

Thesis

submitted to

Charles Sturt University

for

the Degree of Bachelor of Theology (Honours)

**Salvation as Participation in Christ:
a study of three early Christian writers
and their incarnational interpretations of the Atonement.**

by

Margaret Dingle

Bachelor of Arts University of Adelaide 1967

Master of Arts (Creative Writing) University of Adelaide 1999

Bachelor of Theology Charles Sturt University 2016

September 2019

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
Certificate of Authorship	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract	vi
CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	1
The Meaning of “Atonement”	1
Some Early Christian Images of Atonement	2
Anselm and After	3
Love, Justice and Penal Substitution	4
The Focus of this Thesis	5
The Aims of this Thesis	7
What Inspired my Focus	7
The Aims of this Thesis	8
My Approach	8
Chapter Outlines	9
Conclusion	10
CHAPTER 1 PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST AND CHRIST’S	11
PARTICIPATION IN HUMANITY IN PAUL	
Introduction	11
Second Adam/Death and Resurrection Texts	11
<i>Romans 5:12-21</i>	11
<i>Romans 6:3-11</i>	13
<i>2 Corinthians 5:14-17</i>	14
<i>1 Corinthians 15</i>	15
Being in Christ and the New Creation	16
Body of Christ Texts	18
Conclusion	19
CHAPTER 2 IRENAEUS: PARTICIPATION IN A CREATURELY WAY	21
Introduction	21
Irenaeus and his Works	22
Irenaeus’ Opponents: the Gnostics and others	22
Relevance to Participation of the Gnostic Controversy	23
Adam and Christ: Participation as becoming more and more like Christ who is the Image of God	24
Growing into the Divine: the Benefits of Imperfection	25
Redemption as Participation: Christus Victor	27

	Recapitulation as Participation	29
	The Participation of Creation	30
	Conclusion	31
CHAPTER 3	ATHANASIUS: PARTICIPATION IN THE INCARNATE WORD	32
	Introduction	32
	Athanasius	33
	Why the Word had to be God in order to be Saviour	33
	The Original State of Humans and the Consequences of Sin as in <i>On the Incarnation</i>	36
	The Dilemma of God	37
	The Healing of Humans and the Cosmos by the Incarnation of the Word	40
	The Process of Redemption	40
	Athanasius and the History of Salvation: the Teaching of the Word	41
	Conclusion	43
CONCLUSION		45
	Introduction	45
	A Summary: Participation in Context	45
	Paul	45
	Irenaeus	46
	Athanasius	47
	Participatory Atonement in Paul, Irenaeus and Athanasius	47
	The Model: its Viability and its Implications	48
	Ideas of God, the Church, Science and the Wider World	48
	Conclusion: Love, Ignorance and the Life of God	49
REFERENCES		50

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Division of Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses.

Margaret Dingle

Date: 5 September 2019

Acknowledgements

To my Supervisors

The Reverend Doctor Cathy Thomson

Doctor Rodney Fopp

and my Mentor

The Reverend Doctor Gillies Ambler

for advice and encouragement

Also to Anthony Bondarenko for assistance with page numbering

Abstract

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation” (2 Cor.5:17a NRSV)

This thesis demonstrates that appeasement motifs of atonement are not necessary to maintain a theologically well-argued theory of atonement. In particular it explores as an alternative early Christian concepts of the rehabilitation of human nature through union with Christ, leading to the restoration of humanity’s relationship with God and the renewal of creation. Both sin and death are overcome through the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, who is both God and human. In this thesis this is demonstrated particularly in the works of Paul, Irenaeus of Lyons and Athanasius of Alexandria.

This thesis understands atonement as reconciliation, following the Greek word translated as “atonement” in Romans 5:11 in the King James Bible, translated as “reconciliation” in newer translations.

The concept of union with Christ is examined in Paul’s writings, especially his words about being “in” Christ, of sharing Christ’s death and resurrection, of being the body of Christ, and of being a new creation in Christ. Irenaeus of Lyons wrote about growing into the divine, enabled by Christ’s participation in human life and history whereby Christ healed history, sanctified human life and reconciled humans to God in union with Christ. Athanasius of Alexandria has an incarnational view of the Atonement, where the God Word took on human nature and transformed it through his life, death and resurrection, defeating death and restoring immortality to humans, enabling them to partake of the divine nature.

This thesis finds that incarnational Atonement was a process whereby Christ in the course of his life, death and resurrection united himself with humanity and enabled participation in his divine and human nature. This view of atonement has consequences: it shows that God is with us, and is not a god of vengeance. Consequently we should not seek retribution and should regard others as being, The whole creation is affected by the Incarnation. God has lived as one of us, taking the form of a creature in creation, while still remaining God. Christ has inaugurated the new creation, healing the universe by his Incarnation.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Christians have generally linked the death and resurrection of Jesus with reconciliation, the rectification of the relationship between God and humans. Underlying this theology is the assumption that things are not right between God and humans and that God remedied the situation by “sending” his Son into the world. Events in human history and the current state of the world leave no doubt that many evils stem from human behaviour. If sin is the failure to love God and one’s neighbour then atonement as reconciliation with God was certainly needed. But what is in question here is how to image atonement and the understandings of the nature of God that lie behind theories of atonement.

The Meaning of the Word “Atonement”

Traditional Christian belief has always held that the Christ event and particularly the death and resurrection of Christ healed the relationship between God and humankind. This is generally known as “The Atonement” but the word “Atonement” represents a tangled web of changing word meanings and interactions between language, Bible translation and theology. The word occurs only once in the New Testament in the King James Version,¹ reproducing Bible translator William Tyndale’s translation of καταλλαγην (reconciliation), which had the same meaning in English at the time.. The same word was used to translate “kippur” in the Old Testament, to refer to the “covering” of impurities attaching to the sanctuary and holy things, because of sins and ritual impurities. The word meaning shifted to denote, in common parlance, “expiation for an offence, or reparation: extinguishment of guilt or paying the penalty for an offence”² although it is also used simply of cleansing.³

Subsequently the New Revised Standard Version and New International Version translated καταλλαγην as “reconciliation” in Romans 5:11,⁴ but the NRSV and NIV replaced the KJV translation of ιλαστριον, “propitiation” with “sacrifice of atonement” in Romans 3:25.⁵ This links atonement with sacrifice in a way not present in previous English translations and may

¹ Romans 5:11

² New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 887.

³ Gerald O’Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15-7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

be influenced by theological pre-suppositions, and which in turn may have been influenced by changing word meanings. This process tends to bolster sacrificial and penal substitution theories.

Some Early Christian Images of Atonement

Biblical images of salvation through Christ and especially his death and resurrection employ a number of images. In his book, *Christus Victor*,⁶ Gustaf Aulen called them “*motifs*” of atonement, and these occur, with developments, in early Christian literature. As seen by Gustaf Aulen, the predominant theme in early Christian literature was redemption, or *Christus Victor motif*, liberation through the triumphant Christ.⁷ This could involve the idea of buying back slaves. Some early Christian writers regarded the death of Christ as the price paid to Satan for the release of humanity from the slavery to sin and death. However, redemption in the Old Testament did not necessarily involve a payment to the master or captor. For instance, God did not pay the Egyptians to release the Israelites from slavery.⁸

Another *motif* of atonement used in the New Testament and was sacrifice. Sacrifice was a common in Second Temple Judaism and Greco-Roman paganism, so it is not surprising that this image is used in the New Testament. The understanding of sacrifice is complicated by the existence of different kinds and concepts of sacrifice: whole burnt offerings, thank offerings, offerings of wellbeing (communion sacrifices) and sacrifices for removal of ritual impurities and sins. These last, except for inadvertent sins, were generally offered to purify the sanctuary, rather than the individual. This purification was made by applying the blood (symbolising life)⁹ of a perfect sacrificial victim to the impure individual or to the sanctuary.¹⁰ While not directly purifying the worshipper, the application of blood to the Altar or Mercy Seat made it safe for worship to take place. Such sacrifices are referred to in English translations of the Old

⁶ A version of this is Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* trans. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1931).

⁷ See O'Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*, 127. Also elsewhere in Chapter 6; Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1989), 125-33.

⁸ Gerald O'Collins, "Redemption: Some Crucial Issues," in *The Redemption; an Interdisciplinary Symposium on Christ the Redeemer* ed. Stephen T. Davies, Kendall, Daniel, O'Collins, Gerald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7-8. The word *ga'al*, translated as “redeemer” in Job meant a relative or vindicator, although the Old Testament also refers to the buying back, *padhah* of slaves.

⁹ Bradley H. McLean, "The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology," *New Testament Studies* XXXVIII (1992): 546. See also Lev. 17:11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 531-38.

Testament as sacrifices of “Atonement”, as a translation of the Hebrew word “kippur”, or “(to) cover”. Bradley McLean asserts that Paul never refers to Christ’s death as an atoning sacrifice.¹¹

Anselm and After

By the time of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) the language of “expiation”, that is the wiping out of sins,¹² was prevalent in the western Church.¹³ The idea of redemption from the Devil, developed in the early centuries, which implied that Satan was paid or tricked, was repugnant to Anselm.¹⁴ In *Cur Deus Homo* Anselm sought to show that the Incarnation and the death of Christ were consistent with the prevailing Christian doctrine of God.¹⁵ God was not injured by human sin, but the harmony and perfection of God’s creation was damaged and its purpose, which was to glorify God, was frustrated. According to Anselm, to restore the order and beauty of creation and to enable it to achieve its purpose, satisfaction had to be made. This could either be punishment, or the giving of a gift greater than the offence¹⁶

Since God was infinitely above creation, “any failure to honour God [was]¹⁷ an offence of infinite weight. God, being loving, was not willing to punish humanity, as this would destroy his creation. Since humanity could not repay the debt the God-man Christ paid it by the gift of his voluntary death in order to restore creation.¹⁸ While Anselm concentrated on the death,¹⁹ I agree with Anselm in asserting that the Incarnation restored creation. However, like Paul Fiddes, I see this as a restoration of a relationship rather than payment of a debt.²⁰

Love, Justice and Penal Substitution

¹² O’Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*, 15-16, 133.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁴ Anselm, “Cur Deus Homo?,” (<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CHRIST/CURDEUS.HTM>), Chapter 7.

¹⁵ Stephen R. Holmes, “The Upholding of Beauty: A Reading of Anselm’s “Cur Deus Homo”,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54, no. 2 (2001): 195.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 196-7.

¹⁷ “Is” (Holmes’ text)

¹⁸ Gerald O’Collins and Michael Keenan Jones, *Jesus Our High Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 106.

¹⁹ O’Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*, 136.

²⁰ The NT has references to sin as a debt, for instance in the parable of the unforgiving slave (Matt. 18:21-35). However, in the parable the Lord forgives the slave his debt, and only rescinds forgiveness when the slave refuses to forgive his fellow slave who owes him a small amount of money. While initially harsh, the Lord relents and does not demand satisfaction until the slave refuses to show pity on his fellow slave. See also Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* 99.

While Anselm rejected punishment as a mode of satisfaction compatible with God's love for humanity, in the centuries that followed, the idea that sin required punishment and of Christ as the one bearing the punishment in our place gained ground. Aquinas saw the importance of love and repairing human nature but regarded Christ's sacrifice as "placating" (appeasing) God.²¹ Despite Aquinas' insistence on the loving acceptance of his sufferings by Christ, this left the way open for Luther and Calvin to propose Penal Substitution theories in which Christ was represented as taking the punishment for sin, in order to appease the wrath of God.²²

According to penal substitution theories God wants to forgive sin but his justice demands a commensurate punishment for sin, so the incarnate Son of God bore the penalty, which he was able to do because he was both a sinless human and God. This thesis opposes this theory of atonement, while acknowledging nuances among its proponents.

A number of theologians have objected to Penal Substitution on the grounds that it is external to sinners, simply transferring the penalty of sin from sinful humans onto Christ. Thomas Torrance has condemned this approach, describing it as "forensic" and said that rather than simply taking the punishment due to us, the Word made flesh and united himself to humanity, assumed our sinful nature and transformed it from within himself in the course of his earthly life. Torrance particularly singles out Athanasius for praise in teaching that the Incarnation of the Son of God changes our nature into the likeness of the divine nature.²³

On the other hand, J. I Packer defends substitution against charges of it being "external" by saying that, as the Second Adam, Christ involved us in his sin bearing, even though we had "no share in performing it". He quotes 2 Corinthians 5:14 "One has died for all; therefore all have died."²⁴ However, Paul Fiddes criticises Penal Substitution as a two stage process: Christ

²¹ O'Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*, 135-36.

²² Fiddes notes that Penal Substitution is based on an interpretation of Paul, using Anselm's concept of debt and satisfaction, combined with a Roman view of law, as opposed to feudal law, as used by Anselm. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* 96-98.

²³ Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement : The Person and Work of Christ* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 59, 161.

²⁴ J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?: The Logic of Penal Substitution.," in *What Did the Cross Achieve?: The Logic of Penal Substitution. In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement.* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007), 84.

substituted for us, and later we can have communion with him. It does not incorporate the healing of the human personality into the act of atonement. Fiddes remarks:

this comes as a later appropriation of what has been achieved, and misses the heart of the atonement as the restoring of a relationship between persons, and as the restoring of a relationship in which all estranged partners are involved.²⁵

The view of Paul Fiddes is that although no one has to suffer as Christ did, in suffering Christ underwent the depths of human alienation from God²⁶ and took humanity with him and restored it through his death and resurrection.

Underlying this disagreement are different concepts of justice. Packer asserts that God endorses retributive justice,²⁷ that is, that offences must be punished. However, there are other ways of looking at justice. Justice can mean the restoring of relationships that have been broken by wrongdoing. According to Fiddes, Justification, as preached by Paul, involves not only the restoration of right standing before God but a new relationship which transforms our being.²⁸

Notwithstanding these developments in Atonement Theory, especially in the second millennium of the Christian Church,²⁹ there existed in the early Church, alongside other images of Atonement, an alternative vision of Atonement, that is Atonement through union with the incarnate Christ. This understanding of Atonement has probably never disappeared and continues in conjunction with other *motifs*, but it has been subsumed in them, even decried as the “physical” theory of Atonement. However, the concept of union with Christ appears in some biblical writers such as Paul and in patristic authors such as Irenaeus and Athanasius. An exploration of this is the focus of my thesis.

