

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTEGRATION OF BODY AND SOUL

2.0 Introduction

For the early Patristic writers, the person was an integral unity composed of body and soul. Bodily life was seen positively for the most part, and the eschatological expectation was that the unity of body and soul, destroyed by death, would be restored through the resurrection. This unitary model of anthropology and eschatology enabled the Patristic writers to defend the integrity of the creation as God's handiwork, in opposition to the dualistic view of the Gnostics, who denied that we are redeemed by the same God who created us. Denial of the resurrection was seen as arising from a defective view of the creation and a false concept of God.

2.1 The person as a unity of body and soul

The scandal of Christianity in the pagan world, and its genius, was not so much the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as the insistence that the body was an essential, integral part of the person, the idea on which resurrection was based.¹ In spite of the presupposition of a dichotomy between body and soul, the Patristic writers who took a unitary view, stressing that both together comprised the person, managed to retain many important Biblical insights, for instance, the integral nature of the person who is created by God for earthly, bodily life. This led the Patristic writers to insist on the indispensibility of the body for what it was to be human. To deny the importance of the body was to deny that it was created by God, and that it had been redeemed through the incarnation and bodily death and resurrection of Christ; in fact, it was a denial of redemption as such. To postulate that redemption was possible apart from the body made no sense to them. Irenaeus brings out the unitary view quite explicitly. He says that

...the soul and spirit are certainly a *part* of the man, but certainly not *the* man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God.²

Irenaeus holds that salvation is available for the body as well as the soul, since both body and soul together form the person who has either faith or unbelief.³

Theodore of Mopsuestia holds that human nature consists of a body and a soul, which he says are "two natures, but that one man is composed out of both."⁴ Theodore insists

¹ A H Armstrong and R A Markus. **Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy**, pp. 46-47. The ability to contend against pagan ideas was compromised when the person was considered to be the soul alone, as in later Patristic writing.

² Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.6.1. ANF 1, p. 531. Cf. Justin Martyr. *Fragments from the book on the resurrection* 8. ANF 1, p. 297.

³ Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 2.29.1-2. ANF 1, pp. 402-403. Tertullian speaks of "...man's actual component substances, body and soul..." *Against Praxeas* 16. ANF 3, p. 612.

that the person is not the soul alone, but soul and body together. “Yet the two are one man, and one of the two (natures) is never absolutely and properly said to be ‘man’ in itself - unless perhaps with some added qualification, such as ‘interior man’ and ‘exterior man’.”⁵ He thus rejects the Neoplatonic view that the soul is the person, and insists that the body is a constitutive part of human nature.⁶ It was therefore asserted that the whole person came from the hands of the one creator God,⁷ and that it followed that all things, including the flesh, are also able to be saved by God, since it was illogical to suppose that God could not save what he had created.⁸

Ephrem of Syria refers to the body as “a brother and a servant and a companion” to the soul, and says that the soul is awaiting the resurrection of the body so that together they can again share this close relationship.⁹ For Ephraim body and soul have an equal partnership; they share together in everything.

Body and Soul have been invited to Paradise, and in Paradise they were honoured and returned in disgrace, they were disgraced and have returned in honour; Body and Soul entered together, Body and Soul went out together, by death they were separated one from the other, and in resurrection again they are joined.¹⁰

⁴ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Adversus Apollinarem*. Translation cited from: R A Norris. **Manhood and Christ**, p. 151. Cf. Theodoret. “And they refuse to perceive that every human being has both an immortal soul and a mortal body; yet no-one hitherto has been found to call Paul two Pauls because he has both soul and body, any more than Peter two Peters or Abraham or Adam.” *Letter 145, to the monks of Constantinople*. NPNF 2/3, p. 313. Theodoret comments elsewhere: “...the man - I mean man in general - reasonable and mortal being, has a soul and has a body, and is reckoned to be one being...” *Letter 21, to Eusebius*. NPNF 2/3, p. 258.

⁵ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Adversus Apollinarem*. Translation cited from: R A Norris. **Manhood and Christ**, p. 152. Ironically, much the same formulation appears in Cyril of Alexandria. For instance, he says: “The point is that man results from two natures - body and soul, I mean - and intellectual perception recognizes the difference; but we unite them and then get one nature of man.” *Letter to Eulogius*. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 63, 65. See also *First Letter to Succensus 7*. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 77. *Second Letter to Succensus 3*. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 89. *Second Letter to Succensus 5*. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 93.

⁶ R A Norris. **Manhood and Christ**, p. 152.

⁷ It was also essential to assert that all humankind is God’s workmanship: every human being is created by the same God. There is no spiritual “elite” which was created by a superior God. See G Wingren. **Man and the Incarnation**, p. 36, for the Gnostic classification of humankind into different classes.

⁸ This same idea was utilised by Athanasius to refute the Arian heresy. “For it was more fitting that they should not be created than that, having come into being, they should be neglected and perish. For by their neglect the weakness of God rather than his goodness would be made known, if after creating he had abandoned his work to corruption, rather than if he had not created man in the beginning.” *On the Incarnation 6*. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 149.

⁹ Ephrem. *Fifth Discourse to Hypatius Against False Teachings*. **S. Ephraim’s Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan**, Vol. 1, p. cvi.

¹⁰ Ephrem. *Discourse Against Bardaisan*. **S. Ephraim’s Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan**, Vol. 2, p. lxix.

Augustine held to two different conceptions of human nature. In one of his earliest treatises, *The greatness of the soul*, Augustine argued that the soul was “a special substance, endowed with reason, adapted to rule the body.”¹¹ Colleran states that this view reflects the Platonic idea of the soul as a complete and independent entity only incidentally united to the body, as a rider to the horse,¹² “a rational soul with a mortal and earthly body in its service.”¹³ This Platonic conception did not permit an essential union of body and soul. But in various places in Augustine’s later writings, he insisted that the body was not merely an external instrument but part of the nature of humankind, so that the complete person is found only in the union of body and soul.¹⁴ However, even then he still saw the body as inferior to the soul and used as its instrument.¹⁵ Colleran says that the view of the unity of human nature as a composite of body and soul is influenced by Christianity, while the idea that the soul is the higher and dominant principle in human nature is of Platonic origin. In using both views he cannot escape inconsistency.¹⁶ Colleran claims that Augustine never sought to solve the problem of how the body and soul could form a unified nature, if the soul also was a complete being that used the body as its instrument. He cites Augustine’s comment that “the kind of union by which spirits are joined to bodies and become animals, is utterly marvellous and beyond the comprehension of man, although such a unit is what man himself is.”¹⁷ We thus find two different models used by Augustine, which can be traced to the relative influence of either Platonism or Christianity, combining ideas from both sources in his writings.¹⁸

2.1.1 The body included in the image of God

¹¹ Augustine. *The greatness of the soul* 13.22. ACW 9, p. 40.

¹² Joseph M Colleran. **Augustine. *The greatness of the soul. The Teacher.*** ACW 9, p. 201, n. 27.

¹³ [Augustine. *The morals of the catholic church* 27.52. NPNF 1/4, p. 55.] Joseph M Colleran. **Augustine. *The greatness of the soul. The Teacher.*** ACW 9, p. 205, n. 58. However, Pegis comments that here Augustine is seeking to define *man* while his comment that “The soul... is a special substance, endowed with reason, adapted to rule the body” [see note 11] defines the *soul*. Augustine is not trying to exclude the body from membership in the human composite, he is trying to find the central man in the composite. Anton C Pegis. “The mind of St. Augustine.” *Mediaeval Studies* 6 (1944) 40.

¹⁴ [For example, Augustine. *On the Trinity* 15.7.11. NPNF 1/3, pp. 204-205. *The City of God* 1.13. NPNF 1/2, p. 10; 10.29. NPNF 1/2, p. 199. *On the soul and its origin* 4.2.3. NPNF 1/5, p. 355. *Sermon* 150.4.5. PL 38, 810] Joseph M Colleran. **Augustine. *The greatness of the soul. The Teacher.*** ACW 9, p. 219, n. 123.

¹⁵ [Augustine. *The City of God* 9.9. NPNF 1/2, p. 171; 10.6. NPNF 1/2, p. 184] Joseph M Colleran. **Augustine. *The greatness of the soul. The Teacher.*** ACW 9, pp. 219-220, n. 123.

¹⁶ Joseph M Colleran. **Augustine. *The greatness of the soul. The Teacher.*** ACW 9, pp. 205-206, n. 58. See also Kari E Børresen. “Augustin, interprète du dogme de la résurrection.” *Studia Theologica* 23 (1969) 142-144.

¹⁷ [Augustine. *The City of God* 21.10. NPNF 1/2, p. 462.] Joseph M Colleran. **Augustine. *The greatness of the soul. The Teacher.*** ACW 9, p. 220, n. 123.

¹⁸ We find the same contrast in Ambrose, who used a Biblical view in *On belief in the resurrection*, but a Platonic view in *On death as a good*.

For some Patristic writers who held to a unitary anthropology, the “image of God” [Genesis 1:26] was understood to include the body,¹⁹ while those who held an instrumentalist anthropology never included the body in the “image.”²⁰ For instance, the anthropology of Melito of Sardis stresses the unity of body and soul while the person is alive. The body and soul are separable only in death, which is a disaster, an unnatural condition that destroys the unity of human nature; rending apart what God created whole. In death the person is dissolved and scattered; our hope lies in resurrection, in which the person is restored. For Melito human life was a unity which reflected totally the image of God; thus the body was as much part of the image of God as the soul.²¹ Melito says that because of death “in all the world your good image was dispersed. Yet, had you but given the word, all bodies would have stood before you.”²² So there is a direct connection between being in the body and showing the image of God. Death, the destruction of the body, is the dispersal of the image. Similarly, resurrection, the reconstitution of the body which was scattered in death, enables the image of God to be manifest once more.²³ The incarnation was for the

¹⁹ Even those who held a unitary view did not always include the body in the “image of God.” For example, Tatian held that the image of God is the spirit which God gives, not the soul or the body [*Address to the Greeks* 12.1. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 23] although he then goes on to say that “man alone [as distinct from the animals] is the image and likeness of God; and I mean by man, not one who performs actions similar to those of animals, but one who has advanced far beyond mere humanity - to God Himself.” *Address to the Greeks* 15.2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 31. Cf. the comment by G L Bray: “In theory the Christian doctrine of the image and likeness of God embraced the whole man, but in practice this wider sense was seldom maintained in the early period, and it would appear that the image was increasingly identified with the soul (cf., e.g. [Tertullian] *Against Marcion* 2.5.6).” **Holiness and the will of God**, p. 67.

²⁰ Some who held that the soul alone was created in the image of God held that the body was created in the image of the soul - the image of the image. For example, Gregory of Nyssa. *On the making of man* 12.9. NPNF 2/5, p. 399. Daniel E Scuiry comments: “When the rational principle is the ruling part of man, that is, when the soul is imaging God, then the body, too, images God by participation.” “The anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa.” *Diakonia* 18 (1983) 31. Cyril of Alexandria rejects the idea that the soul is an “image of an image,” namely Christ, who is the image of God, on the basis that the Son is God, and so to be created in the image of the Son is to be created in the image of God. *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 4. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 197-199.

²¹ Gennadius records the existence of a sect of Christians who followed Melito in believing that the body is made in the image of God. *Liber ecclesiasticorum dogmatum* 4. Cited by: David L Paulsen. “Early Christian belief in a corporeal deity: Origen and Augustine as reluctant witnesses.” *Harvard Theological Review* 83 (1990) 112-113.

²² Melito. *New Fragment* II, 16. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 92. Melito thought that the “image of God” is the the image of the **Father** rather than the **Son**. *On Pascha*, 56. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 31.

²³ Melito. *On Soul and Body*. Fragment 13. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 80. This view of Melito’s is repeated in Alexander of Alexandria. “Why, O Lord, didst Thou come down to earth, unless it was for man’s sake, who has been scattered everywhere: for in every place has Thy fair image been disseminated?” *On the soul and body and passions of the Lord* 7. ANF 6, p. 301. He also says: “Therefore God sent down from heaven His incorporeal Son... to save lost man, and collect all his scattered members. For Christ, when He joined the manhood to His person, united that which death by the separation of the body had dispersed.” *On the soul and body and passions of the Lord* 5. ANF 6, p. 300.

purpose of restoring human bodily life. “He was born a man, and he raised up lost man and gathered his scattered members.”²⁴

Hall comments that “Some early Christians held that God is a corporeal being, sharing the view of the Stoics that spirit is a very refined kind of matter.” This view is held by Tertullian, and possibly also by Melito.²⁵ Hall says concerning the nature of the image of God in Melito, that “If it is true that Melito believed God to be corporeal, the reference is to man as a psychosomatic unity, and the image would not be merely the soul or reason.”²⁶

Melito has a strong positive attitude towards bodiliness, and sees death not as an escape from the body but the splitting apart of the “beautiful body” which God had made, and then humans entered into captivity to death. The image of the prisoner occurs several times in Melito’s Homily, first of humanity being cast out of Paradise and “into this world as into a convicts’ prison,”²⁷ and then through death the body returns to the earth, thereby undoing God’s creative work, while the soul which had been given by God to live in this beautiful body on the earth is instead confined to Hades, being “dragged off a prisoner under the shadows of death.”²⁸ As a result the legacy left to each succeeding generation is “not imperishability but decay, not honour but dishonour, but freedom but slavery, not royalty but tyranny, not life but death, not salvation but destruction.”²⁹

Irenaeus interprets the image and likeness of God not simply in terms of the soul, but also of the body. Since humankind is created by God according to his own image, the body shares in this image also, thus reaffirming that the whole person is created by God. Since the whole person will be saved by the granting of a renewed image and likeness of God, the body is included in this.

