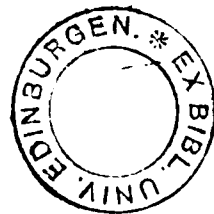


ATHANASIUS' THEORY OF REDEMPTION
|
IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN
EXPOSITORS

A thesis submitted to the University of Edinburgh in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.



Warner Leander Hall

1934

PREFACE.

Within the last hundred years there has been a mild interest in Athanasius and what he taught. Germany has been the scene of greatest interest, the Teutonic scholars having produced some eight or nine volumes devoted to the study of his writings. Britain has produced only one, so far as the writer is aware, - Athanasius on the Atonement by Dr. Melville Scott. One suspects, perhaps unjustly, that Dr. Scott was partially actuated by a desire to find support for his own particular theory of the Atonement. The Germans, on the whole, present a much more balanced view. Since the work of the latter is not available in English, and since Dr. Scott takes little notice of the findings of other scholars, it is felt that this study has some raison d'etre, and so no apology is made for it or for the fact that the field is not a purely virgin one.

The aim of the writer has been, broadly speaking, to present Athanasius' theory of Redemption in its proper setting. (The word Redemption was chosen instead of Atonement because it was felt that the former was a more inclusive term and, as such, better fitted to convey the thought of the archbishop who regarded the work of the incarnate Logos as covering a wide range of activities, all of which were redemptive but not all of which could be classified as atoning

for the sins of the people.) In order to do this it was felt to be desirable that some effort be made to link Athanasius to his immediate past with which he was so intimately connected. Further, "the proper setting" was judged to include some mention of several aspects of Athanasius' theology not strictly soteriological. For it is a well known fact that everything in the Athanasian system was related to his theory of Redemption. This theory might be represented as the centre circle of a group of concentric circles. In order to reach the centre, it is necessary to traverse the outer circle of Greek theology, an inner circle of Asia Minor and Alexandrine theology, coming at last through the circle of his own theology to the theory of Redemption which is at its centre.

The chief aim of the writer has been exposition rather than criticism. But we hope that our position has not been entirely uncritical. Where the writer has felt that there are difficulties, these have been pointed out in passing, and also, we have attempted to defend Athanasius where we believed him to have been attacked unjustly.

As is indicated by the title, the findings of certain writers have been taken into account. But in no case has a full exposition of their positions been attempted. It is evident that such a procedure was quite impossible in a work of this size, if any space was to be left for our own exposition. So it was necessary to select from a rather large

body of material that which, in the opinion of the writer, was of the greatest interest and value.

The bibliography has been grouped according to the purpose served and rigidly limited to those volumes which have proved of the greatest assistance in the preparation of this paper.

Although the writer is more familiar with American spelling, he has attempted to use British spelling. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, new edition, Oxford 1931 has been used the authority.

The writer wishes to thank his advisers, Professor W.P. Paterson and the Rev. W. Perry, Dean of Edinburgh, and also Professor J.H.S. Burleigh for their kindly interest and helpful criticisms and advice. He also wishes to express his thanks to Professor Frank Hill Caldwell of the Louisville Theological Seminary for reading the manuscript.

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CHAPTER I.

THE PLACE OF ATHANASIUS IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE EASTERN CHURCH.

The claims of St. Athanasius to greatness are manifold. He was, among other things, Archbishop of Alexandria and primate of all Egypt and Libya, an important post at all times; but during his lifetime, it became, perhaps, the most important See within the Christian Church, outranking even Rome. This rise to the position of preeminence was due largely, if not wholly, to the prestige of its great archbishop, who ruled with wisdom, courage and kindness¹ for almost forty-five years.

His claim to greatness as an historian and theologian is by no means inconsiderable. Historians of the period are deeply indebted to his diligence and ample store of information. His account of the period is valuable not only for the number of creeds of councils, imperial rescripts, and other important documents, which are included verbatim, not only for the fact that in his account we have, in most instances, the report of an eye-witness, of one who was in a position to know the facts, and who presented them in a singularly unbiassed fashion (a fact which is all the more remarkable when we remember the age in which he lived), but also for the fact that in several instances his record is

1 With the exception of time spent in exile.

the only trustworthy one which we possess, and deprived of it, historians would be almost helpless before the intricacies of the period.

Historians of dogma are not agreed as to the value of Athanasius' contribution to the field of theology. None, however, can deny the widespread and lasting influence of his treatment of the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ. It has been claimed for him, that so thorough was his treatment of the subject that no argument has been advanced since his day for the deity of Christ, which can not be found in his four Orations against the Arians. Athanasius' treatment of the doctrine of redemption is worthy not only of a man of his prominence, but it is also, while admittedly imperfect, worthy of that great doctrine itself. Its failure to win for itself a more prominent and lasting place in Christian thought was more than partially due to the rise in popularity of western anthropology, rather than to any serious defect of its own.

Athanasius' most valid claim to greatness lay in his extraordinary ability as an ecclesiastical statesman and leader. The consummate skill with which he fought for the deity of Christ throughout the wide domain of the Roman Empire for nearly a half century, - at times almost single handed, - has seldom been equalled. His success in winning the Christian world to his point of view against intrigue, persecution, the unscrupulousness of powerful and

worldly-minded prelates, against even the imperial power itself, is attributable chiefly to his character as a man. His indubitable sincerity, his intense moral earnestness, his character which not even the foulest calumny could sully, gained for him the unquestioning allegiance of large numbers of simple but true Christians and of many of the more spiritually-minded clergy, an allegiance which caused more than one prelate to suffer exile rather than betray his leader and friend, and which made many of his lesser followers suffer persecution and even death rather than be guilty of disloyalty to their great archbishop, the champion of their faith. Could any one who was able to evoke such implicit trust, such widespread loyalty, such devotion from all his own flock, from Christians all over the world, from simple laymen to bishops in high places, be called less than great? His own generation has judged him worthy of that title. Can we do less?

It is significant that Athanasius' claims to distinction have always been recognized. From the time of Gregory Nazianzen onwards, he has evoked praise of the most fulsome kind. He has even been hailed, from time to time, as the greatest of all the fathers of the Church. Even the soberest minds have paid their tribute to him and to his undeniable greatness. Loofs says of him that "Through evil report and good report, through many changes of a long and

eventful career, he maintained indisputably his title to the respect which we give to love of truth and honesty of mind."² He knew how, Loofs adds,³ to separate the truth, "as to which he never wavered", from the formula used to describe it. This love of truth, this honesty of mind and of purpose have won for him the admiration of men of learning in all ages. But perhaps no greater tribute can be paid to him than to say that of all the Fathers of the early Church he was the only one to force admiration from an unwilling Gibbon.⁴

Some men stand out in history because they are like an isolated shrub in the treeless plains of mediocrity. Others, and such an one was Athanasius, stand out as one of a group of great trees whose topmost branches wave but a little higher than those of its fellow giants of the forest. For Athanasius' life touched the two centuries which might be termed the golden age of Greek Christianity.⁵ He was a great man living in the midst of great men. He could count among his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, among his friends and acquaintances, many, if not most, of the heroes and leaders of that early church, the pioneers in the field of theological thought, men whose names are writ large on the pages of the history of the Church. The third

² Article, "Athanasius" in The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cf. Gibbon: The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, II, 361 f.

⁵ Athanasius was born at the close of the third century, about the year 298 A.D., and most probably in the city of Alexandria. He died in 373 A.D.

century, the century which, at its close, had witnessed the birth of Athanasius, had also seen, in its earlier years, the heyday of the Alexandrine Catechetical School, and the work of its two greatest figures, Clement and Origen. These two were followed by Gregory Thaumaturgus, Origen's disciple and interpreter, and Dionysius, and Methodius at the turn of the century, whose theology, Harnack tells us, was for the East what Tertullian's was for the West.⁶ The fourth century which contained Athanasius' active years, produced even a larger number of remembered men than had the third, the century of his birth. So Athanasius was even richer in famous contemporaries than in illustrious predecessors. Among his older contemporaries were Alexander, his patron and predecessor on the archiepiscopal throne of Alexandria, a theologian of some note and one of the leading figures in the Council of Nicea, and Eusebius,⁷ bishop of Caesarea, the famous historian of the Church, an acquaintance, if not a friend, of Athanasius. Marcellus of Ancyra, whom Harnack termed "that great theologian", attached himself to Athanasius as a friend and ardent supporter. The great Cappadocian theologian, Gregory of Nazianzus,⁸ and the brothers of Gregory of Nyssa,⁹ and St. Basil, the great,¹⁰ were also products of the fourth century. The lifetime of these three coincided more or less with that of our archbishop. A still younger

6 History of Dogma, Vol. III p.111.
 7 c. A.D. 260-339.
 8 c. A.D. 329-389 or 390.
 9 c. A.D. 335-395.
 10 c. A.D. 347-407.

contemporary, but one falling within the same period, was
¹¹
 Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, whose fame even to-
 day is not entirely forgotten. Space prohibits our men-
 tioning the many others, more or less great, who also graced
 these two centuries. But doubtless a sufficient number has
 been listed to recall to our minds the fact that the period
 in which Athanasius lived and worked was one of the greatest
 epochs in the Church's history; and further, that it was the
 crowning glory of Greek Christianity. It seems beyond ques-
 tion that Greek Christianity, at least so far as the history
 of its thought is concerned, did reach its highest level in
 these two centuries, and that its climax was coincident with
 the life-time of Athanasius himself. This is more evident
 when we remember that after Chrysostom there was only John
¹²
 of Damascus, a voice crying in the wilderness, and after him,
 a complete silence.

In order that we may visualize the period in which Ath-
 anasius lived and laboured, it is well to keep in mind a few
 salient facts which did much not only to mould the age itself,
 but also to shape the lives and direct the energies, at least
 of the churchmen of the era. One event which coloured so
 much of what was to follow was the act of Constantine which
 made Christianity the established religion of the Empire.
 At the beginning of the century the Church had endured one
 of the fiercest persecutions which it had been called upon

11 c. A.D. 347-407.

12 c. A.D. 680-760.

to undergo. . When, however, this last vicious attack of paganism had spent itself, the Church, by a sudden reversal of fortune, found itself raised to a position to which it was not only unaccustomed, but for which it was also unprepared. That the establishment would raise many problems should have been evident to all discerning minds. One of the problems it did raise was the need of a definite creedal statement. The Emperor wanted to direct the affairs of the empire in an orderly and true Roman fashion; the Church as a department of the empire must also function in a peaceful and orderly manner. A plain statement of the faith held by the Church was thought to be necessary to the proper functioning of that body, so that all might know what was to be believed, and so there would be no misunderstandings, no heresies, no dissension, no strife and the Roman peace would be maintained. This task of thinking through its problems, and clarifying its position, proved a most vexing one, one which had wide ramifications in the life of the Church for the entire century. The Arian controversy was in part, we believe, an expression of this urge toward systematizing the faith. At least this controversy, for almost fifty years, proved to be the most disturbing element in Christian community. It shook Christianity to its foundations, set church against church, bishop against bishop, and even Augusti against Augusti. It threatened to shatter the Church Catholic into a thousand fragments and to work its ultimate

destruction. Small wonder, then, that it affected the lives of all whom it touched and influenced so profoundly the lives of the leading Churchmen of the day, of whom Athanasius was not the least. Also it might be said that the Council of Nicea, the first and doubtless the most famous of all the oecumenical councils, together with all the numerous lesser councils and synods which followed that of Nicea, were, in part, an expression of the above mentioned desire and need of a clear creedal statement, and also, in part, directly attributable to the heresy of Arius. These three factors, so intertwined and inter-related, and during the episcopacy of Athanasius so all-pervading, were responsible for most that was done, written, or thought during those forty five years. And unless they be kept in mind, a true understanding of the period in general, and of Athanasius in particular, is rendered doubly difficult.

We gain further insight into the character and mind of Athanasius when we look into his personal history. One fact significant for our understanding of him is that he was of the East, and not of the West, Greek and not Roman. In all probability he was born in Alexandria, a city which, at that time, was the epitome of all that was characteristically Eastern. Alexandria was not only a commercial capital of the East; it was also one of the chief centres of learning. It was blessed with one of the really great libraries of ancient times. It was a city made famous by

pagan philosopher and Christian theologian alike. And it was there that the youthful Athanasius was reared, there that he was educated, moulded by the subtle yet powerful influences of Eastern culture and tradition. It was such a city that one could not spend one's years within its walls without being powerfully affected by the culture for which it stood.

His life and position were such as to heighten the natural influence of his environment. At a very early age he came to the attention of Alexander, the archbishop, who took Athanasius in as one of his own household. The result was that Athanasius' youthful and plastic years were spent under the guidance and tutelage of the archbishop. This was not without its effect upon the young deacon as he set out to write his Apology for Christianity.¹³ Upon Alexander's death, Athanasius was chosen archbishop when he was barely thirty years old - the earliest possible age -. So Athanasius became the spiritual head of the Christians of the city made brilliant by the learning of the Masters of the catechetical

13 So great was Alexander's influence that Harnack, whose opinion of Athanasius' intelligence is very low at the best, is led to assert that Athanasius' whole system was identical with that of his master. Beyond question, Alexander's influence is recognisable in the De Inc. and the Contra Gentes. But even there it is only partial, and it fades almost completely away in the later writings. We feel that Loofs has sufficiently answered Harnack's contention. (cf. PRE., II, 202 f.) Seeberg, (DG., II, 70) while not allowing the growth or change of ideas in Athanasius, holds that the latter's theology is not identical with that of Alexander, but that Alexander did influence Athanasius. Cf. also Hoss: Studien über das Schrifttum und die Theologie des Athanasius; p. 46 f.

school; he was seated upon an archiepiscopal throne which had been graced by a distinguished line of prelates, and this was not without its influence. So deep and lasting was the impress of this environment that although he travelled widely in the West, and had life-long intellectual contacts with Western Churchmen, and was modified to some extent by this contact, he remained throughout typically¹⁴ and essentially a Greek.

It is not an idle distinction which we make when we say that Athanasius was of the East, Eastern. For the East was really different from the West. The distinction most often remarked, but one which is as true as most generalizations, is that the East and Greek Christianity was primarily and fundamentally speculative and metaphysical, whereas the West distrusted speculation and metaphysics and turned its attention to the more practical matters of the faith, which it formulated either in moral or legal terms. It is significant and altogether in character that the Eastern theologians should have attacked the metaphysical and exceedingly difficult problem of the Trinity; while the

¹⁴ Gwatkin has accurately judged Athanasius in this respect: "Athanasius was a Greek by birth and education, Greek also in subtle thought and philosophic insight, in oratorical power and supple statesmanship. Though born almost within the shadow of the mighty Serapeum he shows hardly a sign of Coptic influence. His style is clear and simple, without a trace of Egyptian involution and obscurity. His character had nothing of the Egyptian love of mystery and reverential awe; his fearless understanding, Greek as that of Arius himself, recognised the limits of its powers in no superstitious dread of undefined irreverence, but in the voice of Scripture only". Studies in Arianism, p.71.

West turned its attention to the more practical issues of sin and grace.

Another point of difference between these two great divisions of the early Church turned upon a sense of the unity of the world. The East by means of the comprehensive grasp of its philosophical mentality laid hold of the very fundamental fact that there is a unity pervading all things. They were all intense Monists. The West, on the other hand, occasionally lost sight of this fact with unfortunate results. The contrast is brought out strikingly by a comparison of the creeds of these two sections of Ancient Christendom. The Apostles Creed, which reached its final formulation in the West, and was used extensively in that section, speaks rather disjointedly of believing in God the Father, in Jesus Christ His Son, in the Holy Ghost, in the holy Catholic Church, and so on. The Eastern Creeds, however, usually affirm a belief in Father, Son, and Spirit - one God, in one Catholic Church, in one baptism. The East never forgot that God is one and the world is one.

The theology of the Eastern Church is often spoken of in a disparaging or patronising manner. But the theology of later ages would have been greatly enriched, if it had not so completely forgotten the writings of the Greek Fathers. If the thinkers of the East were too speculative, if they hastened to debate questions beyond the power of human understanding, if they were prone to ask questions to which no

satisfactory answer could be given, they also brought to theology a comprehensiveness, a breadth of sympathy, a mystical understanding of obstruse problems, a sense of the value of certain parts of the Christian faith not strictly utilitarian.

It is necessary to remind ourselves that Athanasius was a Greek; that his theology is more or less typical of the East. He does not come speaking to us in the familiar categories of Western thought; it is the contribution of the East that he brings. He comes with a realization of the supreme importance of true and proper metaphysical presuppositions: it was not due to chance that an exponent of Greek Christianity was the defender of Nicene orthodoxy. He also brings some of the joy of Christian life, and a refreshing belief in the integrity of man; for Christian theology was not then bowed down by that pessimism which hung like a pall above its later views of human nature. Athanasius comes, moreover, with that typical Eastern passion for a monistic system; to him the cosmos is a universe. To him, it was Father, Son, and Spirit, one God. The God of creation and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was one and the same God. Creation was not to be separated from redemption, but both were to be viewed as parts of the same whole. The death of the Saviour was not to be torn out of His life and set apart, but rather His incarnation, life, death, and resurrection form but varying phases of the great redeeming act. As

there is but one God, so is there but one process. It was Athanasius' firm grip upon the unity underlying the obvious diversity which enabled him to escape some of the errors into which theologians not so conscious of this unity have stumbled.

Athanasius, as has been already indicated, was not an isolated phenomenon. He was one among many prominent Fathers of his age. Furthermore he was characteristically Greek in temperament, and was expressive, to a certain degree, of the Greek Spirit; so that to understand the one was to understand something of the other. It may be added that he was not isolated intellectually. Doubtless there have been men who are content to build on no man's foundation; or men who startle the world with an entirely new interpretation of well known facts; but Athanasius was not such an one.

In the first place, he drew from the common Greek tradition. He saw the Christian doctrine of salvation, necessarily, through Greek eyes. In the days of the pagan, Hellenic civilization there had developed certain ideas about redemption; and these had become so firmly rooted in the Greek consciousness that they were not lost, even in the transition from heathenism to Christianity. Franks in an essay,¹⁵ the Idea of Salvation in the Theology of the Eastern Church, shows how closely the pagan mode of interpretation resembled

¹⁵ From the Mansfield College Essays, pp. 249-264.

that of the Greek Christians. Greek Christians, he says, sought and found in Christianity those values which had been promised but not produced by the pagan religions of Ancient Greece. There were three varieties of religious experience in the older religions which made their appeal to the Greek mind. There was the Olympic type which regarded man as naturally and essentially moral, (even if the gods were not). All that man needed was more light, more knowledge, and he would act in a thoroughly moral manner. This was the Socratic idea that sufficient knowledge is the only requisite for a moral utopia. So in Greek Christian circles, man was never regarded as being totally depraved. Although his freedom had been impaired, either by Adam's fall, or as a consequence of other sins, he was still a free moral agent. Still sin had clouded man's mind, dulled the keenness of his judgment of right and wrong, dimmed his clear vision of God. Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God, had, however, brought the true knowledge of the Father, which was life-giving in itself. And Greek thinkers sometime appear to have assumed that the perfect revelation was all that was needed to enable man to live morally.

The second form of religious experience was a terrible fear of demons, and of their power over destiny both here and here-after. This phobia was by no means peculiar to Greece, but it is found there in the more primitive religions, and was a most vital consideration to everyone in

that day, regardless of his religion. There was no state-
¹⁶
 ment of Christian doctrine in these early times which did
 not devote some part, at least, to Christ's victory over the
 evil ones, and man's consequent freedom from the powers of
 darkness.

The third type was to be found in the mystery religions,
 e.g., the Dionysian. Here deification was sought through
 union of the divine and the human. Salvation is thus view-
 ed as immortality achieved through deification. The simi-
 larity of this chief tenet of the mystery religion with the
 most important doctrine of the Greek exposition of Christian
 redemption is at once apparent.

These three varieties of religious experience, know-
 ledge of the truth leading to moral conduct, victory over the
 demons, and deification, constituted to a Greek mind all the
 values that one could expect from salvation. It was what
 they demanded from their own religions; it was what they
 asked of Christianity. "Though their faith, their systems
 were Christo-centric they saw His work through eyes accustom-
¹⁷
 ed to seek these three things elsewhere." But even in the
 light of these striking similarities it is not necessary to
 assume that the Greek Fathers paganised Christianity, or
 that they imparted into Christianity so much foreign or ex-
 traneous material as to produce a different religion. It

¹⁶ So far as the writer is aware.

¹⁷ Franks, op. cit.

was merely that Christianity was interpreted to a Greek world along the lines of religious values which were already familiar, and already eagerly desired. Also it ought to be said in further defence of such a procedure that it has not been confined to early Eastern Christianity. The presentation of the doctrine of redemption has varied from age to age as the social pattern changed.¹⁸ There is nothing more inherently Christian about the presentation of redemption in the terms of the law court or of the feudal system than there is about its presentation in the categories mentioned above. It should not be a reproach to Athanasius, and the other Greek Christian theologians, that they interpreted the Christian faith in terms, and along lines, which, though not new, were best understood and most appreciated by the age in which they were living.¹⁹

Athanasius not only carried on the Greek tradition interpreting Christianity under the categories of current philosophical and religious thought; he also drew certain fundamental conceptions, as well as inspiration, from nearer and more concrete sources; namely, certain of the Fathers. The two Fathers to whose writings he seems most indebted are Irenaeus and Origen, especially the former. But we do not

¹⁸ Cf. Matthews: The Atonement and the Social Process.

¹⁹ In order that there shall be no mistaking our meaning, let it be said that following the Greek tradition, as Athanasius certainly did, still left room both for originality and Christianity. That these three values were found in Christianity did not mean that no others could be found. That they were pagan in origin did not mean that they could not be refined and transformed into something quite worthy of the Faith.

have any direct evidence as to the fact, or the extent, of his indebtedness to either of these Fathers. By his own admission he had read Origen, but he nowhere speaks of any debt to that teacher. And so far as the writer is aware, he does not mention Irenaeus at all. But the similarities between Athanasius and these two earlier theologians are too great to be explained either by coincidence or by the fact that all three, to a greater or less degree, are bearers of that Greek tradition which they all had in common, and which they each interpreted to his own day in his own manner.

The fact of Athanasius' indebtedness to Irenaeus and Origen is by no means unknown. Indeed it is one of the points about which there is the greatest uniformity of opinion among those who have made a study of Athanasius' writings. Loofs was one of the first to comment upon this relationship. He traces it all back to what he calls "the Asia Minor theology". This was the theology of a group of men with the same general geographical background, Asia Minor, and the same general theological presuppositions and concepts. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, was one of the chief figures in this school. (He is supposed to have been originally from Asia Minor.) This line is traced back through certain Apologists to Ignatius, and perhaps, Polycarp, of the sub-apostolic tradition. These are supposed, in turn, to link up with the Apostle John, and so we have a more or

less unbroken chain from John to Irenaeus. Loofs regards Irenaeus not only as the greatest exponent of this school, but also as its last real representative. But the tradition thus established lived on in the tenets of "the neo-Alexandrine theology" of Methodius, Alexander and Athanasius. By this time, however, a new factor had entered the situation. The influence of Origen, and the Christian Platonists of Alexandria, made itself felt in the thinking of the neo-Alexandrines. And so the two currents merged into one stream. These two streams are most noticeable in Athanasius in his youthful writings.²⁰

Dr. Hermann Sträter, in his Die Erlösungslehre des heiligen Athanasius, devotes his introductory chapter to tracing the relationship between Athanasius and his most important sources. He states at the beginning that Athanasius is

20 For a further discussion, cf. Loofs: Leitfaden zum Studien der Dogmengeschichte, 3 te. Afl., pp. 90-94, 147, 8. Harnack scoffs at the whole concept of "the Asia Minor theology", (Hist. of Dogma, II, 238 N.1.). He says (1) that Irenaeus did not learn any more from Polycarp than a pious regard for Church tradition and a collection of historical traditions and principles; (2) that the doctrines of Irenaeus can not be separated from the received canon of the New Testament, but there was no such compilation in Polycarp's and Ignatius' day; (3) "the presbyter, from whom Irenaeus adopted important lines of thought in the fourth book, did not write until after the middle of the second century". For one thing, Harnack seems to place both the writing of and the formation of the canon of the New Testament later than the best of modern opinion would allow. Nor do Harnack's objections explain away the real similarities of thought and expression to be found in the Johannine writing, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Irenaeus. Even Harnack admits that there is a connection between Irenaeus and Athanasius.

deeply indebted to earlier writers in the field. He only goes so far as calling attention to what he calls the two main patristic sources from which Athanasius drew in developing his theory of redemption. These two are the soteriological systems of Origen and Irenaeus. Origen, in this connection, is referred to as Athanasius' "master". It is Strater's opinion that many of Athanasius' most important²¹ ideas are derived from these two sources.

Dr. Melville Scott, in his book Athanasius on the Atonement, devotes a chapter entitled "the Antiquity of the Athanasian Conception" to show that Athanasius presented, in its highest expression, the earliest doctrine of the Atonement. After adducing numerous passages from Irenaeus, he arrives at the conclusion that "the Irenaeus view of the Atonement²² is practically identical with the Athanasian". This conclusion he further supports by calling attention to several similarities between the teaching of these two fathers. "Both writers", he says, "give equal prominence to the condemnation of sin; and both regard the destruction of sin as consummated in the crucifixion". "Both agree", he continues, "with later theology in regarding the Atonement as an objective fact, effected antecedently to man's actual restoration; and both differ from modern theories in viewing it as a process carried on in Christ's divine and human Person, and find the perfection of this process in the

21 Cf. op. cit., pp. 2-14.

22 Op. cit., p. 109.

Resurrection and Ascension. Both look upon the Atonement as part of the world-plan and as the fulfilment of the purpose of creation. More than all, both regard the Atonement as the restoration to fellowship with God".²³

Having demonstrated the practical identity of the conceptions of Irenaeus and Athanasius, Dr. Scott proceeds to trace this Iro-Athanasian interpretation even farther back. A fragment from Justin Martyr is quoted which is understood by Dr. Scott to show the accord of that Apologist with the teaching of our two teachers.²⁴ Attention is also called to the fragment which Irenaeus quotes from Justin,²⁵ using the phrase, "Suum plasma in semetipsum recapitulans". Just how much importance it is well to attach to such a phrase, when it is quoted by Irenaeus himself, is difficult to say. On the other hand, it would be a bit surprising if some similarities could not be detected between two writers who lived almost at the same time and wrote about the same thing. The most that can be said is that, as Harnack seems to suggest, if we had the polemical works of Justin, they might be found to be more in accord with Irenaeus than might be surmised from his apologetic treatises.

Seizing on the well-known fact that Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, and that Bishop Lightfoot considers it altogether possible that Justin, who paid a visit to

²³ Ibid., p. 108.

²⁴ Harnack; History of Dogma, II, 223 Note 1, and Von Englehardt; Christentum Justins, p. 432 f., have pronounced against the genuineness of this fragment.

²⁵ Adv. Haer., IV, 62.

Asia Minor, paid a visit to Polycarp as well, Scott proceeds to trace the teaching of both these men to a common source, namely Polycarp.²⁶ But here again the evidence is somewhat scanty;²⁷ and the very best that can be said is that "they are precisely such as might well have suggested the special form taken by the teaching of Irenaeus".²⁸

From Polycarp it is but an easy step to the apostle John himself. So Irenaeus is said to receive the fundamental tenet of his theory of the Atonement, i.e. the destruction of sin, from John's first Epistle.²⁹ "The formative ideas which underlie the conception of the Atonement which is found first of all in Irenaeus, and afterwards in the more formal theory of Athanasius", are thus said to be found in the Johannine Epistles.³⁰

Dr. Scott is here attempting to show that Athanasius' treatment of the doctrine of redemption is the most authoritative which we have for the simple reason that it is the oldest - The earliest of all the interpretations of the Cross which have prevailed in the Church";³¹ and "antiquity is the best criterion of truth".³²

Dr. Scott is correct, we believe, in his chief contention that elements of Athanasian theory are much older than that Father. The points of similarity between the theories

26 Scott: Athanasius on the Atonement p. 110.
 27 i.e., the reference to the Atonement in Ad. Phil.
 28 Scott: op. cit., p. 111.
 29 Cf. I. John, 3:8, also 3:5,6.
 30 Scott: op. cit., p. 113.
 31 Ibid., p. 110.
 32 Ibid., p. 113.

of Irenaeus and Athanasius are certainly manifold.³³ But it seems somewhat extreme to say that the Irenaeian view is practically identical with that of Athanasius. It would be much nearer the truth to say that they are both members of the same school of thought, but that Athanasius, while retaining certain fundamental theses common to both, has gone a step further, incorporating elements which were unknown or overlooked by the earlier Father. Furthermore, there appears to many students of the subject an undoubted affinity between Irenaeus and the early Christian writers of Asia Minor. Also these writers seem to have drawn greater inspiration from the Johannine writings than from the Synoptists. Still, to find Athanasius, or even Irenaeus, in Polycarp and John, seems to be drawing very large conclusions from very small amounts of evidence. When we pass beyond Irenaeus there is a faint suggestion of similarity of outlook, but nothing more. Further, Scott seems to the writer to err in making antiquity the best criterion of Truth, and in assuming that there was a theory of the Atonement in the second century, or that there was only one interpretation.³⁴ For not only did views on this subject vary among different theologians, but also one writer might hold several widely different views at the same time. That

33 F.R. Montgomery Hitchcock, (Irenaeus of Lugdunum), calls attention to a number of passages in Irenaeus which may be paralleled almost verbatim in Athanasius. This parallelism is most pronounced in passages relating to the Atonement. Cf. Harnack: op. cit., IV, 148.

34 Moberly: Atonement and Personality, p. 366,7.

there is a real connection between Athanasius and Origen, and especially Irenaeus, we shall endeavour to prove; but beyond that, the most that can be said is that Athanasius gives perhaps the best expression to many of the typically Eastern views on the subject.

As Athanasius' theory of redemption can not be understood except as an integral part of a whole system, so also it cannot be thoroughly understood and appreciated except as seen in its larger setting. As Irenaeus and Origen are his two chief sources, we shall survey certain doctrines of these two Fathers.³⁵

Irenaeus, in his greatest work, the Adversus Haereses, has little teaching of a systematic character. His chief interest naturally lay in the refutation of certain heresies which he regarded as inimical to the good of the church. Consequently his treatment of the chief doctrines of the Christian faith was of a casual and incidental character. Taken all together, however, they lose much of their incidental nature and become a more or less systematical whole.

The nature of God is not a question with which Irenaeus deals at any great length; but he does have some definite teaching. One point about which he seems most insistent is the oneness and absoluteness of God.³⁶ Even though God is

³⁵ No attempt is made at completeness. Only such references are given as will, it is hoped, illuminate Athanasius' system.

³⁶ Irenaeus: Adv. Haer., II, 30.9, III, 8.3, IV, 2.1-6. cf. Harnack: Hist. of Dogma, II, 253-256.

the Absolute, He is not entirely inscrutable and unknowable. Perhaps in His very essence He is; but He has revealed Himself; and from this self-revelation, God may be known.³⁷ He has revealed Himself both by creation and by word of revelation, and from these two a sufficient knowledge of God as Creator and Guide may be obtained.³⁸ A second point upon which Irenaeus lays considerable emphasis is that God is the first cause of all being and all existence. He is careful to insist that God is the Creator of all as well as the Redeemer of all.³⁹ Irenaeus is anxious to avoid the use of all anthropomorphic or corporeal categories; God is rather to be thought of as All Light, All Understanding, All Logos, All Active Spirit.⁴⁰ A third point is that God is a moral being: His goodness and righteousness are expressly discussed.⁴¹ He is said to be benevolent and kind,⁴² patient, long suffering, benign, merciful, mighty to save.⁴³ Although this is not a very satisfying treatment of the moral character of God, still it is an advance. The idea of a moral God was still struggling to break through the stiff shell of impassible Deity.

To Origen, as to Irenaeus and to the Greeks in general,⁴⁴ the first truth about God is that He is One. He is Μονός;

37 Ibid., IV, 6.3-6.

38 Ibid., II, 6.1, 27.2, III, 25.1.

39 Ibid., II, 1.1, 9.1.

40 Ibid., II, 28.4, 5. IV, 11.2.

41 Ibid., IV, 25.1-3.

42 Ibid., III, 25.4.

43 Ibid., III, 20.

44 Origen: De Principiis, I, praef., "There is one God".

He is ⁴⁵Εὐαὶς ; and as such He is set over against the world, the plurality of created things. In harmony with the principle that God is *Μοναὶς*, Origen affirms that He is absolutely simple, that is, uncompounded.⁴⁶ Thence Origen proceeds along the via negationis. God is invisible. Origen calls attention to the fact that the Apostle always says "the image of the invisible God", and that John states that "no man hath seen God at anytime".⁴⁷ He is unchangeable, being of such a nature as "admitting within Himself no addition of any kind; so that He cannot be believed to have within Him a greater or a less, but is such that He is in all parts *Μοναὶς*, and, so to speak, *Εὐαὶς*"⁴⁸ He is indivisible. He is, according to strict truth, incomprehensible and incapable of being measured (inaestimabilem). For He is far greater than our finite understanding can conceive Him to be. "....God, whose nature cannot be grasped by any human understanding, even the purest and brightest".⁴⁹ But now He can be partially known through His self-revelation in the incarnate Logos.⁵⁰ The negative attribute on which Origen lays the greatest emphasis is the spirituality of God in the sense that He is incorporeal and immaterial. God is *πνεῦμα ἄσώματος*, *ἄϋλος ἄνχνημάτιστος*.⁵¹ All this might be worthy

45 Ibid., I, 1.6.

46 Ibid., I, 1.6 "natura illa simplex et tota mens."
cf. "simplex intellectualis natura".

47 Ibid., I, 1.8.

48 Ibid., I, 1.6.

49 Ibid., I, 1.5.

50 Origen; C. Celsum, VI, 65-72 VII, 42-44.

51 Origen: De Prin., I, 1.

of a Greek philosopher, but it is not worthy of a Christian theologian. But there is a more positive, more personal side to Origen's teaching. God is the source of all mind,⁵² all intellectual nature, of all being and all goodness. Origen attributes self-consciousness and will to God, which are the bases of personality. He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. Further, He is moral, for He is just and good.⁵³ His goodness and love are expressly mentioned.⁵⁴ "Passions, anger and the like do not exist in God, nor any plurality of virtues, but as the perfect one He is all kindness".⁵⁵ In these latter, positive affirmations about God, Origen has progressed a long way beyond Greek philosophy; and although this latter receives less prominence than do the negative statements, still they show the trend which Athanasius was able to carry much farther. The lack of a strongly affirmed moral conception of the personality of God is reflected in the soteriological systems of Irenaeus and Origen, as a definite fault, a fault which Athanasius' more ethical conception of God enabled him to escape.

Irenaeus inherited the Logos concept from the Apologists, but he does not appear to have used either the term or the philosophy to any great extent. He preferred to call

52 Ibid., I, 1.6.

53 Ibid., II, 5.1-4.

54 C. Cels., III, 43.

55 Harnack: op. cit., II, 351.

the Saviour "Son", "Christ", or. "Lord".⁵⁶ But when he did use the term, he used it with discrimination, avoiding certain of the errors of the emanationist Christology which were prevalent in his day. There can be little doubt but that Irenaeus believed in the full deity of Jesus Christ.⁵⁷ There are some passages where he seems to go to even Sabelian lengths in identifying the Logos with the Father.⁵⁸ The Son is said to be co-eternal with the Father,⁵⁹ and in many other ways is seen to be equal with Him. The Logos was God. We are made certain of Irenaeus' real belief in the deity of the Logos by the fact that his scheme of salvation demanded a divine Saviour. Nothing less than the true God could effect man's redemption.