The Focus of this Thesis

This thesis focusses on an incarnational understanding of the Atonement as union with the Incarnate Christ, who by his incarnation, life, death and resurrection, transformed human nature to the likeness of his divine nature. The picture of God presented by Penal Substitution is not,

²⁵ Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* 99.

²⁶ "Salvation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. Kathryn Tanner and Iain Torrance John Webster (UK: Oxford University Press, 2007; reprint, 2010), 187-88.

²⁷ Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?: The Logic of Penal Substitution.," 83.

²⁸ Fiddes, "Salvation," 99.

²⁹ It must be added here that there are other theories such as “Non Violent Atonement” (Weaver) and Girard’s unmasking of the victimage (Scapegoat) mechanism.

to my mind, in accordance with the picture of a loving Father presented in many parts of the New Testament, for instance, Matthew 5:44-49; 7:9, and indeed the Old. I also felt that such a view of God would be difficult to commend to those outside the Church. While some say we should not adjust the Gospel to the world, neither should one interpret it in a way contrary to one's deepest convictions about the nature of God.

I found in previous reading of Irenaeus and Athanasius a participatory picture of the Atonement, and on further reading I found this also in Paul's writings. Paul's epistles have been interpreted in many ways, but the concept of being "in Christ" and participating in his death and resurrection are major aspects of his writing.

Irenaeus was a major Christian thinker who lived close to the Apostolic age and wrote that in his youth he had heard Polycarp, the disciple of John,³⁰ preach. His developmental understanding of human spiritual development and his appreciation of the goodness of the material creation resonates with much modern thought yet remains based in Biblical and early Christian doctrine. For Irenaeus Christ by participating in human life and history joined humanity to God.³¹

Athanasius strongly advocated for recognition of the divinity of Christ, along with his humanity, in a time when these matters were in strong dispute. His understanding of the Incarnation was that the divine Word assumed human nature and healed it from within from all defects and particularly its mortality. Both Irenaeus and Athanasius had strongly incarnational views of redemption.

This thesis is not about comparing theories of Atonement. Rather it seeks to show how incarnational understandings of the Atonement are expressed by the three theologians and ultimately how they can be of value in the present day. They provide an alternative view of salvation which I call "salvation through participation in Christ". This thesis will show how they envisaged salvation through participation.

³⁰ I leave open the question as to whether this was John the Apostle, or John the Elder, another disciple of Christ.

³¹ Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," in *The Writings of Irenaeus*, ed. & J. Donaldson A. Roberts, Eds., A. Roberts & W. H. Rambaut, Trans. (Edinburgh; London; Dublin: T. & T. Clark; Hamilton & Co.; John Robertson & Co. , 1868-1869), 3.19.1.

The Aims of this Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to examine how three well-known theologians from the early Church understood salvation from the aspect of participation in the incarnate Christ. This was based on their understanding of humanity and its relation to God. This involved the union of the believer, and in some sense, the whole human race, with the incarnate Christ.

All three had clear concepts of how salvation was effected and by whom. The nature of the person of Christ was supremely important for all three theologians. The thesis aims to show that an incarnational participatory image of salvation is credible and has value for today's world.

What Inspired my Focus

In harmony with Fiddes (above), I believe that the concept a God who requires retribution for sin goes against the Biblical conception of a God of love,³² even if he is also a just God. Sin needed a remedy but it was not achieved by a transfer of penalty but rather by bringing sinners into union with Christ and remaking them in his image. Fiddes remarks that Jesus rejected the principle of *Lex Talionis*.³³

I argue that God's love encompasses his justice. God loves all his creatures and is not a God of violence.³⁴ Following Irenaeus and others I hold that unrepentant evil doers punish themselves by depriving themselves of God's love,³⁵ rather than being punished by God. As a toddler throwing a tantrum is temporarily unable to avail himself or herself of the fellowship of his or her loving family, so humans can be blind to or consciously reject the love of God. The angry toddler will eventually calm down without drastic action on the part of the parents. Human sin is far more serious; we have done terrible things to each other and creation, but behind our alienation waits a loving God always ready to reconcile.

³² Ps. 104:8; 145:8, Matt. 7:9-11, and Matt. 5:44-45 which is used by René Girard.

³³ Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* 103. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" Matt. 5:38, referring to Levitical law. *Lex Talionis* lit. "law of retaliation."

³⁴ René Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, ed. Jean-Michel Oughourlian, et al., Athlone Contemporary European Thinkers (London: Continuum, 2003), 180-90, 96-205.

³⁵ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," V.27.1-2.

I consider the concept of retributory justice, or the need to punish an offence, to be of human origin and agree with René Girard that “to leave violence behind, it is necessary to give up the idea of retribution.”³⁶ This may go against our deeply engrained and fundamentally good sense of fairness, but “‘My thoughts are not your thoughts ...’ declares the Lord.”³⁷ God’s justice does not necessarily coincide with ours, as the parable of the Forgiving Father³⁸ illustrates.³⁹

With J Denny Weaver I consider the death of Jesus to be the result of his faithful carrying out of his mission⁴⁰, including making a claim to be the Messiah,⁴¹ without which his mission could not have been accomplished.⁴² However, in becoming incarnate and taking on the human condition in order to heal us, Christ took on all aspects of humanity and that included human mortality,⁴³ which he overcame by his death and resurrection. In the words the words of Gregory Nazianzus “What is not assumed is not healed”.

My Approach

Having long had concerns about Penal Substitution theories, I have felt for some time that union with Christ might be a better way of understanding the Atonement. When reading Athanasius’ *On the Incarnations* some years previously in conjunction with a Bachelor of Theology subject, “Jesus the Christ” at Charles Sturt University I found Athanasius’ incarnational approach resonated with me. During the same degree course I had also read an extract from Irenaeus, in conjunction with the subject, “God, Humanity and Difference”. I found aspects of Irenaeus writing presented a refreshing approach to the relationship of God and humanity and later read more. I found in Irenaeus passages about participation in Christ.

³⁶ Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, 198.

³⁷ Isaiah 55:8

³⁸ Luke 15:11-32

³⁹ It might be noted that the words, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours,” indicates that the elder son, unlike his brother, had benefited all his life from fellowship with his father. The unrepentant sinner is cutting him or herself off from fellowship with God, which is our ultimate happiness

⁴⁰ See J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, second edition, greatly revised and expanded, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., 2011.

⁴¹ See also Athanasius in *On the Incarnation* on the necessity for Christ’s death to be public.

⁴² Even though Jesus encountered opposition early in his Ministry, the “Messianic Secret” of Mark enabled Jesus to continue with his ministry of teaching and healing for a time and prevented it from being hi-jacked for political purposes. Eventually, however, he had to confront the Jewish leaders and not back down and this, combined with fears of unrest by the Roman authorities, led to his death. The Messiah was not considered to be divine but his answer to the High Priest in Mark 14:61-62) virtually amounted to a claim for divinity or at least to be in the future at the Right Hand of God.

⁴³ Thomas Torrance said Christ took on our sinful nature, but without sinning (Ref) and healed it. The New Testament has numerous references to Christ being tempted.

Wanting to base my approach in Scripture, I re-examined Paul, and found that his union with Christ and Second Adam passages also agreed with this approach.

My approach was to read works by the three authors and secondary literature about them. In particular I read Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians, all undisputed letters or Paul, together with commentaries and secondary sources. I read *Against Heresies* and some or all of *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching* by Irenaeus, together with secondary sources. I read Athanasius' *On the Incarnation* and *Four Discourses Against the Arians*, together with some other primary documents cited by secondary sources. I copied or marked interesting quotations from my primary sources, and sometimes from my secondary sources, especially those likely to be useful for my thesis, and took notes. I also read material about different approaches to the Atonement and examined the origin and meaning of terms used in discussing the Atonement. With Paul and Athanasius I sometimes examined the original Greek. When I felt ready I wrote down my thoughts. These took some time to organise and edit but my hope is that now I have a coherent thesis.

Chapter Outlines

The first of the writers discussed is Paul. Paul has been interpreted in many ways and this thesis does not pretend to give an exhaustive account of Paul's theology. However, this thesis notes that but that participation in Christ is a strong theme in Paul's works. Paul said that he no longer lived but Christ lived in him; believers were "in" Christ, they and in some passages the whole of humanity, die in Christ, but believers will also rise in Christ. Believers are the body of Christ, have clothed themselves with Christ and are a new creation. Christ is the second Adam who inaugurates the newly created humanity. For Paul the Cross and resurrection affected the whole of humanity and inaugurated a new creation.

For Irenaeus, humanity began in innocence but not perfection, for humans were as yet "infants." Irenaeus attributed the Fall to human immaturity and to the Word not yet being visible. Salvation began with Adam, as humans were prepared for the coming of Christ, but was concentrated in the Incarnation. Humans were enabled by the coming of the Word to participate in the life of God, everlastingly becoming more and more like God, making progress into infinity but always remaining a creature. In his earthly life the Word healed human history by symbolically re-enacting it, and human nature by living through the stages of human life.

Athanasius was insistent that the Word Christ was God, but took a human body in order to save humans who were perishing and were becoming more and more corrupt and under the power

of death. Only the Word could save humans from death, and to do this he had to die, but since the Word was immortal, he took a human body so that he could die and save humans from death by dying and rising again. In the course of his Incarnation⁴⁴ he “healed every aspect of the human being” taking our degraded nature and healing it from within. Because the Word indwelt his body, he could not remain dead, and rose again, conferring immortality on all who believed.

The conclusion to this thesis summarises what I see as the major contributions to incarnational atonement from each of the three theologians, and explains why I believe that the incarnational participation model of Atonement is valuable. I consider how adopting this perspective on the Atonement affects how we see God, each other and creation.

Conclusion

This Introduction gave an overview of Atonement theories as a background for the exposition of an incarnational model of Atonement demonstrated by Paul, Irenaeus and Athanasius. It discussed the issues which motivated my thesis and how I went about writing it. The Chapter outline summarises the contributions of the three theologians to the development of an incarnational participatory view of Atonement. To begin the discussion, I will next write about Paul and how his concept of union with Christ shaped his view of atonement.

⁴⁴ Strictly speaking his earthly incarnation, since Christ ascended still incarnate.

CHAPTER 1: PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST AND CHRIST'S PARTICIPATION IN HUMANITY IN PAUL

Introduction

Paul uses multiple images of atonement and has been interpreted in many ways. Overall, Paul ties reconciliation firmly to the death of Christ and salvation to his resurrection.⁴⁵ This can be interpreted in the “forensic” sense, in which Christ satisfied the justice of God by dying in our place, or in the sense that we participate in Christ in his death and resurrection and are reconciled to God by becoming like Christ.⁴⁶ Paul shows that God was Christ reconciling the world to himself and that believers are in Christ. One might say therefore that reconciliation involves being in Christ, or participating in Christ. To illustrate this I will examine participatory texts from Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians.

Such texts in Paul include a number of themes, some of which overlap: Second Adam, dying and rising in Christ, being “in” or “putting on” Christ, union with one another in Christ/ Body of Christ, and being part of a new creation in Christ, which follows on from the Second Adam idea, but in a cosmic sense. Taken together, these themes in Paul lead to a scenario where Christians die and rise again in Christ and thus become incorporated in the new creation of which Christ is the first example. The first texts to be considered will be texts referring to sharing Christ’s death and/or resurrection, beginning with Romans 5:12-21.

Second Adam/Death and Resurrection Texts

Romans 5:12-21

The first of the Second Adam/death and resurrection texts which I will consider is Romans 5: 12 -21. In this passage Paul asserted the common identity of all, firstly in the sin and mortality of Adam, and secondly in the righteousness and life of Christ, who as the second Adam brought life from death (resurrection) and justification, also referred to as rectifying of life,⁴⁷ to all. Here I prefer for the verses below Leander Keck’s translation, “rectifying of life”, which is the literal translation for δικαίωσιν ζωῆς. Keck notes that rectifying of life is one process, not two,

⁴⁵ Romans 5:10. 2 Corinthians 5:18.

⁴⁶ Some advocates of Penal Substitution, such as J. Packer, see this as Christ assuming our identity, so that all died in Christ, but this does not extend to our being thereby transformed by being in Christ to become like him. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?: The Logic of Penal Substitution.," 84-86.

⁴⁷ Leander E. Keck, *Romans*, ed. Victor Paul Furnish, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 153-55. Another translation is acquittal that brings life .In “BDAG” Edited by Frederick William Danker, in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 250.

justification/rectification followed by life. Thus Paul wrote about how Adam's sin brought death to all people, but Christ's righteousness brought life to all.

12 Therefore sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned

17 If, because of one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life (rectifying of life) for all.⁴⁸

Jewish exegesis of Scripture in the time of Paul⁴⁹ held that Adam's mortality was the result of sin and was transmitted to his descendants.⁵⁰ Thus all are identified with Adam. Christ's righteousness results in "justification and life/rectifying of life for all." Christ's life, death and resurrection, or here, an unspecified act of righteousness, has resulted in all humans being, at least potentially, in Christ and part of the new creation. As Karl Barth, quoted by Douglas Harink, says, "all are also already dead in Christ, all are caught up already into the crucifixion; all stand reconciled to God through the death of Christ. All are in this sense already in Christ."⁵¹

Barth does not mention the resurrection in this quotation, which corresponds with 2 Cor. 5:14, "For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convince the as one has died for all; therefore all have died." This implies collective identity of all, first in Adam and secondly in Christ. From God's point of view we all have died and risen again in Christ,⁵² Union with Christ meant union with the Divine and human Christ. While some expressions of the person of Christ in Paul are ambiguous, some of Paul's statements, such as "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,"⁵³ suggests that he thought that Christ was divine. This text emphasises that it was God who was in Christ effecting the reconciliation.

⁴⁸ Romans 5:12.17.18.

⁴⁹ Keck, *Romans*, 147.

⁵⁰ Some modern Jewish Rabbis, such as Stuart Federow, hold that Adam and Eve were created mortal, but in any case Adam and Eve after sinning were prevented from eating from the Tree of Life (or good and evil and the problem is that Adam entertained the 'evil' and so barred from immortality., Stuart Federow, "What Jews Believe: Essay 5: "Jews Do Not Believe in Original Sin"." <http://www.whatjewsbelieve.org/explanation5.html>.