But man He fashioned with His own hands, taking of the purest and finest of earth, in measured wise mingling with the earth His own power; for He gave his frame the outline of His own form, that the visible appearance too should be godlike - for it was as an image of God that man was fashioned and set on earth - and that he might come

²⁴ Melito. New Fragment II, 4. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 87. Cf. *On Soul and Body*. “For this reason the Father sent his incorporeal Son from heaven, so that, enfleshed in the virgin’s womb and born as man, he might bring man to life and gather his parts, which death had scattered when he divided man.” Fragment 13. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 80.

²⁵ S G Hall. **Melito of Sardis. On Pascha, and Fragments.** Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. xv.

²⁶ S G Hall. **Melito of Sardis. On Pascha, and Fragments.** Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 31, n. 20.

²⁷ Melito. *On Pascha*, 48. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 25.

²⁸ Melito. *On Pascha*, 55-56. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 31. However, he never says that the soul is cast into the body as a prison (as in the *soma-sema* pun of Greek tradition). The prison is either this world rather than Paradise, and thus the whole person is in prison, or else it is hell, where the dead are confined until they are released by Christ at the resurrection.

²⁹ Melito. *On Pascha*, 49. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 27.

to life, He breathed into his face the breath of life, so that the man became like God in inspiration as well as in frame.³⁰

Thus Irenaeus sees the denial that the whole person, body and soul, partakes of salvation, is rooted in the denial that the whole person is created by God, that is, that both body and soul share in the image and likeness of God. Denial of this implies denial of the body's salvation.

Now man is a mixed organisation of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and moulded by His hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit... For whatsoever all the heretics may have advanced with the utmost solemnity, they come at last to this, that they blaspheme the Creator, and disallow the salvation of God's workmanship, which the flesh truly is...³¹

Theodore of Mopsuestia argues that the image of God is human nature as a composite of body and soul, since it is the essence of an image to be seen, and the soul cannot be seen.³² Others who considered the body as part of the "image of God," and thus held a unitary conception in which the person was the composite of body and soul, included Tertullian,³³ Cyprian,³⁴ and Narsai.³⁵

2.2 The goodness of bodily life

For Patristic writers who held a unitary view of human nature, bodily life was something good and valuable, God's creation which will be redeemed and not destroyed. While they sometimes did express the desire to be free from this world, this was not because of a negative evaluation of bodiliness, but because of the

³⁰ Irenaeus. *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 11. ACW 16, p. 54. See also *Against Heresies* 4.20.1. ANF 1, pp. 487-488. *Against Heresies* 5.6.1. ANF 1, p. 531.

³¹ Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* Preface, 4. ANF 1, p. 463. V Grossi asserts that Irenaeus and Antiochenes such as Diodore of Tarsus read Genesis 1:26 in the light of the incarnation, and so the "image of God" included bodiliness, while the Alexandrian anthropology followed the Middle Platonism of Philo, who emphasised the soul's kinship with God and the capacity of the human *nous* to become like God. The *nous*, the soul's highest faculty, was therefore seen as the image of God. [Clement of Alexandria. *The Instructor* 3.11. ANF 2, p. 287. Origen. *Against Celsus* 4.83. ANF 4, p. 534.] V Grossi. "Anthropology." In: **Encyclopaedia of the Early Church**. Vol. 1, p. 45.

³² R A Norris. **Manhood and Christ**, p. 140.

³³ Tertullian correlates the image with the resurrection: "Shall that very flesh, which the Divine Creator formed with his own hands in the image of God; which he animated with his own *afflatus*, after the likeness of his own vital vigour... shall that flesh, I say, so often brought near to God, not rise again? God forbid, God forbid, (I repeat) that he should abandon to everlasting destruction the labour of his own hands, the care of his own thoughts, the receptacle of his own Spirit..." *On the resurrection of the flesh* 9. ANF 3, pp. 551-552. Cf. G L Bray. **Holiness and the will of God**, p. 67. See also *Against Marcion* 2.4. ANF 3, p. 300.

³⁴ Cyprian. *On the dress of virgins* 15. ANF 5, p. 434.

³⁵ See F G McLeod. "Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai." *Theological Studies* 42 (1981) 459 and passim.

endemic influence of evil in the world.³⁶ For instance, Cyprian, who was to die as a martyr, sees escape from this world in terms of deliverance from pagan persecutions.

In persecutions, earth is shut up, but heaven is opened; Antichrist is threatening, but Christ is protecting; death is brought in, but immortality follows; the world is taken away from him that is slain, but paradise is set forth to him restored; the life of time is extinguished, but the life of eternity is realised.³⁷

Cyprian speaks often of the “security” to be found in Christ, an understandable theme when death by persecution always threatened, and when many Christians were dying daily in a massive epidemic of the plague (252-254 AD).³⁸ He compares the uncertainty of life in the world with all its dangers with the certainty of the resurrection.³⁹ One of the most forthright passages on the theme of security is as follows:

...when, withdrawn from these whirlwinds of the world, we attain the harbour of our home and eternal security, when having accomplished this death we come to immortality. For that is our peace, that our faithful tranquillity, that our stedfast [sic], and abiding, and perpetual security.⁴⁰

It is noticeable that Cyprian wishes only to be delivered from the dangers and tribulations of bodily life in the midst of plague and persecution, not to escape from bodily life as such. This can be seen for instance in his flight from persecution, which was criticised by the Roman clergy.⁴¹ Cyprian was in this respect simply following the advice of Tertullian in his treatise *To his wife*, where he recommended fleeing from persecution rather than risk denying the faith under torture.⁴² Cyprian justified his

³⁶ McDannell and Lang comment in this connection: “Contrary to our assumption that those who die for Christ despise this world, Christian martyrs accepted the goodness of their natural lives. They expected that after martyrdom they would experience an improved earthly existence. They wanted to enjoy *this* world, not some imaginary heavenly realm. This belief was shared by their theologian, Irenaeus.” **Heaven: A History**, p. 50.

³⁷ Cyprian. *Exhortation to martyrdom, addressed to Fortunatus* 13. ANF 5, p. 507. Cf. also *Letter* 28.3.1. *To Moyses, Maximus, and other Confessors*. ACW 44, p. 50. *Letter* 80.2.1. *To Sergius, Rogatianus, and other confessors*. ACW 43, p. 64.

³⁸ Cyprian. *On the mortality* 21-22. ANF 5, p. 474. Cf. also *On the mortality* 6. ANF 5, p. 470.

³⁹ This theme is found as a heading on one of his chapters of Testimonies: “That no one should be made sad by death, since in living is labour and peril, in dying peace and the certainty of the resurrection.” Cyprian. *Three books of Testimonies against the Jews* 3.58. ANF 5, p. 548. Cf. *Letter* 1.14. *To Donatus*. ANF 5, p. 279. *An address to Demetrianus* 25. ANF 5, p. 465.

⁴⁰ Cyprian. *On the mortality* 3. ANF 5, p. 470.

⁴¹ The Roman Clergy. *Letter* 8. ACW 43, pp. 67-70.

⁴² Tertullian. *To his wife* 1.3. ANF 4, p. 40. Cf. *Of patience* 13. ANF 3, pp. 715-716. However, Tertullian also said persecution was the will of God to strengthen the faith of believers. *On flight in persecution* 1. ANF 4, p. 116. See also Athanasius. *Apologia pro fuga*. NPNF 2/4, pp. 255-265. The church was also instructed to receive as martyrs those fleeing from persecution. *Apostolic Constitutions* 5.3. ANF 7, p. 438. This is also found in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* 19. R H Connolly, p. 163. John Cassian, rather removed from the threat of persecution, said

flight as an attempt to avoid being put to death in order to be able to minister to the needs of the church, although he was not afraid of death, which it is impossible to escape. Nor should we fear being killed in the persecution, since that death gains us a crown of martyrdom.⁴³

Now, were it possible for us to escape from death, then dying would sensibly be something we might fear. But as man, being mortal, has no option but to die, then let us grasp the opportunity that now comes thanks to God's promise and providence; let us bring out lives to an end, winning at the same time the reward of immortality; let us have no fear of being put to death, since we know it is when we are put to death that we win our crowns.⁴⁴

Thus the escape from this world sought by Cyprian was rooted in weariness with social upheaval and the constant danger of death, not a creation-negating perspective. He also sees death as liberation from the suffering in this world resulting from the curse of Genesis 3:17-19, and illustrates the frailty of life from Isaiah 40:6-7, the greater desirability of being with God over life in this world from the story of Enoch in Genesis 5:24, and the hope of the resurrection from Ezekiel 37:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, and 1 Corinthians 15:36, 41-44, 53-55.⁴⁵

Tertullian speaks of martyrdom as based on "a contempt for the body,"⁴⁶ but again this is not contempt for bodiliness as such.⁴⁷ Rather, it is the attitude which values

that the saints never tried to avoid it, and even sought it out. *Conferences* 6.3. NPNF 2/11, p. 353.

⁴³ Cf. the view of Ambrose, who said that "not even martyrs are crowned if they are catechumens, for they are not crowned if they are not initiated." *On the death of Valentinian* 53. FC 22, p. 288. Compare this with the *Apostolic Constitutions* which stress that the possibility of martyrdom is not to be refused, even if the catechumen has not been baptised, since it is a union with Christ's death in reality, whereas baptism is union with Christ's death only in imagery. *Apostolic Constitutions* 5.6. ANF 7, p. 439. Theodore of Mopsuestia develops further the idea of baptism being only an image, the reality of which is received in the resurrection. Before baptism we bear "no resemblance of any kind to the mark of an immortal nature," but after baptism we will undergo a change into an immortal, incorruptible and immutable nature. Baptism is only the image of the reality is yet to come, which enables us to participate in that reality, the "future benefits" of which we have received the "firstfruits." *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 4. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 53-56. Later Theodore says that "we receive these benefits in baptism in symbol, while in the next world we shall all of us receive renewal of our nature in reality." *Ibid.*, p. 58. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

⁴⁴ Cyprian. Letter 58.3.2. *To the people of Thibarisis*. ACW 46, p. 62. In his Testimonies he says that "what we suffer in this world is of less account than is the reward which is promised." *Three books of Testimonies against the Jews* 3.17. ANF 5, p. 539.

⁴⁵ Cyprian. *Three books of Testimonies against the Jews* 3.58. ANF 5, p. 548. Elsewhere he describes the consequences of the curse for Adam and Eve [*On the advantage of patience* 11-12. ANF 5, p. 487] and speaks of the translation of Enoch as a removal "from this contagion of the world." *On the mortality* 23. ANF 5, p. 474.

⁴⁶ Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 43. ANF 3, p. 576.

⁴⁷ Tertullian has been considered chauvinistic because of his condemnation of the use by women of cosmetics and dying of the hair to conceal increasing age. Tertullian is not, however, condemning the use of cosmetics as such, but only when it takes on the flavour of contempt

faithfulness to the Lord above the natural desire to preserve life.⁴⁸ For the Patristic authors, life was a gift of God, and thus was relativized to the highest good, faithfulness to God. The desire to preserve one's life was noble, except when that came into conflict with a higher loyalty, and thus martyrdom was seen to be the greatest form of witness to God, since it considered God himself of greater worth than life [Cf. Matthew 10:32-33].⁴⁹

2.3 The positive evaluation of the flesh

The Patristic writers battled against the disparagement of the flesh as something inferior, which was in conflict with the soul. Ignatius of Antioch, who held a unitary view of human nature, saw the "flesh" as the ethical distortion of human life through the drive for unrestrained gratification of the desires of the body. The "flesh" is thereby not the source of evil, but comes to symbolise sinful life.⁵⁰ Ignatius held that the flesh will share in redemption through the resurrection, when it is endowed with immortality and freed from sin completely. Thus the resurrection is essential, so that we can once again be whole persons fitted for eschatological life.⁵¹ Similarly, Tertullian stressed that the flesh is not the source of our problems.

In the same way, when he adds, *Therefore we are always confident, and fully aware, that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight*, it is manifest that in this statement there is no design of disparaging the flesh, as if it separated us from the Lord. For there is here pointedly addressed to us an exhortation to disregard this present life, since we are absent from

for the body that God has created. *On the apparel of women* 2.7. ANF 4, pp. 21-22. John Chrysostom repeats this idea when he suggests that women should not use cosmetics, decrying "the habit of painting your faces and adding to them, as if the workmanship were defective. By doing so you insult the Workman." *Baptismal Instructions* 1.37. ACW 31, p. 38. Cf. also Cyprian. *On the dress of virgins* 15-17. ANF 5, p. 434. Clement of Alexandria. *The Instructor* 3.11. ANF 2, pp. 286-287. Ambrose. *Hexaemeron* 6.8.47. FC 42, p. 260. Paulinus of Nola. *Poem* 25. ACW 40, p. 247. This idea has been considered of Stoic origin. M A Fahey. **Cyprian and the Bible**, p. 27. For a reassessment of Tertullian's attitude to women see Elizabeth Carnelley. "Tertullian and Feminism." *Theology* 92 (1989) 31-35. F Forrester Church. "Sex and salvation in Tertullian." *Harvard Theological Review* 68 (1975) 83-101.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Letter of the Church at Smyrna, concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp*, 2. "Looking to the grace of Christ, they despised all the torments of this world, redeeming themselves from eternal punishment by [the suffering of] a single hour." ANF 1, p. 39. Tertullian. "All our obstinacy, however, is with you a foregone conclusion, based on our strong convictions; for we take for granted a resurrection of the dead. Hope in this resurrection amounts to a contempt for death." *Ad nationes* 1.19. ANF 3, p. 127.

