

THEORIES OF ATONEMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
SOTERIOLOGICAL PARADIGMS: IMPLICATIONS OF A PENTECOSTAL  
APPROPRIATION OF THE CHRISTUS VICTOR MODEL

by

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I declare that THEORIES OF ATONEMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOTERIOLOGICAL PARADIGMS: IMPLICATIONS OF A PENTECOSTAL APPROPRIATION OF THE CHRISTUS VICTOR MODEL is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

  

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November 1, 2011  
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## SUMMARY

Atonement theories have great implications for the soteriological paradigms associated with them, but their significance has not always been recognized in the formulation of theological systems, the lack of dogmatic definition by ecumenical council encouraging diversification and isolation from other doctrinal loci. The strongest coherence between an atonement model and soteriology can be seen in the reformed tradition, and its theory of penal substitution has become the standard accepted by many non-reformed protestant groups, including classical pentecostalism. Tensions persist in the theological system of pentecostalism because of its pairing of penal substitution with the soteriological paradigm of its foundational symbol of faith, the full gospel of Jesus as savior, sanctifier, baptizer with the Spirit, healer, and coming king. This vision of salvation is broader than that of protestant orthodoxy, which through its atonement theory deleteriously separates the death of Christ from his work in life and strictly limits the subjects and nature of salvation, specifically to addressal of elect individuals' sins. It is proposed that this tension within the pentecostal system be relieved not through a reduction of its soteriology but a retrieval of the Christus victor model, the atonement theory of the ancient and Eastern church. As reintroduced to the Western church by G. Aulén, this model interprets the saving work of Christ along two lines: recapitulation, the summing up and saving of humanity via the incarnation, and ransom, the deliverance of humanity from the hostile powers holding it in bondage. In a contemporary, pentecostal appropriation of this model, aid is taken from K. Barth's concept of nothingness to partially demythologize the cosmic conflict of the Bible, and pentecostalism reinvigorates the Eastern paradigm of salvation as *theosis* or Christification via the expectation of the replication of Christ's ministry in the Christian. The study shows Christus victor can give a more stable base for a broader soteriology that is concerned with the holistic renewal of the human person. To demonstrate the developed model's vigor and applicability beyond pentecostalism, the study closes by bringing it into conversation with the concerns of three contemporary theological movements.

**KEYWORDS:** Pentecostalism; atonement; soteriology; Christus Victor; Christology; work of Christ; recapitulation; ransom theory; Reformed theology; Wesleyanism; salvation; healing; fourfold gospel; liberation

Dedicated to the memory of  
Prof. J. Rodman Williams  
1918-2008  
Theologian, Charismatic and Reformed,  
whose *Renewal Theology* awakened my love for systematics  
and first introduced me to the victory of Christ.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.1 Thesis: Pentecostal Soteriology and the Problem of Atonement Theology**

Unlike the dogma of the person of Christ, the broader Christian tradition has never promulgated an official doctrine of the work of Christ. The Nicene creed, the most widely accepted symbol, goes no further than the simple confession that he “for us and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate...and was crucified also for us.” While great certainty regarding Christ’s person and natures persisted for over a thousand years after Chalcedon, theologians have been unable to explain with similar confidence and detail *how* Christ accomplished salvation. More systematic attention was given to the area of theology from the time of Anselm, but by and large the doctrine of the work of Christ has never moved beyond theories to dogma. Eventually, in many traditions of Western (i.e., Latin) Christianity, the term “the work of Christ” became synonymous with “theories of the atonement,” effectively restricting his saving work primarily to what was accomplished by his death on the cross. Less attention has been given to the salvific significance of the various aspects of his life before and after the cross.

This dogmatic incertitude over the doctrine of the work of Christ has resulted in curious effects in other areas of theology, especially soteriology. Since views of the atonement have not, for the most part, been elevated above the level of theories, the work of Christ has often been treated as a locus that can be developed in relative isolation from other, more defined areas of theology. Historically, greater latitude has been given to those who engage in speculation about the means and mechanism of the atonement than to those who have similarly speculated about, for example, the relationship between the two natures of Christ. However, as the atonement lies at the center of the Christian religion, it cannot be held in isolation, and consciously or not, beliefs about it do shape, determine, and restrict other areas of doctrine. Soteriology is the locus most obviously connected to atonement theology, yet the implications of atonement models for the doctrines of salvation have not been fully drawn out, especially beyond that chief concern of Western theology, justification.

The close relationship between Christology and soteriology can be seen clearly in reformed theology, arguably the most developed and coherent protestant theological tradition and the one having the greatest influence on other protestant streams. A well-



known illustration of this correspondence is the doctrine of limited or particular atonement, a construction perfected by the reformed within a framework presupposing a satisfaction model of atonement, specifically as penal substitution, and its correlation to the classical Calvinist points of unconditional election, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. While virtually none outside of the tradition hold to limited atonement, many protestant traditions have otherwise basically accepted reformed orthodoxy's general interpretation of the work of Christ. Tension arises in these systems because of the conflict between a reformed view of the atonement and a non-reformed soteriological paradigm.

This tension between Christology and soteriology is strongly evident in pentecostalism, a comparatively immature theological tradition. While the movement emerged most directly out of Wesleyan revivalism and exhibits considerable soteriological and pneumatological divergence from classical Calvinism, the early pentecostals, like the reformers before them, accepted other areas of received orthodoxy without reexamination. The doctrine of the work of Christ is one of these. Penal substitution is affirmed explicitly in the doctrinal statements and theologies of some early pentecostal bodies (e.g., McPherson and Cox 1969, 74–77, 275–276 §IV.); in others, it became more firmly established with the passage of time (e.g., Menzies and Horton 1993, 60, 97–101; cf. Hollenweger 1972, 514). Equally accepted by early pentecostals was the holiness movement's doctrine of healing in the atonement, the belief that physical healing was part of the saving work of Christ on the cross (Simpson, A. B. 1893). In more recent years as pentecostal theology has begun to mature, greater thought has been given to the implications of including a physical dimension of salvation in a penal interpretation of the cross, raising doubts over the veracity of this particular teaching about healing (Warrington 1998, 169–170). The controversy over healing in the atonement within pentecostalism is illustrative of the movement's need to completely rethink its doctrine of the work of Christ and its soteriology in order to give its theology as a whole greater coherence and logical consistency.

It is the researcher's thesis that penal substitution is inadequate for supporting the broad soteriological paradigm of pentecostalism and that a *Christus victor* view, drawing upon both the Eastern tradition and developments in contemporary critical theologies, is a more suitable model for the movement. Historically, the theology of pentecostalism has been more narrative and doxological than systematic (Cox 1995, 15, 71), and within its telling of theology there is a strong theme of liberation from and triumph over darkness as the heart of the work of Christ. Indeed, of all the major branches of Christianity, pentecostalism seems the best suited for articulating

this model of the atonement, but hitherto the potential of this theological partnership has not been explored in depth.

## 1.2 Stimuli

Three theological experiences stimulated the development of this thesis. First, in researching his M.Th. dissertation entitled *Pentecostal contributions to contemporary Christological thought* (House 2006), an exploration of the functional Christology of the pentecostal fourfold gospel, the researcher repeatedly encountered conflicts between the movement's received understanding of the atonement as a penal substitution and its holistic soteriology. This suggested that these doctrines need revisiting and revisioning from a systematic theological perspective rather than the eclectic, atomistic approach the movement tends to favor. The favorable reception of his M.Th. dissertation encouraged him to continue to contribute to the development of pentecostal theology by further pursuing these questions.

Second, in the researcher's preparation for teaching a seminary course on the person and work of Christ, study of the Bible and Christian theological writings raised doubts about some of the claims made on behalf of penal substitution. Within much of conservative protestantism, for all practical purposes this model has been elevated to the level of dogma, the single correct interpretation of the biblical data about Christ's work on the cross. However, the researcher soon realized that this conclusion was not strictly the result of objective, inductive study of the Bible but rather was heavily dependent upon a presupposed metanarrative structure—that of the supremacy of retributive justice and propitiatory sacrifice—and certain evangelical hermeneutical strictures that channel interpretation towards conformity with this metanarrative. Studying further, he discovered that there is at least as much biblical support for the classical ransom theory as there is for the satisfaction and substitution models even within the Pauline corpus, which is purported to plainly teach penal substitution. Moreover, the forcing of all of the New Testament's teaching on reconciliation into a juridical mold causes distortion in some areas of theology, not the least of which is soteriology. The researcher's initial study of the problem led him to believe that the matter was not as settled as has been presented in some theological circles, and the complexity and importance of the doctrine warrant more in-depth study.

Third, observation of historical trends within Indian contextual theology also stimulated further investigation. Since the Indian renaissance of the nineteenth century, much of Indian theology has been characterized by an extreme Christocentrism (Boyd, R. H. S. 1975). In comparison to European theology, arguably more attention has been given to questions of the work of Christ than to questions of his person and nature, for in the Indian religious and philosophical context, the idea of

a divine human is far less scandalous. The prominent Indian theologians exhibit great diversity in their interpretations of the work of Christ, but with few exceptions, the penal substitution model has not been received well, and there has been a continuous search for other thought forms. Accordingly, as one who lives and ministers within the Indian context, the researcher feels compelled to contribute to this vital area of theology.

### **1.3 Goals and Contributions of the Study**

1. To demonstrate and explore direct connections between theories of atonement and soteriological paradigms: In recent years, there has been a great revival of interest in atonement theology, with new openness among conservative and non-conservative theologians alike towards reexamination and modification of received models. The purpose of this study is not to repeat the work that has been done already with regard to new perspectives on the atonement. Rather, it will expose the connections, often neglected, between the doctrine of the work of Christ and Christian soteriology, particularly in the light of pressures from contemporary theologies to revise and expand traditional understandings of salvation.

2. To highlight and develop pentecostal contributions to the contemporary discussion of the work of Christ: Although not always recognized as such, pentecostalism is a significant theological tradition with strong interests in both Christology and soteriology. Accordingly, its concerns and perspectives deserve greater hearing in the ongoing debate over the work of Christ.

3. To revision the pentecostal soteriological paradigm in light of appropriation of an atonement doctrine more consonant with the movement's practical and doxological theology, namely the Christus victor model: It is the researcher's belief that Christus victor and pentecostalism have long been waiting for one another and can mutually benefit from sustained conversation. To this end, the study will articulate a contemporary Christus victor interpretation of the atonement capable of cohering with the broad soteriology of the renewal movement.

4. To demonstrate the developed model's utility by applying it to ecumenical and contextual theological problems: If a Christus victor model emerging from pentecostal thought is of lasting value, it should not only be useful within the pentecostal-charismatic renewal movement but also find further applications in other contexts. The model will be tested by responding questions raised by liberation, feminist, and Indian theologies.

### **1.4 Methodology and Approach**

The thesis shall be demonstrated through the reflective negotiation of the disciplines of historical, systematic, and constructive critical theology; it contains no

empirical components. Detailed historical analysis (chapter 2) is required because the researcher hypothesizes that theories of the atonement and soteriological paradigms have in some respects developed in relative isolation from one another and without conscious exploration of all the implications of one doctrinal locus for the other. Historical research will help uncover both the unrecognized interdependencies of these loci and the effects of their isolation as well as reveal how they have influenced the development of various theological traditions and standards.

Systematic theological analysis (chapter 3) will be used to move beyond historical to theoretical knowledge and to fully explore the relationship between soteriology and perspectives on the work of Christ, specifically those of traditional reformed and classical pentecostal thought. While atonement doctrines may not have officially moved beyond the level of theories and are relatively underdeveloped compared to other areas, the influence these theories bear on dependent areas of theology should not be underestimated. It is hypothesized that despite the claims to strict adherence to *sola Scriptura* by these two conservative traditions, their soteriological paradigms are based more on a priori assumptions about atonement than self-evident biblical constraints.

The climax of the thesis (chapter 4) is the development of a new, critical theology of the atonement. The necessary theological resources for its construction will be marshalled, and after a detailed statement, the atonement model will be brought into conversation with the soteriological paradigm of pentecostalism, the fourfold or fivefold “full” gospel. Although not deliberately embracing a specific contextual perspective other than that of historic classical pentecostalism, the goal of the thesis is the contribution of theological model with broader applicability. In the conclusion (chapter 5), both the new atonement model and the revised soteriological paradigm will be brought into dialogue with important contemporary criticisms of traditional doctrines of atonement and salvation, specifically those of Latin American liberation theology, feminist theologies, and Indian contextual theologies.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitations**

This work will examine the development of theories of the atonement for the purpose of ascertaining their effects on Christian soteriology. Since the ultimate goal is a revisioning of pentecostal theology, historical research will be limited to areas consonant with that goal. The main focus of the study will be the systematic analysis of the penal satisfaction/substitution and Christus victor models of the atonement and their interaction with pentecostal soteriology. Due to their lack of influence on pentecostalism and other reasons discussed in chapter 2, considerably less attention

will be given to the third major cluster of atonement theories, the various moral and exemplar models. Likewise, outside of necessary critiques and limited exegetical explorations, no attempt will be made to exhaustively prove what is the singular, most biblically correct interpretation of the meaning of the death of Jesus Christ; it is acknowledged a priori that the New Testament does not present a monolithic theology but theological diversity in unity. Even while one specific approach to the atonement question is openly preferred herein, it is also recognized that none of the major theories developed without some inspiration and support from the Bible and a sincere desire for faithfulness to its teaching. That said, of necessity a sustained criticism of the penal theory will be maintained throughout as it intersects with various facets of the study. A detailed apologetic for various aspects of pentecostal soteriology and piety is also outside the scope of the thesis. For the purpose of this study, “pentecostal theology” indicates the traditional consensus of classical Trinitarian pentecostalism, that branch of the broader renewal movement that arose and developed its essential character in the United States from 1901 to 1916; this definition has been explored in greater detail in the researcher’s M.Th. dissertation (House 2006, 3–4, 12–16).

For the analysis of the penal satisfaction or substitution theory, prime attention will be given to the reformed tradition as the most highly developed, standardized, and ecumenically influential form of magisterial protestant thought. Classical pentecostalism, having arisen primarily out of the Arminian-Wesleyan stream of protestantism, developed its theological innovations largely free from, or even in opposition to, reformed teachings (Synan, V. 1971, 217). However, the revival movement did not controvert all areas of received theology; it unconsciously and uncritically absorbed features from the surrounding theological environment, that of American conservative evangelicalism, which is preeminently, if sometimes nominally, Calvinistic or quasi-Calvinistic, and one component of this shared theological heritage is the atonement. Hence, though its soteriology is not reformed, aspects of the pentecostal understanding of the work of Christ are, and thus it is necessary to explore the interactions and implications of a reformed Christology and a non-reformed soteriological paradigm.

The *Christus victor* or classical view of the atonement as revived by G. Aulén (1931) will be explored as a viable alternative to satisfaction theories. The contributions of ancient, modern, and postmodern reflections on theological matters related to this theme will be listened to and negotiated in order to arrive at a revised pentecostal understanding of the work of Christ capable of both bearing the movement’s soteriology and contributing to the contemporary ecumenical theological conversation. Again, as the purpose of this investigation is to determine the effects of atonement thought on soteriological paradigms, historical research is limited to areas

consonant with that goal, and issues of indirect application will be explored only so far as relevant. Settling of the historical controversies raised by Aulén, most notably the correctness of his appraisal of Luther, expressly lies outside of the scope of this work.

### 1.6 Terminology and Conventions

In order to avoid gaps in understanding as much as possible, some points of explanation of the terminology and conventions used in this work must be given. First, since standard English usage lacks consistency in the capitalization of different Christian traditions and churches, for the sake of clarity and equality, none are capitalized within the body text of document unless referring to or derived from a specific proper name. Hence come reformed, pentecostal, and catholicism but Calvinist, Roman catholic, and Christus victor. Second, “Western,” when used in reference to Christianity, theology, or churches, means Latin, i.e., Roman catholic and protestant. Similarly, “Eastern” means Greek or historic, non-Western orthodox Christianity. New theologies from Christian perspectives of the East are described as Asian or more specifically when required (e.g., Indian contextual theologies and *dalit* theologies). In most contexts, “orthodox” means theological orthodoxy as per the tradition under discussion.

Gender inclusiveness is a desired goal of the present work, particularly when speaking of contemporary theologians and their work. However, terms such as “church fathers” and “patristic” are retained both for their historical accuracy and as a reminder that throughout most of this history, the church’s task of theology has been anything but inclusive. On a similar but unrelated note, the researcher has followed the example of W. Wink (1986, 174–5 n.1) in retaining the traditional usage of masculine personal pronouns to refer to Satan or the devil but without an a priori commitment about the personhood of this entity or concept. All direct quotations of other works, of course, are kept verbatim in respect of the authors’ original conventions.

The default English Bible version quoted is the *New revised standard version*. The researcher’s translation and exegetical work is based upon the Nestle-Aland 27th/UBS 4th edition New Testament, the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* Hebrew Bible, and the *Biblia sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem* 4th edition. For classical theological works, the commonly available English translations have been quoted as listed in the works cited, but original language and critical texts have been consulted when deemed necessary.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL NEGOTIATIONS OF ATONEMENT AND SALVATION

#### **2.1 The Unsystematic Development of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ**

Whether their arrangement is inspired by the articles of the creed or a perceived topical ordering of biblical revelation, the typical structure of modern, locus-oriented systematic theologies communicates what is for many the natural unfolding of Christian doctrinal thought. Generally after a treatment of human need, their middle sections on redemption or reconciliation properly start with Christology: first comes the person of Christ, then his work, including his states of humiliation and exaltation, and then the application of his work according to the order of salvation as affirmed by each author and his or her tradition. This seems logical and natural in that who Christ is must be understood before his work can be, and his work must be understood before its application; Christmas precedes Good Friday, which precedes Easter and Pentecost. The necessity of this order was apprehended to some extent by Anselm, who is widely viewed as the first great systematic theologian of the atonement. Grasping the interdependency of the doctrines of the person and the work of Christ, he used his understanding of what God required and humanity needed for the accomplishment of reconciliation in order to answer the question *Cur Deus homo?* and thus justify the traditional Christological dogma before human reason. Anselm's linkage of these two areas of doctrine helped to establish this pattern, which many of his successors then accepted as axiomatic.

