Lord"2. This is especially the emphasis of the Captivity Epistles where Christ is the Head of the Church. Adam reminds us of this in 'Christ our Brother': "He is the Head of the Body and we are the members .... As there is but one

1. 'The Spirit of Catholicism', p. 42. 2. op. cit. p. 25.
Head, so there is but one Body'\textsuperscript{1}. This last quotation comes from a section of the book where Adam makes a point that we shall have to deal with later, namely that Christ, through His human nature, gave new status to mankind: "in this one Man, the whole of humanity was raised out of its nothingness and worthlessness and given a positive being and a genuine worth. And since this elevation of mankind was a fundamental and real elevation, therefore were we made a genuine and real unity in Him'\textsuperscript{2}. On the analogy of Adam whose disobedience depressed the status of all mankind, Christ has raised that status by taking our nature as His. Karl Adam, therefore, represents a water-shed in Roman thinking about the Mystical Body: he set the doctrine free of political and social categories and set it once again in a Biblical and theological context.

Recent Roman Catholic statements about the Church reflect, to greater or lesser degree, the effect of these influences. In 1943, Pope Pius XII produced an Encyclical specifically devoted to the theme of the Church as the Mystical Body - 'Mystici Corporis'. (The following quotations come from the Catholic Truth Society translation, as do those from 'Ecclesiam Suam' and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from Vatican II). Beginning from Col. 1:18, the Encyclical draws two conclusions about the Church as a body (both of them designed to refute Protestant error): "not only must it be one and undivided, it must also be concrete and visible'\textsuperscript{3}. The Church is "not merely a body but the Body of Jesus Christ" and so, without explanation, the Encyclical begins to speak of "this mystical body" of which "our Lord is the Founder, the Head, the Upholder and the Saviour'\textsuperscript{4}. Christ became the Head of this Mystical Body

\begin{itemize}
\item [1.] p. 62.
\item [2.] ibid.
\item [3.] para. 14.
\item [4.] 24.
\end{itemize}
of His death as our Saviour\(^1\) and now rules it through His own direct authority\(^2\), as well as through the Pope and the bishops\(^3\). Referring to I Cor. xii:21, the Encyclical goes on to say that "Christ requires His members" i.e. "He wants to be helped by the members of His mystical Body in carrying out the work of Redemption"\(^4\). It is at this point that the Encyclical begins to incorporate those traditional features of the Mystical Body doctrine which we have been enumerating. Reminding its readers that Bellarmine claimed that "the name 'Body of Christ' means more than that Christ is the Head of His Mystical Body"\(^5\), it speaks of the Church as another Christ and claims Paul as its authority\(^6\), as well as Augustine's famous saying, "Christ preaches Christ"\(^7\). The Holy Spirit is the soul of this Mystical Body\(^8\). The Encyclical continues by showing the necessity of using the adjective 'mystical' to describe the 'churchly' body - not only does it help to distinguish "the social body of the Church .... from Christ's visible body", but also "to differentiate it from any body of the natural order, whether physical or moral"\(^9\). Augustine's doctrine of "the Whole Christ" is then reiterated: "Christ, Head and Body, is the whole Christ"\(^10\).

The 1964 encyclical of Paul VI ("Ecclesiam Suam") also makes reference to the Mystical Body and quotes, with approval, from para. 92

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. see his 'De Conciliis' II, 19.
6. see I Cor. xii:12, Acts ix:4. 7. Sermo 354, ii. 8. 9. 10. 11.
of 'Mystici Corporis': "we ought to get used to seeing Christ Himself in the Church. For it is indeed Christ Who lives in the Church and, through her, teaches, governs and sanctifies: and it is also Christ Who manifests Himself in manifold guise in the various members of His society". This is the emphasis which the present Pope seems to want to underline: he is anxious that "Christ's presence, His very life, will reveal its power and efficacy .... in the whole Mystical Body" and he reminds his readers that such is the teaching of the Bible, the Fathers, the Doctors and the saints. Christ's presence in His Body springs from the Church's "vital bond of union with Christ" and has far-reaching effects: "Christ uses the hierarchy to give this Mystical Body its sublime unity, its ability to perform its various tasks, its concerted multiplicity of form and its spiritual beauty".

G. 'De Ecclesia' of Vatican II.

Most recent and therefore most interesting of all Roman statements is the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church ('de Ecclesia') produced by the second Vatican Council and authorised by Pope Paul on 21st November, 1964. This document has already raised a great deal of speculation and controversy far beyond the confines of the Roman Church because it seems to distil much of the very best Roman scholarship about the Church, while at the same time avoiding many of the errors of the past.

1. para. 36. 2. 35. 3. ibid. 4. 37.
Chapter One of this document includes a section\(^1\) on "the various images of the Church" and this lists and describes the images the Bible uses of the Church e.g. sheepfold, field, building. The whole of para. 7 is, in fact, devoted to the New Testament image of the body, apart from its last sentences which relate the 'body'-concept to that of the 'bride'. In dealing with these images - and with the 'body'-image in particular - the Constitution is thoroughly Christological and Biblical. At the beginning of the Chapter, the Constitution shows the work of Father, Son and Spirit both in history and in the present life of the Church and thereby roots the Church firmly within God's plan of salvation. This plan consists of "inviting all men into unity in Christ\(^2\). God the Father "did not abandon men when, in Adam, they fell, for He has continually offered them help to salvation"\(^3\): "He has resolved to assemble those who believe in Christ in the holy Church\(^4\): "on the completion of the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost to be the perennial agent of the Church's sanctification\(^5\). It is against this background that we find the concept of the Church as body: "when He (Christ) provides His brethren with His own Spirit after assembling them from all the nations, He is making them, as it were, His own Body, in a mystical fashion\(^6\). In this Body are found the means of grace, "the means of the believers' union, hidden yet real, with Christ in His suffering and

\(^1\) ibid.  
\(^2\)  
\(^3\)  
\(^4\)  
\(^5\)  
\(^6\)  
\(^7\)
glory" i.e. baptism and the eucharist. It is important to note here that this Constitution begins "with mystical body as communion of life with Christ in the Spirit." This starting-point is in contrast to the Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis' which stressed that the Mystical Body was firstly a social body and only secondly the Body of Christ (i.e. it was a social structure first and a religious concept of unity second). In other words, the later document has reverted to the Pauline emphasis which we have already noted in the writings of Karl Adam, namely that the Church is Christ's body insofar as its members have been made one with one another and with Christ through His Spirit. "The relation of the faithful with Christ is like that of the members and the human body - there may be a great number of them but the body they make is one." Here again we have the Pauline perspective emphasised and supported from I Cor. xii:12: "for Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body".

Within this body, the Spirit dispenses gifts to the members and creates unity out of their diversity. Christ is the Head of the body and "by His mighty power He has dominion over heaven and earth." Because of His headship over the Church, Christ fills the "whole body with the wealth of His glory (cf. Eph. 1:18-23)." There are two goals to this activity of Christ within the body. Firstly, "all the members must be

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1. ibid. 2. see commentary on the Constitution by Gregory Baum in the Study-Club Edition, p. 23. 3. 'de Ecclesia' i:7. 4. I Cor. xii:1-11. 5. 'de Ecclesia' i:7. 6. ibid.
moulded to His likeness until Christ be formed in them (cf. Gal. iv:19)" and, secondly, His gifts of service ensure that the members "grow up in every way into Him Who is their Head (cf. Eph. iv: 11-16)". At the same time, the Spirit "gives life, unity and motion to the whole body" so that the Fathers of an earlier age could speak of the Spirit as the principle of life, as the soul of the body (see references to Augustine, Leo XIII and Pius XII on p. 12 of the Constitution). In contrast to the idea noted above that the believers make up a body which is Christ's and are, therefore, to some extent, identified with their Master, the Constitution lays great emphasis on the Church as the Bride of Christ e.g. "Christ loves the Church as His Bride .... the Church in her turn is submissive to her Head (Eph. v: 23-24)". This image, in contrast to that of the body, tends to draw a distinction between Christ and His people and to emphasize the necessary subordination of the Church to her Head: "the Church is subject to Christ .... in everything" (Eph. v: 24). So, while the Church is holy, she is also "in constant need of renewal", pursuing "a ceaseless course of penance and renewal". In asserting this tension between identification and distinction, between being Christ-like and being subject to Christ, the Constitution is true to the New Testament.

There is one other point to be noted in Chapter One of the Constitution - the Church, we are told, is a "compound of a human and divine element". Because the Mystical Body of Christ is both "a visible assembly and a spiritual fellowship" (and we have seen that, in contrast to 'Mystici Corporis', this document emphasizes the latter), she can be likened "by a

1. ibid. 2. ibid. 3. ibid.
significant analogy" to the "mystery of the Word incarnate". We shall have to discuss this analogy in our final section (see pp. 145ff.).

In conclusion, we can say that, despite the fact that the Council Fathers have done nothing to resolve the paradoxes of the New Testament e.g. the tension between Christ's pre-eminence "over all things" and His Headship of the Church, the relation of Christ and the Spirit within the Church (and precisely because of it), they have taken the scriptural evidence more seriously than their predecessors. Their document witnesses effectively to the fact that the early Fathers - the tradition of the Church - are dependent, as they themselves are, on the Biblical material. Finally, this Constitution does make good the most obvious omission of Vatican I - it includes chapters on the people of God and the laity. It is the first of these chapters which stresses quite strongly "the peculiar pilgrim state of this ecclesial fellowship and the historical dimension of Christ's body".1

This outline has not set out to evaluate or criticize the development of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. We have only pointed to the movements of thought as they have arisen over the centuries and it is against this background - historical and dogmatic - that we must set the rest of our study.

II. The Background to the Pauline Doctrine of the Body of Christ.

A. The Classical Fable and Related Ideas.

When Paul told the Corinthians that their unity was dependent on their interdependence in the same way as the unity of the human body comes from the co-ordination of its members, he was certainly drawing on a fable of long history - whether consciously or unconsciously, we cannot say. This fable used the human body as an example of unity in diversity: the success of our bodily functions depends on the proper interaction of our various limbs and organs and any failure in this interaction destroys the working of the whole. As can easily be seen, such an example can be used to achieve various ends in different situations. Some scholars have claimed that the first traces of the fable are to be found in the Egypt of the twentieth dynasty i.e. the twelfth century before Christ. Whatever and whenever its origins, the fable makes a fleeting appearance in Aesop before it is found in Livy's account of Menenius Agrippa's attempt to persuade the Roman plebs to call off their strike. Agrippa's plea is that the plebs must work together with the rest of society for the good of the whole, as organs in the human body must work with one another for the sake of health in the body. Cicero also makes use of the fable in 'de Officiis' - no organ, says the lawyer, must drain vigour from any other organ because then "the whole body would be bound to grow weak and perish" (debilitari et interire totum corpus necesse esset). Other writers who make use of the fable, in different

1. see F. Bissing, 'Kultur der Alten Aegypten' p. 47.
2. II:32, 8-12.
forms, are Xenophon\(^1\), Josephus\(^2\) and Quintilian\(^3\). Dupont lists other references to the fable's use and development\(^4\). It is quite obvious why writers should be attracted to this illustration of solidarity among individuals who belong to a group - with reference either to the State (as in Livy) or society in general (as in Cicero).

If we move into the realm of philosophy, and particularly to the literature of Stoicism, we find the words "
\[^\text{iō}\]

and 'corpus' used frequently. De Visscher has shown, incidentally, that Latin and Greek usage are identical\(^5\). There are those who say that this Stoic usage is no more than a natural extension of the thought of the fable. Wikenhauser, for example, has pointed out that Stoicism normally compares society with the human body (as does the fable) and rarely describes it as a body\(^6\). If it were true that Stoicism did not go further than likening society to a body, then we could say that here we had no more than another example of the classical fable. There is one place, however, where Stoicism actually identifies society as a body i.e. when Seneca writes, "Membra sumus corporis magni"\(^7\). Here the simile-form of the fable has completely disappeared. So Malevez, in an article in 'Science Religieuse' (1944) underlines the importance of this quotation from Seneca: "Sèneque a écrit, non point: 'nous sommes

come les membres', mais 'nous sommes les membres d'un corps'”. A little earlier in the same article Malevez has drawn attention to another distinctive feature of the Stoics' use of the 'body'-image: "chez les Stoiciens, il n'y a que l'Etat, mais l'humanité et le cosmos lui-même sont figurés par notre organisme". Our conclusion would be, therefore, that the Stoics widened the whole import of the classical fable from a comparison to an identification and from a political or social image to a philosophical term. Thus Dupont can claim that, as soon as Seneca wrote the words in the ninety-fifth letter quoted above, the influence of the classical fable became less and less important. He goes on to conclude that "la perspective cosmique, qui est celle du milieu stoïcien, quand il emploie cette expression, n'est pas un simple élargissement du thème qui compare la cité ou l'Etat à un corps". Having thus cut off Stoic usage from the classical simile, Dupont is forced to find the source of Stoic thought elsewhere. His theory is that the Stoics called any collectivity, seen as a whole, a 'body': in support of this hypothesis, he quotes Vergil², Livy⁵ and refers to further references in de Visscher⁶. There can be no doubt that this theory certainly covers Stoic identification of society or humanity or even the cosmos as a 'body' – they all represent entities made up of disparate parts which nonetheless can be seen as unities.

1. see art. cit. pp. 28-29. 2. p. 436. 3. ibid. 'Aeneid' xi, 313.

5. Histories XXVI: 24, 6, IV: 9, 4, cf. XXVI: 16, 9: "corpus nullum civitatis, nec senatus, nec plebis concilium, nec magistratus esse".

6. op. cit. p. 92 n. 2, 3.
Stoic thinking about such unities can be illustrated from the writings of Sextus Empiricus in 'Adv. Mathematicos' ix: 73-95 where he is expounding the great Stoic philosopher Chrysippus. The unity of bodies, we are told there, can be of three types – the unity of a whole or totality (ἡνύμενα), the unity of things simply linked together (ἐκ δυνάτων) and the unity of different entities, separate from one another (ἐκ διέτατων). The cosmos or universe, therefore, is by this reckoning a unity of the first type i.e. it is a ᾠνύμενον. But Sextus Empiricus goes on to lay down another three-fold distinction, this time with reference to the principle of unity in these bodies. There are, firstly, bodies whose unity depends upon ἐξεστί, those, secondly, which, like plants, are endowed with φυσις and those, thirdly, which, like animals, possess ἴχνη (soul or spirit). In common with earlier philosophers, the Stoics believed that the world fell into this third category i.e. they thought that the world, as a body, was knit together by a living soul e.g. "the cosmos is a living being endowed with reason, with spirit (ἐμψυχον) and intelligence"1. So, because the world is a unity which can be seen as a whole, it is called a body: because it is endowed with spirit, it is called a ἰσχυρός ἑμψυχον. Such thinking has antecedents in Plato2 who may have derived his ideas in turn from the Eleatics. But, as we have already suggested, the Stoics saw unity in other objects besides the cosmos and these too were called 'bodies'. In Seneca again, the State is one and so he can address the Emperor, "Tu animus reipublicae tuae es, illa corpus tuum"3 and later he can speak of the Empire as a body with the Emperor as its Head4.

1. Diogenes Laertius, vii: 142. 2. See 'Timaeus' 30B, 32C, 32D and 39E.
3. 'de Clementia' i. 5.1. 4. See ii. 2.1.
This latter reference provides an intriguing parallel to the idea of Christ as Head of the Body which is found in the Epistles of the Captivity. This same complex of ideas — the application of ἰσόμα or 'corpus' to the cosmos, the state or society — is found in Marcus Aurelius¹, in Epictetus² and in many other Stoic writers, some of whom are quoted by Lietzmann³. Stoicism and, through it, popular philosophy, therefore, had their own system of ideas centred in the term 'body'.

Within Hellenistic Judaism, Philo also used 'soma' as a distinctive part of his teaching. In 'de Spec. Legibus', for example, he says that the High Priest offers sacrifice for the people "so that every age-group and every section of the nation which makes up one body may be moulded into the one and selfsame fellowship" (ἦνα πάσα ἡλικία καὶ πάντα μέρη τοῦ ἔθνους ἐνδ ίσος ἰσόματος εἰς μίαν καὶ τήν αὐτῇς ἀρμόδιαν κοινωνίαν). In this passage, it is the whole nation which is seen as a body made up of different parts. This same idea is found elsewhere⁵ when Philo is speaking of assimilating proselytes into the nation — they are to be received as members of the people so that, "in its different groups, it may appear to be one living organism, united in fellowship" (ἐν διαίρεσις μερῶν ἐν ἑαυτῷ σύννοι). As W. L. Knox has pointed out⁶ the word σύννοι here replaces ἰσόμα "for purely stylistic reasons". Indeed σύννοι is the word used by Diogenes Laertius in the passage quoted above so here we have a parallel between Stoic usage and that of Philo. In neither case can we ascribe

5. 'de Virtutibus' xx: 103. 6. see JTS xxxix (1938) p. 244.
much significance to the fact that \( \text{σώμα} \) rather than \( \text{βίνη} \) appears, except perhaps that the former stresses the organic nature of the body better than the latter. At other points, Philo introduces the idea of the head as that which controls the body e.g. 'de Præm. et Poen.' xix: 114 where a good man, a good city or a good nation is said to dominate the whole "as the head does the body": 'de Spec. Legibus' iii: 134 where the authority of the Master is compared to the way nature has placed the control of the body in the head. However influenced Philo may have been elsewhere in his teaching, his reference to the head here stands directly in the Rabbinic tradition (see Dupont p. 446 who suggests, with examples, that Philo is dependent here on the Old Testament concept of 'head' as that which is superior or which exercises authority cf. Rabbinic teaching on Deut. xxviii: 13 - see p. 95).

In passing, we may note that a great deal of study has been done to examine the use of the 'soma'-concept in Gnosticism: "much recent work has tended to place the origin of Paul's use of the phrase .... in Gnosticism"\(^1\). Two scholars involved in this work have been Kasemann\(^2\) and Bultmann\(^3\). The passages in Gnostic literature which use 'soma' in a sense parallel to Paul include passages from the writings of Mandaeans, of the Gnostic heretics of the second century and from the Apocryphal writings of the New Testament. But, as Best points out, all these passages are of a much later date than the Apostle: "it is only in post-Pauline literature that we find the conception of human beings as members of the Heavenly Man"\(^4\). Exactly

\(^1\) Best, op. cit. p. 85. 
\(^2\) see 'Leib und Leib Christi' pp. 159 ff. 
\(^3\) see 'Theology of the New Testament' I, pp. 173 ff. 
\(^4\) Best, op. cit., p. 86.
the same criticism could be levelled against those who derive Paul's use of the metaphor from some of the classical and Stoic writers I have quoted - they are later than Paul and, in theory at least, it is more likely that he influenced them than vice-versa.

Thus we have tried to evoke the background to Paul's thinking, a background which obviously echoed with ideas and concepts clustered round the term 'soma'. It is extremely perilous to suggest which area of this background, if any, had a direct effect on the thought of the Apostle. Yet there are those willing to take this risk to posit the source of Paul's thought categorically in one of the areas we have described.

Firstly, we shall note some of those who claim that Paul used the classic fable in his teaching about the body in I Cor. xii: 12-27 and Rom. xii: 4-5. Allo, in his commentary on First Corinthians, says, "Paul a utilisé un exemple d' école". By this, Allo means that the classic fable was part of the cultural background which Paul would certainly assimilate sometime during his education and that he made use of that illustration when he came to write his Major Epistles. It is important to note that Allo does not think that Paul adopted the classic fable exactly as he found it in its pagan setting, but he simply 'utilized' it to illumine a particular point in his letters. Amiot makes the same point when he writes, "Later, when speaking of the charismata, Paul uses a new allegory, based on the ancient fable, to show the supernatural interdependence of Christians". Of the exegetes whose work we are particularly

studying, Cerfaux follows the same line as Allo and Amiot: "faced .... by the trouble which was very much in his mind - the abuse of the charismata in the liturgical assemblies - Paul made use of the classic theme"\(^1\). We note that Cerfaux, like Allo, stresses that the Apostle made use of, rather than took over completely, what he found in the fable. Benoit also shares this general point of view, with one important condition: he feels that Paul found the fable useful as an illustration of a doctrine which he already held - "cet apologue est bien mis en œuvre par l'Apôtre, mais seulement comme l'illustration d'une doctrine qu'il possède déjà, non comme la source dont elle jaillirait"\(^2\). This doctrine claims that Christians are united, not only to Christ, but also to one another. So Benoit believes that Paul "l'utilise (cf. Allo's use of the same verb quoted above) done pour la mettre en service de cette pensée"\(^3\). Benoit is right at this point when he explains how Paul was able to use the classic fable to illustrate his belief that Christ's followers are interdependent in their common union with Christ. The Apostle began with this union of Christ and His disciples and, through the fable, was able to add the horizontal relationship - His disciples with one another. Schnackenburg makes the same point with a slightly different emphasis: "the Apostle was scarcely led to his manner of talking about the Body of Christ by the classical comparison of a society with an articulated organism, but, rather, on the contrary, the former suggested the current simile which conveniently suited the quarrels about spiritual gifts in Corinth"\(^4\). So Schnackenburg puts Paul's "manner of

1. A. p. 266.
2. \(\text{ibid.}\), p. 14.
3. \(\text{ibid.}\)
4. 1, p. 168.
talking about the Body of Christ" prior to his use of the fable, just as Benoit puts the doctrine of union before the fable.

But, secondly, Dupont makes no mention of the fable, but draws our attention to the ideas of popular philosophy - particularly Stoicism - on which he believes Paul was dependent. In a very compressed sentence, Dupont sums up the teaching of the philosophy with regard to 'soma' - "le soma suppose à la fois totalité et unité"¹. It may well be possible to explain Stoic principles in this shorthand way, but it is a serious omission on Dupont's part to neglect the body-imagery to be found outside Stoicism, namely in the current folk-culture through the classic fable.

We have already accepted Benoit's opinion about Paul's having a previously accepted doctrine i.e. the close relationship, the union of Christ and His followers. We must now trace the genesis of this basic idea.

B. The Union of Christ and His disciples.

In its moments of greatest insight, the Old Testament speaks of God as the One Who identifies Himself with the destiny of His people². At such moments, it is the nation as a whole with which God relates Himself, rather than the individual Israelite: "Yahweh was the God of Israel and only secondarily the God of the individual Israelite"³. This distinctive

¹. p. 438.
². see Lev. xxvi: 12, Jer. xi: 4, xxx: 22.
feature of Old Testament religion reached its peak in the prophecy of Hosea. The prophet (perhaps speaking out of the pain of personal experience) sees the relation of God to His people in terms of marriage. Yahweh is not simply a moral leader — He is a Husband¹ by extending the image, Hosea can speak of the steadfast love of Yahweh for His bride². At another point, Hosea explains the closeness of the relationship in terms of parenthood rather than marriage — Yahweh is Father to Israel, His Son³, and, as Father, He shows patient understanding towards His child⁴. From the time of Ezekiel, this sense of God's relation with the whole nation was, to some extent, weakened by a greater emphasis on religion as a personal relationship between the individual and his God⁵. Some scholars dispute that there is, in fact, this weakening of the relationship of nation to God in favour of the individual. It is certainly true that there is a remarkable example of God's concern for the whole people in Ezek. xvi where Israel is compared to a girl, abandoned after birth, but saved, brought up and married by Yahweh: the nation, however, rewards His care and protection with infidelity and adultery. Here we have the same motifs as in Hosea — God and the people bound together in marriage and Israel spurning the steadfast love of God with unfaithfulness⁶. The fidelity of God in contrast to the waywardness of the nation is an important idea in relation to New Testament images of Christ and His Church as Husband and Wife⁷.

The basis for the idea of marriage between God and Israel lies in

the Covenant\(^1\) and, because of the nation's continued disobedience, Jeremiah sees the need for a new Covenant\(^2\). This new Covenant between God and His people will differ in two ways from the Covenant of Sinai - God's Law will be written on the hearts of His people, not on tablets of stone\(^3\): like Ezekiel, Jeremiah sees the new Covenant based on the personal relationship of the individual to God ('for they shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest'), rather than on the relationship of the nation to God.

When, as Christians believe, Christ came as the bearer of this new Covenant, Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled insofar as the blood of the Covenant Christ established was shed for the forgiveness of many individuals' sins\(^4\). Those who stand within this new Covenant are seen, not in relation to God primarily, but to Christ. We can illustrate this relationship from at least three points in the Gospel tradition. In Matthew, x: 40, first of all, we find Christ claiming that His disciples can represent Him - they stand, in a sense, in His place\(^5\). Christ so identifies Himself with His disciples that they can be regarded 'in loco Christi'. This idea can be compared with the one found in Matthew xxv: 31-46 (esp. 40, 45) where Christ identifies Himself, not only with His own disciples, but with all those who are poor and needy, His "brothers". Secondly, there is the Johannine picture of the Good Shepherd\(^6\). The imagery here does not only speak of the loving care of the Shepherd for His sheep, but of their personal knowledge of one another ('I know My own sheep and My sheep know Me') and of the

Shepherd's self-sacrifice for his sheep ("I lay down my life for the sheep"). Thirdly, at John xv: 1-6, Christ speaks of Himself as the Vine and the disciples as the branches. The imagery here leads us to two conclusions - the relationship between Christ and the individual disciple is close and intimate and in that relationship the latter is completely dependent on the former: "dwell in Me, as I in you: no branch can bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains united with the Vine: no more can you bear fruit unless you remain united with Me - apart from Me you can do nothing". There is no doubt that the concept of the Vine and the branches includes similar ideas and notions to the Pauline concept of the Body of Christ: "there is enough in common between the allegory of the Vine and the branches and the Pauline doctrine of the living union of the believer with Christ for us to recognize the underlying identity of thought and experience". Schnackenburg is even more precise: "the Pauline concept of the Body of Christ ... has unmistakable kinship ... with the Johannine allegory of the Vine and the branches". One of the similar ideas shared by the two concepts which reveal their "underlying identity" is only implicit in the Johannine image but appears quite clearly in the letters of the Captivity: in John, the Vine gives life and energy to the branches, thereby enabling them to bear fruit and, in Colossians and Ephesians, the Head nourishes the members of His Body, the Church.

One final point must be made about the word ἀμπελόν in John xv:1,5.
In the Old Testament, Israel is seen as God's 'vine' or 'vineyard' (it is interesting to note that an early Syriac version of John xv:1 reads, 'I am the Vineyard of Truth'2. But the nation has proved unfruitful3 and, in the light of this failure, Jesus sees Himself 'the true, the genuine vine' i.e. He takes upon Himself an epithet and a role once reserved for the nation who are proved unworthy of them. But the other emphasis of this passage is that Christ's disciples are united to Him, they belong to Him and this intimate relationship is the source of their fruitfulness. In some ways, this passage is similar to I Cor. vii:17 - Christ's followers are attached exclusively to Him. There is, therefore, no reason to interpret this passage 'mystically' as a basis for the doctrine of the Whole Christ i.e. by suggesting that the branches are, in fact, part of the 'vine' and included within it and, as such, contribute to its wholeness.

Apart from these references within the Gospel tradition itself, we must also take some account of the Old Testament background of belief and prophecy which Christ used and adapted. Whereas the three references above have all spoken of Christ related to individuals (the sheep and the branches are regarded, first of all, separately and only then corporately), the Old Testament affords images which speak of an individual, representative figure in relation to a group. The "movement between individual and collective is a well-known peculiarity of the Semitic mind"1. We need not describe these images too closely or conjecture too deeply about what use Christ made of them, but they do create a whole complex against which Christ undoubtedly set His ministry.

Firstly, we must begin with Adam who was regarded by the Jews as an individual who was, at the same time, representative of all humanity.

According to this thinking, the tribe was the grouping of all those descended
from a single ancestor and it took on the character of that ancestor e.g. Israel was the single individual, but it was also the people descended from him. Against this background, Rabbinic speculation made of Adam a collective figure insofar as the humanity descended from him shared his nature. Adam, the individual figure, is the representative of all humanity and his failure becomes humanity's failure. Paul, at three points in his letters, compares and contrasts Adam and Christ and we shall see that these passages afford some insight into the question of the Body of Christ. In the meantime, however, it is sufficient for us to see that, for the Jews, Adam was both an individual and the group of those descended from him: in the words of Kierkegaard, "Adam ist er und sein Geschlecht". At the same time, the figure of Adam seems to have left very little trace on the Gospel record. Indeed, the only place where such a trace can be seen is in Mark's account of the Temptations where the wild beasts (peculiar to Mark) and the angels seem to refer back to Rabbinic speculation about Adam in Eden: "it does seem that in the Marcan account of the Temptation the scenery is the Garden of Eden and Christ is placed against the same background as was the first Adam". The other figures we are to examine are far more obviously part of the Gospel narrative than is Adam. In passing, we may note that

1. see de Freine, 'Adam et Son Lignage' p. 113.
2. see Hanson 'The Unity of the Church in the New Testament' p. 68, n. 3, Davies 'Paul and Rabbinic Judaism' pp. 53-57.
4. quoted by de Freine, op. cit., p. 252.
the figure of Abraham takes on something of the duality we have seen as characteristic in the figure of Adam and evidence of this can be found in the New Testament. So Abraham, the patriarch, the "father," has his "seed" and his "descendants" who are entitled to these names only if they "do as Abraham did" and if they share his faith.

The second figure is that of the Servant of Yahweh as found in Deutero-Isaiah (i.e. chs. xl-xliv). Debate about the true significance of this figure still continues but it is sufficient for us to note that many scholars would agree with the conclusion of Rowley: "there is no antithesis between the individual and the group, but an identification of the individual with the group he represents". So, in chs. xl-xlviii, on the one hand, the whole nation is called "God's Servant" in passages which recall the election of Israel as God's own people. But, in the section from lii: 13 to liii: 12, on the other hand, we find the figure of the individual who is also called "God's Servant". It is important to see that these two usages are complementary rather than exclusive: "weder eine rein kollective noch eine rein individuelle Deutung hat hier befriedigt. Der 'õbed' ist ein Einzelner; dieser Einzelne ist der Vertreter des Volkes. Durch seine Verkündigung erfüllt er die Aufgabe des Volkes". So the

Servant of Yahweh, is, at one and the same time, an individual and the people he represents, whether this people is seen as the whole nation or only as the faithful remnant: "the servant-Messiah is the true Israel, the Remnant, concentrated in One Person, and also the One who will re-establish the scattered people and draw all nations into the worship of Yahweh."