⁴⁹ *The Pastor of Hermas. Similitude* 2.2. ANF 2, p. 11. Cyprian. *On the exhortation to martyrdom, addressed to Fortunatus* 5. ANF 5, p. 499. Tertullian. *On flight in persecution* 7. ANF 4, p. 120.

⁵⁰ V Corwin. **St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch**, p. 161. Cf. the *Pastor of Hermas*, which stresses the need to keep the flesh undefiled because the Spirit inhabits it; the flesh is not to be thought corruptible, because it is indwelt by the Spirit, and to defile the flesh is to defile the Spirit. *Similitude* 5.7. ANF 2, p. 36.

⁵¹ Ignatius of Antioch. *Letter to the Trallians* 9. ANF 1, p. 70. Cf. C C Richardson. **The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch**, p. 28.

the Lord as long as we are passing through it - walking by faith, not by sight; in other words, in hope, not in reality. Accordingly he adds, *We are indeed confident and deem it good rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord*, in order, that is, that we may walk by sight rather than by faith, in realization rather than in hope.⁵²

Thus for Tertullian it is not bodily life which separates us from God, but “this present life,” namely a life dependent on faith and hope, rather than in full realization of communion with God. It is a life subject to temptations and sin which hinders us, not the fact of being in the body. It is better to be absent from the body and with the Lord, because the communion thereby made possible is precluded in this present life.

It was common to assert in this way that the “flesh” which opposed the spirit [Romans 13:14] was not the fleshly body but the principle of sin. For instance, John Chrysostom says that the ‘flesh’ is not “corruption” but that which is “corruptible,” and it denotes “evil deeds” not an evil thing.⁵³

However, Novatian erred when he asserted that anger is a vice which arises from “the diversity in us of the materials of which we consist,” although he is undecided whether this is “of nature or of defect.” He is arguing that God cannot be angry because he is a simple nature and thus cannot change, while human beings are of a compound nature and thus can change. He implies that sin is a consequence of the way we have been made, although he does stress that the “flesh” is not condemned but only its guilt.⁵⁴

Augustine understood Paul’s reference to the opposition of flesh and spirit not as a dualism of two incompatible substances, but a distinction between following the inclination of the sinful nature or being transformed into the new nature by the Spirit of God.

They have not been called ‘spiritual’ because they will be spirits, not bodies.... so those bodies are called ‘spiritual’ without being spirits, because they will be bodies. Why, then, is it called a spiritual body, my dearly beloved, except because it will obey the direction of the spirit.⁵⁵

⁵² Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 43. ANF 3, p. 576. He also says that “withdrawing our members from unrighteousness and sin, and applying them to righteousness and holiness” means that the flesh can inherit the promise of salvation. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 47. ANF 3, p. 580.

⁵³ John Chrysostom. *Homilies on First Corinthians* 42.2. NPNF 1/12, p. 256. Cf. the comment by Clement of Alexandria on Ephesians 6:12. “...the contest, embracing all the varied exercises, is *not against flesh and blood*, but against the spiritual powers of inordinate passions that work through the flesh.” *The Stromata* 7.3. ANF 2, p. 528.

⁵⁴ Novatian. *On the Trinity* 5. ANF 5, p. 615. *On the Trinity* 10. ANF 5, p. 620. See below, Chapter 2.3.3.

⁵⁵ Augustine. *Sermon* 242.8. FC 38, pp. 270-271. Cf. *On faith and the creed* 6.13. NPNF 1/3, p. 326. *Against Fortunatus* 22. NPNF 1/4, p. 121. *The literal meaning of Genesis* 6.19.30. ACW 41, p. 200; *ibid.*, 6.24.35. ACW 41, p. 204. Niceta of Remesiana. “In the same way, from the name of Christ they are called Christians. They are also called spiritual - because of the Holy Spirit.” *The Power of the Holy Spirit* 22. FC 7, p. 41. The same view is found in Theodore of

Dewart comments:

No writer of the patristic age tried harder than Augustine to explain the mediating pauline phrase, “spiritual body,” to describe what changes the earthly body will undergo. The core of every explanation is that the body will no longer be an impediment to the vision of God.⁵⁶

The attitude towards the body can be discerned in the way in which Philippians 3:21 is interpreted. This text tells us that Christ *will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body*. Tertullian interpreted this text positively, saying that while the flesh is subjected to *humiliations* through its sin, nevertheless the body will be saved by God.⁵⁷ In another passage he uses this text to explain how the body is to be raised from the dead, and transformed to remove its corruptions through sin to purity and glory.⁵⁸ Cyprian follows Tertullian in his positive interpretation of this passage, comparing the eternal reward of the glorious resurrection body with the humiliations of the present body in its “brief and transient suffering.”⁵⁹ Theodore of Mopsuestia similarly sees in this text a positive view of the transformation of the body at the resurrection, a putting off of the sinfulness of this present life.⁶⁰

2.3.1 The affirmation of sexuality and marriage

Although Patristic writers did assert that marriage and procreation was legitimate, positive affirmations of sexuality and marriage are rare. Virginity came to be considered a superior way of life, and marriage was often considered a necessity for those who lacked self-control. Sexual intercourse was seen by many as the gratification of bodily lusts, and should be engaged in solely for the purposes of procreation.⁶¹ However, the few positive views come largely from those writers who

Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus. “His treatment of the Pauline spirit-flesh dualism found in Rom. vii.5 leads him to say: ‘Holy Scripture sometimes means by ‘flesh’ the nature itself, but sometimes not simply the nature, but the nature in so far as it is mortal.’ The passage, read in its entirety, suggests that by ‘nature’ Theodore means human nature. Biblical and Jewish usage identified ‘flesh and blood’ with humanity and creaturehood. The traditional term ‘flesh’ is interpreted biblically rather than philosophically. And, I should argue, Diodore’s use of ‘flesh’ must be read against a Biblical rather than a philosophical background.” R A Greer. “The Antiochene Christology of Diodore of Tarsus.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 17 (1966) 337.

⁵⁶ Joanne E McWilliam Dewart. **Death and Resurrection**, p. 174.

⁵⁷ Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 10. ANF 3, p. 552.

⁵⁸ Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 5.20. ANF 3, p. 473.

⁵⁹ Cyprian. *Letter 76.2. To Nemesianus and other martyrs in the mines*. ACW 47, p. 97.

⁶⁰ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 4. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) pp. 65, 69. This view is also found in Gregory the Illuminator. *The Teaching of Saint Gregory* 602-603. R W Thomson, pp. 147-148. John of Damascus. *On the Orthodox Faith* 4.27. NPNF 2/9, pp. 100-101. Cf. R P Martin, who says that this verse refers to “the state of humiliation caused through sin.” **The Epistle to the Philippians**, p. 163.

⁶¹ See for instance Athenagoras. *A plea for the Christians* 33. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 81.

have positive evaluations of bodily life and the resurrection. That few of the Patristic writers appear to have been married themselves probably contributed to the dominance of negative views,⁶² while those who were married are not as negative. For instance, Tertullian, who was married, stressed that lust is the cause of shame associated with sexual intercourse, and not the nature of the act itself, which has been blessed by God.⁶³ John Chrysostom spoke well of marriage,⁶⁴ while Theodoret expresses a positive appreciation for the body which appears to be positively correlated with approval of marriage.⁶⁵

The discussion of the goodness or otherwise of sexuality is often correlated with speculation as to the relationship between Adam and Eve, and how that relationship would have developed had they not sinned. Ephrem of Syria insisted that Adam and Eve would have had children in Paradise,⁶⁶ while Basil of Ancyra states that virginity cannot be considered a commandment of God since he gave his blessing on childbearing (Genesis 1:28), nor can it be a sin to marry.⁶⁷ Marriage is spoken of positively by Irenaeus who repudiates Tatian's encratism, which implicitly denied the goodness of humankind being created as male and female, as well as the rejection of various kinds of food which God had created,⁶⁸ and by Tertullian in opposition to the

⁶² The "de facto" relationship of Augustine possibly stimulated his rather guilty attitude towards sexuality. See *Confessions* 4.2.2. NPNF 1/1, p. 68.

⁶³ Tertullian. *On the soul* 27. ANF 3, p. 208. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 4.22. NPNF 2/7, p. 24. There he says that intercourse was arranged by God for our benefit so the human race would not die out.

⁶⁴ See especially Catharine P Roth and David Anderson. **St. John Chrysostom on Marriage and Family Life**. The Introduction to this collection of Chrysostom's homilies gives a good exposition of his views.

⁶⁵ Theodoret. *Letter 146, to John the Oeconomus*. NPNF 2/3, p. 322. See for instance his pastoral letters to newly bereaved widows, where a positive attitude to marriage is evident. *Letter 7, to Theonilla*. NPNF 2/3, p. 252. *Letter 8, to Eugraphia*. NPNF 2/3, p. 252. *Letter 14, to Alexandra*. NPNF 2/3, pp. 254-255. *Letter 69, to Eugraphia*. NPNF 2/3, pp. 269-270. Theodoret also held that sin is passed on by heredity and not by procreation, and this also helps him to a positive view of marriage. G W Ashby. "The hermeneutic approach of Theodoret of Cyrrhus to the Old Testament." *Studia Patristica* 15 (1984) 133. See idem, "Theodoret of Cyrrhus on marriage." *Theology* 72 (1969) 482-491. See also D S Bailey. **The man-woman relation in Christian thought**, pp. 19-102 for a survey of Patristic views of marriage and sexuality.

⁶⁶ Ephrem. *Commentary on Genesis* 2.30. **Hymns on Paradise**, p. 220. Ephrem held that had they not sinned, their children would have been immortal and death would not have affected them.

⁶⁷ [Basil of Ancyra. *On virginity* 55. PG 30.777C-780A.] T H C van Eijk. "Marriage and Virginity, Death and Immortality." In: **Epektasis**, p. 225.

⁶⁸ Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 1.28.1. ANF 1, p. 353. The comments of Irenaeus concerning Tatian are the origin of the view that after the death of Justin, Tatian became heterodox, and in addition to his encratism, rejected the salvation of Adam. Since Irenaeus interpreted Adam as the representative of the human race as a whole, it was not the salvation of an individual that was at stake for Irenaeus, but the salvation of all. [*Against Heresies* 3.23.7-8. ANF 1, pp. 457-458.] J Lawson. **The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus**, p. 77. R M Grant sees Tatian as a Gnostic. "The heresy of Tatian." *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1954) 62-68. This has been disputed by G F Hawthorne. "Tatian and his discourse to the Greeks." *Harvard Theological Review* 57 (1964) 161-188. The accuracy of Irenaeus' report has been challenged

forbidding of marriage by Marcion and Apelles,⁶⁹ while Clement of Alexandria defends it against Basilides, Marcion and other heretics.⁷⁰

2.3.2 Rejection of Gnostic dualism

The Gnostic heresies denied the central Christian doctrines, not only with respect to the reality of the incarnation and the true humanity of Christ, the Eternal Word who was made flesh,⁷¹ and the truth of the resurrection of Christ and thus our redemption (1 Corinthians 15:12-19),⁷² but also with respect to the inherent goodness of humankind in its earthly existence and our future bodily resurrection. These heresies postulated two creators, one of whom had formed the soul and the other the body and the material world, and thus denigrated the flesh and bodily existence.⁷³

This dualism was decisively rejected by the Patristic authors, perhaps most forcefully and most successfully by Irenaeus, who saw the threat it posed to the Christian religion, which is built on faith in the one God who is both Creator and Redeemer.⁷⁴

by L W Barnard, who disagrees with Grant. "The heresy of Tatian - once again." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 19 (1968) 1-10.

⁶⁹ Tertullian. *Prescription against heretics* 33. ANF 3, p. 259. In this same chapter Tertullian defends the resurrection.

⁷⁰ Clement of Alexandria. *The Instructor* 2.10. ANF 2, pp. 259-262. *The Stromata* 3.1-18. ANF 3, pp. 381-402. The refined sensibilities of the editors of the ANF Series made them consider it necessary to print both these sections in Latin! A translation of the section of *The Stromata* is found in LCC 2, pp. 40-92. A complete translation of *The Instructor* is found in FC 23.

⁷¹ O'Neill has argued that John 1:14 means not that the Word 'became' flesh but was 'born' flesh. "The Word did not turn into flesh, did not change its nature and become flesh, did not masquerade as flesh, and did not come on the scene as flesh. We should always be careful to say 'the Word was born flesh' or use the old Latin translation *et verbum caro factum est*, 'the Word was made flesh'." J C O'Neill. "The Word did not "become" flesh." *Zeitschrift fur die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 82 (1991) 125-127.

⁷² A number of the Patristic writers appeared to stress that the resurrection of Christ was more a guarantee of our own bodily resurrection than a redemptive event which makes possible our resurrection. See for instance Augustine. "By showing himself corporeally alive after his resurrection he wished to teach us nothing more than that we should believe in the resurrection of the dead." *Sermon* 243.3. FC 38, p. 274. Peter Chrysologus. "...that by the example of this one rising from the dead, we may be roused to faith in the resurrection of all men..." *Sermon* 103. *On the raising of the widow's son and the resurrection of the dead. Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, Vol. 4, p. 122. Rufinus. "Since then we have Christ as the undoubted firstfruits of our resurrection, how can any question arise about the rest of us?" *Apology* 1.6. NPNF 2/3, p. 437. A more redemptive understanding of Christ's resurrection can be seen in Irenaeus. "...to those who believed and loved the Lord, and in return for holiness and justice and patience, the God of all would bring, through resurrection from the dead, the life everlasting which He had promised, through Him who died and was raised, Jesus Christ..." *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 41. ACW 16, p. 74.