⁵⁶ Harnack tells us that Irenaeus' use of the term "Logos" was merely conventional from John I:1; that he really thought in other terms.

⁵⁷ Baur (Die Christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung Gottes, pp. 178,9), thinks that Irenaeus was a subordinationist. He bases his belief chiefly on the fact that Irenaeus refers to the Son and the Spirit as "the hands" of the Father. (Adv. Haer., V, 6.1). That the Logos is spoken of as "progenies et figuratio" is cited as further evidence. That subordinationist expressions can be found is granted. But they are due to looseness of language rather than to such a belief. For there had been no great trinitarian controversy at this time, and consequently the language in many cases was not carefully chosen. It is possible to find subordinationist language in any of the early Fathers, including Tertullian and the Apologists. Such language in Irenaeus must be understood in light of his whole teaching. It is only when such expressions are studied in vacuo that one is able to say the Logos, according to the teaching of Irenaeus, was any less than true God equal with the Father.

⁵⁸ Adv. Haer., II, 28,5. "But God, being all mind and all Logos both speaks exactly what He thinks, and thinks exactly what He speaks. For His thought is Logos, and Logos is mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father." Cf. also III, 6.1.

⁵⁹ Op. cit., II, 30.9. "Semper coexistans Patri..."

Origen's theory of the Logos was composed of two sets of ideas, which if not actually inconsistent, are very difficult to fit together in one harmonious whole. On one side he seems to teach that the Logos was subordinate to the Father. The Father alone is $\acute{\omicron}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$; while the Son is only $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ and sometimes even $\delta\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ for His deity is derived.⁶⁰ The Father alone is $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$ while the Son is spoken of as $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\tau\alpha$. The Son is said to have come into being by an act of the Father's will.⁶¹ The Logos is the image of the Father's goodness but he cannot be said to be $\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omicron\alpha\gamma\theta\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$.⁶² Even though it may be said that He is the absolute Good in relation to man, still He is only the perfect image of His Father's goodness. The Logos is said to stand $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\beta\acute{\upsilon}\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta\eta\tau\omicron\upsilon,\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta\eta\tau\acute{\omega}\nu\ \phi\upsilon\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\omega\varsigma$,⁶³ which is but an expression of the old Greek idea which found such favour among the Gnostics, that the gulf between God and the world is so great that it can be bridged only by an intermediary.

It is said by some that this subordinationism was Origen's real belief. For, they say, such a position is required by his system, by his philosophy. Baur contends that Origen's principle of God as the One Absolute Principle necessitated the subordination of the Logos.⁶⁴ "So certain as

⁶⁰ Origen: C. Cels., VII, 14,15; In Joan., II, 2,3,18, XIII, 25, XXXII, 18.

⁶¹ Origen: De. Prin., I, 2.6.

⁶² Ibid., I, 2.13. C. Cels., VII, 57.

⁶³ C. Cels., III, 34.

⁶⁴ Baur: op. cit., 197.

the Alone Ungenerated must stand above all essence which has come into being through Him so certain must the Son be thought of as inferior to the Father".⁶⁴

At other times, however, Origen speaks of the Logos with true Nicene orthodoxy. The Son is declared to be co-eternal with the Father.⁶⁵ To posit any beginning for the Son is an impiety to the Father. Father and Son are said to possess all things in common.⁶⁶ "The Son possesses all the attributes of God, His wisdom, His goodness, His power. He possesses them in full and perfect measure, not accidentally, but substantially and unchangeably ... The Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, and no schism is conceivable between them".⁶⁷ The Son is very Wisdom, very Righteousness, very Truth, very King,⁶⁸ The Son is very God.

Bigg, one of the ablest Patristic scholars, takes the position that Origen's subordinationism is not derived from any metaphysical consideration, but purely from Scripture, 'and rests wholly upon the words of Jesus 'My Father is greater than I' 'None is good save one.'⁶⁹ (Hence the refusal to say that Christ was αὐτοῦ ἁγίου.) Where

⁶⁴ Baur: op. cit., 197.

⁶⁵ De Prin., IV, 28 etc., Bigg, (The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, 208 n.) says that Origen invented the phrase οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν famous afterward as the watch-word of the Catholics against the Arians.

⁶⁶ De Prin., I, 1,8 "Whatever belongs to the nature of Deity is common to the Father and the Son. (Constat inter Patrem et Filium)"

⁶⁷ Bigg: The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, p.223.

⁶⁸ Origen: in Matt., XLV, 7.

⁶⁹ Bigg: op.cit., pp. 224,225.

he pronounces his real thought, the difference between persons is conceived not as quantitative, nor as qualitative, but as model simply.⁶⁹ Commenting on Matt. XIV, 7,⁷⁰ Bigg says that it is evident that Origen is there struggling "against his own principles, and is endeavouring to reduce the doctrine of Derivation and Subordinationism, which he had inherited from his predecessors, to the narrowest limits consistent with the direct teaching of Scripture".⁶⁹ Also, the gulf between cause and effect, between the Father and the Son, sometimes seemed to Origen to be immense. "Yet if we look downwards and compare God the Son with the highest of created things, with principalities and archangels, there is gulf more enormous still, because of another kind".⁷¹

Bigg seems to be nearer the truth than those who lay great emphasis on Origen's subordinationism. There are the two streams, inconsistent, if you will, a position which only Origen could maintain, yet both are Origen. But if the inconsistency could have been resolved, it would have probably resulted in making Christ equal with the Father.

Origen's well-known doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, and his teaching that for its sins in heaven, the soul was made man, was so fanciful that his whole Anthropology was without much real influence on the thought of

69 Bigg: op. cit., pp. 224, 225.

70 See the preceding paragraph.

71 Bigg: op. cit., p. 223.

succeeding generations. At least, its influence on Athanasius was so negligible that a discussion of it here would not be justified.

Irenaeus' doctrine of man was more in accord with orthodox thinking on the subject, and reveals some striking similarities with Athanasius' own teaching. In the first place, he teaches that man was not created perfect.⁷² He seems to assume that had man been made perfect at the beginning, a fall would then have been impossible. But at least, he had not known original perfection, for one defect was innate. Man was a created being and as such essentially imperfect.⁷³ Besides his creatureliness, man had another defect. He was changeable. While not sinful at first, nor sinfully inclined, man was not in that advanced stage of holiness which would make him non posse peccare. This does not mean that man was in a hopeless state. In spite of his defects, he was created in the image of God, made capable of receiving immortality and living forever as God. The motive power was to be the continued fellowship with God maintained by the voluntary obedience to God's will. But by the exercise of that free will, man chose evil and

72 Sträter: op. cit., ch. I, says that the original perfection of man was Irenaeus' starting point, but it is a bit difficult to see how he can maintain his position in the face of Adv. Haer., V, 38.

73 Adv. Haer., V, 38, 1 - "But inasmuch as they (men) are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect".

so lost that life-giving communion with God. He was now deprived of his potential immortality and delivered over into the power of the devil, and death and corruption held sway over man from Adam until Christ. Harnack accuses Irenaeus of minimizing sin and its effect on man,⁷⁴ but Hagenbach is nearer the truth when he says, of the primitive church in general and Irenaeus in particular, that however much they were inclined to look at man's ideal side, they did not endeavour to hide the dark side by any false idealism; that "every Christian conscience was convinced of the opposition between the ideal and the real, and the effect of sin in destroying the harmony of life, and this, too, in proportion to the strictness of the claims set up for human freedom".⁷⁵

One other very important point in Irenaeus' anthropology was the belief in the solidarity of the race. By a sort of "Mystico-Pauline" conception, Adam is viewed as summarizing the race in himself so that, his acts having universal significance, through his fall, sin and death came on us all, and the devil took us away captive. This was accomplished not by any hereditary transmission, but by the mystic unity of the race.⁷⁶

74 Harnack: History of Dogma, II, 267, 275.

75 Hagenbach: History of Doctrines, I, 223, 24.

76 Cf., Adv. Haer., III, 10, 3, Franks: History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ, I, 37, Harnack: op. cit., II, 267, 275.

Irenaeus' theory of redemption is based primarily upon his doctrine of the person of the Saviour, who was God, yet became man, vere deus et vere homo. The capacity of Jesus Christ to save lay in His constitution as God-man. For unless He had been man, He could not have overcome man's enemies, and unless He had been God, He could not have united man to God and deified him.⁷⁷ Another fundamental concept upon which Irenaeus builds his theory is the solidarity of the race. As we have seen, he regarded humanity as a corporate whole. "....Christ is not an infinitesimal part, but the consummating whole of humanity: and that, by consequence, Christ's atoning acts were not so much done by Him instead of us, as acts which, in His doing them, we all⁷⁸ did ..."

Christ's redeeming work had two aspects, a positive and a negative. This latter consisted in the abolition of the consequences of Adam's fall, and the redeeming men from death and the dominion of the devil. The lost knowledge of God was restored. The image of God, so obscured by sin, was again impressed on man. Christ's victory over the devil in temptation was our victory in a setting in which heretofore we had been vanquished.⁷⁹ The Saviour's obedience nullified

⁷⁷ Adv. Haer., III, 18. 7.

⁷⁸ Moberly: Atonement and Personality, p.334.

⁷⁹ Adv. Haer., V, 21. 2. Cf. Franks: op. cit., I, 40, 41. While there is use of the figure of ransom, there is no idea of ransom to the devil. Satan has no right to man; his dominion was unjustly seized. Nevertheless, it was fitting that God should use persuasion rather than force.

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Adam's disobedience. In fact Irenaeus goes to fantastic lengths in working out a minute parallelism between the work of Christ and the fall of Adam, whereby Christ exact-⁸¹ly undoes the consequence of the sin of the first man. The summary of this phase is: "All that we lost in Adam,⁸² we received in Christ."

The positive aspect of the work of Christ was the more important for Irenaeus, Christ, here, accomplished for man what is sometimes summed up as "deification"; to become Sons of God, to receive incorruption and immortality, to lift man up to his true destiny - that was the work of the Redeemer.⁸³ Christ realised in His own person the destination of humanity, that all men might so achieve. It is⁸⁴ maintained by Baur that Irenaeus thought that the Incarnation was part of the divine economy whereby man was to be lifted to a stage higher than he might have achieved, even though he had not fallen from his first estate. There is reason to believe that Baur is correct in his contention, but regardless of that, it is certain that by the union of the human and the Divine in Christ man achieves his final destiny - deification.

- 80 Adv. Haer., V, 21. 2.
 81 Ibid., III, 22. 4. V, 16. 3, 17. 3,4 etc.
 82 Ibid., III, 18. 1.
 83 Ibid., III, 19. 1, 18, 1, 18.7. etc.
 84 Baur: op. cit., 181, 2.

85

Franks thinks that the Irenaeian conception is that immortal life is imparted by the Incarnation itself, presumably at the time of the Incarnation. And Franks is not without grounds for this contention, but Irenaeus, however much such a conception may naturally issue from his system, tries to guard against it by finding value in each part of Christ's life. Also he tries to save Redemption from being a mechanical process by his doctrine of the Spirit.⁸⁶ The Son who has accustomed the Spirit to dwell in man, imparts this Spirit to all who receive Him by faith. The Spirit, the Bread of immortality, once communicated, dwells in Christians and leads them to immortality and unchangeableness.⁸⁷

Origen evidently did not aim at achieving a unified theory of Redemption, but characteristically found good in all theories common in his day. He accepted the view of Christ's death as a ransom paid to the devil, but he does not seem to be guilty of originating it. In this connection, he regarded Christ's death on the cross as a real victory over the entire kingdom of evil. This earth is a great spiritual battle ground, with man between two fires. The spirits worse than man, and the demons, are continually seeking to pull him down to their low level. The good spirits work equally diligently to accomplish the opposite.

85 Franks: op. cit., I, 38.

86 To receive much fuller development in Athanasius.

87 Adv. Haer., V, 6.1, IV, 20.5.

These two opposing forces are in continual mortal combat, every victory for one side constituting a reverse for their enemies. Christ's death was in some way the crowning victory for the forces of good and effectually broke the power of the opposition. We also find in Origen such concepts as the expiation of sin through the crucifixion, deification and so on. But the Logos as the divine teacher was the way in which he most frequently presented Christ's work. The Word had revealed Himself before, in the Law, and in those pure spirits, the prophets. He now imparts a newer and deeper knowledge to all those who are able to receive it. Through the impartation of this new knowledge, they receive a new principle of life, "so they might now partake of His life and themselves become divine through being interwoven with the divine essence". But this is only for the Psychici, the less pneumatic Christian receives an entirely different type of salvation. Although the goal in both cases is restoration to fellowship with God. The simple Christian, who cannot be saved by the assimilation of the new knowledge, is saved by faith in the reality of an historical event, the redeeming death of Christ. The Psychici may dispense with faith and the historical Jesus, for redemption is effected through knowledge and love, "which soaring up beyond the Crucified One, grasp the eternal essence of the Logos revealed to us through His teachings in the eternal gospel".⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Bigg: op. cit., cf. Harnack: History of Dogma, II, 365, 380.

Many of the doctrines of Irenaeus and Origen sketched above will reappear in a modified, but still recognizable form in the system of Athanasius, though the influence of Origen was considerably less than that of Irenaeus. Origen had fallen into disrepute, even in his own land. He was not too popular with the monks of the Thebaid with whom Athanasius had frequent and friendly intercourse. How strongly these inhabitants of the desert influenced the archbishop is a matter of conjecture, but we may be sure that whatever influence they may have had, it was not in favour of an Origenistic interpretation of Christianity. In spite of what Sträter⁸⁹ implies when he says that Athanasius, like his master Origen, always thought in Platonic forms, it seems likely that the archbishop broke with Origen far more than he followed him.

Origen's influence was chiefly along theoretical or philosophical lines, as, for example, in the doctrine of God. Athanasius accepted most of Origen's teaching about the Deity, but what he added was more important than what he received. He accepted Origen's fundamental dogma of the immateriality, indivisibility, and complete spirituality of God, and that led him to oppose the material emanationist interpretation of the unity of essence of the Father and the Son. Further, he accepted Origen's teaching with regard to the eternal generation of the Son, as well as the

89 Sträter: op. cit., introduction.

identification of the Son and the Logos. But every trace of Origen's subordinationism is sternly rooted out. Nowhere in Athanasius can there be found the idea that the Logos is a necessary mediator between the uncreated God and the created world.⁹⁰ This omission, says Loofs, marked the overthrow in principle, of the philosophical Logos concept.⁹¹ Again Athanasius seems to be perfectly free from the theory of a ransom to the devil, which Origen did develop. Attention is usually called to the fact that Origen has some treatment of the idea of the deification of man, and of a physical redemption. But this is not so important as at first it would seem, when we remember that, although he could not escape an idea so widespread and important for the Christians of his day, it had no real place in his system and in fact he succeeded in spiritualizing it away. There can be little doubt, however, that Origen did influence Athanasius. Loofs is more or less correct in maintaining⁹¹ that the Alexandrine theology in general,

90 Cf., C. Cels, III, 34 The Logos is said to stand

91 Loofs: Arianismus. Art. in PRE.

92 Sträter (op. cit., introduction) says that the teaching of these three (Athanasius, Irenaeus, and Origen) is very much the same in that they all saw the meaning of the work of Christ as lying in the fact that He restored the union of man with God, which had been broken by sin, and which man was unable to restore. This is undoubtedly true in a sense, as it is more or less true of all Christian theologians. For unless some such harmony of thought is present, it is difficult to see how all could bear the title of expositors of Christianity. But to posit agreement on these bare outlines is to say little about a fundamental similarity of treatment or understanding. It appears to the writer that Origen's thought about the Christian reunion with God differed radically both in means of attainment and in the concept of the end thus achieved from that of Irenaeus and Athanasius, who were much more/

and Origen in particular, was one of the important formative factors for the thinking of Athanasius; still it must be remembered that it was an Origen strongly modified and that the Asia Minor theology of Irenaeus was much more influential.

Athanasius' more important and fundamental ideas on the Atonement are to be found in Irenaeus. The concept of the solidarity of the race, the mystical unity of the race in Adam and in Christ is but one example. Another is the enormous value for redemption which was placed upon the constitution of the Saviour, who was said to be vere deus et vere homo. Further, Christ's work was treated by both, under two aspects, a positive and a negative. Negatively, Christ's work was viewed as undoing the effects of the fall and of sin; positively, it was to "deify" humanity. ⁹²

This is not to say that Athanasius was a disciple who merely reproduced his master. There are certain large differences between the two. For example, the doctrine of recapitulation which dominates Irenaeus' thinking to such a large extent is almost wholly absent from Athanasius' thought

92 contd.
 more in agreement. To these latter two, a physical redemption seemed a very desirable and essential part of man's salvation. Origen, while he could not wholly escape the idea since it was an important part of ecclesiastical tradition, was never happy with the idea and tried to spiritualize it away. Broadly speaking, Origen while keeping the historical Christ and His redeeming death for the simple Christians, as a psychicos turned the eye of hope and aspiration toward the illumination of the eternal gospel. This criticism is equally applicable to Strater's other comparisons. In order to secure harmony, it is necessary to make them so broad that all the real meaning is lost.

and writings. It is replaced by the idea of deification. Franks, although speaking of the De Incarnatione only, has stated the entire situation very well. "It (the De Inc.) is based", he says, "certainly with modifications and developments, on the doctrine of Irenaeus. But Athanasius has appropriated further Pauline elements left unused by Irenaeus."⁹³ Athanasius is to be thought of as being in the same line of theological development with Irenaeus, whose teaching he carries on and develops, but with significant additions.

We have admitted that Athanasius was not wholly original. But few, if any writers on a well known subject are, or can be wholly original; and with such a subject as theology, complete originality would be of very doubtful value. It is not the task of the theologian, who interprets and expands the dogmas of a revealed religion, to pour the waters of Lethe over the past, be that past either Scripture or the expositions of previous Christian thinkers. So it is without apology that we admit that Athanasius' treatment of the doctrine of Redemption was not entirely original. We believe that he was correct in his conviction that the Bible was his chief source. But he also drew from Christians of previous generations who had faced the same task which he himself faced, that of explaining the Christian position about God and the world, about the Logos and the Salvation which He brought, in a way that would be both intellectually

93 Franks: op. cit., I, 63.

and religiously satisfying. It might be said that Athanasius has points of contact with all earlier Greek Christian teaching, that he drew from them all,⁹⁴ that his doctrine of Redemption was expressive of the Greek Spirit as a whole. It might even be said that Athanasius was not only characteristic, but also representative of Greek Christianity at its best. With all his debt, he was no compiler of ideas. He took the best that he could find and gave it his own expression, and that he was not without his own contribution will be evident, it is hoped, as we pass to a more detailed study of Athanasius' own teaching.

94 As we have noted, especially, from Irenaeus and Origen.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF REDEMPTION:

A STUDY OF THE DOCTRINES IN THE ATHANASIAN SYSTEM WHICH HAD A BEARING ON HIS THEORY OF REDEMPTION.

"It is well, then, in treating this subject, to speak first of the creation of the universe, and of God its Artificer, in order that one may duly perceive that its re-creation has been wrought by the Word who originally made it. For it will not appear at all inconsistent for the Father to have wrought its salvation in Him through whom He made it." - De Incarnatione,¹

Athanasius, himself, realized that his theory of redemption was so intimately bound up with the other doctrines of his system that it was impossible to understand a part without the whole. And since he felt that it was desirable to preface a treatise on the saving work of the incarnate Logos by a brief treatment of certain relevant doctrines, certainly we can do no better than to follow his example in the matter.

When Athanasius comes to speak of the nature of God he is manifestly the pupil of Origen. Without doubt it is at this point that Origen's influence was the most pronounced. Athanasius inherited the Alexandrine assurance of the transcendence of God, as well as their respect for the dignity, for the otherness of God. For Athanasius as for Origen, God is the Absolute. He has life in Himself

- ἡ αὐτοῦ ἑωῆ, and is sufficient unto Himself - αὐτάρκης¹ .
 Not only is He the self-sufficient Unoriginate, He is unique in that respect. For all beings, outside Himself, owe their origin and life to Him, and are always absolutely dependent upon Him.² Carrying on the Origenistic strain, Athanasius reproduces a thought about God, common to Origen and the Platonists, but with a significant addition. These latter had taught that God was above all essence - ὑπέρκεινα πάσης οὐσίας - Athanasius agreed but inserted the word γεννητῆς which made a remarkable difference when he came to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity.³ Further, in a manner reminiscent of Origen, God is said to be absolutely immaterial and incorporeal,⁴ thus guarding not only against anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity, but against pantheism as well. Athanasius is very careful to point out that God can not be identified with the visible creation.⁵ Still carrying out the idea of the transcendence of God, Athanasius affirmed his belief in the typically Greek doctrine that God is one,⁶ not merely in the sense that there are no other gods beside Him, but one in the unity of the divine Essence. There is no real unity in the created universe, only an

1. Athanasius: Contra Gentes, 28, "For it is an admitted truth about God that He stands in need of nothing, but is self-sufficient and self-contained...."

2. Ibid., 28, "in Him all things have their being" etc.

3. Cf. C. Gentes, 2, 35, 40, also Robertson: Introduction, p. lxxii.

4. Cf. De Decretis, 10, 22.; De Incarnatione, 8.

5. C. Gentes, 27, 28.

6. Ibid., 6.5.

apparent unity, for it is made up of disparate parts, of varying sizes and importance. But with God it is not so. He is a whole "and not a number of parts, and does not consist of diverse elements....For if He consists of parts, certainly it will follow that He is unlike Himself - being⁷ made of unlike parts".⁸ Similarly He is said to be "simple",⁹ and of an uncompounded nature. That there was a great gulf fixed between the Creator and His creatures, was the first axiom about God in Greek philosophy, and for some the only truth which man could affirm concerning God with any degree of certainty. Athanasius also recognized this truth but refused to exaggerate its importance as some of his predecessors had done. If God is transcendent, He is also¹⁰ immanent. While he teaches that God is impassible, it is not the impassibility which Clement taught. Again, he carries on the old idea that it is impossible to know God, but¹¹ adds "in this essence", which reduces the old formula to a most harmless statement, for he admits that we can and do know much about God through His self-revelation. The great wall of impassibility, of inscrutability, of otherness, of complete transcendence, which had effectually separated God and man, had begun to crumble even by the time of

⁷ Ibid., 28, cf. Dorner: The Doctrine of the Person of Christ, Vol. II, p. 249 f.

⁸ De Decretis, 22, cf. the "simplex" of Origen.

⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰ De Decretis, 11.

¹¹ Ibid., 22.

Origen. Athanasius did much to raze it completely. Not wholly emancipated, he repeated the old formulae, and then proceeded to disregard them almost entirely.

Athanasius' new attitude towards God took at least two distinctive forms. One was an emphasis on the moral nature of the Deity. We find the ethical attributes stressed in the writings of Athanasius in a way which had not been done since the time of the Apostles. It is true that both of Athanasius' teachers, Irenaeus and Origen, had made some mention of the justice and goodness of God, and in so doing made some advance over the philosophy current in their day. But one feels that, even though Origen may devote a chapter to the justice and goodness of God, only such attributes as are met along the via negationis fit naturally into his system. Athanasius, on the other hand, is quite at home with an ethical concept of God. Voigt¹² is correct when he says that Athanasius believed in "the absolute personality of God". This belief was one of the foundation stones upon which he built his theology. God is a person who can and does enter into personal relationship with His creatures on an ethical basis. Even the non-ethical attributes, e.g., omnipotence, are regarded as being qualified and held in check by His justice, truth and goodness. The difference between

¹² Voigt: Die Lehre des Athanasius von Alexandrien, p. 17. Athanasius did not use the terminology of modern psychology, but the idea is the same.

Origen and Athanasius on this doctrine is that for the latter the goodness of God is not incidental but fundamental.

¹³
Ottley has brought out Athanasius' position very clearly by contrasting him with Arius. He says:

"Perhaps the most impressive feature of his (Athanasius') writings is the ethical concept of God which marks them. Arius spoke of τὸ ἀγεννητὸν as if it were an adequate symbol for θεότης. Athanasius insisted that the phrase is not scriptural. We are rather taught to pray to 'Our Father'. Nor ought we to ask what God might conceivably have done; for He is not bare power.¹⁴ Nor is He subject in any mechanical way to necessity.¹⁵ He is essentially loving and good, merciful and full of care for men.¹⁶ The difference between Athanasius and the Arians lay in this profoundly different conception of God. They, from a metaphysical standpoint, denied the possibility of a divine Sonship; but to Athanasius 'Omnipotence is not the synonym for God conceived as Godhead. The terms in which He is construed are ethical, and the ethical Deity can never live out of relations, or secluded from those who need Him.'¹⁷

The doctrine of God is important not only for itself, but also because it exerts a powerful influence on all the other doctrines, and especially upon the doctrine of Redemption. This fact is, to a certain extent, borne out in Greek theology. To those Fathers whose God was cast in a Platonic mould, sin and the forgiveness of sin were necessarily minor considerations. For so long as God is regarded as abstract, separated from all His creatures by a great gulf,

¹³ Ottley: The Doctrine of the Incarnation, II, 39.

¹⁴ Athanasius: Contra Arianos, II, 68.

¹⁵ Ibid., III, 62.

¹⁶ Ibid., I, 63, II, 65, 77. III, 8.

¹⁷ Fairbairn: The Place of Christ in Modern Theology, p.421.

impassible, absolutely unchanged by all that transpires on earth, it is not easy to conceive of Him as being greatly concerned about sin. Nor could such an One be easily pictured as forgiving or condemning evil among His creatures. As long as it is felt that the Deity is not interested in ethics, few theologians are likely to strike a moral note. So it is quite significant for his view of salvation that Athanasius has passed beyond the more frigid concept of God which had prevailed in the East, and even beyond the thought of Irenaeus and Origen on the subject. It is not too much to expect that with an ethical concept of God, he should have an ethical concept of the Atonement as well.

Another way in which Athanasius' new attitude toward God expressed itself was in a renewed emphasis upon the fact that God the Father is the Creator of the Universe. In this connection, Principal Robertson has called attention to the fact that, in recent times, the Athanasian conception of God has been singled out for special recognition, because it furnished a much needed emphasis on the immanence of God.¹⁸ As has been already remarked, Greek Christian theologians were very conscious of the infinite antithesis between the Creator and the creature. Theologians had attempted to bridge this chasm, i.e. to reconcile the immanence with the transcendence of God, but they had only partially succeeded. Their method had been the stressing of the

18 Robertson: Introduction, pp. lxxii, lxxiii.

transcendence of Father and of the immanence of the Logos. After Arius, however, this solution was no longer tenable, and one more in accord with the facts of Christianity was required. Athanasius furnished this solution. God must no longer, he taught, be thought of as, inevitably and by His own nature, separated from His world. God does not need a Logos, an intermediary, to stand between Him and all created things, as if nature could not bear the untempered¹⁹ hand of the omnipotent God. Athanasius is not slow to point out the obvious absurdity into which his opponents had fallen. In the defence of the deity of the Son, the point is clearly made:

"But let us suppose that the other creatures could not endure to be wrought by the absolute hand of the Unoriginate, and, therefore, the Son alone was brought into being by the Father, and other things by the Son as underworker and assistant, for that is what...Arius...has bequeathed to his own friends, and from that time they use this form of words, broken reed as it is, being ignorant, the bewildered men, how brittle it is. For if it were impossible for things originate to bear the hand of God and you hold the Son to be one of their number, how was He alone equal to this formation by God? And if a mediator became necessary that originate might come to be, and you hold the Son to be originated, then there must have been some medium before Him for His creation"...20

And so the process would go on endlessly, each mediator requiring yet another mediator above him; and though the succession of intermediaries were endless, yet none would

19 Cf. Hoss: Studien, p. 57. So also Harnack.

20 De Decretis, 8. cf. C. Ar., II, 25, 26, 27, et passim.

ever reach God for finitude does not reach infinity by the simple process of adding one more, no matter how often that be done. So, buttressed by logic which appears to be irrefutable, Athanasius arrives at the conclusion that God is the Creator of all things. All that came into being is the work of the Godhead, the Father willing it, and the Son putting that will into execution. "The divine will is the direct and sole cause of all things, and the idea of a mediatorial nature is inconsistent with the true²¹ idea of God."

Athanasius was convinced of the value of the correct theory of Creation, even before the Arian controversy sharpened the point at issue. Even in his earliest work he seems to regard the true understanding of creation as one of the foundation stones, as a sine qua non, of an accurate theological system and especially as regards the doctrine of the Incarnation and Redemption. So strongly does he feel on the subject that he devotes the first five chapters of the De Incarnatione Verbi Dei to the exposition of this doctrine, to the refutation of false views, and the presentation of the true account.

21 Robertson: op. cit., lxxii - Irenaeus, as well as Athanasius, was interested in maintaining that God, as God, was the Creator, but for a different purpose. It was necessary for Irenaeus to maintain against the Gnostics and the Marcionites that the Creator God of the Old Testament was identical with the loving Father of the New Testament. Athanasius maintained that the Unoriginate God was the Creator for trinitarian reasons. For unless he could thus heal the breach between the transcendent God and the immanent Logos, the latter would be lowered to the level of a Demiurge or a creative Aeon.

Athanasius rejects three erroneous views of creation. The first is that of the Epicureans, who taught fortuitous generation, that "all things have come into being of themselves and in a chance fashion",²² that "everything has had its beginning of itself and independently of purpose."²² Against this view is brought the fact that the world does not have a haphazard appearance; but on the contrary, order and purpose are discernable on every hand. Such order amid so great a diversity of parts requires an adequate cause for its explanation. The teleological arrangement of the world calls for no less an explanation than God Himself who is the Maker and Orderer of all.

The second view to be rejected was that of the Platonists, who held that all matter was coeternal with God. This matter had existed from all eternity in a chaotic and formless state. At a certain time God had taken this chaotic hyle and impressed various forms upon it - and that, they taught, was creation. But such a view, contended Athanasius, inevitably lowers God from the rank of the Almighty Creator to that of a mere Artisan, the potter who does but fashion the clay. For "had not the material existed, God would not have made anything. And how could He in that case be called Maker and Artificer, if He owes His ability to make to some other source - namely, to the material? So that, if this be so, God will be, on their theory, a Mechanic

only, and not the Creator out of nothing"²³. But God is not weak and limited as we men are. And since this theory would make Him so, it cannot be true. Any theory which would degrade the Creator is not worthy to be considered.

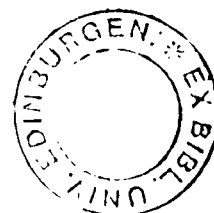
Lastly the theory of the Gnostics was rejected. They held that creation was accomplished by an alien Demiurge, and not by God at all. Athanasius rejects this view on scriptural grounds, for in the light of its teaching, the theory of the Gnostics is clearly seen to be false.

The true view of creation is the Biblical view. The Bible teaches that "out of nothing and absolute non-existence God brought the universe into being through the Word"²⁴. The motive for creation is found in the goodness of God. "For God is good, or rather is Himself the fount of Goodness. But in one who is good, a grudging spirit is impossible with respect to anything; whence, grudging existence to none, He made all things out of nothing through His own Word, our Lord Jesus Christ"²⁵. Athanasius does not go deeply into the problem of creation. In fact, he makes only three points: (1) that God, through the Logos, was the agent; (2) that the motive was the goodness of God; and (3) that creation was out of nothing.

23 Loc. cit.

24 Ibid., 3.

25 Ibid., 3, cf. Plato: Timaeus.



Concerning the creation of man, and his original state, Athanasius has much to say. His remarks are, however, of a sporadic rather than a systematic nature and their co-ordination presents considerable difficulty. With regard to some points, however, his meaning is quite plain. That man was created out of nothing, and in the image of God, are assured facts. Also we are told that man was made "to see²⁶ and know the realities", to have a "conception and knowledge of his own eternity, in order that preserving his nature intact, he might neither depart from his idea of God, nor recoil from the communion of the holy ones".²⁶ Man was also given grace and power by the Logos that he "might rejoice and have fellowship with the Deity, living the life of immortality unharmed and truly blessed."²⁶ That grace and power were imparted by the Logos is a thought which frequently recurs. All creatures, he tells us, bear in some measure the impress of the Logos, their Creator; but man has received far more than the others. The Word did not²⁷ barely create him, but gave him a unique portion of His power not vouchsafed to the lower animals. They are but irrational brutes (ἄλογικοί) but man has been given a rational soul (ψυχὴ λογική), and so may be said to be λογικός.²⁸ It is also said that man was endowed with free will.

²⁶ Contra Gentes, 2, esp. 2.4.

²⁷ De Inc., 3.

²⁸ Loc. cit.

There was nothing new in this last affirmation, all the Greek Fathers had emphasized it, and so did Athanasius. In a word, the foregoing simply means that the first man was so endowed, that had he chosen good instead of evil, he would have lived forever a life of blessedness. All of which was quite conventional.

Athanasius is more unusual in his teaching on nature and grace, especially as regards immortality. What did Adam have by nature, and what dona superaddita were bestowed upon him? In other words, what was his as an inalienable right and what might he lose? Harnack takes an extreme position in answer to these questions. He says:²⁹ "Some (of the Fathers) like Athanasius....assigned to human nature in the strictest sense of the term, only the creaturely and sensuous state of being, in respect of which man is perishable, and they described everything else as a gift of divine grace inherent in human nature".

It is somewhat difficult to see the difference between "nature" and a gift "inherent in human nature". The point is clarified somewhat when he explains that the ambiguity is Athanasius' and not his. "The conceptions formed by Athanasius of the original state of man, of sin and grace, show especially his inability to distinguish between nature and grace".³⁰ Harnack further explains his position by

29 Harnack: op. cit., III, 257.

30 Ibid., III, 272.

saying that in many places and arguments Athanasius takes the position that "nature" is only the sensuous and creaturely constitution, while everything else, including the endowment of reason, is a gift of God conditionally conferred upon man in his original state. The gift was meant to become nature after a process of free moral development. Then Athanasius quite inconsistently maintains that the ψυχὴ λογικὴ is a part of man's natural endowment, belongs to his constitution, "is immortal and at bottom also inalienable". Harnack attempts to harmonize these two positions by saying that the rational soul is only rational (λογικὴ) in so far as it participates in the Logos, and its power is conditional upon its connection with Him. So "for this reason it can be termed, although a natural provision, an 'external.'³¹"

While Harnack is unquestionably right that Athanasius does not distinguish clearly between "nature" and grace, still he has in our opinion, stripped the natural man of more qualities than Athanasius did. This is apparent when we remember that Athanasius held that the difference between us and Adam was not one of nature,³² and that man returned to his natural state after the fall. Neither Harnack nor Athanasius would grant that man after the fall was entirely stripped of his rational soul. For had that been entirely

³¹ Ibid., III, 273.

³² Cf. De Decretis, 9; C. Arianos, II, 6, 8 etc.

gone the Incarnation would have been impossible. Principal Robertson³³ is more accurate when he contends that Athanasius held "the essential rationality and immortality of the soul is absolutely clear, if only from Contra Gentes, 32, and 33". That such a position is difficult to maintain is at once apparent when we examine the evidence more carefully.