Thirdly, we find the figure of "son of man" in the book of Daniel. This figure, quite clearly, is introduced in sharp contrast to four bestial figures who have preceded him - the lion (v. 4), the bear (v. 5), the leopard (v. 6) and the fourth with iron teeth and ten horns (vv. 7-8). It is equally clear that these four animals are meant to represent four kingdoms (see v. 12: "their dominion was taken away"), although estimates vary about what historical kingdoms were actually intended. The figure of "one like a son of man" (i.e. a human being in contrast to the preceding animals) represents a fifth kingdom: "to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom that all peoples and nations and languages should serve him" (v. 14). Later, in the same chapter, however, when "the saints of the Most High" appear (v. 22) it is to them, not to the "one like a son of man", that the fifth kingdom is given (v. 27). So here again we have the tension between the two poles - the individual and the group - in which the first is representative of the second. "For the Son of Man in Daniel is not a mere individual: he is the representative of the 'people of the saints of the Most High' and has set himself the task of

1. G. A. Danell, ibid.  
2. vii: 13.
making this people of God .... a reality\(^1\). In later literature, the
figure of the "Son of Man" was to become more definite and to be overlaid
with apocalyptic characteristics. The thirteenth chapter of the 2nd Book
of Esdras, for example, which seems dependent on Daniel vii, speaks of "the
likeness of a man rising from the midst of the sea"\(^2\) who "flew with the
clouds of heaven"\(^3\). This man, after destroying a multitude of opponents
with fire and flame and sparks from his mouth", called "unto him another
multitude which was peaceable" (v. 12). At v. 52, God speaks of the man
as "My Son" and immediately of "those that be with him". So here again
this apocalyptic figure, this man, is associated with a group, whether it
be a peaceable multitude or those that were "with him" i.e. the Son of Man,
or simply Man, carries with him a group with which he is identified. A
second example of the development of the Son of Man theme is found in the
parabola section of the Ethiopian Book of Enoch i.e. chas. xxxvii-lxxi.
In these chapters, the title "Son of Man" plays an important role. In
fact, it is possible that this part of the Book is a sort of Midrash on
Dan. vii: 13. In ch. xlvi, the figure of the Son of Man is described
(v. 3) and, in ch. xlviii, he is said to have existed before the sun (v. 3)
and before the creation of the world (v. 6). He is a figure of glory and
majesty\(^4\) - his reign will be eternal\(^5\) and he will uphold the just and the
holy\(^6\). This apocalyptic king is both the Messiah\(^7\) and the "Elect One"\(^8\).

But alongside the "Elect One", there is the "elect people": the latter are seen as intimately related to the former so that, here again, we have the same polarity between the individual and the group.

This third figure is especially important for our study because he became associated in the Jewish mind with the far more comprehensive figure of the Messiah. N. L. Schmidt suggests that Christ may well have seen Himself as Messiah in terms of the "Son of Man" in Daniel. In 2 Esdras xiii: 52, the "Man" is called "God's Son" i.e. Messiah; in Enoch, as we have just seen, the same equation between Son of Man and Messiah is made. Thus T. Schmidt can say, "Soviel steht jedonfalls fest, dass in späteren Judentum, in der Apokalyptik der Ausdruck 'Menschensohn' eine Bezeichnung für den Messias geworden ist." This means that the Messiah, who is regarded within the Old Testament as an anointed King in David's line, becomes involved in this polarity between individuality and collectivity. "Er ist der Representant des Volkes, dieses ist in ihm gewissermassen zusammengefasst, und sein religiöse Stellung entspricht der des Volkes als Gesamtheit."

This phenomenon we have been describing has come to be known as the concept of 'corporate personality'. Although this term may be both imprecise and unnecessary, the concept it refers to is, without a doubt, a major factor in Jewish thought and has no real parallel in modern Western thought. All the figures we have mentioned - Adam, the Servant, 1. xxxix: 6, xlv: 3-6, 2. op. cit. p. 40, 3. see also lii: 4, 4. op. cit. p. 223, 5. see II Sam. vii: 12 ff., Jer. xvii: 25, xiii: 5-6, 6. T. Schmidt, op. cit., p. 218, 7. see H. W. Robinson, op. cit. pp. 87 ff., de Fraigne, op. cit. pp. 11-42.
the Son of Man and the Messiah - are more than individuals. They are representative of a group which, in turn, is intimately related to them - they are all one, yet many, insofar as the group associated with them takes on their character and nature.

The question of how far Christ Himself was influenced by these figures - Adam apart - has always caused controversy among scholars. Bultmann has argued, for example, that Jesus did not see Himself as the Messianic Son of Man, either seen in traditional terms or recast to suit His own purposes. Taking the opposite point of view, we have seen K. L. Schmidt claiming that Jesus regarded His Messiahship as Son of Man in terms of Daniel vii. All we need say here is this - there are traces of all three figures in the Gospel records. In other words, the evangelists - and presumably the early Church - thought of Christ as fulfilling these three roles. Thus, if what we have said is correct, He was considered as more than an individual figure - He was representative of a group in intimate relationship to Himself. Such a conclusion leads on quite naturally to an examination of the role of the Twelve in relation to their Master.

The conclusion we must note here, therefore, is that, whereas the three Gospel passages we cited above spoke mainly of Christ in relation to individuals, this Old Testament background has suggested that Christ deliberately chose a role which would associate Him with a group. We shall discover that Paul's major contribution was to follow up this second line of thought.

3. e.g. Luke xxi: 37, John xiii: 31 and Mark viii: 29. 4. see Newton Flew, 'Jesus and His Church' pp. 52 ff.
and give it a distinctive place and language in ecclesiology.

A most important piece of evidence in trying to establish the sources of Paul's thought is that the Apostle himself experienced Christ as the One Who identified himself with His disciples. The fact that Luke repeats this episode twice in Acts and that Paul himself refers to it three times in his letters shows that what happened on the Damascus Road was crucial in the life of the Apostle. Indeed, it is possible to regard these words of Christ ("Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?") as a basic source of the doctrine of the Body-of-Christ-theme. Christ is here implying that Paul, inasmuch as he is harrying Christ's disciples, is also harrying Christ Himself. "Christ had, at the hour of Paul's conversion, revealed Himself as still active in the world through His disciples. It was, however, the dangers which threatened the Corinthian Christians which led the Apostle to express their union to Christ with utter realism (I Cor. vi: 17): "St. Paul began by grasping the fact that Christ was identified with the whole body of Christians and with each individual Christian (Acts ix: 4)". While we may agree with both of these moderate statements about the effect of Christ's question may have had on Paul and particularly on his thinking about the Church, we must also suggest that the wording of the

1. Acts ix: 4. 2. see xxii: 7 and xxvi: 14. 3. see I Cor. xv: 9.
question itself implies that Christ is here identifying Himself with individuals, rather than "with the whole body of Christians". At the same time, those individuals whom Paul was persecuting were soon to be called "the Church of God" by the Apostle himself.¹ Yet, while we have agreed with Stanley and Bonsirven, we must conclude that Allo's conjecture that the basis for the whole idea of the Body of Christ leapt into Paul's mind on the Damascus Road is both unlikely and unrealistic: "toute l'ecclésiologie paulinienne était née en substance dans la reconnaissance de ce fait que le Christ-Seigneur tout-puissant vit en ceux qui croient en lui: 'Pourquoi Me persécutes-tu?"². We cannot say with certainty what influence this conversion experience had on Paul's later thought, but Christ's question does underline the intimacy of Christ's relationship to the individual - Paul, in persecuting Christian men and women, was, in fact, persecuting their Lord Who chose to identify Himself with them. At the same time, we have indicated that the form of Christ's ministry suggests that He saw Himself, not related simply to individual followers, but also to them as a group. We must now see what Paul made of this background-material.

III. The Body of Christ in the Major Epistles.

A. The Emergence of the Doctrine.

Paul was certainly a coherent thinker, but he has left us no systematic record of his thought. We find him rather expressing the tradition he had received in different ways at different points. The teaching of the primitive Church, as we have seen, suggested an intimate relationship between Christ and His disciples, both as separate individuals and as a group. Paul reflects this teaching in varied forms, three of which we shall note here:

1. The Apostle frequently uses the formula 'in Christ.' Basically this formula "describes the relationship of the believer to Christ." Best goes on to say that it can describe the relationship of Christians as a group to Christ. This second usage is a quite natural extension of the first — since all believers are in relation to the one Christ, they are together 'in Him' and also thereby in relation to one another. This relationship is based on those events whereby our Lord achieved salvation, reconciliation and resurrection from the dead. His death and resurrection: "c'est en se rattachant au Christ et à sa œuvre rédemptive que le pécheur est justifié, qu'il reçoit de Dieu le

1. I Cor. xv: 22, Rom. viii: 1, II Cor. vi: 17 etc.  

3. see I Cor. i: 2, I Thess. ii: 14.  

5. II Cor. vi: 13.  
6. I Cor. xv: 22.
salut. Une des formulas les plus chères à Paul pour exprimer cette conviction est celle du  \( \text{ἐν Ἰησοῦ} \) [1]. Insofar as Paul regards baptism as the means whereby the believer is identified through faith with these salvation-events of dying and rising again [2], this sacrament is one important means by which the individual becomes 'in Christ'. "Comment s'opère cette union qui nous fait 'dans le Christ'? Par la foi, d'abord, assurément, mais aussi par le baptême" [3]. Schnackenburg also emphasizes that believers are 'in Christ' through baptism. As we shall see later, he stresses the importance of Gal. iii: 23-25, in which Paul "recalls baptism in which all 'in Christ Jesus' have become sons of God, by 'putting on Christ'" [4]. The importance of this particular passage is that Paul does not have the individual primarily in mind, but the Galatian community as a whole - "you are all one in Christ Jesus" [5]. Schnackenburg is right when he claims that this phrase "is in complete agreement with I Cor. xii: 13 .... and can be compared directly with Rom. xii: 5" [6], both of which speak of unity in Christ but which, unlike the Galatian passage, include the 'body of Christ' concept. Schnackenburg sums up by saying that "here the relation between Christ and Church is viewed as being as close as can be conceived .... the new life of the individual 'in Christ' is, at the same time, life in a new society founded 'in Christ Jesus'" [7]. Cerfáux reiterates exactly the same point when he says, "The life of the Christian is at one and the same time social

2. see Rom. vi: 1-11.
4. 1, p. 166.
5. Gal. iii: 23.
6. I, ibid.
7. II Cor. v: 17.
8. 1, p. 167.
and individual and Paul's theology always has in mind the 'esse Christianum' of the Christian and hence his life within the Christian body"1. So, through faith and baptism, the Christian and the community of which he is a part are 'in Christ' i.e. they are intimately related to their Lord Who made their new 'being' possible (see καὶνὴ ΚΤΙΣΙΣ in II Cor. v: 17). Following what we have said, it is interesting to note that Ernst Percy, in his 'Der Leib Christi', explains the 'body of Christ'-formula in terms of this 'in Christ'-formula which he regards as the more basic of the two2.

ii. Paul made much of an antithesis which he drew between Christ and Adam. The two main passages where this antithesis appears3 are fraught with exegetical problems, although their general meaning is clear. We have already noted (see pp. 52-3) that, for Rabbinic Judaism, Adam was more than an individual - as representative of the human race, his disobedience became humanity's disobedience and his sinful nature was passed on to his descendants i.e. to all mankind. In Pauline terminology, humanity is 'in Adam'4. But, if we are to understand Paul's thinking clearly, we must begin, not with Adam, but with Christ: only then can we appreciate how it is that Paul calls Adam the τύπος of Christ5. "We are in the habit of reversing Saint Paul's order. To us, it seems that redemption is universal because sin had affected all men. But for Paul, the new life of participation in Christ's life, is prior in God's intention.

In God's mind, there is a perfect balance between the fall of man and his salvation. Adam, then, is the type of Christ and the fall is modelled on salvation.\(^1\) So we must begin with the model - with Christ and His act of obedience. The grace of God came to men through the one man, Jesus Christ, and this grace redounded \(\varepsilon\iota\varepsilon\iota\;\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\;\pi\omicron\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\upsilon\) \(^2\). Christ's ministry, therefore, involves a representative factor in relation to the "many who will be made righteous"\(^3\) insofar as His act of grace offers them acquittal and freedom.\(^4\) This group, the "many", are what they are only "through the one man, Jesus Christ our Lord"\(^5\) - without Him and apart from Him, they are nothing. This representative character of Christ's ministry was prefigured in Adam in whom all sinned\(^6\) and by whom death came into the world.\(^7\) So close is the union between Adam and mankind descended from him that they share the same nature and the word "Adam" itself can refer, not only to the individual, but also the humanity descended from him - Adam is one and many. So, as Cerfaux says, since the effect of Adam's act of disobedience spread to all mankind, he is "the type of Him Who was to come"\(^8\) and Who, by an act of obedience, made God's grace possible for the many who are in Him. All humanity shared in the sin of Adam and is therefore one with him, so Christians are one with Christ, sharing together in the grace which flows from His act of self-sacrifice. The emphasis here is not so much on the union of Christ to the individual and the group (the "many"), but on their solidarity, one with the other - they belong to one another.

insofar as, apart from Christ, there is no salvation. "There is a contrast throughout the divine economy, for the deed of one man has its repercussions on all men and the saving act of another man brings about the abundance of justice for all. We owe our justice to Christ, its origin and its cause". Wikenhauser, like some modern non-Roman scholars, sees the same thinking underlying both the concept of Adam-Christ and that of the Body of Christ i.e. Christ includes and represents the new humanity (as Adam did the old) and thus He plays a double role in relation to His Body, that of inclusion and representation.

iii. One passage in the first letter to the Corinthians expresses the union of Christ and the Christian in most vivid terms, at the same time revealing the first signs of a 'body'-doctrine in Paul. This passage is a severe warning against fornication in which the Apostle reminds the Corinthians that their bodies are not meant for lust – they belong to Christ (v. 13). Their bodies, in fact, "are limbs and organs of Christ" (v. 15). Here the ἱματα in v. 13 and ἱματα in v. 15 do not simply refer to the physical side of man's nature – they refer to the whole person: "the Apostle regarded the 'body' as expressing the person in its entirety". As with the formula 'in Christ', the basis for the idea that the Corinthians' persons are "members of Christ" is found in the redemption achieved by Christ through

1. Cerfau, B, p. 235. 2. e.g. Hanson pp. 66 ff., Davies pp. 32 ff.

cf. J. A. T. Robinson in 'The Body' p. 28: "the ἱματα is the whole person".
His death (vv. 11 and 19) and the promise inherent in His resurrection (v. 14). So Benoit is able to trace the origins of the phrase \( \tau \alpha \mu \varepsilon \lambda \eta \tau \omega \chi \rho \iota \beta \tau \sigma \omega \) by saying, "Si les chrétiens sont 'membres' du Christ, c'est parce que leur corps se trouve unis au sien par la communion à sa mort qui les a rachetés (cf. vii: 23, Gal. iii, 13, iv: 5) et à sa résurrection dont ils ont le gage assuré par la présence du Pneuma qui déjà les sanctifie (cf. Rom. viii: 11, 13)." Belonging to Christ as His members, the Corinthians cannot hand themselves over to a harlot: anyone who does this becomes one flesh with her (vv: 15-17). Such an association is impossible for the Christian insofar as he is already spiritually united to Christ (he is one Spirit with Christ – v. 17) and his body is a shrine of the Spirit (v. 19). In this passage, therefore, we are concerned with the union of Christ and the individual – a union which is both spiritual and exclusive: in addition, we must note the use of the words \( \mu \varepsilon \lambda \eta \), \( \delta \omega \mu \alpha \) and \( \delta \alpha \mu \kappa \tau \alpha \) which presage later usage. Benoit suggests that the appearance of these words in this passage mean that the Apostle had the 'body'-theme in his mind even before he wrote this chapter. More important, however, is Benoit's description of the bond between Christ and the individual: "il s'agit d'une union très réelle, physique, puisqu'elle peut être comparée et opposée à l'union sexuelle qui fond deux corps en une seule chair." J. A. T. Robinson would certainly agree with Benoit: "To such an extent indeed is the new union with Christ physical (the word 'joined' is again one of sexual union \( \kappa \omicron \lambda \lambda \delta \theta \alpha \); cf. Gen. ii: 24, LXX) that immoral sex-relationships can destroy it." But to speak of a "physical union" is to

1. ii, p. 13  
2. ii, p. 13  
3. op. cit. pp. 52-3.
neglect the fact that the parallelism of the passage is not complete. Cerfau realises this when he speaks of an antithesis between sexual intercourse with a prostitute and union with the body of Christ: although both refer to the union of a physical body with another physical body, the parallelism is not perfect. "The word 'Christ' is the corresponding element in the antithesis to 'harlot'. The parallelism is carried on still further. Either one joins oneself (κολλώμενος, cling to, fuse with) to a prostitute or one joins himself (κολλώμενος) to Christ. In joining oneself to a prostitute, one becomes ἐν βυθῷ (with her), while in joining oneself to Christ one becomes ἐν πνεύμα (with Him)"¹. So, whereas the relationship with the prostitute can certainly be called physical – he "becomes physically one with her (for Scripture says, 'The pair shall become one flesh')" (v. 16) – the relationship with Christ is called spiritual – "he who links himself with Christ is one with Him, spiritually" (v. 17). Schnackenburg realises the truth of this point: having drawn attention to the lack of symmetry in the passage, he says, "The relationship with Christ, despite the closest imaginable union, is nevertheless of a different kind which comes about and is characterized by the Spirit"². But the important thing about the relationship of the Christian to Christ, however we describe it, is that it is exclusive: the individual cannot be both one with a prostitute and one with Christ – the choice is between the harlot and the "personal Christ, the exalted Lord"³. So this passage emphasizes the vivid reality of the terms Paul uses to express the intimacy of the exclusive union between Christ and His disciples. In addition, this passage offers evidence to suggest that

¹ Schnackenburg, 1, p. 163.  
² Schnackenburg, 1, p. 169.  
³ Schnackenburg, 1, p. 169.
the Apostle is beginning to be aware of the possibilities in the word 'soma'.

In many ways, this passage is similar to Rom. vii: 1-6. Before Christ, says Paul, the Romans were married to the law and were therefore under its authority, just as "a married woman is by law bound to her husband while he lives" (v. 2). But now the law has no more power over them — their former husband is dead — and accordingly they "have found another husband in Him Who rose from the dead" (v. 4). Here, as in I Cor. vi: 12-20, union with Christ, the Risen Lord, is compared to marriage. Here, too, the relationship is exclusive: "if in her husband's lifetime she consorts with another man she will incur the charge of adultery" (v. 3). In contrast, however, to I Cor., the union of Christ and the individual is seen, not just in comparison with marriage, but as itself marriage.

B. The Role of the Sacraments.

In I Cor. x: 14-17, we find the relation of Christ to the group, i.e. the Christian community worked out in terms of the Eucharist. In this passage, the Apostle is concerned that the Corinthians are still sharing in sacrifices to idols, while, at the same time, continuing to participate in the Christian sacrament. So he reminds them of the meaning of the Eucharist: "it is the sharing in the blood and the body of Christ" (v. 16). The thought here is somewhat similar to that in I Cor. vi: 12-20, i.e. in both passages, Paul is pleading for the exclusiveness of the Christian's relationship to Christ. Christ's disciples ought neither to give themselves to prostitutes

1. cf. II Cor. xi: 2.
nor to idols, for they belong exclusively to Christ. So Paul can say, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons: you cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons" (v. 21).

An examination of the structure of this passage reveals the line of Paul's argument. The question in v. 16 which obviously demands an affirmative answer suggests that Paul is appealing to a Eucharistic tradition they already knew well. If this is so, then the formulae κοινωνία τοῦ άματος and κοινωνία τοῦ βάρματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ will belong to a pre-Pauline terminology (the fact that εὐλογεῖν appears here instead of the more common Pauline equivalent εὐχριστεῖν supports this argument). "This verse contains the premises common to the Apostle and his Church and therefore makes use of the traditional, primitive Christian sacramental language" 1. But, in v. 17, Paul gives these accepted formulae a new turn: assuming that the loaf used in the Supper is one and that the broken bread means participation in the body of Christ, then, says Paul, "we, many as we are, are one body" (ἐν άμα τοί τό πολλοί ἐμεν). However compressed this statement may be, we must make every effort to understand it as precisely as possible. It is Paul himself who elsewhere gives us the words of the institution of the sacrament: "the Lord Jesus took bread and said, "This is My Body"." 2.

In v. 17, the worshippers (who might be called the 'Churchly' body) are directly related to this bread which is the Body of Christ - they are said to be a "body": since the bread which they share is one, this is seen as the cause (ὅτι) of the 'Churchly' body's unity. If we go back to v. 16, we can say that it is the worshippers' participation (κοινωνία ) in the

bread which is the body of Christ which makes them a single body: "c'est
la participation de tous au corps du Christ par ce pain qui fonde l'unité
du corps ecclésial"\(^1\). But, going even further back, we can remind ourselves
that the body of Christ in the sacrament is only meaningful in terms of the
event to which the Eucharist points - the death of Jesus on the Cross. So
again, we are face to face with the saving act of God in Christ - this time
the Crucifixion. So we have now come to the root of Paul's thought here -
the body of Christ on the Cross. If we can now retrace the steps we have
taken, we can see that the crucified body is to be found in the bread of
the sacrament: the worshippers, in eating this bread, participate in the
body of Christ: in so doing, they become one body. Although it is not
explicitly said, it is hinted that this latter body also belongs to Christ
(cf. v. 17 and v. 16).

In support of his argument, the Apostle refers to the fact that
"the Jews who partake in the sacrificial meals are sharers of the altar
(κοινωνοὶ τοῦ θυβιατηρίου )" (v. 18). This seems to be a reference
to one of two communal meals taken by the Jews. On the one hand, we have
the ritual meal taken at the conclusion of covenants\(^2\): "the contracting
parties bound themselves and entered into obligations in the presence of a
third party, the deity who was thought of as present (Gen. xxi: 54)"\(^3\).
Thus, God was seen as One Who participated in the meal along with His people.
On the other hand, Paul may be making reference to one form of peace-offering

e.g. the thank-offering, which was followed by a ritual meal. In this meal, the worshippers believed that they were in communion, not simply with one another, but also with God Himself. Whatever explanation we accept as the more satisfactory basis for Paul's thinking in v. 13, we are still left with the problem of why he said το θυσιωτηρίου. Perhaps Paul is here under the influence of his Jewish heritage in that he is unwilling to say the name of God and in its place puts the word "altar" (v. 13). This would certainly create a parallel between Christian and Jewish practice—whereas the former share in the body and blood of Christ through the bread and wine of the ritual, the latter share in the God to Whom the thank-offering is given. But the situation at Corinth with which Paul is immediately concerned is not that of a tension between Christian and Jewish rites: the conflict was between Christianity and paganism. If the Corinthians share in pagan sacrifices, then they "become partners with demons" (v. 20) just as the Jewish thank-offerings meant that the worshippers became partners with God. Christians belong to Christ exclusively and therefore they cannot share in Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist and, at the same time, be partners of demons by taking part in pagan ritual-meals.

Thus, far, therefore, we have seen that, in the sacrament, the 'body of Christ', the worshipping congregation, has communion or participation in the bread which signifies the 'body of Christ' crucified. Much study

2. cf. Philo, 'de Spec. Legibus' i: 221 where the phrase ΚΟΙΝΩΝΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΒΗΜΟΥ occurs.
has been done to define correctly the meaning of the word ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ.\(^1\) Seesemann is right when he claims that ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ here in I Cor. x: 16 must mean 'sharing', 'participation' - 'Teilnahme', 'Anteilhaben' in German\(^2\). The underlying idea in ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ is that of sharing resources, of mutually participating in the same benefits e.g. in papyrus examples, it is used both of business partnerships and of marriage. So the early Christians joined together in 'fellowship' which must refer to their experiment in 'communism' by which the members of the early Church shared their wealth with one another\(^3\). The same concept underlies Paul's collection for the poor at Jerusalem - it was a ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ i.e. a sharing of resources\(^4\). So Seesemann can give this meaning of 'participation' to other Pauline passages\(^5\). In the sacrament, therefore, the worshippers share together in the body and blood of Christ, just as elsewhere they are said to have a part in the Spirit\(^6\). But the word ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ is of vital importance in this particular passage because it guarantees the necessary distinction between the two 'bodies' - the worshipping 'body' and the sacramental 'body'. The worshippers share in Christ, as pagans share in the demons and Jews in the altar, and this sharing means that any ontological


2. see op. cit. p. 34.

3. see the AV of Acts ii: 42-45.

4. see Rom. xv: 26, II Cor. viii: 4, ix: 13. e.g. I Cor. i: 9,

Phil. ii: 1.

5. see the AV of Acts ii: 42-45.

6. II Cor. xiii: 14.
identification between the Church and Christ is impossible. We shall return to this perplexing issue - the Church is Christ's body, not Christ Himself, yet the Church is called 'Body' only because Christ unites Himself intimately to her.

Although the union of Christ to the individual is still implicit in this passage, the greater emphasis is now on the fact that Christ identifies Himself with the community as a whole. Here then we have the union of Christ and His people in a restricted and specialized context - that of the sacrament of the Eucharist. We can now see why Cerfau is able to say: "it was in the celebration of the Supper that the formula 'the body of Christ' received the stamp which made it a distinctively Christian expression." Elsewhere, he explains this more fully: "in I Cor. x: 16, Paul reminds his audience that the Eucharist is a communion with the body and blood of Christ, comparable (insofar as a religious contact is established by the communion) to the ritual sacrifices of Jews and pagans. This brings us back to the theme of unity, for just as they are united to Christ, so likewise they are united among themselves. There is one loaf, shared by all, and this is the body of Christ." This emphasis on unity echoes the passage in the Didache which refers to the bread of the sacrament: "as this broken bread was scattered on the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the end of the earth into Thy Kingdom." Cerfau concludes that the Church's sharing in this one loaf is the reason "why we are all 'one body', that is, Christ's body, with the hellenistic nuance of one organism that has a multiplicity of

1. A, p. 263.  
3.  

9.
members. Cerfau can only speak of pagan meals and Christian communion being "comparable" insofar as they both demand exclusive loyalty on the part of the worshippers: so sharing in the Eucharist makes the worship of idols impossible, just as union with Christ makes fornication impossible. And, although Cerfau is certainly correct in maintaining that the unity of the Church involves the unity of Christians with one another, this man-to-man relationship is only implicit in this passage. But Cerfau's conclusion reminds us that we are one step nearer Paul's explicit usage of the 'body of Christ' epithet. Benoit's explanation differs slightly from that of Cerfau: "le mot ὄμα ne peut avoir que le même sens aux vv. 16 et 17. Or l'inférence de l'un à l'autre verset est remarquable: en recevant dans leur corps, par le rite sacramental, le corps du Christ, ils 'sont', tous ensemble, un seul corps, c'est-à-dire ce corps, individual d'abord, mais assumant en lui tous les corps de ceux qu'il s'unit. Again we see here Benoit's insistence on the physical, the corporeal nature of the union between Christ and His people. But Benoit stresses correctly the two 'bodies' - the one the worshippers 'receive' through the sacrament and the one they 'become' through the sacrament (what Bonnard calls "le corps ecclésial"). The congregation are called a 'body', they are one 'body', because they have eaten the body of Christ. So Benoit is right when he says that here we have the identification "de la communauté chrétienne, c'est-à-dire l'Église, au corps personnel ressuscité du Christ." But even at this point where Christ identifies Himself with the Church, there is still the possibility, as we shall see, of separation and division - the word κοινωνία maintains

the essential distinction between the Saviour and the saved.

Dupont emphasizes the exclusiveness of the Christians' relationship to their Master: "la communion aux démons est incompatible avec la communion au Christ" cf. Schnackenburg: "by the Eucharist the Christians really share in the blood and the body of Christ (v. 16) and cannot at the same time be partakers of the 'table of the Lord' and 'the table of devils' (v. 21)". Later, however, Dupont points out that there is an antithesis here which he feels is crucial for our understanding of the 'body' motif in Paul: "déjà dans les grandes épîtres, la notion de 'soma' marquait l'unité constituée par une pluralité. 'Parce qu'il y a un seul pain, bien que nous soyons nombreux, nous constituons un seul corps, car nous participons tous d'un seul pain' (v. 17). Paul souligne: 'tous' - 'un seul'". This is the tension between unity and plurality which Dupont claims is the key to the whole 'body'-theme: there is no doubt that this particular verse bears this out most forcibly. Schnackenburg, on the other hand, emphasizes the fact of the two bodies - the one crucified and set forth in the sacrament, the other the worshipping congregation - but he is unwilling to deduce from Paul's language what their exact relationship is meant to be. "A profound relationship exists between the body of Christ in the eucharist and the Body of Christ represented by the congregation - how Paul understands this relationship is not immediately clear". Later he expands on this uncertainty: "certainly the common sharing in the eucharistic bread and so in the Body of Christ, brings about the unity of the congregation as the one

5. 1, p. 170.
Body of Christ: yet Paul need not be speaking each time of the 'body of Christ' in completely the same sense. We would agree with Schnackenburg here, but claim that, in the last analysis, it is not vital to know the exact sense in which the Apostle is using 'body of Christ' in this passage. We are only asserting that the 'body of Christ' in v. 16 refers to the sacramental bread and the 'one body' in v. 17 to the participating congregation and that these two bodies are intimately united through the Eucharist i.e. Christ and His people are closely related at His table.

When we come to Paul's longest passage dealing with the 'body of Christ'-theme - I Cor. xii: 12-27 - we encounter the other sacrament in the words, "we have all been baptised into one body" (v. 13a). Here, as in x: 17, we find the words ἐν ἰδίᾳ. Percy reminds us that the phrase βαπτιζέθηκα εἰς normally has a personal reference e.g. ἤγεσέν ἑαυτόν Χριστὸν, ἵνα ἴδῃ τὸν Μωϋσῆν. Baptism "in the name of" and "into the death of" are simply variants of the same expression: "the words βαπτιζέθηκα εἰς as a rule introduce mention of the person with whom we enter into relationship through baptism (Christ, Paul, Moses)". So v. 13a speaks of the relationship between believers and the One to Whom they are baptised.