The example of Anselm, however, is only partial—*Cur Deus homo* (Anselm 1926, 2.20) concludes with a soteriological confession little more developed than that of the Nicene creed—and very late. The historical development of Christian doctrine did not in fact follow this topical ordering. Christian theology developed unevenly, unsystematically, and largely reactively, with the church and its theologians refining and amplifying its confessions primarily in response to internal and external pressures. Not all areas of doctrine received equal attention. By far the Trinity, the person of Christ, and later, in the West only, justification dominated dogmatic inquiry and promulgation, and as is well known, the broader Christian tradition has never made a dogma of any particular interpretation of the work of Christ. Likewise, soteriology, which includes justification but extends far beyond it, developed more erratically and with less care than the doctrines that were the subjects of the ecumenical councils, and

the case may be made that specific areas of soteriology were shaped historically more by other areas of theology, particularly the incarnation and the liturgy and sacraments (Pelikan 1974, 137–138), than atonement theories. This lack of systematic treatment is amply illustrated by the third part of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa* (1947, 3.), which immediately follows its questions about the person and work of Christ not with formal soteriological definitions but with questions about the sacraments. The “natural” order of modern systematic theology did not in fact arise in completed form until the sixteenth century with Calvin and his *Institutes* and the reformation’s forcing of all divisions of the Western church to decisively and formally address the soteriological question (Berkhof 1938, 417).

As will be seen, it is in traditional reformed theology that the doctrine of the work of Christ and soteriology achieved the desired correlation and reciprocity, but this achievement has come at a steep cost. However, the development of Christian soteriology did not halt after the sixteenth century, and most of the major subsequent developments and splinterings in protestantism, at least as a religious movement, concerned questions of salvation. Pietism and revival movements, in particular, were not entirely satisfied with received orthodox soteriology in either content or expression and went on to develop their own paradigms that better reflected their understandings of Scripture and experiences of faith. Although this served the immediate purpose, it once again threw these areas of theology into imbalance, and the orthodox were not wholly mistaken in their concerns about these developments. On the one hand—insofar as they otherwise remained within traditional orthodoxy and did not embrace liberalism—these new movements more or less retained the inherited view of the atonement as a type of satisfaction. On the other hand, by broadening their soteriologies beyond reformed standards, they lost the careful symmetry that had been achieved by the reformed in correlating the doctrines of the work of Christ and salvation. The end result was an increasing disjunction between their understandings of the work of Christ and their soteriological paradigms and the introduction of instability into both. This problem is most evident in the Wesleyan traditions, especially pentecostalism, with their augmented Arminian orders of salvation. Arminian theology arguably found its true home in Wesleyanism, but although the movement has strongly opposed reformed soteriology at nearly every point, its understanding of the atonement is essentially that of penal substitution and thus more alike reformed orthodoxy than different.

### **2.1.1 Atonement Theories and Soteriological Paradigms: Methodological Concerns and Definitions**

Bringing coherence and stability to the revivalistic soteriology of pentecostalism, the largest and most prolific descendant of Wesleyanism, requires a



reopening of the atonement question; this is the broad aim of the current work. Such a task has several viable beginning points. One that obviously suggests itself to a protestant work is to start with investigative Bible study. The teachings of both Testaments on sacrifice and atonement may be examined to determine their basic direction, and this interpretation can then be used as the foundation of an atonement model. The fundamental difficulty with this approach lies in the a priori assumptions it inevitably brings to the study. It presumes that the Bible both contains and intends to communicate a unified teaching about atonement and that this teaching can be discerned, extracted, and then shaped without contradiction or omission into a complete and all-sufficient atonement doctrine. Yet, no historical formulation of the atonement has achieved this, and beginning with the assumption of its possibility is more likely to skew the interpretation of difficult passages than would openness to leaving discontinuities unresolved, even if they conflict with a model that otherwise appears to be robustly indicated. S. Finlan (2005, 1) exposes the methodology to be avoided:

Most strategies for dealing with objections to these doctrines involve separating the objectionable from the biblical, either showing that the objectionable doctrines do not occur in the Bible, or that they do occur but are not objectionable when properly explained.

Along this line, the researcher does not presume that his presentation will silence all possible biblical objections and concerns that may be raised by some; its intention is limited to supplying a valid and serviceable answer to the question at hand.

Another, more basic issue is the accepted metanarrative that the interpreter brings to the reading of a particular text. It is impossible to colorlessly study just one particular doctrinal subject free from bias or the influence of other, a priori beliefs. Rather, presuppositions about myriad theological, biblical, and human issues will affect how various texts are heard and then integrated into the metanarrative. The phenomenon of metanarrative, which will be explored further at relevant points throughout this work, is unavoidable, and arguably it does more to determine interpretation than dispassionate exegesis. Accordingly, while due respect is given to the importance of biblical induction, it does not provide a complete solution to the problem. Obviously, as is clear from the title of the present work itself, investigations and judgments have already been made; a metanarrative is in place; one thematic understanding of the work of Christ has been accepted and others rejected. The discussion in the remainder of this chapter in particular and this entire work generally will reflect and reveal those prior investigations and judgments. Nevertheless, even though one view is firmly put forward, the goal of the work is the advancement and enrichment of the contemporary theological discussion, and history shows that this

cannot be achieved by the vanquishing of the other through a triumph on the exegetical scorecard.

Similar concerns may be raised by approaches that begin with a particular ethical, contextual, or anthropological concern. Many of the more recent works on the atonement have begun from such perspectives, and they have borne considerable fruit. In particular, feminist and other liberation theologies and mimetic anthropologies have brought many valid insights and useful tools to the discussion, challenging as well as affirming different aspects of the traditional perspectives. These voices can and must be heard; indeed, to an extent this thesis was precipitated by their persuasive arguments and discoveries. Yet, fixing upon a particular contextual perspective (e.g., the experience of oppression) as a starting point or an exclusive hermeneutical key (e.g., R. Girard's (2001) theory of mimetic desire) is problematic for dialoguing with theologies with a catholic concern such as pentecostalism, which makes definite claims of universal applicability. Also, even theologies that explicitly begin with a certain context are not free from outside influences, and one key to successful contextualization is recognition of the ongoing influence of historical and traditional concepts on contemporary theology and practice.

For the present task, a more general approach is required, one compatible with the global character of pentecostalism. Assessed most broadly and positively, pentecostalism is a global and incredibly diverse movement, embracing countless cultures and perspectives (Klaus 1999); simplistic generalizations derived from its expression in one isolated context are utterly inadequate for grasping its significance as a major religious movement. Amid this diversity, however, it is also true that nearly all pentecostals share certain common beliefs and concerns, particularly with regard to Jesus Christ and salvation (MacDonald 1988). The pentecostal fourfold or fivefold "full gospel" of Jesus as savior, (sanctifier), baptizer, healer, and coming king serves as the foundation of the movement's theology and as its common symbol of faith (Dayton 1987; House 2006, 28–29). This unity in diversity demands a catholic treatment of systemic theological problems such as the subject of this thesis, which touches the very center of the full gospel. The basic theological problem of pentecostalism is a lack of reflective and critical thought unifying its intuitive doctrinal insights. Accordingly, there is a need for a solution to the atonement problem that contributes towards establishing a general framework for pentecostal theology that can subsequently work towards addressing particularities. Although universality in theology is more an ideal than a realistic goal, a viable solution should be able to be applied successfully to numerous contexts. Such a testing will be performed in the concluding chapter through conversation with some of these new theologies.

This thesis adopts an approach more amiable to the discipline of systematic theology, one designed to explore and answer the historical question of how atonement theories have correlated with soteriology and the implications of these doctrines for one another. In other words, it seeks to understand and compare how the various theories support as well as undermine the soteriological paradigms associated with them. In this chapter, the historical development of different Christian interpretations of the work of Christ and salvation is explored, not simply as a cataloguing or review of traditional doctrines, but with the twin aims of ascertaining the intended and unintended consequences of Christology on soteriology and of assessing the successes and failures of the various theories in unifying and stabilizing their systems of theology. To the extent that they are successful in the latter, their faithfulness to the biblical attestation of the fullness of salvation accomplished by the work of Christ will also be evaluated. This analysis will then serve as the foundation for the next chapter's detailed exploration of the contemporary problem within pentecostalism as mediated through the received reformed theory.

The essential meaning of “atonement”—itself a uniquely English theological term—is reconciliation. Barth's (1956b, 22) basic definition serves as a useful beginning point for unfolding the methodology to be employed in the present study:

“Reconciliation” is the restitution, the resumption of a fellowship which once existed but was then threatened by dissolution. It is the maintaining, restoring and upholding of that fellowship in face of an element which disturbs and disrupts and breaks it. It is the realisation of the original purpose which underlay and controlled it in defiance and by the removal of this obstruction.

In order to be faithful to this meaning, any complete doctrine of the atonement, using the sources of authority for its theological system, must address two questions. First, it must identify and define the problem in the divine-human relationship; the very concept of atonement in the Christian faith, belief in the need for and the accomplishment of reconciliation with God, testifies to the prior existence of such a problem (Ritschl 1872, 8–10). Second, the atonement doctrine must explain how the work of Christ, especially his death, remedies it; that his death has accomplished this reconciliation is the heart of Christian faith (1 Cor. 15.3). As will be seen, the object or terminating point (Warfield 1950, 356–369) towards which the atoning work is directed has major implications, whether recognized consciously or not, for the related soteriological paradigm. The historical answers to these questions given by the major theories will be examined in this chapter. After these questions are answered, in the modern order of systematic theology at least, the locus of soteriology steps in to discuss the application of the work of Christ and its effects—the practical experience of the remedy.

The church's confession of Jesus Christ as its savior is one, but it is refracted through its traditions into what are herein referred to as soteriological paradigms. A soteriological paradigm is a symbol of faith that serves as the framework for conceptualizing and regulating a theology of salvation. It is normative, but not exhaustive, for doctrine and the practice and experience of the Christian life. The paradigm of Roman catholicism, for example, is the system of seven sacraments through which the church mediates grace; Thomas Aquinas's (1947, 3.60–90) structuring of the *Summa* reflects the role the sacraments play in both the thought and the life of the Roman communion. For Eastern orthodoxy, it could be considered to be *theosis*, which embraces both the worship of the church and the mystical union that is the goal of the Christian life. In the reformed tradition, the *ordo salutis* as it stereotypically intersects the "five points" of Calvinism is the paramount means of describing the work of salvation as it is graciously enacted within the plan of God. The *ordo* and the five points describe both the elements of salvation and prevent any deviation from monergism that encroaches upon the sovereignty of God. For pentecostalism, the fourfold gospel depicts the experience of Jesus' work in saving, delivering, healing, empowering, and enkindling hope. Again, these paradigms are not exhaustive of the given traditions' theologies, but they help to organize and summarize their beliefs as well as distinguish them from others. While they are not the only resources drawn upon in theological formation and instruction, it is not possible to speak of the teaching of any of these groups apart from their characteristic symbols of salvation. How these different traditions' theologies of atonement interact with and conform to their soteriological paradigms is the central question of the present study.

### **2.1.2 An Overview of the Forms of the Work of Christ**

The present chapter follows the basic pattern of Aulén (1931) and many others, dividing the major views of the atonement into three general categories. There are, in fact, many more than three theories, and to some extent, it is a disservice to the theologians who developed them to group them together indiscriminately; Anselm and Calvin may be similar but certainly not identical. Justification for the propriety of this generalization will emerge in the ensuing discussion, but the precedent of the employment of this scheme by many authorities is sufficient at this point. The first and oldest theory of the atonement, dubbed "Christus victor" in modern times by Aulén (1931), describes a variety of interpretations held by the church fathers, especially in the East, prior to Anselm. Part of the problem in this whole area of doctrine is that these views are not properly theories, at least not in the same sense as later views. The ancient theologians of the church did not systematically develop a detailed doctrine of the atonement in any extent comparable to the dogmatic

formulations of the person and natures of Christ (Kelly 1978, 163). It is in this uncoalesced period of theological history that the widest range of atonement metaphors is displayed and not without occasional contradiction. These views exhibit great variety in their understanding of the mechanism of the atonement (i.e., how Christ's work saves), if they posit a mechanism at all. What unites them is the answer they give the first question mentioned above; they largely identify the problem in the divine-human relationship as originating outside of that relationship and its principals. The work of Christ is a redemption, and it effects reconciliation by acting on an external third party, power, or force through payment (i.e., ransom), deception, or conquest. These ancient interpretations also largely lack the retributive or juridical orientation of later Western theories of the atonement. Also included with these views, more from contemporaneity and association than absolute logical necessity, is the doctrine of recapitulation found in Irenaeus and others. Correlating patristic *Christus victor* views of the work of Christ with their underdeveloped soteriologies is difficult, but in conjunction with the doctrine of recapitulation, they hold great promise for the constructive section of the present work.

The second theory of the atonement is that identified with Anselm of Canterbury and his watershed work, *Cur Deus homo*. The Anselmian tradition is often called the "objective" theory, but it is more accurately identified as the satisfaction or penal substitution theory depending on which particular variant of it is under discussion. Attempting to justify the Christological dogma, in *Cur Deus homo* Anselm explored in depth the question of how and why Christ's death saves. In essence, Anselm teaches that human sin is a dishonoring of God. Prior to forgiving it, God must be satisfied, and only the death of Christ, the God-man, could adequately accomplish this. Decisively connecting the doctrines of the person and work of Christ, Anselm's view also capitalized on the juridical orientation of Western culture and the concepts of penance and merit that had evolved in the sacramental theology of the Latin church. Though not dogmatized in the same manner as the doctrine of the two natures, the satisfaction view became the *de facto* orthodox position in the West. Later, the reformers and protestant scholastics would revise it into penal substitution, attempting to improve it by tying it closer to the biblical concepts of God's justice and wrath, but both Roman catholicism and protestant orthodoxy must be considered firmly within the Anselmian tradition. The satisfaction and penal substitution theories are highly significant for this study for many reasons; two will be mentioned here. First, in comparison to the more ancient view outlined above, Anselm's theory represented a monumental shift in the understanding of the object or terminating point of Christ's work. Rather than affecting an external party or power, Christ's atoning death restores the divine-human relationship by the effect it has upon God. Second, it

is in the Anselmian tradition that more serious, systematic attention was first given to the doctrine of the work of Christ. This ultimately led to the closer correlation between atonement and salvation in the theology of the reformation and post-reformation period, and thus the content of this particular atonement model helped to shape and limit the contours of the salvation described by those particular soteriologies.

Mention must be made of what is sometimes classified as a separate model, the governmental theory formulated by Hugo Grotius. Although frequently identified as the “Arminian” view of the atonement, both its importance for popular Arminian theology, especially Wesleyanism and pentecostalism, and its differences with satisfaction models, of which it is a type, are overstated (Olson 2006, 221–241; Warfield 1950, 365). On the one hand, Wesley himself and most, but not all, Wesleyan revival traditions essentially hold to the penal substitutionary view of the atonement. In formal disputations with Calvinism, aspects of the governmental view may be used to counter specific points of reformed theology such as the limited extent of the atonement, but in the main, this theory was not essential to the formation of Wesleyan-pentecostal soteriological innovations and does not enter into revivalists’ popular preaching of the cross. On the other hand, while there are real differences in the details of the governmental and satisfaction or substitution theories in direct comparison (Cave 1947, 176–181), from the wider perspective of the other atonement views presented here, the differences are not overly significant. Both theories are juridical in nature. Both prioritize God’s holiness and justice. Both see human sin and its attendant guilt as the prime factor disrupting the divine-human relationship. Both in some manner understand the death of Christ as a propitiation or conciliation of the Father. The main difference lies in the reason for the necessity of the punishment of Christ; according to H. O. Wiley (1999, Ch. 23),

Here the central idea of the defense was that God must not be regarded as the offended or injured party, but as the moral Governor of the universe. He must therefore uphold the authority of His government in the interests of the general good. Consequently the sufferings of our Lord are to be regarded, not as the exact equivalent of our punishment, but only in the sense that the dignity of the divine government was as effectively upheld and vindicated, as it would have been if we had received the punishment we deserved.

As R. Olson (2006, 224) further elaborates,

The governmental theory includes an element of substitution! The only significant difference between it and the penal substitution theory... is that the governmental theory does not say that in their place Christ bore the actual punishment of sinners; it says that he bore suffering as an alternative to punishment in their place.

This alteration allows the theory to evade the difficulties of the limited extent of the

atonement as per the traditional penal theory, but this is its sole advantage: the theory perhaps mitigates but does not yet really overcome the moral problems of the penal theory (Cave 1947, 180–181), and its scriptural justification is tenuous at best (Erickson 1998, 809–810). Accordingly, since it is the theory of neither protestant orthodoxy nor revivalism and critiques of and objections to the satisfaction and penal substitution models are also largely applicable to the governmental, no separate detailed treatment is required. However, a few items of interest raised by the theory will be examined at the relevant points of the present work.

The third major family of atonement theories is the “subjective” group of moral influence and exemplar models most closely associated with the names of Abelard and Socinius. This grouping will receive a briefer treatment than the other two. Although an important tradition within itself, historically it has had little sway over the theologies under consideration here; most importantly, it is largely absent from the theological background of pentecostalism. Still, it has some implications for the problem under discussion. First, it represents the prevailing dissent from satisfaction models within Western theology. Those within the Western context who are seeking a third path must listen carefully to its criticisms as well as avoid its mistakes. As will be seen, the Christus victor model is not lacking a subjective component, and at some points these seemingly diametrically opposed theories can converge (e.g., Ray 1998, 142–143). Second, the moral influence theories are important for their further reorientation of the object of the work of Christ. Within this grouping, the problem disrupting the divine-relation lies not with external powers or with God but with each human being; the work of atonement is thus directed toward and has an effect upon humanity. This again causes changes in the nature and dimensions of the salvation caused by that work.

A few other ancillary matters must also be addressed. Up to this point, “atonement” and “the work of Christ” have been used as virtual synonyms. There are strong precedents for this usage, for this is what they eventually became in the historical development of Western theology: the saving work of Christ is the work of atonement. Although in common usage atonement may encompass more than reconciliation, as the saving act of God it refers exclusively, or nearly so, to Christ’s death on the cross. His ministry of salvation to the world is thus limited to what he accomplished by his death. While the usage of the word “atonement” as a shorthand for “the saving work of Christ in death” is not entirely shunned herein, it will be shown as this thesis unfolds that the narrow assignment of salvific value to Christ’s death has been a major theological error, contravening the teaching of both the New Testament and the oldest Christian traditions and contributing to the soteriological problems under discussion. Christ’s saving work is more than his death; it

encompasses, and is encompassed by, his entire life from the incarnation to his resurrection and exaltation. This truth must be recovered in order to properly apprehend the salvation depicted in Scripture and for the Christian message to remain relevant to contemporary theological and human problems, which require soteriological answers that go beyond the justification and pardon of individual human beings alone.