⁷³ Simone Pétrement. **A Separate God**, p. 29.

⁷⁴ Cf. Irenaeus. "...it was one God the Father who spake with Abraham, who gave the law, who sent the prophets beforehand, who in the last times sent His Son, and conferred salvation upon His own handiwork - that is, the substance of flesh." *Against Heresies* 4.41.4. ANF 1, p. 525. Cf. also *Against Heresies* 4.10.2. ANF 1, p. 474. *Against Heresies* 4.40.1. ANF 1, p. 523. Cyril of Jerusalem also argued against the idea of two creators. "For some have impiously dared to divide the One God in their teaching: and some have said that one is the Creator and Lord of the soul, and another of the body; a doctrine at once absurd and impious. For how can

The most characteristic refutation of Gnosticism in the thought of Irenaeus is his affirmation of the goodness of creation, and of bodily life in particular. Irenaeus repudiates the Gnostic idea of salvation as deliverance from the body and their corresponding rejection of the possibility of the salvation of the flesh (since it was a material substance, created by a deity other than the one who saves spirits by releasing them from bodiliness). This view led to rejection of the possibility of the resurrection of the body.⁷⁵ For Irenaeus, such a conception not only denigrates the body, it also leads to an incoherent conception of human nature and therefore results in inconsistent doctrine.⁷⁶ Irenaeus holds that if souls are saved, then bodies are saved also, and will be raised from the dead. Those who do not believe in the resurrection are in fact denying the power of God to create human beings, as well as denying that the creator God is also the redeemer God, and that redemption applies to the whole person, not just a part.⁷⁷ Irenaeus constantly faults the Gnostics for their distinction between the Redeemer and the Demiurge, which results in their divorce between creation and redemption, as well as between creation and eschaton, in addition to denigration of the body and bodily life. This emphasis comes through most strongly in his insistence on a unitary anthropology, in which both body and soul are equal partners. One cannot be saved without the other.

Since Irenaeus places a strong emphasis on the resurrection of the flesh in his polemics against the Gnostics in his attempt to establish the life of the flesh, he has little interest in the immortal life of the soul separate from the body. To accept such a concept would in many ways result in acquiescence to one of the principle tenets of the Gnostics: that the life of the spirit is somehow superior to and independent of the flesh. Any attempt by Irenaeus to establish immortality as an attribute of the soul as such, apart from the gift of God, would undermine his entire argument. As Wingren says, for Irenaeus the resurrection demonstrates the power of God who saves from death. “The idea of immortality, on the other hand, locates the life-force directly in man as he is in himself - the man who is immortal is not subject to death.” The ambiguous comments by Irenaeus about the immortality of the soul must be seen in the light of his emphasis on life as receiving the power of God, and his correlated emphasis on human nature as “in fellowship with God.” Thus he does not stress immortality of the soul in itself.⁷⁸

Tertullian also insists that because the resurrection is an essential doctrine of Christianity, Marcion’s gnosticism is thereby refuted since only “half” of each person is saved, as Marcion understood the body to have been created by the demiurge and

a man become the servant of two masters, when our Lord says in the Gospels, *No man can serve two masters?* There is then One Only God, the Maker of both souls and bodies...” *Catechetical Lectures* 4.4. NPNF 2/7, p. 20. See also the polemics of Leo the Great against the Manicheans. *Letter* 15.6-11. NPNF 2/12, pp. 22-23.

⁷⁵ For example, Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 1.21.4, 1.24.5, 1.25.4, 1.27.3. ANF 1, pp. 346, 350, 351, 352.

⁷⁶ Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 2.29.3. ANF 1, p. 403.

⁷⁷ Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.31.1. ANF 1, p. 560.

⁷⁸ G Wingren. **Man and the Incarnation**, p. 204.

not the good God.⁷⁹ Tertullian argues from Luke 19:10, *The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost*, that Christ came to save the whole man, and not just the soul or the body. Neither the body nor the soul can be saved alone, since then the person cannot be said to have been saved. The fact that the soul is “lost” means not its destruction, as with the body, since it is immortal; but rather its punishment in hell. But if the soul is immortal, then it does not need to be saved. Rather, it is the flesh which is in need of being saved, because it is subject to death. But even if the soul is not immortal, it will still be saved, since it shares with the flesh that condition which causes it to need salvation. Tertullian then argues that it does not matter whether it is the soul or the flesh that is the cause of perdition, provided that salvation applies to both substances. That is, if the person perishes in one, he does not perish in the other. Salvation therefore applies to the substance which perishes, whichever one that might be. Thus the whole person is saved, since whether one or both need to be saved, that which does need to be saved is saved, and that which does not need to be saved is safe anyway. Thus nothing of the person is lost.⁸⁰

Likewise, in a reference to gnostic ideas Theodore of Mopsuestia says concerning the resurrection that we were created by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the beginning, and expect to be renewed also by them. Further, “It is not possible that one should be the cause of our first creation and another the cause of this second, which is higher than the first.”⁸¹ The rejection of Gnostic dualism in the doctrine of creation was seen as essential if the salvation of humankind was to be maintained. Any idea that there were separate creators for body and soul would inevitably undermine the doctrine of the resurrection, and without the resurrection, it was not possible for the human being to be saved, since the human being was considered to be both body and soul together, not the soul alone.

2.3.3 The interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:50

The Gnostics often cited 1 Corinthians 15:50, *flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*, in an attempt to refute the doctrine of the bodily resurrection. Authors as temporally distant as Tertullian and John Chrysostom argued against this view by insisting that the “flesh and blood” in this passage does not refer to the body,

⁷⁹ Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 1.24. ANF 3, pp. 289-290. A similar problem is found in Patristic writers who saw only “half” of human nature subject to death. Origen makes such a comment in his allegorical interpretation of the parable of the Samaritan: “It is clear that the man being left half-dead signifies that death has advanced into half of his nature - for the soul is immortal.” *Fragment in Luke* 168. SC 87, 520. Cited in: L Hennessey. “Origen of Alexandria: The fate of the soul and the body after death.” *Second Century* 8 (1991) 172. This is repeated by Gregory of Nyssa: “And then the Word explained, in the form of a story, God’s entire economy of salvation. He told of man’s descent from heaven, the robbers’ ambush, the stripping of the garment of immortality, the wounds of sin, the progress of death over half of man’s nature while his soul remained immortal.” *An accurate exposition of the Song of Songs* 14. **From glory to glory**, p. 280.

⁸⁰ Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 34. ANF 3, pp. 569-570.

⁸¹ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 4. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 59. Cf. Jerome. “His right hand has won victory for him. This means He redeemed mankind, His own workmanship, not the work of another; or in other words, what He had made for Himself He ransomed for Himself.” *Homily 25, on Psalm 97* [98]. FC 48, p. 198.

but to the lusts of the flesh: the sinful nature, weak corruptible humanity.⁸² Tertullian argues that the promises of God are given not to the soul only, even though it had a separate origin to the body in the creation of Adam, since both soul and body are designated **flesh**.⁸³ Similarly, Novatian asserts that the flesh we now have was created by God so as not to perish. It is only its guilt which is condemned as a result of human rebellion. But as a result of being cleared from guilt through baptism, the body can be saved in the resurrection.⁸⁴ Likewise, Irenaeus cited a number of passages from Pauline letters where this usage of the “flesh” is found.⁸⁵

Tertullian understood Paul to mean not that the human body cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, but that “flesh and blood,” that is, weak and frail humanity as it now is, cannot enter the kingdom: it must first be transformed and glorified. This phrase refers to the whole human person, not to the body alone.⁸⁶ Paul stresses that **this** corruptible and mortal nature must inherit incorruptibility and immortality, and therefore the body will not be abandoned or annihilated, but will share in the change which is to come on all those who are redeemed.⁸⁷ Peter Chrysologus states this well:

The Apostle confirms what we have said by his words: *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood can obtain no part in the kingdom of God.* See how he preaches the resurrection of the body. There, the spirit will possess the flesh, not the flesh the spirit, as the next words

⁸² Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the dead* 50-51. ANF 3, pp. 583-584. W J Sparrow-Simpson states that Tertullian was contending against gnostic identification of evil with matter, and thus he was stressing the possibility of the body of flesh being saved, while evil as “fleshly behaviour” was condemned. **The Resurrection and the Christian Faith**, pp. 346-347. See also John Chrysostom. *Homilies on First Corinthians* 42.2. NPNF 1/12, p. 256.

⁸³ Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 5. ANF 3, p. 549.

⁸⁴ Novatian. *On the Trinity* 10. ANF 5, p. 620.

⁸⁵ Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.2.3-5.3.3. ANF 1, pp. 528-530. J Lawson argues that Irenaeus had misunderstood Paul in this regard, and failed to see that the “ethical” use of the term “flesh” as rebellion against God’s will is not present in 1 Corinthians 15:50, since there Paul is referring to the present animal body, as distinct from the glorious resurrection body. **The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus**, pp. 231-232. But this view cannot be sustained, as the “ethical” use of the term is also in view in 1 Corinthians 15:50, emphasising the need for the present body, subject to decay and death because of sin, to be transformed in order to be able to enter the kingdom of God. PHEME PERKINS. **Resurrection: New Testament witness and contemporary reflection**, p. 365.

⁸⁶ Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 5.10. ANF 3, pp. 451-452. According to Methodius, Justin Martyr also held a similar interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:50. *The discourse on the resurrection* 2.6. ANF 6, p. 374. R A Norris sees this view also in Theodore of Mopsuestia, who sees the primary meaning of ‘flesh’ as ‘mortality’ which cannot inherit the kingdom, and not human nature as such. **Manhood and Christ**, pp. 154-155.

⁸⁷ Rufinus says that the church at Aquileia stressed in its text of the Creed that the resurrection was the raising of THIS flesh to prevent misunderstanding of what was meant, namely the identity of the present body with the resurrection body. *Commentary on the Apostle’s Creed* 43. ACW 20, p. 81. *Apology* 1.5. NPNF 2/3, p. 437. This custom may be derived from Origen’s comment that when Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 15 of “this corruptible” and “this mortal,” he indicated his body with a gesture. *De Principiis* 2.3.2. ANF 4, p. 271. This is supported by Rufinus’ reference to 1 Corinthians 15 in conjunction with this idea in another treatise. *Preface to Pamphilus’ Defence of Origen*. NPNF 2/3, p. 421. The idea appears also in Tertullian. *Against Marcion* 5.10. ANF 3, p. 451.

make clear: *Neither shall corruption have any part in incorruption.* You see that not the flesh perishes, but the principle of corruption; not the man, but his fault; not the person, but his sin; in order that the man living in God and before Him alone may rejoice over arriving at the end of his sins.⁸⁸

In his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:50, Augustine holds that the “flesh and blood” refers to corruption, not to bodily existence. He distinguishes the body created by God from the corruption of this body under the domination of sin. Thus the body can have access to the kingdom of God, when it is transformed into a spiritual body.⁸⁹ In his later life Augustine retracted his early view of the “celestial body” which had not adequately expressed that the transformation was through elimination of corruption of the flesh, rather than elimination of the substance of the flesh.⁹⁰ The flesh does not thereby cease to be “flesh,” it becomes flesh empowered and renewed by the Spirit. Otherwise identity of the present body and resurrection body cannot be maintained, since it must be this flesh that is glorified.

2.3.4 Rejection of Docetism

Belief in the reality of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, namely, that he was a true human being with all that makes one human, also meant the rejection of the errors of the Docetists, who asserted that Christ only appeared to be human. But this meant that there could be no salvation, since only one who was human like us could redeem us by dying in our place, and only if Christ was truly raised can we also be raised. The Docetic error was attacked by Ignatius of Antioch.

And he suffered truly, even as also He truly raised up Himself, not, as certain unbelievers maintain, that He only seemed to suffer, as they themselves only seem to be [Christians]. And as they believe, so shall it happen unto them, when they shall be divested of their bodies, and be mere evil spirits.⁹¹

Those who deny the incarnation are only denying their own redemption, and the consequence is that they will receive what they believe: their denial of the resurrection of their flesh will leave them as mere disincarnate spirits, just like the demons. Justin Martyr argued that the resurrection body of Christ was real and not illusory, as can be seen from the ability of the disciples to handle him, which was

⁸⁸ Peter Chrysologus. Sermon 117. *On 1 Corinthians 15:45-50*. FC 17, p. 202.

⁸⁹ [Augustine. *Enchiridion* 23. NPNF 1/3, p. 245. *Sermon* 362.15. PL 39, 1622] Kari E Börresen. “Augustin, interprète du dogme de la résurrection.” *Studia Theologica* 23 (1969) 150.

⁹⁰ [Augustine. *On faith and the Creed* 10.24. NPNF 1/3, p. 332. *On Christian combat* 32.34. FC 4, pp. 351-352. *Retractations* 1.16. PL 32, 612. *Ibid.*, 2.29. PL 32, 642] Kari E Börresen. “Augustin, interprète du dogme de la résurrection.” *Studia Theologica* 23 (1969) 150.