Since this is so, two facts emerge clearly. Firstly, being baptised into

1. ibid. cf. Benoit quoted above (p. 74).
2. op. cit. pp. 15-17.
5. I Cor. x: 2.
6. I Cor. i: 13, 15.
7. Rom. vi: 3.
one body means being baptised into the body of Christ Himself.
Schnackenburg makes this point, although he reverses the order: "in I Cor. xi: 13, ἐν εἰς τῷ Ἐσχατολόγιον (that is presupposed) but also in 'a single Spirit εἰς ἐν ὁμογενείαν'. Secondly, since the phrase implies a personal reference, the body of Christ into which we are baptised must be the personal body of the Saviour. In other words, we are baptised into that same body which is set forth in the bread of the Eucharist – the body of Christ, dead and risen. "Le bapteme a plongé tous les chrétiens dans un seul et même corps qui ne peut être que le corps individuel, eschatologique du Christ". Thus we have an answer to those who would interpret εἰς ἐν ὁμογενείαν as if it were a final clause introduced by Οὐκείον, i.e. by translating v. 13a as "we have all been baptised in order to form (or create) one single body" e.g. Lietzmann, Allo, Hering, Wikenhauser, Schlier. The personal body of Christ into which we are baptised preexists that baptism – it is therefore wrong to suggest, as these exegetes do, that, by our baptism, this body is formed and created (see pp. 157 ff).

In many ways, indeed, I Cor. xi: 13 is similar in thought to Rom. vi: 3–4 and Gal. iii: 27. In the first of these, we find the word βαπτίζω which is the characteristic word for Christian baptism in the New Testament. It must be distinguished from βαπτίζων which appears in the plural in Mark vii: 4 and Heb. vi: 2. This plural usage indicates

1. III, p. 26. 2. Benoit, ii, p. 15. 3. in their commentaries ad loc. 4. op. cit. pp. 102 ff. 5. 'Christus und die Kirche' pp. 40 ff.
that this word refers, not to Christian baptism which is a once-for-all event, but to Jewish ritual washings which were frequently repeated. So \( \beta \nu \pi \tau \iota \beta \mu \omicron \dot{\alpha} \nu \delta \iota \alpha \chi \nu \) in Heb. vi: 2 is a reference to the fact that catechumens were taught to distinguish between baptism as a Christian sacrament and these ritual bathings. But, in Rom. vi: 3-4, Paul sees Christian baptism i.e. \( \beta \nu \pi \tau \iota \beta \mu \alpha \) involving identification with Christ's death - the baptised person has died with Christ and looks forward to new life through the resurrection of Christ. In the verse from Galatians, Paul speaks of being baptised as putting on Christ like a garment: whatever the liturgy or imagery which lie behind this statement, it is followed by an assertion that, in Christ, distinctions of race, class and sex no longer have any meaning.

"While, however, in Gal. iii: 28 it is said that all are 'one person in Christ Jesus', in I Cor. xii: 13, the thought of the 'one body' emerges."

While the Eucharist is primarily a corporate act in which the worshippers participate together in the body of Christ and thus become one body, baptism involves the individual becoming incorporated with Christ: "baptism not merely looks toward to but affects incorporation into Christ." But from the context of I Cor. xii, it is clear that this body of Christ into which baptism incorporates Christians is both the personal, historical body of Christ and the Church (cf. v. 13 and v. 27). So here, as in the case of the Eucharist, we have two bodies - the individual body of Christ,
crucified and risen, and the 'Churchly' body. In the Eucharist, the worshipping congregation, by participating together in the bread of the sacrament, are the body of Christ, the Church: in baptism, the individual believer is grafted both to the body of personal Christ and to the Church. One final note is necessary – this verse again bears out, in a striking way, Dupont's contention that the body-theme is based on a tension between unity and plurality, between 'one' and 'all'.

We have now seen that the word ἐνία was common in popular thought and philosophy at the time of Paul and that the Apostle probably made use of one example of such usage – the classic fable – to express the interdependence of Christians within the Christian community. We have also noted the Apostle's emphasis (an emphasis also found in the teaching of his Master) on the union between Christ and the individual disciple. We have seen that this union is sometimes explained by Paul in thought-forms which include the word ἐνία. But now we have to examine the radically new element in Paul's thinking, that element which is without parallel inside or outside Christianity. While it is true that I Cor. x: 17 speaks of Christ united intimately to the whole congregation at Corinth, rather than to the individual follower, and that this congregation is, therefore, a single body, this does not prepare us for the novelty of ἐνία τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Although we know that our bodies are members of Christ, that we participate in Christ's body through the bread of the Eucharist and that we are baptised into Christ's Body by the Spirit, we have still to come to terms with the idea that the local

1. see 'Gnosis' p. 440.
2. I Cor. xii: 27.
3. I Cor. vi: 15.
4. I Cor. x: 16.
5. I Cor. xii: 13.
Christian community is "the body of Christ". The really new thing is that the body is now seen as Christ's. Schnackenburg says that, from I Cor. xii: 13, it can "only be gathered that the baptised were incorporated into the body of Christ, but the relation between Body and Christ remains unexplained and uncertain". We must now turn to that relation.

C. The Body of Christ in I Cor. xii and Rom xii.

Chapter twelve of I Corinthians is devoted to the question of spiritual gifts - it is written περὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν (v. 1). In vv. 4-11, the Apostle explains the differing gifts given to Christ's people, while at the same time emphasizing that they are all derived from the one Spirit: "all these gifts are the work of the one and the same Spirit, distributing them separately to each individual at will" (v. 11). If we leave aside - at least for the moment - the peculiar problem raised by v. 12, in vv. 12-26 we find St. Paul drawing on the classic fable at some length to illustrate the interdependence of members within the Church at Corinth. In these verses, Paul retains the element of comparison found in the fable i.e. the Church is, in one sense, like the human body. But, in v. 27, the comparison is laid aside and the Church is identified with one, particular body - "now you are Christ's Body and each of you a limb and organ of it". In the final verses of the chapter, Paul leaves the gifts of the Spirit to speak of those functions to be fulfilled within the Corinthian congregation e.g. apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle-workers, those who heal and speak. For each of these offices, a spiritual gift is needed, but there is one gift 1.

1, p. 168.
that all Christians must crave - the gift of love. The gift, "the best way of all", is the theme of chapter thirteen.

It is quite obvious that Paul was dependent on the classic fable in this discussion of the charismata. The Corinthian congregation is compared to a human body in that it ought to have the same unity in diversity as is found in the body ("there are many different organs, but one body" - v. 21): "the section is dominated by the comparison of the Church to a body which consists of many members and yet is one"2. Cerfaux agrees with this opinion when he says that "Paul makes use of the tale of Menenius Agrippa to speak to the Church of Corinth on the subject of harmony"3. The parts of a human body have all different roles to fulfil and the unity of the whole depends on their co-operation, as well as on a realisation of their interdependence: this should be the norm for the Christian community (vv. 18, 15). There are, however, three points at which Paul departs from the fable - one of them of little significance i.e.

1. Paul attributes the diversity of function within the human body to the creative ability of God (vv. 18, 24). Although this is a small point, it does show that Paul has not merely lifted the fable 'in toto' out of the pagan context in which he found it. He has adapted it to the Gospel which he is sent to preach: Paul "adopts the hellenistic expressions .... and turns them to his own accounts in the framework of the language of Christianity"4. At this point, we might note the emphasis on the role of the Spirit in this chapter. In vv. 1-3 the Spirit appears as "the Spirit of


4. Cerfaux, ibid.
God" and as "the Holy Spirit", the One Who inspires us to make a proper response to Christ. In vv. 4-6, the charismata proceed from all three Persons of the Trinity - the Spirit (v. 4), Christ the Lord (v. 5) and God (v. 6). In vv. 7-11, the Spirit is mentioned seven times as the single source of all spiritual gifts. In v. 13, the unity achieved through the sacraments is symbolised by the fact that, in baptism, the Spirit is the agent and, in the Eucharist, the Spirit is He in Whom the worshippers share: in both, we are concerned with the one and self-same Spirit - ΕΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ. So Schnackenburg is right to underline the importance of the Spirit in the theme of the body of Christ: "the term (ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΧΩΡΟΥ) directly expresses something about the relation of Church to Christ, its profound union with Him through the Spirit, indeed unity with Him in the Spirit, the constituting of this unity by baptism and its renewal by the Eucharist". Thus, in I Cor. xii, the Spirit has a double role - that of dispensing the charismata and of being active in and through the sacraments. It is this second function which relates, as Schnackenburg suggests, to the 'body of Christ'-theme. Yet Gal. iii:27, which we have already claimed is similar to I Cor. xii:13 (p. 78), does not mention either the Spirit or the Body. So Cerfau can say of the latter passage: "in precise terms, Paul declares that Christian baptism brings about unity in one Spirit by consecrating us to the one body, the body of Christ" cf. Eph. iv:5. So the Apostle does not only relate God to the theme of the Body: the Spirit also has an important place in his adaptation of the classic fable.

In v. 12, the body is compared, not, as we might expect, to the Church at Corinth, but to Christ Himself - it is He Who is like "a single body with its many limbs and organs". Paul's writings offer two parallels to the thought of this verse. Firstly, in Gal. iii:26ff., the Apostle says that through faith and baptism Christians are brought into "sonship" to God and have "put on" Christ (ἐνδοθησία θεοῦ). Without here mentioning the word "body", Paul goes on to say that his readers "are all one in Christ Jesus" (v. 28). Christians are one, therefore, through their shared relationship to Christ Whom they all "put on" at baptism. Secondly, in I Cor. vi:15, Christ, like a body, is said to have limbs and organs i.e. individual Christians are wedded to Him as members of His body. So here Christ is like a body in that He is one and His people are as His many members.

The thinking behind I Cor. xii:12 is not dissimilar to this - unity between Christians is essential insofar as all are limbs and organs to the one Christ. Nonetheless, I cannot quite understand what Cerfaux means when he says, "Christ plays the part of the one Who brings unity into the life of the community" since the idea of Christ playing a role in relation to the Body belongs to the Captivity Epistles, not to the Major Epistles. At this point, it would seem that Paul, faced with the divisions in the Corinthian congregation, is simply pleading that unity ought to be forged out of their diversity. Since Christ is the One to Whom all are related as limbs and organs to His body, the members are "all one in Christ Jesus". So Cerfaux seems on surer ground when he goes on: "Christ is like a body with regard to all Christians for they are His members".

1. see Schnackenburg, II, p. 302.  
3. A, p. 270.
Perhaps the intricacy of this verse will become clearer if we refer to Cerfau's other work where he criticises the exegesis of Severian of Gabala who had written: "Paul compares Christ to a complete body. By this we are meant to understand Christ's Church". From this, Severian concluded that Paul was here calling the Church "Christ", thus "denoting that which is less by that which is greater" cf. "the name of Christ is substituted for that of the Church for the comparison was to be applied .... to us. But because Paul calls the Church 'Christ', this verse is full of rare comfort". As Cerfau points out, such an understanding of this verse would introduce a unique usage by substituting the name of Christ for the Church. In addition, Cerfau objects that Severian has missed the real meaning of the verse: "just as there is one body with many members, so likewise the Lord is one and has many members. Christ and His members may be compared to a body with its limbs because we have all been baptised into a single body".

We have here, therefore, the interplay of two ideas - the union of Christians to their Lord Who can then be said to have many members and the thought of the fable with its stress on unity achieved through the cooperation of diverse elements. We have already seen that Benoit recognizes the existence of these two ideas. So, with special reference to v. 12, Benoit says, "les mots qui le terminent sont elliptiques et l'on a proposé diverses manières de les compléter: je pense qu'il faut entendre: 'de même aussi le Christ .... est un seul corps dont les diverses membres (qui sont les chrétiens cf. vi: 15) composent l'unite'". So Cerfau

3. sec p. 47.  
4. ii, p. 15.
and Benoit are agreed at this point and they rightly recognize the relation between I Cor. vii:15 and xii:12.

iii. According to v. 27, the Christians at Corinth are to be regarded as a body (there is no definite article before ἴσον) belonging to Christ. This genitive (Χριστοῦ) finally severs the connection between the fable in pagan thought and the use Paul made of it in Christian ecclesiology.

"The uniqueness of the New Testament phrase resides not in the word ἴσον but in the qualifying genitive. The body is not τὸ ἴσον τῶν Χριστιανῶν (see the Edict of Milan in Eusebius' History, X, v:10, 11, 12) but τὸ ἴσον τοῦ Χριστοῦ"1. We have already noted (see ii above) that the uppermost thought in Paul's mind throughout this chapter is not the Corinthians as a group or the human body as an illustration, but Christ to Whom the Corinthians are related as members to a body. Dupont makes the same point as Manson when he writes, "La vraie difficulté n'est pas dans la notion de 'soma' mais dans la relation de ce soma au Christ"2. We have examined the wide usage of 'soma' within the culture and philosophy of the ancient world, but we have found nothing to correspond with this phrase ἴσον Χριστοῦ.

The first problem this phrase presents is the omission of the article before ἴσον. In other words, we are dealing here with Paul's early thinking on this theme - we have not yet reached the point where τὸ ἴσον Χριστοῦ has become a stereotyped description of the Church3. This being so, we must translate v. 27 as follows: "but you are a body, a

body belonging to Christ and each of you a member of it". This translation, to some extent dependent on Corfau{1}, tries to make some sense of the article's omission. Benoit, on the other hand, while admitting that such a translation is legitimate, goes on to say, "Cependant l'omission de l'article devant un substantif suivi d'un génitif surtout si celui est un nom propre, est un somnium qui n'est pas rare dans le Nouveau Testament"{2}.

As evidence, Benoit cites I Cor. xi:21 (ποιήμαν κυρίου), cf. xi:27 (τὸ ποιήμαν τοῦ κυρίου); I Thess. vi:2 (ημέρα κυρίου), cf. II Thess. ii:2 (η ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου). Support for Benoit's point of view that the absence of ΤΟ is less important than we suggest comes from A. T. Robertson: "The word may be either definite or indefinite when the article is absent"{3}.

At this point, however, it is helpful to turn to Romans{4} where the Apostle is telling the Roman Church that they too are a ὄμοια in relation to Christ: this relation is not expressed, as in I Corinthians, with a genitive but with a prepositional phrase - ἐν Χριστῷ. This reference does not answer entirely the question of the article's omission, but it does reinforce the view that, in the Major Epistles, the phrase τὸ ὄμοια τοῦ Χριστοῦ has yet to emerge as a generally accepted epithet for the Church. Benoit may certainly be accurate in his exegesis, but we must not force the pace at which Paul moved towards a fixed formula. Schnackenburg, for his part, seems to think that the Body of Christ-theme was already part of Paul's teaching in previous visits to Corinth: "probably the Apostle had already expressed his conception of the Church as Body of Christ by word of mouth (cf. I Cor. vii: 15 οὐκ ὁδεγεῖσε) so that he was able

to refer to it in his epistle. Although again this may be possible, it seems more likely that, as we read the Major Epistles, we are, in fact, seeing the evolution of the doctrine of the Body of Christ rather than the repetition of previous thinking. At this point, we must note that it is the local congregations, taken individually, which are given the name 'body' in their relation to Christ. In addition, we can state with certainty that I. Cor. xii: 27 enshrines what Bеноit calls Paul's "conviction chrétienne" that Christians, both individually and as a group, are united to Christ: "You are a body, a body belonging to Christ, and each of you a member of it".

Here is the new element - the body belongs to Christ or is in Him.

Thus far we have uncovered three strands of thought - the classic fable used by the Apostle to express the interdependence of Christians within the Church i.e. their unity must grow out of their diversity: the fact that they are not simply like any body, but are compared to a specific body, the body of Christ - He Who is One, yet many: the thought that these Christians are related, not only to one another in the community, but are, both individually and as a group, intimately bound to Christ. Schnackenburg sums this up very succinctly: "the leitmotif for I Corinthians xii and Romans xii:4ff. is the union of the members, their unity and solidarity, 'in Christ' or 'in the body of Christ'"². We should not be surprised that this relatively short passage should yield so many interlocking ideas - the Major Epistles show Paul much more as a spontaneous than a systematic thinker. This conclusion is further emphasized by the fact that, in this passage, Paul is answering practical questions raised by members of the Corinthian Church.

1. 1, p. 170.  
2. 11, p. 302.
The Romans passage - xii:4-6 - provides little development. Here we are again dealing with the problem of charismata, but allied to the need for Christian humility: "do not be conceited or think too highly of yourself: think your way to a sober estimate based on the measure of faith that God has dealt to each one of you". In vv. 4 and 5, we have "certainly the classic fable applied to the Christian community at Rome". Benoit explains the relation between this passage and the Corinthian one at some length: "il n'est pas légitime d'isoler ce texte (i.e. Romans xii). Il a été écrit peu après celui de I Cor. xii: 12-28 et le reprend de façon manifeste". Having noted that both passages speak of the charismata and both evoke the classic fable, Benoit concludes, "il est donc permis, voire requis, de comprendre Rom. à la lumière de I Cor.". As we have already seen (see p. 86) the only new emphasis in Romans is that the body, instead of belonging to Christ (as in I Cor.), is now 'in Christ'. This formula, however, is common throughout the Pauline literature to denote the union of Christ and His people, both individually and corporately. In addition, it is this union, as we have already shown, which lies at the root of Paul's use of the 'body'-theme. As in Corinthians, it is the local community at Rome which is the 'body in Christ'. Yet Schnackenburg is right when he says that we must take into account the fact that the local congregation appears here, as in I Corinthians, as typical of the whole Church: "in the first place, it is the individual Church here, the actual community of Corinth which is intended .... but the individual Church nevertheless only appears as the representative of the whole Church (cf. i:2), for in xii:28 the view

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1. xii:3. 2. Cerfau, A, p. 267. 3. ii, p. 16. 4. ibid.
opens out on to this and in principle, too, all the baptised belong to the body of Christ (cf. xii:13, 27). This last point will be important when we move to the Captivity Epistles.

One feature of both I Corinthians xii and Romans xii which we have only mentioned in passing is their emphasis on 'spiritual gifts'. According to both these passages, these gifts have been given to enable their recipients to discharge particular functions within the Church. So discussion of the charismata leads naturally to discussion of offices within the 'Churchly' body. In the Corinthian passage, apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, healers, helpers, administrators and speakers are all mentioned: in the Romans passage, the offices are defined in terms of their function i.e. prophecy, ministry, teaching etc. So there is no sense in which these passages can be said to describe a 'hierarchical' structure for the Church, the Body of Christ. Their emphasis is entirely on the gifts given by God, through His Spirit, and the way these must be exercised within the community. First and foremost, there is the gift which sets a man apart as a Christian i.e. the gift which enables him to make his profession of faith. There then follow these differing gifts which create the diversity of status and function with the Body. All these gifts have been given — not to provide recruits for a hierarchy — but for the building up of the Church. "The true charism .... is something for the service of the community, giving a sense of responsibility towards the community and the desire to edify and benefit it."

1. I Cor. xii:7, 28, Rom. xii:6. 2. see especially xii:28. 3. see xii:6-8. 4. I Cor. xii:4. 5. I Cor. xii:3. 6. I Cor. xii:29-30, Rom. xii:6. 7. Kling, The Church, p. 162.
One final word is necessary about the position of Dupont. He claimed that Stoicism called any collectivity a 'body', as long as it was a whole (e.g., society, the state, the universe). He also saw in popular Stoic usage an antithesis between 'all' and 'one'. This is just another way of saying that the fable (which, according to Dupont, had only scant influence on Stoicism) expressed unity out of diversity. With these two thoughts in mind - the influence of Stoicism which called any 'whole' a 'body' and which thereby created a tension between 'all' and 'one' - Dupont discusses the two passages in question: "on sent présent à l'esprit de l'Apôtre l'apologue classique qui compare la solidarité des hommes réunis en société à celle des membres d'un corps humain; cet apologue est largement développé au ch. xii de la 1ère aux Corinthiens. Il est naturellement adapté aux considérations morales amenées par l'idée que nous formons un seul corps". Dupont thinks that, just as the Stoics made use of and adapted the fable for their own purposes, so Paul moulded it to the practical end of teaching the Corinthians about the reality of the Church. Just as the Stoics' adaptation led to the 'all'-'one' antithesis in their thinking, the same tension became implicit in the use Paul made of the fable. So, since both Paul and the Stoics made use of the fable, their resulting thoughts are, in some ways, parallel: "l'antithèse entre 'tous' et 'un', si spontanée chez saint Paul lorsqu'il parle du 'soma', correspond fort exactement au thème stoïcien où il est question du 'soma' cosmique ou du 'soma' politique". Apart from the fact that Dupont has obviously oversimplified a very complex process with one, simple formula, we must

1. p. 439.  
2. see pp. 439-40.  
3. ibid.
doubt whether the formula itself is satisfactory. The emphasis in I Corinthians xii: 13 is, without a doubt, on 'all' and 'one' — ἵνα... ἐν — but the discussion here is about that baptism whereby all are brought into one body. The stress, however, in those verses which deal specifically with the 'body'-doctrines is an antithesis between 'many' and 'one' e.g. ἵνα... ἐν... ΠΟΛΛὰ (I Cor. xii:14), ΠΟΛΛοὶ, ἐν (Rom. xii:5). It is certainly true that 'all' and the 'many' are not very different — all who have been baptised (v. 13) become the many members of Christ's body (v. 14). It is not impossible, of course, to translate I Cor. xii:27 according to Dupont's formula (i.e. as a contrast between 'one' and 'all') but it is equally possible to interpret it as a contrast between 'one' and 'many' (on the analogy of v. 14). Dupont is certainly right to say that Paul borrowed from the classic fable, although there seems to be little parallelism between him and the Stoics, as Dupont suggests. The main interest of the Stoics centred in the unity and integrity of the state and of the cosmos, whereas the Apostle was immediately concerned with the relation of a Redeemer to the redeemed community, of a Saviour to a saved people.

We have tried to suggest that what we have in the Major Epistles is only the beginning of a process — the first steps towards the full and complete concept of the Church as the Body of Christ. We must continue to trace the development of the concept — in the Captivity Epistles.
IV. The Formula "The Body of Christ" in the Captivity Epistles.

In our examination of the letters to Ephesus and Colossae, we shall avoid the two questions most immediately raised by this literature, namely their relationship to one another and their authorship. For our purposes, it is enough to say that they are closely related, both in form and content, and that they express a highly developed interpretation of the Christian gospel. Whether or not they were written by St. Paul, there can be no doubt that they reflect much of the thinking of those earlier letters which indisputably belong to the Apostle. The four exegetes with whom we are principally concerned - Cerfaux, Benoit, Dupont and Schnackenburg - all maintain Pauline authorship.

To examine the captivity letters properly, one must understand that all their emphases flow directly from their view of the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. So we read that, through Christ's death and rising again, Christians have died to sin and have been raised to new life. By the event of Calvary, Jew and Gentile have been reconciled. According to Ephesians, Christ, through His resurrection and ascension, has become head over all things ("all government and authority, all power and dominion and any title of sovereignty that can be named", Eph. i:21). Yet the two letters do lay the stress at different points. While Ephesians emphasises that it is God Who is the author of Christ's supremacy, Colossians concentrates on Christ Himself as the source of authority and power.

1. See Hanson op. cit., p. 4.
It is Christ Who "is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation"\(^1\), "all things were created through Him and for Him"\(^2\); through His resurrection, "He is pre- eminent in all things"\(^3\). Similarly, Christ's supremacy, according to Colossians, is not derived, as with Ephesians, from the ascension: it springs either from the resurrection\(^4\) or from the crucifixion\(^5\) which is regarded as a triumphal procession of the "principalities and powers". In Colossians, by contrast, the ascension appears as an ethical reminder to the readers to set their minds on things above "where Christ is seated at the right hand of God"\(^6\). But this superiority, this Headship of Christ extends, according to God's will, over "all things"\(^7\). So, by implication, His Headship must necessarily be operative in the Church, "which is His Body"\(^8\). In other words, our author claims that Christ is Head "of all rule and authority"\(^9\) and then, by extension, that He is the Head of the Church.

Benoit, in tracing the evolution of the idea of Christ's Headship over the Church, distinguishes between two concepts inherent in the word \(\kappa\epsilon\phi\alpha\lambda\eta\). He suggests that the writer first thought of Christ as Head over the celestial powers in the sense of 'leader'. This usage of \(\kappa\epsilon\phi\alpha\lambda\eta\) is, according to Benoit, found in the Bible: "il est leur tête au sens de 'chef', d'autorité, qui est le sens biblique de cette métaphore"\(^10\). Then the writer thought of Christ as Head of the Body, the Church, but now in the

\(^{1}\text{John i:15.}^{2}\text{i:16, cf. John i:3.}^{3}\text{i:18.}^{4}\text{as in i:18.}^{5}\text{as in ii:15.}^{6}\text{iii:1-2.}^{7}\text{Eph. i:22.}^{8}\text{Eph. i:22, cf. Col. i:18.}^{9}\text{Col. ii:10.}^{10}\text{ii, p. 24.}
sense that He is her vital principle. Although this second usage does not exclude the first, Benoit believes that it must be distinguished from it as a usage borrowed from Hellenism, cf. "according to Benoit, the hierarchical sense is Biblical, whereas the vital principle sense is hellenic". Benoit then traces this second sense back to the thinking of Plato and the Stoics who thought more clearly than did the Jews about the role of the head in relation to the body. The head in such thinking was regarded as the source of animation for the whole body (a role which the Jews ascribed to the heart).

Dupont (whose conclusions are similar to those of Schlier in TNMT III pp. 672 ff.) agrees with Benoit that the idea of the Head as 'leader' is Biblical - he goes as far as to say that the writer of the Captivity Epistles is dependent on the Septuagint. Further Dupont notes that ΚΕΦΑΛΗ is never used in non-Biblical Greek in the sense of 'leader', even although 'caput' often appears in Latin in this very sense e.g. in Cicero. Against this must be set the interchangeability of ΚΕΦΑΛΗ and ΚΡΑΤΟΥΝ within the pages of the Septuagint and in different versions of the Greek Old Testament. In other words, ΚΕΦΑΛΗ is used in this literature, despite 'secular' usage, in the sense of 'leader'. As examples, Dupont quotes, among others, Judges x:18, xi:8-11, II Samuel xxii:44 (Psalm xviii:43) and Isaiah vii:8,9. In addition, he draws our attention to the rather peculiar theme of the head and the tail in Isaiah ix:14f., a theme which is repeated with a different emphasis in Deut. xxviii:13,14. In the passage from Isaiah, those who

1. see ii, p. 25. 2. J. Hamer, 'The Church is a Communion', p. 60.
3. see ii, p. 27. 4. see p. 145.
lead the people are the head and those who follow behind are the tail: in the two verses from Deuteronomy, the head is that which is above, the tail that which is below - thus if Israel obeys God's commands then they will be the head, but, if they do not obey God, the foreigner will be made head over Israel, the tail. Perhaps in the light of this idea, Philo speaks of animals ($\xi\nu\lambda\varsigma$) whose heads are "first and best" and whose tails are last and unimportant - so, he says, the good man or the good people is the head of human society. So Dupont concludes that the writer of these letters stands directly in the Semitic tradition stemming from the Septuagint: “Paul voit dans le Christ un 'chef', celui qui exerce une suprématie: étant ainsi tout au-dessus (by reason of the ascension), il occupe la place de la tête et il en exerce la fonction, qui est, selon la mentalité juive, une fonction d'autorité”.

Dupont agrees with Benoit further when he says that our author came to understand Christ as Head of the Body through seeing Him first as Head over all - "l'idée que le Christ est 'la tête du corps' s'éclaire également par celle de la préméinence dont il jouit par rapport à toutes choses (Eph. i:20-22, cf. Col. ii:10)".

Cerfaux disagrees with Dupont in that he thinks that the idea of Christ's Headship is derived from Stoic ideas of the world and of the empire as a great Body, whose Head, as we have seen (p. 43), is the Emperor.

By drawing on such ideas, Cerfaux feels that our author presents us with those two aspects of Christ's Lordship over His Church we noted on p. 93 - the aspect of leadership and authority and the aspect of vital infusion and influence. But Cerfaux agrees with both Benoit and Dupont in thinking
that the writer of the Captivity Epistles thought first of Christ's Headship over all things and then of His Headship over the Church: "Christ's supremacy over all creation naturally makes Paul bring in the image of the head (over the Church, Christ's body)". Benoit, in support of this point of view, has already noted the off-hand way the words θν ἐκκλησία are introduced in Eph. 1:22 - almost as an afterthought to the main idea that Christ has been made κεφαλή οπέρ πάντα cf. Col. 1:18. Although Stoicism may well have had an influence on our author, the parallels Cerfaux quotes in support and Dupont quotes in rejection are not close enough to the usage of the Captivity Epistles for them to be conclusive evidence: a further point against these assumed parallels is that they are exclusively Latin.

Schnackenburg claims that the idea of Christ's Headship over the Church is already found in the Major Epistles: "from the beginning Pauline theology presents Christ as the 'Lord' of the earthly community". Yet he admits that the emphasis has changed in Ephesians and Colossians - Christ is definitely the 'ruler', the 'sovereign' over and within His Body, the Church. "His present activity of supremacy and grace within the Church, which can very appropriately be called a 'rule', emerges more definitely when He is spoken of as 'Head' of His body, the Church".

So, in summing up, we can say that most likely our author's source for his usage of κεφαλή is to be found within Judaism and more especially, as Dupont suggests, within the Septuagint. In this tradition, κεφαλή is used in a hierarchical sense not unlike that found in the Captivity Epistles.

1. A, p. 370. 2. ii, p. 27. 3. 11, p. 302. 4. 11, ibid.
Yet the 'vital principle' sense of \( \kappa \varepsilon \phi \alpha \lambda \gamma \) is not found in that tradition which means that our author is drawing on more than his Semitic background. But the question of Christ's Headship - over all things and within the Church - must have reminded our author of the Pauline teaching in Romans and I Corinthians of the Church as the Body of Christ. "On peut retrouver dans les textes l'origine de cette donnée nouvelle du Christ-tête et sa combinaison avec le thème antérieur du Corps du Christ", cf. "lorsque saint Paul dit que le Christ est la tête et que l'Eglise est son 'corps', il unit deux images de provenance différente": he merged the two symbols (Christ as Head and the Church as His Body) without bothering about the contradiction that this involves.