That said, from the time of Calvin (1997, 2.15), protestant systematic theology has included an additional subject in the locus of the work of Christ, that of his threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. In this imagery, an attempt is made to unify the theological significance of his life, death, and glorification beyond the question of the atonement (Ritschl 1872, 2–4). While there is some value in this construct, the researcher agrees with Lutheran theologian G. O. Forde (1984, 26) that within protestant orthodoxy, “the main emphasis remained on the priestly office, and it is doubtful that the doctrine [of the threefold office] is ultimately of much help.” As will be seen, the restrictions placed on soteriological thought by the satisfaction models always remove the other aspects of Christ’s work to the periphery of that locus and outside of the main line of soteriological thought, and acknowledgment of the threefold office does little to address this fundamental problem. This thesis will demonstrate that the saving work of Christ stretches beyond his death in both directions, and that accordingly, the result of that work must be broadened beyond traditional parameters. However, discussion of other aspects of his work sometimes included in the concept of the threefold office but more appropriately explored in New Testament studies, ethics, or pastoral theology will be avoided.

## **2.2 The Victory of Christ: Atonement and Salvation in the First Christian Millennium**

Any survey of the history of atonement thought must begin with the East. During the earliest centuries, as J. N. D. Kelly (1978, 177) notes, “Latin theology remained curiously backward and meagre in its treatment of the redemption,” but ironically, until Aulén (1931, 9–10) pushed it to the forefront of theological conversation, Eastern atonement thought rarely received a serious hearing in the modern West, the Blumhardts and some anabaptist theologians being possible intriguing exceptions. As is well known, the ancient East, even with its theological luminaries, never produced a doctrine of the work of Christ comparable in any way to the completeness of the dogmas of the Trinity and the person of Christ. Unlike these doctrines that dominated councils and creeds, atonement thought developed unsystematically and haphazardly, complicating its study and reception. Moreover, much of the content and expression of early atonement beliefs, particularly as ransom,



is distasteful to modern readers, leading many to reject out of hand the possibility of finding useful or correct theology within the fathers. A pertinent example, pointed out by Aulén (1931, 2), is how Ritschl (1872, 19–21), in his history of justification and reconciliation, quickly dismisses the patristic teaching of redemption as irrelevant to his subject and immediately begins his proper work with Anselm and Abelard. Here again, the interrelation of atonement and salvation as it coalesced in later Western theology is illustrated. As justification has never been a central area of concern for the East, its views on redemption are deemed inapplicable to the main line of Western soteriology.

Only haste, however, can lead one to conclude that there was no ancient theology of the atonement. A survey of extant patristic writings and florilegia reveals profound teachings about the atonement and the salvation it has brought, and it is clear that specific teachers did arrive at a well-developed set of beliefs about the work of Christ. The outlines of doctrine, if not a complete dogma, are truly present. The challenge of exploring patristic atonement thought lies in its disorganization and the fact that at many times, statements about atonement are merely tangential to the main line of thought of a specific work (Harnack 1997b, 167–169). Also, the patristic writers repeat the themes and phrases of the New Testament without clearly delineating how they are employing them. Accordingly, it is easy for the reader to find his or her preconceived understanding in the fathers, and without guard, it is possible to force an anachronistic or distorted interpretation upon them in order to confirm one's own agenda. Aulén (1931, 8–9), for instance, can gloss over juridical language and satisfaction themes to strengthen his case for the classical view, whereas an American evangelical such as J. D. Hannah (2001, 150–160) can see satisfaction and substitution as the dominant themes in the fathers. The effects of the presupposed metanarrative are also felt here.

Patristic sources and later, derivative theologies must be used carefully and critically to avoid these potential problems and misappropriations. The end goal of the present work, the revision of a protestant theology, must always be kept in mind, and ultimately, the aid that can be lent to it by the unreformed East will be limited. All theology must at last be placed under the rule of Scripture, yet much can be learned from the earliest fathers and their hearing of the Word of God. Attempt will be made to keep the witness of their hearing in an appropriate framework by following the guidelines established in the prior section, namely the questions used to probe the orientation and purpose of an atonement model. These will be addressed in the order given above: What is the problem in the divine-human relationship, how does the work of Christ remedy it, and how may the resulting salvation be described and experienced? As already acknowledged, it is anachronistic to impose the order and

methodology of modern theology onto the patristic era, to expect a systematic and sequential development of thought leading logically and explicitly from anthropology and hamartiology to Christology and soteriology. Nevertheless, it is instructive to explore what major authorities—in this case, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzus, and in the West, Augustine and even Tertullian—believed and taught about each of the germane loci. In this manner, patterns and correlations between Christology and soteriology may be revealed even if they were never explicitly connected in creeds and official theology. The findings uncovered can then be further examined in the light of Scripture and appropriated as warranted for the positive construction of doctrine as found in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

### **2.2.1 The Problem in the Divine-Human Relationship according to Eastern Theology**

Scripture and tradition are unanimous in their answer to the question as to what is the cause of the problem in divine-human relationship: it is sin, stemming from the fall of humanity's common primeval parents. Paul (Rom. 5.12, 19) and Irenaeus (1999, 3.18.7), Athanasius and Augustine, Anselm and even Abelard (Cave 1947, 133–137) all affirm the fall and depravity of the human race. Sin may be the fundamental answer to the question, but this answer in itself is not a sufficient base upon which to simply turn and erect a complete atonement doctrine. More carefully defined, the first question addressed by an atonement doctrine is why sin is a problem, how exactly it disrupts the relationship, and what needs to be done about it. The answer given is in fact the source of the differences between atonement doctrines. It is at this point that the assumptions underlying traditional Western beliefs about the atonement must be reexamined; the early church, particularly in the East, answered this question rather differently. The major departure lies in the two sides' interpretations of the effects of the fall upon Adam's descendants (Karras 2003, 102–104). The differences between Western and Eastern anthropologies are great and have wide-reaching implications for many areas of their respective theologies, but their detailed exploration lies outside the scope of this study; a summary of the differences in their hamartiologies is sufficient for the present purpose. The classical Western understanding of original sin is just that—a Western understanding, formulated chiefly by Augustine and alien to Greek Christian thought. As will be seen, Western theology has understood the divine-human relationship primarily in legal terms; guilt before God because of sin, along with the resultant human inability to make proper satisfaction for it, is the reason for the disruption in the relationship. Each human being is guilty not only for his or her individual sins but also carries the burden of guilt from participation in Adam's sin. By contrast, Eastern theology has never accepted this doctrine of original sin and guilt (Meyendorff 1979, 143–146). While

the fall of the primeval parents affects all of humanity, sin and the guilt for it is ultimately personal, the chosen act of each individual.

The difference between the Western and Eastern views of sin largely originates in the differences between the Greek original and the Latin translation of the crucial text of Rom. 5.12 (Meyendorff 1979, 144; Pelikan 1971, 299–300), which the NRSV renders as, “Sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned.” The final clause of the verse, ἐφ’ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον, was improperly translated in the Latin as *in quo omnes peccaverunt*: “in whom [i.e., Adam] all have sinned.” Augustine (1999c, 4.7), following the precedent of other Western fathers, worked from this translation, and his teaching became the basis of the doctrine of original sin in the West. He quoted approvingly the conclusion of Hilary, “It is manifest that all have sinned in Adam, as it were in the mass; for he himself was corrupted by sin, and all whom he begot were born under sin.” Participating in the transgression of Adam, all human beings also share in his guilt, apart from the guilt of their own personal sins. Although later biblical scholarship corrected this translation, Augustine’s doctrine of original sin and guilt as derived from it has continued to hold sway over both protestant and Roman catholic theology (e.g., Turretin 1992, 617–620; Berkhof 1938, 245–246; Hoekema 1986, 148–149, 157–163). Indeed, many uphold it as a nonnegotiable criterion of orthodoxy.

Naturally, this interpretation never arose in the Greek East and was rejected when proposed by the Latin church. Even the neutrality of the corrected English translation, however, does not fully capture how the text was read by the majority of the Greek fathers. According to J. Meyendorff (1979, 144), ἐφ’ ᾧ was commonly held as referent to ὁ θάνατος, thus the clause is best rendered as “because of death, all men [*sic*] have sinned.” Mortality or corruption, even more than sin, is the fundamental problem afflicting the human condition and thus disrupting the relationship with God (Pelikan 1971, 285). This interpretation is reinforced by the parallel “Adam” imagery of 1 Cor 15.21–22, the chief concern of which, like the rest of the chapter, is the problem of death; likewise, however useful the story of the fall in Gen. 3 is for Christian hamartiology, its fundamental intent as an etiological tale is more to explain the origin of human death than sin. Primeval sin is indeed the cause of death, but in their mortal and perishable state, death and its fear pervert human desires and actions; this is the meaning of corruption (Meyendorff 1979, 144–145; cf. Eph. 2.1–3). The fathers take up this theme whenever they discuss humanity’s plight; Athanasius’s teaching is an authoritative representation of this common belief of the early church:

Thus, then, God has made man, and willed that he should abide in incorruption; but men, having despised and rejected the contemplation of God,

and devised and contrived evil for themselves..., received the condemnation of death with which they had been threatened; and from thenceforth no longer remained as they were made, but were being corrupted according to their devices; and death had the mastery over them as king. For transgression of the commandment was turning them back to their natural state, so that just as they have had their being out of nothing, so also, as might be expected, they might look for corruption into nothing in the course of time. (Athanasius 1999b, 4.4)

For having departed from the consideration of the one and the true, namely, God, and from desire of Him, they had thenceforward embarked in divers lusts and in those of the several bodily senses. Next, as is apt to happen, having formed a desire for each and sundry, they began to be habituated to these desires, so that they were even afraid to leave them: whence the soul became subject to cowardice and alarms, and pleasures and thoughts of mortality. For not being willing to leave her [*sic*; i.e., the soul's] lusts, she fears death and her separation from the body. But again, from lusting, and not meeting with gratification, she learned to commit murder and wrong. (1999a, 3.3–4)

For this cause, then, death having gained upon men, and corruption abiding upon them, the race of man was perishing; the rational man made in God's image was disappearing, and the handiwork of God was in process of dissolution.... Again, it were unseemly that creatures once made rational, and having partaken of the Word, should go to ruin, and turn again toward non-existence by the way of corruption. (1999b, 6.1, 4)

The shape of Eastern, pre-Anselmian thought can be seen in these quotations. Belief in the primeval fall is affirmed: it was occasioned by the willful disobedience of humanity's common parents. The result of this sin was death, not only for Adam, but for all human beings. The difference from later, Western thought is that corruption, not original sin and guilt, is the primary effect of the fall holding human beings in bondage. Again, the corruption of mortality instills the fear of death in human beings (cf. Heb. 2.14–15), and this perverts their desires and actions, leading them into sin in a truly vicious circle. However, the Augustinian concepts of original sin and inherited guilt are decisively rejected; human beings retain some freedom of will, and "they are only guilty in so far as by their own free choice they imitate Adam" (Ware 1963, 227–230). Accordingly, the answer to the question, "What is the problem in the divine-human relationship?" is human corruption, with sin and guilt remaining real but dependent dimensions of this fundamental problem.

There exists a further distinction of emphasis, if not at first a material difference, between the Eastern and later Western approaches to this question. In the church's earlier theological reflection, a greater place is given to what the researcher refers to as the "third party" intruding upon the divine-human relationship, the tempter, Satan or the devil. A more critical examination of this concept and its place in contemporary theology will be undertaken later, but at this juncture its recognition is important. In all theologies of this era, the story of the fall of humankind in Gen. 3 is accepted as a record of the original disruption in the divine-human relationship.

Satan, symbolized by the serpent (Rev. 12.9), was present in Eden in addition to God and the first humans, and this third party shouldered much of the blame for the fall itself (Irenaeus 1999, 4.40.3). Moreover, this adversary—the “apostasy” in the phrase of Irenaeus (1999, 5.1.1)—continued to tyrannize and hold humanity in bondage after the fall. Death and corruption and the power of Satan are closely linked (Heb. 2.14–15), thus freedom from the former also necessitates liberation from the latter. In early Christian thought, the healing of the breach in the divine-human relationship was via a redemption that encompasses all three parties present at the fall. Later Western theology did share the belief that the death of Christ on the cross resulted in the liberation of humanity from the power of Satan (Anselm 1926, 1.3), but in shifting the question of the problem in the divine-human relationship away from corruption and bondage to guilt and dishonor, the role and power of the “third party” was moved to the periphery, and the main work of redemption does not directly concern it. Humanity may be liberated from Satan by the work of Christ according to the Anselmian tradition, but in the final analysis, that liberation was not as essential to the actual effecting of reconciliation as it was in the Greek teaching.

The beliefs about the human situation outlined above set the dimensions and agenda for the Eastern doctrine of atonement and its explication below. First, Eastern atonement thought will concentrate primarily, but not solely, on the question of corruption and death, rather than sin, guilt, and punishment (Aulén 1931, 43–44). This orientation causes it to expand its outlook beyond the cross to the incarnation and resurrection as also being part of the saving work of Christ (Aulén 1931, 18–22). Next, it also follows that since sin and guilt are not the primary focal point of the work of atonement, the remedy provided through the work of Christ to the problems of both corruption and bondage to Satan will not be conceived in juridical terms and images. Rather, it will be depicted more as redemption, rescue, and healing. Finally, the identification of corruption, rather than individual sin and guilt, as the fundamental problem in the divine-human relationship will lead to a depersonalization, or de-individualizing, and distancing of the object of the work of atonement. That is, the remedy accomplished by Christ goes beyond the plight of each individual human being and the sins that estrange him or her from God to the inherently unnatural condition of corruption afflicting the entire human race and indeed creation as a whole (Aulén 1931, 6). The problem in the divine-human relationship is not natural but alien to it; as can be seen from the biblical story of the fall, there is a third party or force attendant to the power of corruption disrupting the relationship. This third party will become the primary object or target of the work of Christ, which takes on cosmic dimensions.

### 2.2.2 The Triumph of the Life and Death of Christ

While views prior to Anselm are often consolidated under the singular names of ransom theory or *Christus victor*, this simplification obscures the diversity and depth of patristic and Eastern images and metaphors for the work of Christ. Finlan (2005, 67–71) prefers to group these diverse views together under the category of “rescue theories,” which better captures the basic motif shared by them all: the liberation of the human race from its bondages through the direct intervention of God in Jesus Christ. Thus, Irenaeus’s theory of recapitulation that leads to a “soteriology of repair,” Origen’s eclectic depictions of God’s triumph in the cosmic battle, and Gregory of Nyssa’s cruder portrayal of the ransom and deception of Satan all agree with, and point the way to the remedy of, the basic Eastern belief about the human predicament: human beings are in bondage to death and corruption, and because of this corruption, they are also in bondage to sin. Atonement involves both God and humankind as God heals humanity in and through Christ and reconciles the world to himself, but redemption itself is effected by the triumph of Christ over the dark power that is the jailor and oppressor of the human race. In studying patristic views of the atonement, however, one must not lose sight of the domination of early Christian theology by its questions about the person of Christ, which overshadow its treatment of his work. As E. Brunner (1952, 309) observes:

The interest of the theologians of the Early Church was centred almost exclusively in the doctrine of the Person of Christ, and all that they said about the fact of the Incarnation, as such, also expressed what they had to say about the work of Atonement.

It is therefore not possible to grasp their atonement doctrines by simply examining their preaching of the cross, for significance is given to all aspects of the life of Christ. Rather, exploration of Eastern teachings of redemption and reconciliation must follow two lines of thought that emerge in nearly all of the major authorities: one based on the incarnation and one based on Christ’s triumph over the powers (Brunner 1952, 308–309). Taken together, they form the ancient church’s model of atonement.

The first idea is best embodied in the doctrine, most closely associated with Irenaeus, theologian of the East and West, of Christ’s recapitulation (*ἀνακεφαλαίωσις*) of the life and testing of Adam, the primal human being. As the last Adam (1 Cor. 15.45), Christ succeeded where the first Adam failed, and just as in solidarity with Adam all of humanity suffers because of his disobedience, so too all of humanity can be saved in solidarity with the obedient Christ (Kelly 1978, 170–175). In the thought of Irenaeus and other church fathers—all of whom, according to Kelly (1978, 376–377), affirmed recapitulation in some form—this redemptive obedience does not just consist of his obedience “unto death” but throughout his life, and his

subsequent resurrection and exaltation are also salvific moments within the plan of redemption (Aulén 1931, 28–32). While some affirmation of recapitulation is implied whenever there is theological meditation on biblical texts such as Rom. 5.12–21, as a whole, this concept is pushed to the periphery of later Western interpretations of the saving work of Christ that limit that work to the cross (Berkhof 1938, 380–382). The second line of thought is summarized by the designations of ransom and *Christus victor*. It is here that the diverse pictures of the nature of the work of Christ—as victory over sin, death, and the devil, as the rescue, healing, and rehabilitation of corrupt sinners—are united. Not all of these depictions are palatable to modern thought, but when the different theological insights each image seeks to convey are summed, they reveal the fullness of the early Christian understanding of the meaning of Jesus’ death. Just as the fall of Genesis 3 is traditionally understood to have involved three parties—God, human beings, and Satan (Lossky 1957, 128–129), similarly the work of Christ also concerns all three. Recapitulation of the life of Adam is incomplete without an overcoming of the power that has tyrannized humanity since the fall. Early Christian writers recognized this as an essential element of the work of Christ and thus gave it significant attention in their depictions of his work. When the victory of Christ is combined with the healing of human nature accomplished by the recapitulation, the Eastern approach acquires a surprising depth that is to some degree absent or diminished in other theories, as detailed as they may be, that marginalize or eliminate one of these dimensions.

### **2.2.2.1 Recapitulation and Incarnation**

The doctrine of recapitulation or *ἀνακεφαλαίωσις*, the summing up or uniting of all things in Christ, is an elaboration of a concept found in New Testament texts such as Rom. 5.12–21, Eph. 1.10, and 1 Cor. 15.45–49. Irenaeus (1999, 3.18.7), its best proponent, succinctly explained his theory in his own words: “God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man.” Kelly (1978, 172–173) amplifies:

He understands the Pauline text as implying that the Redeemer gathers together, includes or comprises the whole of reality in Himself, the human race included. In close conjunction with this he exploits to the full the parallelism between Adam and Christ which was so dear to St. Paul... [J]ust as Adam contained in himself all his descendants, so Christ... “recapitulated in Himself the long sequence of mankind,” and passed through all the stages of human life, sanctifying each in turn. As a result... just as Adam was the originator of a race disobedient and doomed to death, so Christ can be regarded as inaugurating a new, redeemed humanity.

Christ is the second or last Adam, and his life on earth represented a repetition of the life of the first human with the crucial difference that where Adam disobeyed and fell, Christ obeyed and effected redemption. Further, just as all humanity was in solidarity

with Adam and thus suffered the consequence of his disobedience—in Eastern thought, principally the corruption of mortality—so all of humanity is summed up in Christ and can receive the outcome of his obedience, which is eternal life (Meyendorff 1979, 144).