In the opening words of the thirty-third chapter of the Contra Gentes, Athanasius plainly says that the soul of man is immortal. To substantiate this statement he submits three arguments (which are obviously as Platonic as Christian.) The soul is seen to be immortal, first because it is distinct from the body; secondly because it is the source of motion;³⁴ and thirdly because it has the power to go beyond the body in thought and imagination. So after the body dies, the soul shall live on "without ceasing by reason of God who made it thus by His own Logos".³⁵ Further evidence of the soul's deathless character is seen in the fact that it contemplates immortality.³⁶

So far it has not been specifically stated whether this immortality belongs to man by nature or by grace, whether an inalienable right or a gift that may be lost through sin.

³³ Robertson: Preface to the De Inc., (Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers).

³⁴ Cf. Plato: Phaedr.

³⁵ Contra Gentes, 33.

³⁶ Ibid., 33. 4. "For this is the reason why the soul thinks of and bears in mind things immortal and eternal, namely, because it is itself immortal....For ideas and thoughts about immortality never desert the soul...and are, as it were, the fuel in it which ensures immortality."

He has merely said that the soul is immortal; but in the next chapter,³⁷ he speaks of the sinful as if they were still immortal, although it must be admitted that this is an inference and not a direct statement. The teaching of the Contra Gentes would, then, be an unqualified affirmation of the immortality of the soul, such a possession being regarded as inalienable.

The teaching of the De Incarnatione concerning immortality is clear enough if taken by itself, but when it is read in connection with the Contra Gentes, as must be done, it constitutes one of the most difficult problems with which the student of Athanasius has to deal. Its apparently inconsistent character is at once obvious when the evidence is examined in any detail. Man is clearly said to be "by nature mortal."³⁸ That it was intended that he should transcend his nature³⁹ does not alter the fact of his mortality. This position is further clarified by the statement that man "being, as I said before, by nature corruptible, yet by the grace of the participation of the Word, they would have avoided that which was according to nature if they had remained perfect."⁴⁰ Man, though mortal by nature, since he was a creature, was given a potential immortality through the indwelling of the Logos. This potentiality could be, and

³⁷ Ibid., 34.

³⁸ De Inc., 4.

³⁹ Ibid., 5. "God freely bestowed upon the power of living the life of God by the help of the Word".

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5.

was meant to be, transformed into an actuality by man's preserving within himself the Logos, through his own righteous choices and the continued contemplation of things divine and eternal. "Thus therefore God made man, and⁴¹ willed him to remain in incorruption".

More light is shed on this problem by Athanasius' description of the fate of man. Man turned from the contemplation of things heavenly to the contemplation of things extremely mundane. That is, he turned from God, the source of his life, to things in which there was no help. So he lost what he should have gained i.e. immortality. Athanasius' own words are most graphic here. They are: "For the transgression of the command called them (men) back to the condition of their own nature, that just as they had been called into being from non-existence, so also in time they should deservedly undergo corruption....being devoid of the contemplation of God, they....should be denuded of eternal existence (κενωθῆναι καὶ τοῦ εἶναι αἰεί), that is, being⁴² dissolved, they should abide in death and in corruption".

The phrase "denuded of eternal existence" is particularly significant. It is no mere startling phrase carelessly used. It is buttressed by at least two lines of argument. One is philosophical, and more or less an echo of Platonism. Briefly it is somewhat as follows. Man was

41 Ibid., 4.

42 Ibid., 4.

once without being or existence. By the power of God he was called out of the void of nothingness into the fulness of being and life. Hence he is subject to that defect inherent in creatureliness - he has no being in himself. His continued existence is directly dependent upon the will of that Power who brought him into being. Should the Creator withdraw that power, or should man break his connection with that power, then man very naturally and very easily slips back into that black abyss whence he came, returning to the nothingness out of which he was fashioned. This line of thought would deny inherent immortality to man, since only such beings which had no beginning, have, naturally, no ending.

The second line of thought forming the back-ground of the phrase "denuded of eternal existence" may be termed ethical. Evil is non-existent in that it has no real being in itself, while good is self-existent. Οὐκ ὄντα γάρ ἐστι τὰ κακὰ, ὄντα δὲ τὰ καλὰ.⁴³ More is meant here than that sin and evil are simple negations and are nothing more than the mere privation of Good. Evil is the absence of Reality.⁴⁴ On the other hand true being is equated with goodness and righteousness, because in the strictest sense, God alone has true being, is Reality.⁴⁵ He also is the absolute Good,

⁴³ Ibid., 4 cf. Contra Gentes 4. "ὄντα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ καλὰ, οὐκ ὄντα δὲ τὰ φαύλα"

⁴⁴ Cf. Pell: Die Lehre des hl. Athanasius von der Sünde und Erlösung, p. 64 f. - who has a good treatment of Athanasius' concept of evil.

⁴⁵ Cf. Hoss: op. cit., Sec. 14, "Die Lehre von der Schöpfung und dem Fall", p. 57 f.

hence τὰ ὄντα and τὰ καλὰ become identical. Thus the idea seems to be that God alone has true being within Himself because He alone is absolutely good and holy. Holiness then appears as the secret, the sine qua non of being. The converse would also be true. Life, existence, being, disappear to the same extent that goodness disappears and evil takes its place. So man, in so far as he departs from God, and substitutes evil for the good in his nature, is robbing himself of life, and, perhaps even of bare existence. Further, these considerations have nothing to do with the physical, but rather with the soul. The soul that turns from God to sin is naturally and inevitably destroying itself, denuding itself of eternal existence. Is the soul of sinful man immortal? Does Athanasius teach conditional immortality? If the De Incarnatione alone be taken into consideration, the answer must unquestionably be in the affirmative. The arguments are clear and overwhelming. Briefly, a man is mortal (1) because he is a creature (2) because he is evil. But on the other hand the Contra Gentes has plainly stated that the soul of man was immortal. Since these two works of Athanasius are really only two parts of one work and were written at practically the same time, it is not unreasonable to expect to find between the two the closest harmony of thought and similarity of expression. That Athanasius should contradict himself within the narrow confines of his own dual work on a matter like this is .

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unthinkable. Some explanation must be found then for his language, either in the Contra Gentes or in the De Incarnatione.

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Principal Robertson has attempted to bring harmony into the situation by explaining away the statements of the De Incarnatione. He finds his key in the words, "μέλειν ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ".⁴⁸ These words, he says, suggest a continued state. We are asked to remember also that even in the worst men the image of God is defaced but not effaced;⁴⁹ And man, once having had contact with the Divine, can never be as though that contact had never occurred. Furthermore, it is pointed out that Athanasius really passes over in silence, as does Paul, the final destiny of the wicked. Therefore, concludes Principal Robertson, Athanasius believes that the soul is immortal, but sees an existence just short of annihilation, not worthy of the name of life, as the fate of those who turn from God and things divine to their own evil and sin.

There can be little doubt but that the proper solution of our problem lies along the line indicated by Principal Robertson. The Bible taught that man had an immortal soul, so Athanasius accepted it and was able to find arguments from philosophy with which to defend it. But when his own

⁴⁶ The obvious judgment, and the one most frequently made is simply that Athanasius was inconsistent. For the reason given the writer prefers to think differently.

⁴⁷ Robertson: Preface to the De Inc. (Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers).

⁴⁸ De Inc., 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 14 etc.

philosophy speaks, as it does in the De Incarnatione, the doctrine of immortality of the wicked is reduced to a meaningless minimum. This view of life seemed to have been, in spite of all his emphasis on the physical, largely qualitative instead of quantitative. What matters is not how long the life, but how well the living. Life apart from God is not worthy of the name. So it is that sin robs man of his life, his very existence, for what is mere duration without the Father's love?

The completed picture of man's original state is as follows: he was possessed of a soul which was both rational and immortal, although both of these qualities could be nullified by sin. He was given knowledge of his Creator and of his own immortality and high destiny. He was a free moral agent, uncontaminated by either sin or corruption. He had been made in the image of God, empowered by the indwelling Logos to shun evil and choose the good so that he might ratify the potentialities within his constitution, and live forever a life of blessedness. To aid in this endeavour he was given a "law and a place".⁵⁰ Yet God did not bring so much influence to bear that man would no longer be able to exercise freely his power of choice. His freedom was respected. Two other facts deserve to be mentioned. One was that all this grace which Adam received was "from

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3 - "He secured the grace given them by a law and by the spot (paradise) where He placed them".

the outside"⁵¹. The other was that while many Protestant theologians have contended that Adam was perfect morally and in every other respect, Athanasius has taken what appears to the writer, to be the more sensible view. To posit holiness of Adam's original state is to multiply the difficulties of explaining his subsequent actions manifold. Athanasius would say that Adam was not holy in the sense that he had overcome temptation and so gained a strong moral character. He was holy only in the sense that he was free from sin and sinful influence. Sinless innocence is a much better term than perfect holiness to describe Athanasius' view of man's original state.⁵²

Athanasius, as has already been indicated, accepted the story of Adam's temptation and fall as found in Genesis.⁵³ Adam, in spite of his special endowments, fell, sinned, turned from God, the source of his life, to evil which was death.

Whence came this sin into the world?⁵⁴ Athanasius sets his own theory in opposition to the Christian heresies, Gnosticism and Manichaeism, as well as against the heathen philosophers, i.e. in opposition to all systems which, (1) make God the Author of good and evil alike, or (2) contend for an

⁵¹ C. Arianos, II, 68, cf. also De Inc., 44.

⁵² Cf. Voigt: op. cit., p. 111.

⁵³ It has been alleged that Athanasius' acceptance of the Genesis story was due solely to his veneration of the Scriptures, and not because it had any proper place in his system. It did not fit as neatly into his system as it does into some. But all, to the writer's mind, that is valuable in that story had a very real place in Athanasius' system.

⁵⁴ Cf. Pell: op. cit., pp. 27-42.

eternal principle of evil, either personal, as a devil, or impersonal, as formlessness or pure matter.

The first principle to be affirmed in this regard is that God was not the Author of evil. Athanasius treated as an absolute absurdity the idea that God could create evil. God out of His goodness has created all things, but not evil. He is God because He is the Good one, the fountain of all Goodness. Thus He could not have created evil and still be God, for evil cannot proceed from good, and the good remains good. The very fact that God is still God, is sure proof⁵⁵ that He is not the Author of evil.

It is equally impossible to believe in a personal, eternal principle of evil. For this would mean that there would have been from all eternity two gods, one good, the other evil, but both weak in that they were unable to rid themselves of the other, their natural enemy. A weak god is as unthinkable to our teacher as a wicked god. Both⁵⁶ reason and Scripture are opposed to such a folly.

It is denied also that matter is the source of evil. The fallacy of this theory is at once apparent when it is remembered that neither the material world nor matter itself is eternal. Since it was once created out of nothing it could not be the original source of evil. This view is untenable as long as the creation of all things ex nihilo⁵⁷ is granted.

⁵⁵ C. Gentes, 4, 6; De Inc., 3.

⁵⁶ C. Gentes, 6, 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6, 7, 27, 28, 35, De Inc., 2, 3.

Almost by the process of elimination, we arrive at the conclusion that evil has been introduced into this world by a creature endowed with free will. Athanasius recognized, as all Christian theologians have done, that the possibility⁵⁸ of evil lay in the freedom of choice of the human will. It can be placed nowhere else in a system of Christian theism. But even so, this discovery of the seat of evil in the free will of man does not solve all the problems connected with this difficult question. Athanasius does not go deeply into the problem. But there are ideas which he held that would have involved him in difficulty had they been pressed at this point. For one thing, he seems to have inferred, without ever plainly saying it, that man was naturally and congenitally defective; that his creatureliness was a metaphysical defect. Further Adam's grace was from without. Sin, he⁵⁹ seems to say, was all that we could expect of such a creature. Also, if a more effective grace was given at redemption than at creation, does that not imply that the first grace was insufficient to sustain our first parents? But Athanasius, as if in answer to our question, says that we are not to ask how God could or might have made man, for we may be certain⁶⁰ that He made man in the best possible way. We are certain that Athanasius would also say that if any inference would make God the Author of sin, then that is sufficient evidence that that inference is wrong.

⁵⁸ Cf. Pell: op. cit., p. 39.

⁵⁹ Cf. Voigt: op. cit., 155f, sees in Adam's changeableness one of the causes of his fall; C. Ar., I, 51.

⁶⁰ Cf. C. Ar., II, 68.

In addition to the weakness of man's own free will in choosing evil, there was according to our teacher, another agency active in causing man's fall. This second agency was the devil and the whole supernatural kingdom of evil. Long before man fell from his home in the garden, there had been another fall - many angels left off serving God, their Maker, had sinned, and so fell from heaven. After their fall under the leadership of Satan, the archfiend, they entered into a conscious and bitter struggle against God, ceaselessly attempting to thwart His righteous purposes. So the devil, moved by envy of man and hatred of God, attempted to seduce man, urged him to disobey God, planted sinful desires in his heart, that from these wicked lusts might come the sinful act, - the transgression of the divine command, Satan was successful, for man, "having rejected things eternal and by the counsel of the devil, turned to things of corruption..."⁶¹

⁶² Voigt understood Athanasius to teach that Adam's weakness which made him capable of sinning was only a secondary cause of his fall. The primary, the real cause was this enmity of the devil toward God, and his envy of man which caused him to work unremittingly to destroy man and so defeat God. Attention is called to the fact that Athanasius was so firmly convinced that the evil in the world was essentially the work of Satan and the powers of darkness, that

61 De Inc., 5, et passim.

62 Voigt: op. cit., p. 113 f.

he had no hesitation in saying that Christ appeared to destroy the work of the Evil One. Consequently, Voigt maintains the larger share of the guilt belongs to the devil.⁶³ But regardless of whether man deserves the larger or smaller share of the guilt, regardless of any extenuating circumstance of congenital weakness, or of 'unfair' activity of the fallen angels, man is said, consciously and of his own free will (ἐκούσιως), to have violated the command of God and so is guilty in his own right.

The results of the Fall, as Athanasius has depicted them for us, were two fold. First, the divine law which God had ordained had been violated. God had warned man that, if he transgressed, he would be punished by death. "Dying, thou shalt surely die". When man sinned God had no choice but to judge man according as He had promised, else God's laws would seem but idle threats, and His veracity might be called in question. Therefore God did judge Adam and passed⁶⁴ upon him the foreordained sentence. And from that time forth, even from Adam to Christ, death reigned as king over⁶⁵ all men, "having gained a legal hold over us, and it was impossible to evade the law since it had been laid down by

⁶³ Ibid., 114. Pell: op.cit., p. 39 takes a contrary view regarding the will of man as "die Verschuldende Ursache des Bösen." The devil is called "the inventor of evil" in the Festal Epistles, but little importance can be attached to such phrases. The judgment of the writer is that Athanasius never decided in his own mind whether Adam or Satan was the more guilty. They were both guilty enough.

⁶⁴ De Inc., 4 - "Man received the condemnation of death with which they had been threatened."

⁶⁵ Ibid., 5.

God because of the transgression, and the result was in truth at once monstrous and unseemly.⁶⁶ This sentence of death⁶⁷ was one result of the Fall, or rather the result of the entrance of sin into the race, couched in legal, forensic terms.

The second result of the Fall, or the same result expressed in different terms, was the complete destruction of man, or, at least, of all that was good in him. The signs of man's deterioration were many. One of the most significant was that the knowledge of God almost disappeared from the race. From Adam onward, as man sank deeper and deeper into the pit which he had dugged for himself, the light of truth, the knowledge of the one true God, became fainter and fainter, until, at last, only the merest glimmer of candle-light remained, where once the light of the sun had shone with all its brilliance. The language employed to describe the descent of man into the pit of gross darkness is very reminiscent of St. Paul. Men, we are told, when they no longer worshipped their Creator, began to worship the creature instead.⁶⁸ At first they adored the nobler orders of creation, the sun and stars, but as they sank lower and lower they stooped to honour sticks and stones, lifeless things, the dust of the earth, and the worm thereof. And as if that

⁶⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁷ Voigt: op. cit., p. 115 says that the judgment was death ($\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$) to the soul, and corruption ($\phi\theta\omicron\rho\acute{\alpha}$) to the body, but this seems to be an unnecessary refinement.

⁶⁸ Cf. C. Gentes, 8, 9, De Inc., 11-14 etc.

was not low enough, their depraved imaginations invented for themselves beasts of horrible and unnatural forms, "dog-headed, snake-headed and ass-headed gods", phantasmagoria of a diseased mind, and worshipped them. But others, "straining impiety to the utmost, have deified. . .their own wickedness, namely, pleasure and lust and worshipped them" as gods. The more they steeped themselves in idolatry and the worship of demons, the more ignorant of the true God they became, the more blinded to His continual revelation of Himself. Yet without the life-giving knowledge of God, their condition was utterly hopeless.

As has already been suggested, man's gradual loss of the knowledge and consciousness of God and things divine was accompanied by a deterioration of his moral character. The two processes were regarded as being closely related, each being both the cause and the effect of the other. This darkening of the soul, as was the case with the darkening of the mind, was viewed as a gradual but ever

69 C. Gentes, 9.

70 De Inc., 11.

71 Cf. Atzberger: Die Logoslehre des hl. Athanasius p. 156 - "Sinful man gradually lost, according to Athanasius, what was supernatural in his prerogatives and retained only what was natural. Supernatural were moral goodness on the one hand, correct conscience and due use of rationality and immortality on the other, while rationality and immortality, per se, were natural."

increasing process. Let Athanasius describe the situation in his own words:

"For even in their misdeeds men had not stopped short at any set limits; but gradually pressing forward, have passed on beyond all measure: having, to begin with, been inventors of wickedness and called down upon themselves death and corruption; while later on, having turned aside to wrong and exceeding all lawlessness, and stopping at no one evil but devising all manner of new evils in succession, they have become insatiable in sinning. For there were adulteries everywhere and thefts, and the whole earth was full of murders and plundering. And as to corruption and wrong, no heed was paid to law, but all crimes being practiced everywhere, both individually and jointly. Cities were at war with cities, and nations were rising up against nations; and the whole earth was rent with evil commotions and battles, each man vying with his fellow in lawless deeds".

The cumulative effect of sin and evil, growing daily more prevalent and more deadly, was devastating both the race and the individual.

Another result of the Fall, accompanying the two fold degeneration of morals and intellect, was the partial loss of the presence of God in man. This is sometimes thought

72 Harnack: op. cit., III, 273 f., while admitting that it was a gradual enfeeblement rather than a loss once for all, seems to feel that it was too gradual. For he remarks rather reproachfully that Athanasius did not teach (with unimportant exceptions) that Adam's fall and its consequence formed any tremendous cleavage between the original state and that following the transgression. Nor did he regard the condition "before and after the Fall as a contrast". The very fact of the sentence of death is enough to make a considerable contrast. But there was a difference, morally and intellectually which became increasingly great. The size of the cleavage is determined by the height of the pedestal upon which Adam is placed. If he is made a demi-god, then the cleavage naturally is great. But Athanasius did not set him on a high pedestal but viewed him as an innocent man, consequently the break was not so enormous. But after sin had entered through Adam, man could not have been more hopeless or helpless were the cleavage a thousand times greater. The end result is the same.

of in an impersonal, abstract way, as the defacing the likeness of the Logos in man, and so becoming *αλογικως*. Man was created an image of the Image of God; sin, and the loss of the knowledge of God, are things which change man, make him unlike his created state, hence mar the image of God in him. But at other times this change in man due to sin was expressed in personal terms. Under this conception, the Logos is viewed as dwelling personally in man so long as the spirit of man is habitable. This indwelling of the Logos, this communion with God, was man's real source of life. When man left the path of godliness this union was no longer possible, so that Logos withdrew and man was left helpless before corruption and death.⁷³

The final result of man's moral decay, his intellectual degeneration, his last spiritual contact with the Logos was in one word - death. Death ruled supreme even all mankind from Adam to Christ; and by death, Athanasius never meant merely physical dissolution, although that was an important consideration to him, as to all Greeks. A result which these forces were also accomplishing - man's spiritual death - was, in his eyes, far more disastrous. Thus the

73 Cf., e.g. *De Inc.*, 5. Man was "by nature corruptible, but destined by the grace following from the partaking from the Logos to have escaped their natural state, and they remained good. For because of the Logos dwelling in them their natural corruption did not come near them ..." And since man became corrupt; we infer the departure of the Logos. But, as stated before, man did not become absolutely

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 fall resulted in man's complete and utter ruin. Man was
 in such a state that it would have been far better if he
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 had not been born.

74 More properly: the forces set in motion by Adam's fall resulted in ... The Athanasian conception was not that all the consequences of sin were accomplished immediately following the transgression in the garden of Eden, but rather that the first sin set in motion forces whose evil effect has been cumulative. We think that it would be fair to say that the effects of Adam's fall, while constant in some respects, vary with the individual, and may not be computed until the person has lived.

75 Hoss: op. cit., p. 66 sees only two results of the Fall: The loss of (1) the immortality of the body, and (2) the knowledge of God. That this is an understatement of Athanasius' position will be clear, it is hoped, from the foregoing exposition.

NOTE ON HARNACK'S CRITICISM OF THE
ATHANASIAN CONCEPT OF SIN.

Harnack (op.cit., III, 274) has charged Athanasius with teaching that "that which, above all, burdened humanity, however, was not sin but the sentence of death pronounced by God upon the sinner". To this effect he cites Atzberger (op. cit., p. 159 f.) who, he says, is perfectly correct "when expressing himself with due caution...finds that Athanasius' does not seem to treat the punishment of sin - better sin, 'with sufficient gravity'."

Atzberger and Harnack seem to be talking about two different things. To answer the former, it is difficult to conceive of a more severe punishment than the sentence of death which Athanasius says is passed upon man for his sin. But even that did not exhaust man's punishment for sin. The real punishment of sin is sin.

In reply to Professor Harnack, it must be admitted that Athanasius did regard the sentence of death as an insupportable burden, which must first be removed if man is to be saved. But it must be remembered that Athanasius was not primarily a speculative theologian, but an active churchman of a deep personal religious life; and it is not likely that he was, or ever could have been, satisfied with the shallow formalism of a view of sin which was exhausted by a legal sentence. But this is conjecture. There are, however, certain facts which Professor Harnack seems to have overlooked. One is that Athanasius plainly and expressly states (C. Ar., II, 68.) that even if the sentence were revoked, man's condition would be just as hopeless as before. So also De Inc., 7 where he says - not in so many words, but plainly enough - that the important thing is not the curse but the effects of sin. It is sin itself that is destroying the lives of men.

If Athanasius speaks little of sin it is because the devastating effects of sin are uppermost in his mind. One of the most important doctrines in the Athanasian system is the utter ruin that sin has wrought in the lives of men - all men. Did Athanasius regard sin lightly? He saw in it that force which has deprived man of his most precious possessions, robbed him of his high destiny, thwarted hopelessly his upward struggles, effected his eternal destruction. - But perhaps such a view still lacks "sufficient gravity"?

CHAPTER III.

THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE REDEMPTION.

"Our redemption from sin and death would have been impossible had not God Himself vouchsafed to be made man. We should have remained forever in the region of the dead. We could never have ascended into heaven; we should have lain in Hades". - Contra Arianos, I, 43.

The situation, as outlined in the last chapter, was tragic, as far as man was concerned. Man seemed to have had every chance to succeed, to live his life in the contemplation of the Divine, to obey the laws of God, thus to make his by nature what was his by grace, and so to live forever as gods. But for some mysterious reason, best known to himself and to the powers of darkness, man forsook God, his Creator, chose evil instead of good, and so fell from his high estate. He invented for himself wickedness and multiplied evil deeds until there could be only one result - the destruction about which he had busied himself came upon him, indeed, upon the whole race. Death reigned over all men. Some were not as evil as others, some held themselves above the abysmal depths into which the majority had sunk. But the result was the same in every case, none were free from the fatal taint of corruption, not one escaped the universal dominion of death.

The worst feature of the situation was, however, man's utter helplessness. It did not matter how great, or how

sincere, his dissatisfaction with his present state might be, mere dissatisfaction, mere hatred of his condition was not enough to alter his estate. Man was powerless to rid himself of this burden, which like "the old man of the sea" could not be cast off and which just as inevitably rode its victims to destruction.

Man's absolute inability to help himself becomes more evident as we examine his position. In the first place, there was an insurmountable legal obstacle in the way of his recovery. The law which was so binding upon the first man was still binding upon all of his descendants. Further, its demands were no whit less severe or exacting than they had been upon Adam himself. Even though man should be given another opportunity to obey the law, there would be small likelihood that that man would better his position. If man, as represented in the person of Adam, had been unable to live his life in harmony with the law of God, it would be hopeless and futile to expect that, were the experiment repeated, and each man given a new garden of Eden, the result would be otherwise than it was with Adam. For Adam, if he had not become strong through righteous living, at least, had not been weakened by an age-long inheritance of sin. He had been endowed with special graces by his Creator; yet he had failed most signally. What, then, could be expected of his sons and daughters who had been shorn of his special gifts, their wills weakened by countless aberrations from

the path of rectitude, their minds darkened and unaccustomed to contemplate things holy and divine, borne down as well by an insufferable burden of sin? Would they not love darkness better than light? For were their deeds not evil?

But this is only a hypothetical obstacle. It matters little that mankind is less able to give full obedience to the law's demands than was Adam since they themselves are not called upon to undergo individual tests. For according to the actual facts, this test was undergone once and for all by Adam, who acted for all his descendants. He disobeyed; and God, according as He had spoken, pronounced the dread sentence of death upon Adam, though not upon Adam only, for the sentence included all his posterity as well. The law had been broken, the sentence passed and none might escape therefrom. "For death, as I said above, gained from that time forth a legal hold against us, and it was impossible to evade the law, since it had been laid down by God because of the transgression."^{1,2}

1 De Inc., 6.2, cf. C. Ar., II, 61 "All men were lost in Adam's transgression".

2 Harnack: op.cit., III, 274, 275 criticizes Athanasius for the lack of any well defined doctrine of original sin. "The empirical view of man which saw within the race very different grades of moral and intellectual position.....compelled him (Athanasius) to secure somehow a historical beginning for the present condition....But the relations of the present to that beginning are really exhausted in the continuance of the once pronounced sentence of death". It is quite true that Athanasius does not have a carefully thought-out doctrine of original sin. The doctrine had not been formulated at this time nor had it come up for much discussion. It would be surprising to find Athanasius enunciating such a doctrine. Harnack's argument is one from silence rather than from positive evidence. Hence if Athanasius neglects to point out any causal connection between Adam's sin and our own, it does not mean that he denied the existence of such. While he doubtless would have rejected the idea of physical transmission, we believe that he did hold to the spreading of sin within the race, due to its solidarity.

Not only was man unable to obey the law of God in his own right, or to free himself from the sentence of death, there was, also, no substitute which he might offer to God instead of obedience and righteous living. In this connection Athanasius raised the question of the efficacy of repentence.³ This is not a personal question for it is evident that it was definitely settled in his own mind. But apparently some must have been asking why a hearty and sincere repentence was not enough. Since it was by sin that man incurred the sentence of death, why should not repentence for those sins be sufficient to remove the curse and make man as he was before he sinned and ready to make a new start? If sin brought death, why should not repentence for that sin restore to life? Why was it not possible that, "just as they came into corruption by sin, they might be restored to immortality by repentence"³?

Athanasius felt that had it been the ideal method of restoring sinful humanity, we may be sure that God would have chosen it, and His rejection of it should be sufficient for us.⁴ Athanasius rejected it as the solution of man's difficulty for reasons consistent with his presuppositions.

The first and most obvious reason why repentence is ineffectual as a method of restoring immortality is that it fails to "protect the consistency of God's character ($\tau\acute{o}\ \pi\rho\acute{o}s\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\nu\ \epsilon\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\nu$) for He would still remain untrue if death did not

³ De Inc., 7.

⁴ Cf. C. Ar., II, 68.

hold the mastery over men.⁵ From the purely legal and formal side of the question, it would be impossible for God to revoke the sentence of death once passed upon men, on the ground that repentance justified it, or was an extenuating circumstance for He had not said from the beginning that man would die if he transgressed the law, provided he did not repent. God's word had been simply that if man disobeyed, he must surely die. So now nothing can protect God's veracity except the fulfilling of the law's demands, - and that is man's death. That the Father of Truth should prove a liar even to save man is so unthinkable as not to be entertained for a moment.⁶ The law must be enforced; man must die; God's veracity must be upheld.

Thus far Athanasius has been thoroughly consistent and followed out the logical implications of his premises. But having done so, he seems a little dissatisfied with his syllogism, or rather with his deductions therefrom. Professor Carnegie Simpson once said that one of the chief reasons why theology has lost both its authority and its audience was that it had failed to recognize the limitations of logic.⁷ Theologians have quite frequently been much more dogmatic than systematic. They have gone on in a cold bloodless sort of way, drawing, without apparent hesitation, infinite conclusions from finite premises. Athanasius seldom falls

⁵ De Inc., 7.

⁶ Ibid., 7. "For it would be monstrous that God should appear a liar for our benefit and preservation".

⁷ Chalmers' Lectures, 1933.

into such an error. Having carried his logic to its natural conclusion, he would draw back a little from his own stern pronouncement. "If indeed", he says, "it had only been a trespass and not a subsequent corruption, repentance would have been well"⁸. The theoretical necessity of protecting God's truthfulness comes into conflict with the vision of man's terrible need; the infinite mercy of a loving Father can not be forgotten, even in the presence of the demand to protect the veracity of the God of Truth. While it can not be said that this latter was ever for Athanasius an unimportant consideration, it was never a very cogent argument here. Man's need, the more real perhaps because it was the more daily apparent, was victorious. Having put forward one inadequacy of repentance, only to admit that if it were the only one, it would be pressed into the background before a more urgent need, he presents the second inadequacy.

Repentance fails because it does not "recall men from what is according to their nature, but only makes them cease from their sins"⁹. This, we feel, is Athanasius' real reason. Repentance does not and can not remove from man's soul the corruption caused by sin, which is destroying the race. This, the real deficiency of repentance, is reiterated and amplified by further statements: "But when once temptation gained a start men came under the power of corruption, which was

their nature, and were bereft of the grace which was theirs¹⁰ in virtue of their being made after God's image". Repentance fails at a point where a remedy is most needed. If man were made after the Pelagian mould, and life and character were only a disjointed series of acts and moods, each uninfluenced by the other, then repentance would doubtless solve the problem. Some way could, perhaps, be found to protect God's truthfulness. But as Athanasius realized,¹¹ man is not made that way. The effects of man's sin are not confined to God's laws. Man himself is affected. God would doubtless have it in His heart to forgive men their transgressions of His law. But should man be forgiven, his estate would be none the less hopeless. For these sins, quite apart from any way in which they may have affected the legal relationship between God and man, have brought upon the sinner death and corruption. So great is their universal mastery over man that he is vanishing, passing out of existence. Only that which is able to overcome and vanquish these two great enemies of mankind is sufficient to save the race. The failure of repentance is thus seen to be its ineffectiveness, not before some legal barrier which sin has raised between God and man, but in the face of the great gulf by which sin has cut off man from God, the Source

¹⁰ De Inc., 7.

¹¹ Voigt: op. cit., pp. 116-118 etc., has gone rather carefully into the problem, and decides that Athanasius is not a Pelagian. Some of Athanasius' language is certainly Pelagian but it was inherited from earlier writers. Besides, the question had never been thoroughly raised so that a careful use of language might be expected. Finally, Athanasius' psychology is a complete denial of Pelagianism.

of his life. Repentance alone was not able to span that chasm; it would only prevent man from digging it any deeper. In a word, repentance failed because it was powerless to revivify corrupt and decadent human nature.

In dealing with the subject of repentance, Athanasius exhibits a deep spiritual insight and true religious feeling. In his earlier chapters, death and corruption are regarded in a somewhat legal light. They enter into the world as the result of man's breaking of the law which God had ordained. They constitute the punishment imposed upon everyone who transgresses this law. As a legal penalty, it partakes of the nature of all legal enactments in that it is capable of being imposed or revoked at the will of the judge. But by this time he has departed from this view, if indeed he ever seriously held it, and returns to a more characteristic position. The legal aspect of the question is mentioned only to be brushed aside. Sin and evil are viewed as that which is contrary to the nature of God, and hence in opposition to the nature and constitution of the universe itself. Evil is the great destructive force of the cosmos as God is the creative. Sin in working death to man was no arbitrary enactment. It so happened because the universe is so constituted. He who embraces evil must expect to be destroyed: God Himself can not make it otherwise. So it is that man can not be saved by merely commuting or rescinding a legal

sentence of death against him. The seed of death have already been sown within him; he must be raised from the
 12, 13
 dead.

Athanasius is very sure that man is unable to save himself. In fact he is quite Augustinian when he comes to appraise man's ability to help himself. His premises are not the same as those of the Bishop of Hippo; his language also is different; but their conclusions are identical - man can not save himself by any effort of his own. He is utterly helpless.

While Athanasius escapes for the most part the pessimism which cast a shadow over the Augustinian doctrine of man, he is none the less sure of man's absolute inability to achieve his own salvation. It was a view which grew on him. Of course there are indications that this was his view in the early De Incarnatione, e.g. the treatment of repentance. But in the more mature Orations against the Arians
 14
 this view is much more clearly expressed. In one place,

12 Dr. Moberly: Atonement and Personality p. 350, shows his appreciation of the Athanasian position by saying that "we might possibly have preferred a denial of the possibility of restorative penitence, under the condition of fallenness, to a denial of its adequacy - if only it had been possible; but in any case, the passage while formally emphasizing the necessity of God's consistency, points really to an inherent, as opposed to an arbitrary, impossibility of any off-hand mode of human restoration".

13 Dorner: op. cit., II, 251, quite misses the point when he says: "had sin been the sole point in question, and not also punishment, repentance would have sufficed". The difficulty is not punishment but the spoiled capacities of human nature.

14 II, 69.

while contending that Christ could not be a creature because he saved man, he states as a self-evident fact that "a creature does not possess the power to join itself or other creatures to God, and no created being can save itself, much less can it be the author of another creature's¹⁵ salvation".

16

"What, then, was God to do?"

In answer to this question, Athanasius arrived at a tremendous conclusion - God must save. In one way he arrived at it by a process of elimination. Man is wholly unable as a race to escape the death which has come upon it as a result of its sin. If the race is to be saved from extinction, that salvation must come from some power outside itself. Further, there is no power other than God which is capable of so great a salvation. The conclusion thus is: God must save - if man is to be saved at all.

Athanasius, however, reached this great truth that God must save by a different route. Some of his reasons are trivial but some are worthy of the moral vision of the Hebrew prophets. One of the rather trivial ones was that

¹⁵ Cf. II, 70, where man is said to be unable to help himself, also II, 73, Ad Adelph., 8 etc.

¹⁶ De Inc., 7 etc. Of course, from God's point of view there never was any question as to what to do. Perfect knowledge could never be faced with a dilemma however much it may appear so from the human, finite standpoint. Nevertheless, Athanasius presents the situation much as if God were really faced by a dilemma, and lists the possible courses of action which would, conceivably be open to God. - So Thomasius: Christi, Person und Werk, in loco, "Da tritt ein schweriges Dilemma ein".

God could not allow man to perish, either through neglect, or through the envy of the devil, because that would make Him appear weak and ineffectual. It would have been better if God had not created man at all, than once having created him, to allow him to perish. ¹⁷ "For from neglect weakness, and not goodness, would be detected in God, if He were to overlook the ruin of His own work when once He had made it, more so than if He had not made man from the beginning. For if He had not made them it would be impossible to impute weakness; but once made and created into being, it were monstrous for His works to perish, and especially under the eye of Him who made them".