Later Irenaeus interpreted death as imposed by God on sinful humans to limit their evil and make possible their rehabilitation. It seems however doubtful that Paul saw things in this way.

⁵¹ Douglas Karel Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2003), 252; *ibid.*; *ibid.* Quoting Karl Barth.

⁵² Romans 6:3-5; Col. 3.3. "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Colossians is arguably Pauline.

⁵³ Alternative translation NRSV 2 Cor. 5:19 (Greek)

This reciprocity demonstrates that by being in Christ we are reconciled to God, that is, our identification with Christ ensures the Atonement. Later in this thesis it will be demonstrated from the works of Irenaeus and especially Athanasius⁵⁴ that the Incarnation effected a more intimate union of God with creation, without God ceasing to be God, than the previous indwelling of the Word in Creation. This can be taken as a rationale for the Pauline conception of participation of the whole human race in Christ.⁵⁵

Romans 6:3-11

The significance of Christ's death for the Christian is further explored in Romans 6:3-11, which I classify as a union with Christ in death and resurrection, text. In mentioning newness of life it anticipates the new creation texts. The context for this passage is Paul's possibly rhetorical refutation of the suggestion that people continue in sin so that grace might abound. A new birth involves a corresponding change of conduct. Paul wrote:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ were baptised into his death. Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body⁵⁶ of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin⁵⁷. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death that he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.⁵⁸

As Christ died and was resurrected in a transformed state, so the inner being of the Christian has to be so drastically renewed as to involve the "death" of the "old self"⁵⁹ (ὁ παλιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος – our old human being),⁶⁰ and "walk in newness of life."⁶¹ This does not mean

⁵⁴ Athanasius, "Athanasius: Select Works and Letters," in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. Archibald Robertson, Athanasius: Select Works and Letters (Peabody, USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1891; reprint, Second Printing, 1995), Para 8.

⁵⁵ Fiddes (and others) talk/s about the modern difficulty in accepting collective identity (although Australians managed to apologise collectively to the stolen generation of Aboriginal children). which was accepted by the Jews and Greek philosophy (Refs). This seems to me a mode of collectivism which is acceptable to today's mindset.

⁵⁶ Σῶμα, which can mean body, living or dead, or sometimes the whole person

⁵⁷ C.f. Irenaeus and the therapeutic purpose of death. Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 3.23.6.

⁵⁸ Romans 6:3-11 NRSV

⁵⁹ 6:6 NRSV

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Romans 6:4 NRSV

physical violence but the utter destruction of the old self-centred way of life which makes way for our new creation in Christ. As seen in the quotation from Karl Barth (above), in the sight of God, Christians and all people have already died and risen in Christ,⁶² but in this world people are still subject to temptation and living in mortal bodies. The potential is still there to not accept the gift of God and to turn back to old ways. Although in this text the emphasis is on inner renewal, the passage also looks forwards to eventual physical resurrection. Christ's death can be interpreted as the radical transformation of humanity whereby humanity died with Christ, who identified himself with sinful humanity, and was resurrected with him.

This means not simply trying to follow Christ's example, but being identified with him. N. T. Wright⁶³ notes the use of Greek terms for being (in a state/condition/situation) together, such as συνετάφημεν (being buried with, 6:4), being crucified together (συνεσταυρώθη 6:6) and the adjective συμφοῦτοι (6:5), (plural of συμφοῦτος), translated as "united with" in NRSV, literally "growing together", but also used in pagan literature to denote a sharing of a similar experience or to denote unity with a deity.⁶⁴ The participation of the Christian in Christ's death and resurrection are explored in further Pauline texts, for instance:

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on therefore we regard no one from a human point of view;⁶⁵ even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view,⁶⁶ we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.⁶⁷

Christians are identified with a Christ who plumbed the depths of human misery social rejection, but who is also the source of life. One interpretation, as given by Karl Barth, above, is that Adam's race died and was resurrected in Jesus and those who are baptised are partakers in this. Christ dwells in the Christian through his Spirit and will ensure resurrection at the *Parousia*, but also in this world Christians already share in the life of God. This can be seen as a life and resurrection through union with Christ text.

⁶² But note that Barth does not refer to rising in Christ in the quoted passage.

⁶³ Nicholas Thomas Wright, "Romans," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol.10: Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans; 1 Corinthians*, ed. Leander E Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 538, 39.

⁶⁴ Danker, 960.

⁶⁵ Greek "according to the flesh"

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:14-17a

But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (διὰ δικαιοσύνη)

But if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.⁶⁸

1 Corinthians 15

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul writes a lengthy exposition on the Resurrection, firstly of Christ, and then of Christians. Paul's main consideration is to defend belief in the Resurrection of all to Christians who might interpret the resurrection of Christians as living life in this world in the spirit of Christ. Paul Sampley⁶⁹ says that the Christians at Corinth all believed in the resurrection of Christ, but some regarded their own resurrection as living "in newness of life" in this world (See Romans 6).⁷⁰ Detailed consideration of this passage is outside the scope of this thesis, but it is noteworthy that in 1 Corinthians 15 the general resurrection is tied to participation in the risen Christ, who is the last Adam.

[But in fact] Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. (1 Cor. 15:20-23)

While Paul in Romans 6:3-11 taught that Christians should live in this world as "risen" people, having in a sense already died and risen in Christ⁷¹ here he asserts the bodily resurrection at the *Parousia* of all Christians. 1 Cor. 15:20-22 is a strongly participatory text which complements Romans 6:3-11. Our death is the result of our participation in Adam (as his descendants). Christ also was a descendant of Adam and shared our death, but was raised from the dead, the first person for this to happen to in a state where death would no longer affect him.⁷² Our participation in the risen Christ ensures our resurrection.

While both Romans 6:3-11 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 talk about death and resurrection in Christ, there is a difference of emphasis. Romans 6:3-11 emphasises that participation in Christ must mean a break with the old human nature and way of behaving, but also that Christians share in the death and resurrection of Christ here and now. Corinthians 15:20-23 shows that

⁶⁸ Romans 8:10-11

⁶⁹ J. Paul Sampley, "1 Corinthians," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 10: Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans; 1 Corinthians*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004).

⁷⁰ NT Wright has a similar opinion and writes on this in detail, but also mentions that some may have simply believed in the survival of the soul, Nicholas Thomas Wright, "Resurrection in Corinth (2): The Key Passages. 1: 1 Corinthians 15," Kindle Edition ed., *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK, 2003).

⁷¹ Roman 6:3-11

⁷² In contradistinction to those like Jairus' daughter and Lazarus, who would eventually die again.

Christians, although they will eventually die physically,⁷³ are no longer bound to death and will rise again at the Parousia because they are in Christ.

In Corinthians 15:35-59 Paul further expounds the resurrection in terms of participation in Christ and bearing the image of the Second Adam, Christ. In verses 45-49 Paul wrote:

Thus it is written, “The first man,⁷⁴ Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.⁷⁵

Thus by participating in Christ, we become like him, the man from heaven, in our resurrection. The concept of bearing Christ’s image is further developed by Irenaeus and Athanasius, as seen in the following chapters.

Being in Christ and the New Creation

Paul often spoke of being “in” (ἐν) Christ. The incarnation, death and resurrection themes are also intimately associated with the new creation. This is the state of those who have previously come “into” (εἰς) in being baptised into Christ. So Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the Ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself/God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, , not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

This involves a major change in the order of things. While the world may seem to be going on as usual, God in Christ has reconciled the world to himself. It is not God who needed to be reconciled but his creation, and in particular humanity. Unknown to those who do not believe, the new creation has already begun. God was and is in Christ, and those who believe are in Christ.⁷⁶ This union is participation in Christ and transforms the believer.

Louis Martyn sees Paul’s writing as apocalyptic. Christ’s death and resurrection resulted in the death of the Cosmos and the New Creation⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that Paul, unlike the author of

⁷³ Unless the Parousia comes during their natural life time (1 Cor 15:51-52, 1 Thess. 4:17).

⁷⁴ ἄνθρωπος, which means a man or a human being. Since both Adam and Jesus were male, the translation is appropriate, but the image bearing applies to both men and women.

⁷⁵ 1 Cor. 15:45-49 (NRSV)

⁷⁶ 1 Cor. 10:14-16

⁷⁷ J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 17-122.

John's Gospel, who uses *κόσμος* in many senses, including as the created world.⁷⁸ employs a different word, *κτίσις* (creation) rather than *κόσμος* (world, existing order), when talking about renewal, rather than destruction. I infer from this that when in Galatians 6:14 Paul says he is crucified to the cosmos and the cosmos is crucified to him, he is referring to the powers, divisions and structures of the former age, not to the natural creation. Thus in Romans 8:20-23 the created world, along with those in Christ, is compared to a woman in labour, giving birth to the new creation. But the sense is that the old creation does not die in childbirth but is renewed, rather than replaced. While Paul's interest in new creation is focussed those in Christ, the first born of the new creation, the effect of Christ's death and resurrection will eventually spread to the whole cosmos.

Those who are in Christ are already part of this new creation, with new values and fellowship in Christ. So intimately connected with Christ are they, that they are referred to as the body (*σῶμα*) of Christ, each differing in character and function, but all equally essential.⁷⁹ In the Lord's Supper Christians are united to Christ and to each other.⁸⁰ Old divisions are done away with.

However, in the course of this argument Paul makes some strong statements indicating the Christian's identity in Christ. Christians are one with one another because they are all in Christ. The Cross is the basis of their unity and Paul's and their being in Christ.

One of the most notable expressions of this unity in being in Christ is Galatians 3:27 -28.

As many of you as were baptised into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (NRSV)

While modern western people may make inferences about people based on their clothing,⁸¹ in Paul's world clothing indicated and conferred identity, so much that when Alexander the Great put on the clothing of a god, he was supposed to become the god.⁸² Richard Longenecker remarks:

The figurative use of *ἐνδύω* ("put on" or "clothe") with a personal object means to take on the characteristics/virtues and/or intentions of the one referred to, and so to become

⁷⁸ John 1:10.

⁷⁹ 1 Cor. 6:15-17; 12:12-27.

⁸⁰ 1 Cor. 10: 14-16

⁸¹ The idea that it is wrong to make inferences about people's worth from their clothing may be of Biblical origin (see James 2:1-6a)

⁸² Danker, 334.

like that person, Thus ἐνδύσασθε⁸³ means “you clothed yourselves with Christ ... and so became like him.”⁸⁴

Paul’s main purpose in Galatians seems to be to convince Gentile converts in Galatia that they did not need to be circumcised, in fact should not be. He is arguing against “the circumcision party” probably Jewish Christians who believed Gentile converts should be subject to the Law of Moses. According to Richard Hays⁸⁵ these “missionaries” believed Jesus to be the Messiah and the authoritative interpreter of the Law, which was to them the Good News. To Paul, however, the cross was God’s apocalyptic action which had broken the power of the forces which held humanity captive and inaugurated a new creation. The Cross, not the Law, was the basis of the relationship with God for Christ’s followers and there was no distinction between Jew and Gentile.⁸⁶ Not only this, but Jesus was not simply a leader and a prophet, but the believer lived in him. As Paul said in Galatians 2:19-20, he was no longer living under the Law but his life was now identified with the life of Christ. As Paul wrote in Galatians 2:19-20:

For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in/the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.⁸⁷ In Galatians 4:4 Paul spoke of Christ being born under the Law to redeem those under the Law,

Body of Christ texts

This oneness with Christ and one another is emphasised in the Body of Christ *motif*. The analogy of the body having many members was common in the ancient world as an image of unity, and Paul uses it to show that members of the Corinthian church all have different but equally significant functions in building up the Church. This image is also used in Romans 12:4-8. The Body of Christ image is taken up later in Ephesians and elsewhere, but there Christ in the head and the church is the body. In Corinthians the body of Christ includes ear, eye and nose, and the emphasis is on representing Christ rather than being controlled by or subordinate

⁸³ 2nd person plural middle

⁸⁴ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary V. 41 (Waco, Tex: Word Books, 1990), 156.

⁸⁵ Richard B. Hays, "Galatians," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 11: 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Philemon* ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004).

⁸⁶ "Galatians," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 11: 2 Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon*, ed. Leander E Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 185-87.

⁸⁷ Gal. 2: 19-20 NRSV with alternative translation.

to him.⁸⁸ In the Lord's Supper Christians are united with Christ in his body, being in union with him and with each other.⁸⁹

Our participation in Christ is based on his participation in our humanity. In urging for humility and mutual love to the Philippians, Paul wrote, possibly utilising an existing Christian hymn:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form⁹⁰ of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.⁹¹
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death-
even death on a cross.⁹²

In participating in us, Christ enabled us to participate in him. This passage and its sequel also for me indicates that Paul thought of Christ as divine.

Conclusion

The theme of participation is strong in Paul's writing. The believer and in a sense all humanity, died and rose in Christ. There is a strong sense that in participating in our humanity and mortality, Christ brought us along with him. The believer is in Christ and "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself".⁹³ It follows that the Christian is not only reconciled to God by being in Christ but is, in a sense, part of this reconciliation.

⁸⁸ 1 Cor. 12:23-31

⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-29

⁹⁰ μορφή (dative of μορφή, which encompasses the meaning of very nature, not just outward form). This word is also used about Christ taking the form or a slave.

⁹¹ Likeness here is ὁμοιώματι (dative of ὁμοίωμα), which can mean having common experiences, or being similar in appearance. BDAG Danker, 707. says this could mean Christ's physical body was capable of sinning as human bodies are, for that he had the outward form of a human.

⁹² Phil. 2:5-8

⁹³ 2 Cor. 5:19

CHAPTER 2: IRENAEUS – PARTICIPATION IN A CREATURELY WAY

Introduction

This chapter shows how Irenaeus wrote that Christ united humans to God⁹⁴ and completed and gathered up all things⁹⁵ to “abolish death and show forth life.”⁹⁶ Irenaeus, a Gentile writing in the second Century, no longer had to deal with the Paul’s concerns of a Jew preaching Christ to the Gentiles, and said little about Law and justification. However, he took up strongly Paul’s theme of union with Christ, facilitated by the Incarnation in which Christ took part in human life and history and thereby healed us. By joining humanity to God in his Incarnation, death and resurrection, the Son of God effected the Atonement. Paul preached union with Christ in his death and resurrection and only hints on the process through Christ’s life; as in Galatians 4:4, and 2 Corinthians 5:19; Irenaeus shows how Christ healed progressively by going through the stages of human life and human history.