As an interpretation of the work of Christ, recapitulation does not confine itself to or even begin with the cross. Rather, it begins with the incarnation, affirming the salvific value of the life of Christ itself; the person and work of Christ are one. (This has led some, not entirely friendly, to dub it a “physical” theory of atonement and salvation (Aulén 1931, 18–19; Kelly 1978, 172–173).) In this perspective, every moment and event of the life and ministry of Christ becomes significant for the renewal and recreation of the human race. The virgin birth recapitulates the miraculous creation of Adam by God from the dust of the earth (Irenaeus 1999, 3.21.10). Christ passed through the various stages of life in order to sanctify them and allow them to receive him (2.22.4, 4.38.2). Facing the tempter while hungering from fasting, he overcame the corruption incurred by the first parents’ desire for food (5.21.2). Jesus, in his role of teacher, was also an example for Christians to imitate and obey for salvation (Pelikan 1971, 142–146); aspects of the exemplar and moral influence theories of Abelard and others are not without some ancient precedent. In his ministry of miracles, in exorcisms and healings, Christ engaged the powers holding humanity in bondage and brought liberty to suffering individuals; this aspect of his life was representative of the fuller victory brought by his death and resurrection.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the doctrine of recapitulation is its ability to include Christ’s resurrection as part of the work of redemption; indeed, one of the greatest weaknesses of the other models is how their nearly exclusive focus on the cross renders the resurrection virtually supererogatory. When all of the life and death of Christ is understood as the summing up of humanity, the fact that death is not his end means that there has been a radical change in human destiny. The resurrection breaks the power of death and corruption, thus setting humankind free (Meyendorff 1979, 162–163). Again, this, not the restitution of God’s honor and the setting aside of human guilt, is the prime aim of the work of atonement in Eastern thought. The view of Theodore of Mopsuestia (1932, Chap. 8; cf. Pelikan 1971, 236) was common to many ancient theologians:

Indeed this resurrection is the end of all the Economy of Christ and the principal object of all the reforms wrought by Him, as it is through it that death was abolished, corruption destroyed, passions extinguished, mutability removed, the inordinate emotions of sin consumed, the power of Satan overthrown, the urge of demons brought to nought and the affliction resulting from the law wiped out. An immortal and immutable life reigns by which all



the above evils are abolished and destroyed, and it was through them that the demons entered to fight against us.

This quote from Theodore reveals the close connection between the two major themes of early atonement thought, recapitulation (expressing the salvific significance of the incarnation or “economy” of Christ) and *Christus victor*. Discussion and integration of the latter awaits in the following section, but even at this point, it is clear that during this crucial period of theological formation, doctrinal correspondence, if not complete systematic development, between the person and work of Christ was achieved. Accordingly, it is not entirely accurate to conclude that it was Anselm who first brought a complete answer to the question of why God became human.

Atonement doctrines concern the mechanics, as it were, of how Christ’s work saves. In the light of the centrality of the incarnation in their thought, Eastern theologians have described in part how the death and resurrection of Christ accomplish the removal of the main obstructions of the divine-human relationship, corruption and sin. John of Damascus (1999, 3.27–28, cited in Meyendorff 1979, 161) explains how Christ’s death resulted in the conquest of death through the hypostatic union of the divine and the human in his sinless person. Because of his sinlessness, Christ was not subject to death, but in solidarity with the fallen human race, he voluntarily took it upon himself. As traditionally believed by Christians, in death all human beings experience the separation of spirit and/or soul and body. Because of corruption, this normally results in “the complete resolution of the body into its constituent elements, and its utter disappearance,” but because of the subsistence of both Christ’s spirit and body in the divinity of the Word, both were preserved from corruption and dissolution. Death therefore could not hold the man Jesus, and death’s power was thus destroyed not just for him but for all of humanity in solidarity with him: “Death was vanquished precisely because God Himself had tasted of it hypostatically in the humanity which He had assumed” (Meyendorff 1979, 162).

Here the crucial difference with Western or Latin atonement is evident: the death of Christ remedies the problem in the divine-human relationship through the overcoming of death. Meyendorff (1979, 161) explains:

...[T]he death of Christ is truly redemptive and “life-giving” precisely because it is the death of the Son of God in the flesh (i.e., in virtue of the hypostatic union). In the East, the cross is envisaged not so much as the punishment of the just one, which “satisfies” a transcendent Justice requiring a retribution for man’s sins.... The point was not to satisfy a legal requirement, but to vanquish the frightful cosmic reality of death, which held humanity under its usurped control and pushed it into the vicious circle of sin and corruption.

Thus sin is cast off, corruption negated, and death destroyed. Theologies in the Anselmian tradition of course affirm that the death and resurrection of Christ

accomplished all of these things, but they are peripheral to the primary purpose of the atonement, which is the resolution of the problem of human guilt before God. Both traditions share the same basic faith affirmations about the person and work of Christ, but when addressed by the more specific questions of what needs to be remedied in the divine-human and how Christ's death accomplishes it, the answers they give lead off in totally different directions.

The doctrine of recapitulation, especially as formulated by Irenaeus, represents one of the deepest, most moving, and innovative expressions of early Christian theology. Brunner (1952, 308–309) praises Irenaeus for remaining “close” to “Biblical thought and the idea of ‘saving history’” and uniting “the doctrine of the Person and the Work of Christ in a way no later theologian was able to do.” Contemporary reformed theologian H. Boersma (2004, 112–113) sees recapitulation as foundational to all interpretations of the atonement and as capable of unifying the three major theories. Yet, this Eastern teaching has been criticized by many Western theologians. Some, echoing Anselm, feel that it minimizes the problem of sin and guilt. A. Harnack (1997a, 274 n. 3) reports that “Irenaeus keeps sin in the background; death and life are the essential ideas,” and O. Cullmann (1963, 191) asserts that the church father did not take sin “seriously enough.” Another criticism leveled is that Irenaeus and others who share his view of recapitulation have no real doctrine of atonement; the incarnation itself is seen as accomplishing salvation (Aulén 1931, 18–22; Brunner 1947, 259). Brunner (1947, 249–264) himself strongly countered the liberal protestant criticisms of Irenaeus and patristic Christology, but as Aulén (1931, 29) notes, he “stops short at the death,” refraining from major revision of his atonement doctrine in an eastward direction.

The criticism that the patristic doctrine insufficiently explains how Christ's death saves from sin will be explored in more detail later, but equally strong countercharges may be brought against the Anselmian tradition's wholesale rejection of the Eastern perspective. The near exclusive focus on the cross in Western atonement thought and soteriology is the result of the tendency in Western theology, particularly protestantism, to view all of the New Testament through a highly selective, Pauline-derived lens. As is well known, references to the life and ministry of Jesus are almost entirely absent in Paul's writings, and Paul is indeed the apostle of the message of the cross (Gal. 6.14). However, upon closer examination, one can see that the resurrection is never far from mind in Paul, and it constantly attends his discussions of the death of Christ and salvation (e.g., Rom. 4.24–25, 5.12–6.11, 2 Cor. 5.14–15; cf. Beker 1980, 189–198). This fact alone demonstrates that a complete doctrine of the atonement must also give a central place to the resurrection, not just as a vindication of the cross, but also as essential to the effecting of redemption. More

importantly, a correct understanding of the work of Christ cannot restrict itself to Paul's writings, let alone a particular interpretation of them; the Gospels, which alone depict the work of Christ in his life, are also sources of theology in the Bible. From the meaning of his name announced before his birth (Matt. 1.21) to all of the recorded actions of his life and ministry, it is clear that his saving work can by no means be limited to his death. One aspect of this saving ministry that has been particularly neglected in traditional Western theology has been Jesus' bringing of liberation through his words and actions, especially in the form of healing and the overthrow of demonic powers. The latter coincides with the *Christus victor* theme, the other major line of thought in patristic atonement theology. This theme will now be examined.

#### **2.2.2.2 Christ the Conqueror**

When discussing the more particular question of how Christ's death and related works accomplish the remedying of the problem in the divine-human relationship, the prominent fathers of the church overwhelmingly concentrate on the "third party" attendant to the fall of humankind, Satan or the devil. Irenaeus (1999, 3.23.1), the great early luminary and masterful constructor of the doctrine of recapitulation, firmly identified Satan as the author of humanity's fall into corruption, while not denying the culpability of Adam. He also held that humanity's liberation came through Christ's victory over this dark power:

He has therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam, and trampled upon his head... (5.21.1)

This view was shared by the majority of other early church fathers, including "Origen, Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Chrysostom" (Aulén 1931, 37), and even, to some extent, by those in the West usually associated with different perspectives such as Tertullian (Cave 1947, 89) and Augustine (Kelly 1978, 391–392). It is thus not improper to follow Aulén (1931, 6) and acknowledge it as "the ruling idea of the Atonement for the first thousand years of Christian history."

The seeming fixation of early Christianity on the devil should not be viewed merely as the expression of superstition common to this era of human history. Rather, the fathers were following the precedent of the New Testament, which relates humanity's plight and Christ's remedying of it to God's cosmic conflict with the powers of evil. As part of the background of the positive construction of contemporary doctrine, the fourth chapter examines this theme in greater detail, but a few central passages are noted at this point. To begin with, the fathers followed the later biblical writings in interpreting the tempting serpent of Gen. 3 as the symbolization of Satan and identifying him as the initiator of the fall of humanity. By

listening to and obeying his word rather than God's, he achieved mastery over them, exacerbating their plight in their corrupted state. Tertullian (1999, 3.) expresses the common belief clearly:

Satan... the source of error, the corrupter of the whole world, by whom in the beginning man was entrapped into breaking the commandment of God. And (the man) being given over to death on account of his sin, the entire human race, tainted in their descent from him, were made a channel for transmitting his condemnation.

Irenaeus (1999, 5.21.3) likewise agrees that Satan held humanity captive and subsequently explains how Christ set humanity free from corruption by breaking his power:

For as in the beginning he [Satan] enticed man to transgress his Maker's law, and thereby got him into his power; yet his power consists in transgression and apostasy, and with these he bound man [to himself]; so again, on the other hand, it was necessary that through man himself he should, when conquered, be bound with the same chains with which he had bound man, in order that man, being set free, might return to his Lord, leaving to him (Satan) those bonds by which he himself had been fettered, that is, sin. For when Satan is bound, man is set free; since "none can enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods, unless he first bind the strong man himself."...

After... the Word bound him securely as a fugitive from Himself, and made spoil of his goods,—namely, those men whom he held in bondage, and whom he unjustly used for his own purposes. And justly indeed is he led captive, who had led men unjustly into bondage; while man, who had been led captive in times past, was rescued from the grasp of his possessor, according to the tender mercy of God the Father, who had compassion on His own handiwork, and gave to it salvation, restoring it by means of the Word—that is, by Christ—in order that men might learn by actual proof that he receives incorruptibility not of himself, but by the free gift of God.

Even in the strongest advocate of recapitulation, Christ's incarnation is not in itself sufficient for the redemption of the human race apart from his atoning death and resurrection (Irenaeus 1999, 5.1.1). Human beings are responsible for their own sins, but they must also be liberated from the one who led them into their bondage (3.23.1, 5). In Luther's (1921, 4.) words, "to be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil, and to enter into the kingdom of Christ, and to live with Him forever."

This is precisely how the New Testament depicts the saving mission of Christ. The conquest of the powers is explicitly linked to the work of Christ on the cross and his resurrection in Eph. 1.19–22 and Col. 2.12–15, and depending on how the various terms for "rulers" and "powers" are construed, this idea can also be seen, albeit less directly, in the undisputed Pauline letters (e.g., 1 Cor. 2.6–8, Rom. 8.33–39, Phil. 2.8–11; cf. Wink 1984, 39–96). Ironically, some of the New Testament writings commonly held up as most strongly teaching the penal and satisfaction theories also

contain some of the most potent descriptions of Christ's cosmic engagement of the devil. John's Gospel, while identifying Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1.29), also records his announcement of his judging and driving out "the ruler of this world" (12.31, 16.11) through his imminent elevation on the cross (12.32). Likewise, Hebrews, the book of the New Testament that draws most heavily on the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, identifies the purpose of the incarnation as the destruction of the devil and the fear of death (Heb. 2.14–15). In sum, rather than degenerating from the purer teaching of Scripture as is sometimes alleged, the fathers were merely continuing its narrative.

Thus, the devil, as the leader of this unholy triad of humanity's oppressors, is the object or terminating point of the atoning work of Christ. It is here that the fathers employ the term "ransom" ((ἀντί)λυτρον) taken from Scriptures such as Mark 10.45 and 1 Tim. 2.6. Christ's life is the price paid to manumit human beings from their bondage; his death means their liberty from the tyrant. The fathers give varying answers as to how this is actually accomplished, but somehow, the payment of the ransom also results in the deposition of the enemy who holds the human race in slavery. A key question that immediately arises from this metaphor is the identity of the recipient of the ransom paid. Here comes the greatest challenge of this atonement model. Gregory of Nyssa (1999, 24) did not flinch in his answer of it, and from him comes the most infamous depiction of the ransom not only as a payment to, but also a deception of, Satan:

For since... it was not in the nature of the opposing power to come in contact with the undiluted presence of God, and to undergo His unclouded manifestation, therefore, in order to secure that the ransom in our behalf might be easily accepted by him who required it, the Deity was hidden under the veil of our nature, that so, as with ravenous fish, the hook of the Deity might be gulped down along with the bait of flesh, and thus, life being introduced into the house of death, and light shining in darkness, that which is diametrically opposed to light and life might vanish; for it is not in the nature of darkness to remain when light is present, or of death to exist when life is active.

Just as death is destroyed by the taking of the human life of Jesus, which is inseparable from the divine Word, so too the devil overreaches by unjustly killing Christ and is himself destroyed. Hardly the chance outcome of a balanced dualistic conflict, it was the Father's plan that the sacrifice of his Son would be too tempting for the tempter to resist and thus bring an end to his tyranny.

Both the concepts of God making a "deal" with Satan over the life of Christ and the implied element of divine deceit in the transaction are problematic, theologically as well as ethically. Later theologians were largely repelled by this imagery, commonly describing it as "crude" and "grotesque." The fathers themselves were by no means in unanimous agreement with Gregory of Nyssa. Another

Cappadocian, Gregory of Nazianzus (1999a, 45.22), strongly rejected this depiction, yet he also rejected the idea of the ransom as a payment to the Father; God neither held humanity in bondage nor demanded the blood of his Son. He preferred revered silence to further speculation. However, silence leaves the doctrinal construction incomplete, and placing the Father in opposition to the Son does considerable violence to Trinitarian theology, a far greater theological problem than the deception of the devil. Contemporary reappropriations of the Christus victor perspective will most likely be forced to follow yet adapt the direction of Gregory of Nyssa, Origen (Pelikan 1971, 148), and other early theologians of a similar mind in order fully retrieve the concept of ransom; feminist theologian D. K. Ray (1998) has proposed such an appropriation. If one can look beyond the “crudity” and “grotesqueness” of such imagery, considerable theological depth can be seen, and the patristic belief in the salvific power of the incarnation and resurrection shines through. Gregory’s belief in the destruction of death and corruption through the death and resurrection of Christ because of the union of the human and divine in him is the same as the later teaching of John of Damascus, referenced above, which became an integral part of historic Eastern orthodox theology. Here, sin, death, and the devil are fully linked, and all three are fully conquered through the work of Christ. The work of Christ retains a three dimensional structure, addressing God, humanity, and the devil, and it naturally follows that the soteriological paradigms of theologies affirming this view should be equally multi-dimensional.

### **2.2.3 Eastern Christian Soteriology**

As stated previously, prior to the reformation the broader Christian tradition did not develop its formal soteriology to as great or precise an extent as other loci such as the Trinity and the person of Christ. Early beliefs about salvation started with the fact of salvation in Christ—the Nicene creed’s simple “for us and for our salvation”—and then were informed by both the theological reflection and the liturgical life of the church. The latter is particularly important when considering the Eastern church, as it is impossible to clinically separate orthodox soteriology from its actual worship practices; to attempt to speak of an Eastern—ancient or contemporary—soteriological “paradigm” is almost to force an alien systematization upon a theology that values mystical experience above rational organization. Moreover, the East was largely untouched by the conflicts and personalities that drove the development of Western soteriology, both catholic and protestant. The East’s doctrine of grace did not experience the theological sharpening forced by the Pelagian controversy in the West, and it lacked a singular theologian of grace of the stature and impact of Augustine. Similarly, the Eastern church, lacking a juridical orientation, has never shared the preoccupation with justification common to both divisions of the

Western church (Karras 2003, 99–101), and the questions of the reformation went unasked. Negatively, this means that the writings of the fathers and later Greek authorities are far less useful for addressing protestant questions about the relationship of atonement to salvation and various issues with the *ordo salutis*. Quite frequently, protestantism has judged Eastern soteriology as too far separated from biblical truths and reformation concerns to be of value, dismissing it as semi-Pelagian at best.

When approached more openly, however, insights can be found within Eastern theology that deserve the attention of other traditions. In the words of V. Lossky (1957, 104), the mystical orientation of the Eastern church gives its faith a “constantly soteriological” emphasis, and its lack of a scholastic tradition allows it to dwell on the practical experience of God in the Christian life. This is especially useful for the present study; as patristics scholar V. Karras (2003, 99) explains, “Orthodox religious formation is similar, strangely enough, to Pentecostalism in its experiential and synergistic approach to salvation”; E. J. Rybarczyk (1999), with a view to the interests of practical theology and spirituality, has performed a detailed comparison of the soteriologies of the two traditions. The best-known expression of Eastern soteriology is the concept of *theosis* or deification. In the famous and startling words of Athanasius (1999b, 54.3), “[Christ] was made man that we might be made God.” To Western ears, such bold descriptions of *theosis* are shocking because of their apparent pantheism, but Eastern theologies firmly reject this equation (Clendenin 2003, 130). *Theosis* is union with God not in essence but with his uncreated energies (Lossky 1957, 87), the divine attributes and operations. The goal of the Christian life, and thus the full meaning of salvation, is a complete and real union with God, a union of love and will. Forgiveness and peace with God are necessary preconditions of this union, but it is accepted that Christ has already accomplished this reconciliation for all of humanity, and more attention is given to how the fruits of this salvation are to be manifested in life (Karras 2003, 114–118). Restoration, healing, and the perfecting of the redeemed creature are soteriological desires shared with pentecostalism.

Again, the doctrine of recapitulation serves as the theological organizing point, bringing together soteriology and the doctrines of both the person and the work of Christ. Recapitulation was elevated to the level of a de facto dogma through the theological developments that culminated in the council of Chalcedon. A guiding principle in the convoluted debate over the natures and person of Christ was the maxim of Gregory of Nazianzus (1999b) that arose in response to the Apollinarian controversy:

For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of Him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole.