Not only would man's continued and unimpeded descent into destruction have the appearance of weakness on God's part, it would be an event so unfitting that it could have no rightful place within the sovereignty of the Divine King. For man bore the image of the Logos; he was λογικός a partaker of the Λόγος, and as such was not meant for corruption. Hence, any such fate was so grossly unfitting that the Almighty in His righteous government of the cosmos must ¹⁸ prevent it.

The reason why God must save is not, finally, any necessity to show that He is not weak and unable to preserve the creature whom He has created rational and a partaker

¹⁷ De Inc., 6.
¹⁸ Ibid., 6.

of the Logos. Man's redemption was no "face-saving" act on the part of God to prove that his will is mightier to save than the deceit of the devil and the demons is to destroy. It is rather an inner necessity arising out of the very nature of God Himself. God is good, therefore He must save His people. If He were other than He is, He might have washed His hands of man altogether. He had done far more than justice required, He had created man in His own image, and given him a law and a place that he might more easily serve His Maker with steadfastness. Nevertheless he had chosen to yield to the devil rather than to obey God. But even then God had not deserted His creature. The Law had been sent by Moses, the prophets spoke the will of God to the people and still they loved darkness rather than the light. Certainly man had no further claim to leniency, indulgence or help. According to strict justice man, at this juncture, should have been consigned to the outer darknesses of his own soul, to the hell which he had made within his own spirit. But God is good, long suffering, and His mercy lasts, apparently, forever. He continued to strive with the spirit of man. Because He was what He was, He could not let man go to his well-deserved fate. God must save. "It was impossible, therefore, to leave man to be carried off by corruption, because it would be unfitting and unworthy of God's goodness".¹⁹ Or again, in the same vein,

19 Ibid., 6

"it were unworthy of the goodness of God that creatures made by Him should utterly waste away through the deceit wrought upon man by the devil".²⁰ Professor Bethune-Baker in speaking of the period in general has well spoken of Athanasius in particular when he said that "it is God's unchanging love for mankind that prompts the Atonement itself, is the cause of it, and ultimately determines the method by which it is effected".²¹

"What, then, was God to do?" We have already seen that He must save man; the question now is how. He might have continued, as He had done in the past, to reveal Himself through

²⁰ Ibid., 6

²¹ Bethune-Baker: An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, p. 351,2. Scott: Athanasius on the Atonement, has pointed out the depth and value of the conception of God here employed and which Athanasius expresses under the figure of τὸ πρὸς Θεὸν εὐλόγον as the moral reasonableness of God (cf. De Inc., 7. 1,5). It is a view, says Scott, which avoids certain difficulties of later theology. "This doctrine of the necessary truth of God to Himself affords a clearer view of the difficulties inherent in forgiveness than that which is supplied by the isolation of the particular attribute of justice, for it does not introduce into the divine nature a conflict of contending and inconsistent attributes. Indeed it implies that such a conflict is impossible since it reduces all particular attributes to the single quality of inherent reasonableness of which both justice and mercy are partial aspects". (p.16) Bethune-Baker, in calling attention to the harmony of the Athanasian conception with Augustinian thought, agrees in principle with Scott. "The necessity for the Redemption, he (Athanasius) finds in the goodness of God...But this conception of 'goodness' includes the consistency, the honour of God, which makes it requisite that His decrees should be maintained and put in force, and thus the principle of justice is recognized under the wider concept" (op.cit., 345). When Athanasius realized that God, because He is what He is must save man apart from any claim to salvation which man might or might not have, he had understood one of the deepest and most important truths of the Christian revelation. Such a true grasp of the nature of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has never failed to prove a blessing to every age which has not lost sight of it.

the Law and the prophets. But that would doubtless prove no more successful in the future than it had done in the past.

A second possibility suggests itself. God might revoke the sentence of death which had been passed upon man as a result of his transgression.²² Much the same reply is made to this suggestion as was made in the case of repentance. At first it is judged to be inadequate because it would endanger the truthfulness of God. For if He should allow man to go free, to escape the penalty which had been imposed, and which God had warned man would inevitably follow his transgression, then God would appear to be a liar. "For God would not be true if having said that man should die, man did not die".²³ In this early chapter of the De Incarnatione this threat to God's veracity is seen as a barrier too great to be overcome. No such immoral course may be pursued; some other method must be found.

This same problem is attacked again in the De Incarnatione 44. Here some are supposed to argue that God should "save and correct mankind...by a mere fiat". That was all that was necessary in order to make man. Why is it not enough to save him? Redemption and creation, replied Athanasius, are quite different. Mere fiat was sufficient to create, but not to heal. The latter requires the Physician and Saviour. Since death is woven into the texture of the body, the Life must also be woven into the warp and woof of mankind,

if the great enemy is to be defeated and eradicated. The answer here is the same as in the earlier chapter but the reason is different.

Again in the Discourses against the Arians, Athanasius raises, in order to refute, this same question, why God did not pardon man just as He had inflicted the punishment upon him - by pronouncing the words. But here he does not even suggest that it is necessary for man to die so that God's veracity will be preserved. He assumes that all things are possible to God, and that He could have removed the curse in this manner, if He had so willed. Grant, then, "that God could by His own immediate voice have uttered the declaration²⁴ of pardon to mankind even as He had uttered the curse". But that would only display God's omnipotence and do man no good at all. For altogether apart from any moral obstacles to indiscriminate pardon which there may be in the nature of God Himself, the plan is not feasible from man's standpoint. It breaks down in the same way, at the same point, as did man's effort to work out his own salvation through repentance. However satisfactory or unsatisfactory it may be from the Divine point of view, it is most inadequate from the point of view of man's needs. Such a plan would remove only the legal barrier to man's recovery and leave him as corrupt and impotent as before. By this method the regeneration must come ~~XXXX~~ from man alone, but he is totally incapable of

lifting himself by his own bootstraps. Unless there is a regenerative power from without, man is utterly helpless. The divine fiat which only pardons and does not lift man out of his sins has little saving worth. All that a fiat can do, in the opinion of Athanasius, is to make man as he was before the fall. His grace would be from without; and, even as Adam, he would have sinned again. Thus God's pardoning grace would be needed a second time, and man would have gone on in-²⁵ definitely ever sinning, ever requiring God's pardon.

Athanasius has shown that man has no health in himself, that he could do nothing to halt his own mad progress toward destruction, and, further, that no legal or external measures, such as a mere verbal pardon, or lifting of the curse, could avail to save him. But he was firmly convinced that God, because He is what He is, must save. He could no more allow His creatures to perish than a great king could permit the²⁶ widespread defection of his subjects. It is true also that only God could save. The disease was too virulent for lesser remedies. From these premises Athanasius was drawn to the conclusion that the incarnation of the Logos of God was not

²⁵ Origen also treats this subject. He, of course, rejects pardon by fiat as a legitimate and practicable method of restoring man and raising him from his fallen condition. But his reason for doing so forms an interesting contrast with that of Athanasius. Origen rejects such a method on the grounds that it would endanger or nullify man's free will. Athanasius, as we have seen, rejects it on the ground of its moral deficiency, its incapacity to lift man above his sin. Origen rejects it on philosophical grounds, Athanasius on ethical. Cf. C. Cels., IV, 1-11, esp. IV, 3.

²⁶ De Inc., 13.

only the most fitting, but also the only possible means of achieving man's salvation. Athanasius was never weary of adducing reasons why the incarnate Logos alone may and can save the race of men. Athanasius listed man's infirmities and showed in each case that only a divine restorative would suffice. That man's finite diseases should have required an infinite remedy did not seem peculiar to our teacher. For, although man was a creature, he was meant to be divine. Consequently, nothing less than the Deity Himself could lift man up to his high destiny.

The Incarnate Logos is said to be the only possible Saviour because He alone can save men and guard the consistency of God's character.²⁷ The argument is already familiar. God, because He has spoken and cannot lie, must see that man suffers the proper penalty. Yet because He is good, He must see that man escapes that very penalty. Only the Logos because of His peculiar relationship both to man and to the Father is able to fulfill the law and, at the same time, save man from the death which the law demands. But important as this consideration is, it did not, as we have already seen, occupy first place in his thoughts. Were this the sole task of the Redeemer there would have been no need for the Incarnation, for God in His wisdom could have made some provision for that. What gave to the Logos, in the eyes of Athanasius,

27 Ibid., 7.

His supreme fitness as Redeemer, was His unique capacity to remedy the ills of man.

The fitness of the incarnate Logos to save, and the necessity of a divine Redeemer are seen in the fact that He forgave men their debt, their sins and punishment. Had he been only a creature He could not have so reversed the sentence of God and forgiven men their sins. "For this is the special prerogative of God Himself, 'for who is a God like unto thee²⁸ that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by transgression', " If He had not been truly Logos and truly God "He could not forgive us that debt which was due to the Father and to Him alone; nor could he free us from that punishment to which the Father had consigned us....For what creature would dare²⁹ pardon those upon whom God Himself had passed judgment?" As a further example of Athanasius' deep religious feeling, he observes that it was most fitting that the judgment of death, which the Father was compelled to pronounce upon His creatures, should be repealed by "the very Word and Son of God."³⁰

It was very fitting that He who had formed man out of nothing in the beginning by the Word of His power should be the Agent of his re-creation ($\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\kappa\tau\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$).³¹ In fact He alone who created us at first, is now able to fashion us afresh. "...He (the Logos), therefore, naturally was alone both able to recreate everything, and worthy to suffer on

²⁸ C. Ar., II, 67.

^{29, 30} Ibid., II, 67.

³¹ Omnia Mihi, 2.

behalf of all, and to be Ambassador for all with the Father".³²

To all those who, like Athanasius, felt that there is an intimate connection between Creation and Redemption, the fact that the Logos was our Creator makes Him the logical Re-creator.. The process is one, and He who began it is best able to carry it to its completion.

In a similar vein, Athanasius calls attention to the fact that man was created in the image of God. But that image has been so defaced by sin that it is scarcely recognizable. Any redemption of man must include the restoration of that image. "But how could this have been done except by the coming of the very Image of God Himself, our Saviour Jesus Christ?"³³ "For it could not have been done through men seeing that they are only made after the Image, nor through angels, for not even they are (God's) images."³⁴ Just as it is necessary for the original to be present in order to restore a defaced picture, so no one can restore that lost likeness but the Image of God Himself.³⁵

Athanasius was sufficiently Greek in outlook to set a high value upon the true knowledge of God, upon a right revelation concerning things divine. Man's intellectual fall,

³² De Inc., 7. Cf. ibid., 1. "It is well then...to speak first of the creation of the universe, of God, it's Artificer, in order that one may duly perceive that its re-creation has been wrought by the Logos who originally made it." Cf. also ibid., 16, In Illud Omnia, 2 etc.

³³ De Inc., 13.

³⁴ Ibid., 13.

³⁵ Ibid., 14.

while not so serious as his moral-fall, was serious enough, and the one was bound up with the other. Consequently the restoration of the true knowledge of God which had been lost and which was so life-giving was an important feature in the work of the Redeemer. And here again the Logos alone was fitted for the task. He alone knows us, for He has made us. He alone knows God, for who can know the Father save the Son, and those to whom the Son wills to reveal Him? Certainly no creature could ever seek Him out, nor ever presume to speak with authority. Only God, the Word, as God, is able to reveal the Father to man.³⁶

A very vital part of the redemptive process necessary to save man was the re-establishment of the union of man with God. Man must be made a son again. This process of adoption, of union, requires no less a Being than the Son.³⁷ "Had the Son been a creature, He could not have ~~been~~ effected our union with God, and consequently man would have to remain mortal. A creature does not possess the power to join itself or other creatures to God ...therefore...God sent His Son".³⁸ This

³⁶ Ibid., 13,14,15. C. Ar., II, 22, III, 38 etc.

³⁷ "How could he, who is himself not a Son, make others sons...?" C. Ar., IV, 21.

³⁸ C. Ar., II, 69. "Had He (the Logos) been only one sort of creature at first, and was afterward made another, our case had been hopeless, and we must have remained as much excluded and at as great a distance from the mercy of God as ever. One created being could not presume to exalt another into a state of union with God. All created beings are equally dependent and helpless..." - C. Ar., II, 67. A comment by Harnack (op. cit., IV, 46) is quite in point here: "...the view that everything valuable is accomplished in the nature only, of which will and feeling are only an annex, was firmly established in the fourth century, and Athanasius made use of it. If Christ was not God by nature, then He could do nothing for man. An adoptionist Christ was an impotent Christ."

does not mean that we are to be made sons in the same sense that the Logos is Son. There is a vast difference between being a Son by nature and being a son by adoption. The Logos is the Son by virtue of His nature and essence, we may become sons by the power of Him who is the Son.³⁹ That this union and adoption was indispensable if man was to be saved was undisputed. That it is additional proof of the necessity of a divine redemption is evident.⁴⁰

Further, the necessity of a divine redemption and the fitness of the Logos for that task is seen by Athanasius in various other needs of fallen man. Man has lost that grace, imparted to him at his creation, which enabled him to keep back his natural enemies. Who can restore that grace but the Author of it? Who can send the Holy Spirit, for man needs to be anointed with the Spirit? The sending of the Spirit is, however, definitely an act of God.⁴¹ There are many divine virtues which man needs which can only be supplied by a divine Saviour. One of the most disastrous faults of the human character is changeableness. For as long as he remains thus he is always liable to fall again and so necessitate a repetition of the economy of salvation. But only the Deity is truly unchangeable, so only He can rectify this defect in man.⁴² So also man is dead; Death reigns over all; none can escape. Only the Life Himself is able to go

39 C. Ar., II, 59.

40 Cf. also ibid., II, 67-73.

41 Ibid., I, 47-50, 59, II, 18.

42 Ibid., I, 51, II, 65, 68, III, 25, 38.

down into the pit for us, and defeat this arch-enemy of mankind, and restore us to life.

As Pell⁴³ has pointed out, perhaps the deepest and most spiritual reason which Athanasius gives for insisting that the redemption of man should, and could only be undertaken by God Himself is summed up in these words: "The Word Himself offered His own body on our behalf that our faith and hope might not be in man, but that we might have our faith in God...."⁴⁴

Enough has already been said to show man's utter inability to help himself in any way whatsoever. Also it has been remarked that no legal or arbitrary mode of restoration can effectually redeem man. Salvation is needed; but more than that, nothing less than the Incarnation of the Logos of God will suffice.⁴⁵ But of this latter more will be said in the following chapter.

43 Pell: op. cit., 124.

44 Ad Max., 3. This thought is expressed in substantially the same form in several other places.

45 Cf. Ad Adelph., 8 and previous references.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSSIBILITY OF REDEMPTION:

THE PERSON OF THE REDEEMER.

"We could not have been redeemed from sin and the curse, unless the flesh and nature which the Word took had been truly ours, for we should have no interest by his assumption of any foreign nature. So also man could not have been united to the divine nature unless that Word, which was made flesh, had not been in essence and nature, the Word and Son of God. For that was the very purpose and end of our Lord's incarnation, that he should join what is man by nature to Him who is by nature God, so that man might enjoy His salvation without fear of its failing or decreasing."

Athanasius is usually best known, if not for a creed which bears his name, and with which he apparently had no other connection, then for the part which he played in the Trinitarian controversy of the fourth century. And he did spend most of his long and arduous life fighting for the beliefs of one faction in that controversy. With the exception of his youthful, systematic treatise which was written before Arianism had come to the attention of the church, by far the larger portion of his numerous writings were devoted to the defence of his ideas and beliefs about the person of Christ, the God-man. Here was a man apparently possessed by one idea; so mastered was he by it that there was scarcely anything which he did or wrote which did not have a Christological colouring. As a result, he has been criticized

1 C. Ar., II, 70.

for thus devoting his entire life merely to theological controversy. Yet Athanasius, Greek though he was, was not such an one as to give his whole life, suffer persecution, calumny, exile just to prove that he was right about some philosophical speculation. A great leader, a great ruler - for he was practically king of Egypt - a man so capable of handling the practical side of an important archbishopric in an efficient fashion, is not likely to have been so devoted to pure speculation. On the contrary, Athanasius gave his whole life to the defence of what he felt to be the most valuable thing in the world - Christianity and the salvation offered by Christ.² It was not for some cold-blooded Trinitarian formula that he contended; he was fighting for the deity of Christ. Athanasius saw Arianism not merely as an unsound theological opinion about a specific dogma; it was the ultimate denial of the whole Faith. If Christ was not very God of very God,³ then he had nothing to offer, no remedy to apply to man's malady; His revelation was a deception, and Christianity a cruel trick. That is why Athanasius fought so fiercely to uphold the dogma of the council

2 Athanasius' interest, here as always, was not theological but soteriological. Christianity was viewed as a religion of redemption and everything was referred to it and made subservient to this central thought. To rob the Redeemer of the nature which enabled Him to be a Redeemer was to destroy the worth of the entire Faith. cf. Harnack: op. cit., III, 140 f.

3 Cf. Chapter III, note 38. Where Harnack is quoted as saying that under the Athanasian conception an Adoptionist Christ is an impotent Christ.

of Nicea. The Redemption in which he had put his trust, his faith, something which was more precious to him than life itself, was at stake. Defend it he must; and defend it he did.

The reference cited at the beginning of this chapter summarizes in brief compass what Athanasius has said in so many ways and in so many places. It is briefly this - the key to, and possibility of, man's redemption lay in the person of the Saviour. Had He who came to redeem man not been both truly God and truly man, He could not have saved man and redeemed the race. This is not to say that Redemption was accomplished at the time of the Incarnation or by the union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ,⁴ but rather that the essential characteristic of a Saviour, the sine qua non, was that He be at the same time both God and man. It is not surprising then that Athanasius vigorously defends the two propositions that Jesus Christ was God and that He was man.

CHRIST WAS GOD.

The proposition to which Athanasius devoted, as has been said, the greater portion of his time and thought need not occupy our attention so fully here. For it is not necessary for our purpose to prove, as Athanasius was forced to do, that Christ was really God, but only to show that our teacher so believed and his reasons for doing so.

4 This point will be amplified, and, it is hoped, substantiated in the succeeding chapters.

That Christ was, according to Athanasius, God in the same sense that the Father is God is evident once we examine the terms used to designate our Lord.

In the earlier works we find such expressions as ἴδιος λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ,⁵ καὶ αὐτὸς Θεός,⁶ αὐτοδύναμις ἰδία τοῦ πατρὸς,⁷ ἁπαράλλακτος εἰκὼν τοῦ πατρὸς.⁸ In the two ante-Nicene writings we find no trace of the later ὁμοούσιος. The idea, however, is the same. Controversy had not then made so accurate and technical a term necessary.

Loofs sees in the changed post-Nicene terminology the influence of the occident acquired during his exile in Treves. Whether the cause be that or merely the Arian controversy, his terminology is quite changed. Now the Son is an ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς,¹⁰ or an ἴδιον γέννημα τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς,¹¹ or an ταύτότης θεότητος,¹² or ταύτότης φύσεως,¹³ μία ἡ φύσις,¹⁴ ἴδιον τῆς πατρικῆς ὑποστάσεως.¹⁵ The Father and Son are said to have μίαν φύσιν,¹⁶ more than that they are said to be one. αὐτὸς (ὁ ὕψος) καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν εἶσι.¹⁷ The Father is infinitely

⁵ C. Gentes, 2. 40; De Inc., 3.

⁶ C. Gentes, 41.

⁷ Ibid., 46.

⁸ Ibid., 41, 46.

⁹ Art., Athanasius von Alexandrien, in the Real Encyclopädie, II, 196-205.

¹⁰ C. Arians, I, 9, 16, 22, 29, 35, 36, II, 32, III, 3, 5, 15, 17, 36, etc.

¹¹ Ibid., I, 9, 15, 16, 17, 19, 29, II, 2, 22, III, 5, 12.

¹² Ibid., III, 3.

¹³ Ibid., III, 22.

¹⁴ Ibid., III, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., III, 65.

¹⁶ Ibid., III, 4.

¹⁷ Ibid., I, 16. Harnack: op.cit., IV, 34 quotes with approval Atsberger: op.cit., p. 117, as saying: "There can be,

perfect and complete, and the Son is the fulness of His
 Father's substance.¹⁸ Christ has all the divine perfections¹⁹
 communicated from His Father by eternal generation. There
 is, of course, the great watch-word of Nicene Orthodoxy, *ὁμο-*
ούσιος. But Athanasius makes little use of it. It is,
 as we have said, altogether absent from the earliest works.
 Even in the great Orations against the Arians it is notice-
 able chiefly by its absence. Athanasius believed in all
 that this word symbolized, defended its use and accuracy as
 a symbol. But he was not fighting for a word. He was
 fighting solely for the reality which he felt that this²⁰
 word most fitly expressed. He was great enough, as Loofs
 points out, to be able to distinguish between truth and
 formulae and to hold to the one and discard the other when
 the situation demanded it. So since this word was distaste-
 ful to many good Christians, Athanasius was ready to use every
 expression which he could think of, which while guarding the
 full deity of Christ would not set up a barrier merely of
 words.²¹ But amid all the variety of terms there is one

17 contd.

be no doubt but that Athanasius conceived of the unity of the Father and the Son as a numerical unity of substance." While it must be admitted that such expressions as *μίαν φύσιν* etc. would appear to substantiate Atzberger's position. But Athanasius never wearied of affirming that earthly categories and analogies do not apply fully to the Deity. While he held to the unity of the Father and Son he would not acquiesce in the meaning which Atzberger and Harnack would place upon that phrase.

18 C. Arianos, III, 1.

19 Ibid., III, 36.

20 Op. cit.

21 Athanasius' affirmation of the full deity of the Son is not invalidated by the semi-Arian language which he occasionally employed to conciliate good Christians who believed/

insistent note which never varies, in Jesus Christ the Godhead has appeared bodily, Christ is God, very God of very God. "Αὐτολόγος ὢν καὶ Θεός"²².

That Athanasius did believe in the full deity of Christ is indisputable. The chief reason why this belief of his was never shaken was that it was built on the firmest of foundations. For as we have already pointed out, he did not sit down among his books to concoct cold bloodedly a theory of the Trinity or about the person of Christ. His views did not arise out of speculation or philosophy; but out of experience. His Christology was not primarily designed to be philosophically or intellectually satisfying; it was framed to fit experience, to explain what had happened

21 contd.

believed that Christ was God but who objected to ὁμοούσιος. Hence ὅμοιος occurs frequently throughout the pages of the C. Arianos, also with numerous variations, e.g. ὅμοιος τῷ πατρὶ (I, 38), ὅμοιος τοῦ πατρὸς (I, 9, III, 11, 20), ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν (I, 20, III, 11, 26), ὅμοιος οὐσίας (I, 21), ὅμοιος κατὰ πάντα (I, 21, 40, II, 18), ὁμοιότης (I, 39, III, 44), φυσικὴ ὁμοιότης (III, 36), ὁμοιότης κατὰ πάντα (II, 22). Athanasius had no objection to such terms. He used them freely. But he was carefull to include a sufficient number of stronger terms which made his real meaning clear and revealed the inadequacy of ὅμοιος. Harnack: op. cit., IV, 30, n.1, calls attention to the fact that Athanasius held that there are not two unbegotten underived principles, ἀρχαί, and consequently the Father is the ἀρχή. Athanasius was ready to admit that the primacy of honour belongs to the Father, as Father, but he would not admit that this detracts in any way from the full deity of the Son. The Father and Son are still

22 De Inc., 54.

in his own life and in the world around him. It was Athanasius' surest principle that He who is ultimate for life must be ultimate for thought as well.²³ Professor P. Carnegie Simpson,²³ in discussing this period in the development of doctrine, says that the dogma of the divinity of Christ did not arise out of speculation about God. He was thought to be divine because He was found doing things which no mere man could do. It was out of a spiritual dynamic that this catholic dogma arose. This observation, while true of the period in general, is especially true of Athanasius. His belief in the full deity of our Lord, a faith which never wavered was based upon the sure foundation of his own experience.

Athanasius not only believed that Christ was God but he also tried in every way which his picturesque imagination could conceive to prove to the world that his firm conviction was the truth. His appeal, however, was chiefly to reason, to ecclesiastical tradition, and to Scripture rather than to experience. The reason for this was, doubtless, that it was against a metaphysical conception that he was contending and so, perforce, he must meet his opponents with their own weapons. However, the appeal to experience is not entirely overlooked.

In the De Incarnatione we find Athanasius pointing to the works of the Saviour and calling them the works of God.

23 Chalmers Lectures, 1933.

Idols are overthrown; the heathen converted from their paganism, heights of moral attainment, heretofore believed to be impossible are now attained; men live together in peace; the deceit of demons vanishes; Death, the once dreaded tyrant, is now overthrown so that women and children now mock him and meet him without fear.²⁴ This is daily being accomplished. Could a dead man do such things? On the contrary, only the living could have such power. Yea, only the Life itself, God alone.

²⁵ Reference has already been made to the various ills of man which, if they are to be remedied, require a divine Physician. Since man has been healed we may infer that the Healer was not less than God.

That Christ was God is shown also from Scripture. The Arians had attempted, by selecting some half dozen or more verses from the Bible which emphasized the human nature of Jesus, to prove that He was not truly God as was the Father.²⁶ Athanasius refuted their false interpretation by a much more sound exegesis. Of course, his exegesis was not without what would be regarded today as faults; nevertheless, on the whole it was quite an accurate rendering of the verses in question. Certainly Athanasius was far more in harmony with the thought

²⁴ Cf. De Inc., 28-32, 51-54.

²⁵ Cf. Chapter III.

²⁶ The Arians made much of such texts as Heb. III, 2, Acts II, 36, Prov. III, 22 which refer to the "creation" of the Son, also of such references in the New Testament as speak of Christ as being hungry, thirsty, tired, asleep, ignorant etc.

of Paul and the Evangelists than were his opponents. At least, he was able to show that the writers of the New Testament²⁷ believed that Jesus was God.

Athanasius accused the Arians of being innovators,²⁸ in that they denied the full deity of Christ. He was, it seems, amply justified in making this accusation. Not only did the Scriptures testify to the deity of our Lord, but tradition also spoke with equal insistence on that point. From the very beginning Jesus Christ had been worshipped and adored as God. Since there is only one God, and Scripture and tradition alike pronounce Christ to be God, then He must be God as the Father is God.²⁹

Reason also shows Christ to be God. Philosophy had set up certain qualities which must be true of any being if he is to be thought of as God. It must be shown that he did not come out of nothing, or that his essence is eternal; without a beginning in time. Following from these two, it is evident that if it can be shown that a being has been created, he is, ipso facto, not a god. Further there are certain attributes, such as unchangeableness, impassibility, etc., which the deity must possess and the absence of which is the sure proof of creatureliness. The Arians had attacked

27 Cf. De Inc., 33-39, also C. Ar., I, 37 - III, 58 discusses controverted texts.

28 The Arians had accused the Nicene party with unscriptural innovations e.g. θεοοοῦτος. Athanasius replied that it was they who were innovators, rejecting the whole burden of ecclesiastical tradition. Cf. C. Ar., I, 8,9 etc.

29 De Synodis, 5-7.

the deity of Christ along all of these lines, and it was the task of Athanasius to show that the Son possessed all the qualities essential to Deity.

Athanasius asserts times without number that the Son is not a creature, or a work.³⁰ The Logos - Son was not created. The Father begot Him from all eternity. The Arian formula, "There was, when He was not", was anathematized in the severest terms. God is said never to be ἄλογος.³¹ The very titles of the Son, Power, Reason, Wisdom, all imply eternity.³² The Logos is definitely asserted to be co-eternal with the Father.³³ In fact, in Athanasius, as is developed more fully later by the Cappadocians, we find the idea suggested that the very idea of Deity necessitates an eternal Son as well as an eternal Father.³⁴ Unquestionably, Athanasius would say that the Son is uncreated, He did not come out of nothing; He is eternal; "there was not, when He was not".

The Son is not lower in dignity or any less God because He has been begotten by the Father. For His begetting arose not out of the good pleasure of God, the Father, nor from His will. It was not something which might or might not have occurred, and as such fortuitous and unworthy. It was a

³⁰ The burden of the entire C. Arianos.

³¹ C. Ar., I, 14, 19, 24, 25, II, 32, III, 63, De Decretis, 19, 26.

³² De Decretis, 15 f.

³³ C. Ar., I, 9, 19, 29 etc.

³⁴ Cf Baur's treatment of Athanasius' "Logos lehre" in his Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung.

necessary begetting arising out of the nature of God Himself.³⁵
 Athanasius' psychology might not stand the test of modern
 criteria, but the idea itself is valid. The fact that there
 is a Son, or for that matter a Trinity, is not due to chance
 or any caprice of will which at that time might still have
 clung to the idea of God. The Sonship of the Logos, the
 Trinity itself is grounded in the heart of reality.³⁶ It is
 nothing unworthy of Deity to be God, the Son.

The Son is said to have all the attributes of the Father.
 "And as Being Word and Wisdom of the Father, He has all the
 attributes of the Father, His eternity, His unchangeableness,
 and the being like Him in all respects, and is neither be-
 fore nor after but co-existent with the Father, and is the
 very form of the Godhead, and is the Creator, and is not
 created".³⁷

The Son is said not only to be equal with the Father,
 sharing the same attributes, but to share His being as well,
 to be ὁμοούσιος,³⁸ to be identical in essence, yet distinct
 persons. This unity is an ethical one, it is true, there is

³⁵ C. Ar., I, 29 -

³⁶ Cf. ibid., III, 58 f. Although here another objection
 is raised. To say that the Son was begotten by the will of the
 Father, is to deny eternity to the Son because the will to be-
 get must have preceded the begetting. Then he reverts to the
 old view (Harnack op.cit., IV, 46) that everything valuable is
 accomplished by nature. God must be good by nature, and not
 by will, so also the Son must be by nature and not by will.

³⁷ Ad Episcopos Aegypti, 17. Cf. also De Synodis, 49.

³⁸ C. Ar., I, 9. De Decretis, 14, De Synodis, 51 etc.

39

a harmony of will and purpose; but that is not enough.
 Father and Son are one in nature, in essence, in being. So
 that, if it may be said of God, the Father, that He is God,
 then no less a fullness of Deity may be ascribed to the Son.
 Our Lord is then seen to be

"Very Son of the Father, natural and genuine,
 proper to His essence, Wisdom Only-begotten, and
 Very and Only Word of God is He; not a creature
 or a work, but an offspring proper to the Father's
 essence. Wherefore He is very God, existing one
 in essence with the Father....He is the expression
 of His Father's person, and Light from Light, and
 Power, and very Image of the Father's essence".⁴⁰

The reason Athanasius insisted so strongly on the full
 deity of the Logos-Christ has already been intimated. Athan-
 asius' whole soteriological system stood or fell on the val-
 idity of this one fact. For him, Christianity as a religion
 was valueless unless Christ was God. Baptism is a sham and
 a deception and we receive nothing from it if the Saviour be
 not God. "In thinking to be baptized into the name of one
 who does not exist, they will receive nothing; and ranking
 themselves with a creature they shall receive no help from
 creation; and believing in one unlike and foreign to the
 essence of the Father, they will not be joined to the Father
but being led astray the wretched men henceforth remain
 destitute, and stripped of Godhead".⁴¹ All the promised

39 Ad Afros, 8. Today many of the best theologians
 feel that there can be no deeper, more real, more vital, more
 lasting principle of unity than absolute ethical oneness.
 The dominant philosophy of the century which asserted the
 primacy of 'nature' was sufficient to blind his eyes to other
 possibilities.

40 C. Ar., I, 9.

41 Ibid., II, 43. Cf. I, 38.

blessings of the redemption which He offers depend entirely for their fulfilment upon His absolute divine power. If He is not God then He must fail to bring us forgiveness of our sins, victory over death - immortality, fellowship with God, deification.⁴² For it is certain that none but God can bring us all these gifts. Athanasius chided his Arian opponents that they were attempting to build a half-way house, to place Christ somewhere between heaven and earth, neither man nor God. Oh foolish men and blind, he lashed out, can you not see that it is God or nothing?

If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men,
Mere man, the first and best, but nothing more
Account Him, for reward of what He was,
Now and forever, wretchedest of all.

Can a mere man do this?
Yet Christ saith this He lived and died to do.
Call Christ then the illimitable God,
Or lost! ⁴³

42 Cf. ibid., II, 67-70. De Synodis, 51 - "If the Son were a creature, man had remained mortal as before, not being joined to God, for a creature had not joined creatures to God, as seeking itself one to join it nor would a part of creation have been the creation's salvation, since it needed salvation itself" - C. Ar., II, 19. Cf. Seeberg: Dogmengeschichte II, 59, 60. Cf. also Harnack: op.cit., IV, 27 - "Christ brings us blessings but He could not have done so had He not been God, if He had possessed it as a gift secundum participationem. For in that case He had only so much as He needed for Himself and could not afford to give any away. He could not in fact give away what was not His own". Cf. C. Ar., I, 30, 39.

43 From Browning's A Death in the Desert. Spoken by St. John to the doubter Cerinthus. If Browning has interpreted the mind of St. John aright, it is but one example of numerous similarities of thought between Athanasius and the Apostle.

Harnack in his History of Dogma has criticized Athanasius' teaching concerning the deity of Christ very severely. His charges are two. First, that "the man who saved the character of Christianity as a religion of living fellowship with God was a man from whose Christology almost every trait which recalls the historical Jesus of Nazareth was erased".⁴⁴ This accusation seems to be partially true. The divine in Christ overshadows, and at times almost blots out the human element. This attitude is partially explained by the fact that it was the deity of our Lord and not His humanity which was threatened. The latter required no defence, while the defence of the former demanded his entire time and thought. Also his opponents had made all reference to the human activities of Christ a reproach; these activities constituted stumbling blocks which had to be carefully explained lest they detract from the deity of our Lord. That this emphasis on the divine in Christ at the expense of His human nature was due more to circumstance than to inclination, is attested by the fact that the De Incarnatione makes much more use of the events in the life of the historical Jesus than does the polemical Contra Arianos. Further, it was just as essential to the thought of Athanasius that the human nature of the Saviour be real as it was that He be truly divine. Such being the case, it seems improbable that Athanasius would, under normal circumstances, have neglected the human element in Christ as

44 Harnack: History of Dogma, IV, p. 45.

much as he did, that had there been no Arian heresy the Saviour would have been no less God, but more of a man. It should also be remembered that, faced with a choice as he was, Athanasius retained what was, for his day at least, the more important part,⁴⁵ the deity of Christ. A greater thinker might have been able to preserve a better balance, but it was a day when extremes had to be met with extremes. But that Harnack's charge is only partially true will be seen from the next section.

Harnack's more serious accusation is that Athanasius, in expressing "his faith in the Godhead of Christ, i.e., the essential unity in the Godhead Itself with the Godhead manifested in Christ, fell into an abyss of contradictions".⁴⁶ These he proceeds to enumerate :

"That the Godhead is a numerical unity, but nevertheless Son and Father are to be distinguished within this unity as two - this is his view. He teaches that there is only one unbegotten principle, but nevertheless the Son has not come into being...This Son is not to be thought of either as uncreated, or as an attribute of God, or as an emanation, or as a part of God, and is therefore something wholly indefinable....The Father is perfect for Himself and is sufficient for Himself; indeed, although Father and Son have one substance in the sense of a single nature, in common, still the Father alone is 'the God' and is the principle⁴⁷ and root of the Son also. Quot verba, tot scandala!"

⁴⁵ Harnack admits this - "Athanasius undoubtedly retained the most important feature - namely, that Christ promised to bring men into fellowship with God" - loc. cit.