But just as we have to distinguish between two senses of \( \kappa \varepsilon \phi \alpha \lambda \gamma \) in the Captivity Epistles - the hierarchical and the vital principle - we have also to distinguish the Headship of Christ over and within His Church as vastly different from His supremacy over "the principalities and powers". The ideas for the latter are derived from the realm of force e.g. victory in war, supremacy through "strength and might". "Christ's cosmic rule, in contrast to His guidance and direction of the Church through grace, exerts compulsion insofar as it controls and subjects these enemies of God". By contrast, the ideas which surround the Headship of Christ in the Church stem from three diverse realms. Firstly, the realm of marriage: "the man is the

5. Col. ii:15.
7. Schnackenburg, ll, p. 309.
head of the woman just as Christ is the Head of the Church .... Just as the Church is subject to Christ, so must woman be subject to their husbands in everything. In other words, the Head makes demands upon the Body to which the latter must respond - there is a relationship (which, we shall discover, is grounded in love) of command and obedience. "La terminologie ici s'agit de la soumission que femmes doivent à leur mari: le modèle en est la soumission de l'Eglise au Christ, cf. I Cor. xi:13."

Secondly, the realm of sanctification: "Christ is the Saviour of the Body: Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, cleansing it by water and word." The Church is here seen as the object of the redemption acts of Christ manifest in baptism. In other words, there is a relationship between the Saviour and the saved, a relationship which stems from the love the Saviour has for those whom He has saved: "there the Apostle is looking back to Christ's great act of redemption which was for the benefit of the Church and demonstrates its blessing in baptism".

Schnackenburg goes on to suggest that this process of sanctification is continued in the sacrament of the Eucharist to which there may be a reference in Eph. v:29. "Christ continues to feed and cherish His Church - perhaps an allusion to the Eucharist." Cerfaux, quite rightly, stresses the fact that Christ does not exercise this sanctifying influence over the principalities and powers (being set above them, Christ "imposes His way over them rather than exercise His power of sanctification"). In the same footnote, however, he is wrong, as we shall see,
in his terminology when he says that Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body which is the "pleroma of His sanctification". Thirdly, the realm of physiology: "He is the Head and on Him the whole Body depends"\(^1\) and "the Head nourishes the whole Body and knits it together through its joints and ligaments"\(^2\). This, according to Benoit, is a Hellenistic thought-form - Christ, the Head, is the source of the vital energy for His Body, the Church. "De Christ-Tête s'écoule per les jointures et ligaments l'influx vitale qui alimente le corps en énergie, assure sa cohésion et produit sa croissance harmonieuse"\(^3\), cf. "all life and growth, the whole building up of the body proceeds from the head (cf. Eph. iv: 12, 16, Col. ii: 19): the heavenly Christ .... as head, possesses a sovereign position in relation to the Church, His body (Eph. v: 23f.) but He only uses this to distribute His gifts to it and these are viewed concretely in Eph. iv: 11 as the charismatic offices"\(^4\).

From these three realms, we can deduce that our author is saying certain definite things about the relationship of Christ and His Church as Head and Body -

1. It is a true relationship, not an identification nor a 'mystical' absorption of the one in the other. By a free act of grace, Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, thus relating Himself to it as Saviour. But this Church is still an errant Church which must be constantly recalled to obedience and subjection to her Head. Whereas, in the Major Epistles, there was a real sense in which the whole Body was Christ\(^5\), the image of

1. Eph. iv: 16, cf. v: 29 - "Christ provides and cares for His Body, the Church".
2. Col. ii: 19. \(3.\) Benoit, ii, p. 26. \(4.\) Schnackenburg, i, p. 171. \(5.\) see I Cor. xii: 12.
Christ as Head in the Captivity Epistles preserves the essential distinction between the Body and Christ. So Schnackenburg, speaking of the realm of marriage in Eph. v: 22-23, can say: "The 'distance' between Christ and the Church disappears in this conjugal point of view, without their distinction becoming blurred"¹. Benoit makes the same point when he says that Christ and the Church are not identical, that the Church is the object of Christ's redemption, of His love and of His life-giving influence. Speaking of the same passage as Schnackenburg, he says that the Church "apparait en face du Christ comme son Epouse, unie étroitement à lui certes, mais enfin distincte de lui, qu'il aime, pour qu'il se livre, qu'il purifie et sanctifie"².

2. The right balance in the relationship between Christ and His Church is preserved. No one reading these Epistles could feel that their author glorifies the Church at the expense of Christ. Yet this is the very criticism Bonnard directs at Roman treatment of these Epistles: "si chez Paul le theme de l'Eglise Corps de Christ sert toujours à glorifier le Christ ou à exhorter les fidèles, dans la paraphrase catholique il sert a glorifier l'Eglise"³. As proof of Bonnard's statement, we can compare Benoit's words "Le corps n'est rien sans la tête" (words which truly reflect the New Testament emphasis) and those of Prat, "Le Christ sans l'Eglise serait un être incomplet"⁴. The tension between Christ and His Church is properly reflected in the Captivity Epistles - the Church must be subject to her Head:

¹, ², ³, pp. 172-3. ⁴, p. 23. ⁵, op. cit. p. 282, n. 1.

⁴, 'Théologie de Saint Paul' II p. 342.
stands in need of the sanctification and the cleansing only He can offer: she is totally dependent on Him for nourishment and growth, care and provision. Schnackenburg strikes the right note when he reminds us that, in Eph. ii: 5 ff., although the theme of the 'body' is not specifically mentioned, the participation of the Church in the saving acts of Christ is stressed (note, for example, the three verbs compounded with ὑπέρ—).

The Church's existence and nature are determined by Christ: "all the baptised, the whole Church, shares in the saving event and the heavenly sovereign position of Christ, precisely because He is its Head and the Church is His Body."¹

3. The relationship between Christ and His Church in the Captivity Epistles is not simply an extension of the thinking of the Major Pauline Epistles, e.g. in I Corinthians, the head is simply a member of the body, but in Colossians, the Head is Christ, pre-eminent and supreme over all the other members, over the whole Body. Despite this discontinuity, Dupont thinks that the ideas of the Captivity Epistles are not entirely new: "le Christ est dit maintenant la 'tête' de son Corps. Cette donnée .... ne paraît pas avoir entraîné de modification bien notable dans la notion même de Corps du Christ."² Benoit, on the other hand, claims that Ephesians and Colossians introduce new thinking: "l'idée du Christ-Tête du Corps-Eglise, et à ce titre distinct de lui, est donc nouvelle dans Col. Eph."³

He has already pointed out, quite correctly, that, although the Head does appear in the thought of the Major Epistles⁴, it is not there identified

with Christ and is simply one member among many. As we have seen (p. 97), Cerfiaux underlines the contradiction inherent in the wedding of the two ideas - the Church as the Body of Christ and Christ as the Head of the Body\. So, in the last analysis, we must concur with Schnackenburg when he agrees with Benoît by saying, "In Colossians and Ephesians, there is a new element - a concept of 'head' and 'body' which it is difficult to interpret merely as an organic development of the earlier notion of the Body of Christ"2. For this reason, we agree with Benoît that there is a discontinuity between the thought of the Major Pauline Epistles and the later Captivity Epistles.

But before we go on to discuss this discontinuity, it is important that we do not exaggerate its importance. There are ideas found in the Major Epistles which are repeated in the Letters of the Captivity. We can illustrate this continuity from Eph. iv: 4-13, a passage which reflects quite closely the thinking of I Cor. xii. We have already seen that this Corinthian passage (and its parallel in Romans xii) is concerned, above all, with charismatic gifts3. There is one source of these gifts - the Holy Spirit Who distributes them to members within the Body for fulfilling the offices of the community and for its growth and development4. Exactly the same motifs are found in Ephesians. There is one Body and one Spirit5: Christ is here the giver of the charismata which differ according to the

2. ll, pp. 302-3.  
3. see p. 89.  
4. see 'de Ecclesia' of Vatican II para. 18, p. 27: "Christ the Lord established in His Church different ministries which are aimed at the good of the whole body".  
5. iv:4.
measure of grace each member has received: these gifts allow members to exercise the ministries of the Body properly applied, the charismata lead to the building up of the Body. Despite the differences (e.g. Christ, rather than the Spirit, as the source of the spiritual gifts and the idea that the Church's offices are themselves gifts given to the Body), we have here obvious continuity between the Major and Captivity Epistles. In the latter, the emphasis is on the fact that Christ gives His gifts to members of the Church rather than on the roles the members are to play (see the use of ἐνόκειν in Eph. iv:ll as an echo of iv:3).

But we must now return to the clear discontinuity between the earlier and later Letters, a discontinuity which can be illustrated in many ways. We have already accepted Benoit's point of view that the supremacy of Christ over "theprincipalities and powers" led to the further conviction that He was Head over the Church. This Headship motif was then combined with the Body-theme of the earlier letters. But the Church of which the Captivity Epistles speak is no longer the local congregation as in I Thess. i:1, II Thess. i:2, I Cor. i:2 etc., but the Church Universal, even although the earlier usage is found in Col. iv:15-16. It is true, of course, that this later usage does appear in the Major Epistles e.g. I Cor. xvi:9, Gal. i:13, Phil. iii:6 where Paul speaks of having persecuted "the Church of God". It is interesting to see, as Benoit points out, that I Cor. xii: 27 seems to preface later usage: Paul here speaks of the ἐκκλησία Christou and in the
next verse (v. 28) of the ἑκταληθία i.e. the Universal Church in which God has established certain charismatic offices is also the Body of Christ. In general, however, Paul sees the Church in the early letters as the local community: in Ephesians and Colossians, the emphasis has shifted to the 'Great' Church. Paul's "captivity epistles speak in an entirely new and profound way of the ecclesia as the universal Church"¹. This is not a hard-and-fast distinction but we have here an important shift in emphasis. Schnackenburg is therefore able to speak of the relation, in the Captivity Epistles, "of the heavenly Christ to His Church - here in the sense of the Church as a whole"², and Cerfau can claim that only in Ephesians and Colossians does "the word 'church' clearly mean the Universal Church"³.

In passing, we may note that it is difficult to ascertain whether our author thought of the Church as a cosmic entity or simply as an earthly institution. Dupont is unwilling to commit himself: "que Paul conçoive le soma dans une perspective cosmique, suivant peut-être ainsi les conceptions de ses adversaires, ou qu'il préfère ramener cette notion aux proportions du peuple chrétien, il reste toujours vrai que le Christ est le 'chef'"⁴.

Cerfau, on the other hand, is convinced that the Church of Ephesians and Colossians is more than an earthly reality: "the Universal Church is, at the same time, a very idealised entity, often personified and carried into heaven"⁵. We can hardly agree with Cerfau at this point since our author lays so much stress on the imperfection of the Church (see especially Eph. v: 21-27 where the Church is in need of cleansing and must be brought into

1. Küng, op. cit. p. 11.  
2. ibid., p. 171.  
3. A, p. 296.  
4. p. 452.  
submission to Christ – this is no "idealised" picture of the Church!)

Although Dupont's point about the Church being a cosmic reality, able to combat the cosmic and celestial powers, is well taken, we prefer to think that our writer saw the Church simply in earthly terms – Benoit speaks of the "usage œcuménique". In disagreeing with this point of view, Schnackenburg claims that "the cosmic status of this 'body of Christ' is brought into prominence in Eph. iv: 11-16". This contention is explained when he comes to interpret iv: 15 which he translates ".... (that we) may speak the truth in love and so help the cosmos grow towards Christ Who is the Head". This translation follows Schlier and depends on taking ἀληθεύομεν transitively and τὰ πάντα to mean "the cosmos". This translation adds to the difficulty of interpreting v. 16 in which Schlier translates ἀληθησόντος τοῦ ἐσωμάτως in such a way that the growth of the cosmos towards Christ accompanies the building up of the Church. This rendering is possible when we remember that vv. 11-16 suggest that the Church is the instrument by which Christ "might fill the universe" (v. 10). Schnackenburg follows Schlier's reasoning here and he therefore concludes that this whole passage "expresses indirectly the cosmic significance of the Church". Elsewhere he speaks of the Church having two "appearances": "the Church as Body of Christ has a heavenly yet earthly appearance: it is Christ's sphere of operation and instrument in this world and nevertheless rises with Him as its Head and extends up into the heavenly sphere". This double aspect reinforces

1. 11, p. 305. 2. 'Brief an die Epheser' p. 190 ff. ibid.
4. 11, p. 307. 5. 1, p. 173.
Schnackenburg's view that the Church has cosmic status in Colossians and Ephesians.

Another point of difference between the earlier letters and the Captivity Epistles is the independence of the Body of Christ metaphor in the latter. This epithet for the Church required to be explained in Romans and I Corinthians, but, in Ephesians and Colossians, it has already become a generally accepted description of the Church. Whereas the earlier letters used the metaphor to illustrate unity and diversity within the Church, the later epistles include it for its own sake and conclusions about the nature of the Church are drawn from it. In the quotation from Cerfau cited above, the Church in the Captivity Epistles was said to be "personified". It is Benoit who expands this thought: "le sens œcuménique (i.e. of ἐκκλησία) est bien saillant, voire ordinaire, en Col. Eph., et l'identification du terme ainsi employé avec celui du 'Corps du Christ'. Ce fait littéraire exprime une personification du Corps du Christ qui est assurément remarquable". Benoit goes on to say that this personification makes the Church, the community of the saved, like a living being which can be distinguished from the personal Christ. At the same time, he recognizes that the Church, thus personified, cannot be separated entirely from Christ: so we cannot say that the Church is autonomous because her whole being comes from Christ, she only exists in Him. Perhaps the point that Cerfau and Benoit are both making here can best be illustrated from Eph. v: 23-32 where the Church is the Bride of Christ, distinct from Him, yet intimately related to Him. Although we might quarrel with the use of the term 'personification', there is no

1. "ibid.
2. ibid."
doubt that Cerfauz and Benoit are pointing to something quite distinctive in the thinking of the Captivity Epistles. The Body, which, in the Pauline letters, belonged to Christ\(^1\) or which was in Christ\(^2\), has now become the Body 'simpliciter' without definition or explanation\(^3\).

There is another new emphasis in Colossians and Ephesians which is parallel to this usage – the stress on the Church as an entity at the expense of the individual. Initiatives which, in the Major Epistles, were taken by Christ on behalf of the individual are here taken for the Church, His Body e.g. in self-giving\(^4\), in baptism\(^5\). This new emphasis is specially noted by Schnackenburg\(^6\). A similar stress on the community rather than the individual is found in those passages where growth and development are mentioned. In the Major Epistles, the body was a static image, admitting of no development, but, in the Captivity Letters, growth is taken for granted, e.g. the different uses made of the image of marriage in II Cor. xi: 2 and Eph. v: 22-32. Yet, in Eph. ii: 19-22, we have both a static image and an image of development. At first, the writer is speaking of a completed building whose coping-stone is Christ, whose foundations are the apostles and the prophets and of which the Gentile Christians at Ephesus are part

1. I Cor. xii: 27.  
2. Rom. xii: 5.  
6. see 1, p. 172 where he speaks of "Christ's great act of redemption" for the Church, of the power "of Christ's sacrificial death" which enables the Church to become "pure and radiant" in the "water of baptism" and also of Christ continuing to "feed and cherish the Church" in the Eucharist.
But then our author speaks of the building growing "into a holy temple in the Lord" and now the Gentile Christians are being fitted "into a spiritual dwelling for God" along with all other Christians
d. This latter picture of the "developing building" can be compared to the imagery of Eph. iv: 16 where the whole Body depends on Christ, the Head, Who, as we have seen, is the source of the Body's vital energy. This energy binds and knits the Church together, as well as providing power for the growth and the building up of the Body. If we return to v. 15, we shall there discover the goal of this development in the Body - "we shall grow up into Christ". So Christ is both the end and the agent of the Church's development
d. Schnackenburg explains this by saying, "All life and growth, the whole building up of the body proceeds from the head (Eph. iv: 12, 16, Col. ii: 19): the heavenly Christ builds Himself up in the Church and through the Church itself, in love (Eph. iv: 16)

Apart from the error of saying that "Christ builds Himself up", this is an adequate interpretation of Eph. iv: 16. Let us note, in passing, that Benoit makes an important point about this 'physiological' role of the Head:

"l'introduction de la notion du Chef établi aux cieux pouvait entrainer entre le Christ et son Corps une séparation dommageable à leur étroite union: par le biais de la liaison physiologique qui rattache le Corps à la Tête, cette union est réaffirmée et d'une certaine manière enrichie avec une précision plus grande"

Yet again we see that Christ fulfils a role in relation to the whole Church, rather than in relation to the individual. Vestiges of the earlier point of view can be seen by comparing Eph. iv: 15 where the

1. see Carfax, A, p. 345.
3. 1, p. 171.
writer says, "we (i.e. the individual Ephesians) fully grow up into Christ" and iv: 12 where Christ is said to give His gifts, not for the growing maturity of individual members, but "for the building up for the Body of Christ".

The most striking and complex advance found in the Captivity Epistles is the introduction of the idea of 'fullness', 'pleroma'.

We would do well to heed Garfoux's warning before we proceed: "the history of the word πλήρωμα (is) very involved. It is rooted in philosophy, Judaism and Gnosticism, and its derivation is not completely clear". Although the verb πλήρουν means 'to fill', there is much disagreement about the meaning of the noun derived from it. Commentators in an earlier age laid down a quite immutable rule i.e. πλήρωμα is almost exclusively used in a passive sense. More recent commentators realize that the answer to the dilemma is not quite as simple as that e.g. Armitage Robinson claims that nouns ending in μα normally give "the result of the agency of the corresponding verb" and that these nouns may either be concrete or abstract. From Biblical and non-Biblical usage of the word we can draw two, quite definite conclusions about the word πλήρωμα — it refers either to that which makes complete or to that which has been completed. The first meaning is found in Matt. ix: 16 where πλήρωμα refers to a patch on clothing. In Thucydides 7:4, 12, the word refers to ships'
crews (cf. Robinson "πλήρωμα has the concrete meaning of a 'crew' 

In the passages cited (Lucian, 'Ver. Hist.' ii, 37, 38 and Polybius, 
i: 49), the literal meaning is 'crews': though 'to fight with two crews' 

is only another way of saying 'to fight with two ships'\(^1\). In 

Aristotle, 'Politics' iv: 4, the tradesmen in a city are said to be its 

'pleroma' i.e. they make the city complete. The second meaning is found 
in the LXX translation of Eccles. iv: 6 (πλήρωμα θρακός) cf. Mark 
viii: 20. This second sense is similar to the sense of the Latin 

'plenitude'. 

The reason for this word's appearance in the Captivity Epistles is 
not so difficult to ascertain. Those who advocated what has come to be known 
as the 'Colossian' heresy probably used this word as part of their teaching. 
It is certainly true that we cannot say with any precision what this heresy 
was and we can only deduce its nature from the Colossian letter itself\(^2\). 

Cerfaux tries to guess at the form of the heresy: "on the outer fringes of 
the Christian Churches at Ephesus and Colossae we have an inkling of spec-
ulations focussed on a 'pleroma' of beings who were intermediaries between the 
supreme God and men"\(^3\). So it is likely that our author borrowed this term 
from his adversaries. While Cerfaux is vague, Dupont is more precise. 
He claims that the most characteristic feature of the heretical teaching at 
Colossae is the important place it gives to the celestial powers: "d'où 

l'insistance de Paul à montrer la supériorité absolue du Christ sur toutes 
ces puissances (Col. i:16, ii:20, Eph. i:21), la défaite que le Christ leur 

a infligée (Col. i:13, ii:15, Eph. vi:12)"\(^4\). In an attempt to refute such 

1. p. 259. 2. see Benoit, ii: 16, 18. 3. i, p. 292. 4. p. 490.
false doctrine, our author says that the whole πλήρωμα of God, God's 'plenitude', was to be found in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians, this emphasis is not quite so explicit: at iii:19, there is an exhortation to know "the love of Christ which is beyond knowledge" in order to be filled "to the measure of the whole πλήρωμα of God". According to Colossians, the 'plenitude' of God is posited in Christ: the Ephesians, on the other hand, are called to strive for this divine 'plenitude'. According to Eph. iv:13, however, the Christian community is at the last to become as one perfect man, "according to the measure of the stature of the 'plenitude' of Christ". Leaving aside for the moment the imagery which lies behind this particular passage, we can say that the fullness of God has been granted to Christ and Christians have to attain that fullness, in the knowledge that some day it will be their heritage. So, thus far, we have only found πλήρωμα used in the second of the two senses noted above i.e. of that which has been made whole or complete.

Cerfaux, in his discussion of Col. i:19 and ii:9\(^2\), makes the mistake of trying to define more precisely than does the New Testament the fullness of God (or of the Godhead) which is granted to Christ. He speaks of this fullness in terms of life, power, holiness and sanctification e.g. "God is the 'fullness', fullness of life which lives in Christ". Following Stauffer\(^3\), he says: "Christ is given the fullness of divine power"\(^4\) and "the 'fullness of the Godhead', the power of sanctification, dwells in Christ  θυματικός\(^5\). It is noteworthy, however, that, through these

1. i: 19, ii: 9.
3. TWNT iii, p. 120.
5. p. 323.
letters, the word πλήρωμα stands absolutely free of any definition or explanation. The most we can say in faithfulness to our source is that all that God is dwells in Christ ἐν Θεῷ. Gerfaux is therefore wrong when he argues that this adverb refers to the glorified ἐν Θεῷ of Christ, which he believes our author identifies with the Church i.e. he is saying that the fullness of Christ is found within His glorified body, the Church. But we must also account for the fact that Christ received the fullness of God through His incarnation i.e. the fullness of the Godhead dwelt 'bodily' in Christ prior to His glorification. In addition, we must note that Gerfaux sees the fullness which has been granted to Christ as dynamic, as working through the Church until its members "are filled to the fullness of God" till they come to the maturity "which corresponds with the fullness of holiness which is enjoyed in Christ". We shall see later that Gerfaux's notion of a dynamic, active fullness of God in Christ (His "power of sanctification") is allied to a particular understanding of the Church as the πλήρωμα of Christ (see p.129).

Dupont examines the possibility that our author may have found his source in Judaism and in Biblical terminology. In the end, however, he feels that the usage of the Captivity Epistles seems closest to what we know of Stoic use of the term πλήρωμα: "le terme 'pléône', dans la signification que lui donnent les épîtres de la captivité, doit donc être considéré comme tributaire du vocabulaire stoïcien qui, seul, révèle un


theme similaire. Later, however, Dupont notes a difference in emphasis between Ephesians and Colossians: in the first, God or Christ fills all things\(^2\), but, in the second, Christ is the 'locale' for the 'pleroma' of God\(^3\). Also in Colossians, we are told that "all things are held together in Christ\(^4\)" and that, as He has received the fullness of God, so, in Him, His disciples can share in that fullness\(^5\). Dupont makes the meaning of Col. ii:9 precise as follows: "τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς Θεότητος signifie naturellement 'ce que remplit la vertu divine'. Il n'y a pas lieu de s'étonner de voir réunies les deux idées: la plérôma, 'ce qui est rempli', et le Christ qui 'contient' ce plérôma .... La vertu divine remplit l'univers et c'est dans le Christ que se trouve l'univers, qui a en lui sa cohesion\(^6\). Because Dupont refuses to define 'pleroma' other than by maintaining its strictly passive reference, he finds it difficult to interpret in certain passages. In Eph. iii:19, for example, the Ephesians are exhorted, according to Dupont, to be filled by God for thus "they will be integrated in the 'pleroma' of God i.e. to the totality filled by God\(^7\). But this verse must, in fact, be set alongside Eph. iv:13. In the thought of the Captivity Epistles, the norm of 'fullness' is the 'pleroma of God' - what Dupont calls 'the divine virtue'. But, in the divine plan, God has shared this 'pleroma' with His Son\(^8\). Further, God wishes to share that 'pleroma', not with His Son only, but also with the people of His Son's Church. The Captivity Letters describe this sharing in passive and active

In terms i.e. in Eph. iii:19, the people are filled up to the norm of the 'pleroma' of God, but, in iv:13-15, the people are to grow into the 'fullness of Christ', that fullness He shares with the Father. So it would seem that Dupont's loyal adherence to the one meaning of πληρωμα - "le terme 'plerome' a toujours une signification passive" - leads him astray. He has forgotten that the passive inference in πληρωμα can still be retained when it is translated "that which has been filled", "that which is complete" - this perfect passive sense enables us to interpret the usage of πληρωμα in the Captivity Letters quite consistently.

Benoit, on the other hand, when he comes to deal with Col. i:19, is out of step with the accepted exegesis. He claims that if we take πληρωμα to mean 'the divine life or being' which God was pleased should dwell in Christ, then we are liable to fall into Nestorianism. This passage stresses that Christ "is the image of the invisible God" (15) and "the whole universe has been created through Him and for Him" (16). Thus it is wrong, according to Benoit, to think of God's whole being, His 'pleroma', being given to Christ at one point in time (e.g. at the Incarnation) because He has in fact been one with God from all eternity1. "Sa divinité est pour le lecteur un fait acquis, une nécessité de nature, le point de départ de tout le développement sur son rôle créateur et créateur"2. Benoit's objection to the more popular interpretation can be summed up as follows: "D'après toute la doctrine de Paul, Jésus est divin par nature: en tant que Fils de Dieu, il ne le devient pas .... pas plus ici qu'ailleurs Paul ne distingue entre nature divine et nature humaine dans le Christ"3. To overcome this

1. Hebrews i: 2,6. 2. ii, p. 34. 3. Ibid.
difficulty, Benoit says that the 'pleroma' is not the Church, not the divine being, but the cosmos. Benoit explains this understanding of 'pleroma' as the cosmos by suggesting that our writer has amalgamated the pantheistic monism of Stoicism (which used the term πλήρωμα extensively) and the transcendant monotheism of the Bible: "je vois dans les épîtres de la Captivité la Pléitude de l'Être, non seulement la Pléitude de la divinité, mais encore celle du Cosmos". So Benoit thinks that the παν το πλήρωμα includes the heavens and the earth, as well as the divine world which Christ carries in His nature as the Son, the image of God. This 'whole pleroma' came to dwell in Christ because of a decision made by God Himself: "le Christ en s'incarnant ayant rassemblé en lui-même tout l'univers, divin, humain et même cosmique, divisé par le péché, a pu tout réconcilier et y ramener la paix par sa mort expiatrice et sa resurrection". We have spent some time with Benoit's interpretation of this particular passage because his opinion marks a major departure from the accepted exegesis. We must now see how he applies his ideas in other contexts.

He is quite willing to admit, for example, that the more obvious interpretation explains Col. ii:9 perfectly well: "c'est en prenant un ἰδίωκα, c'est-à-dire en s'incarnant, que le Christ a fait habiter dans un homme toute la Pléitude de la divinité". Benoit goes on to say, "Cette interprétation est de soi parfaitement soutenable: je pense qu'elle est même foncièrement vraie". Nonetheless, Benoit reminds us of the context:

1. see note, p. 32.
2. see note one, p. 33.
3. cf. the exegesis of Theodore of Mopsuestia mentioned in note one, p. 35.
4. ii, p. 37.
5. ii, p. 38.
7. ibid.
of this verse: our author is concerned with the contrast between Christ and
the "elemental spirits of the world" (8). These spirits have been made
subject to Christ, their Head (10), and have been stripped of their power
and authority (15). Since this is so, Benoit claims that he can apply the
meaning of \( \pi \lambda \rho \rho \mu \alpha \) he suggested in 1:19 equally to 11:9 I.e. "ce qui habite
dans le Christ, c'est la Plénitude de l'être, de Dieu et du Monde: mais
cette fois les deux composantes de cette Plénitude sont analytiquement
exprimées - Dieu (\( \Theta \alpha \omicron \omicron \tau \omicron \sigma \zeta \)) et le Monde (\( \beta \gamma \mu \mu \alpha \tau \iota \kappa \iota \iota \delta \))
1. This exegesis, of
course, depends on the Stoic understanding of the Cosmos as a \( \beta \gamma \mu \mu \alpha \), an
understanding which Benoit feels our author has accepted in his use of the
adverb \( \beta \gamma \mu \mu \alpha \). Benoit sums up his thought by saying that, in Christ,
God dwells bodily, not only through the individual body He accepted at His
incarnation, but also through the whole of humanity which He gathered to Him-
self in His act of salvation: there is also a sense in which humanity is
itself to be found in Christ along with the whole creation 2.

There are many objections to Benoit's point of view, although his
principal criticism of the accepted understanding of 1:19 has value, if only
to make us reexamine our conclusions. It certainly does seem that this verse
can be interpreted to suggest a dichotomy between the two natures of Christ
by claiming that His divine nature, His sharing in the \( \pi \lambda \rho \rho \mu \alpha \) of God,
began only at the Incarnation. There are, however, three major objections
to Benoit's interpretation. Firstly, we can level the same criticism at
other New Testament passages 3 which Benoit levels at the generally understood
exegesis of Col. 1:19. It is wrong to isolate anyone of these passages
1. ii, p. 39. 2. ibid. 3. e.g. John iii: 16, Gal. iv: 4.
from the total emphasis of the New Testament. The first chapter of
Colossians indeed is concerned to show that Christ is the One Who became in
all things alone supreme through His resurrection because (ἔτι in v. 19) God was pleased to share His Πρώτον with Him. There is no speculation
here about when this decision taken by God was implemented, but only that its
implementation is a reality. Because the fullness of God dwelt in Christ, He
is what He is and He did what He did. Secondly, Benoit has gone astray in
thinking that ὄμνικως in ii:9 is derived from the Stoic notion that the
universe is a great body: if this were the true source of the adverb, then
it would be unique in the New Testament. Benoit's understanding of ὄμνικως is more difficult to appreciate when we remember that there is a
simpler explanation at hand - God's 'pleroma', His whole being, dwelt with
the incarnate (ὅμοιος) Christ. A third criticism, like the first,
applies to chronology. It is true that Christ is related to "everything in
heaven and on earth" through creation and this means that, in one sense, He
is supreme over creation from the beginning, but in another sense, His
supremacy is subsequent and consequent to His historical death, resurrection
and ascension. In other words, Christ may very well be said to bear the
recreated Cosmos potentially within His person as the New Being, but we
cannot equate this Cosmos with the 'pleroma' since the 'pleroma' is co-
terminous with Christ, not merely subsequent to His historical life.