The doctrine of Apollinarius and any other Christologies that denied the full humanity of Christ were to be rejected, for any deficiency in his humanity would mean that the corresponding aspect of human existence would be left unredeemed. Christ was a whole human person because he came to save human persons in their entirety, and this salvation was effected not only by his death but through the incarnation as a whole. This belief was affirmed and preserved by the verdict of Chalcedon, the confession of Christ as ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα (Schaff 1931a, 62; Karras 2003, 113). The clear soteriological implication of this ecumenical confession is that salvation encompasses all aspects of human existence, but as will be seen, protestant orthodoxy, with its fixation on forensic justification, has lost sight of the significance of the ὁμοούσιον in this regard.

In general, the Eastern tradition takes a sacramental approach to salvation. All of life is “sacramental,” says Lossky (1957, 180), and “an unceasing struggle for the acquisition of that grace which must transfigure nature.” Grace is considered one of God’s uncreated energies through which humanity is united to him. The acquisition of grace or *theosis* is pursued through two distinct but complementary avenues, immediately through the individual’s mystical quest, especially hesychastic prayer and meditation, and mediately through the sacraments and fellowship of the church (Rybarczyk 1999, 153). Participation in the divine liturgy is essential in bringing the two paths together. Lossky (1957, 181) continues:

In the Church and through the sacraments our nature enters into union with the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Son, the Head of His mystical body. Our humanity becomes consubstantial with the deified humanity, united with the person of Christ; but our person has not yet attained its perfection...

Meyendorff (1979, 191) describes the sacraments as “the aspects of a unique mystery of the Church, in which God shares divine life with humanity, redeeming man from sin and death and bestowing upon him the glory of immortality.” Baptism, which incorporates individuals into the body of Christ, is regenerative and communicates the need for continual new birth rather than justification or the removal of original sin and guilt (Karras 2003, 104–105). It is preceded by exorcism and renunciation of the devil, which links this salvific act to the Eastern interpretation of the atonement (Meyendorff 1979, 193–194; Williams, G. H. 1957, 248–250). Confirmation, which historically is related to the descent and filling of the Spirit at Pentecost, immediately follows baptism:



[R]edemption of humanity implies that not only human “nature” but also *each man*, freely and personally, will now find his place in the new creation, “recapitulated” in Christ. The gift of the Spirit in chrismation is the main sacramental sign of this particular dimension of salvation, which is, according to the liturgical norm, inseparable from baptism. Thus the “life in the Christ” and “life in the Spirit” are not two separate forms of spirituality; they are complementary aspects of the same road, leading toward eschatological “deification.” (Meyendorff 1979, 194–195)

Penance is also a sacrament of the Eastern church, but it never developed the same formal and legal character as in the West. “Ideally,” Meyendorff (1979, 196) notes, it takes the character of “liberation and healing rather than that of judgment.” Similarly, the Eastern church also practices the anointing of the sick for healing: “Whatever the outcome of the disease, the anointing symbolize[s] divine pardon and liberation from the vicious cycle of sin, suffering, and death, in which fallen humanity is held captive” (Meyendorff 1979, 199). In sum, the Eastern tradition frames salvation as participation in “the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1.4), positively orienting it towards the healing of the human person and the bestowal of the life of God.

#### **2.2.4 Weaknesses and Challenges**

While there is much that is valuable in the Eastern tradition’s teaching about the work of Christ, a contemporary appropriation, especially a protestant one, cannot stop with a merely appreciative appraisal of its benefits and strengths; it must also critically assess its weaknesses. From the above discussion, three points of challenge arise. First, there is a considerable gulf between the Eastern and Western understandings of original sin and the exact nature of the problem in the divine-human relationship. Fundamentally, the issue may be resolved to the singular question of whether human beings are in bondage and therefore sinful, or sinful and therefore in bondage. The Eastern view of the atonement, in the teachings of both recapitulation and Christus victor, affirms the former, while the West holds to the latter, and the soteriological paradigms associated with each reflect their specific answers. The famous words of Anselm (1926, 1.21) come to mind: “You have not as yet estimated the great burden of sin.” The charge may be made that Eastern theology and the Christus victor theory have neglected or underestimated the magnitude of human sin and the problem it creates in the divine-human relationship (Schreiner 2006a). As has been shown, Eastern models do address this through the doctrines of recapitulation and *theosis*. It is equally clear that they do not explain the mechanism of the removal of the sin problem as adequately as might be desired by many. The satisfaction model, discussed in the section that immediately follows, did not develop because of theological whimsy but from a genuinely perceived need to more adequately answer this question. If the concerns raised by it—that guilt is the core problem in the divine-human relationship and that scripturally, the remedying of this guilt by Christ’s death

involves its remission before God rather than the healing of human corruption—are paramount, then this weakness may be counted as a serious defect in the Eastern approach. However, the validity of this charge has yet to be demonstrated, and in any event there may be means of addressing this possible deficiency without resorting to forsaking *Christus victor* in favor of a satisfaction model.

Second, there are obvious difficulties with the “ransom to Satan” form of the *Christus victor* theory. Modern objections cannot be simply dismissed as visceral reactions to Gregory of Nyssa’s colorful imagery; many have genuine theological concerns. One general issue is the question of myth vis-à-vis Satan and the demonic; indeed, movement away from the patristic view of the atonement may be understood as an early form of demythologization (Brunner 1952, 310). Ancient Christian assumptions and traditions about the existence, nature, attributes, and abilities of Satan and demons have been questioned from many standpoints, and while more recent modern and postmodern theologies have taken the subject more seriously than earlier works more strongly ruled by the confident skepticism of the enlightenment, a complete return to the ancient perspective is neither possible nor desirable. A contemporary retrieval of the *Christus victor* model, even by pentecostalism, must address this critical question thoroughly.

Next, however the category of the demonic is interpreted, an additional problem remains: the idea of the ransom to an external party itself. Again, as the objection of Gregory of Nazianzus shows, this has long been an issue even within the Eastern tradition. To some, the centrality of the devil to this model of redemption implies a latent Manichaeism, a theologically unhealthy dualism that magnifies the power of Satan at the cost of God’s sovereignty (Anselm 1926, 1.7; Grudem 1994, 581). The question that must be asked is, is the devil, the “third party” to the fall, the proper object of the work of Christ? That is, are redemption and salvation accomplished through the effects of the work of Christ on this external party or force, however it is interpreted, rather than God or humanity? While the overcoming of the dark powers is definitely a biblical theme, reconciliation ultimately concerns the repair of the relationship between God and human beings (2 Cor. 5.19), and the model may be guilty of shifting focus away from the vital question of the repair of the divine-human relationship. It is not completely clear how the liberation of humanity from bondage results in full reconciliation with God. The work of Christ as recapitulation partially addresses this issue, but how redemption as triumph over an external party brings healing to the relationship of the two principals has not yet been fully explained by this perspective.

An additional set of problems lies in the area of soteriology. Some strengths in Eastern soteriology that may be appropriated in a revisioning of pentecostal theology

have been highlighted, but ultimately, it is a new understanding of a protestant soteriological paradigm that is desired, not the simple conversion of pentecostalism to Eastern orthodoxy. While pentecostal theology is fundamentally and thoroughly Arminian, it shares many concerns common to the broader reformation traditions—issues surrounding the nature and reception of grace, the relationship of works, and the role of the church and sacraments in salvation. The complaint of a lack of correlation between atonement thought and soteriology in all branches of Christian tradition has been made, but what stands above this issue is, from a protestant perspective, the lack of biblical support for catholic and orthodox soteriological paradigms. The issue of theological correlation is, before anything else, an issue of faithfulness to scriptural teaching. These concerns about Eastern theology and practice do not disappear because of appreciation for its perspective on the work of Christ. Additionally, from a pentecostal perspective, room must be left within any paradigm for the vitality and dynamism of the Holy Spirit. It is a concern that whatever valuable elements of apostolic teaching that both Roman catholicism and Eastern orthodoxy have retained, their sacramental and hierarchical paradigms represent the ritualizing and formalizing of what were originally charismatic experiences, a less than salutary development in the history of the church (cf. Ruether 1983, 196). To whatever degree patristic thought on the atonement and the incarnation is embraced and integrated, the biblical question must always take precedence, and neither theology nor tradition should be allowed to detract from the life of freedom and spontaneity in the Spirit.

### **2.3 The Satisfaction of the Father: Anselm and the Approximation of a Western Atonement Dogma**

Although *Christus victor* was the predominant view in the early church, the seeds of other interpretations of the atonement grew quietly alongside it, particularly in the West (Aulén 1931, 81–84). It is in Tertullian, the father of Latin Christianity, that the ideas of satisfaction and merit begin to emerge, first in connection with penance, but as Kelly (1978, 177) notes, he “altogether fails to apply them to the mediatorial role of Christ,” while Cave (1947, 88) adds that, “For the most part Tertullian’s teaching is that of Irenaeus.” Aulén (1931, 80–83) traces the development of the distinctive Western approach through Cyprian and Gregory the Great but—significantly—not Augustine (cf. Rosenberg 2004, 233–238). Anselm of Canterbury was the first systematizer of Western atonement thought and laid the foundation for the establishment of a standard of orthodoxy in this underdeveloped area of theology. As has been noted, though the undivided church never made a dogma of any understanding of the work of Christ, in the West the satisfaction theory approaches the level of dogma in both Roman catholicism and magisterial protestantism (Forde 1984, 19–20).

At the outset, it must be acknowledged that there are significant differences between Anselm's theory and the later protestant development of penal substitution, and these differences should not be overlooked in a detailed study of the atonement. However, the latter theory is demonstrably derived from the former, and the two share a far greater number of features in common than they do with any of the other major theories; the same may also be said of the less influential governmental theory. It is thus possible and appropriate to treat this group of models together. Following the line of thought prescribed by the central question of this work, Anselm's theory will be examined first to show its broad impact on both Christological and soteriological concepts within Western theology. Note will then be made of modifications and clarifications to these concepts made in protestant theology, especially the reformed tradition. The next chapter will explore these modifications in greater detail, particularly as they interact with and critique non-reformed protestant soteriologies. As Anselm and the concerned protestant theologians who formulated these theories are also responsible for shaping the discipline of dogmatic theology into its present form, with fully-articulated soteriologies, this analysis is much more straightforward than that of the ancient theologies of the previous section.

### **2.3.1 The Fall and Redemption in the West**

S. Cave (1947, 122) notes that in Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* "the Western Church obtain[ed] an interpretation of [the work of Christ] so congruous with its piety and praxis that other interpretations came to seem superfluous"; indeed, it can be said that Anselm's theory became the reigning atonement idea of Christianity's second millennium in the West. As the work's title indicates, Anselm desired to show why the incarnation was necessary, especially to those outside the faith who mocked this central doctrine. Addressing the problem *remoto Christo*, he sought to demonstrate why only the perfect God-man could accomplish the reconciliation needed between God and sinful human beings. Thus, *Cur Deus homo* was intended to be a work of not only doctrinal theology but also apologetics and natural theology, though its success at the latter may be questioned given its heavy dependence on the penitential and sacramental system of medieval catholicism (Cave 1947, 123; Williams, G. H. 1957). In the course of his argument, Anselm tracked a different course than the older, more widely-held Christus victor perspective. Although *Cur Deus homo* contains abundant references to the defeat of the devil, Anselm (1926, 1.7, 2.19) rejected outright the premise of a ransom to Satan, and he distanced his theory from the doctrine of recapitulation (Cave 1947, 124; Forde 1984, 21). By closing off these interpretations of the work of Christ and his death, he not only reopened the atonement problem but also revisited the foundational question previously described, that of the nature of the disruption in the divine-human relationship. Anselm's answer to that question

continued and accelerated the movement of Western theology away from the patristic and Greek emphasis on human corruption towards a more juridical assessment of the human condition, one in which sin, with its resultant dishonoring of God and guilt before him, was the prime affliction requiring remedy by Christ. He thus took elements of the theology of Tertullian and other Latin fathers, influenced as they were by the legal orientation of imperial Roman culture, to their logical conclusion. Above all, he was influenced by the more immediate values and experiences of medieval feudalism; his theology is thus also culturally conditioned and highly contextual.

The great theological luminaries of the West—especially Augustine, Anselm, and Calvin (Berkhof 1938, 245)—fundamentally agree about the nature of the problem in the divine-human relationship: it has been disrupted by the original sin of Adam, which has been transmitted to all of his descendants. The Western theologians' diagnosis is essentially a mirror image of the East's; sin takes center stage, and corruption is its contingency, not its cause. For Anselm (1926, 1.11), sin is simply “nothing else than not to render to God his due.” This robbing or dishonoring of God disrupts the relationship until proper restitution has been made:

He who does not render this honor which is due to God, robs God of his own and dishonors him; and this is sin. Moreover, so long as he does not restore what he has taken away, he remains in fault; and it will not suffice merely to restore what has been taken away, but, considering the contempt offered, he ought to restore more than he took away.

Because of Adam's fall, it is impossible for fallen human beings, tarnished as they are by original sin, to give this full satisfaction to God. Even complete and perfect obedience to the law of God would only render to him what is his natural due; unaided human beings have no ability to restore to him what was taken in the original dishonoring and in their every actual, past personal sins (Anselm 1926, 1.20ff.) In such a state, in keeping with the unalterable nature and character of God himself, their punishment is the only just response (1.13–14), and thus a dark cloud lies over the divine-human relationship.

Herein lies the problem that Christ must remedy and thus the reason for the incarnation of the God-man. Also owing to the perfection of his character, God cannot leave his creation in this marred state (Anselm 1926, 2.5), and only he has the ability to make the necessary satisfaction for atonement (2.6). Yet, the debt remains that of humanity, so it is only fitting that a human make the satisfaction. Thus, it is necessary for God to become human, the man Jesus Christ, in order to effect atonement. Since the God-man is free from sin, it is not necessary for him to die as his own, deserved punishment. Having done all that is naturally due to God and undeserving of death, his death is therefore a gift “greater than anything in the possession of God” (2.11),

having “infinite value and “outweigh[ing] the number and greatness of our sins” (2.14). In other words, the merit created by Christ in his death is more than sufficient to restore the honor and glory to God taken by the sins of humanity, and both his justice and his desire to save are satisfied.

The main line of Anselm’s thought is clear and logical, requiring little further explanation, but note of some points of comparison and contrast with previous and subsequent theories is of value. To begin with, while Anselm frequently mentions the defeat of the devil, in terms of the actual mechanics of the atonement, he is effectively “deleted from the equation” (Weaver 2001, 188ff.) Christ in his human nature overcomes him, but the devil is not a party of concern in the work of reconciling God and humanity:

For though God is said to have done what that man did, on account of the personal union made; yet God was in no need of descending from heaven to conquer the devil, nor of contending against him in holiness to free mankind. But God demanded that man should conquer the devil, so that he who had offended by sin should atone by holiness. As God owed nothing to the devil but punishment, so man must only make amends by conquering the devil as man had already been conquered by him. But whatever was demanded of man, he owed to God and not to the devil. (Anselm 1926, 2.19)

Thus, in contrast with the patristic approach, atonement is a work that concerns two parties, not three. Next, as this removal of the devil from the equation flattens the work of redemption to two dimensions, it follows naturally that soteriologies in Anselmian traditions are narrower in scope, primarily addressing humanity’s relationship with and before God. Indeed, salvation is concerned almost exclusively with how humans become right with God; subsidiary blessings of the kingdom are moved away from the central work of salvation to providence or another theological locus. Most significantly, God himself is the object or termination of the work of Christ (Warfield 1950, 366–369). The satisfaction theory effectively inverts the order of 2 Cor. 5.19; as Cave (1947, 133) describes, “God was conceived as One who had to be reconciled, not as the God who in Christ reconciled the world unto Himself.”

It can also be observed that, again in contrast with the older tradition, Anselm alters the salvific purpose and function of the incarnation. The God-man comes for the main purpose of dying; his saving work is restricted exclusively to his death on the cross. Unlike Irenaeus and others who share his view of recapitulation, Anselm does not connect the incarnation itself or the events of the life of Christ with the work of redemption beyond the requisite demonstration of his sinless human nature; the resurrection also seems to be of little import. In his theology, the meaning of Christ’s solidarity with humanity, the *ὁμοούσιον* of the incarnation, is truncated; Christ does not save humankind by the virtue of his union with it but because of the infinite merits

of his sacrifice as the sinless God-man. This subtle alteration has wide-reaching implications both for the scope of redemption and the salvation that stems from it; it contributes to the trend of reducing Christ's work to his death and salvation to reconciliation. On this last point, however, it should be noted that the concept of vicarious punishment does not figure in Anselm but is a product of later protestant orthodoxy (Berkhof 1938, 386; Weaver 2001, 191–192). For Anselm, Christ does not atone by suffering as a substitute for humanity but by the positive offering to God of his life, a gift of limitless value (Harnack 2005, 68).

The main line of orthodox protestant thought, with the partial exception of Luther, largely follows Anselm with a few modifications. The present interest of this work lies primarily with the theory of the reformed tradition, but it may be noted that however Luther's own perspective is adjudged, Melancthon steered later Lutheranism into the Anselmian theory as well (Aulén 1931, 124–128; Cave 1947, 158–160). Protestant orthodoxy largely agrees with catholicism about the cause of the problem in the divine-human relationship—original sin and guilt as well as actual—but differs with Anselm on the nature of the disruption itself. Cave (1947, 159), in reference to Melancthon, explains that

...the “Latin” theory in its Protestant form... speaks, not as with Anselm of God's honour which has to be satisfied, but of God's wrath which demands that the claims of the law should be met.

Sin is a violation of God's law, an offense against his holiness and justice. A wholly deserved wrath governs the relationship between God and fallen human beings, and the only just and possible treatment of sinners is punishment, something that Anselm touches on then passes over as averted through the honor-restoring offering of the infinitely valuable sacrifice. The protestant doctrine, mediated through Aquinas (McCormack 1998, 300), does not accept punishment as being averted but rather administered vicariously in the death of Christ. As Calvin (1997, 2.16.5) states, “Our acquittal is in this that the guilt which made us liable to punishment was transferred to the head of the Son of God (Is. 53:12).” Likewise, question 37 of the Heidelberg catechism teaches,

That all the time he lived on earth, but especially at the end of his life, [Christ] bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race, in order that by his passion, as the only atoning sacrifice, he might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life. (Schaff 1931b, 319)

The entire liability for the sins of the world, or the elect according to some sections, has been transferred to Christ. He has been punished for their sake, and thus wrath no longer abides upon them; the divine justice has been satisfied, and reconciliation may

take place. It is thus accurately named the penal substitution theory, at the same time also remaining a form of satisfaction.