In the previous chapter we have seen how Paul wrote about being in Christ and how believers, being in Christ, shared Christ’s death and resurrection, and were part of a new creation. Irenaeus of Lyons (c 130 – c 200) took up Paul’s theme of union with Christ and further developed it as growing everlastingly into the Divine while remaining a creature. Paul also wrote about being in Image of Christ and of bearing the Image of the “Man from Heaven”, (1 Cor. 15:45-49) that is, Christ.

For Irenaeus, bearing the image of Christ, who is the image of God the Father, meant participating in Christ. Yet such participation does not annihilate the creature or destroy its individuality as some may have misinterpreted Paul. When Paul said “It is not I that live, but Christ that lives in me,” (Gal 2.2) he did not mean that his human personality was erased but that his life was part of the life of Christ. For Irenaeus, participation meant the human creature sharing in the life of God and becoming progressively more like God, while remaining a creature. As Irenaeus said, God created humans for fellowship with Him⁹⁷ but humanity had not acted in accordance with God’s plan for them, and so had lost their immortality and were

⁹⁴ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.."

⁹⁵ Ephesians 1:10

⁹⁶ Irenaeus, "The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching," in *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching (translated from the Armenian with Introduction and notes by j. A. Robinson; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920)*

ed. R. M. Grant (New York: Routledge, 1997), 6.

⁹⁷ "Against Heresies," in *The Works of Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. (Edinburgh; London; Dublin

T & T Clark; Hamilton & Co.; John Robertson & Co., 1868-1869), 4.14.1.

captive to sin and Satan and cut off from the source of divine life. In taking on human nature and living through the stages of human life and re-enacting human history, the divine Son healed humanity, which was thereby joined to him and able to participate in the divine life. This, for Irenaeus, was the Atonement, or reconciliation.

Through the Incarnation, fallen humans were enabled to participate in Christ and therefore to share in Christ's divine nature, while remaining creatures. Irenaeus saw God as patient and compassionate, guiding the development of the "Earth Creature" towards union with him. God was always with Adam, but it was through the coming of Christ, the Image of God became visible on earth, and through the life, death and resurrection of Christ that humans were freed from death and the bondage to Satan and re-formed in the image of Christ, and so enabled to participate in the life of God.

Irenaeus and his Works

Irenaeus was a leader in the Greek speaking churches of Vienne and Lyons in the late second century. He said that as a boy or young man he heard Polycarp of Smyrna, (d 155) a disciple of John,⁹⁸ preach. It is believed Irenaeus came from Asia Minor.⁹⁹ In 177 he was the bearer of a letter from the churches at Vienne and Lyons, then undergoing persecution, to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome. During the persecution, Pothinus, the Bishop of Lyons, died in prison and a number of other members of the congregation suffered martyrdom. After this Irenaeus became the leader of the church in Lyons.¹⁰⁰ Little else is known for certain of his life, but two major works, *The Detection and Overthrow of So-Called Knowledge (Adversus Haereses – Against Heresies)* and *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching*, have survived, mainly in translation to Latin or Armenian. The original Greek remains only in quotations, including some in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Church History* (340)¹⁰¹

Irenaeus' Opponents: the Gnostics and others

⁹⁸ I am not entering into the controversy as to whether this was John the Apostle, or the Elder John, a "disciple of the Lord".

⁹⁹ Denis Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction* (London: T&T Clark International, 2010), 2.

¹⁰⁰ At the time of his visit to Rome Irenaeus was described in the accompanying recommendation as a presbyter, a term that could be interchangeable with "bishop" The actual leadership structure of his church is unknown. Ibid., 5.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 6.

Irenaeus' best known work, *Against Heresies*, argues against certain Christian sects, mainly the Valentinian Gnostics,¹⁰² the Marcionites¹⁰³ and the Ebionites.¹⁰⁴ The Gnostics, from which the Valentinians were selected by Irenaeus as an example, had an elaborate mythology, where a number of aeons emanated directly or indirectly from the supreme God.¹⁰⁵ The material world was the unfortunate result of the passion of one of the aeons, Sophia.¹⁰⁶ Those with the knowledge of the divine (Gnosis) would escape the material world after death into the Pleroma, or highest heaven.. Other Christians who had faith and led virtuous lives would after their death go to a lower heaven, while other people (material men) would just die and cease to exist.¹⁰⁷

Marcion,¹⁰⁸ on the other hand, believed that there were two Gods, the so-called wrathful God of the Old Testament, and the loving Father of Jesus, depicted in sections of the Gospels and Paul (selected by Marcion). The Ebionites¹⁰⁹ were Jewish Christians who denied the divinity of Jesus. Irenaeus argued for the oneness of God, the Father who created the world through the Son and the Spirit, his two hands,¹¹⁰ and for the divinity of the Son. He did this on the basis of the Jewish Scriptures, in the Septuagint version, and various New Testament writings, including the works of Paul and John.¹¹¹

Relevance to Participation of the Gnostic Controversy

In order to argue for participation in the divine, as he saw it, Irenaeus had to deal with the Gnostics' rival idea of participation. To the Gnostics God was remote from material things but on the same continuum as everything else. The material world was just a degraded by-product of the spiritual world. To Irenaeus, God was totally other than Creation but chose to give humanity the gift of participation in the divine. There was no opposition between God and creation, unlike in Gnosticism, where there was opposition between matter and spirit, divinity and the world. For Irenaeus, God in God's generosity and freedom chose to bestow his benefits on others, so that though distinct from God they could partake of the divine.¹¹² To Irenaeus participation could only occur where the divine and human are not opposed; according to

¹⁰² Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 1.11.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 1.27.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 3,15; 4.33.4.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 1.1.1; 1.1.3 ff.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 1.2.2-3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1.6, especially 1.6.5.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.27.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 1.26, 3.15.

¹¹⁰ Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 64.

¹¹¹ The New Testament (and possibly the Old Testament) Canon was not fixed in Irenaeus' day. In fact his endorsement of the four later canonical Gospels may have aided their inclusion in the Canon.

¹¹² Julie Canlis, "Being Made Human: The Significance of Creation for Irenaeus' Doctrine of Participation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58, no. 4 (2005): 439-41.

Gnostic beliefs becoming godlike was at the expense of creatureliness.¹¹³ To Irenaeus, God's generosity, especially in the Son assuming human nature, enabled humans to participate in God's being, while still remaining creatures. This was made possible because Christ was not some remotely generated Aeon, or simply a man, but God made visible (though the Father is invisible). In the following passage Irenaeus makes it clear that the Incarnation is crucial to participation.

For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God¹¹⁴

Receiving the adoption involves being "taken into the Word" who shows his divinity through his perfect humanity. In so participating in the Word we can reveal God through our humanity, which we share with Christ.¹¹⁵ This can only be done by being to some degree in the Image of Christ. The following section shows how Irenaeus interpreted Paul's concept of Christ as the Second Adam in terms of growing into the image of Christ.

Adam and Christ: Participation as Becoming more and more like the Image of God who is Christ

Participation involves growing into the Image of Christ, who is the Image of God. Irenaeus takes up a Paul's concept of Christ being the "second Adam" or "last Adam" but develops it in a different way from Paul. Paul contrasted Christ with Adam, with Adam seen in a negative light. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ will all be made alive,"¹¹⁶ and "As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven."¹¹⁷ In these passages Paul uses the word ἄνθρωπος, which means a man or a human being, as he does in Romans 6:6, "We know that our old self (ὁ παλιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος – our old human being) was crucified with him". The use of ἄνθρωπος in both passages suggests that Paul was generalising about humanity, represented by Adam. The old ἄνθρωπος or the ἄνθρωπος of dust was effectively the first Adam.¹¹⁸ According to Paul the human race had failed, and had

¹¹³ Ibid., 443.

¹¹⁴ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 3.19.1.

¹¹⁵ Denis Minns, *Irenaeus* (Washington/London: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 40,41.

¹¹⁶ 1 Cor. 15:22 (KJV)

¹¹⁷ 1 Cor. 15:49 (NRSV)

¹¹⁸ In the first creation account, which does not include the fall, the word "Adam" is used for multiple human beings, male and female, who are made in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26-27) I take Paul's use of ἄνθρωπος, with qualification in 1 Cor.15:22;49 and Romans 6:6 as being equivalent to Adam as the representative of the human race. Minns says that for Irenaeus Adam represents all humanity. Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 71.

been restored in Christ, who is both the “man from heaven” and also “born of a woman”,¹¹⁹ but only by being co-crucified¹²⁰ with Christ.¹²¹

Irenaeus, too, wrote of a new human race:

When He became incarnate and was made man He commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation, so that what we had lost in Adam - namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God - that we might recover in Christ Jesus.¹²²

While Paul in Corinthians 15 talks about contrasting images, the image of Adam being superseded by the image of Christ, Irenaeus refers to only one image, that of Christ, who is the image of God the Father, with humans being created with the capacity to grow into the image, but losing it because of sin.¹²³ While not excusing sin, Irenaeus attributes the loss of the Image to human immaturity at the beginning¹²⁴ and to the Word not yet being visible, as Christ was not yet incarnate.¹²⁵ According to Irenaeus’ thought, the Image of God referred to in Genesis 1:26-27 was that of God made visible, that is, Christ.¹²⁶ In order for humans to be re-formed in the image of God, the Word had to become incarnate. Irenaeus wrote of how the Incarnation made humans receptive of the Father, and able again to be in the image of Christ that is, to participate in God, yet for all this, Adam was always in the hands of God. Irenaeus wrote:

In the [times of] the end the Word of the Father and the Spirit of God,¹²⁷ having become united with the ancient substance of Adam’s formation, rendered man living and perfect, receptive of the perfect Father, in order that as in the natural [Adam] we were all dead, so in the spiritual we may all be made alive.¹²⁸ For never at any time did Adam escape the *hands*¹²⁹ of God, to whom the Father speaking said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” And for this reason in the last times (*fine*), not by the

¹¹⁹ Gal.4:4

¹²⁰ Romans 6:6; Commentary by N. T. Wright in Wright, "Romans," 538-39.

¹²¹ This distinction between Paul and Irenaeus is not absolute, as Irenaeus quotes Paul “But it is not The spiritual that is first, but the physical and then af spiritual” but regards it as a process that would have happened in any case; “For there had been necessity that, in the first place, a human being should be fashioned, and that what was fashioned should receive the soul; afterwards that it should thus receive the communion of the Spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45)

¹²² Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 3.18.1.

¹²³ Ibid., 5.12.2.

¹²⁴ Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 88. Referencing Irenaeus, "The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching." And "Adv. Haer.," 4.38.1-2.

¹²⁵ Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 73. Referencing Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 5.16.2. Humans were formed in the Image but lost it more easily because the Image was not yet visible

¹²⁶ Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 72,73.

¹²⁷ Refers to the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary, Luke 1:35.

¹²⁸ C.f. Paul the Anthropos of Dust and the Anthropos from Heaven, 1 Cor. 15:45-49

¹²⁹ Refers to Irenaeus’ description of the Son and the Spirit as the two hands of God. Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 64. Referencing Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," Preface Book 4.4 (not necessarily the same translation as mine).

will of man, but by the good pleasure of the Father, his hands form a living man in order that Adam might be created again after the image and likeness of God.¹³⁰

Irenaeus regarded the seeing of the Image as transforming those who saw it, that is, through Christ and through faith, and according to the will of God, those who see the Image receive life from it and participate in God. As Irenaeus wrote

For as those who see the light are within the light, and partake of its brilliancy;¹³¹ even so, those who see God, are in God, and receive of his splendour. But [His] splendour vivifies them; those, therefore, who see God, do receive life. And for this reason He, [although] beyond comprehension, and boundless and invisible, rendered Himself visible, and comprehensible and within the capability of those who believe, that He might vivify those who receive and behold him through faith.¹³²

Similarly Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that those who saw the glory of the Lord reflected were being transformed into the image of God

For all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.¹³³

For both Paul and Irenaeus, seeing the glory of God through faith had a transformative effect, resulting in either the partaking of the light or being transformed into the image of the glory of God. As seen in the quotation above, for Paul this was a process. So too, for Irenaeus, participation was a process where humans, over time, and in spite to the setback of the Fall, were enabled to participate in God.

Growing into the Divine: the benefits of imperfection

Irenaeus argued that humans were not made perfect from the beginning because being newly made they were “yet infants”¹³⁴ they could not bear divinity but needed to grow into the capacity “to bear God”.¹³⁵ Participating in God is a process. As a normal three year old cannot undertake university studies, but may develop the capacity through education and life experience, so newly made humans were being prepared, but not yet ready, to bear God. When Christ was incarnate he went through the stages of life so that humanity could mature in him. As Irenaeus wrote:

God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to man; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it,

¹³⁰ "Adv. Haer.," 4.39.2.

¹³¹ Although one might object that one could be in the dark and see light in the distance to see the light some of it must have entered the eye.

¹³² Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.20.5.

¹³³ 2 Cor. 3:18 (NRSV)

¹³⁴ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.38.1.

¹³⁵ Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 83. Referencing Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.38.1.

could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it. It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man's existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him. There was nothing, therefore, impossible to and deficient in God, [implied in the fact] that man was not an uncreated being; but this merely applied to him who was lately created, [namely] man.¹³⁶

To the obvious question as to why God did not create humans perfect (and able to bear God's glory), Dennis Minns¹³⁷ notes that Irenaeus, who originally said only the uncreated can be perfect, changed his argument to say that something is not perfect while it is developing. Only when completed is something perfect. Humans are created to grow eternally into the Image of God, revealed in the Incarnate Christ¹³⁸ and partake more and more of God's infinite glory. Rather than being granted a static and limited perfection, humans beings were called to grow endlessly into the divine. In writing of those who are saved Irenaeus said that after the Last Judgment "these do receive the kingdom for ever, and make constant advance in it."¹³⁹

The glory of this vision of Irenaeus is that for humans eternity is not a static perfection but a never ending journey into the divine. While writing in a time when Christians saw the world as created in six days, Irenaeus still saw God's creation as ongoing. Participation means allowing God to continue to his work of creation in the human.