⁴⁶ History of Dogma, IV, 46.

⁴⁷ Loc. cit.

Harnack goes on to say that no complete contradiction can be correct, thus implying that Athanasius is quite wrong. No philosophy possessed formulae, he says, which could present Athanasius' propositions in an intelligent form, e.g. what he calls ousia, and sometimes hypostasis, was neither an individual substance nor a generic conception. Athanasius' Christology finally led the church to accustom itself to complete contradiction as the sacred privilege of revelation. Than which, apparently, there is no worse fate. Arianism, on the other hand, was, in his opinion, at least philosophically intelligible, though, he admits, so deficient religiously that it would have destroyed Christianity had it gained the supremacy.

Athanasius believed that the Godhead itself had appeared in Christ for man's salvation, that in the Son we have the Father, and that because the Son is by nature God, He can and will make us divine. Whatever philosophical absurdities and contradictions he may, or may not have fallen into in defending this belief against the Arians, even Harnack admits the worth of that faith. It was not new; the majority of the Christians before him had held it. But not since the fourth Gospel was written, we are told, do we find one who expressed this belief with such definite conviction, with such victorious assurance. All the others had introduced some qualifying thought, and thus brought in an element of uncertainty into their feeling of its truth

and so impaired its strength. But when the need was greatest, faith was surest. In the tremendous Arian controversy, "the greatest revolution which the church has experienced" and which might easily have rung the death knell for Christianity, it was the faith of Athanasius, a faith confessed with such vigour, a faith so indomitable, so invincible, that saved the Christian Church. On a purely pragmatic basis the Athanasian Christology is to be preferred to that of the Arian party, in spite of all of the "contradictions" of the former and the intelligibility of the latter.

We believe, however, that Professor Harnack has overstated his case. In the first place, we are by no means convinced that Athanasius would admit that Father, Son and Spirit constituted a numerical unity. As we have already observed, Athanasius, on more than one occasion, denied the validity of pressing earthly or finite analogies too far in attempting to explain the Deity, and it is doubtful that he would admit of the use of "numerical" here. Though he, certainly, in common with most Christians, believed in "Father, Son and Spirit - one God". They and he would insist that God is one and that the three persons are distinct. Such a belief was no innovation of Athanasius.

With regard to the "contradiction" that there is only one unbegotten principle and yet the Son has not come into being, it may be pointed out that again Athanasius was not

an innovator. He took over this doctrine of eternal generation from Origen. It would seem to be a greater absurdity to say that the second Person of the Trinity was not eternal. That the Son was begotten of the Father was too well established to be discarded, even had he been so inclined.

The reproach that the Son is said to be neither an emanation, nor attribute, nor a part of God, and is therefore something wholly indefinable, does not seem very serious. Surely Professor Harnack would not have approved if Athanasius had said that the Son was any of the three alternatives mentioned. The archbishop's rejection of them all at least has the approval of later thought. Further, it does not seem to follow that the Son is "wholly indefinable" since He is none of the three.

Enough has already been said to show that Professor Harnack has obviously overstated his case. This is not to claim that the Athanasian Christology is perfectly clear and consistent. It is neither. But then, Harnack seems to demand perfect clarity and consistency where such is not possible, to give too large a place to reason and too little to faith. For there are some minds which prefer to follow the gleam of truth, the vision of faith, wherever it seems to lead them. They are not greatly concerned about logical consistency for they are not at all convinced that all truth is to be found through consistency of a philosophical nature.

Athanasius, we believe, was such an one. He was convinced above all things that his Saviour was very God of very God. This truth he cherished wherever it might lead, careless though contradictions should smite him on every hand, for he could not surrender it. For had he not found The Truth? This does not excuse the unwholesome fondness for contradiction and mystery which Theology has sometimes displayed. But we are sure that Professor Harnack would agree that the claims of logic and reason must not be pressed too far, that finite categories are burst asunder when we try to make them contain the infinite, that so long as men are men and God is God there must be a certain amount of mystery and, doubtless, inconsistency in our thinking about the person of Christ, the Trinity and the nature of the Deity.

Athanasius asserted in the most unqualified manner possible that the Incarnate Logos was the Godhead who had appeared in the flesh for our salvation. Such an unqualified affirmation of the Deity of the Redeemer led him into certain positions which were apparently inconsistent, where a less rigid statement might have been more intelligible from the standpoint of reason. But he was conscious that it was religion and not philosophy with which he was dealing, so every page of his writings repeats the same refrain - Christ is the fullness of the Godhead. For such a position was necessitated by the exigency of the times, by his whole theological system, and by his own faith.

CHRIST WAS MAN.

The incorporeal, incorruptible, immaterial Logos of God, the Son, true God of true God, took unto Himself a human body; or rather, since He is the All Powerful, the Creator of all things, He fashioned for Himself in the womb of the virgin a bodily temple which he appropriated as the organ of His earthly manifestation, and dwelt in it among⁴⁸ men."

While such a statement is true, it does not give full expression to the Athanasian view. The Logos did more than⁴⁹ appear in a body, He became man, a man.

⁵⁰
In none of Athanasius' writings are there to be found any extended or systematic passages dealing with the human nature of our Lord. But this is only natural. Athanasius' chief, if not sole, interest was the defence of the deity of

⁴⁸ Cf. De Inc., 6,8, Voigt: Die Lehre des Athanasius von Alexandrien, p.124.

⁴⁹ So Harnack: op. cit., III, 297, Scott: op. cit., p. 50. and Dorner: Doctrine of the Person of Christ, II, 260 - Athanasius verged on the old representation of the body of Christ as a temple or garment which excludes the full idea of incarnation. But it was at this point that he made "a decided effort to rise beyond that meagre notion....for he frequently repeats the remark, - what we needed was not a mere theophany, but that He should really become one of us; in order to be our representative, He must not merely have, or bear, or dwell in a man, but must Himself be this man". This belief, Dorner regards as the centre of Athanasius' system.

⁵⁰ Except in the two books against Apollinaris. But the evidence against their genuineness is sufficient to warrant the exclusion of them from consideration in this study. See Excursus A.

Christ. A fact so well established as the human nature of Jesus did not need proof. Also the fierce struggle with Apollinaris was just beginning in the declining years of the archbishop, too late for his active participation and too late to awaken him to the necessity of exact terminology. So it is that the references to the human nature of the Redeemer are mainly incidental nor are they characterized by great precision of language.

One of the most noticeable features of Athanasius' references to the humanity of Christ is the distinctly physical character of the terms employed. ⁵¹ Voigt has made a study of the terminology used in this connection and finds that the most characteristic expressions were $\nu\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ and $\nu\hat{\omega}\mu\alpha$. ⁵² But for these two there might be substituted any of the following variations - $\sigma\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\varsigma$, $\nu\alpha\acute{o}\varsigma$, $\delta\acute{\rho}\gamma\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$, or more rarely ⁵³ $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$.

The question now arises - was Athanasius an Apollinarian before Apollinaris? He has been frequently accused of being such. He has been charged with Docetism more than once. And if we had nothing else upon which to base our judgment except the terms used, Athanasius would unquestionably stand

⁵¹ Voigt: op. cit., 125, 126.

⁵² This is especially true in the earlier writings.

⁵³ Example of the use of this words - $\nu\hat{\omega}\mu\alpha$, - De Inc., 8,9,10,13,14,16,18 etc., C. Ar., I, 43, II,46, De Decretis, 14, 31, De Sent. Dion., 11, 26, Expos. Fidei, 2,3. Ad Epict., 10, Ad Adelph., 3,6; $\nu\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$, - C. Ar., I, 43, III, 33 etc. Ad Adelph., 2,3,4,5,6; $\sigma\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ - C. Ar., III,52,53, IV,34, Ad Epict., 10; $\nu\alpha\acute{o}\varsigma$, - De Inc., 8,9 Ad Adelph., 3,4.; $\delta\acute{\rho}\gamma\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$, - De Inc., 9,43,44, C. Ar., III, 31; $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$, - De Inc., 10, Ad Adelph., 4.

condemned on both these charges. Even Voigt, who defends his use of these terms, says that in his earlier years, Athanasius must have had a more or less Apollinarian view which⁵⁴ he changed in his later years.

We are of the opinion, however, that Athanasius would not have agreed with Apollinaris either early or late in life. We are not wanting in evidence of a sort to support this contention. In the first place, on purely a priori grounds, Athanasius may be said to have taught the full humanity of the Saviour. We have seen that all the other doctrines of his system were referred and subordinated to the doctrine of redemption. Since the complete humanity of the Redeemer⁵⁵ is essential for his theory of salvation, we may be sure that he did teach this dogma, if not explicitly then implicitly.

While it is true that Athanasius used $\psi\omega\mu\alpha$ and $\nu\acute{\alpha}\rho\phi$ in the De Incarnatione almost exclusively, it is also true,⁵⁶ as Dorner has pointed out, that the arguments of this treatise presuppose the full humanity of Christ.⁵⁷ This is even more the case in the later writings.

All the attributes or qualities of a complete human⁵⁸ nature are ascribed to Christ. Of course, more frequently

⁵⁴ Voigt; op.cit., p.129.

⁵⁵ Cf. the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, for example.

⁵⁶ Dorner: op.cit., II, 259.

⁵⁷ Cf. De Inc., 8,42 ff. etc.

⁵⁸ Cf. C.Ar., III, 54-57, De Sent. Dion., 9.

than not, these are merely weeping, sleeping, weariness and other physical manifestations which do but attest to the human body and so are beside the point. But there are others which do not so evidently belong to the body. For instance, there was the apparent weakness of will when the Master said 'Let this cup pass from me'; or again, the limitation of knowledge when He said that He did not know the day of judgment; or again He is said to have changed His mind. Neither limitation of knowledge, nor weakness of will nor changeableness can be attributed to the Logos of God. And Athanasius is careful to avoid doing so. In fact, he goes to undesirable lengths in separating what Christ did and said as a man, and what He did and said as God. Such actions belong, then, to the human element in the Saviour. But since they are not physical, therefore they must have been regarded as having their origin in the human soul or mind of Christ. Our Lord is represented by Athanasius as functioning as a complete human personality, using both body and spirit. Therefore it seems improbable that he should have believed any less, or ascribed to Christ any less than a complete human nature.

59 In the same vein: "But when the Lord came upon the earth, the enemy made trial of His human economy, being unable to deceive the flesh, which He had taken upon Him". Flesh cannot be deceived. It must symbolize the rational part of man as well as the physical. (From Ad Episcopos Aegypti, 2) We recognize that this argument is somewhat weak. The real argument, of course, is that such a view is necessitated by his system, i.e. man can not be saved unless He were fully man. The majority of commentators are agreed on this point. So Dorner, Scott, Harnack (note 49). Also Voigt: op.cit., 126-128.

Some explanation must be found for Athanasius' consistent use of physical terms - body or flesh - for the human element in Christ. It seems quite probable that the words "σῶμα" and "κῶμα" might have had a wider connotation than our very restricted usage grants to "body" and "flesh". The prologue to the fourth Gospel speaks of the Word becoming flesh in much the same manner that Athanasius used the term. Yet no one would think of accusing that Gospel of being docetic. Athanasius is very fond of repeating the phrase from John, and it seems that he either regarded it as a precedent worthy of being followed, or else the phrase, so often in his mind, unconsciously influenced his terminology, or both.⁶⁰

Christ, then, was completely, fully man, just as we are men. Even as the Logos in man was no mere influence of God, given in greater measure than it is ordinarily given to man, but the Godhead itself descended into humanity, so, too, the man Jesus was no mere appearance, no shell, no mere physical body to clothe the Being of God that men might see Him. He was a man even as we are.

The question next arises as to what kind of a human nature it was that Christ took. There are several possibilities. He might have taken a specially purified humanity, somewhat as Adam is supposed to have possessed before the fall, the view perhaps most commonly held. Or He might have

⁶⁰ It will be noted also that in several instances the words 'man' and 'body' or 'flesh' seem to be used interchangeably. Cf. Ad Adelph.

assumed sinful flesh. This theory has rarely been proposed and has had few adherents. There is a third possibility. He might have assumed the nature of fallen man, the same nature which we, as men, receive, if we are willing to grant that human nature, as such, is not inherently sinful. That Christ was sinless was never the question. None were so depraved as to attribute sin to the Holy Son of God, least of all Athanasius. But he does seem to have taught that Christ assumed the nature of fallen man, yet without⁶¹ sin.

Cardinal Newman in a note on "Flesh" says that to the question whether Christ took on Him our flesh as it was in Adam before the fall or as it is now, "the direct and broad answer is - He assumed it as it was after the fall".⁶² To substantiate his position Newman quotes from several of the Fathers who seem to have held the same position. "The Lord came not to save Adam as free from sin, that He should become like unto him; but as, in the net of sin and now fallen, that God's mercy might raise him up with Christ."⁶³ Saint Cyril is even more to the point. "It was necessary for our salvation," he says, "that the Word of God should become man that human flesh subject to corruption and sick with the lust of pleasures, He might make His own; and whereas, He is life

⁶¹ Such a position would doubtless be impossible to an Augustinian or a Calvinist, but Athanasius can not be judged by such standards.

⁶² Newman: Select Treatises of St. Athanasius, II, 120.

⁶³ Leontr. contra Nestor., ii, t 9, p.692 Bibl. Max. (slightly altered for clarity).

and life-giving, He might destroy the corruption....."⁶⁴
 He cites still others to the same effect.⁶⁵ It seems ap-
 parent that this view was not uncommon among the earlier
 Fathers. It was customary to urge against the Apollinarians
 "that, unless our Lord took on Him our nature, as it is,
 He had not purified and changed it, as it is, but another
 nature".⁶⁶ This, apparently, was the feeling of Athanas-
 ius also.

Dr. Melville Scott in his book, Athanasius on the Atone-
ment shares Cardinal Newman's view at this point. In fact
 his entire study and interpretation seems based upon the
 fact that Christ assumed our nature, and not the pre-fallen
 nature of Adam. Naturally he goes into the question most
 thoroughly, adducing large numbers of quotations. If Dr.
 Scott is correct in his rendering of the passages in ques-
 tion, then his conclusion is inescapable. However Dr.
 Scott's translation sometimes differs at the crucial point
 from that of Principal Robertson⁶⁷ and Dr. Bright.⁶⁸ It is,
 therefore, necessary for us to examine the evidence.

⁶⁴ Cyril: Ep. Ad Success, i, p.138 - italics his

⁶⁵ St. Leo - "Non alterius natura erat ejus caro quam nostra, nec alio illi quam caeteris hominibus anima est inspirata principio, quae excelleret, non diversitate generis, sed sublimata virtutis". Ep., 35 fin. So also St. Austin: Op. Imperf., IV,48. Cf. Also Gregory Nazianzen esp. Orat., 30, and Ad Cled.

⁶⁶ "Note to C. Ar., I, 43 in Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (probably Newman's note).

⁶⁷ In Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.

⁶⁸ In Later Treatises of St. Athanasius.

One passage about which there is general agreement reads: "The Saviour took upon Himself the form of a bond-servant, having put on the flesh which is in bondage to (or enslaved to) sin".⁶⁹ The phrase "enslaved to sin", or "in bondage to sin" seems to be slightly ambiguous. For some have suggested that it might mean no more than that the Saviour assumed man's guilt, but no other liability. There are passages which seem to have only man's guilt in mind. For example, in Contra Arianos, II, 55, Athanasius speaks of Christ having been made sin and a curse for us, though He Himself did no sin. But it seems to the writer that if our archbishop had meant here that Christ put on the flesh which was in bondage to guilt or the curse, he would have said it. He said it frequently enough elsewhere, and could have easily said it once more if that was what he wished to say. It seems much more sensible to take the plain meaning and say that the nature which Christ took was the same nature which we receive, inclined to sin, indeed, so bound to sin that there can be only one result for all men - a life of sin and evil. But in Christ all these weaknesses were strengthened, and passions were overcome so that there was no sin.⁷⁰

69 C. Ar., I, 43 - "δούλου τε μορφὴν ἔλαβεν, ἐνδυσάμενος τὴν δουλωθεῖσαν ἰσάρεκα τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ"

70 So also Newman and Scott: Athanasius' idea seems to have been that our nature is weak, which, with men, inevitably leads to sin. But that there is nothing inherently sinful about being born, so that it would not stain the spotless purity of the Logos to take our nature.

One passage of which Scott makes much is the following:

"He purposed before the world was to take upon Himself, by means of the flesh, all the condition of condemnation laid upon us, and that, thenceforth, we should be adopted in Him".⁷¹ By an ingenious bit of reasoning Dr. Scott attempts to prove that the phrase, "All the condition of condemnation", must mean not only the guilt which man has incurred as a result of sin and his transgression of the law, but man's corrupt nature as well. This presumption is made more certain, he says, by the inclusion of the word "all". Guilt can not be divided into parts, therefore it would be foolish to use "all" if only guilt were meant.⁷² Principal Robertson, however, renders the passage in a different way.... "He had a purpose, for our sakes to take on Him through the flesh all that inheritance of judgment which lay against us...."⁷³ This latter seems much more accurate. *Κληρὸν*, the important word here, properly means "a share" which was drawn by lot, and since the proper meaning obviously does not fit, the Principal has used the

71 C. Ar., II, 76 Scott's translation. The Greek is: ὥστε αὐτὸν πρόθεσιν εἶναι ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντα τὸν καθ' ἡμῶν κληρὸν τοῦ κρίματος ἀναδέξασθαι διὰ τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ λοιπὸν ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ υἱοποιηθῆναι.

72 "It being evidently impossible that guilt should be divisible in such a way that part of it should be assumed and another part left unappropriated.....the word "all" is added to show that in the opinion of St. Athanasius, our Lord took man's condition without any such reservations as might have been expected". Scott: op. cit., p. 52.

73 In Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.

meaning of an allied word of the same stem - κληρονομία - which means inheritance. Taking inheritance of judgment as the best translation, the phrase evidently has reference only to the curse laid upon all mankind.

Another passage which Scott regards as particularly conclusive speaks of Christ as having taken "the things of the flesh"⁷⁴. But the reference occurs in a passage in which Athanasius is attempting to demonstrate the impassibility of the Logos, even in connection with the flesh. The immediate context is: "Therefore when He is said to hunger and thirst, to toil and not to know, to sleep and to weep, and to ask, and to flee and to be learn, and to deprecate the cup - in a word to undergo all that belongs to the flesh"⁷⁵. These actions are explained as the deeds of Christ in the flesh, i.e. not the actions of the Deity. It does not seem likely that Athanasius intended to say in this passage that Christ took on corrupt human nature, as Dr. Scott avers, but rather that Christ, while He was on earth, performed bodily functions and did human things and yet in doing so He did not become any less divine. He could sleep, as man, and still be God. .

Other references frequently cited are: first, C. Ar., III, 33, where it is stated that all the infirmities, or weaknesses, of the flesh are transferred to the Logos. But

⁷⁴ C. Ar., III, 34.

⁷⁵ Loc. cit., ἀπλῶς πάντα τὰ τῆς σαρκός

here again it is not at all certain that Athanasius is referring to any thing more than physical infirmities or weaknesses, and has left the moral completely out of account. And secondly, C. Ar., III, 31 fin. Here the Logos is said to bear our infirmities, which is slightly more to the point. It runs as follows: "And well has the prophet said 'carried', and not said 'He remedied our infirmities,' lest, as being external to the body, and only healing it, as He has always done, He should leave man still subject to death; but he carries our infirmities and He Himself bears our sins that it might be shewn that He has become man for us, and that the body which in them bore them was His own body..." But here again there is really nothing to prove that he has man's moral nature in mind at all. The physical side of man and the curse are all that is needed to explain these references. The evidence adduced thus far may be dismissed as more or less irrelevant. Another passage, slightly more pertinent, should be noted. It reads: "If the properties of the flesh were not rightly ascribed to the Logos, man would not have been wholly set free from them....But now that the Word has become man and has made His own the things of the flesh, these no longer affect the body by reason of the Logos who came in the body, but were destroyed by him; and thenceforth, men no longer following their own passions, abide not in sin and death, but raised

up according to the power of the Word, abide in immortality and incorruption".⁷⁶ The line of thought seems to be that since the Lord has taken the things of the flesh and destroyed them, he has destroyed the cause of sin in man, the passions, the weaknesses which led to sin. While this is not conclusive proof that Athanasius did teach that the Logos did take our nature, it seems to suggest some such view. Of course it must be remembered that here again the general context is predominantly physical rather than moral.⁷⁷

The two most important passages, for our purpose, besides C. Ar., I, 43, are: first, "For He had become man that he might deify us in Himself, and He has been born, begotten of a virgin in order to transfer to Himself our perverted nature, that we may become henceforth a holy race and partakers of the divine nature".⁷⁸ Principal Robertson, as usual, takes a more conservative view, and instead of 'perverted nature' reads 'erring race'. The Greek does not lend itself readily to translation. Πλανηθείσαν can mean 'erring' or 'wandering', and also could, we believe, mean 'perverted'. Γέννησιν is even more difficult. It ordinarily means, "begetting, engendering, nativity, birth", but

⁷⁶ C. Ar., III, 33.

⁷⁷ Cf. ibid., III, 34, "And while He Himself, being impassible by nature, remains as He is, not harmed by these affections, but rather obliterating and destroying them. Men, as if their passions were changed and abolished in the Impassible, henceforth become themselves impassible and free from them forever".

⁷⁸ Ad. Adelph., 4, the phrase in question: τὴν ἡμῶν πλανηθείσαν γέννησιν εἰς ἑαυτὸν μετανέγκη

79

obviously none of these fits here. The Greek then seems to allow either translation. And certainly it is reasonable from the meaning of the sentence to translate it "nature". To say that Christ transferred to Himself our erring race ⁷⁹has little or no meaning. The Greek permits, and the meaning requires, that we render this passage as saying that Christ took our nature as it is.

The second passage is from the Expositio in Psalmum, 21:31 - "For holy and blameless was the life of Christ, which he accomplished on earth (in union) with the flesh. For He alone did not sin, although having been made as we are, and having ⁸⁰received the flesh which delights to sin". There can be little doubt in the face of such passages as this last one that Athanasius really taught that the Logos took our nature as it is, rather than a purified or pre-fallen nature. ⁸¹He did not, however, relinquish by one iota his faith in the sinlessness of the Master. Although

79 Γεννησιν is rendered "nature" by Dr. Bright who translates "our original nature which had been perverted" - the "original" is obviously his own addition. Quoted by Scott p. 57. Γέννησιν is used by Athanasius in Expos. in Psalmum, 50.7 (Col. 240 Migne Vol.3) it is used apparently as a synonym for φύσις but is translated in the Latin by "ortus".

80 Expositio in Psalmum, 21.31. - "Ἁγία γὰρ καὶ ἄμω-
νος ἡ Χριστοῦ γέγονε ψυχή, ἣν πεποίηται μετὰ σαρκὸς ἐπὶ γῆς.
Μόνος γὰρ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἁμαρτίαν, καίτοι καθ' ἡμᾶς
γεγονώς, καὶ πᾶρκα λαθὼν τὴν φιλαμαρτήμονα."

81 As already indicated, so Newman and Scott. So Sträter also (Die Erlösungslehre des hl. Athanasius, p.131) - "The Logos took on the flesh which was capable of sin; He bound His divine will with the weak human will and conquered the last weakness". Neither Pell nor Voigt comment upon this point. But Dr. Moberly: op. cit., 360, agrees with our position.

he was quite certain about man's complete inability to save himself, he did not share, entirely, the gloomy and pessimistic view of human nature which from time to time has found favour in the West. As we have already tried to show, Athanasius does not seem to have taught that there was anything innately sinful about human nature, though weak it certainly was, and easily inclined to do evil. While man always hastened to sin shortly after his entry into this world, nevertheless it was not sinful to be born. What our nature needed was the power of the Logos of God to lift it above itself and overpower its desire to sin. So it was that the Son of God took flesh, our flesh, and became a man, like unto ourselves.

THE UNION OF THE TWO NATURES IN ONE PERSON.

Athanasius had several principles with regard to the person of Christ of which he was absolutely certain. He felt that he must retain these at all costs and fit them into his system as best he could. He knew, on the one hand, that Christ was God, of the one substance with the Father, and, on the other, that He was a real man just as we are, except without sin. If He were to be able to save, then He must be both true God and true man. But as Harnack⁸² points out, according to the Athanasian conception, it was just as necessary from the soteriological point of view that

82 Op. cit., IV, 147.

these two natures be united in one person, as it was that there should be an incarnation of the Son of God. There was great saving power in the union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ.

There is a considerable amount of material which may be cited against the position that Athanasius believed in a real organic union of the two natures in Christ. For Athanasius frequently sets the activity of one nature in opposition to that of the other. All expressions of weakness were ascribed to the man, Jesus. It was as man, and man only, that He wept, hungered and was athirst. It was as man that He said, "Now is my soul troubled", and "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and "If it be possible let this cup pass from me". It was as man that He said He did not know the day of judgment. Athanasius, however, tries very hard to show that Christ as God, knew the day and the hour at the very time when His humanity had had to plead ignorant. As man He asked questions of His disciples, the answers of which He, as God, must have already known. The Son of God was absolutely devoid of any of these creaturely affections. He is said to be sensible of them only because His humanity was liable to them.⁸³

There is another side which is as strongly emphasized. He who, as man, prayed that the cup might pass from Him, as God, said, "I have power to ^{lay down} my life, and power to take it

83' C. Ar., III, 32,46,55, Ad Serap., II, 8.

again." He who, as man, wept and was troubled in spirit, as Almighty God gave sight to those born blind, turned water into wine, raised Lazarus from the dead, and did many such wondrous works.⁸⁴

Athanasius has merely recognized the fact that in the Gospels there are two sets of data about Christ. One set reveals Him acting as a man should, and would act; the other set portrays Him as the God who does divine deeds. Nevertheless the Gospel picture is always that of a unified personality. Athanasius sometimes fails to give us such a picture. The reason for this is obvious. He had to present two sets of data to remind the Arians that there are two. They apparently could see only that one which spoke of Christ as a man. And further, in a world where the ideas of suffering, and of God were wide apart as two poles, if he were to be successful in maintaining that Christ was the Son, ὁμοούσιος, it was necessary that the Logos be kept absolutely free from anything and everything human. Notwithstanding the exigencies of the situation, Athanasius did frequently present a greater cleavage between the human and the divine than is permissible if a true or philosophically satisfactory view of the person of Christ is to be given. And to this extent the Arian controversy forced him into an inconsistent position, for it was his belief, as well

84 C. Ar., III, 54-58.

as an essential part of his system, that there was a real union of God and man in the person of the Saviour.

In complete accord with his sharp distinction between the divine and human actions and attributes, Athanasius, while he believed in a complete union of God and man in Christ, felt that the two natures⁸⁵ remained completely separated. The gulf between Logos and man was too great to be perfectly bridged even in Christ. The human would never become 'consubstantial' with the divine. There was no question with him of the two natures mixing and forming a tertium quid. There was both unity and separateness. Christ was the God-man, but He was also God and man.

As a complement to the foregoing, Athanasius regarded this union as a natural unity, an ἐνωσις φυσική, a unity which would remove or make impossible any great inner conflicts and result in harmony of will and spirit - or in the language of present day psychology, a unified personality.⁸⁶

One characteristic of this union of the human and divine in our Lord was, according to Athanasius, that the divine was the dominant and controlling influence. When the flesh was weak and shrank in dread before the approaching ordeal of the crucifixion, the spirit of the divine immediately gained control and answered "not my will but thine

⁸⁵ Athanasius nowhere speaks of δύο φύσεις, such terminology had not come into general usage, but his conception is the same as that conveyed by this later symbol.

⁸⁶ So Voigt: op. cit., 138, 139.

be done". The man was tempted of the devil in the wilderness but the power of the holy God strengthened the whole man so that He was able to overcome. And so throughout His entire life, the temptations to sin which must have beset His path, as they do that of every man, would have overcome Him had not the strength of God Himself ruled and controlled at every point lifted Him above the transgressions so common to the flesh.

Such a view is not without its difficulties, although that is one common denominator between all theories of the person of Jesus Christ. One of the more obvious problems raised by Athanasius' presentation arises out of his sharp separation of God and man in Christ. This led to the attributing to Christ two sets of qualities, and occasionally these were two mutually exclusive qualities, as divine omniscience and the limited knowledge of the man Jesus. In C. Ar., III, 46, we read: "For as, on becoming man, He hungers and thirsts, and suffers with men, so with men, He knows not; though divinely, being in the Father Word and Wisdom, He knows and there is nothing that He knows not.....He asks of the disciples.....(who He was) though knowing before Peter made answer.....what Peter was about to say". The fact already referred to, that Jesus as man did not know the day of judgment, while as God He knew quite well, is another

87 Cf. Mark 13:32.

88 C. Ar., III, 37,42,44,45,46.

case in point. This conception of two contradictory attributes, both of which function at the same time, is one which can quickly lead one into absurdities. To carry out such a position to its logical conclusions would be to sacrifice that unity which was so essential to his system. Certainly his position here is not carefully thought out, or else he was driven into conscious inconsistency by the requirements of his own system and the demands of controversy. Whatever may be the cause, this is one of the most unsatisfactory parts of Athanasius' teaching.⁸⁹

The union of God and man in Christ is necessarily a mystery to us because it is so entirely outside our experience and beyond the present powers of our limited understanding. Even so Athanasius did little to illumine the darkness. He was sure, however, of three things. First, that the Son of God, who had become incarnate, was homoousios with the Father, and secondly, because He was incarnate, homoousios with man.

⁸⁹ Voigt regards this as one of the weakest points in all Athanasius' teaching. His comment, *in loco*, is as follows: "Die in dieser Stelle (C. Ar., III, 46) sich findende Zusammenstellung der Wissensbeschränkung der menschlichen Natur Christi mit dem Leiden, Hungern und Dürsten derselben ist darum von besonderer Wichtigkeit, weil daraus hervorgeht, dass Athanasius die Wissensbeschränkung welche Christus nach seiner menschlichen Seite kund giebt, nicht als einen bloß angenommenen Schein nichtwissen; denn sonst musste er auch die ganze übrige menschliche Erscheinung des Herrn mit allen unbegründet". - op.cit., p. 138. Voigt, pp. 123-145, has the best treatment of the person of the Saviour which the writer has seen and he is indebted to Voigt in this chapter more than the footnotes indicate.

The Arians denied the former, the Apollinarians, the latter; Athanasius maintained them both, for therein, to his mind, lay the possibility of our redemption. The third fact was that there had occurred a real union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ. The importance of these three beliefs will become more apparent as we turn to a more detailed study of Redemption in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER V.

THE FACT OF REDEMPTION:

THE REDEPTIVE WORK OF THE INCARNATE LOGOS IN ITS NEGATIVE ASPECTS.

"But since it was necessary also that the debt owing from all should be paid again, for as I have already said,¹ it was owing that all should die, for which special cause,² indeed, He came among us: to this intent, after the proofs of His Godhead from His works, He next offered up His sacrifice on behalf of all, in order, firstly, to make men quit and free of their old trespass, and further to show Himself more powerful even than death, displaying His own body incorruptible, as the first fruits of the resurrection of all".³

The situation, as it has been outlined so far, may be expressed in two propositions. First, man is in an utterly hopeless and helpless condition. And secondly, God's character is such that it compels Him to save His hapless creatures. Man, as we have seen, was created in the image of God and possessed, potentially, a blessed life with God as deified sons of the most High. This state of immortality and blessedness was to become his when man ratified God's gifts to him by the exercise of his own free will in choosing for himself, and living a holy life, ever contemplating his maker. To aid man in this task God supplied him with a law and a place, rules by which to live and the most

1 Cf. ibid., 7.

2 Μάλιστα

3 De Inc., 20.

desirable environment in which to put them into execution. But as we have also seen, man did not live as God intended that he should, but rather transgressed the commandment which God had ordained. So man brought upon himself the punishment which God had also fixed as a penalty for the violation of His law. This penalty was death. So Death reigned over the entire race of men, and there was none who escaped its universal power. Regardless of the other direful results of sin in the lives of men, there was always this judgment of death which rested upon man, and thwarted successfully man's aspiration to his higher destiny. Had sin done no more than this, it was sufficient to bar man forever from his life with God. If man was to be saved from his self-inflicted destruction, this penalty must somehow be removed. This preparatory step must necessarily precede all others in man's redemption. When, and only when, the penalty had been paid, and the claims of death satisfied, could the Saviour proceed to re-create man and remove from his spirit the ravages of his own sin.

The problem of saving man from suffering the consequences of his own misdeeds appears, from the human point of view at least, as extraordinarily difficult. We have already noted the complicating factors. God had said that if man transgressed the commandment he should surely die. Now if man did not die, the Father of Truth would appear to be a liar for man's sake - but that is unthinkable. So if the

veracity of God is to be preserved, then there does not appear any other alternative but that man must die. The problem is made more difficult by the claims of Death. Death is often regarded by Athanasius as a semi-personal force which may have, and, in fact, does have rights, and which exercises sway over its kingdom which, until the time of Christ, the Deliverer, was not wanting in subjects. These rights may not be disregarded or lightly cast aside. We may be sure that God will act to save man in a manner which fully recognizes and respects the rights of Death over the race of men.

Either one of these factors was, in the eyes of Athanasius, quite sufficient to make the death of man inescapable. There seemed but one possibility - man must die. For the only apparent solution to this problem - that all men should actually die - is no remedy for the difficulty at all. While such an end would safeguard the veracity of God, and satisfy the claims of Death, it could not satisfy the goodness of God or the consistency of His character. An impossible remedy was required; that is, impossible to all except God Himself, for all mankind needs must die and yet all must be saved from that very death which they must die. This impasse, this Gordian knot could be severed only by the sword of the person of Jesus Christ, who alone was both able and willing to die for all mankind.

Since the incorporeal, incorruptible, and immaterial Logos could not die, He took a mortal body which was capable of death:

"Seeing the
rational (λογικόν) race persisting and death
reigning over all in corruption; beholding, too,
the threat against the transgression confirming
the corruption upon us, and how monstrous it would
be for the law to become a dead letter before it
was fulfilled; beholding also the unseemliness of
that had happened - namely, that the very things
of which He was Artificer were disappearing; be-
holding again the exceeding wickedness of men, how
gradually and overwhelmingly they had increased it
against themselves; seeing besides the liability
of all men to death - He pitied our race and com-
passionated our weakness and condescended to our
corruption, and, unable to bear the mastery of
death - lest His creature should perish and the
work of His Father in man come to nought - He takes
to Himself a body, and that one like to our own".⁴

And with his mortal body He died for all men with the result that the sentence was executed, the claims of justice satisfied, and the rights of Death over men were regarded, and yet all were saved from death.

Athanasius' conclusion that only the death of Christ can prevent the death of all mankind is somewhat vitiated by his admission that God could have lifted the curse, and done so, seemingly, with no dishonour to Himself. While he does not say so explicitly in his treatment of the in-
5
efficacy of repentance to heal man's diseases, yet he does more than hint that although God's veracity is a most serious

⁴ De Inc., 8.