*Cur Deus homo* and its widespread acceptance in the West undeniably lie behind the formulation of the penal substitution theory, but no later theologians adopted Anselm's theory without some alterations (Bavinck 2006, 344). Whereas Anselm attempted to devise his theory *remoto Christo*, protestant theologians strove to adhere to the principle of *sola Scriptura* and give their theory a stronger biblical basis. Following the cue of the New Testament's sacrificial imagery such as that of the last supper, the identification of Christ as the lamb of God, and the extensive typology of the letter to the Hebrews, the atonement is attributed to the priestly work of Christ, the most prominent of his three offices (e.g., Turretin 1994, 375–482). The theory thus has a strongly Old Testament character or, perhaps more accurately, it rigidly carries one possible interpretative orientation towards the Hebrew Scriptures into the New. The crucial passage uniting the two Testaments, cited frequently in most presentations of the theory, is the song of the suffering servant of Isa. 52.13–53.12 (e.g., Calvin 1997, 2.16.5–6, 2.17.4). Interpreted as a prophecy of Jesus Christ, chapter 53 contains all the necessary elements of the theory: the vicarious bearing of sins (vv. 4–6, 11–12) and the necessary punishment for said sins (vv. 5, 10), the characterization of his suffering as a sacrifice or offering (vv. 7, 10), and the identification of God as the actor carrying out his punishment (vv. 5 and 10—“it pleased the Lord to bruise him” in the KJV). Proponents of the theory believe that these and other passages give the theory an unassailable biblical proof; the fourth chapter of the present work will explore in more detail whether this indeed be the case.

The reformed tradition makes other significant modifications and refinements to the theory; these will be examined in greater detail in the third chapter, but a few may be mentioned at this juncture. Contra Anselm, the reformed theory holds that the active obedience of Christ, his perfect keeping of the law and fulfillment of the will of his Father in life, is “a contributing factor to His atoning work” (Berkhof 1938, 386). In doing so, an attempt is made to give salvific significance to his life (e.g., Calvin 1997, 2.16.5); the concept of Christ's active obedience also serves to support the doctrine of justification as imputed righteousness (Berkhof 1938, 380). Similar place is sought for the resurrection as the completion of redemption:

Hence, although in his death we have an effectual completion of salvation, because by it we are reconciled to God, satisfaction is given to his justice, the curse is removed, and the penalty paid; still it is not by his death, but by his resurrection, that we are said to be begotten again to a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3); because, as he, by rising again, became victorious over death, so the victory of our faith consists only in his resurrection. (Calvin 1997, 2.16.13)



Additionally, reformed theology decisively settles an aspect of atonement doctrine that had long been a controversy within the Western church (Pelikan 1978, 90–95), the idea of limited or particular atonement. Christ bore only the sins of the elect, not the mass of the humanity; he suffered the full and equivalent penalty of what is due those who are saved. In this sense, he was a real and effectual substitute, not a provisional representation.

In the final analysis, it can be seen that the protestant theory has much in common with Anselm's. Both identify the problem in the divine-human relationship as guilt before God because of sin. Both see punishment as the necessary outcome of this condition without the intervention of the God-man. Both have a commercial or transactional character to them: Anselm's in the compensation of God for his wrongful dishonoring, the reformed markedly in the exact payment, no more and no less, of the punishment due the elect. Finally, both understand this problem as being remedied by the satisfaction of God through the death of Christ; in other words, God himself is the object of the work of atonement. The reformed form differs from the earlier theory by a more specific understanding of how the death of Christ accomplishes this: Christ is punished in the place of sinners. Thus, God's justice is satisfied and his wrath averted through the fulfillment of a concrete requirement of his character rather than the more abstract and biblically undefined concept of honor.

Now that the two basic forms of the Western atonement model have been sketched, their associated soteriologies require comment, and it is at this point that irrepressible difficulties emerge. Not neglecting their differences, the two main forms of the theory are of the same basic kind; both understand the work of Christ as a satisfaction of God that allows guilty human beings to escape the just and eternal penalty for their sins. Yet, they are associated with diametrically opposed soteriological paradigms, that of medieval and Tridentine catholicism and reformed orthodoxy. Anselm's teaching was largely accepted by Aquinas (Cave 1947, 143–149) and became the standard view within Roman catholicism (Forde 1984, 19–20), not being seen in any way as contradicting its sacramental soteriology or its teaching of justification by faith and also by works. Indeed, Anselm's interpretation of the work of Christ did not shape his soteriology but rather the reverse; his theory was, to a large extent, based on the eucharistic and penitential practices of medieval catholicism (Williams, G. H. 1957), and these practices in turn influenced how the death of Christ was related to salvation. Although not a strictly necessary conclusion of Anselm's theory—after all, he declared the death of Christ to be of “infinite value” (Anselm 1926, 2.14)—this work is limited to the remission of pre-baptismal sins. The sacrament of penance is necessary “to recover the grace of justification” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, 279 ¶1446), and the sinner “must ‘make satisfaction’ for

or ‘expiate’ his sins” (281 ¶1459). To the treasury of the infinite merits of Christ are added the “prayers and good works of all the saints” (285 ¶1477), which may be obtained for the remission of the temporal punishment of sin “from God through the Church” via indulgences. All is because of Christ’s atonement, but in Roman catholic soteriology, human works definitely contribute to the satisfaction of God and the acquisition of graces from him.

Protestant orthodoxy takes the opposite track. The sacrifice of Christ is once and for all utterly efficacious for the elect. God’s justice is satisfied apart from any of their works, and their righteousness before him is completely secure. F. Turretin (1994, 438ff.) vociferously rejected the Roman catholic view for implying, in his view, a denial that “the satisfaction of Christ [was] so perfect as to leave no room after it either for human satisfactions in this life or for purgatory after life.” The reformed soteriological paradigm strives to uphold pure monergism; human beings do not, to any extent, cooperate in or contribute to the work of salvation, even via the sacraments, but depend completely on grace. Calvin (1997, 2.16.1) speaks for all who come after him:

Still, however, redemption would be defective if it did not conduct us by an uninterrupted progression to the final goal of safety. Therefore, the moment we turn aside from him in the minutest degree, salvation, which resides entirely in him, gradually disappears; so that all who do not rest in him voluntarily deprive themselves of all grace.

A consequence of this—even more obvious in Lutheran theology than reformed—is the tendency to subsume all aspects of soteriology under the singular crisis event of regeneration-justification. Most especially not finding space in the tradition are soteriological crises subsequent to regeneration-justification, particularly ones that may occur discriminately with some correlate dependence on human actions (e.g., Bruner 1970, 114–117). This has significance for later developments in protestant theology, in particular those arising out of forms of revivalism that controvert the singularity of soteriological experiences.

The next chapter shall more fully explore the reformed paradigm in conversation with pentecostalism and its revivalistic antecedents. It should be noted, however, that it is in reformed theology, even more than Roman catholicism, that the doctrines of the work of Christ and salvation achieve the closest and most cohesive correspondence. It is Calvin, not Aquinas, who set the order of modern theology with soteriology immediately following the work of Christ in his *Institutes*. This correspondence developed gradually; Calvin is not entirely clear on the extent of the atonement, and it took time for both loci to be fully informed by the reformed doctrine of God and his sovereignty. By the time of Dort, however, with the establishment of

the basic framework of the “five points,” the reformed soteriological paradigm is essentially complete, and its theory of the atonement has become a seamless part of the overall system. This theological achievement is highly significant and must be kept in mind when criticizing this theory and attempting to construct alternatives. In the end, however, notwithstanding their differences, the soteriological paradigms of the two major branches of Western Christianity have a major commonality shaped by their approach to the atonement: as the divine-human relationship is juridical in nature, the salvation won by Christ concerns, above all else, the legal standing of human beings before God. In contrast with the East, the healing of corruption, the prime effect of the fall, and *theosis* retreat to the periphery; the concern of salvation is peace with God via the release of human beings from the guilt incurred by sin. Not neglecting the importance of the sin problem in the divine-human relationship, this approach to understanding reconciliation limits its scope, and theologies of the Anselmian tradition have difficulty accommodating in their systems an understanding of salvation that goes beyond the forgiveness of sins.

### **2.3.2 Critical Evaluation**

Critiques of the various versions of the satisfaction model are legion, as are its defenses. For some, such as many women and members of other groups that have historically been marginalized in the church, the Anselmian tradition epitomizes all that is wrong with the way the Christian religion has manifested in history; reform of Christianity’s faults necessitates its rejection (Ray 1998, 1–6; Weaver 2001, 1–11; cf. Brown and Parker 1989). For others, particularly from conservative evangelical and confessional perspectives, penal substitution is the very heart of the gospel that must be defended at all costs, and its criticism is tantamount to a fresh stumbling over the scandal of the cross (e.g., Gaffin 2004, 161–162; Schreiner 2006b, 70; Smeaton 1991, vi). As expressed above, ecumenical theology is not done through the vanquishing of the other via the exegetical scorecard or other means of silencing conflicting perspectives. Viewed charitably, the satisfaction theory has played an essential role in the history of Christian theology, particularly in the defense of orthodoxy, and its positive features must be appreciated. Anselm and many of his followers may eventually be diagnosed as scrupulous, but his expressed concern for holiness before God—“You have not as yet estimated the great burden of sin”—should not be judged ignoble by any standard. Proponents of penal satisfaction and substitution take sin, holiness, and the justice of God very seriously. This concern must be considered soberly, even by those who ultimately reject this theory, as a necessary check to sentimentality and indolence in the practice of the Christian life.

That said, the chief concern of the present work is the effect of atonement theology on soteriology and the pursuit of a more suitable model for the broad

soteriology of pentecostalism and other emerging theologies. Some criticism of penal substitution, the traditional but problematic position of classical pentecostalism, must therefore be given to demonstrate the need for its theology to move in other directions; indeed, in part the present work represents a sustained critique of this theory. Due to its close relationship with the original satisfaction theory of Anselm, the two will be treated together, but emphasis will lie squarely on the more clearly articulated protestant version. The following evaluation is by no means comprehensive or original; the defenders of penal substitution and satisfaction are well aware of the complaints of others and have been constant in their response to them (e.g., Berkhof 1938, 382–383; Turretin 1994, 426–438 and more recently and insightfully Holmes 2005; 2007). The problem is not that responses to these points have not been given but that they have failed to adequately surmount these difficulties. The perspective of the present work shares many theological values with the penal theory and its advocates: the seriousness of sin and the holiness of God, the uniqueness of Christ, and the authority of Scripture. It also does not deny that the atonement has a substitutionary or representative character. It is not out of disregard for these things that this criticism is made but rather for perceived deficiencies in penal substitution, both in terms of its interpretation of the biblical teaching of the work of Christ and its ability to support the breadth of biblical soteriology. This criticism is also made prior to reference to the longest abiding dissent to the Anselmian tradition, that of the various moral influence and exemplar theories, which also perceive these problems but propose a different means of remedying them.

Starting with the foundations of the theory, it should be noted from the outset that *Cur Deus homo* is essentially a work of natural, not biblical, theology. For protestants—both orthodox and neo-orthodox—this should give immediate pause. Even those who do not share Barth’s passion in the matter should acknowledge that natural theology is a precarious beginning point for Christology, the doctrine that lies at the heart of the Christian faith and indeed is responsible for its existence. Anselm attempted to demonstrate the rightness of the dogma of the God-man *remoto Christo* and *remota Scriptura*, but rather than working in a vacuum of pure, indefectible reason, he allowed contextual factors to take the place of the revelation of Christ in Scripture. Anselm’s success in faithfully replicating this revelation in the answer he gave the problem may be seriously questioned. The protestant modification of satisfaction into penal substitution was an attempt to tie the theory more closely to Scripture, and this attempt was partially successful. The foundation, however, was still Anselm’s, and the supplied biblical support constitutes a justification after the fact, a reading back of the tradition into Scripture rather than a theory that emerges directly from Scripture itself.

The deficiencies of this justification are best revealed through examining the metanarrative that it constructs. A popular means of dramatizing this metanarrative is the image of the “scarlet thread (or cord) of redemption,” first employed by Clement of Rome (1999, 12) and carried on by Justin Martyr (1999, 111) and Irenaeus (1999, 4.20.12), though ironically it did not lead them to a juridical view of the atonement. This motif takes its name from the account of Rahab in Joshua 2 and traces the shedding of blood for redemption through the two testaments, starting with Gen. 3.21, the killing of animals to cover the first sinners. It is institutionalized through the sacrificial system of the Torah and finds its ultimate, perfect fulfillment in the death of Christ. Thus, the flow of sacrificial, substitutionary blood is the thread that unites the story of the Bible and God’s plan of salvation, and modern preachers and theologians have freely used this image and its story to describe and support the penal theory. Reformed theologian Roger Nicole (2004, 446), responding to his *Festschrift* on the atonement, summarizes this narrative well:

This central doctrine of the atonement has its own center in the substitutionary interposition of a sin-bearer who absorbs in himself the fearful burden of the divine wrath against our sin and secures a renewal of access to God and of the reception of his wonderful grace. This was figuratively foreshadowed in the Old Testament sacrifices, particularly the sin offering and the guilt offering (Heb 4–7), and was factually accomplished in the one all-sufficient and effective sacrifice of the God-man, Jesus Christ, on Calvary (Heb. 9:12, 14, 24-28). Substitutionary sacrifice is the fundamental basis of the whole process of salvation according to Scripture.

The death of Christ thus stands not only as the culmination but also the idealization of God’s work of salvation in history. It stands in complete continuity, not discontinuity, with all that has gone before (Calvin 1997, 2.16.6, 4.14.20–21; Erickson 1998, 822–823; Schreiner 2006b, 82–93). The sovereign Lord of all that unfolds, God himself is the officiator of this sacrifice, and in his great mercy he provides all that he requires for the justification of sinful human beings (Schreiner 2006b, 67). Hence, the death of Jesus was completely according to his plan and in accord with his will. Within the framework of such a metanarrative, penal substitution stands inviolable (Berkhof 1938, 373). It becomes the center of the narrative of the Bible and Christianity itself, like Anselm (1926, 2.22) proclaims through Boso: “By the solution of the single question proposed do I see the truth of all that is contained in the Old and New Testament.” Not all scholars agree, however, that this narrative accurately interprets either Testament’s commandments and characterizations of sacrifice (Schmiechen 2005, 21–25).

The theological implications of this narrative may be restated in the pattern of the questions put earlier to the atonement models. First, as per the answers given by the protestant version, sinful human beings can be reconciled to a holy God only

through the satisfaction of his justice by punishment, which will turn away his wrath. Second, this has been accomplished in the death of his Son, who vicariously bore the punishment due them as willed by God. Third, salvation as justification and peace with God results by the righteousness of Christ being imputed to them instead of the sins that were transferred to and borne away by him. Finally, it can be noted that God is both the officiator of the sacrifice and the object of the reconciling work; all streams of the Anselmian tradition decisively reject the idea of the “rights” of the devil or his being a direct party of concern in the atonement (Erickson 1998, 814). These points fit perfectly with the narrative of the substitutionary “scarlet thread of redemption” sketched above; where they falter gravely is in comparison with the actual narrative of the Bible, particularly the New Testament and its interpretation of Christ and the God revealed by him. While the fourth chapter, in constructing an alternative model, examines in more detail the hermeneutic and metanarrative of the penal theory as well as the chief texts commonly cited to support it, the present discussion puts forward the theological reasons that rule out this model.

To begin with, the premise that God only forgives human beings after punishment has been rendered is contradicted in Scripture, most especially by the teaching and ministry of Jesus in the Gospels. In terms of how he relates to human beings, the nature of God as Father is perhaps best revealed in Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15.11–32. The father of the parable, upon sighting the first sign of repentance in his wayward child, who represents all sinful human beings, rushes forward to embrace him without sacrifice and without punishment. Likewise, the one who emerges from the temple justified is the one who humbly cries to God for mercy apart from any sacrifice (Luke 18.9–14; cf. Ps. 51). In Jesus’ ministry on earth, he caused great scandal by proclaiming immediate forgiveness to those he met by chance encounter (Mark 2.5ff.) and freely proclaimed the immediate coming of salvation to those who received him (e.g., Luke 19.1–10). According to the Gospels, such generous forgiveness is the nature of the kingdom and its king, and it seems reasonable that this revelation would be a proper beginning for the formulation of a Christian doctrine of reconciliation. Irenaeus (1999, 5.17.1–3), in fact, works from this very point.

However, these incidents do not fit into the narrative of the satisfaction and penal substitution models, in which complete satisfaction for sins must be rendered in order for God to justly forgive. Anselm (1926, 1.12), for one, avers that it is not proper or fitting for God “to put away sins by compassion alone... since it is not right to cancel sin without compensation or punishment.” B. B. Warfield (n. d., 46–48), a stalwart defender of the traditional reformed doctrine, attacks interpretations of the parable that suggest such promiscuous forgiveness. Likewise, M. J. Erickson

(1998, 835) warns that, “for God to remove or ignore the guilt of sin without requiring a payment would in effect destroy the very moral fiber of the universe, the distinction between right and wrong,” but he neglects to supply a verse for this bold pronouncement. Such incidents of salvation and forgiveness prior to the crucifixion—including those of the Old Testament—are usually explained, when addressed at all, as anticipatory of the perfect sacrifice rendered by Christ (cf. Finlan 2005, 111–112), but this is only eisegesis, not exegesis. L. Berkhof (1938, 383) admits that “vicarious atonement... does not stand out so clearly in the teachings of the Gospels as in those of the Epistles,” and the gospel references he supplies to support it are less than convincing. The schemas of the satisfaction and penal substitution theories in fact invert 2 Cor. 5.19—God does not reconcile the world to himself through Christ but rather is the one who must be reconciled by his death (Calvin 1997, 2.16.2–3; Turretin 1994, 433–434); circumlocutions aside, there is no real salvation prior to this. Again, the narrative of the Anselmian tradition is divergent from that of Scripture. The actual depiction of God supremely revealed in Jesus Christ precludes such an equilibrium between punitive justice and divine love; his love and mercy always lead.

This observation, the free granting of forgiveness in the ministry of Jesus, leads to the problem revealed by the second point, the assertion that the reconciliation of the divine-human relationship occurs through the satisfaction of God by the death of his Son. A persistent difficulty of the Anselmian tradition is that it locates the work of Christ exclusively in his death; his life serves little salvific purpose other than to demonstrate the perfection and blamelessness of the God-man. The protestant version of the theory sees the problem and tries to overcome it by teaching that the active obedience of Christ contributes to the atoning work; the remarks of Calvin on the resurrection should also not be overlooked. However, these assertions carry little weight given the actual mechanics of the theory: reconciliation takes place because the Father is satisfied via retributive justice, and this satisfaction is completed only by the *death* of his Son. Turretin (1994, 418), for example, states, “Hence we infer that three things were required for our redemption—the payment of the debt contracted by sin, the appeasing of divine hatred and wrath and the expiation of guilt.” Redemption is not connected in any real way with Christ’s life; all that is required for salvation transpires on the cross. The scope of salvation, too, has narrowed from Luther’s broader formula of deliverance from sin, death, and the devil. Harnack’s (2005, 76) criticism of Anselm applies equally well to the doctrine of protestant orthodoxy:

Anselm holds it as superfluous to accentuate any one personal feature in the picture of Christ; the sinless man with the infinitely valuable life is enough. The death of Christ is entirely severed from His life-work on earth, and isolated. This God-man need not have preached, and founded a kingdom, and gathered disciples; he only required to die.