We can finish our discussion of Benoit's thinking by noting that he
has difficulty explaining Col. ii:10 within the terms set by his previous
exegesis. Christians, he says, are filled "par cette vie incarnée du Christ-
Plérome qui se répand sur le Nouvel Univers et dont ils sont les bénéficiaires
1. Col. i:16.  
privileged. In this advanced and sophisticated meaning, Benoit sees echoes of an earlier usage where Paul is speaking of God's grace in the human heart. But to interpret Col. ii:10 adequately, Benoit has had to change his previous thinking about the meaning of πληρώμα. In Col. i:19, the 'pleroma' of God, God's being, is said to dwell in Christ: this thought is echoed in Col. ii:9 but it is followed by the idea that the Colossians are 'fulfilled' in Christ (v. 10). It is quite clear that we cannot say the 'pleroma' of God, which Benoit claims was found in Christ as all being, human and divine, as all creation, can be passed on to members of the Church in order to 'fulfil' them in Christ. Benoit's understanding of πληρώμα as the fullness of all being certainly seems to be supported in some passages cf. Eph. i:10 where "all in heaven and on earth" are 'summed up' in Christ. But in this passage Christ is no longer the One in Whom all things find their unity - He becomes the giver of life and of power i.e. the fullness is no longer consummated in Him but is now given by Him. All of which naturally leads to a final criticism of Benoit's position - he is far too imprecise in his definition of what 'the pleroma' is. At times, it would seem to be the divine being, at others, the whole of humanity, at others again, the physical creation and then, as here, the fullness of life Christ gives His followers.

Schnackenburg has a much more simple approach to the question of 'pleroma': "all the Christians in the Church through Christ and in Him are 'filled' (Col. iii:10), endowed with every blessing of grace." At this point, Schnackenburg is only concerned with the relationship of Christ to

1. ii, p. 40. 2. e.g. Rom. xv: 13, 14; Phil. i: 11.
3. see p. 125. 4. see John x: 10. 5. i, p. 171.
His Church, not with the relationship of Christ to God. The Church is filled by the Christ who is "Head of every power and authority" but this process depends on the fact that "the complete being of the Godhead dwells embodied" in Him. Thus, in fact, the two relationships are necessary for this process of 'filling'. In passing, we may note that Schnackenburg, as compared to Cerfau, does not try to define the nature of this process any further than by saying that Christ endows His Church "with every blessing of grace". However vague this statement may be, it does go beyond the content of the Captivity Epistles which say only that the goal of this 'filling' process is the 'pleroma' of God: "this can be expressed as a prayerful petition that they may be filled in order to attain to the whole 'plenitude' of God (Eph. iii:19)". Here Schnackenburg is right when he claims that the 'pleroma' of God refers to the "riches of the divine life" with which the Church must be filled. It is also Schnackenburg who reminds us of the importance of the Spirit in Christ's relationship to the Church, especially with regard to the Head supplying the Body with vital energy. "Once again it is ultimately the divine Spirit Who, from Christ the Head, flows with His vivifying power, strengthening and enlightening and impelling to good, into the body and all its members (cf. Eph. v:18ff.)".

The juxtaposition of 'one body' and 'one Spirit' in Eph. iv:4 is further proof of the point Schnackenburg is making - the Spirit has an indispensable role in the doctrine of 'the body of Christ'.

Thus far, we have seen the 'pleroma' as the fullness of the divine life communicated to Christ by God's own wish and then, from and by Christ,

to the members of the Church. But as the members are filled by Christ with this divine life, they must strive to achieve that life as they find it embodied in Him, the Head of the Church. But, before we finish this section, we ought to note one important point made by Schnackenburg in his examination of Eph. ii:14-18. Here the writer is concerned with the major theme of his letter— the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles with one another and together with God. To illustrate this "double establishment of peace", the writer uses different images, one of which is the 'body of Christ' (see vv. 15ff.). "By this one body in the first place only the body of Christ given up to the bloody death of the Cross can be meant, His physical body (cf. v. 14 ἐν τῇ θανατῷ αὐτοῦ and also Col. i:22)". But it soon becomes apparent that this body "assumes a more comprehensive meaning" (v. 18). Here again we have the same juxtaposition of 'one body' (16) and 'one Spirit' (18) as in iv:4. Since, according to Schnackenburg, it is the Spirit of God Who "fills and unites the ecclesiological Body of Christ", "ἐν ἐνὶ ἕνῳ νουματί (16) perhaps itself is deliberately intended to have a double meaning".

In other words, this body which bled on the Cross and through which reconciliation was achieved can also be the Church, the body in which the reconciled groups are found and in which their reconciliation is made real. An equivalent idea is found in v. 15: "... so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in Himself". This new ἄνθρωπος may depend, we are told, either on Rabbinic speculation about Adam, the primal man or on Gnostic anthropos-mythology. Schnackenburg, with characteristic caution, is unwilling to hazard a guess about the source of this idea, but he does sum

1. ibid. 2. ibid. 3. ibid.
up his view of the 'body of Christ' thus: 'the body of the crucified and risen Lord expands into the ecclesiological Body of Christ by means of the Spirit: through the latter the Lord (the head) builds up His Church (the body) for Himself and becomes with it a full unity'. It is clear from what has been said above that we will take exception to Schnackenburg's terminology - the physical body of Christ does not "expand" into the Churchly body, but rather the two are identified and seen as a unity i.e. our author intends us to think of both the physical body of Christ and the Church by the words ἐν ἑνὶ ὑμῶν ἐν v. 16. Whereas the identification is most strongly emphasized in the Major Epistles, the differentiation between Christ and His Church, illustrated by the theme of the Head and the Body, is nearer the surface in the Captivity Epistles. Tied up with this whole question is the theme of Christ, the New Man, the representative of the new humanity. To this theme, we shall return later (see pp. 159 ff. and 169ff.).

In Eph. 1:23, we are faced with an expression of startling perplexity: τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ ἄνω πάντα ἐν πασί πληρομένου. This phrase is quite obviously a description of the Church, the Body of Christ. In passing, we must note that this phrase cannot be interpreted as if it were in apposition τοῦ ᾑμῶν (v. 22), since that would render the relative clause beginning with ἡ τίς completely redundant. If we start our examination of the phrase with the present participle in the genitive (πληρομένου), we must take more seriously than do some commentators that it is either middle or passive. It cannot, therefore, be exactly comparable to Eph. iv:10 where a part of the verb πληροῦν is also followed by ἄνω πάντα because there the verb is clearly active - ".... that He might fill all things". Unless 1:ibid. 2:cf. T. K. Abbott, ICC commentary on Ephesians p. 19.
it be a translation of the middle, therefore, there is no justification for
the Authorised Version of Eph. 1:23 which makes it a precise parallel to
Eph. iv:10: "... of Him that filleth all in all". We would rather take
this participle as a passive - the Christ to whom πληρωμένου refers does
not fill, but is Himself filled. This raises the further question, "By whom
or by what?". We have already suggested an answer to this question by our
exegesis of Col. i:9 and ii:19 where our author has stated that all the full-
ness of God dwells in Christ, according to God's own choice. In other words,
it is God Himself Who fills Christ with His own spiritual life and energy1. 
Christ is therefore filled by God2. Yet Armitage Robinson, for one, refuses
to accept this interpretation. He claims that Christ is filled, not by God's
πλήρωμα, but by the members of His Body so that the Body becomes the
'complement' of the Head Who is Christ. Such an understanding depends upon
accepting πλήρωμα as synonymous with οἰκονομία.3 Although some comment-
ators would say that there was some support for this understanding in I Cor.
xii:12, the idea that Christ is filled or made complete by the members of His
Body would be unique in the New Testament4. Thus, having taken πληρωμένου
as a passive, we must understand τά πάντα ἐν πάσι adverbially i.e. "at
all times in all places".

1. see Lightfoot's commentary on Colossians p. 196.  
2. cf. John i:14
where the Word is said to be "full of grace and truth", qualities which
properly belong to God Himself.  
3. see J. A. T. Robinson, op. cit. p. 68.

4. cf. A. Médebielle, 'Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément' II, col. 666:
"Le Christ se complète .... il le fait pleinement dans l'Eglise".
This leaves us, however, with the thorny problem of the noun πλήρωμα in apposition to τὸ ὑμῖν αὐτοῦ which is obviously the Church. We have already isolated two meanings of 'pleroma' and both have been suggested for this particular phrase. Early commentators (e.g. Chrysostom, Oecumenius, Thomas) adopted the first meaning i.e. 'that which completes'. If we accept this as correct we are again faced with the idea that the Church makes Christ whole or complete. Theologically, it is true that Christ has chosen, by His own decision, that He will not be without His Church¹, and that His saving work would be for and on behalf of the Church². But, within the context of this letter to Ephesus, it would be an exaggeration to claim that our author categorically states that the Church makes Christ complete. In fact, the writer's most consistent emphasis is that Christ's saving acts are perfectly effective in themselves and therefore He, as Saviour, needs no external power or outside authority to make Him 'complete'. So we agree with Abbott when he says that πλήρωμα in this sense is the complement of ηττημα cf. Rom. xi:12 with Thucydides' use of the verb πληροῦν with Χρειάν in his History i:70³. We also agree with the 'Faith and Order Findings' from Montreal when they say that the Church's participation in Christ does not add anything to that which has already been accomplished⁴. So, by rejecting the first meaning, we are forced back to the second i.e. "that which is complete or fulfilled".

If we explain πλήρωμα thus, there is no doubt that the Church as Christ's ὑμῖν can be said "to be filled" by the Christ Who makes it perfect. Indeed, we find in the writings of Philo a good parallel for this

very genitive to express the person or thing which fills or completes:

γενομένη πλήρωμα ἐρημίας ἥδε ἡ μυστήρια ... σοβεν ἑαυτήν καταλημμοῦνα κανών 1. Philo is here suggesting that the wise soul will become filled with every virtue (see the genitive ἐρημίας). So, in a similar way, the Church is filled and made complete by Christ, by receiving from Him those powers and attributes which He, in turn, received insofar as the πλήρωμα

Τῆς Θεότητος was pleased to dwell in Him. In other words, God has chosen that Christ should receive His fullness and Christ, in turn, has filled the Church - His Body - with that fullness: "the fullness with which Christ is filled by God is now filling those who are 'in Him'"2, cf. John i:16 - "of His fullness we have all received". So the situation in which Christians together attain to the stature of the fullness of Christ is, in one sense, future3, but it is also in another sense, present, i.e. the Church is already filled with the 'plenitude' of God in Christ. But this latter concept is not static but dynamic - Christ is actually filling His Church with the riches of the divine life. So we have here a connection with the concept of Christ the Head as the source of vital energy for the body4. Christ gives to His Church what He has received from the Father. The goal and norm of this giving is that the members of Christ's Body will grow up to the fullness of the Godhead found in Christ, their Head. We can illustrate this point in another way, namely, by positing a connection between the ideas surrounding the biblical usage of the verbs πληροῦν and τελεῖον. In the Old Testament, God's perfection (ὑπερτερία) is seen as His holiness, His lack of moral failing, and man is expected to strive for that same integrity5.

In the New Testament, the same idea appears e.g. the rich young ruler knows that he is not perfect because he feels that his righteousness lacks something. So Christ's command to His disciples is that they should be ἔλεημον, just as God is ἔλεημος, 'perfect', 'holy' i.e. the norm and goal of the Christian life is the integrity of the Father. This thought is echoed exactly in the letters of the Captivity. But here, as in the concept of πληρωμα, what the Father is has been shared with the Son. So Christ is the "mature" man and Christians are called upon to aspire to this "maturity".

Returning to the idea of Christ's 'fullness', as we saw in our examination of πληρωμα, this is not only given to the Church, but also through His ascension, proleptically to the whole Cosmos. At the point, Benoît's interpretation of the 'pleroma' as the Cosmos assimilated into the risen and glorified Christ seems to make more sense. In Eph. 1:10, we meet the unusual verb ἀνακεφαλαίων which appears only once elsewhere in the New Testament (at Rom. xiii:9 where the Law is "summed up" in the command of Christ to love). Both Dupont and Cerfaux claim that this verb is dependent on the noun Κεφαλή rather than Κεφαλαίων. Although Dupont feels that Christ ought to be seen as "head" rather than as the "consummation" of all creation, he nonetheless translates the verb ἀνακεφαλαίων as "recapitulum". Cerfaux finds himself in exactly the same dilemma: although he thinks that Paul "chose the word for its connection with Κεφαλή", he translates it as "to unite". In theory, therefore, both exegetes think that the verb is derived from the noun Κεφαλή, but in practice their interpretation depends on Κεφαλαίων. On the other hand, I feel that our author chose this very verb deliberately to suggest that Christ's

relationship to the created order is different from His relationship to the Church i.e. while He can be said to be the "Head" of the latter, He is the ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΟΝ of the former. The sense of ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΟΝ is that Christ, in Whom and through Whom all things were created, is to be the One Who will bring all things into a final unity for God - He is to be the One in Whom all creation will cohere, He is to be the "consummation" of all things. The reason why this will be so is that God has already chosen Christ as the agent of reconciliation - through the death of Christ, God has reconciled all things to Himself. The outstanding example of this reconciling act of God in Christ's death is the breaking down of the barrier between Jew and Gentile. So we have here the typical New Testament tension between indicative and imperative, between 'already' and 'not yet' i.e. creation has already been reconciled to God by Christ's death but the final sign of that reconciliation lies in the future when Christ will be seen as the "summary" of all things.

Returning to Eph. 1:23, it is interesting to see Dupont contradicting the Vulgate translation ("plenitude eius, qui omnia in omnibus adimpletur") by giving the participle πληρομένου "le sens actif qui correspond à ce que saint Paul a écrit un peu plus loin - ἵνα πληρώθη τὰ πάντα (iv:10)". In support of this interpretation, Dupont quotes both grammars and commentaries, as well as Corfaux who translates this verse as "the sphere in which is exercised the power of life and sanctification of Him Who 'fulfils' holiness completely in all". But, as we have tried to show, the 1. Col. i:16.  2. see Col. i:28, cf. II Cor. v:19.  3. see Eph. ii:16, cf. Rom. x:12, Gal. iii:28.  4. p. 424, n. 1.  5. A, p. 323.
participle is either passive or middle (with an active sense) and, of these two alternatives, the former is the more likely. Thus this verse cannot be an exact parallel to iv:10. The Church is not the sphere of Christ's sanctification, according to this verse: rather the Church is called "the fullness" of Christ because He has been pleased to give to His Body the 'pleroma' He has received from the Father. Benoit claims that to take the participle as active would give correct sense, but he still finds the passive preferable. He notes that the passive is recommended by philology and is adopted by the majority of the ancient versions and in the writings of the Fathers. Against this background, Benoit translates the phrase as "l'achèvement de celui qui est achevé en tout de toutes façons". Despite the fact that he here sees πληρωμα as "achèvement", Benoit can also translate it as "complément" e.g. "l'Eglise n'est plus tout le Christ, mais elle est son 'complément'". Benoit explains this seeming contradiction thus - Christ 'fills' the new world insofar as His recreating influence extends throughout the whole universe, but He 'is also filled' by this same new world insofar as He is progressively completed and made perfect in His 'plenitudo' by the growth of the Church and the world involved with her through Christ Himself. This explanation contains a double confusion, especially in its second part where the passive significance of πληρωμα is interpreted. We cannot accept an exegesis which suggests that the Church in any sense 'completes' Christ, because He is, in every way, complete and perfect. Benoit's attempt to wed the Church and the 'cosmos' in a unity

1. "la pensée serait exacte" - 1, p. 42. 2. 1, p. 514, n. 2.
3. 1, p. 514. 4. see 1, pp. 42-43.
which gradually 'fulfils' Christ is even more suspect. The second part of the confusion is caused by Benoit's understanding, noted above (pp.114ff.), that the 'pleroma' is the Cosmos. This confusion leads Benoit to deny the basic teaching of the Captivity Epistles - that Christ is alone supreme, both over His Church and over the created order. In passing, Benoit notes that some early scholars (e.g. Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret) regarded the πληρωμά as belonging to God rather than to Christ. This possibility is ruled out by the context, although, taken by itself, this verse might be similar in sense to Eph. iii:14-19 where the writer prays that his readers may attain "to the fullness of God Himself"¹, that fullness which elsewhere is said to dwell in Christ². We have already seen that Ephesians does in fact lay more emphasis on God's initiative in redemption than does Colossians: "Dieu est toujours le terme de l'oeuvre du Christ, qu'il a menée toute de bout en bout, en l'envoyant, en le faisant mourir, en le ressuscitant, en le glorifiant. C'est lui qui en est la première source et l'ultime fin"³.

Returning for a moment to Dupont, he feels that Eph. i:23 contains two unresolved ideas: "après avoir écrit que c'est l'Eglise qui est le corps du Christ et son 'pleroma', l'Apôtre élargit sa pensée à la mesure du cosmos: l'Eglise est le 'pleroma' de celui qui remplit toutes choses de toutes manières. A ce compte, c'est l'univers entier, rempli par le Christ, qui devrait être son 'pleroma', comme, au verset précédent, il semble que tout devrait être compris dans le 'soma' du Christ, puisqu'il est le chef de 'toutes choses'. Or Paul identifie le 'soma' avec l'Eglise. Il y a donc

1. iii:19. 2. Col. i:19. 3. Benoit, i, p. 43.
Duport is certainly right about this duality if he and Cerfauts are correct in taking \( \text{πληρομένου} \) as active — the Church as 'pleroma' is the object of Christ's fulfilling, as is also the cosmos (τὰ πᾶντα). But we stand by the passive significance of \( \text{πληρομένου} \).

We can further criticize Cerfauts for trying to define the \( \text{πληρομένου} \) too closely i.e. in terms of holiness and sanctification. This may embrace the dynamic element in the concept of 'pleroma', but it means going further than the Biblical material allows. In addition, despite the fact that Cerfauts's notion of the Church as 'the sphere' in which Christ exercises His sanctifying power may have its advantages, this spatial image is, in the end, more confusing than helpful. We must remember that Christ's relationship to His Church, the body, is personal, as His relationship to the Father Whose \( \text{πληρωμένου} \) He embodies is personal. To speak then of the Church as the 'sphere' in which Christ operates is to render that relationship impersonal.

A third, but minor, criticism of Cerfauts's position is that, since he takes \( \text{πληρομένου} \) as active, he ought logically to take \( \text{τὰ πᾶντα ἐν Πάλιν} \) as its object and not, as he does, as part of an adverbial phrase. Indeed, Cerfauts seems to omit the very thing which makes the possibility of the participle being active most attractive, namely, the idea that Christ 'fills', not only the Church, but also the entire cosmos.

What then does this phrase mean? We have given a great deal of space to these eight words because they represent, in microcosm, much of the Captivity Letters' attitude to God, to Christ, the Church and their relationships with one another. The writer of these Letters calls the Church Christ's

2. "completely in all", p. 323.
Body and here in this verse His 'pleroma'. The genitive found in the participle πληρομένους is subjective i.e. Christ is the One Who gives His Body the right to be His pleroma. But the only 'pleroma' these Letters know is the 'fullness' of God granted to Christ by God's own wish - it is this 'fullness' which is given to the Church and entitles her to be called "Christ's fullness". But Christ, the One Who gives, is also the One Who receives - He is Himself filled by God and, in a particular sense, by His disciples and by the whole cosmos. Yet it is only because Christ Himself has chosen that His disciples should be 'in Him' that He can be said to be 'filled' by His disciples: it is only because that creation which came to be in Christ and through Him has been brought to unity in Christ's death that we can speak of His being 'filled' by the cosmos. So the Christ Who shares His fullness with the Church is Himself being filled in all places and at all times. Principally, of course, when we speak of Christ being filled, we are thinking of God granting Him His 'pleroma'. So I can do no better than agree with the paraphrase of the NEB: "the Church is His body and, as such, holds within it the fullness of Him Who Himself receives the entire fullness of God".

So, in conclusion, we find that, in the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians, there are elements in the earlier letters developed and made explicit. The sphere of salvation is no longer mankind only, but the whole created order. Christ is no longer simply the Saviour and Lord of the individual - He is the Head of the Church, the One Who, through His death, has reconciled man with God, man with man and the whole of creation within itself. In addition, Christ is the agent of creation and of recreation, the

1. see Rom. viii: 19-23.
New Being. Faced with the cosmological heresies of Colossae and the Gnostic speculations of Ephesus, our writer, dependent as he was on the Pauline tradition claimed that Christ was all-sufficient, the sole Mediator and Saviour. Further, the writer states that the Church, Christ's Body, shares in the sufficiency of her Head. In developing this thesis, our author forged new concepts and adopted new terminology. In the end, however, he is faithful to the tradition he has received.
V. Theological Implications of the Doctrine.

"It is impossible to deal with the doctrine .... of the Church without being decisively influenced by one's understanding of the relation between Scripture and Tradition". We have examined the growth of the Roman doctrine of the Church as Mystical Body and we have uncovered the Biblical roots of that doctrine: we must relate all this to present-day thinking about the nature of the Church. Immediately, however, we are faced with the fact that Roman Catholics do not feel themselves under the same primary obligation to Scripture as do Protestants. Yet ecumenical debate about the relation of Scripture and Tradition, as well as the developing concern for Biblical studies within the Roman Church, has reopened the Bible as the authoritative source for all Christian doctrine. So much has changed in recent years that J. R. Geiselmann is able to quote the Lutheran writer Max Lackmann with approval: "If something is found in the Church which is not confirmed by Holy Scripture, it is ipso not of the Catholic faith". Hans Küng stresses the same point even more positively: "the Church abides under the word of God and precisely thus she remains the possession and property of the Lord .... The word of God proclaiming itself in words of men is at once the ground and the limit of the Church's teaching authority". Küng goes on to explain that this "Word of God" is to be found "in the human word of Scriptures". So, in our subsequent discussion, we are assuming the primacy of Scriptural authority for all Christians, whatever differences there may be with regard to the interpretation of that authority and its

1. 'Christianity Divided' p. 3. 2. op. cit. p. 62. 3. 'The Living Church' p. 297. 4. op. cit. p. 298.
relation to other forms of authority in the Church. "Toute la doctrine de l'Eglise repose .... sur la révélation qui a procédé du Saint-Esprit dans les Apôtres et les Prophètes, sur l'écriture dans toute la vérité première qu'elle exprime".

The ecclesiology of the New Testament springs directly from its Christology: "one point is absolutely plain - christology and ecclesiology go hand in hand, the Church is completely dependent on Christ. We might apply the familiar phrase to their relations and say that ecclesiology is nothing more than developed christology". The Church's life and work are nothing without Christ: the Church must always be defined in terms of Christ. In order to understand the New Testament thinking about the Church, we must begin - not with the community itself - but with Christ. The first thing that the New Testament has to say about Christ is His historicity i.e. He was a man Who lived and died the life and death of other men, a concrete living being whose deeds and words are recorded in the writings of the four evangelists. The Apostles' Creed enshrines this historical element in the fact of Jesus Christ when it says He was "born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and was buried .... the third day He rose again from the dead". Jesus Christ, first and foremost, was a historical figure, Whose life and death are rooted at a particular point in time and space. But there are two further points that the New Testament makes about this man Jesus Christ, both of which are relevant when we come to think of His Church.

Firstly, He is the Logos of God, the very image of God, God's only Son, the Word of God made flesh. As such, He is, in the words of Bonhoeffer, the "powerful word of creation". So this man Jesus Christ is related to all mankind as the mediator of creation to those who are creatures. But He is further related to mankind, since, by His incarnation, He took our humanity as His own; because Christ freely chose to take our manhood upon Himself, He bound Himself to all men. In other words, the New Testament claims that it is not enough to say that Jesus Christ belongs to the realm of space and time – as the Logos, the Word of God, He belongs to the eternal realm as the One without Whom "no single thing was created" and "Who became flesh .... to dwell among us".

Secondly, in the words of Barth, Jesus Christ is "not simply one .... but one in many". We have already seen the prevalence of the representative figure in Biblical thought – Adam, the Servant, the Son of Man, the Messiah. So Jesus Christ, the man Who saw Himself as the Suffering Servant and Who called Himself 'the Son of Man', is a representative figure – "one in many". So Christ can be called (ο θεός) by St. Paul both because He is one and also because He has many members.

In this role as representative, Christ, first of all, stands for all humanity – that humanity whose nature He took as His own at His incarnation. "He, the one man Jesus of Nazareth Who had been raised from the dead .... But not He alone, abstractly as this one man, just as He had not

1. see Col. 1:15, Mark 1:11, John 1:14. 2. see John 1:2, 3, Col 1:16, Heb. 1:2. 3. Heb. 11:14-15, iv:15. 4. see pp. 52-57 5. I Cor. xii:12.
died alone, abstractly as this one man. But the one man Who as the Representative of all men, the bearer of their sin and flesh and death, had delivered all this up to the past in His death, dying on the Cross. Barth goes on to speak of the Resurrection of "this one man" as the rising again of the One Who bore in Himself the disciples' new right and life. So the disciples' future is revealed in Christ's own person, in His Body, the promised ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΣΩΤΟΙΟΣ, "which is His remarkable title as the 'last Adam'". Thus the New Testament looks forward to the day when "every knee will bow and every tongue confess, 'Jesus Christ is Lord!', for what He did, He did as representative of all mankind.

But, in the second place, Christ especially represents those who, through faith, have accepted the redemption He has won for them and who are thereby part of His community, the Church - it is for this community, as much as for all humanity, that Christ died. As Adam was, in Jewish eyes, representative of fallen humanity which had become tainted by his initial act of disobedience so Christ, for Christians, is representative of those in the elect community who, through Him, have received God's grace and righteousness. And baptism, the means of entry into this community, is the acknowledgement that, on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, Christ acted as the "one in many" i.e. as He died and rose again, so we died and rose with Him. So there is a sense in which Christ is to be seen as a collective figure - He refuses to be without those whom He has in His grace chosen to represent. It is this

1. Barth, 'Church Dogmatics' IV/1 p. 664. 2. see Phil. ii:10, 11.
3. see Eph. v:25-27. 4. see Rom. v:12-21, esp. v.17. 5. see Rom. vi:1-11, esp. v.8.
Idee which lies behind Bonhoeffer's bold assertion that the Logos of God 
"has extension in space and time in and as the community"¹. By this Bon¬
hoeffer means that Christ, the Logos, does not only exist in and through His 
community, the Church, but is, in a certain sense, the Church herself: "the 
Word is also itself community insofar as the community is itself revelation 
and the Word wills to have the form of a created body"². Yet, as Bonhoeffer 
himself points out, the Church and Christ are not identified: "this Christ, 
existing as community, is the whole person, as the One Who is exalted and 
humiliated. 
His being as community, like His being as Word and sacrament, 
has the form of a stumbling block. Insofar as it is community, it is no 
longer in sin. But it remains in the world of the old Adam, in the likeness 
of man, under the era of sin"³. And it is this community which the New 
Testament calls "the body of Christ". St. Paul and his fellow-writers, let 
us remember, never use the word 'body', as the Stoics did, of humanity as a 
whole, but only of the Christian Church, the redeemed community.

It is against this Christological background that we must set the 
New Testament doctrine of the Church. According to the writers of the New 
Testament, the Church's nature and being flow directly from Christ - every¬
thing might well be based on Christ's own words, "Apart from Me, you can do 
nothing"⁴. Having established this pattern of dependence whereby the Church 
is nothing without Christ her Lord, we can then go on to say that the New 
Testament concept of the Church involves a continual tension between two 
poles. On the one hand, Christ and His Church are seen as one i.e. there

¹. "Christology" p. 60.  ². ibid.  ³. op. cit. pp. 60-61
⁴. John xv: 5.
is a tendency to identify the Representative with those He represents: on the other hand, there is felt the need to distinguish Christ from the Church in order to maintain His authority and Lordship over His people. The images and terminology of St. Paul and the writer of the Captivity Epistles are designed to serve one or both of these poles. In a sense, the Major Epistles lay more stress on the former while Ephesians and Colossians - with their imagery of the Head - emphasize the latter. But interpretation of New Testament ecclesiology is not easy when it is remembered that this essential tension is easily upset by distortion and overemphasis. It can be said, indeed, that possible errors in interpretation spring from four main sources. Firstly, it is sometimes supposed that it is possible to define the New Testament doctrine of the Church without reference to what it has to say about Christ - we have already argued that this is impossible. Secondly, one of the images used to describe the Church (e.g. that of the Bride of Christ) can be isolated from all the rest and be given too great an importance in the total picture - no one image is normative and none should be taken on its own. Thirdly, one feature of a particular image (e.g. the fact that Christ is to the Church as the head is to the body) can be overplayed in relation to other, equally important features of the same image. Fourthly, it can be forgotten that we are dealing in figures and these figures are then confused with the reality they are meant to illustrate.

Traditional expressions of the Roman doctrine of the Mystical Body all betray traces of these faults. We shall now examine four ways in which the Mystical Body doctrine has become accepted in Roman Catholicism and show where they fall short of or go beyond the teaching of the New Testament -
A. In some writers, the doctrine of the Mystical Body suggests that the Church is the prolongation or extension of the Incarnation. Such terminology betrays, not so much an error in thinking about the Church, but an error in Christology.

B. The doctrine of the Mystical Body, in some authors, so identifies the Church with Christ that, for example, the Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis' can say that the Church is like another Christ and can instruct the faithful to accustom themselves to see Christ Himself in the Church. Such thinking takes us too far towards the pole of identification and too far away from the pole of distinction. The delicate, but necessary, tension of the New Testament has been disturbed.

C. Parallel with this identification of Christ with His community, the doctrine of the Mystical Body has led, in some writers, to the concept of the Whole Christ we have already met in Augustine, e.g. "Christ, head and body, is the Whole Christ". This concept is based on a misunderstanding of New Testament categories, a misunderstanding which confuses the imagery with the reality it is meant to illustrate.

D. Some authors have seen the Mystical Body of the Church as a social or moral body. Here again New Testament and particularly Pauline thought-forms have been misused.

A. The Church as an Extension of the Incarnation.

At first sight, as we have already noted, it is surprising that in I Cor. xii:12, it is not the Christian community at Corinth which is called a

1. para. 77.  
2. para. 92.  
3. 'Mystici Corporis' para. 77.
body, but Christ Himself (cf. I Cor. xii:27 where the community is called ἐκκλησία Χριστοῦ). This reminds us again of the representative role played by Christ i.e. He chooses never to be separated from those He has redeemed—though one Himself, He has many "members". But this idea that Christ as Representative can be called ἐκκλησία, allied to the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ, has led to the conclusion that Christ and His Church can be unconditionally equated. And if this is possible, it is equally possible to speak of Christ's earthly life being continued in the life of the Church: in other words, the Church becomes an extension or development of the Incarnation.