⁵ Ibid., 7.

consideration and can not be disregarded, still it is not quite so important as the lives of all of His rational creatures. Athanasius seems to feel that God, if repentance would save man, would find some way to remove the curse; if He were faced with the necessity of choosing between His own veracity and man's redemption, we might reasonably expect Him to elect to save man - this, too, in contrast to often repeated denials of man's worth in comparison with God's veracity.⁶ Athanasius' position is made more explicit in the later Contra Arianos.⁷ Here he seems to take it for granted that God was able by the word of His power to relieve man of his unbearable burden, if He so desired. "God was able just to speak and so undo the curse."⁸ But while this conception of God as bare power, able to do anything, was mentioned only to be rejected, still Athanasius apparently concedes the fact that God could have undone the curse by mere fiat, had He desired to do so. And He is retrained from so doing merely by the fact that such a course would not help man at all. God, he says, is omnipotent but not bare power; we are not to ask what God could do, but what is best. So with one mind he tells us that the sentence of death can not be removed, except by its fulfilment in the

6 Of course, God would never be faced with such a choice. His wisdom would always see more than a meagre two alternatives. Nor could He ever cease to be the God of Truth.

7 II, 68.

8 Loc. cit.

death of all. Then with admirable inconsistency he tells us that if it would effect man's salvation, God would be both able and willing to rescind His decree.

The question now arises, how was one able to die for all in such a way that the claims of Death should be satisfied and the justice and truth of God not be outraged? As a matter of fact man did not die. How then could all be considered to have died? Could the death of one for all be regarded as any more than a "token payment" which God accepted in lieu of full restitution but which, in actuality, left the debt unpaid, and His veracity still unprotected? Athanasius does not treat this problem separately, nor does he face it squarely, but rather satisfies himself by repeating the scriptural formulae which speak of Christ dying "in behalf of all", or "instead of all", or "for all". (But it is true of Athanasius, as of other Greek Fathers, that Pauline phraseology does not always mean Pauline concepts. It is by no means to be assumed that New Testament thought is the inevitable corollary of New Testament language. It is not especially difficult to find, particularly among the earlier Fathers, examples of writings where almost the only common element between them and the New Testament is a uniformity of language and a common allegiance to Jesus Christ.)⁹

So we must seek to deduce Athanasius' answer to this

⁹ This is not to say that Athanasius did not hold some of the Pauline theology. He did. But language is not a sure sign and always needs to be examined.

important question from scattered references, where his own thought shows through his Pauline language.

Athanasius' ambiguity here is attested by the fact that his interpreters are not agreed as to his precise meaning.

¹⁰
Voigt understands Athanasius to say that he "grounds the meaning (Bedeutung) of the saving death of Christ, a vicarious sacrifice of one for the whole race, in the universal relationship in which the Logos stands to the human race." This relationship, Voigt explains, is manifested in two activities of the Logos, i.e. in creation, and in the ruling and regulating of the world and of the race of man. Thus the Son is related to the world and to all of its inhabitants, as the Supreme King, and as such He is able to act for all the people. In support of his position Voigt quotes one of Athanasius' well known figures of speech. A great king goes into a large city and dwells in one of the houses of the city. Thus because the king dwells in one of the houses of the city every house in that city is honoured and protected from the lawless and its enemies. "So the Monarch of all, having come to this world and taking a body like ours and living therein, has completely frustrated the designs of the Enemy against us, and the corruption of death which formerly prevailed against us
¹¹
has vanished away".

¹⁰ Voigt: Die Lehre des Athanasius von Alexandrien, p. 152 ff.

¹¹ De Inc., 9, cf. Ad Adelph., 8, C.Ar., I, 49, II, 53, 77.

Voigt seems to have been too greatly impressed by the language of the simile. It is quite true that Athanasius does picture the Logos as being the Ruler of all. Athanasius realized, as do we all, that our relationship to God is roughly analogous to that of the subject-king relationship of our every-day life. But he does not appear to have built his theory on this analogy. Further, the point of the simile does not seem to be that Christ is able to die for all men because He is the Great Emperor. The figure is intended to illumine the Incarnation and to reveal how Christ can be in us all, and not in one man only. Of course, Christ did stand in a representative relationship to man. Athanasius realized that, but it is not the chief factor here.

12

Pell comes to the heart of the matter when he remarks that it is difficult to see how a representative death should or can be called a real death of all. So, he says, it is not the representative capacity of the Logos in His kingly relationship to the world and to man which enabled Him to die for the race. It was rather "His all-embracing content,¹³ and His unparalleled worth".¹⁴ Voigt, he says errs in stressing the more or less formal relationship of king and subject. It is in the great worth of His person and His activities that Christ's representative capacity lies.

12 Pell: Die Lehre des hl. Athanasius von der Sünde und Erlösung, 153 ff.

13 "Inhalt"

14 "Alle Zusammen aufwiegenden Wert".

Pell, while able to see the deficiency of Voigt's explanation, also, we believe misinterprets Athanasius. His idea of the importance of the worth of the Saviour is valid. It is inherent in Christianity. Athanasius spent his whole lifetime in the defence of this one idea - the supreme worth of the person of Jesus Christ. He definitely teaches that the Son's divine attributes are His chief and necessary qualifications as Saviour of the world. But this thought is not the most important one here. Pell apparently was looking at Athanasius' teaching with eyes grown accustomed to the dogmas of Western theology of the Middle Ages and later. He seems to be thinking in terms of a substitute of such great worth, that he is really an exact equivalent for all; the idea that the death of one of infinite worth is equal to the death of any number of beings of finite worth - an idea which held such perennial sway - seems not to be forgotten. But to say that such a view is Athanasian is about as sound a practice as finding Christian theology in Plato.

15

We have seen that Irenaeus believed in the solidarity of the race and made extensive use of it in his system. Athanasius, like his master before him, also believed in the solidarity of the race, that mankind is at once both a many and a one. There is a fundamental unity pervading

15 See above Chapter I.

the race of man which laughs at the little, artificial barriers of colour and caste which we raise between one another. In our present day world we are being forced to admit what heretofore we have steadfastly refused to see - the essential oneness of communities, of nations, of the world. That all men are more alike than they are different. But Athanasius did not need our experiences to teach him this truth. He saw it, admitted it, and made use of it, especially at this point. He seems to have drawn inspiration also from another and greater than Irenaeus - the apostle Paul, and his concept of the mystical union of the believers with Christ. In fact he quotes almost every relevant passage from Paul's epistles and from Hebrews as well, e.g. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died on behalf of all, then all died; and He died for all, that they should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died¹⁶ and rose again". Or "For since by man came death, by man¹⁷ came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be quickened". Is his thought as Pauline as his language? Some would doubtless say no; that Paul was thinking of a physical unity derived from a common ancestor, while Athanasius would base

16 II. Cor., 5:14 f. quoted in De Inc., 10.

17 I Cor., 15:21 f. quoted in De Inc., 10. He also quoted in loco Heb., 2:9,10,14 f., I Tim., 6:15.

his theory on a philosophical concept, the Idea of Man. But whether this be true or not, are they not both agreed as to the unity of the race, and the possible unity of that race with Christ?

How was Christ able to die for all men and do so in a way which would meet all the requirements? Perhaps His representative capacity is a partial answer. For Athanasius, although he does not carry it to the unusual lengths which Irenaeus achieved, was very fond of the parallel between Adam and Christ. Adam was the head and representative of one race; Christ, the second Adam, is also the head and representative of a race. The action of each affects the whole of the race in a very real way. But there is a factor which underlies this representative activity and which makes it possible. Perhaps the great worth of the person of the Saviour also has some relevance, but again it is not the chief consideration. The answer is to be found in the concept of the solidarity of the race.

Christ could die for all, because all could die in Him. "And thus taking from our bodies one similar, because all were liable to the corruption of death, He surrendered it to death instead of all, and offered it to the Father; and this He did of His loving-kindness in order that, by all dying in Him, the law with regard to the corruption of man kind might be abolished (inasmuch as its power was

exhausted in the Lord's body, and no longer had place against
¹⁸like men)". This was the only possible and the perfect
 solution for man's difficulty. For nothing less than the
 real death of all men would suffice to satisfy the require-
 ments of the law. To accept a representative death as being
 the death of all would be to put as great a strain on the
 veracity of God as the outright revocation of the sentence.
 Yet all must be saved. Because of the unity, the solidar-
 ity of the race, Christ's actions become the actions of all.
 Not only did all men die in Christ, they died when He died.
¹⁹His death was actually their death. Pell calls attention
 to two phrases which express the thought of our teacher
 much better than the former's emphasis on the worth of the
²⁰Saviour. Christ is said to be able to die for all because,
²¹(1) He is "over all", and (2) He "embraces all". ²¹These
 two phrases give the gist of the whole matter. Christ and
 Adam stand in similar positions, each is head of the race,
 i.e. in a sense "over all". Because of peculiar positions,
 their actions have an extraordinary, indeed, a universal
 significance. But chiefly because all are one in Christ,
 and He is one with man, - because He "embraces all" - may
 it be said that because He died, all have died. Professor

¹⁸ De Inc., 8. The same thought is repeated in C. Ar.,
 I, 41 and elsewhere.

¹⁹ Op.cit., p. 153.

²⁰ See above.

²¹ De Inc., 9.

Seeberg has rightly interpreted the mind of Athanasius and all those who think like him, when he says, "Christ has, therefore, borne in His mortal body the guilt of sin in our stead and has conquered it in virtue of His divine character. But all this belongs to humanity, since Christ, as a member of humanity, accomplished it. As the guilt of the first Adam was imputed to the whole race, so the deed of the second Adam removed this curse. In virtue of this cohesion (Zusammenhang) between us and Him, His death is our death and His victory our victory".²²

When the Master bore in His own body the curse which was upon us, and so exhausted it, when He ended the reign of death over us, He had accomplished the largest part of His task of liberating man from the effects of Adam's fall. But there remained one other alien force whose power had to be broken, if man was to be completely freed. This was the supernatural kingdom of evil. The power of the demons was of minor importance in comparison with death and the curse, nevertheless it is a thought prominent^{enough} in the writings of Athanasius to warrant our consideration here.²³

22 Seeberg: Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, II, 77. So also Canon Moberly: Atonement and Personality, p. 356. "There is nothing which is more central to the teaching of Athanasius..(than this concept). His death, His resurrection, His exaltation, His consecration, whatsoever He is said to have received - all were corporate and representative, not individual or separate. These things only happened to him that in Him, they might be true of us...Whatever His death really signified or effected (which is the point least analyzed by Athanasius), His death was our death, as truly as the correlative resurrection is our resurrection".

23 We shall also have occasion to refer to this topic in another connection in the next chapter.

We have already noticed that Athanasius regarded the activity of the powers of darkness as one of the chief causes of man's initial downfall. And because of that fall and consequent sin, man had fallen, to some extent, into the power of the demons. Since that time Satan, the demons, and all the host of lesser evil spirits have never ceased to struggle²⁴ to impede man's moral progress. And that Athanasius felt that their efforts had not been entirely fruitless is shown by the fact that Christ is said to have become incarnate for²⁵ the very purpose of destroying the works of the devil. Christ's death consummated His victory over Satan and his hosts. Of course, throughout His lifetime, as Jesus spread light and knowledge, He was destroying the works of the devil. But Athanasius seems to have felt that the powers of light and of darkness met in a last titanic struggle on Calvary, and there the Saviour broke once and for all the power of the Evil One. The cross is regarded as playing an essential part in this struggle. For it was desirable that Christ should be crucified hanging in mid air between heaven

24 e.g. ... "the devil, the enemy of our race, having fallen from heaven, wanders through the air here below, and having authority over the demons with him, who are like him in disobedience, on the one hand through them works illusions in them that are being deceived, and on the other endeavours to hinder those who are struggling upwards". De Inc., 25. All the illusions and errors which the flesh is heir to, are said to be the work of the demons.

25 Cf. De Inc., 10 etc.

and earth, in order that He might purify the upper air.
²⁶
 Athanasius believed that the air, i.e. the space between heaven and earth was thickly peopled with all sorts and conditions of demons whose special delight and natural province it was to harass, impede, or stop the pilgrim soul as it struggled upward after leaving its earthly habitation. But Christ's death on the cross has ended this special as well as the general reign of the devil and his demons. The upper air has been purified, cleansed of all that unholy brood. No longer may the timid soul fear this journey, for the Saviour has prepared, or rather cleared, a way in which he shall²⁷ be free from any molestation.

The complete collapse of demonical power is shown by the fact that it is necessary only to mention the name of Christ and all evil spirits are driven away....."Let him use the sign of the cross....and merely name Christ and he will see how by it demons flee, soothsaying ceases, and all²⁸ magic and witchcraft are brought to nought". The whole²⁹ madness of demons is withstood simply by naming Him. Thus it is that men are completely emancipated from the power of the devils and may not make their journey heavenward unimpeded.

²⁶ De Inc., 25.

²⁷ Here we have an idea to be found in Origen, who believed firmly in the demon-compelling power of Sacrifice. (cf. Franks: A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ. vol. I, p. 71.) The appeal to the collapse of demonical power at the naming of Christ were very common in the writing of the early Fathers, e.g. Tertullian; Apol., 23, 37, 43, de Idol., 11, de Coron., 11. etc., cf. also Justin Martyr.

²⁸ De Inc., 48.

²⁹ Loc. cit., cf. also De Inc., 31, 46, Ad Epis. Aegypti, 1, 2, 3. Vita Antonii, passim.

The Redeemer has thus broken all the shackles which held man bound to earth. The curse was exhausted in His own body; Death has been conquered and his reign ended; the deceit of demons may no longer keep man from his destiny, for their power is broken. His inheritance, which had defeated him for so long, has been removed; man is now free to become what he should have been.

It will be noticed that while we have been discussing Redemption in its negative aspects, we have been considering the death of Christ as well. The release from the curse, and the power of Death and the demons has been accomplished in all three instances by the death of the Saviour. Further, it may be said that these three considerations practically exhaust the value of Christ's death for Athanasius. He does point to certain other things accomplished by the cross, but they are, on the whole, trivial.³⁰

Such a treatment of the death of Christ must seem woefully inadequate to the Western mind. Indeed, Athanasius has received his share of the criticism customarily made of Eastern theology in general - that they have no theory of the Atonement, but only of the Incarnation.³¹ While most

³⁰ E.g. the death of the Lord is regarded as the act by which "the middle wall of partition" is broken down, or, in other words, the Gentiles are called into the Kingdom. On the cross He died with outstretched arms. With the one He drew to Himself His own people, and with the outstretching of the other, He gathered to Himself all the nations of the Gentiles. De Inc., 25.

³¹ Cf. Scott: Athanasius on the Atonement, p. 74,75.

patristic scholars recognize the fact that Athanasius did have a theory of the Atonement quite apart from his theory of the Incarnation, he does sometimes speak as if man's redemption were accomplished at, or by, the Incarnation, and he sometimes makes one feel that he did not regard the death of the Logos-Son as being absolutely essential. For in his own treatment, there is nothing that was accomplished by the death on the cross, of which he does not suggest at one time or another that it might have been done in some other way. One of the chief reasons for the cross, as we have seen, was that the burden of the curse must be lifted from the back of mankind. Yet in two distinct places he³² tells us that God, if He had so desired, could have removed the sentence in some other way, either by allowing man to repent, or merely by speaking the word of His power and rescinding the decree. The reason that God did not use either of the methods was not that they would not have effectually removed the curse, but that the complications of man's disease necessitated the Incarnation anyway.

The destruction of death and its tyrannical power over men was accomplished at Calvary, but in more than one instance Athanasius says that the Life ($\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omega\acute{\nu}$) coming into contact with moribund humanity was enough to dispel the power of death. The same is true with regard to the overthrow of

³² De Inc., 7. C. Ar., II, 68. The latter reference is much more outspoken, but the idea is the same in both cases.

the power of the demons. Sometimes Christ's death is regarded as the great victory which has destroyed forever the rule of the demonic hosts. At other times, as we shall see in the next chapter, it is the new knowledge which Christ has brought which enables us to know God, and to recognize the deceit of the demons for what it is, and so to conquer.

Dr Sträter takes an even more pessimistic view.³³ He feels called upon to defend Athanasius against the charge that he taught that the death of Christ was really unnecessary and His work might have been accomplished without the cross. But though Dr Sträter rises to Athanasius' defence, he himself can find only the most meagre values in the archbishop's teaching about the death of our Lord. Sträter can not escape the most obvious fact that Christ is said, by His death, to have destroyed the rule of Satan and his demons. He discovers also a second reason for the death of Christ. Death was a human weakness, the chief human weakness, in fact. And it was the Saviour's purpose to undergo and overcome all human weaknesses. Therefore, He must necessarily suffer death.³⁴ But, as Sträter sees it, Athanasius taught that the real necessity and importance of the death of Christ lay in the fact that it made the resurrection possible. Since

³³ Die Erlösungslehre des hl. Athanasius, p. 145 f.

³⁴ Dr Sträter cites as references, De Inc., 6,8,9,21, C.Ar., II, 68,69 which do not seem to us to be conclusive, but if Athanasius did teach it, it was never a major consideration with him. It is a typical Irenæan doctrine, and has no real place in Athanasius' system.

one of the chief aims of the Incarnate Son was to rise again, and by so doing to call men back to life, then a preliminary death was very necessary, if only to prepare the way for the important act of rising again.

While it is perfectly true that Athanasius does not attach the importance to the death of the Saviour which Western theology has done, he had by no means reduced it to the level of inconsequence which Strater evidently believed him to have done. Nor does the case which we have just tried to make out - that Christ's death had no essential place in Athanasius' system - present a true picture. For the cross did have a real place in his thinking. In the case of the victory over the demons, Christ's death is regarded as the final great victory over the temptation of Satan,³⁵ such a victory as knowledge could not give us. Our victory here does not arise from either Christ's death, or our new knowledge; it is a case of both...and. With regard to the raising of the curse, the very fact that God chose to remove it in the manner that He did, shows that that way was the best, and with God there is only one way - the best. Hence, the death of Christ was the only way that the curse could possibly be removed. Further, it was one of Athanasius' fundamental assumptions that the removal of the curse was a necessary first step, and until that had been accomplished, nothing

35 Cf. Expositio in Psalmum.

could be done toward the inner regeneration of man. We may safely say, then, that the death of Christ had a real and necessary place in the thinking of our teacher.³⁶

If it is possible to defend Athanasius on the charge of regarding the cross as unnecessary to man's salvation, it is not possible to defend his leaving out of account certain values which we highly regard. Let us take forgiveness as an example, since it is, we feel, his most serious omission. Of course, one characteristic of the Western church as opposed to the Eastern was a far stronger sense of forgiveness. If at times in the West we find both the sense of the burden of sin, and of the release afforded by forgiveness being carried to abnormal lengths, still, the Eastern church was abnormal only in the sense that it was decidedly subnormal. How could one feel any deep sense of personal sin against a God who was so impassible, so unchangeable, that the deeds of mere man could not affect Him? It is little wonder that, so long as this conception of God prevailed in the Eastern church, we find very little mention of God's gracious forgiveness of sin. Although Athanasius has progressed far beyond such a view of the Deity, and sin was, to him, an awful thing which devoured and destroyed the souls of men, yet he makes little or no mention of the feature of the

³⁶ One has only to read his Festal Epistles, and note the repeated references there to Christ's death and what it has done for us, to realize what a place the cross had in the devotional life of Athanasius. Much the same may be said for the De Incarnatione. Nor may all these references be set down as the mere repetition of scriptural phrases, they may be taken as a true indication of our teacher's thought here.

redemption process which modern theologians, indeed, all Christians, value so highly - the free forgiveness of sin.

It seems to have been a difficult concept for the ancient world to grasp. We remember how frequently in this early period it was taught that there was forgiveness at baptism and there alone. While Athanasius must not be condemned too severely for failing to rise to the heights of present-day religious thinking, still one regrets that he did not advance farther beyond the thought of his contemporaries and find room for forgiveness. All that Athanasius has had to say so far, while not legalistic, is most certainly formalistic; it lacks the living, breathing vitality of the New Testament. ³⁷ Scott, with considerable truth, calls all that we have considered in this chapter, all the relevant material in the De Incarnatione, "The Atonement as an External Transaction". This is to be explained partially by the fact that in the De Incarnatione a larger place is given to the traditional interpretation than is given in his later works, and also the nature of these considerations lend themselves to formalism more readily than do some others. But this can not atone for such omissions as that of the idea of forgiveness, which is a severe loss whatever the circumstances.

Whatever deficiencies he had with regard to the evangelical conception of forgiveness, it is at the same time true

37 Op. cit., Chapter II.

that he did escape some of the pitfalls of a lax view into which some protestants have fallen. Athanasius was firmly convinced that forgiveness, unless followed by moral transformation, was not only useless, it was unwise.³⁸ Scott has recognized this. He says: "Athanasius has done valuable, if sadly overlooked, service to theology in recognizing that forgiveness is after all only a means to an end. It is not in itself a good. There is only one end that is good and that is the establishment of goodness, or, in other words, the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Should forgiveness fail to secure obedience, and should its proclamation, as not infrequently happens, have the unforeseen effect of producing moral laxity, forgiveness becomes an evil rather than a good. Such an eventuality is wholly precluded when an Athanasius rises to assert that the final cause of forgiveness is obedience, or, in other words, the end of religion is not forgiveness, but the end of forgiveness is religion".³⁹

Dr Scott does not cite any references here in support of this statement, so it is difficult to know to what he is referring. But so far as the writer is aware, Athanasius nowhere asserts that the final cause of forgiveness is

³⁸ Cf. C. Ar., II, 68.

³⁹ Scott: op. cit., pp. 36, 37.

40

obedience. We are of the opinion that Athanasius would have said no more than that no disobedient creature can be a son of the all-holy God. It would not seem that one who was so conscious of God's constant love, a love which prompted the Incarnation of the Word to redeem sinful and disobedient men, would believe that such a God required obedience in order to forgive. It is that there is less of the righteous wrath of God against sin in the writings of Athanasius, than of the terrible effect of sin upon the sinner. Forgiveness would mean little, therefore, so long as sin remained within the soul. He was not greatly concerned that the angry God should be appeased, but he was concerned that the sinner should turn from his evil way. His thought was not that the sinner must seek first to be forgiven, but that he should claim the power of God which was able to remove all sin from his soul, that he might live, and live with God.

40 Sträter agrees with Scott. He says (op. cit., p.145 f.) that the release from sin and the curse, from death and corruption comes not as a free gift of God's grace mediated through Christ's act, but rather grows out of man's moral recovery. Man is not first to be freed from the guilt of sin and the curse of death, and then once released, to be renewed in the image of God, and redirected along paths of righteousness. On the contrary, the sequence is just the reverse. This release is the result, not the forerunner, of man's spiritual regeneration. Sträter, however, seems to be more in harmony with later Catholic theology than was Athanasius. Of course, Sträter and Scott are not without some grounds for their contention. But it must be kept in mind that Athanasius clearly says that the removal of the curse was a necessary first step, and until that had been accomplished, nothing could be done toward the renewing of the inner man.

Athanasius' teaching here may be called moralism by some, catholic error as opposed to protestant truth. But, when we take into account the categories of the time, he has presented most forcefully an aspect of the truth which has sometimes been overlooked, and which always may be heeded with profit.

One other point that should be noticed in favour of Athanasius' treatment here is the complete absence of what is sometimes known as the patristic theory of the Atonement, or the theory which regarded the death of Christ as a ransom paid to the devil for the release of the souls of men, over whom he had acquired certain rights. This is all the more significant when we remember its wide, if not universal, acceptance among the theologians of the later patristic age, and even down to the time of Anselm. That Athanasius is entirely free from this idea, is one of the few points at which⁴¹ all of his interpreters are agreed. This is another example of the deep religious sensitiveness of Athanasius, which more than once saw more deeply and more truly than did his contemporaries.⁴²

41 Pell: op. cit., p. 155, Franks: op. cit., I, 71; so also Bethune-Baker and Voigt.

42 Professor Bethune-Baker: An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, p. 340, sees in Athanasius' presentation of the matter, an attempt to mediate between two ideas - ransom to Satan, and sacrifice to God - which remained unreconciled throughout the patristic period. The two elements are united in Athanasius by allowing Death to take the place of the devil.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FACT OF REDEMPTION: THE WORK OF THE INCARNATE LOGOS IN ITS POSITIVE ASPECTS.

"For He became man that we might be made God: and He manifested Himself through the body that we might take cognizance of the invisible Father: and He underwent insult at the hands of men that we might inherit immortality.....But the successes of the Saviour, brought about by His Incarnation, are of such a kind and magnitude that, if one wished to go through them all, it would be like those who gaze at the expanse of the sea and try to count its waves. For as it is impossible to take in all the waves with the eye, their multitudinous approach transcending the perception of him who attempts it, so also is it impossible for him who wishes to take in all the successes of Christ in the body, to grasp the whole even by counting them, and those which transcend his apprehension being more than those he thinks he has taken in....And all are equally wonderful, and wherever one turns one's eyes, there one sees the Divine working of the Word and is beyond measure astonished". - De Inc., 54.

In the last chapter we discussed the negative aspects of Athanasius theory of the work of Christ. We saw that, by His death, He removed those barriers, the curse, the reign of death, the power of the demons, which had effectually prevented man from achieving his high destiny - life with God. We come now to consider the various phases of the positive side of Redemption - the communication of the new life.

One of the ways in which Athanasius viewed the work of Christ was that of re-creating, or renewing¹ fallen and ruined humanity. This concept of recreating was one of the archbishop's favourite figures. We find it first in the early chapters of the De Incarnatione and from thence forward it is not forgotten, occurring frequently in the later writings.

The idea that the Logos is the Creator and hence, naturally the Re-creator, is an integral part of Athanasius' thinking.² He frequently reminds us that it was the Logos who has made us and not we ourselves. It was He, pursuant to the Father's will, who impressed upon us those qualities which make us what we are, images of the Image of God, above all other creatures. Thus we are in a special sense creatures of the Logos.³ So it is that "the relationship of created man to God, the eternal Logos, did not begin in the fact of the Incarnation, but the fact of the Incarnation grew, as it were, naturally out of it", (i.e. the previous relationship of creation).⁴ It was not only natural, it was

1 *Ανακτίσις*, *ἀναγενώσις*. Cf. *C. Ar.*, II, 53.

2 So important does Pell regard this concept of the work of Christ that he includes under it all that Christ did except what He accomplished by His suffering and death on the cross. All commentators regard this as one of the more important of the Athanasian figures.

3 It was this resemblance of man to God, faint though it was, which constituted the possibility of the Incarnation. Had they been totally dissimilar, it would have been impossible for the Logos to appear in man. So the fact that man was created *λογικῶς* was both the ground for and possibility of the Incarnation of the Word.

4 Moberly: Atonement and Personality, p. 349.

"inherently apt" that the Creator should be the Re-creator.⁵

It is the natural sequence. For only He who made us would know how to remake us.⁶ Further, our author seems to feel that the Logos has a vested interest in man. He was not merely as a king who could not permit the defection of his subjects, when that defection meant their death. For a king may or may not care if some of his subjects perish, but the Logos Himself has made man. We are not merely subjects, we are His creatures, the works of His hands. So He cannot allow us to destroy ourselves through our own sin and folly. The Creator must, therefore, re-create.⁷

The "re-creation", or "renewing", means simply what it says. It was part of the work of the Saviour to restore man to the condition in which he was before the fall. This necessitated a two-fold work, a removal of acquired evils,

⁵ De Inc., 1 - "For it will not appear improper (ἐνάντιον) for the Father to have wrought the salvation of this universe in Him through whom He made it". Cf. De Inc., 20 etc.

⁶ Cf. De Inc., 14.

⁷ Cf. De Inc., 10 Athanasius felt that it was necessary that man should be renewed in the image of God because to leave him as he had become - irrational, one with the beasts, led astray by demoniacal deceits, harkening to their voices rather than the voice of their Maker - was as intolerable for God as it was ruinous for man. (De Inc., 13) It had been better if God had not created man rational, than once

λογικόν, He allowed him to live the life of the irrational creatures (ἄλογων). (Loc. cit.). An Emperor can not permit, as a point of honour, his subjects to come under the power and sway of another, so the Great King can not allow those who had been the partakers of the Image of God to dwell in the land of darkness subject to the demons who rule therein.

and a restoration of lost blessings. The deliverance from the curse and rule of death, the negative side, was discussed in the last chapter. On the positive side, the re-creation consisted, partially at least, in the restoration of man's lost supernatural graces, immortality, incorruption, the blessed life and in establishing him in knowledge and virtue as a son of God.

Another one of the tasks of the Saviour was the renewing of men's minds with the right knowledge of Him who was their Creator and God. Athanasius was enough of a Greek and sufficiently close, both in time and in the world of ideas, to the Apologists and the earlier Greek Fathers to regard the importation of the new and true knowledge about the Deity as one of the chief offices of the Redeemer.⁸

We remember that man was created in the image of the Logos. God in His goodness did not permit that they should be as the irrational animals (ἄλογοι) who can know only mundane matters and whose lives are, therefore, profitless;

⁸ Pell: op. cit., Chapter III, understands Athanasius to teach that the restoration of the knowledge of God is not only of essential moment for the messianic activity of Christ, but is also of equal value with Christ's activity in reconciliation and the renewing of the inner life. In support of his statement Pell quotes from the De Inc., 6,7,9,45,50,54. And in the references cited Athanasius undoubtedly does give large place to the value of the new knowledge. It is significant that he quotes from none of the later writings. This does not mean that Athanasius repudiated his earlier belief, as scattering references show (in the Festal Epistles especially), but that it's relative importance diminished as the entrance of more ethical values broadened his mental and spiritual horizon.

but He imparted to them a share of His Logos that they should be λογικοί, rational, and should be able to receive "a conception of the Father, and so coming to the knowledge Maker, live the happy and truly blessed life".⁹

Instead of continuing in the knowledge and contemplation of the Creator, man gradually turned away from God and so defiled his soul that the knowledge of his Maker was forgotten and lost. Creation still proclaimed God to be the creator of the world, and man might have learned afresh from the world about him the truth that he had lost, but either he could not or would not.¹⁰ Indeed, being made in God's image was sufficient to enable man to know God.¹¹ But, knowing our weakness, God did not stop there. He sent prophets, men of our own kind, to proclaim Him. In case we defaced the image within us so that it no longer mirrored the Logos, if we shut our eyes to the world around us we might, at least, listen to men like ourselves. But the prophets went unheeded;¹² and men's minds became completely darkened.

When God saw that men would no longer find Him in His works of creation and providence, nor give heed to the voices of their fellowmen, even though they were the prophets of God, the Word of God became a man, like as we are, that all

⁹ De Inc., 11.

¹⁰ De Inc., 12. Athanasius seems to have thought that man could have regained his lost knowledge, and again contemplated God had the desire to do so been present. So also C. Ar., I, 12.

¹¹ Loc. cit.

¹² See above note 7.

might see Him and know that He was the Logos, and, through Him, know the Father.¹³ He gave such a new direction to their thinking and a new interpretation of the commonplace sights and events of their lives that they were enabled to perceive the truth where, heretofore, they had found error only. Those who had seen gods in men saw the works of such so far surpassed that there could be only one conclusion - that Christ alone was the Son of God. Those who had mistakenly worshipped demons saw the object of their adoration put to flight, and were forced to admit that the Lord alone was God. Those who had revered heroes of former days saw a more worthy object of their adoration in Him who had conquered even death itself.¹⁴

Athanasius' point here is made vivid by one of his famous similes:

"For as when the sun is up, darkness no longer prevails....; so now the Divine Manifestation of the Word of God is come, the darkness of idols prevails no longer, but every part of the whole earth is illuminated by His teaching. Just as, when an emperor, reigning in some country, does not appear, but remains within his own house, frequently some disorderly persons, abusing this withdrawal of his, proclaim themselves emperor, and each being invested with the outward show, cheats the simple with his appearance. Thus men are deceived....But when the true emperor comes forth, then the deceivers are convicted by his presence, and men, seeing the true emperor, abandon those who formerly deceived them. So, in like manner, demons formerly deceived men....but when the Word of God appeared in a body, and made known to us

¹³ De Inc., 14.

¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

His Father, then the deceit of demons vanished and ceased; and men, looking to the true God....., abandon idols, and themselves come to a clear knowledge of the true God".¹⁵

Athanasius confused somewhat man's intellectual emancipation and renewal with his release from the power of the demons. There are, apparently two causes for idol worship or lack of the true knowledge of God: (1) plain ignorance, or ignorance due to sin, and (2) the deceit of demons. And often our sinful ignorance is regarded as being due to the deceit of the demons, and vice versa, the deceit of demons is thought of as having been made possible by our culpable ignorance. So also the removal of our ignorance is sometimes thought of as effected by the mere appearance of the Logos in the flesh so that erring humanity might come to a true knowledge of God by seeing the Godhead incarnate before their very eyes.¹⁶ At other times, it is effected by the teaching of the Son who has given man the words of Truth.¹⁷ Or again, it is accomplished by breaking¹⁸ the power of the demons.

¹⁵ Ibid., 55.

¹⁶ Ibid., 13-19 etc. Pell: op. cit., p. 160 f., regards this as the sole cause of man's intellectual re-creation. It is the only one which receives any prominence in the De Inc., but His teaching is mentioned more frequently later. Cf. Ad Episcopos Aegypti, 1-3. The revelation of the Father spoken of in C. Ar., I, 12, 16, II, 81 etc. is not wholly by the appearance of the Logos.

¹⁷ Cf. Ad Epis. Aegypti, 1-3 etc.

¹⁸ The constant references throughout the De Inc. that the demons have worked illusions and deceits upon men lead one to assume that, once the power is broken of those who are said to have caused man's ignorance, man is ipso facto nearer knowledge.

The victory over the demons, the breaking of their power, and the putting to an end to their deceits was accomplished in many ways: (1) Christ's crucifixion was regarded as a crushing victory which finally broke their power,¹⁹ (2) Christ's teaching has enabled us to perceive²⁰ their deception so that they can no longer lead us astray, (3) Christ has conquered by reason of His divine nature, and to all who, through communion with Him, participate in that divine nature,²¹ He has given power over demons, (4) demons, heathen deities, and idols are identified and the overthrow of the latter constitutes a victory over the former,²² (5) magic, all demons are said to flee before the Name or the Sign of the Cross.²³ Each of the five is regarded as final and sufficient in itself to end the regime of the demons. Thus the new knowledge is seen as the cause and result of the overthrow of the kingdom of evil and the destruction of the power of the devil. It is apparent that ignorance and demoniacal deceits were never really separated in Athanasius' mind, and as a result his thinking is confused

19 See Chapter V.

20 He who through the ages - since Eve - has deluded and deceived man, led him astray, and into error, and finally into his own pit of wickedness is now powerless against the Christ-enlightened man. Since our Lord has vanquished Satan "even the infant child lays his hand on the hole of the Asp, and laughs at him who deceived Eve". (Ad Epis. Aegypti, 2). Man is said to have been taught the difference between that which is true and that which is false so he is no longer deceived by him who simulates truth, but leads man into error. (ibid., 1).

21 C. Ar., III, 40. Cf. ibid., II, 69, Seeberg: Dogmengeschichte, II, 77.

22 De Inc., 30, 32 etc.

23 Ibid., 50 etc., Vita Antonii, passim.

and his expression contradictory, but there can be little doubt as to the idea which he has attempted to convey.

One noticeable feature of Athanasius' teaching here is the practical absence of any reference to salvation through knowledge. Of course, there are a few scattered references which are reminiscent of Celestine of Alexandria and the Apologists in this respect.²⁴ But in his chief works they are so negligible that we may safely leave them out of account. Athanasius did regard man's intellectual emancipation and renewal as definitely a saving act contributing materially to man's general redemption. But he did not look on Christ's revelation as some esoteric body of doctrine, the possession of which was the sole prerequisite for admission into the celestial kingdom.