Likewise, it is difficult to ascertain a salvific role for the resurrection in this paradigm. As G. A. Boyd (2006a, 99) asks, “God may (and does) have other reasons for raising Jesus from the dead, but what reason could have that would be *penal* in nature?” If all that is needed for redemption is accomplished through the substitutionary death, then the necessity and function of the resurrection are unclear.

Similarly, as atonement within the framework of satisfaction and penal substitution is juridical in nature, it is not surprising that justification became the chief soteriological concern of both branches of Western Christianity. While the forgiveness of sins and its accompanying peace in the divine-human relationship are vital components of the New Testament teaching of salvation, they are not the sum of it. One of the greatest contemporary criticisms of traditional soteriology, protestant and Roman catholic alike, is how it exclusively concentrates on the salvation of individuals, specifically the legal settlement that determines their avoidance of hell and attainment of heaven (e.g., Simpson, T. 2007, 54–55). Feminist and liberation theologians clearly voice this concern, and the present work will show that pentecostal soteriology takes an inherently broader perspective as well. Much of the case for a wider understanding of salvation comes from the ministry of Jesus in the gospels, which encompasses the entirety of the persons and groups to whom he ministered. However, the expansion of Christian soteriology is difficult when it is viewed through the lens of substitutionary atonement. Again, if the work of Christ necessarily and primarily concerns the satisfaction of a holy God angered by human sin, it is difficult to see how salvation can concern matters other than the justification provided by this satisfaction. As will be shown in the next chapter, the soteriological paradigm most closely associated with penal substitution has fixed limits as to the extent and dimensions of salvation. Moreover, as sections of pentecostalism more oriented towards formal doctrine have come into closer contact with conservative protestant theology, pressure has been felt to reduce the scope of their soteriological paradigm as a natural consequence of adherence to traditional orthodoxy. The researcher does not view this as a positive development.

Perhaps more disturbing than the theory’s understanding of salvation and how God relates to human beings are its implications for Trinitarian theology. An element of conflict or opposition is to some degree brought into the relationship between the Father and the Son, which was impossible in the earlier theology. For example, in speaking of Augustine (1999b, 4.13.17), who clearly identifies the devil as the slayer of Jesus, Aulén (1931, 58) writes,

He denies that God the Father can be in any way “placated” by the Son’s death; for in that case there would be a difference of some kind, even a conflict, between the Father and the Son: but that is unthinkable, for between the Father and the Son there is always the most perfect harmony.



In the development of the later “Latin” theory of the atonement, however, this caution is lost. As noted above, the Anselmian tradition sees itself as an improvement on the ancient views of the atonement by the “deletion of the devil from the equation” of the divine-human relationship; G. H. Williams (1957, 248) states, “In Anselm’s... theory the devil is in a sense replaced by God.” In removing the third party of evil, God the Father is moved to the center stage of the narrative as the demander, officiator, and recipient of the work of Christ, and that not just his sacrifice but his death itself. This may overcome some theological problems concerning the demonic but replaces them with much graver ones.

In this model, the two parties of the work of redemption are the guilty, that is, Christ as the substitute for the elect of sinful humanity, and the executioners who carry out the penalty. The actual narrative of the New Testament is reversed, and the will of the Father in accomplishing redemption becomes conflated with the actions of Christ’s opponents. Berkhof (1938, 339–340), for example, displays this misconstrual in fleshing out the details of the penal theory’s narrative:

It was quite essential that Christ should die neither a natural nor an accidental death... but under a judicial sentence. He had to be counted with the transgressors, had to be condemned as a criminal. Moreover, it was providentially arranged by God that He should be tried and sentenced by a Roman judge. The Romans had a genius for law and justice, and represented the highest judicial power in the world. It might be expected that a trial before a Roman judge would serve to bring out clearly the innocence of Jesus, which it did, so that it became perfectly clear that He was not condemned for any crime which He had committed.... And when the Roman judge nevertheless condemned the innocent, he, it is true, also condemned himself and human justice as he applied it, but at the same time imposed sentence on Jesus as the representative of the highest judicial power in the world, functioning by the grace of God and dispensing justice in God’s name. The sentence of Pilate was also the sentence of God, though on entirely different grounds.

Mild qualifications notwithstanding, this narrative overlooks the inherent malevolence and injustice of the crucifixion. In seeking to place the life and death of Christ in continuity with the Old Testament and its sacrificial system, it neglects the discontinuities, particularly the moral ones, that must be taken into consideration. God, of course, is sovereign, and it is only by his will and plan that the crucifixion could be carried (Matt. 26.53–56, John 18.11, 19.11, Acts 2.23, etc.) Yet, he was not the only actor in the drama, and what was carried out in it was not according to but against his loving character. The one who delivered up Jesus for crucifixion was “guilty of a greater sin” (John 19.11); this one was not God but Judas, whose heart had been entered by Satan (Luke 22.3). Jesus described his capture by his enemies as “your hour, and the power of darkness” (Luke 22.53). His death may have perfected and brought to an end the sacrifices of the old covenant, but it was not a holy work

performed by the people of God in a holy place. It was most cruelly carried out by the oppressors of the people of God in an unclean place (Heb. 13.10–13). Christ paid a terrible price to accomplish reconciliation, but it was not the Father who demanded it. “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15.3) forms the heart of Christian confession, but “God killed Christ for our sins” is an unwarranted and dangerous extrapolation. To carelessly subsume every act and moment of the crucifixion under the will of God risks the conclusion that “Jesus had suddenly stopped being the revealer of God and instead his opponents had been entrusted with this mission” (Schwager 1999, 163). On the contrary, as Aulén (1960, 170) more generally observes,

Faith refuses to attribute to God that which the Gospel attributes to Satan.... That which faith designates as divine revelation consists precisely in this victorious struggle of the divine will. If God’s will were comprehended in everything that happens, there would be no need of a “revelation.”

The killing of Jesus was an evil act. It was part of the plan of God and thus his will, and viewed through the faith of Easter, it itself has been redeemed to the glory of God and the renewal of creation. The fact remains, however, that the execution itself was intrinsically evil. Atonement theories must squarely address this evil or disqualify themselves. Presentations of the penal substitution model largely fail to see this darkness and the discontinuity of the death of Jesus both with the character of God and the religious system he instituted. The shadow then falls on God himself. Others may state it more circumspectly, but this darkness is very clear in the presentation of an American evangelical Calvinist such as W. A. Grudem (1994, 574–575):

The physical pain of crucifixion and the pain of taking on himself the absolute evil of our sins were aggravated by the fact that Jesus faced this pain alone....

As Jesus bore our sins on the cross, he was abandoned by his heavenly Father, who is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Hab. 1:13). He faced the weight of the guilt of millions of sins alone....

As Jesus bore the guilt of our sins alone, God the Father, the mighty Creator, the Lord of the universe, poured out on Jesus the fury of his wrath: Jesus became the object of the intense hatred of sin and vengeance against sin which God had patiently stored up since the beginning of the world.... But at the cross the fury of all that stored-up wrath against sin was unleashed against God’s own Son.

Again, according to Grudem (1994, 577), the prime actor in the crucifixion was God the Father: “[T]he penalty was inflicted by God the Father as he represented the interests of the Trinity in redemption.” The most disturbing conclusion is that God can only be satisfied by punishment, that is, suffering, and that in lieu of the destruction of humanity, the suffering of his Son is acceptable. Weaver (2001, 202) explains the conclusion to which this logic leads; though he speaks directly of Anselm’s theory, his remarks are even more applicable to the protestant theory:

It is important to realize that this analysis of satisfaction atonement is not the product of a supposedly one-sided reading of Jesus' work or of the biblical material. It flows from the logic of satisfaction atonement itself. . . . But Anselm's whole effort to develop a "fitting" understanding of God's work was a result of removing the devil from the equation and leaving only God as the power responsible for or involved in Jesus' death as an act of debt payment. Further, it is to God's honor that the debt is paid. The honor of God needed the debt payment, and God paid that debt with the death of Jesus. God is in the image of the ultimate punisher. It is not being one-sided but rather starkly clear about the logic of this saving work to say that God is in charge of the process, that God pays or punishes, and that God is paid or vindicated by punishment. To then say that God the Father killed Jesus in order to pay the debt, and that the killing of Jesus is a model of divine child abuse may be a provocative image—but it flows from the logic of satisfaction atonement itself.

The moral problems of this model are enormous, and the third family of atonement theories arose partially in an attempt to correct them. As Peter Abelard (quoted in Ray 1998, 147 n.19) fearfully asked, "If that sin of Adam was so great that it could be expiated only by the death of Christ, what expiation will avail for that act of murder committed against Christ?" Questions may be raised about the character of a God who is satisfied only by punishment but commands human beings to be more magnanimous in their forgiveness of others (e.g., Matt. 5.43–48, 6.12–15, 18.21–35; cf. Schwager 1999, 9), and about how his mercy can truly be gratuitous mercy when full payment has been already made. Of course, responses have been made to these charges, generally revolving around the importance of upholding the utter holiness of God while affirming how the death of Christ also expresses his love (Berkhof 1938, 371–372; Erickson 1998, 833–835). One may counter, however, that these attempts to maximize both love and justice are unsuccessful. In the end, justice always emerges as paramount, and this model risks violence to Trinitarian theology by setting the Father against his beloved Son and segregating the righteousness of the former from the mercy of the latter (Aulén 1960, 56–57; Schmiechen 2005, 110–112). Such a dichotomy is unthinkable in the context of the Trinitarian devotion that was the hallmark of the ancient church.

Again, many possible responses can be given and have been given to these criticisms of the penal substitution and satisfaction theories, including a formidable set of proof-texts that will be examined in greater detail as part of the fourth chapter's construction of an alternative. The constraints of this work preclude a detailed response to every argument and counterargument, but an important point to note at this juncture is that every problem raised above can be swiftly eliminated by a retrieval of the patristic view of the atonement and the restoration of the devil to the equation. In the *Christus victor* view, God became human in order to heal humanity, not simply to die in order to satisfy the demands of the Father. The doctrine of recapitulation gives significance to every aspect of the life of Christ from his

incarnation to the resurrection and beyond. The salvation and healing that he extended in his ministry are part of the work of redemption, which did not begin with but rather culminated on the cross; understood this way, salvation becomes more than justification and the pardon of individuals. God did not orchestrate the punitive death of his Son; rather, this was a work of the enemy that God, Father and Son together in the power and love of the Spirit, used to bring about the downfall of the enemy. The curse of sin, itself its own penalty, was done away with by being borne into death; death's hold on humanity was loosed by the union of God and man in Christ Jesus that cannot be undone in death; and the head of serpent was decisively crushed by evil's overreaching in taking the life of the blameless and blessed Son. Not all dissenters from traditional theology will be satisfied by this retrieval, (e.g., Brown and Parker 1989; Finlan 2005) and the restoration of the devil to the equation brings its own theological problems and complications. Nevertheless, it is the intent of the remainder of the work to show how such a revisioning of the atonement can meet major contemporary theological needs.

#### **2.4 Moral Influence and Abiding Dissent**

After a critical evaluation of the satisfaction theories, it is appropriate to discuss the third major family of atonement theories, the so-called subjective views, which arose in the Western church as a reaction against Anselm's view. This model has been stated in numerous ways; the two basic versions are the moral influence theory of Peter Abelard, the earlier, more moderate form, and the exemplar theory of the more radical Faustus Socinus. Again, though their differences are respected, they can be adequately treated together as they hold in common the rejection of the need for God to be satisfied in order to be reconciled with humankind. Berkhof (1938, 386) provides a good description of the basic form of the theory as per Abelard:

The fundamental idea is that there is no principle of the divine nature which necessarily calls for satisfaction on the part of the sinner; and that the death of Christ should not be regarded as an expiation for sin. It was merely a manifestation of the love of God, suffering in and with His sinful creatures, and taking upon Himself their woes and griefs. This suffering did not serve to satisfy the divine justice, but to reveal the divine love, so as to soften human hearts and to lead them to repentance. It assures sinners that there is no obstacle on the part of God which would prevent Him from pardoning their sins. Not only can He do this without receiving satisfaction, but He is even eager to do it. The only requirement is that sinners come to Him with penitent hearts.

Abelard still speaks of the atonement in terms of merit (Cave 1947, 135–137), but Christ's work is not efficacious because of any form of payment to God but because of the effect that it has on human hearts as a demonstration of divine love:

It seems to us that we are justified in the blood of Christ and reconciled to God, because by this singular grace shown to us, that His Son has taken our nature and persevered in instructing us by word and example even to death, He has more greatly attached us to Himself by love so that, enkindled by so great a benefit of the Divine grace, true charity should not shrink from enduring anything. (Abelard, quoted in Cave 1947, 136)

Although more overtly radical, to say the least, in numerous areas, Socinus taught essentially the same view, stressing the role of Christ as an example, the term used here by Abelard.

Within the framework of the reconstruction of atonement doctrine, the subjective theories are most valuable for the ethical critique that they provide of the satisfaction models. Abelard was acutely sensitive about the idea of the innocent Son having to suffer to satisfy the Father (Cave 1947, 136), and Socinus offered piercing ethical criticisms of the contingency of divine forgiveness on punishment (Erickson 1998, 833). Yet, for several reasons these theories are unsuitable for the task at hand, the revisioning of pentecostal atonement doctrine in order to adequately support its broad soteriology. While the official stand of most classical pentecostal denominations is penal substitution and the Christus victor theme resonates with pentecostal spirituality and informal theology, the subjective theories find no place in the background of the revival movement. Fairly or not, pentecostalism quickly rejects them as unbiblical (Pecota 1995, 338–339) and too liberal. Although suggestions of the theory may certainly be found in the New Testament—John 15.13 in particular comes to mind—it encounters great difficulty in integrating or at least explaining the biblical motifs of sacrifice and cosmic conflict. While no model perfectly accommodates all of the diverse scriptural imagery, the moral family is in a rather worse position in terms of biblical support than the other two major theories.

Apart from their alienness to the pentecostal movement and the paucity of biblical indication, the nature of the subjective theories themselves reveal that they cannot provide a suitable framework for the task. One criticism given above of the satisfaction theories was their “deletion” of the devil from their understanding of the mechanics of the atonement. The work of Christ becomes directed towards God, and humanity is saved by the effect that it has on him. This led to a narrowing of the scope of salvation to a limited area around the hub of justification; in a sense, soteriology becomes two dimensional rather than three through the elimination of reference to the “third party” of evil. The moral theories agree with the Anselmian rejection of the rights of the devil (Cave 1947, 136). It can be argued that they further flatten the work of redemption and reconciliation to one dimension by shifting the effects of this work away from God and onto human beings. The problem in the divine-human relationship is that human beings simply will not come to God; the problem is

remedied by their doing so. Christ shows the way by his death, but it is not strictly necessary for the healing of the relationship for him to die. The salvation resulting from this sort of redemption is left indefinite and ambiguous. In final analysis, the subjective approach truly is the atonement theology and soteriology of liberalism properly designated as such. It is not adequate for dealing with the complexities of the biblical teaching of atonement or the salvation it upholds.

In the end, it must be acknowledged that atonement theories are metaphors that attempt to encompass this biblical and theological complexity. Like other theological metaphors, they are attempts to draw analogies with other events and concepts in history, nature, and human experience. No theological metaphor or analogy is completely successful; the analogues are always similar in some ways but dissimilar in others. The natural can never completely encompass the divine. The death of Christ is a sacrifice, but it is both like and unlike other sacrifices in Scripture and in history. His work is a work of redemption but unlike other redemptions and manumissions. No single metaphor or image can completely capture the nature and scope of Christ's saving work, and it is for this reason that Scripture and its authors do not confine themselves to a single depiction (Finlan 2005, 5–10, 39, 79). This must serve as a constant reminder for latitude and tolerance of differing views of the atonement; perhaps the church was right in never making a dogma of the work of Christ. In terms of completely explaining the work of Christ, no model or metaphor will triumph completely. However, more modest questions can receive satisfying answers. One option among the others is more consistent in accommodating all of the aspects of redemption and reconciliation addressed by the life of Christ in both life and death; in turn, it is capable of sustaining the broad soteriology depicted in Scripture, especially the gospels. The ancient model of Christ's recapitulation and victory best meets these requirements, and thus the general direction of the thesis has been indicated. Before theological reconstruction is possible, however, closer attention must be given to the specific problem of pentecostalism—the tension of pairing a reformed view of the atonement with a non-reformed soteriology. This is the subject of the next chapter.

## **2.5 Excursus: Christus Victor and the Anabaptist Tradition**

Widely overlooked in the telling of the history of Christian theology is the contribution of the radical reformation. The anabaptist tradition, however, contains insightful precedents valuable both to the present work and to pentecostalism in general. The theological works of the early movement are, as might be expected, less systematic and more eclectic than the dogmatics of the magisterial traditions, and with regard to atonement and salvation, a wide range of language and imagery is employed.

Surprisingly, though, some leaders come close to a retrieval and reform of the Eastern orthodox perspective, and the *Christus victor* motif stands out as the radicals' most prominent interpretation of Christ's saving work (Finger 2004a, 332–350). Early anabaptist theology could be categorized as protestant but non-Augustinian; C. N. Kraus (1992, 292–293) describes further:

Anabaptists insisted on human freedom; they rejected the idea of original guilt, although not inherited corruption; they rejected the monergistic concept of predestination and held to a universal atonement, i.e., that Christ's sacrifice was sufficient and fully intended for all. And finally, they rejected the Augustinian synthesis of spiritual and temporal authorities in a "Christian" society. Thus they rejected the "Christian" use of violence to enforce "justice" and "orthodoxy," which by the same token calls into question the idea that the violent death of Christ was necessary to maintain God's justice (and orthodoxy) in the universe.

On the other hand, along with the magisterial reformers they stressed salvation by grace, and justification as an integral component of regeneration. Their understanding of justification differed from that of the Protestants. They insisted that Christ's atonement is actually recreative as well as forensically justifying. But the point here is that they did believe and teach justification by grace and not by works.