⁹¹ Ignatius. *Letter to the Smyrnaens*, 2. ANF 1, p. 87. This idea is also found in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* 26. The heretics “believe not in the resurrection of the body; who moreover will not eat and drink, but would fain rise up demons, unsubstantial spirits...” R H Connolly, p. 242.

done in order to prove it was a resurrection of the **flesh**.⁹² Similarly, Irenaeus stated the case against Docetism this way:

So, if He was not born, neither did He die; and if He did not die, neither was He raised from the dead; and if He was not raised from the dead, He has not conquered death, nor is its reign abolished; and if death is not conquered, how are we to mount up on high into life, being subject from the beginning to death?⁹³

Novatian says that the Docetic Christ is a fanciful idea “of those heretics who reject the authority of the Old Testament, as to a Christ feigned and coloured up from old wives’ fables,” and thus they rob us of the hope of the resurrection. There is no salvation for the flesh in a saviour who has only the appearance of a body.⁹⁴ But because Christ himself was raised bodily from the dead, salvation will be complete.⁹⁵ While Docetism undermined the reality of the incarnation and the resurrection from another direction than that of Gnosticism, it was still only a variation on the same error of separating creation from redemption.⁹⁶ The Patristic writers thus insisted on the intrinsic relation of creation and redemption, since to deny this was to deny the Christian understanding of God.

2.4 Death as destruction of the unity of body and soul

Since it was considered that body and soul form an intrinsic unity, their separation in death could only be temporary. Unlike the Gnostic view in which the soul is liberated from the bondage of the body, death is seen as the destruction of the unity of the person. The body and soul are wrenched apart, a disruption of their relationship which will be restored in the eschaton, so that they can again act as one, the way God created them to be. Death is considered unnatural, the negation of life. John of Damascus speaks of this when he says:

For fear is natural when the soul is unwilling to be separated from the body, on account of the natural sympathy and close relationship implanted in it in the beginning by the Creator, which makes it fear and struggle against death and pray for an escape from it.⁹⁷

⁹² Justin Martyr. *Fragments of the lost work on the resurrection* 9. ANF 1, p. 298.

⁹³ Irenaeus. *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 39. ACW 16, p. 72.

⁹⁴ Novatian. *On the Trinity* 10. ANF 5, p. 619.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Second Clement* 14. ANF 10, p. 255. Ignatius. *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 12. ANF 1, p. 92. Cf. Theodore of Mopsuestia, who says that the Son assumed both body and soul in order to “raise the fallen man who is composed of a body and of an immortal and rational soul.” *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) 56.

⁹⁶ This problem also appears in the Manichean heresy. Cf. the polemics of Leo the Great. “...we can have nothing in common with men who... strive by any means in their power to persuade men that the substance of the flesh is foreign to the hope of the resurrection, and so break down the whole mystery of Christ’s incarnation: because it was wrong for Christ to take upon Him complete manhood if it was wrong for Him to emancipate complete manhood.” *Letter* 13.12. NPNF 2/12, p. 24.

⁹⁷ John of Damascus. *On the Orthodox Faith* 3.23. NPNF 2/9, p. 70.

Tertullian stresses that even though death is simple, the separation of soul and body, yet it is violent in its very nature, tearing apart “so close a companionship of soul and body, so inseparable a growth together from their very conception of two sister substances.” Death is thus not a natural event but brought on because of sin. It is not because of our creatureliness that we die, as is proven from the fact that death was threatened as a consequence of disobedience, so that, had Adam not sinned, he would not have died.⁹⁸ Thus death does violence to our nature.

A central pastoral concern in Cyprian’s works is to allay the fear concerning death. “...let us be prepared for the whole will of God: laying aside the fear of death, let us think on the immortality which follows.”⁹⁹ He stresses that through dying we are thereby liberated forever from the fear of death: it can no more assail those who have died. He also stresses that death is for the Christian different from that of the unbeliever: it is a disaster for the latter, but for the Christian it is departure to salvation.

The fact that, without any difference made between one and another, the righteous die as well as the unrighteous, is no reason for you to suppose that it is a common death for the good and evil alike. The righteous are called to their place of refreshing, the unrighteous are snatched away to punishment...¹⁰⁰

Believers die in the knowledge that Christ has defeated death and removed its sting. They now die “in the Lord,” that is, it is Christ who controls the keys of death (Revelation 1:18). A similar idea is found in Athanasius. “For now no longer as condemned do we die, but as those who will rise again we await the general resurrection of all...”¹⁰¹ Further on Athanasius says:

So, since the common Saviour of us all has died for us, no longer do we the faithful in Christ now die as before according to the threat of the law, for such condemnation has ceased. But as corruption has ceased and been destroyed by the grace of the resurrection, now in the mortality of the body we are dissolved only for the time which God has set for each man, in order that we may be able to *obtain a better resurrection*.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Tertullian. *A treatise on the soul* 52. ANF 3, p. 229.

⁹⁹ Cyprian. *On the mortality* 24. ANF 5, p. 475. Cf. *On the mortality* 26. ANF 5, p. 475. “What a pleasure is there in the heavenly kingdom, without fear of death...”

¹⁰⁰ Cyprian. *On the mortality* 15. ANF 5, p. 472.

¹⁰¹ Athanasius. *On the Incarnation* 10. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 159. Cf. the comments of Oscar Cullmann. “Christ the firstborn from the dead! ...Death has already been overcome... the resurrection age is already inaugurated... Granted that it is only inaugurated, but still it is **decisively** inaugurated. **Only** inaugurated; for death is at work, and Christians still die.” **Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?** pp. 41-42.

¹⁰² Athanasius. *On the Incarnation* 21. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 185.

Similarly, Marius Victorinus said: “Therefore I do not fear death, because to die is gain for me; death itself is not gain for me, but to die: but Christ is life, because he who hopes in him, always lives, both now and forever.”¹⁰³

Chryssavgis comments that in the ascetic theology of John Climacus, the separation of body and soul in death is only temporary, since the unity will be restored in the resurrection. This separation is possible only for God, and it is a mysterious event which defies comprehension: “and it is amazing how [the soul] can come to exist outside [the body] in which it received being.”¹⁰⁴ John Climacus thus recognises the unnatural character of death since it separates what was originally created as a unity. He does not deprecate the body, as so many ascetics did. Ware says that the basic dualism underlying John’s theology is

...not a dualism between God and matter, for God is the creator of matter; not a dualism between soul and body, for *The Ladder* views the human person as an integral unity; but a dualism between the unfallen and the fallen, between the natural and the contranatural, between immortality and corruption, between life and death.¹⁰⁵

John Climacus stresses that the body and soul are bound together for eternity. There is no way that the soul can escape from the body and follow a separate fate.

By what rule or manner can I bind this body of mine? ...How can I break away from him when I am bound to him forever? How can I escape from him when he is going to rise with me? How can I make him incorrupt when he has received a corruptible nature?¹⁰⁶

Vincent of Lérins also held that while the body and soul are two distinct components of human nature, they are eternally bound together. They form the one human being; neither is sufficient on its own, both during this life and in the eschaton.¹⁰⁷ In fact he insists that because we need both body and soul to be human, the dualism is permanent, and the distinction between the two substances is eternal. Neither body nor soul will be changed into the substance of the other, but will exist forever as they now are:

... for not only in the present life, but in the future also, each individual man will consist of soul and body; nor will his body ever be converted into soul, or his soul into body; but while each individual man will live for ever, the distinction between the two substances will continue in each individual man for ever.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Marius Victorinus. *In Epistolam Pauli ad Philippenses*. (On Philippians 1.21). PL 8, 1200B.

¹⁰⁴ [John Climacus. *The ladder of divine ascent* 26. Classics of Western Spirituality, p. 243] J Chryssavgis. *Ascent to Heaven*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁵ K Ware. Introduction. **John Climacus. The Ladder of Divine Ascent**. Classics of Western Spirituality, pp. 21-22.

¹⁰⁶ John Climacus. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* 15. Classics of Western Spirituality, p. 185.

¹⁰⁷ Vincent of Lérins. *Commonitory* 13.37. NPNF 2/11, p. 141.

¹⁰⁸ Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitory* 13.37. NPNF 2/11, p. 141.

From this we can deduce that Vincent saw the future life in terms of the resurrection, since each person will have both body and soul.

2.4.1 Can the soul feel without the body? The unitary view

Those who held that the body and soul together formed the person thought that neither functioned fully on its own, since all life was an experience of the unity of body and soul.¹⁰⁹ There was therefore no way judgement could take place and punishments or rewards be allocated without the resurrection of the body.¹¹⁰ It was considered by some that the soul was unable to suffer punishment on its own; it needed a body to communicate suffering to it. This view is found in Tertullian's early works, although he subsequently changed his mind and accepted the opposing view.¹¹¹

Assuredly, as the reason why restoration takes place at all is the appointed judgement, every man must needs come forth the very same who had once existed, that he may receive at God's hands a judgement, whether of good desert or the opposite. And therefore the body too will appear; for the soul is not capable of suffering without the solid substance (that is, the flesh; and for this reason, also) that it is not right that souls should have all the wrath of God to bear: they did not sin without the body, within which all was done by them.¹¹²

The assertion, or denial, of the possibility of a judgement after death, together with the allocation of punishments and rewards, was anthropological in nature.¹¹³ Thus Nestorius held that just as the body cannot live without the soul, so the soul cannot perceive without the body.

Even as the body has need of the soul that it may live, for it lives not of itself, and the soul has need of the body that it may perceive, whereas otherwise it would see, even though it had not eyes and it would hear, even though the hearing were injured, so too with the other senses.¹¹⁴

This view precludes the possibility of both punishment and rewards in the intermediate state, since the experience of the person required both body and soul functioning together.

¹⁰⁹ This idea was common in Syrian theology, and thus they held that after death the soul was devoid of sensation although still living. F Gavin. "The sleep of the soul in the early Syrian church." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 40 (1920) 107-108.

¹¹⁰ L W Barnard. "The father of Christian anthropology." *Zeitschrift fur die Neuetestamentliche Wissenschaft* 63 (1972) 258.

¹¹¹ E Evans. **Tertullian's treatise on the resurrection**, p. xii, n. 1. See Chapter 4, n. 9.

¹¹² Tertullian. *Apology* 48. ANF 3, p. 53.

¹¹³ The discussion focused on whether the soul was "spiritual" or "corporeal" in nature. This was connected with the debates as to whether the fire of punishment was also "spiritual" or "corporeal." Cf. Tertullian. *A treatise on the soul* 7. ANF 3, p. 187.

¹¹⁴ Nestorius. *The Bazaar of Heracleides* 2.1. G R Driver and L Hodgson, p. 304.

2.4.2 Death as release of the body from sin

A common image in Patristic writings is that of the body being dissolved by death, returning to the dust from which it was originally created, so that it can be set free from the sin with which it is bound up, and re-created again without that sin. This is one reason why death is essential for human beings. We cannot be granted immortality without the body being set free from sin through death, otherwise we would live as sinners forever.¹¹⁵ This, the Patristic writers argued, is the reason why Adam and Eve were excluded from the garden of Eden after their sin, so they could not eat of the fruit of the tree of life [Genesis 3:22] and remain forever immortal in their condition of sin.¹¹⁶ An early expression of this view is found in Theophilus of Antioch.

And in so doing, God conferred a great benefit upon man. He did not let him remain for ever in a state of sin but, so to speak, with a kind of banishment he cast him out of Paradise, so that through this punishment he might expiate his sin in a fixed period of time and after chastisement might later be recalled... Again, just as when some vessel has been fashioned and has some fault, and is resmelted or refashioned so that it becomes new and perfect, so it happens to man through death; for he has virtually been shattered so that in the resurrection he may be found sound, I mean spotless and righteous and immortal.¹¹⁷

This idea is also found in Irenaeus, possibly borrowed from Theophilus.

Wherefore also He drove him out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life, not because He envied him the tree of life, as some venture to assert, but because He pitied him, [and did not desire] that he should continue a sinner for ever, nor that the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil interminable and irremediable. But He set a bound to his [state of sin], by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease, putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh, which should take place in the earth, so that

¹¹⁵ Ephrem. *Against Marcion* I. **S. Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan**, vol. 2, p. xxviii. Ambrose. *The Sacraments* 2.6.17. FC 44, p. 285. Ambrose said that "death is not to be feared, since it is the end of sin." *Consolation on the death of Valentinian* 45. FC 22, p. 285. Gregory of Nyssa. *The Great Catechism* 8. NPNF 2/5, p. 482. Theodoret. *Quaestio 40 in Genesin*. PG 69, 141-144. Cited in: G W Ashby. **Theodoret of Cyrrhus as Exegete of the Old Testament**, p. 109.

¹¹⁶ Novatian. *On the Trinity* 1. ANF 5, p. 612. Hippolytus. *Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe* 2. ANF 5, p. 222. Gregory of Nazianzus. *Oration* 45.8. NPNF 2/7, p. 425. Gregory of Nyssa. *The Great Catechism* 8. NPNF 2/5, p. 483. Hilary of Poitiers. *Commentary on the Psalms* 68.23. Cited in: W A Jurgens. **The Faith of the early Fathers**, Vol. 1, p. 386. John of Damascus. *On the Orthodox Faith* 4.9. NPNF 2/9, p. 78. Methodius. *The Symposium* 9.2. ACW 27, pp. 134-135. *The Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.4. ANF 6, p. 364; 1.6, p. 365; 1.13, pp. 367-368. Cf. E Buonaiuti. "The ethics and eschatology of Methodius of Olympus." *Harvard Theological Review* 14 (1921) 262. J P Burns. "The economy of salvation: Two patristic traditions." *Theological Studies* 37 (1976) 603.