One feels that this whole process of redirecting the mind of man in paths of truth is coldly and purely intellectual. It is just as if a master chemist were to point out to a group of ignorant students which one of a group of yellow metals was gold, and which were cheap imitations; so Christ enables us to distinguish the true God from all the host of imposters which man had, theretofore, erroneously thought to be the Deity. Perhaps it is asking too much to expect an ethical treatment of such a subject. But it seems to us that seeing God is quite as much an ethical matter as it is an intellectual

²⁴ Cf. De Inc., 15. But such references are to be found chiefly in the Festal Epistles, e.g. V, 1.

process. Nevertheless, one looks in vain for a mention of the pure in heart; it is merely ignorance replaced by information.

Athanasius has been charged with overemphasis at this point; but it does not seem to the writer to be a valid criticism. It is true, of course, that some of the Apologists did rejoice in the newness of knowledge until it seemed that they had forgotten about the newness of life. But the outlook of the fourth century was not that of the second. And while Athanasius undoubtedly is guilty, from our point of view, of an over emphasis in the De Incarnatione, he is not guilty if we take a more comprehensive view of his teachings. The value of the new knowledge occupies a much more minor place in the later Contra Arianos than it does in the youthful Apology, although it was never completely lost sight of, nor discarded.

Doubtless there are some, who, from the vantage point of the twentieth century, are able to look with conscious superiority at the entire concept, and who would charge Athanasius, not with overemphasis, but with the perpetuation of what they might classify as vestigial paganism, or, at least, an undesirable idiosyncrasy of the Greek mind. However, it seems to us that Athanasius, in common with the other Greek Fathers, recognized in Christ's redemptive work a value which is not so apparent to some today. While their deep appreciation of their intellectual redemption may be

attributable, in part, to the influence of extra-Christian philosophy, it is certainly to be partially accounted for by their nearness to the pagan world. Athanasius lived in daily contact with pagan ignorance and superstition. He, or his fathers, had but recently come out from such a life. When he looked upon the gods whom over half of his neighbours still served, and whom, but for the grace of God, he would still be serving, it is small wonder that he stops to render thanks unto our Lord Jesus Christ who delivered him from so great an error and taught him to love and serve our heavenly Father. When he saw his neighbours cowering in terror before the unpredictable malice of the countless hosts of devils and evil spirits, who should be surprised that his heart was filled with gratitude to the Saviour whose truth had made him free?

Another phase of Christ's re-creation of man was the restoration of those graces which had been lost through sin - namely, immortality, incorruption, and communion with God. Christ, by His death, had removed the legal barrier, the sentence of death, which had effectually prevented man from securing, or even appropriating these gifts. This having been done, the way was opened for the Redeemer to give them to man again.

The method by which the Saviour restores immortality and incorruption to man is sometimes spoken of as "the grace of the resurrection" and sometimes it is thought to be

accomplished by "union with the Logos". Two quotations will serve to illustrate the point. In the De Incarnatione the body which the Logos took is said to "remain incorruptible, through the indwelling of the Word, and for the future corruption should cease from all by the grace of the resurrection".²⁵ The second method is referred to in the Contra Arianos and reads as follows: "For it was fitting that the flesh, corruptible though it was, should no longer according to its own nature remain mortal, but, because of the Word who had put it on, should abide incorruptible. For as He, having come into our body, was conformed to our condition, so we, receiving Him, partake of the immortality that is from Him".²⁶ The two thoughts are united in another reference, with the inclusion of a third element - His death. Christ is said to have taken a body and given it over to death in order to exhaust the sentence of death which was upon them and also in order that "He might turn them again to incorruption, and quicken them from the death by the personal appropriation of His body and by the grace of the resurrection, making death to vanish completely from them as straw from fire".²⁷ Again, in the Festal Epistles²⁸ the resurrection of the Saviour is spoken of merely as the proof of our immortality and incorruption.

²⁵ Ibid., 9.

²⁶ C. Ar., III, 57 ad fin.

²⁷ De Inc., 8, cf. C. Ar., II, 67-70.

²⁸ Festal Epistles, XI, 14.

Athanasius' own mind seems not to have been very clear at this point, or else he was careless in his use of language. But if we should take what appears to be his most probable meaning, both from the passages quoted and other references, it would be that the grace of incorruption and immortality is implanted in the human soul a second time by the participation of that soul, as a member of the race, in the head of that race - Christ, the incarnate Logos. The participation of the man, Jesus, in the being of the divine Son was sufficient to enable Him to be victorious over death and live forever. His resurrection is the sure and abiding pledge that all who are joined to that same Son of God shall rise, that they, by that union, have achieved immortality.

One is impressed here, as in the case of the impartation of knowledge, by the comparative absence of the ethical. The language and concepts employed, while not entirely physical,²⁹ are certainly not moral. The method of attainment has more to do with the solidarity of the race than with the Sermon on the Mount. There is no mention here of the principle

29 Athanasius has been accused of desiring, above all else, escape from physical death. This can scarcely be so since he found the satisfaction of all his desires in Christianity; yet Christ had not brought release from physical death. He had merely transformed it. Not was his concept of immortality wholly physical. This is shown by the fact that he frequently spoke of "living forever as gods" with the emphasis on "as gods" rather than on "forever". He did not desire mere immortality, the wicked had that, but he did long for a life with God. Such a life, he felt, was alone worthy of the name of immortality. Incorruption, on the other hand seems to have been chiefly a physical, or better, a metaphysical, rather than an ethical term.

previously affirmed that goodness is being, and evil is non-being, that life is an ethical quality. It is merely that those who have come into union with the Life have received such an infusion of His essence that they too have become immortal and incorruptible. The only difference between this process and that of creation is that in the former case, since death had become woven into the texture of men's lives, it was necessary that the Life also be woven into the fabric to counteract the evil effects of death and in creation it was only necessary to stamp the necessary qualities on man.³⁰ Re-creation might be compared to the draining of the impure blood from a diseased person and the infusion of new, healthy blood; creation is only the latter; the result of both is life to that person. But there is one difference. In re-creation the Life is woven into the fabric of human lives, hence the grace of immortality and incorruption imparted is permanent, as it was not in the case of creation. But in the references cited, and in many similar to them, re-creation is portrayed as being, from man's standpoint, quite as amoral as creation was. And this is a definite weakness.

We have already noted that the death of Christ secured man's immunity from any forensic penalties of his sin, or that of his representative, ancestor, Adam. And while this

30 De Inc., 44.

was the least important, according to the thought of Athanasius, still it was a very effectual barrier in itself, and as such needed to be removed. However, when it was removed, it still left man in a state of corruption and sin, as helpless as before, with no chance of achieving that divine life for which he was created. It was sin and the consequent corruption which constituted the real barrier in the way of man's recovery. In the final analysis, it is sin, the evil which we have incorporated into our souls, and not any divine decree that bars us from the presence of the Holy One of Israel, and the life of blessedness. We believe that Athanasius realized this full well. The work of Christ conceived of as taking humanity, sick unto death, and restoring it to the health of righteousness was not overlooked. Many times it comes strongly to the fore, but too often only to be covered over by the physical, the metaphysical, or the legalistic. But even so it is never lost; it is only occasionally lost sight of in the welter of ideas which Athanasius retained concerning the work of Christ.

To ascribe the slightest ethical insight to Athanasius is to go against the judgment of several eminent theologians who have pronounced against such a conclusion. Principal Denney was one of Athanasius' severest critics at this point. To Dr. Denney the Athanasian writings seemed utterly devoid

of ethical content. He regarded the De Incarnatione as, at least sub-Christian, if not actually unchristian. If Principal Denney's judgment of Athanasius could be compressed into one sentence, it might, with some degree of fairness, be phrased thus: Athanasius' teaching about redemption and reconciliation is the dark night of metaphysic and speculation, where fitful flashes of the moral serve only to accentuate the all-enveloping gloom. "The one thing", accuses the Principal, "which bulks in the mind of Athanasius from first to last, is not the sin of man, nor the estrangement between God and man, nor the need of effecting a change in man's relation to God in the sphere of conscience," but physical death.³¹

There was unquestionably a physical side to Athanasius' theory; he did use metaphysical categories at times. But such a sweeping statement as Dr. Denny has made is not only very unfair to Athanasius, but is also, in the opinion of the writer, untrue even of the De Incarnatione. Western theology has tended to emphasize the question of how man was to be treated. This consideration was regarded as being so fundamental that any system which failed to deal with it

³¹ Denny: The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation, p. 38, cf. pp. 35-44. Thomasius (Christi, Person Und Werk) takes a similar position, and to a certain extent, so does Rashdall: The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology. All three seem, however, to have based their judgment solely upon the De Inc. But it does not seem to be sound scholarship to judge a man by one treatise and that a work of his youth.

was considered of doubtful value, if not wholly unethical. It was Athanasius' failure to treat this subject in any detail which seems to lie at the root of Principal Denney's condemnation. And it is quite true, as we have already observed, that his failure to deal adequately with this subject of forgiveness is one of the most disappointing features of Athanasius' teaching. But it by no means follows that his writings are, therefore, devoid of ethical content. In fact, we do not see how anyone whose acquaintance with the Athanasian writings is wider than the De Incarnatione,³² and possibly Harnack, could seriously make such an accusation. For few men have realized the deadly character of sin as did Athanasius. Far from disregarding it or considering it venial, he perceived with terrifying clarity that the soul that sinneth shall surely die. So he did not speak of forgiveness until he felt that forgiveness was ethically justified. It was not how the soul was to be treated that seemed most important to him; it was how the soul was to be healed and saved. Athanasius brought this out most clearly in his treatment of the inefficacy of repentance,³³ nor can it be legitimately objected that he was thinking in physical terms in light of his more outspoken

³² Harnack and Denney have made practically the same criticism, in practically the same words. So it does not seem unlikely that Harnack has influenced Principal Denney's judgment, to this extent at least. Cf. Note on Harnack's criticism at the end of Chapter III.

³³ Cf. De Inc., 7, and Chapter III.

statement in the Contra Arianos, II, 68. Canon Moberly's comment on this passage brings out the point with admirable clarity. "Why", he asks, "could not God redeem man by a word of command in power? Simply because such a command-word would not have the effect which was required. What was required was a change, not so much in man's treatment, as in man's deserving. It was not his freedom from punishment, but his freedom from sin: it was not an external change, but a change within himself which was really (i.e. which needed) to be brought about".³⁴

Dr. Melville Scott has gone to the other extreme.³⁵ He has called this process of removing sin from the souls of men the true Athanasian theory of the Atonement. This view is said to be the product of his mature thinking and deep religious experience. Athanasius is said to have reached it by outgrowing and discarding, one by one, his views about the other aspects of Redemption.³⁶ It is quite true that this is one of the most significant parts of Athanasius' teaching about Redemption. But we do not think that all other aspects were discarded and this alone retained. Dr. Scott has called this "the Atonement as an Internal Process",

34 Moberly: Atonement and Personality, p. 352.

35 Scott: Athanasius on the Atonement, pp. 46-73.

36 It seems that Dr. Scott has found in Athanasius just what he desires to find, and since this process of purification is satisfactory to Scott, and all other aspects are not, Athanasius is said to have discarded them as "puerile and unworthy" in order to reach his true view.

and sometimes merely "sanctification". This latter term is misleading. While it is of value in showing the relation of Athanasian thinking to modern Protestant theology, the term, "sanctification", with its entirely ethical connotation, is not the proper medium to express the partly ethical, partly physical thought of our teacher. But in spite of whatever defects Scott's interpretation may have, it must be granted that he has done no small service in that he has emphasized one of the most important Athanasian concepts, one which heretofore has been either neglected or passed over in silence.

This conception of the work of Christ depends for its validity, first, upon the homousia of the human nature of Jesus with that of other men, and secondly, upon the perfect sinlessness of the Master. We have already reviewed the evidence and given our reasons for holding that Athanasius taught that Christ assumed a human nature which differed in no respects from our own except that it was without sin. He did not take the Adamic nature or any pre-fallen nature, or a nature especially purified by an immaculate conception.³⁷ In other words, Christ, on His human side, was just as we are, endowed with human "passions", and "infirmities", even "prone to sin",³⁸ yet He was without sin,

³⁷ The Immaculate Conception is said to have been regarded by Athanasius as proof of the reality of the humanity of Christ and not to show that He had a different nature, or mentioned as the reason for His sinlessness. Cf. Scott: op. cit., p. 57, Dorner: History of Christian Doctrine, III, 345.

³⁸ Φιλα μαρτήμονα , Expos. in Ps., 21:31, cf. also C.Ar., I, 43.

Reference has also been made to the saying, frequently heard in the Greek Church in Athanasius' time, that if Christ did not take our nature, but rather some other perfect or pre-fallen nature, then ours is left untouched, unhealed, unsaved.³⁹ Further, if Christ was unable to take our nature and sanctify it, then what hope or chance have we to do what Christ Himself was unable to perform? The very thing which would prevent Christ from taking our nature as it is and saving it would prevent us from saving ourselves, even though we were endowed with His power. What help would it have been to man if He had taken foreign nature (i.e. any nature but our own) and caused it to live without sin? That is not our problem at all. But if the Redeemer did take our nature as it is and caused it to live as it is intended that we all should live - without sin - then that is of tremendous significance for the race.⁴⁰

Athanasius seems to have taught that this is what the Saviour did do. For example, we read in one place as follows:⁴¹

³⁹ Cf. treatment of Christ's human nature in Chapter IV.
⁴⁰ Scott: op. cit., p.72, has put the thought very well: "If Christ painted a portrait on ivory, this is no encouragement to us who have to paint the same portrait on clay". Dr. Scott is able to defend vigorously what he believes to be Athanasius' teaching here, because he has found his own theory in Athanasius. Dr. Scott is a disciple of Du Bose (Gospel in the Gospels, and The Gospel according to St. Paul, etc.) Scott lauds Athanasius for having discovered, in the span of a single lifetime, a truth which the present generation owes to the thought of Dr. Dubose. (cf. p.47). One is always a little suspicious when an author finds a somewhat unusual modern theory perfectly worked out in one of the early Fathers, although there are no a priori reasons why this should not be done. But the very fact that Dr. Scott holds a brief for the theory which he believed Athanasius to have held naturally led him - unconsciously, to be sure - to magnify similarities and to gloss over or ignore differences. That this is what he has done will be more

"Let no man then stumble at what belongs to man, but rather let a man know that in nature the Logos Himself is impassible, and yet because of the flesh which He put on, these things⁴² are ascribed to him, since they are proper to the flesh, and the body itself is proper to the Saviour. And while He Himself, being impassible in nature, remains as He is, unharmed⁴³ by these affections, but obliterating and destroying them, men, their passions as if changed and abolished in the Impassible henceforth become themselves also impassible and free from them forever...."

Again in the same vein we read:

"If, then, after taking him (i.e. man or human nature) when enfeebled⁴⁴ into Himself, He renews him again through that sure renewal into endless permanence, and therefore is made⁴⁵ one with him in order to raise him to a diviner lot...."

It is evident from these two passages that it was the physical that Athanasius had in mind here. The same is true of numerous other references where Christ is spoken of as⁴⁶ having "sanctified the flesh". In fact, it may be said that it is primarily the physical that Athanasius is thinking of whenever he says that the Saviour has taken the "infirmities", or the "passions", or the "affections" of man

40 contd. more evident as we proceed. Cf. his Atonement for the similarity between his own view and the theory which he maintains is the true Athanasian view.

41 C. Ar., III, 34.

42 I.e. hunger, thirst, sleeping, weeping, working, deprecating the cup, limited knowledge, in a word "all that belongs to the flesh".

43 βλαπτόμενος

44 Σαθρωθέντα. Newman seems to understand this word to have a purely physical connotation. Cf. C. Ar., II, 66 for a similar usage.

45 C. Ar., IV, 33.

46 Cf. C. Ar., I, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, II, 10, III, 39 etc.

47

and destroyed them. . The method of removing these "passions" seems simply to have been the contact of the eternal Logos upon human nature in the person of the God-man. It was as if the Deity of the Logos was a consuming fire which burned away all the dross of creaturely characteristics. Quite frequently it is spoken of as if it were an automatic and instantaneous process. Yet that could hardly have been the case because Jesus is admitted to have possessed these creaturely characteristics throughout His life time, and even on the cross He said that He was athirst. So by no stretch of the imagination could it be said that the human nature of the God-man had had these "affections" and passions purged from it until after the resurrection. Nor could it be said that in the case of mere Christians that they ever lose these infirmities as long as they remain upon the earth. Yet it cannot be denied that Athanasius did regard part of the Redemption wrought by Christ as being just the removal of these "passions", first from the man, Jesus,

47 So in C. Ar., III, 32:.... "and it became the Lord in putting on human flesh, to put it on whole with the affections proper to it; that, as we say that the body was His own, so we also may say that the affections of the body were proper to Him alone, though they did not touch Him according to His Godhead. If then the body had been another, to him had been the affections attributed; but if the flesh is the Word's, (for "the Word became flesh"), of necessity then the affections of the flesh are also ascribed to Him, whose the flesh is. But He to whom the passions are ascribed, namely, liability to condemnation, scourging, thirst, crucifixion, death, and all the other infirmities of the body, has also the power and grace needed for their restoration".

and then from all Christians. It is equally certain that these "passions" were thought of as being, on the whole, physical. How they could be said to have been removed, even "obliterated", and yet fail to disappear from men, is a problem upon which Athanasius does not shed much light. The only possible solution would be that this purging of all creaturiness would take place after death. But that is only a conjecture; Athanasius does not offer a solution.

Athanasius had in mind more than the merely physical passions. We are told that the whole man has been appropri-⁴⁸ated by the Master and renewed by Him. Sometimes, as we have already seen, only a physical or perhaps metaphysical, renewal is contemplated; at other times, he seems to have had a moral transformation in view. Thus, frequently we find both the physical and moral mentioned together, neither being carefully distinguished from the other, as in the following passage:

"And well has the Prophet said 'carried', and has not said 'He remedied our infirmities', lest as being external to the body and only healing it, as He has always done, He should leave man still subject to death; but he carries our infirmities, and He Himself bore our sins, that it might be shown that He has become man for us, and that the body, which in Him bore them, was His own body; while He received no hurt Himself by 'bearing our sins in His body on the tree', as Peter speaks, we men were redeemed from our passions,⁴⁹ and were filled with the righteousness of the Logos".⁵⁰

48 C. Ar., IV, 36 "....seen, I say, not in His invisible Godhead, but in the operation of the Godhead through the human body and the whole man which he has renewed by its appropriation to Himself".

49 Παθῶν

50 C. Ar., III, 31 fin.

The indiscriminate mingling of the two is even more clearly seen in another passage in which the superiority of the present redemption wrought by Christ to all previous attempts at man's rehabilitation. It reads:

.....Thus man remained mortal and corruptible as before, liable to the affections proper to his nature. But now the Word having become man, and having appropriated what belongs to the flesh, no longer do these touch the body because of the Word who has come in it, but they are destroyed by Him, and henceforth men no longer remain in sin and death, following their own passions, but raised up according to the Word's power, they abide forever immortal and incorruptible".⁵¹

Or again, his apparent inability to distinguish between the moral and the physical is seen in his treatment of the particular affection, changeableness. This infirmity is, in one sense, the epitome of creatureliness, and, as such, is physical, yet it is also regarded that that which is the source of man's sin, so that to remedy that is practically to redeem man from a life of sin. Adam and his race were changeable and therefore sinful. Christ was unchangeable, and in so far as He imparted to His race something of His divine immutability, He was not only remedying a metaphysical defect, He was also saving man from sin.⁵²

Athanasius' language, as it is sometimes wholly physical, is also at times wholly ethical. Thus he tells us that if the Logos is not God then we have Him only externally as

⁵¹ Ibid., III, 33.

⁵² Cf. ibid., I, 51, II, 68 etc.

a mere teacher who gives us instruction. And if our relation to him be but an external one, then "sin has not lost its reign over the flesh, being inherent and not cast out of it". But such a doctrine is a doctrine of the enemies of Christ and of the heretics. Christ is not a creature but God and the blessed Apostle Himself assures us that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus"⁵³. Christ's relationship to us is an internal one and by His indwelling⁵⁴ He has cast out sin and thus sanctified the flesh.

First the moral and then the physical, the Christian and then the Hellenic predominates in Athanasius' thinking. Curiously enough he seems never to have been able to distinguish between the two. For, as we have seen, we find the two often mingled together as if they were not two but diverse parts of one whole. But this freedom which Christ has brought is not to be thought of as composed of a higher and a lower gift. It would be presumptuous, of course, to say exactly what value he placed on each. But certainly we may say that both were of great value for him. His double background would not allow him to disparage either, and both are presented as if of equal significance for man's redemption. To Athanasius, as to all the Greek Fathers, it was a real

⁵³ Ephesians, II, 10.

⁵⁴ C. Ar., II, 56. Scott translates the important phrase as follows: "...in order that by His indwelling in the flesh sin might be entirely thrust forth from the flesh". This seems to be a correct interpretation, if not an exactly literal translation.

salvation which could lift man above his natural condition, above all the hampering and degrading qualities of creatureliness. For these things kept man back from his destiny just as truly as did his moral evil. But it is another tribute to the true Christian spirit of the man that he did not stop there; he went on to the real trouble with man, namely, sin.

How was sin cast out of the flesh? Athanasius does not give us any very clear answer to this question. But we have already seen enough to know that he would not have proposed any arbitrary or mechanical method for its eradication. There are, however, indications that he felt that sin was cast out by a life long struggle which in every instance culminated in perfect obedience. The last and greatest struggle with temptation was the crucifixion.⁵⁶ And our Lord's triumph there was final and complete. This had not been possible had not the power of the Word been everpresent, strengthening His humanity. But because the divine power was available, sin was utterly cast out and His human nature

55 It is now evident that Dr. Scott, in his vigorous defence of the Athanasian conception of Redemption against those critics who can see only the physical in the writings of the archbishop, has overstated the case. Just as Principal Denney and Thomasius err in one direction, so Scott has erred in the other. In his eyes, Athanasius' teaching was as purely ethical as the New Testament itself. But, in spite of his overstatement and neglect of contrary evidence, Dr. Scott's service in bringing the ethical in Athanasius so forcibly to our attention has been most valuable. It must not be forgotten that it is a service in which Canon Moberly has rendered able assistance,

56 Cf. Expos. in Psalmum, esp. 68,69.

became non posse peccare. So His flesh became sanctified and was the first fruits of the redemption of the race.

There can be little doubt that Athanasius believed that all men were sanctified as a result of the sanctification of the human nature of Christ by Himself. And again the question of "how" arises. As Newman has put it..."our Lord has deigned to become an instrumental cause, as it may be called, of the life of each individual Christian. But at first sight it may be objected to the whole course of Athanasius' argument thus: what connection is there between the sanctification of Christ's manhood and ours? How does it prove that human nature is sanctified because a particular specimen of it was sanctified in Him?"⁵⁷ The answer seems, as usual, to lie along several lines. For one thing, Christ's sanctified body was the leaven which leavened the whole because all were united to Him through the solidarity of the⁵⁸ race. Again we find the idea expressed that all the qualities of human nature are transferred to the Logos and the qualities of the Word are transferred to us and we are healed

⁵⁷ Note on C. Ar., I, 48.

⁵⁸ We have already seen how this concept has been employed with regard to the death of Christ. And unless we assume some such relationship here, much of Athanasius' language is meaningless. It is, at least, a view held by other Fathers of the period, e.g. Chrysostom: Hom. in Matt., 82,5, Hom. in Joann., 46,3; Cyril, Joann., X,2; Gregory of Nyssa, Orat. Catech., 37 where a real physical union with Christ is asserted. For further consideration see Chapter VII.

59

by the transfer. We transfer to him our weak sinful human nature, we receive in return that nature of His which "was sanctified first". So we read in the Contra Arianos, II, 61 that "His Flesh was saved and liberated before all others, as being the Word's body; and henceforth we, becoming incorporate with it, are saved after its pattern. For in it our Lord becomes our guide to the Kingdom of Heaven and to His own Father...." But the concept of which he made fullest use was that of the mediation of the blessings of redemption by the indwelling of the Spirit, a thought with which we shall deal more fully in the next chapter.

The concept of redemption for which Athanasius is, perhaps, best known is that of deification. It is a thought which we find in all his writings from the first to the last. So in the early De Incarnatione we find the very strong statement that "He became man that we might be made God".⁶⁰ In the Contra Arianos we find the same thought frequently repeated with only slight variation, so "He vouchsafed to be made man in order to make men like gods",⁶¹ or again, "He was not, therefore, first man and then God, but first God and then

59 Cf. C. Ar., III, 34 etc. This is Dr. Scott's explanation, and while suggestive, it can only be a partial answer.

60 De Inc., 54. The same thought is to be found in many of the Greek Fathers, e.g. Irenaeus famous passage where Christ is said to be raising humanity into God by His Incarnation (Adv. Haer., V,1), also Origen: C. Cels., III, 28 has the same thought.

61 C. Ar., I, 38.

man, in order that He might make us as Gods".⁶² Numerous
 other references might be cited,⁶³ for it was a word which
 came easily to the pen of Athanasius but they would add little
 to the thought already expressed. For that matter, he no-
 where gives a full account of what he meant by the term "de-
 ification". We are simply told that the Redeemer did deify
 man. So in order to understand the term it is necessary to
 draw inferences from passages that are more explicit.

There are, however, certain facts which are more or less
 evident. It is quite certain that he did not mean that man
 was made God, although that may be legitimately inferred from
 the language used. It is only necessary to remember that
 Athanasius was a Greek to be quite certain about it. For
 every Eastern philosopher and theologian realized full well
 that the gulf which lay between the creature and his God
 was of such a kind that it could never be bridged no matter
 how high man might be raised. Just as it is impossible to
 make a finite number infinite by ceaselessly adding other
 numbers to it, so man, regardless of whatever additions he
 might receive, would never become God. It was a difference
 not only of degree, it was a difference of kind as well. So
 it is that Kattenbusch rightly says: "the θεοποίησις is

⁶² Ibid, I, 39.

⁶³ Cf. C. Ar., II, 70. Also I, 42, II, 54, 56, III, 23 ad
fin., 33 ad init., 34, 38, 39, 48, 53, 56, IV, 33, De Decr., 14,
Ad Adelph., 4, Ad Serap., I, 24. θεοί, C. Ar., III, 25, cf.
 III, 23, 41, 45. θεομεθεα C. Ar., III, 48 ad fin., 53.

for Athanasius an enhancement of human life physically and morally; his idea of it does not look forward to man being pantheistically merged in God, but to the renewal of man⁶⁴ after the original type". If Kattenbusch means by that last phrase that it was the purpose of the Atonement to restore man to the condition in which he was before the fall, then we must disagree most decidedly, for reasons which we shall make clear. But if he means no more than that man was renewed in a way similar to that of creation, though not necessarily the same, then we are agreed.

Kattenbusch's description of the content of deification - "the enhancement of human life physically and morally" - is a good one, though a little broad. Man was definitely a creature. He possessed all the undesirable qualities of a creature. These qualities, these "infirmities" held man back, kept him from becoming anything higher. It was absolutely necessary, if man were to become a son of God, that he be freed from the shackles of his creatureliness. The infirmities of the flesh which are always mentioned, e.g. hunger, thirst, weariness, sleep, etc., arise naturally from a physical organism as such, and cannot be remedied or removed as long as that organism remains physical. Yet Athanasius felt that the Logos had taken the qualities of man and so transformed them that they were no longer the same creaturely

64 Quoted in Harnack: History of Dogma, III, 295.

infirmities which had previously hampered man. We transferred our affections to the Logos and He transferred His qualities to us until we had "become Logos", or become divine.

The other side of this process of deification was the cleansing from moral evil by the indwelling of the Logos. As we have seen, man's two great defects were sin and creatureliness. Both kept man back from perfection and a life of blessedness with God. Both must be removed by the Redeemer. Of course we feel that the removal of sin was by far the more important, for sin separates man from God and life. Athanasius, too, realized that to live a life of sin was to commit spiritual suicide. But it was also true of creatureliness that it kept man back from that absolute perfection, which the heart of the Greek desired, though it did not destroy man as did sin. But since the Saviour brought freedom from creatureliness, as well as from sin, it was accepted gratefully, for there could have been a satisfactory redemption without it.

Deification was not a wholly negative process. The term itself implies far more than that. It was not simply a casting out of sin. It was also a filling with righteousness. And, although the idea is not made clear, the same seems to have been true on the physical side. It was not only that man was freed from the creaturely infirmities, he was also to be imbued with more God-like qualities.

The time element in deification is frequently misunderstood. So Baur says, "that the Logos, in the very act of being born as a man, ἐθεοποίη⁶⁵ the humanity, in the first instance naturally His own". So that the Logos did not become man, but entered into a humanity "deified and raised⁶⁶ above its natural attributes" by His very approach. Dorner has rightly contended there is not a trace of such an elevation in the writing of Athanasius. This process of deification was not automatic, least of all, on its ethical side. It was rather a growing, developing process which reached its climax in the crucifixion and its perfection in the resurrection and ascension. As we have already pointed out, the Saviour is said to have suffered hunger and thirst until after His resurrection. Because of the Arian controversy, it was necessary for Athanasius to say that, as Logos, He did not thirst, while, as man, He did. Whatever evidence there is, is against Baur's contention, and indicates that Athanasius conceived of deification, in all its elements, as a growing, developing process of which the earth sees only the beginning, and only heaven may witness its completion.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Baur: Die Christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung, pp. 573 f.

⁶⁶ Dorner: The Doctrine of the Person of Christ, Vol. II, p. 510, 11.

⁶⁷ Vide, C. Ar., III, 37 f., 42-48. etc.

It will be noticed that the concept of deification, as we have briefly outlined it, is practically identical with what we called the doctrine of purification, with which we have just dealt. Both called for release from the physical, as well as from moral evils. Both regard that which is gained as "an enhancement of human life physically and morally"; and both look upon this gain as being achieved by a process rather than at some particular moment. The term deification, for Athanasius at least, had no occult or recondite meaning, as is sometimes supposed. In fact, it had no specific content which may not be found under other headings. It was just a familiar concept or figure customarily used to describe the redemptive work of the incarnate Logos.

There are three other concepts which, while they add little to the thought of Athanasius' theory, are important enough to deserve brief mention. One is union of man with the Deity which was, for Athanasius, a way of expressing both the end and cause of man's salvation. There was nothing new or characteristically Christian about this view. It had been a favourite concept of certain of the mystery religions, and had found and retained an important place in Greek Christian thought since earliest times. In its crudest form

68 Deification seems occasionally used as a broad, general term, synonymous with salvation. Cf. C. Ar., II, 70, for example.

it was but a means of achieving immortality, for that was the chief attribute of deities or Deity, and also that which was most painfully lacking in man. So the mortal, being united to the immortal, was able to absorb from the latter the desired quality, or else by this union man partook sufficiently of the nature of the Deity that immortality became a natural attribute. Athanasius has risen above this; but he still clings tenaciously to the idea that there is no redemption for man until God and man, the divine and the human have been united. So we read that "if, being a creature, He had become man, man would have remained just what he was, not joined to God, for how could a work be joined to God by a work? Or what succour could come from like to, like, when one needed it as badly as the other?"⁶⁹ We find the same thought repeated elsewhere. "Again, if the Son were a creature, man would have remained mortal as before, for he would not have been joined to God; for a creature could not have joined other creatures to God, as seeking itself one to join it".⁷⁰ Probably all that is meant by these and similar passages is that it was necessary that God and man be joined⁷¹ in the person of the Redeemer, and through the union in Him man would receive that divine life which he needed. The

⁶⁹ C. Ar., II, 67.

⁷⁰ Ibid., II, 69.

⁷¹ We have already seen (Ch. IV) that our salvation depended upon Christ being both God and man and that the divine and human were united in one body.

ethical content of this concept, if any, is negligible. Certainly the physical predominates.

Another concept under which Athanasius thought of Redemption, and one more promising, in title at least, is that of sonship to God. He would probably grant that we are all sons of God naturally ($\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{\omega}\varsigma$), since we are all His creatures. But this meant little as long as man was under the curse and living in sin. But now that the Redeemer has come, we are made Sons of God $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\nu$. "For He has bid us be baptized....unto the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for with such an initiation we too are made sons verily,⁷² and using the name of the Father, we acknowledge from that name the Word in the Father. But if He wills that we should call His own Father our Father, we must not on that account measure ourselves with the Son according to nature, for it is because of the Son that the Father is so called by us....For the Spirit of the Word is in us and names through us His own Father as ours, which is the Apostle's meaning, 'God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'⁷³ Or again, we read that "men, receiving the Spirit of the Son become children through Him."⁷⁴ In these two quotations we have the gist of Athanasius' teaching about sonship. The one negative point upon which

72 $\upsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\sigma\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\acute{\upsilon}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\omega}\varsigma$

73 De Decretis, 31, quoting Gal., IV, 6.

74 C. Ar., II, 61.

the archbishop insists most frequently is that even though we are made sons there is still a great gulf fixed between us and the Son. He is a Son by nature, we are sons by adoption or grace only.⁷⁵ But so far as lies within the power of a creature, we have become sons of the Father and partake of His nature. Further, we are made sons by the Spirit of the Son dwelling in us.

While there is little evidence in either direction, the writer feels that here we are in an atmosphere different from that surrounding the discussion of "union with God". Here we have the language and spirit of the New Testament; the thought must, therefore, be partially ethical. While the term "sonship" may have connoted metaphysical similarity, immortality, and incorruption, we are sure that it also means moral likeness; filled with the Spirit of the Son and filled with righteousness must be very much the same, even for a Greek theologian.

Another way which Athanasius employed to describe the saving work of Christ was the conventional threefold division of prophet, priest, and king. He does not use this terminology widely, though he does use it. One feels that it is not indigenous, but rather imparted because of the hallowed associations which sanctified its use. It was not that he could use only what he himself had wrought out. For, as we

75 De Decretis, 6-14. C. Ar., II, 51, etc.

remember, he drew largely on earlier thought and made it his own. But he never seems quite at home in speaking of Christ as the Prophet, or the Priest. The thought of the Logos-Son, or even Christ as King, came more readily to his mind and pen.

The use made of these figures is quite conventional. Christ, as the Prophet, has brought the new knowledge of God.⁷⁶ As Priest, He offered for us a sacrifice to God and freed us from sin and death.⁷⁷ Also He is spoken of as the High Priest who is merciful and faithful in all things pertaining to the Father, and who makes reconciliation for the sins of the people.⁷⁸

Christ is frequently spoken of as a King. Sometimes it is the eternal Kingship which belongs to Him as Creator and God.⁷⁹ Then, His Kingship is viewed as underlying the other two offices and furnishing the power (in part, at least) for the execution of their special functions. It is His power to work miracles which enables Him to reveal Himself as God, and through Himself, to reveal the Father. Of course, miracles furnished but a small portion of His revelation, but they gave to His words the stamp of authority. Again, as High Priest, He redeemed man from sin and death, but it was

⁷⁶ De Decretis, 6-14, C. Ar., II, 51, etc.

⁷⁷ Christ is said to become the High Priest "when, after offering Himself for us, He raised His body from the dead, and, as now, Himself brings near and offers to the Father those who in faith approach, and for all propitiating God". - C. Ar., II, 7. See also II, 7, 8, for an elaborate comparison of the priesthood of Christ and Aaron.

⁷⁸ C. Ar., II, 8.

⁷⁹ Ibid., IV, 8.

His regal power over these two which gave Him the victory,
⁸⁰
 and enabled Him to free men from their dominion.