Thus Allo can write in his commentary on First Corinthians:

"L'Eglise devient le 'Christ' mystique, qui est comme l'épanouissement du Christ personnel, la plénitude de l'Incarnation". Similarly, Morsch in 'The Whole Christ' writes: "The Church is Christ and, for us at least, she is Christ in a more perfect sense than was the historical Christ .... the Mystical Body .... is a kind of prolongation of the Incarnation, or rather, it is the Incarnation in its fullest realization", cf. The Church "is an extension of the Incarnation, an Incarnation extended and expanded so much so that the Mystical Christ seems to be an extension of the Individual Christ": "the Church becomes as it were the fullness and completion of the Redeemer, Christ in the Church being in some sense brought to complete achievement". All these statements can be compared with what Cerfæux has to say in 1, p. 268 (n. 13): " .... some think up a new and unheard of

1. cf. I, Cor. vi: 15. 2. p. 328. 3. pp. 48, 199.

meaning for the word "Christ": Christ is thus made a moral and mystical Christ, the Church. Such statements involve the idea that the Church — seen sometimes as the 'mystical' Christ — is the extension and even the fulfilment of the personal, historical and individual Christ. But the equation on which this line of continuity is based i.e. that the Church is Christ (see Marsh above) fails to take account of the essential tension in the New Testament's thinking about the Church. Certainly, as we have seen, the Gospels suggest that Christ's disciples can stand in the place of their Master, can represent Him: certainly, there is a tendency in Paul's letters to unite and even identify Christ and the people who belong to Him and whom He represents. But equally the New Testament as a whole and the writer of the Captivity Epistles in particular go to great lengths to ensure that Christ and His disciples, His community are properly differentiated. So, in Colossians and Ephesians, while the Church is clearly said to grow into the full stature of Christ\(^1\), Christ still remains distinct as Head and Saviour over the Body which is the Church\(^2\). In addition, we must set alongside this the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ\(^3\) which suggests separate identity and unbreakable union rather than assimilation. So, if we maintain that the Church is, in some sense, the continuation of the Incarnation, we are being untrue to one pole of what the New Testament says about the Church.

But to get to the real root of the matter, we must go beyond what the New Testament says about the Church to what it says about Christ. We have already said that ecclesiology is nothing more than developed christology. Since this is so, the concept of the Church as a development of the

Incarnation springs just as clearly from a misunderstanding of the nature and work of Christ as from distortion of what the New Testament claims for the Church. The Incarnation is that unique event by which God became man in Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrinal questions this may have raised subsequently in the history of the Church, one point about it has never been in dispute - the Incarnation is an utterly and completely unique event. The birth of Christ, as well as His death, resurrection and ascension, were once-for-all happenings. And the individual Jesus Christ Who was born by the event we call the Incarnation was as unique as the event itself. But, more than that, the acts which surround the end of this man's earthly life - His crucifixion, His rising again, His ascension - are so radical, so final that the conditions which required the Incarnation no longer obtain. In the thought-forms of the New Testament, man the sinner has been made righteous by what Christ did, man the slave of sin and death has been set free by Christ, man the minor has become man the adult son in Christ, man at odds with his neighbour has been reconciled through the Cross and man, afraid of an alien environment, has lost his fear, his sense of estrangement because of what Christ has done. All that the Incarnate Christ did is now finished and complete and so His final cry from the Cross - "It is finished!" - has more than immediate significance. There is one further event which marks the


discontinuity between the time of the Incarnation and what we might call post-Incarnation-time - the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost. It is clear from John's Gospel that the gift of the Spirit is, in Christ's mind, meant to compensate the disciples for the fact that their Lord is no longer to be with them i.e. the era of the Christ has become the era of the Spirit. "The intervention of the Cross and of Pentecost between the Incarnation and the establishment of the Church means that the Church is not the extension of the Incarnation or the prolongation of Christ in the world."2.

If, therefore, we say that the Church continues or extends Christ, we are making a mistake on three counts. Firstly, we rob the Incarnation of its necessary uniqueness - the period of the Incarnation ceases to be complete in itself. Secondly, the effectiveness and finality of Christ's saving acts on Good Friday and Easter Sunday are called in question. When Mersch speaks of the Church as "the Incarnation in its fullest realisation" and Allo of the Church as "the fullness of the Incarnation", they are obviously implying, quite against the evidence of the New Testament, that the work of Christ is somehow incomplete and unfinished. This Roman emphasis can best be illustrated from the sacrifice of the Mass which can be described as the representation on the altar of the self-offering of Christ by which men were redeemed. While it is true that Romans are anxious to avoid any idea that the Eucharistic sacrifice is a 'repetition' of the once-for-all death of Christ, describing the Mass as a means of representing Christ's sacrifice under another form does not satisfy all critics. There seems to remain an implication that Christ's work is somehow not final and total. It is

2. 'Faith & Order Findings', p. 48.
true that what Christ did must be made known and made real in the lives of men and societies, but this proclamation and application in no way undermines the efficacy of what has been achieved in Christ. While we may agree with Pope Pius XII when he writes, "Our Saviour wants to be helped by members of His Mystical Body in carrying out the work of redemption"¹, we cannot agree that the Church is herself the Redeemer, as is suggested by para. 77 quoted above of the same Encyclical. The Church's role is not to fulfil the redemptive work Christ began, but to make the redemption which He wrought once and for all real and effective. In the book 'Le Dialogue Catholique-Protestant', Jean Bosc stresses this point succinctly: "Dans l'Incarnation .... tout a été accompli"². A modern Roman Catholic writer recognizes that this is the emphasis of Protestantism: "Le protestantisme conclut: toute fonction de ministère a été accomplie, toute œuvre pastorale a été exécutée, toute récapitulation a été achevée. Il ne reste qu'à rendre témoignage, qu'à le proclamer, qu'à le signifier"³. Since the work of the Incarnate Christ is a completed work, it need not and indeed cannot be continued in the life of the Church and, in that sense, the Church does not prolong the Incarnation.

The third point deserves fuller treatment. Any notion that the Incarnation is extended in the Church devalues the place of the Spirit in the history of salvation. While it is true that Christ's departure from the realm of the visible and the tangible meant a real impoverishment for his disciples, it is also true that it meant enrichment insofar as the coming of

1. 'Mystici Corporis' para. 12.
2. p. 66.
the Spirit not only opened their eyes to the truth of Christ¹ but guaranteed them power to witness to their Master². If there is complete and unbroken continuity between the historical Christ and His Church, seen as the 'mystical' Christ, then the Spirit as Third Person of the Trinity has no necessary or essential place in the life of the individual or the community. Yet Paul for one sees quite clearly that the Spirit has a vital role to play in the Church and among her members e.g. in enabling these members to make their profession of faith³, in allotting talents and abilities to members⁴, and in creating unity among the baptised⁵. In all this, however, the Spirit is and must be free in His relation to the Church and her members⁶. To compensate for their devaluation in the role of the Spirit, Roman Catholics have fallen back on that doctrine we have already noted in Augustine - the Spirit seen as the soul of the Church⁷. The Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis' lists those functions which the Spirit fulfils as the soul of the Church - He animates the Church, unites her members with one another, He gives grace to those who are faithful and withholds it from those who are apostate⁸. If we think of the Spirit in this way as the soul of the Church, then He Who ought to be free becomes the possession of the Church and His gifts, instead

³. 4. I Cor. xii: 3. I Cor. xii: 4-11. ⁵. I Cor. xii: 13.
⁶. see John iii: 8. ⁷. see Sermo 268, 2 cf. Leo XIII, 'Divinum Illud':
"It is enough to state that, since Christ is the Head of the Church, the Holy Spirit is her soul": Yves Congar, 'The Mystery of the Temple', p. 288:
"As a result of Easter .... the Spirit was given to the Church as its indwelling life-giving soul". ⁸. see paras. 54-56.
of being at His disposal to dispense as He pleases, become the guaranteed prerogative of the Church. The uncreated Spirit is thus devalued to the status of the creaturely.

It may be possible to criticize this idea of the Spirit as the soul of the Church in another way in that it tends to gloss over the human fallibility of the Church. The Church's liability to error and sin is diminished when the Spirit fulfills the function of soul within the Body for the Spirit - the 'invisible principle' of the Church's life - can then guarantee truth and righteousness to the Body. In the light of such objections, therefore, it is interesting to note that Vatican II refuses to accept this traditional idea without question. Indeed, as we are going to see again and again, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from this Council marks out new paths for Roman ecclesiology. The Spirit, says the Constitution, "is He that gives life, unity and motion to the whole body". Because He animates the Body in this way, the Council Fathers remind us that their predecessors were able to compare the work of the Spirit "to the function which is fulfilled in the human frame by the principle of life, the soul". So we have here a cautious statement which says no more than that, at a purely functional level, there is an analogy between soul and body, the Spirit and the Church. This is far more acceptable than the bald assertion that the Spirit is the soul of the Church.

There is one other sense in which the doctrine of the Mystical Body is related to that of the Incarnation. "Si l'Eglise est vraiment et pleinement humaine, elle est aussi, comme son chef dont elle est le prolongement et la visible expression, vraiment et pleinement divine". It is 1. para. 7, p. 12. 2. J. H. Nicolas in 'Revue Thomiste' 46 (1946) p. 430.
logical that the Roman Church, thinking of herself as the extension of the Incarnation, should go on to construct such a theory - the Church has, like the Christ Whose continuation she is, two natures - human and divine - which are analogous to the two natures found in Christ Himself. But such a theory fails insofar as it undermines the uniqueness of Christ and denies the finality of what He is and did: "we cannot think of the divine nature of the Church as we think of the divine nature of Christ, for in Him the union of God and man is absolutely unique". Yet, having said that, we must also go on to say that there is a sense in which the union of the human and divine in Christ helps us to understand the relation of Christ and His Church. There is a valid analogy which states that as God and man became one in Christ so Christ and His Church are one. It is this point which Vatican II is making when it explains how the Church is "a compound of a human and divine element". The Fathers then go on to say: "by a significant analogy, she is likened to the mystery of the Word incarnate: the nature taken by the divine word serves as the living organ of salvation in a union which is indissoluble: in the same way, the social framework of the Church serves the Spirit of Jesus Christ, her life-giver, for His bodily growth (cf. Eph. iv:16)". In other words, Christ, the Incarnate Word, chooses to act through and to be seen in the visible and tangible elements in the Church's life (e.g. worship and sacraments): because of this decision, Christ and His Church are joined in an indissoluble union. In fairness, we ought at this point to refer to those Roman thinkers who

2. p. 12, para. 8.
realize the damage done by the sort of viewpoint exemplified by Nicolas' statement quoted above. So, for example, we have already mentioned Bernard Lambert's description of how Protestantism relates the work of Christ to the work of His community. Later, by contrast, he describes the Roman Catholic position: "pour le catholicisme ...... le Christ est et demeure dans l'Eglise, comme celui qui fonde l'exercice actuel de toute oeuvre de ministère, du pastoraat et de service des âmes". Apart from the fact that we cannot limit the action or presence of Christ within the confines of the Church, this is exactly what we have been stressing - the Church is not a second Christ, extending the Incarnation, but the physical, historical community in which Christ, the one and only Incarnate Word, exercises His sanctifying influence: because Christ has chosen to act in and through this tangible people, He has bound Himself to it in the way that God bound Himself to man at the Incarnation. As a second example, we may note that Yves Congar approaches the same theme from a different point of view. At first, he stresses the uniqueness of the hypostatic union of God and man in Christ: "the temple which is established by the corporal presence of God in that human nature .... has .... been realized once only at a precise point and space in time, during the period between Mary's 'Fiat' at Nazareth and Jesus' 'Consummatus Est' on Calvary". But Congar goes on to point out that exegesis uses the phrase 'body of Christ' of two other entities besides the historical, personal body of Jesus Christ: "the body of Christ is not only Jesus Christ during the days of His flesh or in its present glorified state: the body of Christ is also the bread of the

1. Ibid. 2. op. cit. p. 242.
Eucharist and the community of the faithful\textsuperscript{1}. So, says Congar, we have three realities with the same name - the historical and ascended Christ, the bread of the sacrament and the Church. These all have the same epithet - 'body of Christ' - because, in them all, the mystery of God's presence among men and for men is being achieved. What Christ accomplished in the days of His earthly ministry, He continues to achieve in the Mystical Body (which Congar would prefer to call the 'community' body i.e. 'communionel' in French). Congar's approach has one distinct advantage - it stresses the continuity between Christ and His Church while, at the same time, never losing sight of the discontinuity created by Easter and by Pentecost. The real presence of the risen Christ is found with the Church, but the Church is not herself that presence, only the historical, corporeal vehicle for it.

We must conclude this section with a final point of importance. The Church has always claimed that when God became man in Jesus Christ, He took upon Himself our human nature - at the Incarnation, the Word "became flesh"\textsuperscript{2} and this word "flesh" expresses the true humanity of Christ. "The Son of God, by virtue of His Incarnation, and because everything was created in Him, embraced the whole of mankind within Himself"\textsuperscript{3}. This fact is important when we come to think of Christ's work of redemption because it ensures that the principle, 'quod non assumptum, non est sanatum', is obeyed. We have already noted Barth's insistence that Christ, the one in many, carried man's flesh, sin and death to Calvary and nailed them forever to the Cross. So Christ, as we have said, is related to all mankind

\textsuperscript{1} p. 243. \textsuperscript{2} John ii:14. \textsuperscript{3} Bonsirven, op. cit. pp. 305-6.
through His Incarnation insofar as He took our human nature as His own. Because this is so, there is a sense in which all mankind have already been saved and redeemed in Christ, a sense in which the Church includes all humanity. "By the fact that the Word of God became man, humanity has already in advance become ontologically .... the people of the children of God .... Insofar as mankind, thus 'consecrated', is a real unity from the very start, there already exists a 'people of God' which extends as far as humanity itself". What Rahner is stressing here is that the Church, in one sense, is totally inclusive i.e. that she includes within herself the whole of humanity insofar as Christ, her Head, adopted our human nature as His, insofar as He died to redeem all men and insofar as His rising from the dead involves resurrection for all men. Yet it is also true that the Church, as we know her, is exclusive i.e. she sees herself as the society of the baptised, of the faithful and of the elect only. So Paul can ask for the expulsion of a man from the Corinthian congregation because his behaviour does not befit a Church-member. And the New Testament claims that Christ stands in a different relationship to the Church, to His 'purchased' people than He does to humanity as a whole. While He is regarded as Head and Saviour to His Body, the Church, in relation to mankind He is the creative principle, the one and only Mediator and the Adam Who guarantees life for all. But how can we reconcile the Church's

3. I Cor. xv: 22. 4. I Cor. v: 2. 5. see I Peter ii: 9.
intended inclusiveness with her actual exclusiveness? The answer lies at the centre of the Church's life in the sacrament of the Eucharist. It is there that Church-members partake in the body and the blood of Christ: in this corporate act, they remember and proclaim the death of the Christ who died, not for them only, but for all mankind. So at this point - the most exclusive in the community's life - the Church remembers that she is meant to be inclusive, that she is the means God has chosen to fulfil His purpose of unity in Christ. But none of this can provide a basis for the idea of the Mystical Christ to which we must now turn. Certainly, Christ took our nature to be His own: certainly, His redemption is for all men: certainly, His rising again as the last Adam gives real hope of resurrection for all: certainly, all things are to be brought into a unity in Christ. But the Church is not therefore to be thought of as a new form of Christ, namely Christ in union with His members.

Before we do turn to the Mystical Christ concept, let us finish this section on a positive note. We have shown that the notion of the Church, as Christ's Body, extending or continuing the Incarnation, is untenable: but what can we say in affirmative terms which will avoid this error? Let us go back to Yves Congar and particularly to his book, 'Chrétiens en Dialogue'. He rightly recognizes the historical continuity which exists between Christ and His Church - the individual body of the personal Christ gives way to the 'community' body of Christ, the Church: "l'Eglise est une suite historique de l'Incarnation .... l'Eglise porte et développe quelque chose du Christ depuis l'Alpha de son Incarnation.

1. I Cor. xi: 26.
2. see Eph. 1: 9-10.
But Congar equally rightly recognizes the discontinuity between Christ and His Church by stressing that what he calls Christ's 'passover' (i.e. His death, resurrection and ascension, followed by Pentecost) marks the end of one period and the beginning of another. By His 'passover', Christ has won salvation and now the Church has become the vehicle which He uses to impart that salvation: "dans la considération catholique, ce salut nous vient du Verbe incarné, dans le mystère de sa Paque"\(^1\). The Church, therefore, is not the extension of the Incarnation, but the historical means through which the Incarnate Word works in union with His people, a union analogous to that between God and man in the historical Christ. The Church may be seen as the outward expression of the Christ in the world - His Body in fact - but she cannot be totally identified with Him Who is her Head\(^2\).

B. The Church as Christ, the Mystical Christ.

In speaking of the Church as the Body of Christ, we are principally concerned with the relation of the community to her Head and in particular with Christ's role in and towards that community. In all our consideration of this epithet, therefore, we begin, not with the Church, but with Christ. So the title 'Body of Christ', as we have seen, reveals to us the Christ Who identifies Himself with His people: it speaks to us of the Christ Who is one in many, the Representative: it reminds us of the Christ Who is active in and through His chosen community. Christ is Head to His Body, Vine to the branches, Shepherd to the sheep and Saviour to those whom

1. p. 430.  
2. p. 432.  
3. see de Lubac, 'The Splendour of the Church', pp. 82-83.
He has loved. Because there is evidence within the New Testament of this close identification between Christ and His Body or, put another way, between the historical, personal body of Christ and the Christian community, we are able to say, as Barth does, "as the Head Christ is Himself and primarily the Body and He constitutes and organizes and guarantees the community as His Body". Thus Calvin was able to transfer attributes of Christ to the Church and, even more surprising, to impute to Christ characteristics of the Church: "it is by no means an uncommon thing to find our errors, by a mode of expression not strictly correct, transferred to Christ". But if this were all we could say about the title 'Body of Christ', we would be untrue to the New Testament. For Christ is not only identified with His people by His own decision - He is also distinguished from them, as the Head is distinct from the Body, the Bridegroom from the Bride. While it is true that Christ "will no more suffer His faithful people to be severed from Him than His limbs to be mutilated and torn in pieces", it is equally true that the New Testament always speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ, never as Christ Himself.

The development of the concept of the Mystical Christ in Roman Catholicism follows quite naturally from that of the Church as an extension

1. op. cit. IV/1 p. 663. 2. see CR 83, 333 (i.e. Epistol. Johann. III:5): "there is no sin in Him so this refers not to the person of Christ but to the whole body. Wherever Christ infuses His power, He claims that there is no more room there for sin. Therefore he concludes that those who remain in Christ do not sin". 3. see CR 59, 412 (i.e. Comm. in Ps. 40, 3).

4. Eph. v: 22-23. 5. Calvin, CR 30, 743 i.e. 'Institutes' IV. 1.3.
of the Incarnation. If the Church can be said to continue the life of the Incarnate Word, then it is possible for her to be identified with that Word. So Augustine could write that "we have not only become Christians but Christ ... We have become Christ."

1. Emile Marsch can say that "the faithful are not merely in Christ, nor are they simply one in Christ, they are Christ Himself".

2. Jean Guitton, writing in the book 'Le Dialogue Catholique-Protestant', while admitting that there is a distinction between the Incarnation of Christ and the creation of the Church, can yet go on to say: "l'Eglise, j'entends l'Eglise visible institutionnelle, est le Christ continué."

3. The Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis' is more cautious and goes no further than saying that "Christ lives in the Church so that she may be said to be another Christ (ipsa quasi altera Christi persona)"; yet, in support of this equation, the Encyclical quotes Paul, Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine in such a way as to suggest that they all call the Church "simply by the name of 'Christ'." It is statements like these which justify Bonnard's criticism of Roman ecclesiology: "elles (i.e. Roman concepts of the 'Mystical Body') tendent toutes vers une confusion entre la tête et le corps de l'Eglise et décrivent leurs relations en termes qui minimisent l'autorité de la tête sur le corps."

In other words, the unconditional identification of Christ and His Church to the extent that the Body can stand in...
the place of her Head is only possible if we forget the polarity of all
New Testament thinking about the Church i.e. if we ignore the fact that
Christ is Head and Bridegroom and that the Church, as Body and Bride, is
subject to Him in all things and if we, at the same time, exaggerate the
significance of the unity Christ has with His people.

Yet, to give a balanced view, we must remember that not all Roman
statements about the Church suppress the other pole of New Testament thought.
Augustine, for example, stresses that Christ, as Head, rules all His members
and has been put over them in order that they may be under His care

'Mystici Corporis' also recognizes that both poles are necessary: "though
Paul combines Christ and His mystical Body in a marvellous union, yet he
contrasts the one with the other, as Bridegroom and Bride". It is this
latter image which emphasizes more forcibly than does that of the 'body'
the subordination of the Church to Christ, as well as their individual
identity. To get the New Testament properly into perspective, it is im-
portant to include all its images of the Church and not isolate any one or
two from all the rest. So the figure of marriage corrects any imbalance
likely to be deduced from the figure of the 'body'. If we remember the
relative status of husband and wife within marriage at the time of the
Apostle, we shall never regard the union of Christ and His Church as a union
of equals or as some sort of mystical assimilation whereby the identity of
the two partners becomes confused: "en effet, l'unité .... entre le
Christ et l'Eglise, étant d'ordre conjugal, est une unité ou une identité
d'union et non pas de suppression des personnes qui s'unissent". Thus

1. 'De Agon. Christi' xx. 22. 2. para. 35. Martelet, art. in VC no. 45
(1953) p. 41.
Bonnard is able to sum up the meaning of the New Testament imagery as follows: "le Nouveau Testament .... affirme deux choses qui, d'abord, paraissent contradictoires. D'une part, l'Eglise est corps du Christ, rien ne pourrait jamais séparer ce corps de cette tête. D'autre part, la relation entre la tête et le corps est déjà en question .... il n'est pas possible, sur la base des textes bibliques, de reporter sur le corps les perfection de la tête"\(^1\). In the light of this and in comparison with the statements of Calvin quoted above, it is noteworthy that the Dogmatic Constitution, 'De Ecclesia', from Vatican II stresses (in a way that 'Mystici Corporis' does not) the subjection of the Church to her Head and those duties which fall upon her because of that subjection e.g. "the Church .... is submissive to her Head"\(^2\), "the Church .... is .... to spread humility and self-denial by the example she must give"\(^3\), "she pursues a ceaseless course of penance and renewal"\(^4\).

Yet there are Roman writers who, working from the pages of the New Testament, can claim to find there warrant for the idea of the Church as another Christ which, in some, becomes the 'mystical' Christ. Allo, for example, suggests that this is a valid interpretation of Pauline thought: "l'Eglise est le corps du Christ et même (I Cor. xii: 12) est nommée 'Christ' sine addito. L'Eglise est comme un homme multiforme, donc chaque individu constitue un membre"\(^5\). We have already shown that this particular verse - I Cor. xii: 12 - does not speak about the Church directly, but about Christ, the Representative, He Who is one in many. It is Christ Who is the one

body with many members\textsuperscript{1} but, by applying the image to the Church, Allo is able, later in the same article, to speak of the Church as both Body of Christ and Mystical Christ\textsuperscript{2}. Yet in his commentary on First Corinthians, Allo recognizes that this verse refers to Christ. Instead of realizing, however, the fact that Paul is here explaining the representative character of Christ, he claims that the word 'Christ' must be given a new and unprecedented meaning: "This mystical and collective meaning of the name \(Xp\) used alone and in an absolute sense, is not met elsewhere, at least not literally, but the idea is everywhere\textsuperscript{3}. As evidence for this point of view, he goes on to cite Gal. iv: 9 where Christ is said to be 'formed' in those believers who are thus made like Him and Eph. iv: 12-13 where the writer juxtaposes the structure of the Body of Christ and the fullness of Christ\textsuperscript{4}. As another possible parallel, Allo suggests that the phrase \(2\pi\) can sometimes bear this mystical, collective sense\textsuperscript{5}. But to think of Christ in this new way is to forget that the New Testament, while stressing that Christ has indeed many members, never loses sight of His fundamental oneness and is also to sever Christ too radically from His historical life. And that is why our representative exegetes cannot share Allo's point of view. Dupont is particularly fierce in his criticism: "Le Christ reste toujours pour Paul un être concret, individuel, n'est jamais réduit à être partie d'une vaste personnalité collective\textsuperscript{6}. Cerfau is just as categorical as Dupont when he maintains that Paul's formula is

\begin{itemize}
\item 1. cf. I. Cor. vi: 15.
\item 2. see p. 168 of art. cit.
\item 3. op. cit. p. 328.
\item 4. ibid.
\item 5. ibid.
\item 6. p. 451.
\end{itemize}
not 'Christians form one mystical Christ', but 'Christians have a mystical identity with Christ as a person'. Elsewhere, Cerfau explains his position more fully and in more general terms: "we prefer to speak of a 'mystic' identification with the body which belongs to Christ personally, rather than speaking of the 'mystical body'. To speak of a 'mystic Christ' is less Pauline than 'mystic union with Christ'. We shall have to deal with this word 'mystical' as a description of the union between Christ and His community (see pp. 135 ff.).

Benoit's attack on Allo's position is concentrated at one particular point - I Cor. xii: 13. Here Allo translates the words ημεῖς πάντες εἰς ὁμο ιημερτὴθημεν as "pour former un seul corps nous avons été baptisés". Linguistically, this translation depends on taking εἰς in the sense of purpose, but, as Benoit points out, the phrase ιημερτήθημεν εἰς always retains the idea of a relationship to a person: it cannot therefore be translated "pour ne former qu'un seul corps qui serait alors le corps métaphorique du 'Christ Mystique', distinct du Christ personnel". So the personal relationship which lies behind the phrase ιημερτήθημεν εἰς is that of Christ's relationship to us through baptism and the use of the word ὁμο reminds us particularly that we are baptised into Him Whose body died on the Cross on our behalf. But our union with Christ through baptism

is the outward sign of what has, in a sense, been true from all eternity, namely that we are members of Christ by God's initial act of election. But the crucial events are Christ's death and resurrection in which we die and rise again with Him. In these events, Christ's body of which we are members goes down into the grave from which it rises again. So Allo is wrong in suggesting that our union with Christ is entirely subsequent to our baptism and also, as Benoit says, in implying a distinction between the Christ Who died and rose again and the Christ Who identifies Himself with His Church - what he calls the 'Mystical Christ'.

Schnackenburg discusses this same problem and comes to the same conclusion as Benoit. He says that recent research has shown that εἰς in this verse has a local rather than a consecutive meaning. "According to this, the 'Body of Christ' does not come first into existence through baptism, but it exists beforehand and the baptised are received into it .... (this) commends itself on objective theological grounds". Through the Incarnation, we are incorporated into Christ's Body insofar as Christ took our human nature as His own: we died and rose again with Him in that same body so that our baptism is, as Schnackenburg says, our reception into a body of which we are already members. The New Testament gives us no warrant for thinking of the Church as another or a second Christ - a mystical, collective personality in Whom His people are baptised. Christ, both identified with and set over His Church, is always the One in and for the many, never simply the many.

There is little doubt that one of the Biblical categories which enabled the New Testament to speak of the Church as the Body of Christ (although there may be an argument about the extent of its influence) is one we have already noted (pp. 52 ff.), namely that concept which has rather unfortunately come to be known as 'corporate personality'. The name, however, does convey the paradox inherent in the idea of the 'one in many', the idea which is well defined by Rawlinson in the book 'Mysterium Christi': "the Messiah, the Christ, is at once an individual person - Jesus of Nazareth - and He is more. He is, as the Representative and (as it were) the constitutive person of the New Israel, potentially inclusive: He includes, He is one with the new Israel". Rawlinson here seems to equate the Christ as representative with the Christ as "potentially inclusive" of the new Israel, without realizing that the latter role extends far further than does the former. Yet our concern is with the former only - Christ as representative. He can certainly be said to stand on behalf of the people, whether or not He can also be said to include them potentially in His own person. We might also quarrel with Rawlinson about the phrase "new Israel" which suggest too radical a dichotomy between Old and New Testaments, but we have found this category of the person who is both one and many because of his representative role throughout the Old Testament e.g. Adam, the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah and the Son of Man. And Rawlinson is right when he applies this category to the Jewish hope for the Messiah i.e. He would be both individual and, at the same time, would stand before God on behalf of the people. Despite the fact that Cerfau asserts that this idea of 'corporate personality'...
personality' had only the vaguest effect on the thinking of St. Paul, there are those who suggest that we have here the basis for the whole New Testament concept of the 'body' - e.g. Dahl claims that the unity between the Messiah and His people, between the Son of Man and the elect is the root of Paul's thinking about the Body of Christ: Best says that we must understand the Christ Whose Body is the Church as a corporate personality. In addition, Hanson finds the source of the body-imagery in one particular example of 'corporate personality' used more than once by Paul - the contrast, already noted (see pp. 52-53), between Adam and Christ. While the former represents humanity as a whole, the latter is to be seen as the representative of the 'new people of God': "we hold that the action of the Body of Christ should be understood on the basis of the idea of Adam-Christ." While the sin of Adam involved both himself and the whole of humanity, so Christ's work of reconciliation in obedience to the Father became effective for His people: "Christ has created a new race through reconciliation, which is mediated to the individual by baptism." In addition, since Hanson recognizes that Paul's use of the classic metaphor in I Cor. xii includes the reconciliation of members with one another, he can say, "As reconciler, Christ is both the vertical and the horizontal bond of unity in the Church.

1. see A, p. 234.
2. op. cit. p. 277.
5. Hanson, p. 116.
6. op. cit. p. 118.
7. op. cit. p. 119.
This category of 'corporate personality' in which the representative individual is more than individual since he himself can stand for his race, clan or family is the subject of an intense study by the Roman scholar, J. de Fraine, in his 'Adam et son Lignage'. Having explained the category's relevance to the figures of Adam, of the Israelite King, of the Servant, of the Son of Man and of the "I" of the Psalms, de Fraine goes on to discuss its significance in the New Testament. He is sure that Paul draws on this idea so prevalent in the Old Testament: "en réalité saint Paul reste toujours dans la ligne de l'Ancien Testament, où individu et peuple sont inseparables, et où rôle représentatif est courante". It is natural, therefore, that de Fraine should find this category has special reference to the doctrine of the Mystical Body to which he devotes a whole section in his book. He is in agreement with Hanson's point of view: "le Christ est d'abord, comme Adam, à la fois chef de file et représentant de toute une humanité .... l'Israël nouveau [see Rawlinson p. 159 above] est 'dans le Christ' .... comme l'humanité était dans Adam". Although he rightly concedes that 'soma' is never used of a group in Hellenism, he claims that the idea of a collective body was common in Judaism: "on devrait de toute façon se souvenir du fait que l'idée de corps collectif est absolument courante dans le Judaïsme". While the word 'body' does not appear in Old Testament examples of 'corporate personality', we have seen that the word is found in Hellenistic Judaism in Philo (see pp. 4ff.), although it is a subject for debate whether he used it in the sense of a collective body.