Those things which, through His super-eminent kindness, receive growth and a long period of existence, do reflect the glory of the uncreated One, of that God who bestows what is good ungrudgingly. For from the very fact of these things having been created, [it follows] that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the Uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God.¹⁴⁰

Irenaeus likens humans to clay,¹⁴¹ which while moist can be moulded but once dry cannot be changed. Participation is part of God's ongoing creation, but humans must be patient let God create them in his own time.

How, then, will that be God which is not yet a human being? How will that be perfected which has just been begun? How will that be immortal which in its mortal nature did not obey its creator? You ought first to keep within the bound of humankind and then from there partake in the glory of God. For you do not make God, rather it is God who makes you. If then, you are the work of God, await the hand of your fashioner who does all things at the due time – the due time for you, that is, who are being created. Offer him a soft and pliable heart and retain the shape which your fashioner gave. Retain the moisture he gives you, for if you turn dry and hard you will lose the imprint of his

¹³⁶ "Adv. Haer.," 4.38.2.

¹³⁷ Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 74.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹³⁹ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.28.2.

¹⁴⁰ "Adv. Haer.," 4.38.3.

¹⁴¹ Appropriately since Adam was made of the red earth and there are a number of biblical references to God as potter, e.g., Jeremiaiah 18:3-4, Isaiah 29:6; 45:9, Romans 9:19-21.

fingers. ... But if you become hardened, and reject his handiwork and become ungrateful to him because he made you a human being – ungrateful that is, to God - you will have lost at once his handiwork and life. For creating belongs to the generosity of God; being created belongs to the nature of humankind.¹⁴²

This is recognition of human ontological status. Humans are not God and never will be. However, they can grow progressively more like God and partake of the divine life but need to recognise what they are and wait patiently for God to form and everlastingly re-form them.¹⁴³

The Word, in his incarnation, death and resurrection effected the costly healing of the Earth Creature, but there is more than a hint that Irenaeus envisaged the Word being incarnate even if humans had not sinned, for by saying that humans fell into sin more easily because the Word was not yet visible,¹⁴⁴ he implies that the Word would have become visible at some stage in the future.

However, humans did sin, and their rescue was costly to God. Overall, Irenaeus' depicts a compassionate God, Father, Son and Spirit and that the Son was born as one of us, and suffered and died for us. "For never at any time did Adam escape the hands of God."¹⁴⁵

Redemption as Participation: Christus Victor

The *motif* of *Christus Victor*, as Irenaeus presents it in *Against Heresies*, can also be interpreted as an example of participation because in some passages Irenaeus implies that in releasing humans from bondage to Satan, Christ changed human nature. Irenaeus in no way presented Christ's death as a payment to Satan, but did present it as a contest, effecting the rescue of the human race from bondage to Satan through a personal battle with Satan, with Christ acting as the representative of the human race. Irenaeus' rationale was that defeated humans could only be released from bondage to Satan by a human being but that humans were helpless to save themselves. Therefore their rescuer has to be both God and human.¹⁴⁶ However the rescue involved the "re-formation" of the human race in Christ.

Irenaeus seems to have written about Christ's redemption of humans from slavery to Satan on two levels. One consists of defeating Satan, as one might release people being held hostage by a gunman. This might be termed an external captivity. On the other level Irenaeus seems to

¹⁴² Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.39.2-3. Quoted by Minns in Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 76-77. Not all of Minn's quotation reproduced here.

¹⁴³ Geoff Vogel, "The Haste of Sin, the Slowness of Salvation: An Interpretation of Irenaeus on the Fall and Redemption" *Anglican Theological Review* 89, no. 3 (2007): 446-48.

¹⁴⁴ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 5.16.2.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.39.2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.33.4; 5.1.3; 5.2.

have been writing about an internal captivity, such as addiction to a drug, where freedom is only achieved by a change in the addict so that s/he no longer craves for the drug. As seen below, humans needed to be re-formed and this could only happen by participation in Christ.

For as it was not possible that the man who had once for all been conquered, and who had been destroyed through disobedience, could re-form himself, and obtain the prize of victory; and as it was also impossible that he could attain to salvation who had fallen under the power of sin,—the Son effected both these things, being the Word of God, descending from the Father, becoming incarnate, stooping low, even to death, and consummating the arranged plan of our salvation.¹⁴⁷

Irenaeus, does in fact talk of fairness to Satan, but also speaks of the human race as going down to death vanquished and rising victorious,¹⁴⁸ which suggests he thought in terms of both kinds of captivity. To think of this as the reversal of an internal captivity it is necessary to invoke the concept of participation. It was not just Christ who rose victorious, but the human race, re-formed in union with Christ. Irenaeus said, “He re-formed the human race, but destroyed and conquered the enemy of man, and gave to his own handiwork victory against the enemy.”¹⁴⁹

Christ “was made in the likeness of sinful flesh”¹⁵⁰, “to condemn sin, and to cast it, as now a condemned thing, away beyond the flesh, but that He might call man forth into His own likeness.”¹⁵¹ This idea that Christ became like us, to change us from within, is echoed by Thomas Torrance in saying that Christ achieved “the renewal of the human mind from within and below through the Incarnation”.¹⁵² While Torrance is writing about Athanasius, Irenaeus, too, as seen above, also spoke of the work of Christ as saving humans from within.

Recapitulation as Participation

In representing the rescue from Satan Irenaeus combines the Synoptic image of the Strong Man being bound with the Pauline concept of the Second Adam. For Paul, Christ saves humanity as the “Second Adam” in whom we can have identity and unity. This is the germ of the concept of “recapitulation” for which Irenaeus is noted. As we have seen above, Christ became an infant and grew to manhood in order to mature the human race. In the context of the resurrection Irenaeus wrote in *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Faith* that Christ

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 3.18.2. See also 3.23.3.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.21.1.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 4.24.1.

¹⁵⁰ Romans 8:3

¹⁵¹ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 3.20.2.

¹⁵² Torrance, *Atonement : The Person and Work of Christ*, 161.

hallowed our birth and destroyed death, loosing those same fetters in which we were enchained. And He manifested the resurrection,¹ Himself becoming *the first-begotten of the dead*,* and in Himself raising up man that was fallen.¹⁵³

Mary Ann Donovan notes that not only “In and through the humanity of the risen and incarnate Son the humanity of the entire race is affected,”¹⁵⁴ but that “In becoming a human being the Son of God recapitulates the entire creation in himself.”¹⁵⁵ For Irenaeus Christ not only defeated sin and death by becoming one of us, but redeemed and healed human history as recounted in the Hebrew Scriptures by symbolically reliving it. For instance, Adam and Eve fell by eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but Christ saves us by the tree of the Cross.¹⁵⁶ Denis Edwards¹⁵⁷ notes that Denis Minns refers to Irenaeus’ concept of the cross (stretching up and down and to both sides) as symbolising Christ’s presence throughout the universe,¹⁵⁸ saying that the Word “who is ‘always present in the human race’ is now united with and grafted to the Word’s own handiwork.”¹⁵⁹

In another example of recapitulation, Irenaeus says that Eve was a disobedient virgin, whereas Mary was an obedient virgin (in allowing herself to become the mother of Jesus).¹⁶⁰ Irenaeus portrays history as part of the slow but sure history of salvation, as God’s people learn more and more and become “accustomed to bear God” through the experience of the Patriarchs, the history of Israel, the Law and the Prophets.¹⁶¹

Recapitulation is an extension of the concept of participation, primarily of Christ’s participation in us, but as a corollary involves our participation in Christ. Steenberg¹⁶² notes that this involves actual rehabilitation, not just a symbolic re-run. Christ is the life of humans being, who are therefore in Christ are in the image. “Christ enters into the race of humanity *as human*, as-himself the personal reality of the whole race.”¹⁶³ Christ recapitulated not only human history, but the stages of human life, which enabled him identify with babies, children, young

¹⁵³ Irenaeus, "The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching," 38.

¹⁵⁴ Mary Ann Donovan, *One Right Reading? A Guide to Irenaeus* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press. A Michael Glazier Book, 1997), 81.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ This idea is problematic, as it implies that God ordained that Jesus be crucified and Irenaeus unfortunately talks about the damnation of the unbelieving Jews, and the actions of the Jewish leaders in the time of Christ being necessary in order that Christians might be saved. Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.28.3.

¹⁵⁷ Denis Edwards, *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2019), 41.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Referencing Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 109.

¹⁵⁹ Edwards, *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures*, 41.

¹⁶⁰ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 3.21.10; 5.19.1.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 3.17.1; 3.20.2; 4.14.2; 5.8.1.

¹⁶² M. C. Steenberg, *Of God and Man Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 45.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 48.

and “old” people.¹⁶⁴ This is an anticipation of Gregory of Nyssa’s statement “What is not assumed is not healed”,¹⁶⁵ but it has its limitations because of the particularity of Christ’s life; he did not need to become a female Gentile dye merchant in order to save Lydia.¹⁶⁶ The deeper point is that Jesus participated fully in human life and in so doing healed our nature. Geoff Vogel wrote about Christ undoing the disobedience of Adam and healing humans through receiving from God on our behalf:

Christ’s central role in his (Irenaeus’) theology is to be the man who receives from God, undoing the disobedience of Adam and reorienting humanity to God. The Son’s act of taking on flesh alone was not sufficient to accomplish this. One could say that taking on flesh was the condition of the possibility of his recapitulative work.¹⁶⁷

The Participation of Creation

For Irenaeus, the beauty of Creation reflects the Creator.¹⁶⁸ One of the features of Irenaeus’ thought is that he maintained that the material creation is good, and the risen human body, in transformed state, is part of the inheritance of the saints in the Kingdom of the Son.¹⁶⁹ In the Eucharist, the produce of the earth becomes the body and blood of Christ, and in partaking of it our bodies partake of the Divine Life.¹⁷⁰ Though mingled with the earth in death, our bodies, made immortal by the Spirit will rise at the *Parousia*,¹⁷¹ when body, soul and spirit will be reunited.

For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God. For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality.¹⁷²

While Irenaeus asserted the divinity of the Son of God and unity of the human with him, he never lost sight of the continuing embodiment and creatureliness of the human.

¹⁶⁴ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 2.22.5-6. Irenaeus referred to a tradition that Jesus was between 40 and 50 years old when he died. Matthew and Luke say that Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great (37 BCE – 4 BCE) and according to Luke the Emperor Augustus (27 BCE- 14 CE)

Luke also “while Quirinius was Governor of Syria” but this was 6 CE. All the Gospels agree that Jesus died during the Governorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 CE). Luke’s “about 30 years old” (Luke 3.23) is an approximation.

¹⁶⁵ He said this a number of times and it was probably in the context of Christ having a human soul.

¹⁶⁶ Acts 16:11-15.

¹⁶⁷ Vogel, "The Haste of Sin, the Slowness of Salvation: An Interpretation of Irenaeus on the Fall and Redemption " 151.

¹⁶⁸ Denis Minns, "Irenaeus," *Expository Times* 120, no. 4 (2009): 163. Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.20.7.

¹⁶⁹ Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction*, 5-6.

¹⁷⁰ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 5.2.2,3.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., 3.19.1.

Conclusion

For Irenaeus the Incarnation was essential in “joining man to God.”, which might be said to be the Atonement, or making as one.¹⁷³ Consequently he opposed teachings that denied the full divinity of Christ and those that denied that Jesus was a real embodied human being. While for Irenaeus the Incarnation was the foundation of participation of fallen humans in God, he used several *motifs* to express how participation happened: the re-forming of humans in the image, the continuous moulding of the human being who submitted to God’s creative work, recapitulation, the re-formation of the human race effected by the defeat of Satan by the Incarnate Son, and participation in Christ by partaking of the Eucharist, whereby the body of the believer was rendered immortal through the resurrection by union with the body of Christ.

Irenaeus developed Paul’s concept of Christ as the image of the Father into whose likeness we can grow. For Irenaeus, this process was not completed at the *Parousia* but continued into eternity.¹⁷⁴ Recapitulation was not just a symbolic re-run of human history, but healing of history and the human personality from within. Irenaeus’ concept of creation not only affirms the goodness of the material creation but in his Eucharistic sections affirms the intimate connection with the whole creation achieved by the Incarnation.¹⁷⁵ Humans and the rest of creation are not God, but can participate in God through God’s gracious goodness. This is a lively faith that shows God as close to us, although infinitely transcendent. Not only are we enclosed in God,¹⁷⁶ but God has become incarnate in his own creation.

For Irenaeus, as for Athanasius, to be discussed in the next chapter. the Incarnation and divinity of Word were essential to participation,¹⁷⁷ If God the Son had not taken on human nature this intimate relationship between humans and God would not have been possible. About one and a half centuries later, in the context of a dispute about the nature of Christ, Athanasius was to affirm that Jesus Christ could not be the Saviour unless he was both God and human. Athanasius further develops the concept of participation in the divine nature and being in the Image through the Incarnation of the Word and his life, death and resurrection.

¹⁷³ I have not used this explanation of Atonement before in this thesis as reconciliation and being made one are similar in meaning but use of that definition is pertinent here.

¹⁷⁴ Irenaeus, "Adv. Haer.," 4.28.2.

¹⁷⁵ "Adv. Haer.," 5.2.2,3.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 5.18.3. Plus secondary reference

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3: ATHANASIUS: PARTICIPATION IN THE INCARNATE WORD

Introduction

In the previous chapter we have seen how Irenaeus, building on Paul's concept of participation in Christ, expounded the concept of human participation in the Divine, though union with the Son of God who took on human nature. As part of this identification Irenaeus related how Jesus lived through the stages of human life and recapitulated events of Old Testament history, whereby he healed the past. By going down to death and rising he defeated Satan and gave victory to the human race, "casting out sin from the flesh,"¹⁷⁸ enabling them to partake of the divine nature, and thereby effected reconciliation, that is, Atonement.