¹¹⁷ Theophilus. *To Autolycus* 2.26. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 69.

man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live to God.¹¹⁸

The flesh would thus be saved through death and resurrection. For instance John of Damascus said:

It was necessary that what was made of earth should return to earth, and thus be assumed to heaven. It was fitting that the earthly tenement should be cast off, as gold is purified, so that the flesh in death might become pure and immortal, and rise in shining immortality from the tomb.¹¹⁹

The resurrection is therefore essential for our salvation, since the soul can have no life on its own, and the future life parallels the original state of Adam; humanity will once again be set free from sin, participating in the life of God, and living in paradise. Theodore of Mopsuestia cites the image of the potter from Jeremiah 18:1-6, to demonstrate that through the dissolution of our bodies of clay in death, we can be refashioned in the resurrection to be immortal and incorruptible, dwellers in “a world higher than the present.”¹²⁰ This idea appears to have no necessary connection with either the unitary or the instrumentalist anthropological model, although it is treated in somewhat different ways.

2.5 Immortality of the soul

In unitary models, we find arguments both for and against the idea that the soul is inherently immortal. While many hold that immortality is a gift of God to both body and soul, some did hold that the soul had immortal life by virtue of its nature. However, in a unitary anthropological model, this did not diminish the fact that it was not until the resurrection and subsequent judgement that we receive rewards and punishments, since it is the person, the composite of body and soul, that is under consideration. Thus it is the anthropological model, and not views concerning the immortality of the soul, which determines the structure of thought in the Patristic writers with respect to the judgement.

2.5.1 Philosophical arguments against inherent immortality

¹¹⁸ Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 3.23.6. ANF 1, p. 457. Cf. A R Kerr. “Imago and Similitudo in the thought of Irenaeus,” pp. 37-38. G Wingren. **Man and the Incarnation**, pp. 49-50.

¹¹⁹ John of Damascus. *Sermon on the Assumption* 3. M H Allies, p. 206. This view can lead to denigration of bodiliness, as in Gregory of Nyssa, who says that the flesh is justly dissolved since it was through the senses of the flesh that the soul went astray, and in the resurrection the body is reformed according to the original pattern. *The Great Catechism* 8. NPNF 2/5, p. 482.

¹²⁰ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 4. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 57. Cf. also *ibid.*, 59. *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* 5. *Woodbrooke Studies* 5 (1932) 56. *Commentarius in Genesin*. PG 66, 640c-641a. Cited in: R A Norris. **Manhood and Christ**, p. 183. Methodius also makes use of Jeremiah 18:1-6 in this connection. *Discourse on the resurrection* 1.6-7. ANF 6, p. 365.

While some Patristic authors argued from philosophical grounds for the immortality of the soul, many of the early Patristic authors argued from philosophical grounds **against** its immortality. This was possible partly because in the pagan philosophical tradition, on which the Patristic authors drew for their arguments, the same differences of opinion could be found.¹²¹ For instance, Nemesius notes the many and conflicting opinions of the philosophers on the subject of the soul and indicates this as the reason why his own discourse is so long, as there are many errors to refute.¹²²

After his conversion from pagan philosophy to Christianity, Justin Martyr repudiated the belief in the immortality of the soul, in favour of a belief in the resurrection of the body and the millennial kingdom.¹²³ Although some scholars have understood him to retain the idea of the immortality of the soul, the structure of his thought makes it improbable that he held this view after his conversion.¹²⁴ When Justin speaks of immortality (apart from his discussion of the philosophical view) he understands it to mean the state of those raised from the dead following the return of Christ, in one case referring to the wicked suffering torment in their resurrected bodies. According to Young, Justin thought that the pagan views of immortality and punishment after death were a distortion of the Christian doctrine.¹²⁵

It is impossible to argue from his belief that the philosophers received the basis of their doctrines from the prophets, to the conclusion that he believed in the immortality of the soul in the way the philosophers taught it: that is, as an immortal substance, possessing life in itself, and independent of God. Daniélou argues that Justin's use of the term "seeds of truth" indicates the imperfect character of the teaching borrowed from the OT writers, and that the philosophers' view of immortality was not an accurate expression of Scriptural teaching.¹²⁶

The direction taken by Justin was developed further by his disciple Tatian, whose distinctive anthropology shapes his whole eschatology. For Tatian the soul is not in itself immortal, but it is possible for it to become immortal through knowledge of

¹²¹ Margaret R Miles comments that "The problem of the relationship of body and soul had been analyzed and discussed since Aristotle; the Christian dogma of the Incarnation fell heir to both the tools and the difficulties with which philosophers had been dealing for centuries in the attempt to explain the relationship of body and soul." **Augustine on the body**, p. 79.

¹²² Nemesius. *On the nature of man* 2.11. LCC 4, pp. 257-260. Cf. also Pseudo-Justin. *Hortatory address to the Greeks* 6-7. ANF 1, pp. 275-276, where he discusses the differences between pagan philosophers on the immortality of the soul. Arnobius argues that the disagreements among the philosophers mean that they cannot all be true, since their views are inconsistent. However, again he admits that there are weighty arguments for each case. *The case against the Pagans* 2.57. ACW 7, pp. 167-168.

¹²³ E F Osborn. **Justin Martyr**, pp. 197-198.

¹²⁴ Van Eijk says that Justin rejects the Platonic conception of the immortality of the soul [*Dialogue* 5] and the gnostic idea of the ascent of the soul after death. T H C van Eijk. **La resurrection des morts chez les pères apostoliques**, p. 155. Young says that Justin's story of his conversion revolves around disproving the immortality of the soul, and he also states in the *Dialogue* that it undermines dependence on God. M O Young. "Justin Martyr and the death of souls." *Studia Patristica* 16 (1985) 210.

¹²⁵ M O Young. "Justin Martyr and the death of souls." *Studia Patristica* 16 (1985) 210-211.

¹²⁶ J Daniélou. **A History of Early Christian Doctrine**. Vol. 2, p. 47.

God. It is union with God which preserves the soul in death, for in death it is dissolved, being a compound and not a simple substance, but if it is in union with the Spirit, it is preserved in anticipation of the resurrection.¹²⁷ The composite soul is not concentrated in one part of the body but is “manifested” throughout it. Thus the flesh and the body must be resurrected together,¹²⁸ to face the judgement, those of the wicked to face annihilation and those of the righteous to receive eternal life through union with the indwelling Spirit.¹²⁹ Tatian held that neither the body nor the soul can be made immortal in its own right, but only the body joined to the soul, the whole person, can become immortal through faith and repentance through union with the Holy Spirit.¹³⁰

Tatian was concerned to demonstrate the validity of the resurrection because he saw it as the only future hope for humanity. If the soul is not immortal, able to live on after death, then it is only through the resurrection that we will finally be saved. All will face the judgement, when God will allot immortality to the righteous and punishment to the wicked. The judgement can take place only if there is a resurrection: the dead must be raised to life again to receive their rewards and punishments.¹³¹

Florovsky points out the difference between this Aristotelian view of Tatian’s and its modification in the views of Athenagoras. Aristotle held that the mortality of the body meant the mortality of the soul, which was its animating force. Athenagoras concluded that the immortality of the soul made possible the resurrection of the body, the reconstitution of the *compositum*.¹³² However, while Tatian sought to affirm the unity of human nature, he still conceived of it in dichotomistic terms, and as an alternative to the Platonic idea of the immortality of the soul, he defends instead a more Aristotelian conception, that the soul was the “form” of the body,¹³³ which dissolves and dies along with the body.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 13.1-2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 27. *Address to the Greeks* 15.1. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 29, 31. The close connection between the Holy Spirit and the resurrection in Tatian’s thought is also continued in later Syriac theology, a tradition which stressed the work of the Holy Spirit in eschatology.

¹²⁸ Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 15.1. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 29, 31. The idea that the soul is immortal because it is a simple substance recurs throughout Patristic theology. The basis of this idea is that a simple substance cannot be further divided or changed, thus if it exists it must continue to exist. For Tatian to assert that the soul is a compound substance is to deny its immortality on philosophical grounds.

¹²⁹ Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 13.1. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 27.

¹³⁰ Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 15.3-4. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 31. While Tatian insists that it is only through union with the Spirit that we will receive eternal life after the resurrection, he never discusses the glorification of the **body** through its union with the Spirit. The most he says is that in the resurrection the body will be restored “to its original state.” *Address to the Greeks* 6.2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 13.

¹³¹ Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 6.2-7.1. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 13.

¹³² G Florovsky. “Eschatology in the Patristic age: an introduction.” *Studia Patristica* 2 (1957) 249.

¹³³ F Bottomley. **Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom**, p. 53.

¹³⁴ Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 13.1-2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 27.

Tatian's rejection of the immortality of the soul thus comes not from the recognition that it is based on a false anthropology, dualistic in basis, but on the grounds of a synthesis with a differing stream of pagan Greek thought.¹³⁵ But to contend against Platonism from the position of Aristotle is equally erroneous, since the root problem of synthesis between Christian and pagan thought has not been addressed.¹³⁶ The attempt to refute a pagan conception by adopting another **pagan** alternative has cogency **only within a pagan framework**.

It is interesting that even though he disagreed with the immortality of the soul, Theophilus of Antioch says he can understand why some deduce it from Scripture. The soul was apparently seen as the breath breathed into Adam by God, and was therefore immortal. "...and God formed man, dust from the earth, and breathed the breath of life into his face, and man became a living soul. This is why the soul is called immortal by most people."¹³⁷ However, Theophilus does not think that the soul was created immortal by God, since the breath of God is not immortality, but life itself.¹³⁸ The arguments used by Theophilus are based on the Biblical theme of the Holy Spirit as the life-giver, which is not solely eschatological, but is a present reality. Without the life given by the Holy Spirit we die. This alternative to pagan philosophical speculations, although present in the early Patristic period, was not sufficiently developed.¹³⁹

Arnobius argued that if the soul is immortal, then there is little incentive to moral living, since there is nothing which can harm us after death, as both the soul and God are immortal and cannot harm each other. Thus we will live forever regardless of the deeds we perform. He maintains instead that we will be resurrected for judgement, and it is only virtue which will bring eternal life.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Cf. R M Grant's comment that Justin was converted from a Platonic belief in the immortality of the soul through the Aristotelian arguments of the "Old Man" whom he met. "Aristotle and the conversion of Justin." *Journal of Theological Studies* 7 (1956) 246-248. Similarly, Nemesius uses Plato and Aristotle to reject the trichotomistic views of Apollinarius, which were based on the views of Plotinus. *On the nature of man* 1.1. LCC 4, pp. 224-225.

¹³⁶ Florovsky explains why Aristotle's views were so attractive to Patristic writers in a heavily Platonic environment. He asserts that from the beginning, Patristic writers found assistance in Aristotle. While Aristotle asserted that human beings did not survive death, this was because he held that human nature was a unity, in which soul and body are two aspects of the same reality, which only exist together in a concrete and indivisible correlation [*De anima* 413a]. Once this functional unity was broken in death, there is no "organism" any more, and thus transmigration of souls was impossible. For Platonism death was a welcome release from bondage to the body, while for Aristotle it was a sad end to earthly existence, similar to the Christian idea of death as a catastrophe as a result of sin. While they were an attractive alternative to Platonism, Aristotle's views were still incompatible with Scripture and had their own problematics. G Florovsky. "Eschatology in the Patristic age: an introduction." *Studia Patristica* 2 (1957) 246-249.

¹³⁷ Theophilus. *To Autolycus* 2.19. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 57-59.

¹³⁸ Theophilus. *To Autolycus* 1.7. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 11.

¹³⁹ For a contemporary discussion of this issue see Neill Q Hamilton. **The Holy Spirit and eschatology in Paul**.

¹⁴⁰ Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 2.29-30. ACW 7, pp. 142-144; 2.32, p. 145. Cyril of Jerusalem is another who does not argue from immortality to the incentive for ethical living,

Arnobius argues from the works of Greek philosophy to demonstrate that where there is any change, as for instance in emotional disturbance, then there is the possibility of decay and death. This argument he applied to the pagan gods, showing that their all-too-human emotions indicate that they cannot be immortal, and thus cannot be considered divine.¹⁴¹ He further argues that if, as the pagans avow, the gods all had their origin from the one Father, then they had a beginning, and thus are begotten and not self-existent, and thus mortal.¹⁴² Arnobius then applies this logic to human beings, and shows that if we had a beginning, and suffer change in our nature, then we have received life from God, and we do not have that in ourselves.¹⁴³ It is only through Christ that we will receive immortality, since he alone has the right from God to grant this gift. Instead of the immortality of the soul, Arnobius stresses the resurrection.¹⁴⁴

arguing instead that it is the denial of the resurrection that leads to wickedness. *Catechetical Lectures* 18.1. NPNF 2/7, p. 134. Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:32-34.

¹⁴¹ Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 1.18. ACW 7, pp. 71-72.

¹⁴² Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 1.28. ACW 7, pp. 78-79. Elsewhere he argues that whatever has an end cannot be immortal, since it must have had a beginning, and is therefore not self-existent. *The case against the Pagans* 3.12. ACW 7, p. 201. He argues from the fact that the gods are give immortality from the Father that they have a neutral character (according to Plato's *Timaeus*); what is so unusual then in saying that human beings are similarly of a neutral character? *The case against the Pagans* 2.36. ACW 7, p. 148. This neutral character is seen in the susceptibility of the soul to inducement to change and to suffer, since this shows the "essentially passive" nature of the soul. *The case against the Pagans* 2.26. ACW 7, pp. 139-140.

¹⁴³ Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 1.29. ACW 7, p. 79. Cf. *The case against the Pagans* 2.36. ACW 7, pp. 148-149. Arnobius asserts that it is their "deep-seated arrogance" which leads men to claim to be immortal, just like God. *The case against the Pagans* 2.16. ACW 7, p. 129. He says that if they had the slightest knowledge of their own nature or that of God, they would never have claimed to be immortal. *The case against the Pagans* 2.19. ACW 7, p. 132.