1. 'Adam et son Lignage' p. 203.  
2. see pp. 202-19.  
3. p. 204.  
On that basis, de Fraine is justified in criticizing Gerfaux's contention that the word 'body' in the New Testament must always refer to the individual, personal body. And if de Fraine is right in saying that Paul did not think of Christ only and simply as an individual (for then how could we interpret Gal. iii: 23 or Eph. i: 10?), he is equally right in warning us against those who see Christ only and simply as a collectivity i.e. as 'mystical Christ': 'pour opposer le Christ strictement individuel à l'exteriorisation' du Christ dans l'Eglise, on peut appeler cette dernière 'le Christ mystique'2. But de Fraine is clear that a distinction must be drawn between Christ and those who are His members if only to ensure that Christ is the Saviour and His members are the saved and that their roles in relation to one another are essentially different3. So de Fraine insists on keeping the Adam-Christ parallel in mind when thinking of the body of Christ. For Paul, both Adam and Christ are individuals, and, at the same time, representatives - the one of fallen humanity, the other of those whom He has saved4. Thus de Fraine claims that the body-of-Christ imagery is too complex to be explained simply in terms of the individual Christ or of the collective, 'mystical' Christ, but must be seen in the light of that 'corporate personality' which includes both: 'cette notion .... comporte d'un côté l'extension d'une personne unique dans un groupe, et de l'autre

1. p. 215, cf. Benoit, ii, p. 12. 2. p. 208. 3. see Käsemann, 'Leib und Leib Christi' p. 135, who points out that the more Christ's people are assimilated to Him in the 'mystical Christ', the more difficult it is to distinguish the Christ Who redeems from those He redeems and the nearer we get to the idea of a Church which saves itself. 4. p. 209.
l'influence prépondérante de cette même personne sur l'ensemble et sur chacun des membres de ce groupe. Christ's status and influence within the Body as Head and Saviour are so pre-eminent that, as the one in many, He can stand for the community. So de Fraine can quote G. E. Wright with approval - "Christ is the community and the community is in Christ." De Fraine thus strikes another blow at the idea of a 'mystical Christ': while it may be possible to claim that Christ is the community because of His unique position as representative, this statement cannot be reversed - the community is not Christ in any collective or mystical sense. The category of 'corporate personality' which we have seen de Fraine and others consider as the root of the Pauline concept of the 'body of Christ' does not allow us such a reversal i.e. the individual may represent the group and may even be said 'to be' the group, but the group can never represent or 'be' the individual: "the whole does not act as a whole and represent Christ .... within the race, He is quite exceptional - what He does affects the salvation of others, the reverse is not true." Thus de Fraine, by his study of the category of 'corporate personality', throws light on the complexity of the thought-forms which lie behind Paul's images of the Church and, at the same time, exposes the shortcomings of the 'Mystical Christ' epithet of the Church.

In passing, we take note of a particular description of the Church, not unrelated to that of 'Mystical Christ'. In para. one of chapter one of the Dogmatic Constitution 'De Ecclesia' of Vatican II, we

1. p. 203.  
2. see 'The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society' p. 81.  
read, "the Church exists in Christ as a sacrament". The meaning of this statement is explained by saying that the Church is an "instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of unity for the whole human race". In other words, the Church exists as the effective symbol of the fact that, in Christ, men are reconciled to God and to one another. The error in this particular line of thought is that it distorts the true meaning of a sacrament. It is certainly true, as we have seen, that the New Testament figure of the body of Christ involves a double relationship - each member is related to Christ and to every other member of the Body. So, in Christ, each person has been reconciled to God and to his fellows. But if, because of this double union within the Body, we feel justified in calling the Church "a sacrament", then we distort what is usually meant by a sacrament. The classic definition of a sacrament, found in the catechism of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, is that it is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace". According to this definition, the Church might be seen as a visible sign of God's grace uniting men to Himself and to one another. But this definition makes no mention of the subjective side of the sacraments - they are signs which must, through the action of the Church, be effectively communicated to the members of the Church who receive them in penitence and faith. The sacrament only becomes real when the faithful have accepted the grace God conveys through it. It has always been the tendency of Roman Catholicism to emphasize the objectivity of the sacraments and of Protestantism to stress their essential subjectivity. But to

1. p. 5, para. 1.  
3. see Hanson, op. cit. p. 119, quoted above.
understand them aright, it is necessary to maintain both points of view. To speak of the Church existing in Christ as a sacrament is to overemphasize the objective side of what we mean by a sacrament. The Church is not herself the sacrament, but the community which, in Christ's name, has been entrusted with the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist through which God communicates His "inward and spiritual grace" in these "outward and visible" rites.

Karl Rahner, in 'The Church and the Sacraments', makes the same point as the Dogmatic Constitution but draws different conclusions from it: "the Church is the abiding presence of that primal word of definitive grace, which Christ is in the world, effecting what is uttered by uttering it in sign". In other words, what Christ achieved during His lifetime as the Incarnate Word, He now communicates in and through the Church in which His presence is to be found. Because the Church is "the enduring presence of Christ in the world, she is truly the fundamental sacrament, the well-spring of the sacraments in the strict sense". For Rahner, because the Church is the abiding presence of God's gracious word in Christ, she is a sacrament or, more accurately, the sacrament. The Church is certainly the vehicle of Christ's presence in the world, but she cannot herself be unconditionally identified with that presence. Because this is Rahner's basic contention, the conclusion he draws from it is also suspect i.e. that the Church is the supreme sacrament: "viewed in relation to the sacraments, the Church is the...".

1. ibid., p. 18.
2. ibid., cf. Rahner's 'Theological Investigations'

II p. 76, Conger's 'Christian en Dialogue' p. 432 - the Church "est, a travers le temps et l'espace, .... sacrament du salut".
primal and fundamental sacrament". Yet Rahner is not unaware of the subjective side of what constitutes a sacrament: "if it is true that the Church as the continuance of Christ's presence in the world is the fundamental sacrament ... then salvation is offered to the individual by his entering into positive relation to the Church". Despite these refinements, however, Rahner's position depends basically on thinking of the Church either as the "Christ continued" or as "another Christ". Since we cannot accept this basic position, we must reject his conclusion that the Church is either a sacrament or the sacrament.

To sum up, the error inherent in the concept of the 'Mystical Christ' is that it exaggerates one extreme of two ideas which in the New Testament have an essential polarity. Firstly, it overemphasizes the identification of Christ and His Church, making it an organic necessity, rather than the result of Christ's own gracious choice. In so doing, the opposite pole whereby Christ and His Church are kept distinct from one another is suppressed or forgotten. Secondly, it puts too much stress on Christ as the many, the One in Whom those He represents all cohere. Thus, we neglect the fact that, at the other extreme, Christ is one and individual. Further the 'community' body of Church becomes all-important and the personal body of the historical Christ in which salvation was secured is set aside. The imperfections of the Church are glossed over and we move towards the idea of a Church which, as the 'Mystical Christ', is able to redeem herself. But while Christ does represent the Church and may even be said "to be" the Church, the reverse is not true.

1. p. 19.
2. p. 21.
C. The Church as the Whole Christ.

The doctrine of the Church as the Whole Christ as it is developed from that of the Mystical Body is only different in degree from that of the Mystical Christ. Like the Mystical Christ, the Whole Christ is said to include within Himself all those who belong to Him; in addition, however, it is claimed that He needs His people in order to achieve wholeness or perfection - the Whole Christ is Head and Body seen as a single entity. The Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis' defines the Whole Christ for us: "Christ, the Mystical Head and the Church, constitute one new man, joining earth and heaven in the continuance of the saving work of the Church." We have already seen that it was Augustine who gave this doctrine its influential place in the Roman Church. The Bishop of Hippo obviously believed that this concept (which he called 'Totus Christus') could be found within the New Testament e.g. in the idea that Christ and His Church, seen as Bridegroom and Bride, are said to be one flesh and, in consequence, one new and perfect man. So he writes: "if He Himself said, 'Now no longer two, but one flesh', what is there strange about talking of one flesh, one tongue and of the same words as they belong to one flesh, head and body?" But the reference here to the union between Christ and His Church, the union on which human marriage ought to be based, is meant to illustrate exactly the opposite of what Augustine is suggesting i.e. it speaks certainly of the indissoluble union which exists between Christ and His community but also of their separate identity and different roles within that union. While it is

1. para. 77.  
4. 'In Psalmam' xxxviii: 6.
true that Christ, the Incarnate Word, and His people share "one flesh" by reason of the Incarnation, within this union of the one with the other, Christ "loves the Church as His very self" and the Church, in turn, "must see to it that she pays Him all respect." In other words, we are not concerned here with the mystical assimilation of two separate identities to form one new whole but with the tension between union and individuality in the relationship between Christ and His Church. And while the relationship of individual Christians and of the Church to their Lord can be contrasted and compared with the physical union of a man to a prostitute or of a husband to a wife, the relationship between Christ and the Church is a spiritual one. Thus Bonhoeffer can say, "The Church is the body of Christ, but only under the gathering and uniting influence of the Holy Spirit." So this passage which Augustine uses to suggest that there is assimilation of the Church into Christ Who is thus fulfilled as the 'Whole Christ' is better understood as an attempt to differentiate the Head and Body within their undoubted union. But this differentiation is not only functional - it might also be called 'spatial': "the Church on this earth is away from her Lord (cf. II Cor. v: 6) .... Consequently she seeks and sets her mind on the things which are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God: there the life of the Church is hid with Christ in God, until she shall appear in glory with her Bridegroom (cf. Col. iii: 1-4)."

1. see John i: 14.  
2. Eph. v. 24, cf. 32-3.  
4. as in Eph. v.  
5. I Cor. vi: 17.  
7. 'De Ecclesia' of Vatican II para. 6, pp. 9-10.
But one of the conclusions to be drawn from the 'Whole Christ' concept has persisted right down to the present-day. Mersch, for example, can write, "The Church continues Christ .... without her, Christ would be incomplete, like a head without a body .... without the faithful, Christ has not His fullness". Similarly, Prat can say, "Le Christ sans l'Eglise serait un être incomplet: .... incomplet comme Christ, puisque le Christ est aussi dans saint Paul une personnalité collective". Here, once again, we discover the same error we mentioned with reference to the figure of the 'Mystical Christ' - the overemphasis on identification of Christ and the Church and on Christ, seen as the many. But, in addition, if we suggest that the Church 'completes' Christ, we undermine the total efficacy of His person and work in Incarnation and Atonement. But we have already shown that there can be no lack of fulfilment or perfection in what Christ was and did in His life and death. So while the Church needs Christ and is totally dependent on Him, Christ only needs the Church because He has decided that it should be so.

In passing, we must note a possibility which we only hinted at in our discussion of the 'Mystical Christ' and which applies even more pointedly with reference to the 'Whole Christ'. Although both these epithets for the Church tend to sever the historical Christ from the ascended Christ present in and through His Church, paradoxically they also suggest

that the historical Christ is somehow inferior and therefore subordinate to the Christ identified with the Church as the Mystical or Whole Christ. But it is the personal, individual Christ Who died and rose again Who is definitive for the nature and being of the Church. It is on Calvary that God's will for a new people born out of Israel was achieved in the redemption Christ won through His death. In a particular sense, therefore, 'Mystici Corporis' is right when it says, "On the Cross, the Church .... was born from the Saviour's side"\textsuperscript{1}. And while Christ died and rose again as our representative, the idea of representation does not get to the root of the matter. Christ also died and rose again as our substitute, taking the place that should have been ours on Calvary, carrying "in His own person our sins to the gallows"\textsuperscript{2}. Christ died as the one in place of the many, but in contrast to Adam with whom the New Testament often compares Him, the many can add nothing to what the one has done or even repent it in their own lives\textsuperscript{3}. So, against the background of the Christ dying and rising again as our Substitute, the concepts of the Mystical and the Whole Christ are seen as mistaken - the Christ Who is present in His Church and Who, in His love, identifies Himself with His people is so exceptional in the union of Head and Body that assimilation of one with the other is meaningless. It was not because the historical Christ needed the Church that He died and rose again as the individual, both substituting for and representing the many: it is not because the ascended Christ was incomplete without the Church that He identified Himself with her - this was His gracious choice.

At this point, it is interesting to note a possible parallel between Augustine and a modern Roman scholar, Heinrich Schlier (who was, at one time, a Protestant). We must recall that Augustine, in his younger days, was very much under the influence of Manichaeism, which displayed traces of Gnosticism (especially with regard to spirit and matter, as well as soteriology). Indeed, one of his contemporaries, Julian of Eclanum, complained that Augustine always remained a Manichee and was responsible for introducing Manichaeism into Christianity. However much we may mistrust the opinion of an opponent (Julian was a leader of the Pelagian party), we might give it a second look when allied with the point of view of Alfred Adam: "Ja, der gesamte Corpus-Begriff Augustins ist unchristlich, unjuristisch, orientalisch: in dem manichäischen Schrifttum findet sich die dazu allein passende geschlossene Weltanschaung". Schlier, on the other hand, in his book 'Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief' and elsewhere, claims that the thinking of the Captivity Epistles is influenced, not by Manichaeism as such, but by Gnosticism. More specifically, he states that the Gnostic myth of the Anthropos, the Perfect or Primal Man is the source of the body-imagery in Colossians and Ephesians. It is easy, of course, to make facile generalisations about these two men, living centuries apart, yet seemingly working from similar areas of thought to similar conclusions, but it remains true that the doctrine of the 'Whole Christ' seems to reflect something of Gnosticism. In the Gnostic Redeemer-myth which the heretics adapted from Indian and Iranian sources, the Saviour is only complete when he and those whom he has saved are one i.e. when he, the head,

1. art. in TL 77 (1952) col. 390.  
2. see Bultmann, 'Theology', I p. 175.
and they, the body, are united: "the Primal Man, the Saviour, is the unity of the saved inasmuch as he is both the Saviour, the Primal Man, and the totality of souls: he is the saved Saviour"\(^1\). The one feature of the Captivity Epistles' thinking which is conspicuously absent from Gnosticism is the concept of representation: "ce qui manque surtout la notion gnostique ... c'est la valeur de représentation d'un individu incluant dans sa personne tous les individus dont il est le représentant"\(^2\). Although we cannot agree with Schlier's point of view\(^3\) that the Captivity Epistles are dependent on Gnostic mythology for their concept of the 'perfect man'\(^4\), we can say that "he has pointed out a very important parallel to Paul's thought"\(^5\). The omission of the article with ΤΕΛΕΙΟΝ ΥΝΘΡΑ and the use of υπνιος in Eph. iv:14 both suggest that this passage is concerned, not with a mythical figure, but with the goal of Christian maturity to which the Ephesians ought to be striving — unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God\(^6\). But Schlier finds many more points of correspondence between Gnosticism and the Captivity Epistles (e.g. the ascension of the redeemer, the heavenly wall, the heavenly building and the heavenly marriage). The Perfect Man is, however, the only element of Gnosticism to interest us here insofar as it may be the source of the concept of the Whole Christ\(^7\). So

1. Hanson, op. cit. p. 113.
2. de Fraine, op. cit., p. 211.
3. His point of view corresponded with that of Kasemann in his 'Leib und Leib Christi' (see pp. 59—94), although he has since moved from that position — see art. 'Das Interpretationsproblem des Epheserbrief' in TL 36 (1961) col. 5.
5. Hanson, p. 114.
Schlier believes that the author of the Captivity Epistles draw on the mythology of Gnosticism as his source. He did this in order to highlight "der unzertrennlichen Verbindung von Christus und Kirche". Yet, at the same time, Schlier does not altogether omit the other extreme of New Testament polarity: "sie wäre nicht Kirche, wenn sie nicht in diesem Gehorsamsverhältnis zu Christus stände ... Sie ist Gegenstand der Herrschaft Christi". But, in the end, because he is so dependent on Christ and the Church within the thought-forms laid down by the myth of the Primal Man, he overemphasizes the identification of Christ with the Church as the Perfect Man. "Denn Haupt und Leib zusammen machen erst den himmlischen Anthropos aus. Ohne Haupt hätte die Kirche kein überlegenes himmlisches Prinzip und kein weltüberlegenes himmlisches Ziel. Und ohne Leib hätte das Haupt keine irdische Gegenwart und Wirklichkeit".

Two criticisms can be finally levelled against Schlier's thinking. Firstly, while he recognizes the polarity of the New Testament thinking about the Church, especially as expressed in the Body-image, he is so tied to the Gnostic imagery that he fails to give it adequate expression. The essential feature of the myth from which he draws is that Head and Body, Saviour and Saved are together part of an entity larger than themselves. Within this entity, they are united and interdependent and cannot act alone. But the Body-imagery, while guaranteeing the unity of Christ and His Church, still maintains their separate identities and their individual roles within that unity. So Schlier, in the first place, falls into the errors we met in our

2. op. cit. pp. 175-76.
3. p. 175.
discussion of the Mystical Christ, while, at the same time, adding this further element of the Head's need for and dependence upon the Body.

Secondly, Schlier's point of view overlays the New Testament categories with the alien thought-forms of Gnosticism. It must be remembered that, whatever points of similarity there may be between Gnosticism and the New Testament, there are many points of difference¹: in addition, much of what we know to be genuine Gnostic traits post-date the New Testament. Yet it is no wonder "that exegesis of this sort should have led Schlier into Catholicism"².

The Roman doctrine of the Whole Christ has, without a doubt, affinities with the Gnostic myth of the perfect Man -- the One who is both Redeemer and redeemed.

But there is one further point raised by Schlier's interpretation of the Captivity Epistles. Although, as we noted above, Kasemann once shared Schlier's basic conviction, he did not draw the same conclusions from it. In the article in TL already mentioned³, he claims that New Testament statements about the Church are always presented in the context of a real relationship between her and her Lord, a relationship in which she must be forever obedient to Christ. It is wrong, says Kasemann, to mould Christ and the Church into one single entity, as does the concept of the 'Whole Christ', because the Head as Lord is always fully autonomous in relation to the Body. It is important to notice this 'relational' element in the New Testament's teaching about the Church. "Nous devons plutôt nous trouver

¹. see the list given by Hanson, pp. 114-5.
². see The Problem of Catholicism' by Vittorio Subilia, p. 106.
³. see col. 3.
ici .... en présence de ce qu'on appellerait en allemand une notion de rapport (Beziehungsbegriff): c'est à dire une notion qui n'exprime pas ce que la chose est en soi, mais envisage son être dans son rapport avec autre chose". The Church, according to Leenhardt, is 'body' insofar as she is related to Christ to Whom she belongs (in the Major Epistles) and to Whom she owes allegiance (in the Captivity Epistles): similarly, Christ is only Head in relation to the Church. In order not to exaggerate the importance of what Leenhardt is saying here, we ought to remember that we have seen Christ and His Church united at two levels. Firstly, the fact that Christ assumed our human nature at His Incarnation means that He is one with all mankind and, therefore, by extension with the Church. In dying and rising again, Christ as the one in many represented those who belonged to Him and substituted for them in such a way that they died and rose again in Him. So, on this level, the Church is the body of Christ because the historical, personal body of Christ is normative for her life and witness. But at this level, the 'relational' element referred to above is not immediately relevant. But, secondly, the ascended and glorified Christ identifies Himself with His people, while, at the same time, retaining His authority and status over them as Head and Saviour. On this level, Leenhardt's point of view has relevance because it ensures that the 'identification'—pole of New Testament thinking never becomes assimilation where the separate identities of Christ and Church are lost: in addition, it ensures that the 'distinction'—pole is never forgotten. Above all, Käsemann and Leenhardt


save us from identifying New Testament imagery with the reality it is meant to illustrate: "images are not themselves the reality to which they point. Confusions and distortion abound where this is not remembered."

The doctrine of the Whole Christ, insofar as it confuses and distorts the essential tension of New Testament ecclesiology, must be rejected. In binding Christ and the Church into a single entity in such a way as to make them mutually dependent on one another, this doctrine is untrue to the New Testament. As we have tried to show, it may be the result of overemphasizing the Gnostic categories the writer of Colossians and Ephesians may have adapted for his own ends. If this is correct, "we are beholding here something with incalculably serious and far-reaching consequences - Gnosticism is infiltrating into Christianity and producing damage so deep-seated that the very life-centres of the Christian organism are affected and it is being changed into a different organism. The only cure for this disease is to retain the necessary distinction between Head and Body in such a way that the Head is seen as normative for the life of the Body."

D. The Church as a Social or Mystical Body.

According to Matthew xxii: 38, Christ was once asked by one of the Pharisees which was the greatest commandment in the Law; in reply, our Lord quoted the two commandments about love to God and then love to one's neighbour. In a sense, Christianity can be summed up from the human side in these two commandments i.e. we must respond to a double claim on our lives - the claim


2. Subilia, op. cit., p. 119.
of God and the claim of our fellow-men. This double relationship is
evident in the Christian doctrine of the Church—members are related to
God through Christ and also to one another within the community. When
Paul adopted the classic fable for his own use in I Cor. xii, its first
and basic reference was to the need for unity among the members of the
Corinthian congregation¹ and only secondarily to the unity of the congrega-
tion with Christ (v. 27). And, to a large extent, it was this second
relationship which came to the fore as the doctrine of the 'body of Christ'
developed from the Major to the Captivity Epistles. But the double
emphasis never completely disappeared and can be illustrated by taking the
word ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ along with the key-word for the doctrine we are considering
— ΣΥΝΕΡΓΕΙΑ. While Christians can be said to 'participate' in Jesus Christ
their Lord, the other emphasis of the word ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ is on 'sharing' in a
practical way with and for one's fellow-Christians. But it is the Eucharis-
tistic passages in I Corinthians which bring the two words closest together
and thereby highlight the double relationship in which Church-members stand.
In the first of these passages, as we have seen (pp. 68 ff.), Paul combines
the common participation of worshippers in Christ through the bread and wine
of the sacrament with their unity in one another — "because there is one loaf,
2. see John Chrysostom, 'Homily on First Corinthians', 30, 1-2. ³. I Cor. i: 9.
4. e.g. in the collection for the poor at Jerusalem—see Rom. xv: 26, II Cor.
ix: 13. ⁴. see especially x: 14-22, xi: 17-34.
we, many as we are, are one body"¹; "at the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we really do share the Lord's body and we are raised into fellowship with Him and with each other"². In other words, because of their shared κοινωνία with Christ, they are one ἑσύμα. The same theme is repeated, but with a different emphasis, in chap. xi where Paul suggests that the disunity within the congregation at Corinth is spoiling their ability to share in the sacrament (see vv. 20-21). From all this, it is clear that we cannot say that the concept of the body of Christ refers only to the inner nature of the Church in her relationship with her Lord. It also refers quite decisively to the relationships of Church-members with one another.

Now we have to consider what this man-to-man factor in the concept means.

We have become so accustomed to using the word 'body' collectively (e.g. a body of soldiers, cf. the NEB translation of Acts ix: 26) that we might reasonably assume that Greek had a similar usage. This very point has been a subject of debate among scholars for many years. Till relatively recently, it could have been said from the evidence available that ἑσύμα was never used collectively in pre-Christian literature. But then an Edict of Augustus was found (dated 5/6 B.C.) which is mentioned in de Visscher as the inscription of Cyrene, edict iii³. The relevant words in this edict are as follows: ἀναποιουμένοι οὐδεν ἐλαβον ἐμ μέρει τῶν Ἐλλήνων ἑσύματι κελεύ. This led T. W. Manson, in the article already quoted, to conclude, "It is no

¹ I Cor. x: 17. ² De Ecclesia' of Vatican II, para. 7, p. 10. ³ see op. cit. pp. 20ff.
longer possible to say that ἑώρα is never used in pre-Christian literature for a 'body' of people or a society.\(^1\) Some scholars, however\(^2\), have discounted the evidence of the Edict by claiming that the underlying reference is to an individual, not to a collectivity. De Visscher's final words on the question are a complete rejection of Manson's point of view: "in spite of all our research, it has proved impossible to discover a single example in which this word designates a collectivity: it can mean a unity, a whole, but never a collectivity"\(^3\).

Corfaux, who discusses the Edict at some length\(^4\), agrees with this conclusion: "we refuse to see in ἑώρα the meaning of a social body". Corfaux claims that the Church is called 'body' only insofar as it is related to its principle of unity, the physical, personal body of her Lord for "ἐόρα, without anything to which it is referred, means a human body or the body of Christ, but always a physical person"\(^5\). Later, when dealing with Colossians and Ephesians, Corfaux repeats this point of view: "the Epistles of the Captivity .... are explained without having to give ἑώρα the collective meaning of a moral body constituted by the entirety of Christians (ἐόρα τοῦ Χριστού) who would be the 'mystical' body of Christ: in the metonymy 'body' there is always a reference to the real (risen) body of Christ"\(^6\). As far as the Major Epistles are concerned, Corfaux supports his opinion with very careful exegesis of the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians: he points out that the development of Paul's thought in this chapter

\(^{1}\) op. cit. p. 335.  
\(^{2}\) among them, de Visscher himself - see op. cit. pp. 39ff.  
\(^{3}\) op. cit. p. 91.  
\(^{4}\) A, pp. 272-5.  
\(^{5}\) A, p. 274.  
\(^{6}\) A, p. 337.
(i.e. from v. 12 to v. 27) is most easily understood if ὄμοιο retains the same meaning throughout i.e. in vv. 12, 13, 14 and 17. A change of meaning from v. 12 where ὄμοιο obviously connotes the human, physical body of Christ to v. 13, where some have suggested a collective meaning for ὄμοιο (see Allo quoted above), is quite unwarranted. Cerfaut is fully aware, however, that this exegesis is contrary to the teaching of some of the Fathers of the Church e.g. according to Chrysostom, v. 13 means "in order that we may all be one body": Pelagius translates it as "in order that we may be made one body in Christ": Thomas interprets it as "into the unity of the Church which is the body of Christ". But Cerfaux thinks that the word 'soma', even when applied to the Church, still implies a reference to the historical body of Christ. In this opinion, Cerfaux receives support from Benoit who states that the expression 'body of Christ' always retains a basic allusion to the personal body of Christ, "ce corps mort et ressuscité auquel le chrétien doit s’unir pour participer au salut".

Schmackenburg takes up the same position but Dupont is more

circumspect in his conclusion: "cette opposition (between 'all' and 'one body' which, as we noted, Dupont uncovers in I Cor. xii) exclut l'idée que le 'corps' serait la collectivité comme telle, le 'collegium christianum'.\(^1\) But Dupont then points out that, once the identification had been made between Church and 'body', it was then possible to speak of the Church as 'body' without explanation. "Lorsque Paul déclare que les chrétiens sont intégrés tous dans l'unité d'un même corps, qu'ils sont un corps unique, ce corps unique est constitué par eux tous.\(^2\) Dupont is certainly right here, especially insofar as the Captivity Epistles are concerned. There the word 'body' can stand alone as a designation for the Church and it is clear that here it is moving away from the source of its meaning in the Major Epistles, namely the real, personal body of Christ. At the same time, as Cerfau rightly reminded us, the word \\( \text{σῶμα} \) never moves so far from this source that it takes on an entirely new meaning - that of a group or society. All that we can say with certainty is to agree with David Stanley when he writes: "the term 'soma' did not possess in the Greek of that day the collective sense we give the term 'body' in expressions like 'body politic'.\(^3\)

This does not null the fact that the Christ, Whose body the Church is, is also the One in many Who includes within himself many members\(^4\): "le corps, c'est d'abord le Christ lui-même, mais c'est aussi tous ceux qu'il porte en lui par son rôle de Nouvel Adam.\(^5\)

Up till now, therefore, we have said that Paul was concerned with the mutual relationships of Church-members when he spoke of the Church as the

\(^{1}\) p. 440. \(^{2}\) ibid. \(^{3}\) op. cit. p. 387. \(^{4}\) cf. I Cor. xii: 12, vi: 15. \(^{5}\) Benoît, ii, p. 20.
'body of Christ'. In addition, we have said that he was not thereby saying anything about the Church as a group or collectivity. In other words, Paul was primarily interested in that invisible, intangible unity members had with one another because of their shared unity with Christ. And it is this unity in Christ which is normative for the community i.e., because members have been baptised into the one body of Christ and 'participate' in that body through the Eucharist, they are said to be one body in Christ. Yet, without the dying and rising again of that personal body of Christ, there would be no Church. Paul and the author of the Captivity Epistles were not making 'sociological' statements about the Church in calling her 'body' -- they were emphasizing the spiritual union of members with their Lord and with one another. So we consider any theory of the Church as a 'social' body very suspect.

In reaction against Reformed thinking about the invisible Church, Bellarmine defined the Church as 'coetus fidelium' i.e., the gathering of the faithful (see pp. 25ff.). Ever since, certain Roman Catholics, in stressing that the Church was thus a visible, tangible grouping within society, have spoken of the Church in 'sociological' terms. This thinking has become entangled with that of the 'Mystical Body' so that 'social' and 'mystical' seem, in some contexts, to be synonymous e.g., 'Mystici Corporis' speaks of the "social body of the Church", of which "Christ is the Head and the Ruler". This social body, the Mystical Body, is to be distinguished from Christ's physical body -- that body born of the Virgin and now "hidden beneath the Eucharist veils"; it is also to be distinguished from all moral bodies.

1. para. 58
2. ibid.
whose "only principle of unity is a common end." The concept of the Mystical Body of Christ as a social body is therefore given a place within Roman thinking and there are even those who are willing to defend it from a Biblical standpoint: "les chrétiens forment, 'par' le Christ auquel ils ont été baptisés (I Cor. xii: 13), 'dans' le Christ (Rom. xii: 5) et 'pour' lui (I Cor. vi: 15) un corps social." Martelet goes on to say that the Church, as a 'social body', has its distinctive nature in the fact that it is integrated to Christ's personal body - it can thus be called 'His Body'.

Others want to maintain that the Mystical Body is, at one and the same time, Christ's historical body identified with the 'community' body and a social body i.e., a society of the faithful, both visible and tangible. "Le terme 'corps du Christ' renferme à la fois une référence au Christ personnel, à son corps réel et physique, et une vue sur la pluralité organisée des fidèles." But the New Testament use of the word 'soma' for the Church does not substantiate this second meaning. But, apart from the fact that the New Testament gives no warrant for the concept of the 'social' body, there is a further objection to this idea. As we have seen with the concept of the 'Mystical' or 'Whole' Christ, there is a tendency for the 'social' body epithet to dissociate the Church from her foundation in the historical Christ. Paul and those who followed him were speaking of the Church not as a group, a sociological phenomenon within society, but as a community whose members are intimately related, individually and corporately, to the Christ Who died and rose again on Good Friday and Easter Sunday: to speak of the Church as a collectivity is to separate her from her 'esse' in Christ. So it is significant that 'De Ecclesia' from Vatican II makes no reference to this concept.