This chapter continues the theme of participation in Christ, here exemplified in the works of Athanasius of Alexandria. In the following I will discuss how Athanasius saw human participation in the Word and why he saw it as crucial to salvation. I will discuss firstly why Athanasius saw the full divinity and humanity of the Word as the only way for fallen humans to participate in God. Irenaeus believed in the divinity of Christ. Athanasius tied his understanding of salvation firmly to the Nicene doctrine of the nature of Christ and eventually to the Trinity. This union of the doctrine God to the doctrine of salvation is a valuable understanding for us today.

For both Irenaeus and Athanasius the Incarnation was crucial to human participation in the Divine, which was based on the divine Son, or Word, taking human nature. In doing so, and in his life, death and resurrection the Word joined humans to God and so healed the breach made by sin and effected reconciliation (Atonement). Irenaeus gave a broad and detailed picture of salvation, starting from Adam, though the Incarnation was the crucial turning point, and regarded participation in the Divine as a process that continued into eternity. Athanasius focussed more heavily than Irenaeus on the Incarnation from its beginning to its unfolding in the life and ministry of the Word made flesh, his death and resurrection. For Athanasius the Incarnation had soteriological significance as the means of rescue for a race mired in corruption and on the point of perishing. He also expounded at length on the divinity of the Word, which he regarded as essential to salvation. While Athanasius lived at a time when the nature of the

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 3.20.2.

Word was a matter of dispute among Christians., he emphasised the divinity of the Word as a prerequisite for participation in the divine.

Athanasius

Athanasius of Alexandria (296–373) was Bishop of Alexandria from 328 until his death, but his episcopacy was punctuated with sometimes lengthy periods of exile, because of his vigorous engagement in controversy about the nature of Christ, the Word, in which he steadfastly opposed the doctrines of the Arians.¹⁷⁹ He was present as a deacon at the Council of Nicaea in 325, where the doctrines of Arius, which held that the Word was a created being, were condemned. Subsequently the controversy re-ignited, with Arianism supported by the emperors Constantine and Constantius. Athanasius continued to oppose Arianism. His polemic sprang from his conviction that the Word Christ had to be both God and human in order to save humans from sin, and death which was the result of sin.

Athanasius' work *Four Discourses Against the Arians (Contra Arianos)* was written from 339-343, during his exile in Rome.¹⁸⁰ His probably earlier work,¹⁸¹ *On the Incarnation, (De Incarnatione)* does not mention the Arians but expounds the doctrine of the divinity of the Word and his taking of human nature and dying in order to save humanity. The following analysis I have based largely on the *De Incarnatione*.

Why the Word had to be God in order to be the Saviour

Athanasius' soteriology is based on the concept of human participation in the divine, through Christ, the incarnate Word. This does not actually mean that we become God, but by being in Christ we share something of his nature, and therefore of God's nature, as he put it in? people before the Fall, "a share of the power of his own Word."¹⁸² Partaking in the Word includes

¹⁷⁹ The history is complex. During his time of exile other people were regarded as Bishop of Alexandria. Arianism went in and out of favour

¹⁸⁰ Thomas G. Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 4.

¹⁸¹ The date is disputed. C. S. Lewis, noting that Arians are not mentioned, favours a date after the Council of Nicaea before the controversy re-erupted. C. S. Lewis, "Introduction," in *St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria: On the Incarnation. Greek Original and English Translation*, ed. John Behr, St Vladimir's Seminary Press: Popular Patristics Series (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 24-25.

¹⁸² Athanasius, "St. Athanasius the Great, of Alexandria: On the Incarnation. Greek Original and English Translation," in *St Vladimir's Seminary Press Popular Patristic Series*, ed. John Behr (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 3.

knowledge of God.¹⁸³ While Athanasius mentions concepts other than participation in the Word in his writings about salvation, such as sacrifice,¹⁸⁴ release from the curse of the Law,¹⁸⁵ and exhaustion of God's punishment of death on sinful humanity,¹⁸⁶ these are grounded in the concept of our union with Christ by participation¹⁸⁷ in his divine nature, enabled by him taking a human body,¹⁸⁸ and his deeds in the body.

It is noteworthy that Athanasius distinguished between our *human* participation in the divine as a gift of grace which we receive, on the one hand, and the Word's "participation" in the Godhead, on the other. The Word was divine, not by participation, as we participate in God's nature by grace and adoption, but because the divine nature is inherent in him.¹⁸⁹ The Word was one with, though distinct from, God the Father.¹⁹⁰ Yet without the Incarnation, fallen humans could not participate in God's nature.¹⁹¹

This point about Christ's not being divine by participation but by nature was central to his debate with his Arian opponents. Athanasius and the Arians agreed that creation was related to God by participation, but the Arians held that this was true of the Word also, while Athanasius asserted that the Word was of the essence of God's being and did not participate in the manner of creatures.¹⁹² Athanasius argued at length with his Arian opponents, who believed that the

¹⁸³ Ibid., 11, 12.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 9,10,16.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 8,9,10.

¹⁸⁷ In his "Four Orations against the Arians" says that humans participate of the divine nature by receiving from the Word but the Word does not participate in the Father in this way because he is of the same essence as the Father. The Son's being is essential to the Father's and the Son does not receive from him in the manner of creatures. Athanasius makes an exception in "Against the Arians" 1.15 but this is to stress that the Son participates in the very essence of the Father and the Father in the Son. For this reason, in my chapter on Athanasius I will use terms such as 'took' or 'assumed' to indicate the sharing in of human nature by the Word. See Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), 105-07. Athanasius, "Four Discourses against the Arians," in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers: Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, ed. Archibald Robertson, A Select Library of the Christian Church (Peabody, USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1891, 1995; reprint, Reprinted Hendrickson Publishing Company, Peabody, USA, 1995), 3.1. Cited by Anatolios.

¹⁸⁹ Athanasius, "Contra Arianos," 1.15, 4.1. Rather than using the term "participation" for the Word's incarnation, Athanasius uses the term "takes to himself." "On the Incarnation," in *St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria: On the Incarnation. Greek Original and English Translation*, ed. John Behr (Yonkers, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 8.9.

¹⁹⁰ "Contra Arianos," 4.1. See also "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1

¹⁹¹ It is not altogether clear whether the Incarnation effected simply a restoration or something beyond this. Humans in Paradise had a "share in the power of the Word" (De Inc. 3) but the same paragraph hints that there were even better things promised than the "life of Paradise". The Incarnation also effected a more intimate relationship between God and creation than before.

¹⁹² Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, 105-09.

Word was a creature created by God for the purpose of creating the world, “a created mediator between creation and the transcendent God”,¹⁹³ a fellow creature whose example Christians could follow, “a creature but not as one of the creatures,”¹⁹⁴ or a lesser god.¹⁹⁵

While the earlier controversy with the Gnosticism was largely over,¹⁹⁶ the Arians had some ideas in common with the Gnostics, particularly in separating God the Father from creation, the created Word being God’s deputy in creation and redemption.¹⁹⁷ Thomas Torrance points out that by placing the Word in the category of created beings the Word, as conceived by Arian theology, would be unable to join humans to God.¹⁹⁸ In so arguing, Athanasius claimed that it was essential for the Word to be God in order to save, as a creature could never join us to God and could not have conferred immortality.¹⁹⁹ As Athanasius stated in *On the Incarnation*:

It was not for another to turn what was corruptible to incorruptibility except the Saviour himself, who in the beginning created the universe from nothing, and [that] it was not for another to recreate again “in the image” for human beings, except the Image of the Father; and [that] it was not for another to raise up the mortal to be immortal, except our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Life itself; and [that] it was not for another to teach about the Father and destroy the worship of idols, except the Word who arranges all things and is alone the true only-begotten son of the Father.²⁰⁰

Having discussed the importance of the divinity of the Word in relation to the Arian controversy this chapter now examines how Athanasius explained Atonement in his work, *On the Incarnation*, with occasional references to his other works. Although there is no mention of Arians in this early work the same doctrine of the person of the Word is expressed. *On the Incarnation* explains the history of salvation through the Incarnation of the Word: his life, death and resurrection.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 93.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 94. See whole discussion pp. 93-96 See also Athanasius, "De Synodis," in *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, ed. Archibald Robertson, A Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1891; reprint, 1995), 19.

¹⁹⁵ Paul L. Gavriluk, "Arianism Opposed: The Word's Divinity Is Not Diminished by Involvement in Suffering," in *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p.7 of downloaded chapter. Oxford Scholarship online downloaded 18/8/2019.

¹⁹⁶ Although Thomas Torrance notes that “Alexandrian Christianity never really expelled the Gnostics.” Thomas F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 179. However, the main theological controversy of Athanasius’ day was over Arianism.

¹⁹⁷ Whereas the Gnostics placed a series of aeons between the Pleroma and the material world, the Arians divided God from creation. For Athanasius (as for Irenaeus) God was distinct from creation but imminent in it, and God the Son assumed human nature.

¹⁹⁸ Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics*, 188-89, .

¹⁹⁹ Athanasius, "Contra Arianos," 2, XXI:69 (NF 386).

²⁰⁰ "De Inc.," 20. "That" in brackets because required by grammar in original text but not grammatical in quotation as here.

The Original State of Humans and the Consequences of Sin as in *On the Incarnation*

Athanasius' work *On the Incarnation* tells the story of how participation in the Word was lost and restored by the Incarnation, the Cross and the Resurrection. The Word, through whom God the Father made the world, was always in the world,²⁰¹ which was a reflection of his glory but needed to be sustained and upheld in order to remain in existence.²⁰² Athanasius held that all being comes from God and without God sustaining creation it would fall into non-being,²⁰³ or corruption (φθορά), which has multiple meanings including decomposition, moral depravity and total destruction.²⁰⁴ Human beings, like other earthly creatures, were created mortal, but were given at the time of their creation a portion of the Word, which ensured present or future immortality and stamped them with the image of the Word, who is the Father's true image. As Athanasius said:

He granted them [human beings] a further gift ... making them according to his own image, giving them a share of the power of his own Word, so that having as it were shadows of the Word and being made rational, they might be able to abide in blessedness, living the true life which is really that of the holy ones in paradise. And knowing that the free choice of human beings could turn either way ... he gave them a law, so that if they guarded the grace and remained good they might live the life of paradise ... besides having the promise of their incorruptibility in heaven;²⁰⁵ but if the they were to transgress and turning away become wicked, they would know themselves as enduring the corruption of death according to nature, and no longer living in paradise, but thereafter dying outside of it, would remain in death and corruption.²⁰⁶

According to Athanasius, because humans disobeyed God, they lost their immortality and the image of God was lost²⁰⁷ or defaced²⁰⁸. As Athanasius said, they died and remained dead and were unable to turn back because they no longer had a portion of the Word. As Athanasius said in *On the Incarnation*:

For if, having a nature that did not once exist, they were called into existence by the Word's advent (*parousia*) and love for human beings, it followed that when human beings were bereft of the knowledge of God and has turned to things that exist not –

²⁰¹ Ibid., 8. But not in a bodily way.

²⁰² "Contra Gentes," in *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, ed. Archibald Robertson, A Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995; reprint, 1995), 41, 44.

²⁰³ Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics*, 183.

²⁰⁴ Danker, 1054-5.

²⁰⁵ It seems here that the incorruptibility was to be in the future, in heaven, which was to be the ultimate destination of unfallen humans.

²⁰⁶ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 3.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 7,13.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 14.

evil is non-being, the good is being, since it has come into being from the existing God – then they were bereft of eternal being²⁰⁹

If human beings had guarded their comprehension of God they would have “blunted their natural corruption and “remained incorruptible.”²¹⁰ Even after disobeying God it was possible to apprehend God in creation, but human beings turned in on themselves and instead of contemplating God in his works, worshipped the creature rather than the Creator.²¹¹

The Dilemma of God

Athanasius says that as human beings became more and more evil and were at risk of dying out.²¹² Corruption and death exercised an ever increasing hold on them. If all humans perished God’s creation of humans would have been in vain. Athanasius writes of the plight of the human race and why the Word became incarnate in this way:

But now he comes, condescending in his love for human beings and his manifestation. For seeing the rational race perishing, and death reigning over them through corruption, and also the threat of the transgression giving firm hold to the corruption that was upon us, and that it was absurd for the law to be dissolved before being fulfilled ... and that the very things of which he was the creator were disappearing ... ²¹³For the race of human beings would have been utterly dissolved had not the Master and Saviour of all, the Son of God, come for the completion of death.²¹⁴

Athanasius presented the dilemma of God. God had made humans in love²¹⁵ and made a law that set conditions on their immortality, which meant that if they became evil they would die.²¹⁶ Since they had become evil, death had taken hold of them. It was unseemly that God should leave people created in his image in permanent death.²¹⁷

But as well as explaining human death in terms of a law decreed by God, Athanasius also explains the reasons for human death in terms of consequence. One reason indicated in the fourth paragraph of *On the Incarnation*, quoted above, is that human beings lost their

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 4.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., 12. Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, 35, 64.

²¹² Athanasius, "De Inc.," 8, 9.

²¹³ Ibid., 8.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 9. This may possibly be interpreted as ceasing to be rational beings.

²¹⁵ In De. Inc. 3 Athanasius refers to God’s goodness, rather than love, but mentions God’s love for humans in De Inc. 1, 2, 4, and 8.

²¹⁶ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 3.

²¹⁷ "De Inc.," 8.

knowledge of God and turned to things that did not exist, that is evil, they returned to their natural state of mortality and they “were bereft of eternal being”.²¹⁸

This looks like a consequence rather than a judicial law. To the hypothetical question as to why God could not just forgive human beings, Athanasius pointed out that humans could have been forgiven, but human nature being so corrupted they would have sinned again and would still have remained “held fast by death”. The following passage juxtaposes the idea that God had to be true to his word with the assertion that in any case human nature needed to be changed by renewing their participation in the Word because sin had corrupted their nature, and made them both evil and subject to death. Athanasius wrote:

What then had to happen in this case or what should God do? Demand repentance from human beings for their transgression? ... But repentance neither would have preserved the consistency of God, for again he would not have remained true if human beings were not held fast by death, *nor does repentance recall human beings from what is natural, but merely halts sins. If there were only the offence and not the consequence of corruption, repentance would have been fine. But if, once the transgression had taken off, human beings were now held fast in natural corruption and were deprived of the grace of being in the image, what else needed to happen? Or who was needed for such grace and recalling but the God Word, who in the beginning made the world from non-being?*²¹⁹ (My italics)

Human beings were not just subject to death and corruption because God was carrying out his law against them, but they had lost what formerly gave them life, their participation in the Word.