¹⁴⁴ Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 2.65-66. ACW 7, pp. 176-179.

2.5.2 Immortality a gift from God

The Patristic writers who held a unitary anthropology insisted that the person will only receive immortality as a gift of God through being raised from the dead. Cyprian believed that immortality comes only through Christ: it is not a natural possession of the soul. Through the death of Christ the effects of the sin of Adam and Eve are reversed, and we are able to return to the paradise they lost.¹⁴⁵ Lactantius says that immortality is produced only by virtue and wisdom, and is received from God, who alone is able to confer immortality, since He alone possesses it, and grants it to the pious who honour God.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, Cyril of Jerusalem says that the soul “is immortal in as far as God grants it immortality. It is a rational living creature not subject to decay, because these qualities have been bestowed by God upon it.” However he also stresses here that man has “a two-fold nature, consisting of soul and body,” and thus maintains a unitary approach.¹⁴⁷

The idea of immortality as a gift of God also appears in later Patristic writers such as Theodoret and John of Damascus, who hold that the angels are immortal by gift and not by nature.¹⁴⁸

As late as the seventh century, Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, attacked the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in a synodical epistle. He said: “Men’s souls have **not** a natural immortality, it is by the gift of God that they receive the grant of immortality and corruption.”¹⁴⁹ He states that human souls as well as angels are immortal not by nature but are made so by grace.¹⁵⁰ According to Du Pin, Sophronius was opposed to what he saw as the erroneous views which Origen had introduced into the church,¹⁵¹ and the inherent immortality of the soul was for him such an error, which quite possibly he saw as originating with Origen. However, by this time Sophronius was an exception to the almost universal acceptance of the concept of the inherent immortality of the soul.

¹⁴⁵ Cyprian. *An address to Demetrianus* 25. ANF 5, p. 465. *On the mortality* 26. ANF 5, p. 475. The idea that redemption enables us to return to paradise is found in many Patristic writers. For example, Methodius. *Oration concerning Simeon and Anna* 8. ANF 6, p. 389. Jerome. *Homily 12, on Psalm 78* [79]. FC 48, p. 91. Ephrem of Syria. *Hymn* 8.9. **Hymns on Paradise**, p. 134. Cf. the discussion of this theme in G B Ladner. **The Idea of Reform**, pp. 63-82. J Daniélou comments in this regard that “The idea which the prophets had was not of a return to the original Paradise of Adam... Rather it is a complete renewal of the universe involving a new creation at the end of the world.” **From Shadows to Reality**, pp. 23-24.

¹⁴⁶ Lactantius. *Divine Institutes* 7.5. ANF 7, p. 201.

¹⁴⁷ Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures* 4.18. NPNF 2/7, p. 23.

¹⁴⁸ Theodoret. *Eranistes*, Dialogue 3. NPNF 2/3, p. 230. John of Damascus. *On the Orthodox Faith* 2.3. NPNF 2/9, p. 19. The idea also appears in Ambrose, who usually uses an instrumentalist model. *Of the Christian faith* 3.3.19. NPNF 2/10, p. 245.

¹⁴⁹ [Sophronius. *Epistola Synodica*. PG 87/3, 3181.] Cited in: L E Froom. **The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers**. Vol. 2, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ [Sophronius. *Epistola Synodica*. PG 87/3, 3181.] C J Hefele. **A History of the Councils of the Church from the Original Documents**. Vol 5, p. 48.

¹⁵¹ L E Du Pin. “Sophronius.” **A New History of Ecclesiastical Writers**. Vol. 4, p. 17. Cited in: L E Froom. **The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers**. Vol. 2, p. 17.

2.5.3 Immortality lost by Adam and Eve

Some early Patristic writers held that Adam was created immortal, but lost this gift of God through his sin.¹⁵² The goodness of all created things [Genesis 1:31] meant that death had no place in human nature, since otherwise it would not have been *very good*. Through sin, however, humankind became subject to death, and this fate was passed on to all subsequent generations, who have likewise been deprived of immortality.¹⁵³ According to Tatian, “We were not born to die, but we die through our own fault.”¹⁵⁴

Augustine says that in the Garden of Eden, Adam was both mortal and immortal: mortal because he was able to die, immortal because he was able not to die. This is in distinction from other creatures such as the angels, which are immortal but unable to die. Adam’s bodily immortality came from the tree of life, not from his nature. After his sin he was separated from this tree so that he was then able to die. Augustine concludes: “He was mortal, therefore, by the constitution of his natural body, and he was immortal by the gift of his Creator.”¹⁵⁵ Through his sin, Adam lost immortality in the sense of not being able to attain it.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, according to Vööbus, Theodore of Mopsuestia held that Adam was created mortal, with the possibility of immortality. He rejects the idea that God took back the gift of immortality as a punishment for Adam’s sin.¹⁵⁷ Theodore says that after Adam had broken the commandment he had “become mortal.”¹⁵⁸ As a result of sin we “assumed a thorough corruption through the sentence of death.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵² Justin Martyr. *Dialogue with Trypho* 124. ANF 1, p. 262. Irenaeus. *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 15. ACW 16, p. 56. Tertullian. *On the resurrection of the flesh* 53. ANF 3, p. 586. *Against Marcion* 2.8. ANF 3, p. 303. *An answer to the Jews* 2. ANF 3, p. 152. Methodius. *The Symposium* 3.5. ACW 27, p. 62. Gregory of Nyssa. *An accurate exposition of the Song of Songs* 5. **From glory to glory**, p. 188. Cf. G Wingren. “Even if man has been unaffected by sin and had lived forever in Paradise, his eternal life would have been a gift from God, since man’s life is always the creation and the gift of God.” **Man and the Incarnation**, pp. 60-61. This is found in Tertullian. *An answer to the Jews* 2. ANF 3, p. 152, and Maximus the Confessor. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 61. PG 90, 629A. *Ambigua* 10. PG 91, 1156D. *Ambigua* 42. PG 91, 1321A. P Sherwood. **St. Maximus the Confessor. The Ascetic Life. Four centuries on charity**. ACW 21, p. 64.

¹⁵³ Methodius. *The Symposium* 3.6. ACW 27, p. 63.

¹⁵⁴ Tatian. *Address to the Greeks* 11.1-2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 23.

¹⁵⁵ Augustine. *The literal meaning of Genesis* 6.25.36. ACW 41, p. 204. Cf. also Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes* 2.13. ANF 7, p. 62. *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 27. ANF 7, p. 231.

¹⁵⁶ Augustine. *The literal meaning of Genesis* 6.27.38. ACW 41, p. 206.

¹⁵⁷ A Vööbus. “Regarding the theological anthropology of Theodore of Mopsuestia.” *Church History* 33 (1964) 116-117.

¹⁵⁸ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 4. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 54.

¹⁵⁹ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist* 4. *Woodbrooke Studies* 6 (1933) 57.

2.5.4 Adam and Eve neither mortal nor immortal

An alternative position to the view that Adam and Eve possessed immortality but lost this through their sin, is the idea proposed by Theophilus of Antioch, that Adam and Eve were originally created neither mortal nor immortal, but capable of either.¹⁶⁰ Theophilus makes the important point that if we had been created immortal, we would have been like God; alternatively, if we had been created mortal, we could blame God for our death. But because death is earned through disobedience,¹⁶¹ we have nobody to blame but ourselves, as the offer of eternal life was made for those who were obedient.¹⁶² The same idea is found in Ephrem of Syria.

For when God created Adam, He did not make him mortal, nor did He fashion him as immortal; this was so that Adam himself, either through keeping the commandment, or by transgressing it, might acquire from this one of the trees whichever outcome he wanted.¹⁶³

Theophilus held that immortality applied as much to the body as it does to the soul, stressing the resurrection as the form of eschatological life, when we shall “put off what is mortal.”¹⁶⁴ Immortality is the goal of humanity, not a natural possession of the soul. In his unitary anthropology, neither the soul nor the body receives immortality alone: both soul and body are either given immortality together in the resurrection or else denied it.¹⁶⁵ In the transformation of the resurrection, we are made no longer able to die. This is summed up in the Latin terms *posse non mori* (it is possible not to die) and *non posse mori* (it is not possible to die), used for instance by Augustine in *The City of God*.

For as the first immortality which Adam lost by sinning consisted in his being able not to die, while the last shall consist in his not being

¹⁶⁰ Theophilus of Antioch. *To Autolycus* 2.27. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 71. This idea is found also in Methodius. *The Symposium* 3.7. ACW 27, p. 64, and in Arnobius. *The case against the Pagans* 2.53. ACW 7, p. 164. He asserts that the arguments among the philosophers as to whether the soul is mortal or immortal proves its “neutral” character, and each side is presenting one aspect of the truth. *The case against the Pagans* 2.31. ACW 7, p. 144. He argues that souls have a “neutral” character because God alone is immortal and unchanging, and all other beings therefore have been brought into being by God. Thus souls are liable to change and are “held on the line midway between life and death.” It is only by the power of God that souls are made immortal. *The case against the Pagans* 2.34-35. ACW 7, pp. 146-147.

¹⁶¹ Theophilus of Antioch. *To Autolycus* 2.25. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 69.

¹⁶² Theophilus of Antioch. *To Autolycus* 2.27. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 69, 71. Cf. *To Autolycus* 2.24. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 67. Cf. the comments of Lactantius. “Therefore, as I have already said, they who complain of the frailty of man, make this complaint especially, that they were not born immortal and everlasting.” *On the workmanship of God* 4. ANF 7, p. 285.

¹⁶³ Ephrem of Syria. *Commentary on Genesis* 2.17. **Hymns on Paradise**, pp. 208-209.

¹⁶⁴ Theophilus of Antioch. *To Autolycus* 1.7. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ Theophilus. *To Autolycus* 1.7. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 11.

able to die; so the first free will consisted in his being able not to sin, the last in his not being able to sin.¹⁶⁶

Theodore of Mopsuestia thinks that through his sin, Adam lost the chance to become immortal. He was not created immortal and immutable in the beginning, since he would not then have appreciated the gift of immutability, being ignorant of his mutability.¹⁶⁷ He says further that since humankind has sinned, it is an advantage to die so as to put an end to disobedience. But Adam was not created mortal either, so God could not be accused of with-holding immortality. Instead, God gave a commandment and promised immortality as a reward for obedience, and death as a penalty for disobedience. If they had been granted immortality from the beginning, they would not have been led to trust the Creator to grant that gift.¹⁶⁸

Nemesius of Emesa also sees human beings as neither mortal nor immortal, but intermediate between the two with the potential for immortality, which is possible only by eschewing bodily passions. He follows Theophilus in his discussion of this subject. Through Adam's sin, humankind lost immortality which we can now gain only through God's grace.¹⁶⁹ However, Nemesius still considers the soul itself to be immortal and the body to be its instrument: it is the person as a whole which lacks immortality. Nemesius describes the body as mortal, but able to be immortalised, a privilege it receives "for the soul's sake."¹⁷⁰ He sees this immortalising of the body as taking place at the resurrection, when it rejoins the immortal soul.¹⁷¹

2.5.5 Proponents of the inherent immortality of the soul

The strongest expression of the unity of human nature in the early Patristic writers appears in the thought of Athenagoras, curiously enough also the first, in contrast to the early apologists, to argue explicitly for the immortality of the soul, an idea he did not see to be in opposition to the resurrection of the body, but complementary to it. He does not, however, provide any exegesis of Scripture as the basis for his views; it is his philosophy which lead him to the immortality of the soul. We are striking for the first time a purely philosophical anthropology in Christian thought. As

¹⁶⁶ Augustine. *The City of God* 22.30. NPNF 1/2, p. 510. The Latin reads: "Sicut enim prima immortalitas fuit, quam peccando Adam perdidit, posse non mori, novissima erit non posse mori: ita primum liberum arbitrium posse non peccare, novissimum non posse peccare." PL 41, 802.

¹⁶⁷ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary on Genesis*. PG 66, 633ab. Cited in: R A Greer. **Theodore of Mopsuestia**, p. 16. This view is also found in Irenaeus. "For how could a man have learned that he is himself an infirm being, and mortal by nature, but that God is immortal and powerful, unless he had learned by experience what is in both?" *Against Heresies* 5.3.1. ANF 1, p. 529. See A R Kerr. "Imago and Similitudo in the thought of Irenaeus," p. 44.

¹⁶⁸ Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentary in Genesis*. PG 66, 640c-641a. Cited in: R A Norris. **Manhood and Christ**, p. 183.

¹⁶⁹ Nemesius. *On the nature of man* 1.5. LCC 4, pp. 238-240.

¹⁷⁰ Nemesius. *On the nature of man* 1.7. LCC 4, p. 244. Cf. also Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes* 7.5. ANF 7, pp. 200-201.

¹⁷¹ Nemesius. *On the nature of man* 1.7. LCC 4, p. 246.

Athenagoras is the first Christian thinker to argue positively the immortality of the soul, his thought on this subject is important.¹⁷²

Athenagoras was the first Christian thinker to use the term *sunamphoteron* or *compositum*,¹⁷³ to express the idea that the person is a composite of body and soul, two incomplete but supporting realities. The soul directs and controls the body, but the actions of the soul are attributed to the whole person, not to the soul alone.¹⁷⁴ While he was influenced by Middle Platonism, and generally follows the Platonic tradition in an eclectic fashion,¹⁷⁵ it is in his anthropology, with consequent implications for eschatology, that Athenagoras diverges from the views of Plato, especially concerning the transmigration of souls and the resurrection.