It is important to note, of course, that we are not saying that
the Church cannot be studied in sociological terms. The Church is, in one
sense, an institution within society with its own structure, its own officers,
its own ethos and norms, i.e. the Church does manifest itself as a social
form involving particular social relationships. What we are saying is that
the New Testament category of the 'body' used of the Church is not concerned
with the Church seen in this light. It is concerned with the unseen
relationships of members with one another and with their Lord which are not
open to sociological investigation. By stretching a point, however, it
might be claimed that the New Testament's use of the word 'body' with all
its physical and tangible overtones indicates that the Church must be visible
within society. But the fact that the Church is the Body of Christ is hidden
except to the eyes of faith.

We have already noted that the doctrine of the Mystical Body took
on political overtones as early as the time of Constantine and that later
sociological categories were added at the time of Bellarmine. While this
thinking was obviously the result of borrowing ideas and terminology from
the 'secular' sphere, it did not mean that the Church was thereby trying to
identify herself in any way with 'secular' groupings within society. What-
ever the political and sociological similarities between the Church and other
communities within society, the Roman Church has always claimed to be essen-
tially different from them. Indeed, the celibacy of the clergy and the
tendency to identify the 'real' Church with her priesthood has led to a
practical separation between the Church and society. In fact, as we shall
see, 'Mystici Corporis' suggests that the adjective 'mystical' is useful
in this context.
insofar as it maintains the distinction between the 'Churchly' body and all other 'bodies'. This detachment from the wider society in which she is set is creating many problems for the Roman Church at the present time. For too long she has made too much of the body-image in her doctrine of the Mystical Body, an image which says nothing about the Church's relation to the 'world' (used in the Johannine sense), to the exclusion of other figures which do speak of the involvement of the Church in the 'secular' sphere. Because of her preoccupation with her own life and structure, the Roman Church now finds herself unable to communicate relevantly to the world (e.g. Pope Paul's recent "Credo" and "Humanae Vitae" have both been criticised for their obscure and ecclesiastical language). Yet, she must now begin to realize that, paradoxically, much of her own thinking about the nature of the Church has been influenced by 'secular' categories. It is here, above all, that the Church should be studied by sociologists to emphasize that she is, in one sense, just one 'social' body among many others in society.

The Church, however, is not just seen as a social body - she is also called a 'mystical' body. This epithet suggests two possibilities. Firstly, we may derive this adjective from the word 'mystery' (μυστήριον). While this word appears throughout the New Testament, it is a characteristic term of the Captivity Epistles in which it is found ten times. Apart from Eph. v: 32 (which we shall examine on p. 189), the sense of μυστήριον in these Letters is that the purpose of God, up till now a hidden secret, has now been revealed in Jesus Christ: "the secret hidden for long ages and through many generations has now been revealed to God's people, to whom it was His will to make it known". Older commentators derived this 1. para. 58. e.g. the 'salt' and the 'light' in Matt. v: 13-16. Col. i: 26 cf. Eph. i: 9.
idea of 'mystery' from those mystery-religious which flourished in the Empire of the first century. At the time of St. Paul, captives from the Eastern provinces of the Empire were being settled in country districts of the West. At the same time, soldiers and imperial administrators were returning from their duties in these same Eastern provinces. It was these three groups of people who were principally responsible for bringing the so-called 'mystery'-religions of Phoenicia, of Syria and elsewhere into the mainstream of the Empire's life and thought. Although these cultic religions differed greatly from one another, they still had enough in common for them to be grouped together e.g. they all admitted members by a rite of initiation, they all demanded that their members kept the details of this rite from the uninitiated, they all asked for purification prior to the initiation proper and they all claimed to impart either a vision of the deity or 'salvation' (6ωτηρα). Fundamentally, these religions were national or tribal cults based on the cycles of nature. Commentators in the past seemed prone to concluding that similarities in language between these mysteries and the New Testament were sound evidence that they had influenced one another. Some, however, were more cautious: "any suggestion of borrowing on the part of the New Testament writers from the thought of the Mystery religions must be closely scrutinised in the light of a clear conception of New Testament religion. The New Testament writers always transform what they borrow ... Similarity of language has been mistaken for similarity of thought". Strachan does go on to point out that, with these reservations, there are terms which

1. see Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp. 156ff.
the Mysteries and the New Testament have in common e.g. 'perfect', 'knowledge', 'rebirth'. Almost fifty years after Strecian first came to this cautious conclusion, another scholar was being equally circumspect in his findings: "the question of the relation of this motif (i.e. dying and rising again in Rom. vi) to the mysteries, then, is not yet settled .... Paul's language cannot be cut off from the language of his world .... The relation between the question concerning the historical background and that concerning Paul's own understanding is not one-sided, as if we could simply understand the historical background first and then interpret Paul\textsuperscript{2}. But one factor could not be discounted. The Mystery-religions think of 'mystery' in terms of their own cultic rite of initiation whereas the New Testament sees it as the purpose of God, established from the beginning but now revealed in the life and death of Christ\textsuperscript{3}. So, because these cults could not be said definitely to provide a source for the New Testament use of 'mystery', other possible sources were sought.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls opened up new possibilities. Throughout this literature, the Hebrew word \( \text{ס私募ות} \) appears used of a mystery God has communicated to His prophets and now enshrined in Scripture e.g.

"And God told Habakkuk to write down the things which will come to pass in the last generation but the consummation of time He made not known to him. And as for that which God said, "That he may read it easily that reads it, the explanation of this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries (\( \square' \text{§} \) ) of the words of His servants the prophets"\textsuperscript{4}. This passage, like many others\textsuperscript{5}, reveals the

1. e.g. Titus iii:5, see Strachen, op. cit., pp. 75f.  
3. see Rom. xvi:25.  
4. see Commentary on Habakkuk vii:1-5 (translation of Dupont-Sommer in The Essene Writings from Qumran).  
5. e.g. Manual of Discipline 8:16.
pattern of revelation according to the Qumran community. God makes known His purpose to the prophets: this purpose in time comes to be written down in the Scriptures; then God enlightens a specially gifted man to interpret the purpose aright for his fellows. Supremely, this interpreter is the Community's own Teacher of Righteousness; yet it would also seem that his interpretation had to receive the sanction of the whole community. But this pattern was already prefigured in the Old Testament (and note that, in the Septuagint, is translated as μυστήριον). In the Aramaic portion of Daniel, we are told about Nebuchadnezzar's two dreams and Daniel's interpretation of them. In two passages, Daniel is regarded as the interpreter of 'mysteries'. So we need not look beyond the Old Testament and, in particular, beyond the use the Dead Sea Community made of it for the source of the New Testament concept of 'mystery'.

In the Captivity Epistles, there is no question but that the Church is part of the hidden purpose of God now revealed in Christ. Indeed, the writer of these Epistles explains this 'mystery of Christ' in Eph. ii: 5-7. There it is said that God's purpose, once hidden, has now been shown to Christ's apostles and prophets: part of that purpose is that Jews and Gentiles should be united with the Church, Christ's Body. So we conclude that the word 'mystery' is used in Ephesians and Colossians of the truth of God's plan, once obscure, but now revealed. Unlike the secrets of Qumran, this mystery is revealed, not through the right interpretation of Scripture.

but through a proper understanding of Christ's life and death.

But the Roman Church would seem to understand this word 'mystery' (and justify its connection with the epithet 'mystical') not as a truth revealed but as a truth, part of whose reality still remains hidden, cf. the everyday use of the adjective 'mysterious'. So Kung can say, 'Since the Middle Ages, it has been customary to talk of the Catholic Church as the 'corpus Christi mysticum'; the word 'mystical' here, in accordance with Eph. v: 32, simply means 'mysterious'\(^1\). But the sense of \(\mu\upsilon\beta\omicron\upsilon\pi\omicron\omicron\upsilon\) in Eph. v: 32 is similar to that found in Rom. xi: 25 and I Cor. xv: 51 i.e., it refers to a particular 'secret' within the overall divine plan, namely the union of a man and a woman in 'one flesh' (v.31). The writer feels, however, that the true meaning of this 'secret' is to be found in the union of Christ and His Church\(^2\). So this verse may possibly be used to support the idea that Christ and His Church are bound together in a 'mystical' union (see p. 192) but hardly the doctrine of the Church as a 'mystical' body. Yet Ponsirven seems to agree with Kung: "we may fairly use the word 'mystical' to describe this body, though the word does not appear in St. Paul. Mystical, that is, belonging to the category of mystery"\(^3\). In the last analysis, we must take what Ponsirven says about the adjective not appearing in Paul's writings (which, for him, of course, include Ephesians and Colossians) and use that to criticize its use in ecclesiology. The criticism becomes stronger when its use implies that the reality of the Church is shrouded in 'mystery'.

Secondly, we may derive the word 'mystical' from the categories of mysticism. It is very difficult to arrive at an exact definition of mysticism. But, whether we define it in broad terms (e.g. as "an overwhelming awareness of the ultimately real") or in narrow terms (e.g. "the

\(^1\) The Church p. 237.  \(^2\) Robinson, op. cit., p. 209.  \(^3\) op. cit. p. 317.
doctrine that the individual can come into immediate contact with God through subjective experiences which differ essentially from the experience of ordinary life" — see Tannehill, op. cit. p. 3, n. 7), the Apostle seems to have known 'mystical' experiences. His conversion on the Damascus Road put Paul into living contact with Christ as ultimate reality through an experience which could not be compared with everyday experience. Indeed, Paul felt his life so pervaded with the influence of Christ that he believed that he was no longer his own. There is also evidence that Paul knew something of these ecstasies we have come to associate with mysticism. This personal experience of grasping and being grasped by Christ Paul summed up in his use of the phrase "in Christ", at least when that phrase "may be developed into 'the life communicated by Christ'". There are some who claim that this formula is found in Paul referring, not to individuals or to Christians as a group, but to Churches. In other words, congregations can be said to be 'in Christ' and therefore in intimate relationship to Christ, but it could hardly be said that such a relationship is "mystical" within the terms of the definitions given above. But there are two other reasons for saying that the 'in Christ'-formula is not meant to describe a 'mystical' relationship. The first is that this formula is "social in its implications" insofar as it expresses a relationship to Christ which believers share with one another. Mystical experience, on the other hand,

1. see Gal. i: 12.  2. see Gal. ii: 20.  3. see II Cor. xii: 1-4.
4. see Gerfau, A, p. 213.  5. see Tr. Schmidt, op. cit. pp. 73-91, Wikenhauser, "Die Christusmystik des hl. Paulus" pp. 9-16.  6. e.g. Gal. i: 22.
7. see Best, op. cit., p. 7.
tends to be incommunicable and personal to the individual. The second reason is that there is always a tendency in classical mysticism for the individual to lose his identity in his sense of oneness with ultimate reality i.e. he feels himself assimilated into the absolute he is experiencing. But the 'In Christ'-formula refers to believers' participation, either as individuals or as a group, in the saving events of God in Christ and involves no loss of identity. Indeed, in relation to what Christ has done for them, believers are made intensely aware of themselves in their inadequacy. "To talk of the 'mystical' body of Christ is misleading, since the word is very often taken in the sense of what we nowadays understand by mysticism: this gives rise to a view of the Church as united with the divinity in a way which overlooks human creaturaliness and sinfulness, and suggests a direct relationship with Christ, an identity with Christ, which is quite wrong". So the categories of mysticism do not help us in our understanding of the relationship between Christ and His Church, the Head and the Body.

Yet the Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis' based its use of 'mystical' as an epithet for the Body of Christ on the concepts of mysticism. This adjective is necessary, we are told, not only to distinguish the Church "from any body of the natural order" but also because "the Spirit of our Redeemer is perennially and intimately pervading the Church and acting in her". So the Church, according to the Encyclical, is 'mystical' because, as a society it does "not consist merely of social and juridical elements".

nor rest solely on those grounds. The fact that the Spirit of Christ is pleased to be active within the life of the Church is immaterial to whether the Church can be called 'mystical' or not. Mysticism is concerned, not with the sphere in which the Spirit is present, but with the relationship in which the individual becomes aware of the Spirit as ultimately real. The argument of the Encyclical, therefore, is unconvincing because it seems to define mysticism to suit its own purposes. In the end, indeed, one objection to the word 'mystical' is really sufficient — as Bonsirven admits, it is absent from the pages of the New Testament. The same objection can, of course, be levelled against those who, like Amiot, Carfax and Schnackenburg, speak, not of a 'mystical' body, but of a 'mystical' union between Christ and His people. Criticism of the adjective thus used need not be severe, since these scholars realize, at least, that mysticism involves a relationship between two parties — albeit one in which assimilation is often seen as a desirable goal. But since the Biblical writers left the relationship between Christ and His Church largely undefined, it would be well for modern interpreters to do the same, especially if their definitions are to include such unbiblical terms as 'mystical'. If the relationship must be described, however, then Benoit's use of 'sacramental' is to be preferred since our accession to the Body of Christ is realized through baptism and is confirmed in the Eucharist. Better still, we might speak of the Church as the 'spiritual' body of Christ (but not in the sense, of course, of I Cor. xvi: 14). But, since Roman Catholics tend to have, as we have seen (see pp. 143 ff.), a deficient understanding

1. ibid.  2. op. cit. p. 186.  3. B, p. 339.  4. II, p. 305.  5. see I Cor. vi: 17, xii passim.
of the role of the Spirit in relation to the Church, this epithet has found little place in their thinking.

Much of what we have said in this chapter has been critical and negative. It now remains for us to conclude on a more positive note.
VI. Final Conclusions.

We shall finish now with some positive comments about the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ. Before we do this, however, we must refer, very briefly, to some of the issues of ecumenical interest raised by our study. In the present, ever-changing ferment of Catholic-Protestant relations, it is important that the problems at stake are clearly defined and understood before any effort is made to resolve them. While this is true, the present situation is so fluid and mobile that we can no longer be said to be engaged in dialogue from fixed positions, as was true, for example, both during and immediately after the Reformation. The Roman and Reformed Churches alike are searching — not for ways and means to defeat one another in debate — but for a new identity in the face of rising paganism. Part of this search, on both sides, is a reappraisal of doctrine and dogma in the light of the truth to be found in Jesus Christ. This reassessment is particularly relevant to their thinking about the Church.

One of the traditional points of dispute between Catholic and Protestant has been the relation between Scripture and Tradition. As a Protestant, I could not study the doctrine of the Church without, first of all, examining the Biblical roots of that doctrine — for me, as for all Protestants, the Scriptures are normative. But to study the Roman doctrine of the Church, or at least, one small part of it, I had to trace the historical development of that doctrine in the theology and teaching of the Church. In other words, I had to examine the growth of tradition which, as was seen, sometimes found its basis in Scripture, sometimes amplified it
and sometimes seemed to contradict it. To isolate the doctrine of the Church, it was necessary to spend time with the Church’s tradition for Romans regard this, along with Scripture, as an essential witness of the fact of Jesus Christ. In a situation like this, where Scripture and Tradition are twin witnesses of the truth, the role of the dogmatic theologian is very important. But, within the last fifty years, this situation has changed to some extent by a renewed interest within the Roman Church for Biblical scholarship and criticism. Partly under the influence of Protestantism within an ecumenical context, Scripture and Tradition were again seen, in Tridentine terms, as fully complementary, instead of it being assumed, as had so often happened, that Tradition, by its very nature, must be true to Scripture. In this new situation, the Biblical scholar whose influence within the Church has, for a long time, been minimal, finds himself with an important contribution to make. The Church which once laid so much stress on Tradition that she was only concerned with the findings of the theologians is now eager to hear the discoveries of the Biblical interpreters. On the continent of Europe especially, Catholic Biblical studies have become as rigorous and scrupulous as their Protestant equivalent — our four representative exegetes amply demonstrate the truth of this.

But this restoration of Scripture has produced an interesting consequence — it has revealed disagreement at particular points between the traditional teaching of the Church and the teaching of the Bible. Over and over again we have seen this illustrated in our study of the Mystical Body — even the phrase ‘mystical body’ itself does not appear in Scripture and it now carries such overtones in Roman dogma that it seems to have cut
itself off from its roots in the New Testament epistles. We can see this very clearly in the writings of the pre-war theologian, Emile Mersch, who spoke of the Church as 'Mystical Body' in ways which only bore scant relation to the Apostolic thinking about the Church - yet Mersch, in his own way, was true to the Tradition of his Church. Yet the doctrine Mersch was propounding had a profound effect on the teaching of the Church in his own generation. But the change which has taken place since Mersch can be seen most vividly by comparing the Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis' of 1943 with the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Vatican II produced in 1965. In some ways, the Encyclical represents the last official Roman document to speak of the Church in traditional terms. Within this document, there is no serious attempt at Biblical interpretation and as many references are made to Tradition as to Scripture. So, for example, the Encyclical accepts certain traditional doctrines about the Mystical Body as valid, without feeling the need to justify them from the Bible e.g. the Spirit seen as the soul of the Body, the doctrine of the Whole Christ, the total identification of Christ with His Church. By the time the Dogmatic Constitution has been written, the change of emphasis has taken place: this latest document is thoroughly Biblical in its approach and this determines its scepticism towards those traditional doctrines so easily accepted by 'Mystici Corporis' e.g. "the Fathers have found it possible to compare the Spirit's work to the function which is fulfilled in the human frame by the principle of life, the soul": the Biblical image of marriage preserves the identity of the Head and the Body, instead of giving them one single identity as the Whole Christ: the

1. para. 55. 2. para. 77. 3. para. 51. 4. I, 7 pp. 11-12. 5. I, 7 p. 12.
Church is a pilgrim Church, always submissive to her Head and never to be confused with Him\(^1\).

On a smaller scale, we can exemplify the influence of Biblical studies on the Tradition of the Church in another way. The doctrine of the Church as the "Whole Christ" seemed, at one time, to find support in the work of those exegetes who, like Schlier and Kasemann, claimed that the writer of the Captivity Epistles was dependent on Gnosticism and, in particular, on the myth of the Primal Man. But later Biblical criticism has shown that this dependence is extremely unlikely, mainly because the Gnostic evidence post-dates the letters to Colossae and Ephesus. Thus Kasemann who once agreed in substance with Schlier has now renounced that position. This has forced the Roman Church to rethink the doctrine of the Whole Christ — which does not appear in the Dogmatic Constitution — simply because it has been found to have so little support in Scripture. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the Roman Church, in a proper adherence to the Tridentine formula, is now having to collate dogmatic and exegetical findings in her teaching. This is an essential part of her quest for the truth of Jesus Christ to Whom Scripture and Tradition, so Catholics feel, both bear witness.

We Protestants must beware of thinking that the closing of this gap in the Roman Church — the gap between Tradition and Scripture, dogma and exegesis — represents a swing to our perspective. It is certainly true — as their books reveal — that Roman Biblical scholars are deeply impressed and influenced by the work of their Reformed counterparts: it is also true that the rediscovery of the Bible within Catholicism is due, in some measure, \(^1\) ibid.
to the pervasive effect of Protestant scholarship. But, at this point, Romans are being no more and no less than true to their own insights into the relation of Scripture and Tradition. Since these two sources of authority are, for them, complementary, proper interpretation of the former is imperative.

We can indeed see a parallel movement in the influence Protestant theologians - Karl Barth in particular - have had on their Roman colleagues. In the doctrine with which we have been most concerned, the principal issue at stake between Catholics and Protestants is the relation between and the relative statuses of Christ and His Church. Between 'Mystici Corporis' and the Dogmatic Constitution, there has been a significant shift of emphasis on these two matters within the Roman Church. The Church, which once stood 'in loco Christi', is now seen in ambivalent relationship to her Lord, at one time identified with Him, at another distinguished from Him as the Body to the Head. Although we cannot say categorically that this shift is either wholly or partly due to the influence of Barth (or of any other Reformed theologian), the immense Christocentricity of his dogmatics has had its effect on all Churches, including the Roman Catholic. And there can be no doubt that this new emphasis is due to a new awareness of the person and role of Christ, as much as to new thinking about the Church.

But again we must not imagine that we are here seeing a movement which is, by necessity, bringing Roman Catholicism closer to Protestantism.

1. see 'Mystici Corporis' para. 51. 2. cf. the first para. of I, 3 with the last para. of I, 7 on p. 12 of the Constitution.
While Romans have certainly had a tendency to idealise the Church at the expense of Christ and to the neglect of the Body's subordination to the Head, they have never fully forgotten that the Church is nothing without Christ. So we are witnessing the reestablishment of a position which has never fully disappeared from Catholicism, a reestablishment which some may claim, with a measure of justification, was created under pressure from Protestant theology.

Thus far, therefore, we have seen that the Roman Church, involved in the present ecumenical turmoil, is drawing together features of her thinking which, in the past, have been severed from one another. For her, Scripture and Tradition are positively related and should not be - as we have noted they so often were in the history of the doctrine of the Church - divorced from one another. In practice, this divorce meant that study of the Bible was subordinated to the study of traditional dogmatics. The same is true of the relation between Christ and His Church. These two - so long separated from one another by the Church standing in the place of Christ and continuing the work He began in His historical life - have been brought together again in a positive relationship with one another - Head to Body, Bridegroom to Bride, Vine to branches. Instead of the confusion of the past, Christ and His Church have again been given their individual identity in relation to one another. This drive towards a comprehensive theology is of the very nature of Catholicism - that system of Church life which claims to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

Turning from these ecumenical issues to the particular theme of our study, we can begin by saying that the doctrine of the Church as Body is a question of roles and relationships. The imagery of the New Testament
is designed to illustrate the roles played by Christ and His Church in relation to one another and also, on another level, the role played by members of the Church towards one another.

But, if we are to understand the Church in the perspective of the New Testament, we must begin with Christ and especially with His death and resurrection. When the New Testament describes these saving events of God in Christ, great emphasis is laid on Christ's physical body - it was the Body which died on the Cross\(^1\) and it was this Body which was raised on the third day\(^2\). In passing, we must note that these events were complete and effective - in them, man can find total redemption\(^3\). It is against this background of what Christ has achieved in His historical Body, crucified, risen and glorified, that we must set the Church.

Paul, like so many of his contemporaries, realized the significance of the human body as a symbol of unity and interdependence. In addition, we might deduce that the Apostle had already experienced, on the Damascus Road, the way in which Christ identified Himself with His people. Allied to this, we have the fact that the Christian faith into which Paul stepped after this dramatic experience seemed to lay great emphasis on the physical historical body of Christ. So Paul tells the Romans and the Corinthians that they are, in the first instance, like a Body belonging to Christ and then, secondly, that they are, in fact, the Body of Christ.

We shall deal first with the less important relationship this imagery is meant to illustrate, namely the dependence of members on one another within the Church. Members are related to one another in that 1. Eph. ii:14 cf. the words of the sacrament in I Cor. xi:24: "This is My body". 2. Luke xxiv: 3. 3. Acts iv: 12.
they have all shared the one baptism, they have all confessed the one faith, they all participate in the one sacramental meal. In all these, the member is brought into a positive relationship with Christ and, in the case of the two sacraments, with His historical Body, first dead and then raised to life. In baptism, the believer is identified with the dying and rising again of Christ and, in particular, He is baptised into His body\(^1\), in the Eucharist, the believers together share in the Body of Christ, set forth in the bread (and thus, according to Paul, themselves are one body – I Cor. x: 17). Thus members, all standing in this common relationship to Christ through faith and the sacraments, are bound together in the unity of the Church. But, within that unity, members stand in need of one another, so they play roles of dependance, one to the other – no one member can claim freedom or independence from the rest or even from one single member\(^2\).

We have seen, however, that the relationships which this imagery describes as being internal to the life of the Church give no warrant to those who want to see the Church in sociological terms. The Body-metaphor is concerned with the nature of the Church as a distinctive grouping within society, a grouping which certainly has visible and tangible features (the physical overtones of the word 'body' guarantee this). But the metaphor speaks in terms of spiritual and personal values which are not open to objective investigation. The Church as Body has significance primarily for the eyes of faith.

But far more important than the internal relationships illustrated by this metaphor is what might be called the supreme 'external' relationship

1. I Cor. xii: 13.  \hspace{1cm} 2. I. Cor. xii: 14-26.
of the Church - her relation to Christ, her Lord. In the Major Epistles, the individual believer belongs to Christ, he is owned by Him. Indeed, this passage claims that Christians are limbs and organs to their Master which not only establishes that individuals belong to Christ but also gives a foretaste of later body-imagery. This later usage of 'body' states that the Church, in its unity, like the individual, belongs to Christ - the Church is His Body. While the Major Epistles assign Christ no definite role in relation to the Church (in I Corinthians, the head is just one member of the Body among many), it is clear that, as Saviour and Lord, He has the right to regard the Church-members, individually and corporately, as His own.

Before we go on to think of the Captivity Epistles, let us repeat - in the terminology we have used throughout this study - that the body-theme claims that the relationship between Christ and His Church is ambivalent - on the one hand, there is the tendency towards identification where Christ and the Church become one and the same - the Church takes the place of Christ: on the other hand, there is the emphasis which distinguishes Christ from His Church - the Church is not then seen as Christ, but as His Body. It is this ambivalence, this tension which is so often destroyed in interpretation.

In the letters to Ephesus and Colossae, we have moved into another world, perhaps even into the thought-forms of another man. The Church is not now primarily the local congregation, as it is so often in the Major Epistles: the Church is now universal, the ecumenical Church with outcrops in particular towns and cities. The internal relationships of

1. I Cor. vi: 12-20, esp. 19.
members with one another within the community are no longer discussed in
terms of mutual dependence but are now seen as expressions of the reconcil-
ing power of Christ\(^1\) and of the growing hierarchical structure of the Church\(^2\):
in addition, members' relationship to one another involves social respons-
sibilities in terms of employment and family\(^3\). We are more concerned now
with the 'external' relationship, with the roles to be played by Christ
towards His Church and vice versa. And, above all, a new dimension has
been added to the imagery - Christ is now the Head of the 'churchly' Body.
Indeed, the imagery of Romans and Corinthians, which never strayed very far
from simile, is now presented as a statement of fact i.e. the Church is no
longer like a human body, she is now the Body of Christ.

This new dimension of Christ as the Head suggests His authority
and supremacy over the Church. As Head, He demands and expects obedience
from His people. But, the Head, according to the physiology of the day,
was seen as the source of the life and energy of the body. So Christ as
Head infuses power and vitality into the community which belongs to Him.
But Christ is not only Head, He is Saviour (and, in these letters, it is the
Church which is redeemed, rather than individuals) and, following the per-
spective of John iii:16, Christ's role as Saviour sprang out of the deep
love He had for those He saved. So the writer uses the analogy of marriage
to show that the relationship of Christ to His Church is not just author-
itarian and life-giving. In fact, reversing what would have been the
modern usage, Christ and the Church are seen as the ideal husband and wife

\(^1\) Eph. ii: 11-13; \(^2\) Eph. iv:4-15, cf. I Cor. xii:27-31. \(^3\) Eph. v:
21-vi:9.
- marriage is to be compared with what Christ and His Church are for one another rather than vice versa. So Christ not only plays the role of Head and Saviour towards the Church - He is also seen as Bridegroom and Husband. It is here that we encounter a most important facet of the relationship which is only implicit in the New Testament, namely the fact that Christ chose to be one with His Church, never to be parted from her. Just as marriage presupposes the possibility of divorce so the relationship of Christ and His Church presupposes the possibility of their separation, yet, because of Christ's faithfulness, their separation would never become actual - Christ chooses never to be without His people.

The Church's role within this relationship is the natural corollary of Christ's role - she must be obedient to His authority, open to His influence and submissive in response to His love (marriage in Biblical terms, of course, meant the submission of the wife to the husband). In addition, she must be constantly aware of her own insufficiency in relation to the Christ Who is her Saviour, the One Who washes her and makes her immaculate. She is, indeed, the object of all those initiatives taken by Christ in His life, death and resurrection. The goal of all this activity is that individual members, within the life of the Church, may grow up to the fullness of true manhood found in Christ, He in Whom, paradoxically, the fullness of Godhood was also to be found.

Despite the differences between the Major and the Captivity Epistles, they both maintain, to greater or lesser degree, the tension we noted earlier. So, in Ephesians and Colossians, there is still the tendency to identify Christ with His Church (especially if we exaggerate the idea that Christians, both separately and as the Church, mature into Christ
and also the idea that Christ infuses the Church with His vitality. But, within these particular epistles, there is an even greater emphasis on the distinction between Christ and His Church — now the first is the Head of the second.

Such is the viewpoint of the New Testament on the nature of the Church as Body. It is with this viewpoint that all Christians must struggle. In very general terms, the Roman doctrine of the Church has, in the past, tended to overplay identification to the detriment of distinction. The Church became Christ, continuing the work He began and even carrying on His life in her own. Then, of course, the Church became an extension of the Incarnation, a second Christ. And because of this stress on the direct continuity between the historical Christ and the Church, the efficacy of Christ's work was underplayed — the Church, and particularly the priesthood, were seen as reenacting the saving acts of Christ within her own life. In addition the Church, instead of being seen in need of Christ's salvation and under His authority, was regarded as the inheritor of His fullness and perfection. Against such thinking, we must maintain the distinction between Head and Body, Christ and Church. We must show that, according to the Apostles, the Church, under the authority of Christ, has both to proclaim the salvation to be discovered in Him and to display the fruits of that salvation in her own life.

Again, in general terms, the Protestant thinking about the Church has tended to overplay distinction at the expense of identification. Especially in the evangelical wing of Protestantism, an oversharpen dichotomy has been created between the era of the historical Christ and the era of the Church by seeing the Church, not so much as the community of Christ,
but as the community of the Spirit. Parallel with this, Reformed mistrust of 'sacramentalism' has meant that the Church has cut herself off from the Christ Whose death marks the birth of the Church, rather than Pentecost. Allied to this, the Protestant Churches have never fully realized the Christ Who is in their midst, not just as Head and Saviour, but as the source of life and energy, especially through the sacraments. Thus Christ has been driven out of His Church which, in turn, has too often been no more than an aggregate of like-minded people grouped out of convenience rather than conviction. Against such thinking, we must just say, "The Church is the Body of Christ."
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