Only the Creator²²⁰ who made the world from nothing could save human beings from corruption and restore the image,²²¹ by enabling participation in the divine nature.²²² Khaled Anatolios comments that, according to Athanasius, “Only the true image can renew the impaired or lost image within us” because the true image of God is the Word and our image derives from him.²²³ Athanasius argued that God could not abolish death by fiat as death was inherent in the body. God could have created a new human race from nothing but existing creatures needed to be healed by the renewal of their nature.²²⁴ The Word, who was life itself,

²¹⁸ "De Inc.," 4.

²¹⁹ "De Inc.," 7.

²²⁰ Athanasius held fast to the doctrine that the Father created the world through the Word. (John 1:2,10 ; Col. 1:16)

²²¹ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 7.

²²² 2 Peter 1:4b.

²²³ Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, 56.

²²⁴ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 44.

had to take a body and so unite himself with humanity in order to abolish death by dying and rising from the dead.²²⁵

In Paragraph 9 of *On the Incarnation* Athanasius seems to use the concept of a substitutionary death but this actually means that in dying the Word took all of humanity with him and brought them back to life with him. According to Athanasius, the Word died for humans so that humans could be saved by their union with the Word. It was only by dying and rising again as a human that the Word could destroy death. Death and corruption are removed by the union of the Word who now dwells in humans. Thus:

By offering his own temple and his bodily instrument as a substitute for all, fulfilled in death that which was required; and being with all through the like [body], the incorruptible Son of God consequently clothed all with incorruptibility in the promise concerning the resurrection. And now the corruption of death no longer holds ground against human beings because of the indwelling Word, in them through the one body.²²⁶

Athanasius' principal argument in *On the Incarnation* develops along the lines, of changing human nature and restoring the image of God rather than a substitutionary punishment.²²⁷ In order for this change to occur it was needed to restore human participation in the Word and this was achieved by the Word becoming incarnate and uniting himself with humanity and abolishing death by dying. Athanasius wrote:

For the Word, realising that in no other way would the corruption of human beings be undone except, simply, by dying, yet being immortal and the Son of the Father the Word was not able to die, for this reason the Son takes to himself a body capable of death, in order that it, participating in the Word who was above all, might be sufficient for death on behalf of all, and through the indwelling Word would remain incorruptible, and so corruption might cease from all by the grace of the resurrection. ... For, being above all, the Word of God consequently by offering his own temple and his bodily instrument as a substitute for all, fulfilled in death that which was required; and, being with all through the like [body], the incorruptible Son of God clothed all with incorruptibility with the promise of the resurrection.²²⁸

Here Athanasius argued that the Word incorporated all humanity in his body, which in dying meant the death of all, and in rising meant that all would rise from death so that death no longer held any power over humans. Because the Word dwelt in his body, his body was incorruptible and bound to rise again. Athanasius likens the indwelling of the Word in Christ's body and its

²²⁵ Ibid., 20.

²²⁶ Ibid., 9.

²²⁷ See Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, 36-7.

²²⁸ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 9.

effect on others to a city where a king has taken up residence in one of the houses and the enemy no longer dares to attack it,²²⁹

The Healing of Humans and the Cosmos by the Incarnation of the Word

Athanasius expressed agreement with “the Greeks” to the idea that the Cosmos was a body,²³⁰ and that every part of a body was united to the whole body. The Word had indwelt the whole Cosmos since creation. Therefore he argued that it was fitting for the Word to manifest himself in the human body which was part of the Cosmos.²³¹ However, in assuming a part of creation as his own the Word’s relation to creation was different from before and he was able to heal the whole creation. Athanasius wrote, “the Lord touched all parts of creation and disabused everything from every error.”²³²

However, humans are distinguished in Athanasius’ work from the rest of material creation,²³³ in having originally had “a share of the power of his Word.”²³⁴ It was human beings who above all needed restoration and the re-inscription of the Image of the Word.²³⁵ The same principle of the part being able to affect the whole is also applied to the Word “becoming human”.²³⁶ Philp Kariatlis observes that:

By becoming human, living in the world, sacrificially suffering and dying, Christ was able to destroy death by death and through his bodily resurrection to restore incorruption and to give the created realm throughout time the opportunity, within the ecclesial context, to participate in the life of God.²³⁷

The effect of the Incarnation on creation as a whole is discussed below in the section, “*Athanasius and the History of Salvation – the Teaching of the Word.*”

The Process of Redemption

²²⁹ "De Inc.," 9.

²³⁰ Ibid., 41.

²³¹ Ibid., 41-43.

²³² "De Inc.," 45.

²³³ However, Athanasius writes about restoring creation. See below.

²³⁴ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 3. This implies some initial participation in the Word that was lost, but in the absence of the Incarnation it cannot have been in the same manner.

²³⁵ Ibid., 14.

²³⁶ That is, assuming human nature while remaining God.

²³⁷ Philip Kariatlis, "Soteriological Insights in St Athanasius' *on the Incarnation*," *Pronema* 28 no. 2 (2013): 33-4.

While Irenaeus emphasised the Son's participation in, and divinisation of, human nature by going through the different stages of human life, from infancy to maturity, and the healing of human history by recapitulation, Athanasius concentrated on the deeds of the Incarnate Word. In undergoing experiences such as fear, sorrow, weariness, forsakenness and death, and generally living a human life, the Word changed human nature to be like the divine nature, for example, by ridding people of the fear of death by experiencing it, and by dying and rising, and bringing resurrection to immortal life and "restoring every aspect of human beings." He quoted Hebrews 2:14-15:

Since therefore the children share flesh and blood, he likewise partook of them, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and might deliver all those who through the fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.²³⁸

By suffering the fear of death, the Word delivered his faithful followers from the fear of death.²³⁹ By taking a body, the Word divinised the body and released it from corruption. By rising he rendered his own body impassable, and by implication potentially ours, as he wrote in *On the incarnation*, 26, "On the third day he immediately raised it [his body] up, bearing the incorruptibility and impassibility of the body as trophies and victory over death."²⁴⁰

Athanasius and the History of Salvation: the Teaching of the Word

For Athanasius the salvation wrought by the Word had a universal effect. Not only humans, but the whole creation, was healed by the Incarnation. Philip Kariatis writes that the Incarnation, as well as saving humanity, "enabled the world to receive and participate in the divine life of God."²⁴¹ In Paragraph 16 of *On the Incarnation of the Word* Athanasius wrote:

For the Word unfolded himself everywhere, above and below and in the depths, in and in the breadth: above, in creation; below, in the incarnation; and in the depths, in hell; in breadth, in the world. Everything is filled with the knowledge of God.²⁴² For this reason, not immediately on coming did he complete the sacrifice on behalf of all, delivering the body to death and resurrecting it, making himself thereby invisible.²⁴³

²³⁸ Quotation as per Athanasius, "De Inc.," 10.

²³⁹ Ibid., 27.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 26.

²⁴¹ Kariatis, "Soteriological Insights in St Athanasius' *on the Incarnation*," 25-6.

²⁴² Ibid., 28.

²⁴³ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 16.

And again in paragraph 45 one of the purposes of the Incarnation is said to be to “fill all things with the knowledge of himself,” and, “the Lord touched all parts of creation and freed and disabused everything from every error.”²⁴⁴

The knowledge of God was part and parcel of participation in the divine, and without the knowledge of God, people would remain in evil. The Word came not just to die but to make God known, teach, and to be seen.²⁴⁵ Like a good teacher, he worked from what humans, who perceived through the senses, knew, and became visible as a human being.²⁴⁶ Athanasius said that humans had the Law and the Prophets, or their own conscience, and the wonders of nature, to teach them about God but they did not heed them.²⁴⁷ Athanasius’ reference of the Day of Judgment in Paragraph 57 and his statement “In addition to the study and true knowledge of the scriptures, there is needed a good life and a pure soul and the virtue which is according to Christ,”²⁴⁸ shows that participation in the Divine is not an automatic process although it is enabled by the Incarnation, death and resurrection of the Word.

Anticipating objections from people who might think that the Incarnation, death and resurrection of the Word were sufficient in themselves to restore humanity without anyone knowing about it, Athanasius felt it necessary to explain why the Word did not save us by dying at birth and instantly rising, or by dying from sickness or old age, or by dying and rising again in secret.²⁴⁹ His death and resurrection needed to be public in order to be believed.²⁵⁰ Athanasius defended the cross by saying Christ neither devised his own death, nor fled, but accepted the death imposed by his enemies.²⁵¹ It was also necessary to have witnesses to the resurrection, in order for it to be believed. The timing was also important. An instant resurrection would not be seen as a resurrection, and if too much time elapsed between death and resurrection, it also might be not be believable.²⁵²

As well as having witnesses to his death and resurrection the Word needed time on earth to fulfil other aspects of his mission. He came to heal and to teach, to demonstrate his divinity

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 45.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 14, 15.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 12.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 57.

²⁴⁹ "De Inc.," 23-24.

²⁵⁰ "De Inc.," 22-4, 27.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 21-24.

²⁵² Ibid., 26.

and to impart the knowledge of God, as well as sanctifying his own body, so that by the Word having undergone human suffering humans would not have to suffer in the future and that by the Word living a human life the sinfulness inherent in humans could be remedied.²⁵³ Christ rose from the dead because the body was joined to the Word, who is life itself, but he also went through human experience and transformed his body through being the Word made flesh,²⁵⁴ and “restored every aspect of human beings”,²⁵⁵ body and soul, “the soul being born again and recreated in that which is after the image”.²⁵⁶ Athanasius said that Christ was living, and gave as evidence for the resurrection and examples of his power the decline of idolatry and other heathen practices and the holy lives of Christians.²⁵⁷

Above all, giving the example of the martyrs, Athanasius says that Christians no longer fear death and death itself has lost its power.²⁵⁸ “For they really know that when they die they are not destroyed, but both live and become incorruptibility through the resurrection.”²⁵⁹ As Athanasius maintained:

Indeed, with the common Savior²⁶⁰ of all dying for us, we, the faithful in Christ no longer die by death according to the threat of the law, for such condemnation has ceased, But with corruption ceasing and being destroyed by the grace of the resurrection, henceforth according to the mortality of the body we are dissolved only for the time God has set for each, that we may be able “*attain a better resurrection*” (Heb 11:35)²⁶¹

Conclusion

Athanasius recounts the salvation wrought by the incarnate Word, after humans had lost their first state of innocence and incorruptibility through disobedience to God, and had become enmeshed in sin, death and corruption. The Word, who was the eternal Son of the Father, took on human nature and released humans from death and corruption, renovating their nature and giving them the “grace of the resurrection.”²⁶² Athanasius used multiple *motifs* for atonement, including sacrifice in the offering of the Word’s death to the Father to annul the penalty of

²⁵³ Ibid., 43.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 20.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 14.

²⁵⁷ "De Inc.," 30-32.

²⁵⁸ "De Inc.," 27-29.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 27.

²⁶⁰ American spelling as per quote.

²⁶¹ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 21.

²⁶² Ibid.

death on humans. However, in this he included all humanity as partakers in him, rather than standing in as a substitute. His dominant *motif* was participation in the divine through humans being joined to the Word, and the healing of humanity. While primarily concerning human beings this healing encompassed all creation. “For he was incarnate that we might become god; and he manifested himself in a body that we might receive an idea of the invisible Father.”²⁶³

In reading this statement it is important to note that we do not become God by nature as the incarnate Word was, but take part in the life of God by participation and adoption.²⁶⁴ The Word takes and heals our infirmities As Athanasius noted:

For as he takes our infirmities, not being infirm, and hungers, not hungering, but sends up what is ours that it may be abolished, so the gifts which come from God instead of our infirmities, does he too Himself receive, that man, being united to Him, may be able to partake them.²⁶⁵

As we have seen in this and the preceding chapters Athanasius, Irenaeus and Paul all employ the concept of being in Christ or union with Christ in their writings on salvation. Athanasius showed how the divine Word took on human nature and healed it from within, by living, and especially dying and rising, and so abolished death and re-enabled the original participation in the Word.

Christ has transformed our nature by living as a human among humans, and dying and rising from the dead. This, I argue, is the basis for our reconciliation with God, because we are in union with Christ. The conclusion to this thesis will examine whether this concept is an adequate model of the Atonement, and what implications the adoption of such a model could have for Christian spirituality, Christian hope, ethics and society.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ "Contra Arianos," 4.1.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 4.7.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this concluding chapter I intend to examine whether the concept of salvation through participation in Christ who assumed human nature and lived, died and rose again to remake our nature from within, is adequate as a stand-alone explanation of Atonement. It must be noted that all three of the theologians examined in this thesis also used other *motifs* of Atonement in conjunction with participation. I will also attempt to address issues of how the Atonement is universal but requires an individual response. The question also arises as to what value such a view of Atonement has. What does it imply for our conception of God? How does it affect how we view and treat one another? Does it give us hope?

Finally there is the question of credibility and relevance. Is this a view of salvation that people in the modern world can adapt, seeing that my primary sources all lived in the first four centuries after Christ, took the Old Testament literally, and had a different understanding of how things are in the world from those who have been exposed to modern science?

But before I embark on the above considerations I will give a brief summary of participatory Atonement in each of the three authors considered.

A summary: Participation in Context

In the preceding chapters this thesis has shown how the concept of salvation through participation in Christ is a major theme in the works Paul, Irenaeus of Lyons and Athanasius of Alexandria, although this theme was expounded in different ways and in the context of the controversies of their times. For Paul the controversy was the issue of whether Gentile converts to Christianity needed to convert to Judaism, and also issues concerning the change of lifestyle needed for pagan converts. Irenaeus disputed rival interpretations of the Gospel, notably the Gnostics and those who denied the divinity of Christ, or posited more than one God. Athanasius wrote in a time when Christianity had imperial sanction,²⁶⁶ but the doctrine of the nature of Christ was under dispute. To Athanasius participation in the divine was through the Incarnation of the Word. It was essential to salvation that Christ be both human and divine, enabling humans to participate in his divini

Paul

²⁶⁶ Except for a brief time under Julian “the apostate”.