Taking all in all, this view of the work of the Logos is more of the nature of an occasional aside rather than an integral part of his system. One phase of this view, he
⁸¹
 seems to have made his own. From certain passages it is evident that Athanasius regarded Christ as completing the old dispensation as well as instituting the new. He fulfilled and brought to completion the three great figures of the old covenant. He succeeded in accomplishing all that they failed to do. Whereas under the regime of the prophets the knowledge of the true God steadily diminished, it is now spread all over the face of the earth. The efficacy of the sacrifice offered by Christ far surpassed any offered by a priest of Aaron's order, for which of them destroyed sin and death? Once He had perfected all that these types had foreshadowed,
⁸²
 so the old order was brought to a close. The fact that there is no king, no prophet, no priest, yea no temple and

⁸⁰ Cf. Fragment in Matt., also Voigt: op. cit., p.149. Pell takes a contrary view saying that Athanasius keeps the three offices separate by clear distinctions, but his argument is unconvincing. Athanasius here, as always, felt the unity of Christ's work rather than the separateness of the work of each office.

⁸¹ Esp. De Inc., 40, C. Ar., I, 59.

⁸² De Inc., 40. "At the advent of the All-Holy One, therefore, vision and prophecy were naturally sealed, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem ceased. For kings were anointed among them for such time until the All-Holy One should be anointed...."

no Jerusalem proves that Christ, the old covenant having served its function, perfected that which was imperfect,⁸³ brought it to its close, and so initiated the new order.

One problem in connection with Athanasius' view of Redemption, which has aroused considerable controversy, and which is of considerable importance for our study, is the relation of the new state to the old.

⁸⁴

Voigt makes the statement that the saving work of Christ consisted of two parts. The first was the re-creating and renewing of creation, and the second was the continuation and perfecting of the creatures already renewed. Or simply, Christ not only restored man to the perfection of his former state, but also lifted him still higher to a new and more divine perfection. The renewed community was superior to Adam. This superiority consisted chiefly in the fact that the new race was made more secure than was the previous one. Adam could and did fall. The redeemed society was established in goodness. The fault of the first creation lay in the fact that it was changeable, man's grace was from without and so he was left insecure before the attacks of the kingdom of evil. Athanasius says plainly that should he be relieved of the curse, man would only be as Adam was, whose grace was from without, and the fall would most certainly

⁸³ So Voigt: op. cit., pp. 149,150.

⁸⁴ Op. cit., pp. 155-159.

be repeated, not once, but as often as man was restored to the primal state.⁸⁵ The efficacy of Christ's redemption,⁸⁶ on the other hand, is said to be permanent. So the work of the incarnate Logos is not to be regarded simply as the bringing the justice of God into harmony with His love, nor as made necessary only by the Fall, but it is to be considered as a second act of creation which made secure for us the perfection intended for the first creation. - Christ won for us more than Adam lost, or generally could have achieved.⁸⁷

There was a metaphysical defect in man. He was a creature, hence changeable, for that is an essential characteristic of all beings created ex nihilo.⁸⁸ As such, Adam and his descendants were, and always would be capable of sinning. Thus, in the final analysis, it was man's creatureliness and not his fallenness which made the Incarnation necessary. Sin was but an expression of his nature. So Redemption had not only to purge man of sin, it had to lift him above his nature so that he would be able to continue to love virtue and not stray from the paths of righteousness. That is what Athanasius meant by the Logos taking changeable human nature and making it unchangeable.

⁸⁵ C. Ar., II, 68.

⁸⁶ Ibid., III, 25, II, 69. Christ died for all so that "all might thereupon be free from sin....and might truly abide forever risen from the dead and clothed with immortality and incorruption."

⁸⁷ Voigt: op.cit., p.156. That we gain more in Christ than was lost in Adam is a thought frequently voiced by Athanasius.

⁸⁸ C. Ar., I, 51. "For the nature of the created thing is liable to change..."

Taking this as Athanasius' position, Voigt charges him with error at two points. First, that it was sin and not the creatureliness of man that necessitated the Incarnation; and secondly, that it is not the nature of created essence to be changeable. Such an idea, he says, arises out of a false idea of freedom. If man had developed as he should, and had not sinned, then the law of God would have become his life principle and what was his by will would have become his by nature. Formal freedom would have become real freedom. He would remain free but no longer changeable.

89

Pell denies most emphatically these assertions of Voigt. He presents five counter statements. 1) Athanasius called man's original condition perfect.⁹⁰ Any work which comes from God's hands is necessarily perfect. When it became imperfect it was necessary to restore it to its former perfection. This process was not a rectifying or continuation, but a re-⁹¹newing only. 2) The Incarnation was conditional solely upon the entrance of sin, and not upon any metaphysical defect. The fall occurred in spite of original perfection, and in spite of the will and positive arrangement of God to make man secure in goodness. 3) It cannot be proved that Athanasius pictured Adam as changeable by natural necessity. 4) Athanasius did not have the false concept of freedom imputed to him by

89 Pell: op. cit., pp. 169 f.

90 C. Ar., I, 51, II, 67, 69.

91 Ibid., II, 53.

Voigt. 5) He nowhere says that man would not have reached his appointed goal without the Incarnation.

The question of the false concept of freedom, while Voigt is unquestionably right, if only of the basis of C.Ar., II,68, is irrelevant and may be dismissed.

On the point at issue the weight of evidence and logic seems to lie with Voigt.⁹² Pell is right in claiming that Athanasius designated man's original state as that of perfection. But it must have been a relative perfection; when he can say that the grace given at Redemption was better than that given at creation. Man was subject to creaturely limitations, of which changeableness was one. So he needed to be raised above the creature level by the infusion of divine immutability. He is also correct in saying that Athanasius nowhere states that man would not have reached his appointed goal without the Incarnation, but at least it is a legitimate inference from Athanasius' statement that man without Christ would have repeated Adam's disgraceful story times without number. But that Athanasius believed that the saint in Christ had been raised to a perfection unknown by the first man is

92 That changeableness was the ultimate cause of the Incarnation is an inescapable conclusion on Athanasius' premises. But he does not draw the conclusion, and if faced with the necessity, he would probably choose to be inconsistent rather than draw such a conclusion. So far as he expresses himself on the point, it is always sin that is the cause of the Word's becoming flesh. Voigt, we believe, has been more logical than Athanasius was or would have been.

beyond question. It was one of his staunchest tenets. Those who have been re-created in Christ have been advanced to a stage beyond that where Adam was at the beginning. As Athanasius himself has said, "we gain more in Christ than was lost in Adam".⁹³

One of the most outstanding characteristics of the Athanasian theory of the work of Christ is its manysidedness, the richness and number of figures under which the redemptive process is pictured. He was not bound down by any ecclesiastical ruling or regula fidei to accept and conform to one particular view. So He could allow his deep religious feeling full range, his gratitude to God to be untrammelled by orthodoxy. So with a wealth of figures with which to portray what his Saviour had done, he seizes upon one only to cast it aside as unworthy to tell of so great a salvation. Thus he goes on, ever seeking new figures, new modes of expression, that he might find one which was adequate, yet its fulness ever escaped him.

It is just at this point that most of those who have written on Athanasius miss the point. They all attempt to seek out "the Athanasian theory of Redemption". Apparently going on the assumption that "as in Anselm, so in Athanasius". They feel that Athanasius must have had a theory. So they

⁹³ So Harnack: op. cit., IV, 294, note 2, Scott: op. cit., pp. 125-129, and others.

seek among his writings to have it out. Dr. Scott recognized that Athanasius used many forms of expression, but he, too, in our judgment, errs in that he discards one after another as "puerile" or transitional until he comes to what he calls the true Athanasian conception. Strater is guilty of the same offence. But if we have understood the mind of the great archbishop aright, he felt that here was something too great, too wonderful to be captured by a figure or set phrase. He was convinced that neither God, nor life, nor the Atonement could ever be compressed into a syllogism or the narrow confines of one theory. Being one to whom logic and systems do not constitute the pearl of great price to which all else must be sacrificed, he was content to run the risk of being unsystematic and illogical, if he might better express what Christ had done for him and his fellowmen. So he kept side by side thoughts which to a Western mind might seem incongruous. Yet it is this very breadth of appreciation, this ever-springing freshness of insight and metaphor which lends much of the beauty and worth to Athanasius' interpretation of Redemption.⁹⁴

One feels that, in method, if not in interpretation, Athanasius has surpassed the great theologians of the West,

94 To shew that Athanasius did not gullibly accept every idea of which he happened to hear, but used judgment and discrimination, we know that he rejected one theory, common in his day - that of ransom to the devil.

that one is more likely to find truth, reality, if one follows the example of Athanasius than, for example, that of Anselm or Grotius. If there are bits which are unworthy, if there are times when he fails to rise above his age, or the outlook and ephemeral values of his own people, we are more than repaid by the fulness of the picture. What is lost in logical exactitude is gained in a richer, fuller faith that God has done something for us which far exceeds our power to express.

Notwithstanding the complexity of the Athanasian conception, there is running throughout his whole treatment the very definite feeling of the unity of the entire process. "Neither the thought of God, nor the thought of God's redeeming work upon man, is divisible into sundered parts. God is one. And the drama of the Atonement, however complex or many sided, is one."⁹⁵

Another outstanding fact about Athanasius' theory is the emphasis and value placed upon each part of the life of Christ. It has been frequently assumed that he regarded the Incarnation as of supreme importance, and that man's salvation was accomplished by the very act of the Word becoming flesh. But such a view is quite wrong. He did find much of value here. By the Incarnation the human and the divine

95 Moberly: Atonement and Personality, p.365.

were joined, and the value of the entrance of the Deity into corrupt, and weakened humanity can hardly be overestimated. But the life of the Saviour was of equal importance. It was from His life that we received the new knowledge of the Father. Also His life was a life of obedience offered to the Father;⁹⁶ it was during that lifetime that sin was purged from His humanity,⁹⁷ and one life had conquered, all might win the victory over sin and evil. The death of Christ, while it did not receive the consideration given to it by later theories, was regarded as important enough that it was said that it was chiefly to die on the cross that the Logos became incarnate. It was by His death that death and the power of the demons was destroyed and the curse lifted from the backs of mankind. Even the resurrection was regarded as of value,⁹⁸ as that which perfected what had been begun during His life. Each part had its share in accomplishing the work of salvation, and all together form one composite whole. Such a view has points of superiority over those views which see the redemption accomplished by the death, or life alone.

⁹⁶ That such a view is not so far out of line with modern thought is evidenced by the fact that Professor W.P. Paterson: Rule of Faith, p.286, says that the view that "the ground of our forgiveness is that Christ offered to God, in life as in death, the sacrifice of a perfect obedience in the form of human service, and under the conditions of human life" has some countenance in the Westminster confession and "appeals strongly to the refining mind".

⁹⁷ He accomplished the spiritual evolution of man in the span of a single lifetime.

⁹⁸ See above. Strater feels that Athanasius put greater value on the resurrection than on any other aspect.

Perhaps the greatest fault which a Western mind would find with Athanasius' theory is that too great a proportion of time and thought is given to the discussion of the physical or metaphysical aspects of Christ's work and entirely too little to the ethical. This is quite true. He leaves out of account much that we hold to be worth while. But he can not be censured too severely for not developing the doctrine of justification by faith or any other such dogma that has been the achievement of centuries. Also we need to remember that occasionally he - and this, we believe, is the real Athanasius - speaks with as strong an ethical note as may be found outside the New Testament. And we prefer to judge him by the heights he climbed rather than the number of valleys down which he ran.

CHAPTER VII.

THE APPROPRIATION OF REDEMPTION.

"But if it is for our good that He sanctifies Himself, and this He does after becoming man, it is very plain that the descent of the Spirit also, which came upon Him in Jordan, came really on us, because He put on our body. It came not for the advancement of the Logos, but for our sanctifying, that we might share His 'Chrism', and it might be said of us 'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' For when the Lord, as man, was washed in Jordan, it was we who were being washed in Him and by Him. And when He received the Spirit, it was we who were being made by Him capable of receiving it." - Contra Arianos, I, 47 (Moberly's translation).

How does man appropriate the redemption effected for him by the incarnate Logos? This is one of the most vexing questions which the student of Athanasius has to face. For here Athanasius is not as clear and logical as he is in some places. One reason for the difficulty of interpretation experienced here is that our teacher nowhere treats this specific question; so it is necessary to draw our conclusions from passages, many of which are only more or less relevant. Yet the writer feels that this question is too important for the proper understanding of the Athanasian concept to be passed over in silence, but rather deserves a
¹
 separate treatment of its own.

¹ This subject has, naturally, received some consideration in the previous chapter, but only incidentally. We shall attempt now to develop these thoughts to their proper proportions.

The Logos of God had descended to earth, become incarnate, and dwelt among men, united to the man Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth was a man just as we are; the Logos was the true - not depotentiated - Logos, the second Person of the Trinity, and the two, God and man dwelt together in the person of Jesus Christ. Because the Logos dominated this union, the man was enabled to live so as to cast out of his life all those "passions"³ and "infirmities" to which the flesh is heir. More than that he was able to rise above his more important ills, namely, corruption, and death, and sin. This was not, either in intention or in reality, a private victory over the enemies of man, the triumph of an individual amid general failure. Quite to the contrary, it was a first bright beam, which was the harbinger of the coming dawn. It was a victory designed to extend to all men. But how?

One feels in reading Athanasius - though it is little more than a feeling - that the victory of Jesus over the traditional enemies of mankind was regarded as having broken the spell of pessimism and defeatism which had hung like a pall over men's spirits, darkening and stifling their aspirations. Death had never been conquered heretofore. Man, in spite of his best efforts, had been chained to the earth,

2 If we would be strictly Athanasian we should say that the Logos became a man, yet remained God. But both this concept and the variation mentioned above are to be found.

3 $\pi\alpha\theta\omega$. The peculiar connotation of this word has been mentioned in the previous chapter, and the problem how Athanasius could regard either Jesus or redeemed men as having been freed from essential physical qualities was discussed.

his home, frustrated by the works of the devil, mastered by his own passions, blasted by his own sin. Life was a raging sea whose hidden reefs, swirling currents, and ceaseless tempests were sure to wreck every vessel which embarked upon it. Greek philosophy and Hebrew law alike had failed to afford safe passage. If for no other reason, both were beyond the reach of the majority. The mystery religions held out glowing promises, but could not point to a single safe crossing. But Christ had changed all that. He had brought certainty where before there had been, at best, only an ardent hope. He had gone across and returned to show that man's earnest desire was capable of realization. Why wonder, or question, or doubt, for the world has been presented with certainty. Man's unconquerable enemies are now seen to be invincible no longer. Athanasius could cry with as much feeling, as much wonderment, as much heartfelt gratitude as Paul, the words "O Death, where is thy sting, O Grave, thy victory?" Now man had conquered where before he had invariably been defeated. New courage, new vigour, greater aspiration were flowing into the race of men. A sure faith, a hope, which was not hope but certainty, had renewed their strength. They could run now and not be weary.

4 The expression of such a feeling occurs most frequently in devotional writings, as the Festal Epistles. One example is - "It is truly a subject of joy that we can see the signs of victory against death, even our own incorruptibility, through the body of our Lord. For since He rose gloriously, it is clear that the resurrection of all of us will take place; and since His body remained without corruption, there can be no doubt regarding our incorruption...." Festal Epistle, XI.

Somewhat in the same vein, Athanasius seems to teach that we appropriate the salvation offered by Christ by learning the new truth, which He, as the Revealer of God, came to teach, and by diligently obeying the commandments which He, as the Revealer of the new and highest moral law, has given to us. Such a view, however, has very small place in Athanasius' theoretical presentation of the doctrine of Redemption. Of course, it is the natural inference to be drawn from those sections of the De Incarnatione which portray the Logos as rectifying man's intellectual fall by new knowledge and new precepts.⁵ And there is an occasional reference to it in the Contra Arianos. But the Festal Epistles, which were devotional and practical, contain much that is decidedly moralistic in character. Salvation comes to him who keeps the commandments; death is the reward of the disobedient. So we read that "virtues and vices are the food of the soul, and it can eat either of these two meats, and incline to either of the two, according to its own will. If, on the one hand, it is bent toward virtue, it will be nourished by virtues: by righteousness, by temperance, by meekness, by fortitude.... Such was the case with our Lord, who said, 'my meat is to do the will of my Father which is in Heaven..'"⁶

⁵ Chapters 11-16.

⁶ Festal Epistle, I. Cf. also Epistle VII, "For bitter is the worm and grievous the darkness which evil men inherit. But the saints, and the real followers of virtue 'mortify their members which are on the earth...' and, as a result of this, are pure and without spot, confiding in the promise of our Saviour who said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God'. These having become dead to the world, and having renounced the merchandise of the world, meet with an honourable death such as this, for 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints'..."

Going on to speak of being nourished by virtue and fasting from sin, he says that "not only does such a fast as this obtain propitiation for our souls, but it also, being sancti-⁶fied, prepares the saints and raises them above the earth". Or again he teaches that "we should observe more prolonged prayers and fastings and watchings that we may be enabled to anoint our lintels with precious blood, and to escape⁷ the destroyer".

By this recommendation of moral conduct, this equating of righteousness and redemption, of disobedience and death, Athanasius is merely perpetuating something of the moralism of the older Alexandrines. Such teaching occurs with notice-⁸able frequency in the writings of Clement of Alexandria. It is much less frequent in Origen and by the time Athanasius is reached it is negligible, but present.

It is also quite possible that Athanasius' contacts with the monasteries and the hermits of the Thebaid and Libya might, in some measure, be responsible for his emphasis on the value of good works. But it seems little other explanation is needed than the essential moral character of Christianity, which Athanasius recognized and desired to perpetuate. One of the most difficult problems connected with any religion is to see and maintain the proper relationship between

⁷ Ibid., III.

⁸ Cf. Protrepticus, 1,9. Paedagogos, I, 2,3 "His commands and counsels, the short and straight path to immortality...", 10 "the rewards of goodness - everlasting life". etc.

religion and morality. This difficulty is increased in the same proportion as the emphasis upon ethics is heightened. In Christianity, the perfect balance is most difficult to maintain. So it is not surprising that, if, in his theoretical treatment of the Faith, the more strictly religious aspect should be overemphasized, in his advice to those under his care the ethical aspect of salvation should receive a corresponding over emphasis. Such a procedure, while not entirely satisfactory, is at least more desirable than the omission of either aspect.

There are two other ways by which man is said to have appropriated salvation. And these are the two which Athanasius seems to have considered the most important. One way is bound up with his doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the other is that salvation is mediated through the sacraments.

Athanasius seems to have known of only two sacraments, baptism and the Eucharist. At least, there are no traces of any others. But these two are closely connected by him with the mediation of Redemption. The ideas of sacrament and Redemption had been closely linked from the first. Occasionally we find the whole redemptive act referred to as a sacrament. In the Greek Church baptism and the forgiveness of sins were almost synonymous terms. It was not infrequently thought that there was only one free forgiveness of sins, and that occurred at the time of baptism. The delayed baptism of the Emperor Constantine is evidence of the fact that

this doctrine was widely held and firmly believed.⁹ There is little or no evidence to show that Athanasius held such a belief, but it is not likely that he escaped from it altogether. He most probably held that baptism was a time of purification from past sins, and that it offered the believer an opportunity to begin life afresh as a new man in Christ. This seems to have been his meaning when he spoke of baptism as a "bath of regeneration", or rebirth.¹⁰ That he believed that sacrament mediated some special blessing or grace to the recipient is attested by the fact that he laid such emphasis upon its proper administration. A true and correct belief in the Trinity was regarded as being essential to the proper mediation of the baptismal grace.¹¹ He who departs from the correct usage, i.e. the trinitarian formula of Father, Son, and Spirit, and is baptized into the name of the Father alone, or the Son alone, receives nothing.¹² Similarly, the baptism of heretics was said to be worthless.¹³ "He who is sprinkled by them (the heretics) is rather polluted by irreligion than redeemed".¹⁴ Baptism was then, when properly administered,

9 Constantine delayed his baptism until he believed himself to be dying. The reason usually given is that he thought that the later in life it was performed, the greater proportion of his sins it would wash away, and leave him less to account for.

10 Ad Serap., I, 4 λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας

11 C. Ar., II, 42, cf. IV, 21 etc.

12 Ad Serap., I, 30.

13 C. Ar., I, 42, 43.

14 Ibid., II, 43.

"the bath of rebirth" which separated the initiate from his past, so that he might become a new creature in Christ. Baptism corresponded roughly to Christ's death, in that it appropriated for the recipient salvation in its negative aspects rather than in its positive.

Athanasius' theory of the Eucharist is somewhat obscure. Its obscurity is shown by the fact that Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Theologians have regarded Athanasius as being in full accord with their particular interpretations. But Voigt rightly contends that his conception of the Eucharist¹⁵ was neither Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinistic. However, the fine points of his theory do not greatly concern us here. It is sufficient for our purpose if it can be shown that Athanasius thought of redemption as being appropriated through the Lord's Supper. And it seems that he unquestionably did hold such a belief. Believers are said to partake of the Logos in Communion.¹⁶ Or again, we read that "He, by His living Word, quickeneth all men, and gives Him to be food and life; as the Lord declares 'I am the bread of life'."¹⁷ The Lord is said to be the food of the righteous, even as the devil is the food of the unclean.¹⁸ So in the letter to Maximus, the philosopher, it is said that "we are deified not by partaking of the body of some man, but by receiving the body

¹⁵ Op. Cit., pp. 179-181.

¹⁶ Festal Epistle, V, 5.

¹⁷ Ibid., VII, 4.

¹⁸ Ibid.

of the Logos Himself".¹⁹ From these and similar passages,²⁰ we may conclude that the Lord's Supper was regarded as mediating certain benefits of redemption considered in its more positive aspects. Through the partaking of the bread and²¹ the wine, the body of our Lord, the Saviour dwells in us and deifies us, even as He dwelt in, and deified the body which He took at His Incarnation.

The thought connected with the appropriation of salvation which occurs most frequently has two aspects. One is the indwelling Christ, and the other is the Athanasian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. But in order to see this concept in its proper proportions, it is necessary to recall briefly certain points already made. Jesus was not only the individual man who proved to the world that redemption was within the realm of possibility by accomplishing it in His own person. His redemption was in some way the potential, if not actual, redemption of the rest of mankind because of the peculiar relationship to the race in which Jesus stood. How was Jesus the universal man? He was such because He was the Head or

¹⁹ Ad. Max., 2.

²⁰ Cf. Ad Serap., I, 19, 30, III, 6.

²¹ Athanasius seems not to have held any brief for transubstantiation. Though he spoke of partaking of the body of the Lord, his language was apparently much more physical than his thought. The partaking of the elements created a spiritual communion with the Saviour, mediated by the Holy Spirit. And through this communion or fellowship the believer received something of the spiritual qualities of the Logos, which enabled him to become more divine.

Representative of the race, holding very much the same position that Adam is said to have held. The mystical union of the believer with Christ was also invoked. Christ is said to be in all, and all are in Christ. "For as being all of earth, we die in Adam, so, being born of the water and the Spirit, we are all in Christ made alive, the flesh being no longer a thing of earth, but made to be "Logos" from henceforth, by reason of the Logos of God who for our sakes became flesh".²² It seems that Athanasius shared Paul's view here, as far as he understood it. Another way of expressing the same thing was his concept of the solidarity of the race. But in whatever way Athanasius tried to express this thought, whether by making use of the concept of mystical union, or that of solidarity, he was sure that Christ did stand in a universal relationship and because He was related to every man, He was able to mediate His salvation to all who would receive it. So the redemption effected in the person of Jesus Christ becomes in a real way our redemption. Since He is in us and we in Him, all the blessings, all that He is said to have received came not because He lacked anything, but in order that we who are "in Christ" might receive those things which are needful to our salvation.

This doctrine of the transmission of the benefits of Redemption through the unity of the believer with the

indwelling Logos is clearly stated in the following passage:

"When it is said 'Power was given unto me', and 'I received', and 'for this cause God highly exalted Him', these are gifts of God given to us through Him. For the Logos never was, nor was made to be lacking in them; nor, on the other hand, were men capable of providing them for themselves; but they are given through the Logos, to us. So then, as given to Him, they are communicated to us; for it was just for this that he became man, that, as given to Him, they might pass over to us....So the Logos was united with us, and then communicated to us His power and exalted us on high. For the Logos being in man, highly exalted man, and because the Logos was in man, it is man who 'received'. It was because the Logos was in flesh that man was exalted and received power. Therefore it is to the Logos that these things are referred....for it is on account of the Logos in man that these gifts were given. And just as the Logos became flesh, so man received the things which came through the Logos....Since then through the union of the Logos with man, the Father, looking upon the Logos, bestowed upon man exaltation and possession of power....For as on our account He became man, so on His account we are exalted.....So the Logos, when we are exalted; and received, and succoured, gives thanks to the Father as Himself exalted, and received, ~~and received~~, and succoured, transferring our condition to Himself and saying, 'All things which thou hast given me, I have given unto them'".²³

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Canon Moberly in commenting on this passage says that "the clearness and emphasis are most remarkable, with which he not only lays down the immanence of the Logos in ourselves as a doctrinal truth more or less mysterious or remote, but finds in it the whole human capacity to Godward; and finds

²³ Ibid., IV, 6,7 (Moberly's translation). Cf. also C. Ar., I, 41-43, 47-51, II, 56, III, 33.

²⁴ Atonement and Personality, p. 359.

at the ^{same} time in that capacitating the very purpose and significance of the Incarnation".²⁵

This idea of the indwelling Christ is one which permeates the whole of the Athanasian writings. It is to be found in the De Incarnatione couched in very Pauline language; it is to be found in the Contra Arianos where the language and idea has become more of his own. At first he is quite mystical, and mysterious as well, but in the later writings he becomes more explicit. The solidarity of the race was from the first a primary axiom, and a quality of the race essential to his concept of Redemption, and he never loses sight of it. More and more the idea of Christ in us and us in Christ comes to the fore in his thinking. Then, gradually there grew in the mind of Athanasius an even deeper understanding of this doctrine. Whereas, at first, he was content to state the mystery, he later gives a rationale of the doctrine. How is Christ in us? How does He transfer the values He achieved to the rest of mankind? Athanasius' answer is to be found in his doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

²⁵ Voigt: op.cit., p.159, also understands Athanasius to teach that Christ, as an individual man, has effected the redemption of His own human nature, and as the universal man, made this same salvation accessible to all. It is the Christian's being "in Christ" which enables him to appropriate that which the Logos has already won for him. Athanasius would say, "we are all in Christ saved from sin and the curse; in Him we have died, and have been raised again; in Him we have, in the Jordan, received the Holy Spirit; in Him we are the children of God; in Him we are exalted and deified".

The nature of the Holy Spirit is treated more fully in the Orations to Serapion which were written toward the close of Athanasius' life. There and elsewhere the Spirit is defined as the third person of the Trinity, consubstantial with the Father and the Son. Such was Athanasius' theoretical position. But actually he did not always hold rigidly to the complete individuality of the Spirit. Quite in harmony with the Fourth Gospel, with which he seems to have been most familiar, he presents two sets of data, one holding the individuality of the Spirit, and the other practically identifying Son and Spirit. More frequently than not the Spirit appears as the alter ego of the Son, being occasionally referred to simply as the Spirit of the Son.²⁶ The Holy Spirit is said to be inseparable from the Logos.²⁷ Christ Himself is said to be in us through the Spirit.²⁷ So that it is often difficult to know whether Athanasius is referring to the third Person of the Trinity or to the spiritual presence of the Son, such a presence being indistinguishable from the Son Himself.²⁸

The presence of the Spirit, be it the third Person or the Spirit of Christ, was regarded as essential to salvation.

²⁶ Ad Serap., I, 24, τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ λόγου, C. Ar., III, 25, τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ C. Ar., II, 61.
²⁷ Ad. Serap., I, 31.
²⁸ Ibid., I, 31, III, 6, C. Ar., III, 25. So Voigt: op. cit., p. 161. "Der heil. Geist ist der Geist Christi selber, und durch ihn kommt Christus selbst in uns ... auf geistige Weise".

Athanasius has already made clear that there can be no salvation apart from union with God. He now adds this further thought that there can be no communion with God without the Holy Spirit. "Who", he asks, "will unite us to God when we do not have the Spirit of God?"²⁹

The presence of the Spirit, so necessary to the salvation of man, is beyond his power to secure; Christ alone is able to send Him to us. So we read;

"because thou art God and King, therefore art thou anointed Christ, since none other could unite man with the Holy Spirit but Thou, the Image of the Father, after whom we were created from the beginning, for Thine is the Spirit also. For no created nature could be adequate for this, since angels transgressed and man had disobeyed. Therefore God was required...."³⁰

The Spirit is enabled to come into man because the Logos became man and received, as man, for men, the Spirit whom He, as God, had sent. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, not because He needed the help of the Spirit; the Spirit descended upon Him for our sanctification.

"But if, as the Lord Himself said, the Spirit is His, and He Himself sendeth Him, it follows that it is not the Logos...who is anointed with the Spirit who is given by Him, but it is the flesh, which was assumed by Him, which really is in Him, and by Him anointed; that the sanctification which came on the Lord as man might come on all men from him".³¹

²⁹ Ad Serap., I, 29.

³⁰ C. Ar., I, 49. So Ibid., I, 50.

³¹ Ibid., I, 47 (Moberly's translation) - See also the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

When the Logos has sent His Spirit to us, He mediates to us, and enables us to appropriate the salvation achieved by Christ in His own body. As His Spirit sanctified His flesh, so the presence of that same Spirit in the lives of the rest of mankind will transform and redeem them. Thus deification is said to be the result of presence of the Spirit in us. "The Logos was made flesh in order to offer up his body for all, and that we, partaking of His Spirit might be deified...But as we, receiving the Spirit, do not lose our own proper substance, so the Lord, when He was made man for us..., was no less God; He was not lessened by the envelopment of the body, but rather deified it and rendered it immortal".³² So all the benefits of salvation are mediated to us through the Spirit.

As Voigt observes,³³ Athanasius seems to teach that the Holy Spirit is related to man in just the same way that the Logos was related to the man Jesus of Nazareth. As the Logos raised His own body from the dead, and exalted it, and brought it into communion with God, so also does the Spirit work in the other members of the human race. Of course we are, in a real sense, essentially different from Jesus. It is impossible for us to receive the fulness of divine life which the Logos communicated to Him. Otherwise the process is the same.

³² De Decretis, 14. Cf. C. Ar., II, 6, De Inc., 17. It will be noticed that in Ad Max., 12 deification is said to be mediated by the Eucharist.

³³ Op. cit., p.160.

The salvation effected in Jesus must be mediated to all other men. This is achieved by the Spirit being in man in much the same manner as the Logos was in Jesus.

Certain questions arise in connection with this doctrine of the Spirit. One is that if the Spirit in each man effects the redemption of that man, where is the necessity of the Incarnation? Why could not Christ have sent His Spirit from heaven without the Incarnation and achieve the same results that are being achieved? Was it necessary that one be sanctified first, in order that the remainder of the race be redeemed?

Athanasius would say that the Incarnation was necessary, if only to remove the curse, destroy death, and defeat the works of the devil. But it was also necessary to accustom the Spirit to dwell in man.³⁴ But if the Spirit could not come into man without the Incarnation then the Logos could not have been made flesh. Or he would say that it was necessary that the Logos be incarnate, to send, as God, and as man, receive the Spirit and claim it for man on the principle of solidarity that what belongs to one is a race possession. But again this is unconvincing.

In spite of all the difficulties which are inherent in such a theory, Athanasius was correct in feeling that the efforts of Christ to save did not cease at the Ascension, but

that His Spirit is ever with us all, turning us Godward, purging sin from our spirits, lifting us up from our low estate, strengthening our wills that He may present us to the Father a pure and redeemed race, worthy models of His perfect example.

EXCURSUS A.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE TWO BOOKS

against APOLLINARIS.

Until recently these two books against Apollinaris have been generally accepted as being from the pen of Athanasius. They have been accepted, more or less wholeheartedly by the Benedictine Editor, Montfaucon, Möhler (Athanasius der grosse und die Kirche seiner Zeit), Pell: (Die Lehre des hl. Athanasius von der Sünde und Erlösung), Voigt (Die Lehre des Athanasius von Alexandrien), Sträter (Die Erlösungs Lehre des hl. Athanasius), Lauchert (Die Lehre des hl. Athanasius). Sträter's argument has been that since he could have been the author so far as the time element was concerned, and since there is some resemblance between them and the Epistola ad Epictetum, therefore he is the author. That there are differences much greater than the similarities seems to have escaped Dr. Sträter. Most of these writers seem, however, to have accepted these two books quite uncritically; and so their acceptance can count for little.

Dräseke in his general denial of the authenticity of most of the Athanasian books includes the two against Apollinaris, but since he also rejected the De Incarnatione which is unquestionably genuine, little weight can be attached to his opinion.

Harnack also would class it among the "dubious" writings, and further, when two careful scholars like Bardénhewer (Geschichte der Altkirchlichen Literatur), and Loofs (Art. "Athanasius" in PRE), both deny the Athanasian authorship of these two books, it constitutes reasonable grounds for their rejection.

Dr. Scott (Athanasius on the Atonement) also rejects these books and cites in support of his position the opinion of several writers, with whom the present writer is not familiar. These are included for what they are worth. They are: 1) Stülchen (Athanasiana, 1899), 2) Tixeront (Histoire des Dogmes, p. 94), 3) Voisin (L'Apollinarianisme).

The chief argument against accepting these two books is based upon internal evidence. These books, while purporting to attack Apollinarianism, are really much more in harmony with that view than are the genuine writings of Athanasius. They, quite obviously, teach that Christ took a purified nature, such as Adam is supposed to have had. This runs counter to the plain teaching of Athanasius in many of his works known to be genuine. The evidence for this statement has already been adduced in our treatment of Athanasius' view of Christ's human nature in Chapter IV. While there is no good reason why he should not change his mind, or even be inconsistent, still it seems hardly probable that he would take up a position so diametrically opposed to what he had taught throughout the major portion of his life. Such a procedure seems still

unlikely when we remember that this concept of the human nature of the Logos, which is taught in most of his works, under²lies much that he has to say about Redemption.

It will be remembered also that Athanasius' teaching about Christ's humanity was a doctrine which found much favour in the eyes of other Fathers - more so, we believe, than did that view held in the Contra Apoll. Several quotations from the Fathers were given in Chapter IV as proof of this. Further, it is quite certain that Gregory Nazianzen taught that our Lord's human nature was exactly like ours, except without¹ sin. Also, he opposed such Apollinarian doctrines as are to be found in the Contra Apoll.¹ Now Gregory was the friend and, in a sense, the interpreter of Athanasius, and we may expect a certain similarity of thought between them. Scott: op. cit., pp. 141-146 feels that this is a most important consideration, and assumes that because Gregory could not have written the Contra Apoll., Athanasius did not. Of course, this does not necessarily follow, but it is a good reason for questioning the Athanasian authorship of these books.

The argument is as follows: 1) the majority of present day opinion has pronounced against the Athanasian authorship, 2) its teaching is out of harmony with many of the Fathers of that time, with Athanasius chief friend and admirer, Gregory Nazianzen, and with Athanasius' own works which are known to

¹ Cf. Orat., 4,3, 30.6,21, 38.14, Ad Cled., 1.7,10.

be genuine. This, while not absolutely conclusive, was judged to be sufficient reason for leaving it out of account in making our study of Athanasius' teaching, feeling that it was a better policy to base our observations upon only such writings as are unquestionably genuine.

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