Athenagoras tries to defend the Christian doctrine of the resurrection with philosophical arguments, using examples from the Greek philosophers to demonstrate that their philosophy in fact demands a resurrection, and is **compatible** with belief in a resurrection, although Athenagoras did not claim that these philosophers such as Plato actually believed in the resurrection.¹⁷⁶

Because he held that the body and soul formed a unity, the immortality of the soul therefore meant that the resurrection of the body was necessary in order for the person to be whole. And it is the wholeness of the person Athenagoras focuses on: he does not believe in the ultimate independent existence of the immortal soul, although he does consider that it exists independently after death and before the resurrection.¹⁷⁷ Athenagoras speaks of the intermediate state as an “interruption” in human life that will be restored at the resurrection.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷² L W Barnard holds that Athenagoras gives the first Christian anthropology which is developed philosophically as well as theologically, one which in Barnard’s words, “goes beyond the biblical data.” “The father of Christian anthropology.” *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 63 (1972) 3/4, 257. A J Visser claims that Tertullian was the first in the west to defend the philosophical doctrine of a natural immortality of the soul, even though he was strongly biased against philosophy. “Bird’s eye view of ancient Christian eschatology.” *Numen* 14 (1967) 13. The *Letter to Diognetus*, dated to the end of the second century (and thus approximately contemporary with Athenagoras) says that “The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle.” The *Letter to Diognetus* 6. ANF 1, p. 27. There is however no **argument** for the soul’s immortality in the *Letter*.

¹⁷³ This term is found in the Middle Platonist Albinus. *Epit.* 23.3, which Athenagoras possibly adapted from this source. L W Barnard. **Athenagoras**, p. 47.

¹⁷⁴ L W Barnard. **Athenagoras**, pp. 122-123. H A Lucks. **The philosophy of Athenagoras**, p. 59.

¹⁷⁵ L W Barnard. **Athenagoras**, p. 44.

¹⁷⁶ Athenagoras. *A Plea for Christians* 36.3. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 87.

¹⁷⁷ L W Barnard. “Athenagoras gives no explicit teaching about the qualities of the soul, its simplicity, unity or distinction between its faculties. His main concern is to argue for the resurrection of the body and he introduces his views of the soul only in so far as they assist the establishment of his main thesis.” **Athenagoras**, p. 126.

¹⁷⁸ Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead* 16.4-6. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 127, 129.

Athenagoras has a teleological view of creation, which demands a resurrection so that God's purposes for the creation will be accomplished. There must be a resurrection so the body can be rejoined to the immortal soul. The soul for its part must be immortal so as to ensure the continuance of that which God has created.¹⁷⁹ Unless the whole person shared in eschatological life, the purpose of the creation would be lost.

Nor indeed is there happiness for the soul in a state of separation from the body. For we were considering the life or end, not of one of the parts which constitute man, but of the creature made up of both parts. For such is the nature of every man allotted this life of ours, and there must be some end which is proper to this form of existence. If the end has to do with the composite, and if this cannot be discovered either while men are still alive here below, for the reasons so often spoken of already, nor yet when the soul is in a state of separation (for man as such cannot be said to exist when the body has undergone dissolution or been completely dispersed, even though the soul as such is permanent), then the end of men must certainly be seen in some other state of the same composite creature.¹⁸⁰

Since God's purposes for the creation continue, then the things which were created to fulfill those purposes must also continue in being. This is for Athenagoras the strongest argument that he uses in his discussion of the necessity of the resurrection. Causality is the key to the teleological understanding of the creation. Everything was brought into being by the First Cause, and from the cause established for each creature follows the *telos* towards which it is directed. The *telos* of the human being is communion with God, and for this to be possible death must be overcome by resurrection. The accomplishment of God's purposes therefore demanded the resurrection, since the intentions of God in creating humanity would otherwise be thwarted.¹⁸¹

Athenagoras discusses three arguments for the resurrection based on causality: 1) the purpose of the Creator in making man, 2) the nature of men so created, 3) the reward or punishment due to each.¹⁸² The argument from causality demands that that which was created by the First Cause should accomplish the purpose for which it was created, otherwise causality would be of no effect. Therefore death must be overcome by resurrection. Those who have not believed will suffer punishment, since we are moral beings and must give account of our lives. "Christian ethics is based on the knowledge of God and is governed further by the expectation of the survival of the

¹⁷⁹ Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead* 15.5-8. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 125, 127. Other Patristic writers also have teleological aspects in their eschatologies. Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 4.22.1. ANF 1, pp. 493-494. Lactantius. *The Divine Institutes* 7.8. ANF 7, p. 204. Gregory of Nyssa. *On the Soul and the Resurrection*. NPNF 2/5, p. 465. Jerome. *Homily 10, on Psalm 76* [77]. FC 48, p. 71.

¹⁸⁰ Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead* 25.1-2. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 147. Cf. *Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead* 15.2-3. Oxford Early Christian Texts, pp. 123, 125.

¹⁸¹ L W Barnard. **Athenagoras**, pp. 130-131.

¹⁸² Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead* 14.4. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 123.

soul and of the Judgement.”¹⁸³ The *telos* God has intended for us means that those who reject him must be punished; it is not enough that they be annihilated, since that would make us no better than animals who do not have to bear the consequences of moral failure.

Martin has shown that eschatology came to function in the thought of the post-reformation era as the conclusion of God’s acts, rather than their goal, through the emphasis on the Aristotelian concept of causality as the heuristic method for understanding God’s relationship to the created order.¹⁸⁴ Eschatology was thus merely the final “effect” of the causal chain. Athenagoras was perhaps aware of this kind of consequence when he expressed dismay at the use some Christians made of the judgement as a necessary cause of the resurrection.¹⁸⁵ He insisted on the contrary that the resurrection was essential in and of itself, since this was the means by which the purposes of God would finally be accomplished: the resurrection was central to the goal towards which the creation was moving, it was not a mere stepping-stone on the way.¹⁸⁶ However, eschatology therefore acquired a merely formal function, not important in itself.¹⁸⁷ Martin states that seeing the judgement as the *finis* of the chain of causal action did not place this doctrine within the body of theology, but saw it merely as the reason why there should be a resurrection and judgement.¹⁸⁸ This criticism applies also to some extent to Athenagoras, since, like many early Christian writers, he argued for the necessity of the resurrection, because only through the resurrection from the dead could judgement be carried out on those who had escaped

¹⁸³ A J Malherbe. “Athenagoras on Christian Ethics.” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 20 (1969) 3.

¹⁸⁴ James P Martin. **The Last Judgement in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl**, pp. 5-6. God is not the First Cause or any other cause, and stands outside the causal chain which is purely **creational** in nature. God is not included in the causality which he has created. For a discussion of the nature of causality see Herman Dooyeweerd. **A New Critique of Theoretical Thought**. Vol. 2, pp. 38-41. The idea of God as “first cause” is found as early as Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 4.38.3. ANF 1, p. 521.

¹⁸⁵ Grant argues that Athenagoras’ critique of the use of the necessity for the judgement as a cause for the resurrection indicates knowledge of (and therefore the temporal priority of) Tertullian’s *De resurrectione* 14 where this is used. R M Grant. “Athenagoras or Pseudo-Athenagoras.” *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954) 128. However, Tertullian could easily have used an argument which had earlier been criticised, or else ignored the criticism because he still found the argument convincing (or useful). To adopt Grant’s view would be to assume that no writer ever used an idea criticised or refuted by an earlier author because such criticism or refutation is always accepted and deferred to. Ideas are often maintained in spite of criticism from others (and sometimes rightly so).

¹⁸⁶ Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead* 14.4. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 123.

¹⁸⁷ As Barth said in his Commentary on the epistle to the Romans, eschatology is often relegated to a short and perfectly harmless chapter at the end of Christian dogmatics. Karl Barth. **The Epistle to the Romans**, p. 500. Eschatology is not, however, merely the conclusion of theological discourse. It is a thread which runs throughout the whole, binding it together and pointing to its consummation in Christ. Without that perspective, the whole of Christian theology lacks direction and purpose.

¹⁸⁸ James P Martin. **The Last Judgement in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl**, p. 6.

justice, or had not been rewarded for virtue, during their lifetimes.¹⁸⁹ But Athenagoras was prepared to use this as only **one** argument for the resurrection. He did not want to give it too much weight. His teleological view was of much more significance for him, and thus causality was crucial for his views, more crucial than the need for justice *per se*.

But Athenagoras is still prepared to accept the validity of the argument from justice. He holds that both body and soul will face punishment, since body and soul have acted together. The body will not escape punishment, nor will there be an escape through the annihilation of the soul at death. This he uses as an argument for the resurrection and is based on his idea of human nature as a *compositum* of body and soul which are separated by death: the immortal soul survives, and will be reunited with the same body, transformed to be incorruptible, so together they can face judgement. There is no judgement for the soul after death, as this would be unjust: both body and soul will be held accountable.

If the body decays and each part which undergoes dissolution returns to its appropriate element, whereas the soul as such remains incorruptible, not even then will a judgement upon the soul take place, since justice would be absent.¹⁹⁰

Because of his belief that the person was both body and soul, Athenagoras attacked the gnostic view that there was some advantage in the soul being released from the body. Thus he insists that the resurrection, the restoring of the original union of body and soul by our Creator, is not disadvantageous to the person; rather it is the completion of the person in the fulfilling of God's intention for the creation. He states that if having a body disadvantages us, then the present life is also to be rejected: the logic behind asceticism! Rather, in the resurrection, an incorruptible body will be joined to the incorruptible soul.¹⁹¹

Other Patristic writers also held that the soul was immortal, but still insisted that the person was comprised of both together. In death the soul is separated from the body, and since it is the source of life for the body, the body dies. In the resurrection the body is restored to life and the unity recreated.¹⁹² Novatian held that the body was earthly, but the soul was heavenly.¹⁹³ He states throughout his treatise on the Trinity that the body is mortal and the soul immortal. In this strongly dualistic theology we still find a unitary anthropology, even though there is considerable tension in his thought. Novatian states that God is always

¹⁸⁹ H A Lucks. **The philosophy of Athenagoras**, p. 32.

¹⁹⁰ Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead* 20.3. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 137. This is because the subject on which judgement is exercised is not present or aware of the punishment. There is no justice if the one punished does not know of it.

¹⁹¹ Athenagoras. *Concerning the Resurrection of the dead* 10.6. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 111.

¹⁹² Isaac the Syrian. *Homily 36. The ascetical homilies of St. Isaac the Syrian*, p. 160. Cf. Nestorius. From a Homily called *Concerning the Faith*. Fr. 280. G R Driver and L Hodgson, pp. 393-394. Also: *The Bazaar of Heracleides* 2.1. G R Driver and L Hodgson, pp. 301-302. John of Damascus. *On the Orthodox Faith* 4.27. NPNF 2/9, p. 99.

¹⁹³ Novatian. *On the Trinity* 1. ANF 5, p. 612.

...linking together discordant materials into the concord of all elements, that out of these unlike principles one world is so established by a conspiring union, that it can by no force be dissolved, save when He alone who made it commands it to be dissolved, for the purpose of bestowing other and greater things upon us.¹⁹⁴

Thus the union of body and soul is held together by God, dissolved only by death, so that through death the body can be released from bondage to sin,¹⁹⁵ for the purpose of resurrection. While Novatian stressed the immortality of the soul and argued for it principally on the basis of simplicity of substance,¹⁹⁶ this does not diminish for him the importance of the resurrection. He attacks the Docetists because they take away the hope of resurrection, and says that he gains nothing “if I do not receive myself when I lose my body.” The Docetic resurrection is a phantom body and not a fleshly one, and thus is not human. Since Christ shared in our death, we can expect to receive a resurrection body like his, in which the flesh which died is restored to life, as is proved by the wounds which remain in that body.¹⁹⁷

2.6 Conclusion

Those Patristic writers who held to a unitary anthropology - that is, that the person is a union of body and soul - defended the goodness of bodily life, the nature of death as a punishment for sin which brought about an unnatural separation between body and soul, and the resurrection of the body. This view was also often correlated with the inclusion of the body in the “image of God.” They rejected the Gnostic view that death liberated the soul from the bondage of the body. While most of these Patristic writers held that immortality was a gift of God given at the resurrection, some held that the soul was itself immortal, although unable to enjoy a fully independent existence prior to the resurrection. They still insisted that the body also needed to be made immortal, as it was the whole person, body and soul, which would enjoy eternity with God. Immortality had been lost for the human race as a result of the sin of Adam, and was made available again only through the redemption of Christ.

They defended the resurrection of the fleshly body as to acquiesce on this was to compromise the doctrines of God’s unity (against the Gnostic dualism of two creators), the goodness of creation, and the possibility of redemption, as if the creator was unable to save us, then he was inadequate to preserve what he had created; but salvation by another deity is alien to our nature. Resurrection is thus not only an eschatological doctrine: it has ramifications for the whole of Christian thought.

The redemption of the body is its deliverance from the power of the flesh, namely our **sinful** nature, not our **creatureliness**. Only by maintaining the original goodness and

¹⁹⁴ Novatian. *On the Trinity* 2. ANF 5, p. 612.

¹⁹⁵ See above, Chapter 2.4.2.

¹⁹⁶ He also argued from *Matthew* 10:28 and *Luke* 20:38 for the immortality of the soul. Novatian. *On the Trinity* 25. ANF 5, p. 636.

¹⁹⁷ Novatian. *On the Trinity* 10. ANF 5, pp. 619-620. Cf. Ignatius. *Letter to the Smyrnaens* 3 (long version). ANF 1, p. 87.

unity of creaturely existence can sin, the corruption of our nature, be truly dealt with. Sin is not the consequence of being creaturely or being trapped in a body which is in conflict with the soul.

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