For Paul, Christ assumed the condition of humanity, including its mortality, and brought humanity through death to resurrection in him. The old, sinful, estranged humanity has died in Christ and been transformed in Christ into a new, cleansed and revitalised humanity. This sense of renewal is exemplified in Paul's saying:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the Ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.²⁶⁷

Here it should be noted that the believer is said to be "in Christ", denoting union. It also should be noted that God reconciled us to himself, not himself to us. The estrangement was on our part, not God's. This is more strongly shown in Philippians 2:5, where Christ was represented as being "in the form of God", which implies having all the attributes of God.²⁶⁸ In Colossians²⁶⁹ 1:15 he is "the image of the invisible God". This is relevant to the importance of being in Christ and bearing the image of Christ, "the man of heaven,"²⁷⁰ and "being transformed into the image from one degree of glory to another." The image in which Christians participate is Christ, who is God as well as human. It is more than just becoming a copy, but actual union, being "in" Christ. From such texts springs the concept of theopoiesis, being made God, used by Athanasius.²⁷¹

The question remains as how to resolve the universal with the individual in the matter of union with Christ. Paul wrote, "if one has died, all have died," but generally talked about new life for the believer. The solution to this apparent conflict is, I believe, that Christ incorporated his death and resurrection in all humanity and made us all new creatures, but humans have the capacity to reject the gracious gift of God. This question applies to the works of all three authors.

Irenaeus

For Irenaeus, the Son of God became like us so that we could be like him. The Incarnation is the focus of salvation, although God was always with Adam. In order to enable humans to

²⁶⁷ 2 Cor. 5:17-19a. Or "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." Alternative NRSV translation, following KJV.

²⁶⁸ The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2003, footnote p. 2102. According to this reference, the meaning of this passage is disputed.. See also Danker, 659.

²⁶⁹ Scholars differ as to whether Colossians was written by Paul and Timothy, or was post Pauline.

²⁷⁰ I Cor. 15:49

²⁷¹ Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics*, 194. Athanasius, "De Inc.," 54.

participate in God the Son did not simply become incarnate, die and rise again but went through all the stages of human life and re-enacted history as related in the Old Testament, fulfilling prophecies. Humanity's participation in God is based on the participation in humanity of the Son of God. While participation is enabled by the Incarnation and what Christ did while incarnate, it is a gradual and never-ending journey into the Divine, extending to the resurrection and *Parousia* and beyond into eternity, with redeemed humanity growing into ever closer unity with God in Christ but never becoming fully God. As seen below, Irenaeus' developmental approach is in harmony with today's understanding of science and development.

Athanasius

Athanasius' *On the Incarnation* is the first known Christian work to concentrate on the Incarnation.²⁷² According to Athanasius, unfallen humans possessed a portion of the Word but lost this when they disobeyed God, resulting in death and moral and spiritual degradation. To restore humanity the Word took on human nature, and particularly a human body and lived as a human, died and rose again, while remaining fully divine. In doing so he abolished death. Believers, though they still died, participated in the life of God and did not "die as condemned" but would rise again at the resurrection.

Athanasius argued at length that the Word was God, in union with but distinct from God the Father. Humans could only participate in the life of God if joined to the Word who was both God and human. The Word was of the same essence as the Father. Human participation came through the Word who had taken a human body and soul and so joined humans to him.

Participatory Atonement in Paul, Irenaeus and Athanasius

In this thesis I have illustrated how Athanasius, Irenaeus and Paul all had a concept of participation in Christ. Being in Christ presupposes reconciliation and I have defined Atonement as Reconciliation. However, one might define Atonement, rather than being the state of being in Christ, as being the process of the human race being incorporated in Christ and thereby healed, which took place in Christ's life, death and resurrection.

This is the initiative of God, in taking part in human life and death in order to save humans, whose best efforts fail to achieve their own ideals, let alone God's. Christianity has much to offer the world, the news that the God Word consented to live as a "risen ape" in a tiny corner of the universe and to bring God's erring children back to him. The universe is certainly vast

²⁷² Edwards, *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures*, 55.

but perhaps it is our biological heritage that makes us regard size as important. Be that as it may, present day people with a sense of the vastness and wonder of creation can be awed by the condescension of God becoming incarnate on this planet. While the independence of creation and the sinfulness of humans means that disasters can happen, we can take comfort that God is with us, and in Christ has taken humanity into himself.

The Model: its Viability and its Implications

All of the theologians considered wrote of the Incarnation as affecting the whole human race, and the rest of creation. None of them, however, claimed that the moment of Incarnation brought instant salvation and sanctification to all. All of them to some extent saw atonement as a process during Christ's life on earth as well as his death and resurrection. Atonement was not just the Son of God being conceived and born, or of him dying, or of him rising. In the process of incarnation Christ took the whole of humanity along with him. This means he was not punished for us, but shared in our sorrows and flawed nature and healed them. Stated thus, I believe that the participatory incarnational interpretation of Atonement is valid.

What then is the relevance of this conception of Atonement? The Incarnation is crucial. God has taken our nature so we should have reverence for one another as people who are, at least potentially, in Christ. This also has environmental implications. The world is not only the creation of God, but Christ in becoming incarnate joined himself to it. It follows that we should have reverence for creation without worshipping it as God.

I believe the adoption of the incarnational approach tends towards a kinder, gentler attitude towards others. We can regard everyone as loved by God and in a sense in Christ and not put limits on our conception of God's love and mercy, let alone predict that certain people will go to hell. It is not a case of the elect and the unelect. We are all elect.²⁷³ While love of neighbour can be theologically constructed in more than one way, I believe the incarnational approach to Atonement brings a change of emphasis. To adopt this model of Atonement you give up the idea of retributive justice. God is seen as non-punitive, but seeking to bring the erring human into fellowship with "Him". This does not mean that in a society of sinners we do not need legal deterrents to keep order, but the legal system should not be used as a vehicle for vengeance.

Ideas of God, the Church, Science and the Wider World

²⁷³ Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* 99.

Most modern people, including myself do not take creation story in Genesis literally, but nevertheless the universe derived from God and “he” is still involved. We do not know exactly how and when humans became humans. Irenaeus’ developmental way of thinking resonates not only with the then (and now) known process of human development, from a foetus, to a baby, to a child, to an adult, but with modern scientific views of the evolution of life forms, and of the universe possibly from a “big bang.” While writing in a time when Christians saw the world as created in six days, Irenaeus still saw God’s creation as ongoing. Participation means that God to continues the work of creation, not only in the human, but in bringing the universe into the new creation. Torrance, in writing of Athanasius, says that Athanasius saw God as “unceasingly an creatively present in the universe.”²⁷⁴ Athanasius asserts this in *On the Incarnation*. God was not only present in the world but he became incarnate in it.²⁷⁵

Conclusion: Love, Ignorance and the Life of God

As the three theologians considered have indicated, in participating in Christ we participate in the life of God. Since God is love, we participate in the divine love, and in order to do this we must also love. As in John’s first Epistle “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”²⁷⁶ 1 John 4:16. The Incarnation was and is for all creation and for all humanity. The Word, always present in the world, has entered his creation²⁷⁷ and everything is changed.

There are many ways to interpret the Atonement. I offer this interpretation, that we are saved by participating in Christ, who, though divine, took our nature upon him and healed our broken nature and that, in itself, is a sufficient theory of Atonement. Finally, I admit that we all “see in a mirror, dimly”²⁷⁸ and that I bring to this investigation one small mirror, aided by selected theologians, to the interpretation of these writers, and that others will doubtless see things hidden to me.

²⁷⁴ Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics*, 185.

²⁷⁵ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 8 et al.

²⁷⁶ 1 John 4:16

²⁷⁷ Athanasius, "De Inc.," 8.

²⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 13:12, Greco-Roman mirrors were made of polished metal and not as good as modern mirrors.

Bibliography

Primary Sources (Ancient Works)

- Anatolios, Khaled. *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*. London/New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Anslem. "Cur Deus Homo?": <https://www.ewtn.com/library/CHRIST/CURDEUS.HTM>.
- Athanasius. "Athanasius: Select Works and Letters." In *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, edited by Archibald Robertson. Peabody, USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1891. Reprint, Second Printing, 1995.
- . "Contra Gentes." Translated by revised by Archibald Robertson Cardinal Henry Newman. In *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, edited by Archibald Robertson. A Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995. Reprint, 1995.
- . "De Synodis." Translated by revising translation by Henry Newman Archibald Robertson. In *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, edited by Archibald Robertson. A Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1891. Reprint, 1995.
- . "Four Discourses against the Arians." Translated by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. In *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers: Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, edited by Archibald Robertson. A Select Library of the Christian Church. Peabody, USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1891, 1995. Reprint, Reprinted Hendrickson Publishing Company, Peabody, USA, 1995.
- . "On the Incarnation." In *St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria: On the Incarnation. Greek Original and English Translation*, edited by John Behr. Yonkers, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.
- . "St. Athanasius the Great, of Alexandria: On the Incarnation. Greek Original and English Translation." In *St Vladimir's Seminary Press Popular Patristic Series*, edited by John Behr. New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.
- Aulen, Gustaf. *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* Translated by A. G. Hebert. London: SPCK, 1931.
- Canlis, Julie. "Being Made Human: The Significance of Creation for Irenaeus' Doctrine of Participation." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58, no. 4 (2005): 434-54.
- Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* Third Edition (BDAG) ed. (Greek-English Lexicon Based on Walter Bauer's Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literature, edited by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, with Viktor Reichmann and on previous English editions by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker). Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Donovan, Mary Ann. *One Right Reading? A Guide to Irenaeus*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press. A Michael Glazier Book, 1997.
- Edwards, Denis. *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2019.
- Federow, Stuart. "What Jews Believe: Essay 5: "Jews Do Not Believe in Original Sin"."
- Fiddes, Paul S. *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1989.
- . "Salvation." Chap. 10 In *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, edited by Kathryn Tanner and Iain Torrance John Webster. UK: Oxford University Press, 2007. Reprint, 2010.
- Gavrilyuk, Paul L. "Arianism Opposed: The Word's Divinity Is Not Diminished by Involvement in Suffering." In *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Girard, René. *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*. Athlone Contemporary European Thinkers. Edited by Jean-Michel Oughourlian, Guy Lefort, Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer. London: Continuum, 2003.
- Harink, Douglas Karel. *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2003.
- Hays, Richard B. "Galatians." In *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 11: 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Philemon* edited by Leander E. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.

- . "Galatians." In *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol.11: 2 Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon*, edited by Leander E Keck. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Holmes, Stephen R. "The Upholding of Beauty: A Reading of Anselm's "Cur Deus Homo"." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54, no. 2 (2001).
- Irenaeus. "Against Heresies." Translated by Alexander Roberts and W. H. Rambaut. In *The Works of Irenaeus*, edited by Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. Edinburgh; London; Dublin
T & T Clark; Hamilton & Co.; John Robertson & Co., 1868-1869.
- . "Against Heresies." In *The Writings of Irenaeus*, edited by & J. Donaldson A. Roberts, Eds., A. Roberts & W. H. Rambaut, Trans. . Edinburgh; London; Dublin: T. & T. Clark; Hamilton & Co.; John Robertson & Co. , 1868-1869.
- . "The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching." In *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching (translated from the Armenian with Introduction and notes by j. A. Robinson; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920)*
- edited by R. M. Grant. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Jones, Gerald O'Collins and Michael Keenan. *Jesus Our High Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Kariatlis, Philip. "Soteriological Insights in St Athanasius' *on the Incarnation*." *Pronema* 28 no. 2 (2013 2013).
- Keck, Leander E. *Romans*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Edited by Victor Paul Furnish. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.
- Lewis, C. S. "Introduction." Translated by John Behr. In *St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria: On the Incarnation. Greek Original and English Translation*, edited by John Behr. St Vladimir's Seminary Press: Popular Patristics Series New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011.
- Longenecker, Richard N. *Galatians*. Word Biblical Commentary V. 41. Waco, Tex: Word Books, 1990.
- Martyn, J. Louis. *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- McLean, Bradley H. "The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology." *New Testament Studies* XXXVIII (1992): 531-53.
- Minns, Denis. *Irenaeus*. Washington/London: Georgetown University Press, 2007.
- . "Irenaeus." *Expository Times* 120, no. 4 (2009): 157-66.
- . *Irenaeus: An Introduction*. London: T&T Clark International, 2010.
- O'Collins, Gerald. *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . "Redemption: Some Crucial Issues." Chap. 1 In *The Redemption; an Interdisciplinary Symposium on Christ the Redeemer* edited by Stephen T. Davies, Kendall, Daniel, O'Collins, Gerald, 1-22. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Packer, J. I. "What Did the Cross Achieve?: The Logic of Penal Substitution." . Chap. 2 In *What Did the Cross Achieve?: The Logic of Penal Substitution. In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement*.
, 53-100. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007.
- Sampley, J. Paul. "1 Corinthians." In *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol.10: Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans; 1 Corinthians*, edited by Leander E. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Steenberg, M. C. *Of God and Man Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius*. London: T & T Clark, 2009.
- Torrance, Thomas F. *Atonement : The Person and Work of Christ*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009.
- . *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995.
- Vogel, Geoff. "The Haste of Sin, the Slowness of Salvation: An Interpretation of Irenaeus on the Fall and Redemption ". *Anglican Theological Review* 89, no. 3 (Summer 2007 2007).
- Weinandy, Thomas G. *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction*. Wahington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018.
- Wright, Nicholas Thomas. "Resurrection in Corinth (2): The Key Passages. 1: 1 Corinthians 15." In *The Resurrection of the Son of God* London: SPCK, 2003.
- . "Romans." In *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol.10: Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans; 1 Corinthians*, edited by Leander E Keck. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.

Lexicon and Bible versions

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature Third Edition (BDAG) ed.
(Greek-English Lexicon Based on Walter Bauer's Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften
des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literature, edited by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland,
with Viktor Reichmann and on previous English editions by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W.
Danker). Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

The UBS Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition; Greek Bible Text. The Greek New Testament, Fourth
Revised Edition. Edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martina
and Bruce M. Metzger in cooperation with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research. Deutsche
Bibelgesellschaft. Munster/Westphalia

New Revised Standard Version

King James Version