Pilgram Marpeck, an important leader from the South German-Austrian region, is an illuminating representative of the anabaptist approach to these questions. His understanding of the sin and the fall is very similar to that of the Eastern church; the prime affliction resulting from sin is not inextirpable guiltiness before God but the corruption and enslavement of the human person to fleshly—though not necessarily bodily—desires and hostile alien powers (Finger 2004b, 59–62). Likewise, Marpeck assigned soteriological significance to all of Christ's life in a formulation similar to the ancient doctrine of recapitulation, albeit with some difficulties vis-à-vis the complexities of the dogma of the two natures (Finger 2004b, 62–66). In the actual death of Christ, Marpeck combines moral exemplar and substitutionary language with the conflict motif, though the former pair dominates his teaching (Finger 2004a, 343–344; 2004b, 67–68). The substitution envisaged, however, "goes quite beyond the dimensions of the forensic view of Post-Reformation protestants" (Kraus 1992, 295). Other leaders such as Menno Simons similarly borrowed and blended language from other theories to describe Christ's victory, but all were intimately concerned about his conquest of the rulers and powers, as oppression from those who wielded temporal authority was very real to them (Finger 2004a, 347–349; 2004b, 75). Likewise, for all the resurrection was the climax of his victory.

As might be expected from the above depiction, the radical reformers sought to derive from their atonement perspective a transformative soteriology:

The critical line of difference has less to do with a technical definition of atonement and more with the Anabaptist understanding of the effects of that atonement in the life of the believer. (Kraus 1992, 292)

Although they affirmed justification by faith, they were, as so many pietists and revivalists after them, “wary of a forensic view that might seem to justify baptized persons who continued in their disobedience” (Kraus 1992, 301; cf. Finger 2004a, 109–110; McGrath 1998, 238). They likewise rejected the reformed doctrines “of predestination and of imputation, with its corollary of limited atonement” (Kraus 1992, 302). Marpeck again takes his theology in the direction of the East, envisaging salvation as divinization or *theosis*, the “participation of the human in the divine” (Kraus 1992, 294–295; cf. Finger 2004a, 125–126). Believers are transformed in likeness to how humanity was renewed in Christ; “Jesus’ flesh purified that of his followers to the degree that they participated in his historically extended humanity” (Finger 2004b, 66). Menno more freely appropriates the reformation’s language of “sacrifice, merits, satisfaction, etc.” but is

...less concerned with explaining how Jesus’ death paid the penalty and more concerned with how Jesus’ life, example, teaching, death and resurrection make a new beginning for us—how he reconciles us to God, cleanses us from sin, stimulates us to genuine faith, and enables us to love and obedience.

His soteriology, too, is ultimately a form of divinization (Finger 2004a, 129–131). Thus, the radical reformers combine aspects of protestant, catholic, and orthodox soteriological paradigms. Though they are firmly in the first camp, their rejection of the legal, forensic orientation of the magisterial reformation in favor of a holistic approach allows them to overcome the perceived difficulties in the Lutheran and reformed paradigms that limit the realization and extent of sanctification and renewal in this life and induce the separation of personal salvation from ethics and Christology (cf. Moltmann 1990, 116–119; Weaver 2001, 78–80).

This theology of the radical reformation has positive implications for pentecostalism because of the striking similarities between the two movements, despite the fact that pentecostalism is principally derived from the English reformation via Wesleyanism and lacks an anabaptist root. The two share the same basic religious disposition, the desire to recover the full faith of the New Testament, which they perceive as forgotten by the institutional church, and the full activation of the Spirit in the believer’s life. Both reject the ritualizing of faith that they believe is produced by paedobaptism and are similarly wary of scholasticism in theology (Kraus 1992, 293). Even pacifism was common among early classical pentecostals (Wilson 1988). A similarity, too, can be seen in how the movements in the United States have been affected by increased contact with conservative evangelicalism and



fundamentalism; in the early part of the twentieth century, many anabaptists came to accept the penal substitutionary theory in the place of their traditional beliefs about the atonement (Kraus 1992, 302–305). Interest in the Christus victor model has revived among more recent Mennonite theologians, the most prominent of whom has been J. D. Weaver (1990; 1994a; 1994b; 2001); it is perceived that the ancient interpretation lends aid to the realignment of the tradition's doctrinal theology with its moral theology, which rejects punitive justice. Given these similarities and shared values, the radical reformation stands as an encouraging precedent of how the self-imposed limitations of the magisterial reformation in revising its received traditions can be overcome and also how protestant theology may appropriate and reform Eastern concepts. In the researcher's view, it is an inspiring example and resource for the direction pentecostalism should take both with regard to the atonement question and for theology and ethics generally, though a return to an ethic of non-violence would be an uphill battle in many sections of American pentecostalism.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SYSTEMATIC INTERSECTION OF ATONEMENT THOUGHT AND SOTERIOLOGY: REFORMED STANDARDS AND PENTECOSTAL TENSIONS

#### **3.1 The Theological Milieu of Classical Pentecostalism: American Evangelicalism**

Now that the basic form, character, and implications of the major atonement theories have been sketched, it is possible to address the central problem of this thesis, namely, the problem of the relationship between the atonement doctrine and the soteriology of pentecostalism. In his M.Th. thesis (House 2006, 6–28), the researcher has described at length the character and setting of classical pentecostalism and its theology. In brief, classical, “first wave” pentecostalism is a twentieth-century American revival movement that developed into its definitive form during the period of 1901 to 1916, beginning with the Spirit baptism of the first modern pentecostal, Agnes Ozman; quickening with the California Azusa Street revival and the rapid, wholesale conversion of many holiness denominations; and ending with the formation of the Assemblies of God, the world’s largest pentecostal denomination, and its schism over the anti-Trinitarian and rebaptism “Oneness” controversy. Although it was rapidly internationalized and has taken many different forms of expression in different contexts, the movement is essentially united under the banner of the fourfold or fivefold “full” gospel of Jesus as savior, (sanctifier), baptizer, healer, and coming king, its de facto symbol of faith and the summary of its theology (Dayton 1987). Rather than being a chiefly pneumatocentric movement as is sometimes supposed, it is highly Christocentric (MacDonald 1988), and as the full gospel reveals, its prime theological concern is actually soteriology.

Pentecostalism did not invent the symbol of the fourfold gospel. All of its elements were present in the Wesleyan holiness revivals of the previous century, and they shared the same soteriological paradigm on virtually every point. Classical pentecostalism differs only in its clarification of the function of Jesus as baptizer with the Holy Spirit and its innovative doctrine of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of this experience. Pentecostal historian V. Synan (1971, 217) provides a good description of the movement’s theological background and orientation:

The basic premises of the movement’s theology were constructed by John Wesley in the eighteenth century. As a product of Methodism, the holiness-pentecostal movement traces its lineage through the Wesleys to Anglicanism

and from thence to Roman Catholicism. This theological heritage places the pentecostals outside the Calvinistic, reformed tradition which culminated in the Baptist and Presbyterian movements in the United States. The basic pentecostal theological position might be described as Arminian, perfectionistic, premillennial, and charismatic.

Thus, pentecostalism is essentially a Wesleyan-Arminian revival movement, indeed the most successful one in terms of distribution and number of adherents. Although frequently grouped with such, the researcher has argued that pentecostalism stands outside of the mainstream of American fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism, actually antedating those movements (Hollenweger 1996, 6), and that it is better understood as a “third stream” of protestantism between evangelicalism and ecumenical or mainline protestantism.

That said, it is not possible to adequately treat the present problem exclusively within the framework of Wesleyan Arminianism. Despite the essentially non-reformed character of the movement, classical pentecostalism did not methodically set out to devise a pure Arminian theology free from other influences; indeed, the same can be said of Wesley. The movement was and is a revival, not a confessional tradition, and to a large extent, its theology developed informally, spontaneously, and eclectically. The fourfold gospel is fundamentally an expression of Arminianism and Wesleyan-derived holiness teaching, but as the early movement was almost entirely comprised of converts from other churches, other traditions did influence some aspects of its theology, particularly its doctrine of the atonement. Pentecostalism arose and developed in the basic context of American evangelicalism, that being understood as both the earlier, evangelistically- and ecumenically-minded evangelicalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century of which it may be considered a part (Synan, V. 2002a, 613–614), and as the later fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism of the twentieth with which it has interacted and clashed (Synan, V. 2002a, 614–616; Synan, V. 2002b, 655–658). In the main, these theologically conservative movements held rigidly to the penal substitution theory. Not originally seeking to innovate in this area and largely unaware of viable alternatives, it was natural that revivalism absorbed this interpretation of the work of Christ from the surrounding milieu. Both the earlier holiness movement and the later pentecostals accepted the penal substitutionary theory, as did their progenitor, Wesley, and with the exception of their affirmation of its limitlessness, their understanding of the atonement *qua* atonement is essentially that of the reformed. This, it will be shown, is this source of their soteriological conflict.

This chapter serves the purpose of fully elaborating this conflict both as a discontinuity with traditional protestant theology and as an unrelieved tension within classical pentecostalism. Building on the foundation of the previous discussion, it will

examine the correspondence between atonement and salvation in reformed thought and the role of that tradition as the guardian and standardizer of protestant theology, particularly within the historical context of American evangelicalism, the environment in which pentecostalism arose and developed. It will then explore the pentecostal doctrines of atonement and salvation to fully uncover their insights and inconsistencies. This way it is possible to do that which was not done during the initial stages of the movement—the systematic consideration of all the movement’s theological values and their implications. In turn, the groundwork will be laid for the next chapter, the revisioning of pentecostalism’s soteriological paradigm through an appropriation of the *Christus victor* interpretation of the work of Christ.

### **3.2 Atonement and Salvation in the Reformed Tradition: The Perfecting of Reformation Standards**

The reformed tradition has played a paradoxical role in American religious life. On the one hand, various reformed communities were instrumental in colonizing and establishing the nation, and their faith and practice left an indelible mark on all aspects of its culture (McNeill 1954, 331–350). On the other hand, the United States is also a land in which Arminianism has taken root and thrived, via methodism and its descendant revivalistic traditions, and largely supplanted its older rival (Synan, V. 1971, 20–23ff.) both in terms of sheer numbers as well as cultural religious disposition. Yet it has not been a simple displacement; Calvinists, Jonathan Edwards most prominent among them, also participated in and contributed to American revivalism. More significantly for theology, the reformed tradition has ever served as the guardian and promoter of protestant orthodoxy. In America, it established the first seminaries and universities, which have ever influenced the development of theology in the nation. Important for the current study is the role that the reformed tradition played in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. While pentecostalism was not a direct party to this conflict (Macchia 2002, 1122), the controversy irreversibly set the course of conservative evangelical theology, with which pentecostalism has become increasingly intermeshed, and the reformed tradition is the incontrovertible theological leader of evangelicalism. Its theology thus cannot be ignored, even by the staunchly Arminian and especially with regard to the question under discussion, a question the reformed tradition has given a firm and coherent answer.

In broad comparison to other traditions, it may be said that the prime concern reformed theology seeks to clarify is soteriology. In its confessions of faith, both as positive affirmations and rebuttals of dissenting views, more consideration and greater detail is given to the doctrine of salvation and the means of its reception by human beings. Yet, reformed theology is more than just a particular soteriological scheme;

the movement owes its success as the preeminent form of protestant theology to its careful and thorough integration of all major traditional loci into a coherent system. Stepping back from the details of its soteriological paradigm, it may be said that reformed theology is characterized by affirmation of the absolute sovereignty of God, the complete inability of human beings to establish their own right standing with him, and the integrity of the Bible as the revealed Word of God and the sole authority of the Christian faith. These affirmations precede, define, and interpenetrate the tradition's teaching of salvation, which in the end may be summarized as absolute and consistent monergism: God and God alone graciously saves human beings. The reformed *ordo salutis*, its soteriological paradigm, is held to be the system that best upholds this sovereignty and this inability while being the most consistent with the revelation of Scripture. Not as central but by no means peripheral is the tradition's Christology, and this, too, is integrated with its soteriology in a manner highly relevant for the present study.

Viewed internally, the reformed tradition is far from monolithic, even soteriologically. In its history, it has dealt with conflicts not only with those ultimately judged outside—Roman Catholics and Lutherans and Arminians—but also those within. The best-known, though not sole, example of these is the conflict between supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism. While not minimizing the importance of these internal debates, which are heightened given the theological precision the tradition seeks to uphold, from an external viewpoint—especially an Arminian one—the tradition speaks with near unanimity on the doctrines of grace. Accordingly, it is possible and appropriate to study the reformed correlation of atonement doctrine and soteriology from a variety of vantage points and thus, positively, fully scope out its dimensions without misrepresenting its careful distinctions. The Canons of Dort, the symbol most obviously relevant for the question under discussion, may be taken up simultaneously with the more influential symbol for American Calvinism, the Westminster Confession, which has a radically different agenda and temperament. “Reformed” and “Calvinist” may be considered coterminous and used interchangeably for this purpose, even though they are not formally equivalent. Similarly, while an anachronistic oversimplification when viewed internally (Muller 2009), the “five points” of Calvinism may even be used as a shorthand summation of the entire tradition's soteriological paradigm when it is to be contrasted with the Arminian soteriologies of pentecostalism and related movements (Beeke and Ferguson 1999, xi).

These observations set the contours for the present aspect of the study. The form and content of reformed soteriology, as communicated by the generally accepted *ordo salutis*, will be examined from the perspectives of the above referenced

confessions of faith and representative and retrospective theologians, particularly ones important for the context of American Calvinism. The correlation between soteriological concepts and the work of Christ will be examined, both in how they are explicitly stated in the formulations as well as the nuances that are discernible in subsidiary works. Thus, the implications of the reformed view of the atonement for the reformed soteriological paradigm will be elucidated. It is hypothesized that the middle point of the “TULIP,” limited substitutionary atonement, is the axis around which the reformed soteriological paradigm turns. This interpretation of the work of Christ both transports the theological values of earlier loci into the soteriological model and controls the character and dimensions of the resultant understanding of salvation. Once these dimensions are delineated, it will then be possible to see what happens when the reigning paradigm of protestant soteriology is challenged and altered as occurred in Anglo-American revivalism.

### 3.2.1 The Antecedent of Salvation: Sovereign Grace

“The Reformed understanding of Scripture,” writes conservative American Calvinist A. A. Hoekema (1989, xi), “begins with a recognition of the sovereignty of God in all things.” Similarly, G. Fackre (2003, 64), an ecumenically-oriented theologian, states that many of the reformed feel that

[n]ot *sola fide* but *soli Deo gloria* is the Reformed tradition’s organizing principle... not the anthropocentric questions of *our* faith or *our* works but the theocentric will and way of the sovereign God.

An elucidation of traditional reformed soteriology cannot begin with human need and inability but rather with the doctrine of God; the convenient acronym of the “TULIP” to summarize Calvinist soteriology is somewhat misleading in that it begins with the former rather than the latter. While the first line of the Canons of Dort begins with the affirmation of human sinfulness, the first head of doctrine is “Divine election and reprobation,” and election is the first “step” in the generally accepted reformed order of salvation. Neglecting the lapsarian controversy and, for the moment, the Arminian critique as well as the difficulties attendant to the concept of an *ordo salutis* itself (Hoekema 1989, 11–18), the order accepted by most Calvinists follows the logical scheme of

election/predestination → (effectual) calling/regeneration → conversion  
(repentance/faith) → justification → sanctification → glorification/perseverance

(cf. Berkhof 1938, 418–420; Collins 1984, 802; Hoekema 1989, 14–17; Murray 1955, 86–87; Turretin 1994, 501ff.) While largely based on the precedent and pattern of Rom. 8.29–30, not all theologians assent to a chronological depiction of the *ordo* as a series of steps as the best way to express what this theological construction attempts

to communicate, nor have all reformed theologians historically employed these terms in the same way. For example, regeneration has not always been explicitly or precisely identified as the culmination of effectual calling, but over time and in interaction with other theological viewpoints, many reformed theologians have come to define it in such a way so as to ensure that spiritual revivification is understood as necessary before justifying faith can occur (Hoekema 1989, 93–94, 106–107). However it is qualified, the reformed *ordo* provides a useful structure for examination of the tradition’s teaching of salvation, beginning with the sovereign decree of God and culminating with the complete salvation of the elect, mediated by the work of Christ.

Salvation begins with election, the sovereign and unconditioned decree of God to save (*Canons*, 1.6–13; *WCF*, 3.5–6). As Barth (1957, 10) states, “The doctrine of the divine election of grace is the sum of the Gospel.” The decree of salvation is absolute; God in his sovereignty chooses and predestines certain persons to salvation, and by his omnipotence, he will steadfastly bring their salvation to pass. Election is based on nothing other than the sovereign choice of God. Calvinists deny that it is based on foreseen faith, the perspective of many Arminians and Lutherans, or any work or quality in the elect themselves; in the reformed system, “to foreknow” and “to predestine” as used in Rom. 8.29 are practically, if not precisely, synonymous, as both refer to this determination by God (Barth 1957, 60; Berkhof 1938, 111–112; Boettner 1932, 42–46, 99). The predestining of individuals begins the chain of salvation and utterly ensures that the other steps in the *ordo* will come to pass (*Canons*, 2.8–9). In interaction with other theologies, a question is often raised as to what is the decisive factor in salvation. Is it faith and works or faith alone? Is it human decision or the completed work of redemption wrought by Christ? In the end, in the reformed system, salvation may be traced back to this decree of election; all else, including the redemptive death of Christ, flows from it. Absolute sovereignty means that salvation is absolutely monergistic; God wills, and thus it happens. One could say that salvation, even justification, is by election more rightly than by faith (Barth 1957, 20). This unconditioned election is the very definition of grace (Boettner 1932, 71).

At this point in the intersection of the *ordo* with the five points, it would be appropriate, chronologically speaking, to discuss the middle point of limited (or particular or definite) atonement, but this will be deferred for complete amplification in the next section. From the eternal decree of election flows the temporal call to salvation by the Spirit and the Word (*WCF*, 10). Reformed theology makes a distinction between the general call to salvation, the proclamation of the Gospel indiscriminately to all people (Hoekema 1989, 70–71), and the internal, special, or effectual call to salvation, the irresistible, regenerating work of the Spirit in the elect. As J. M. Boice (Boice and Ryken 2002, 29) explains, “The gift [of salvation] is given

to those to whom God chooses to give it; and although it is *offered* to everyone, it is not *given* to everyone.” In reformed thought, the concept of calling takes on its full meaning when it is brought into correspondence with the decree of election: the effectually called are those who have been chosen (Matt. 22.14), and only those who are predestined to salvation are irresistibly called (Rom. 8.29–30). The call to salvation aligns perfectly with the immutable decree of the sovereign God; this correspondence is reflected across the system’s entire soteriology, bolstering its logical integrity. Although the general call to the non-elect is a bona fide offer, at least as is maintained by the mainstream of the tradition, it does not result in salvation for them because the Spirit has not performed the further work of bringing them to life and imparting faith, without which they are incapable of believing. The reprobate are, however, solely responsible for their rejection of the gospel (*Canons*, 3/4.9).

Partially to distinguish its doctrine from Arminianism (Erickson 1998, 944–945), later Calvinism came to identify regeneration with effectual calling, or at least its concluding aspect (Berkhof 1938, 470–471; Hoekema 1989, 106). Earlier (i.e., sixteenth-century) reformed theology tended to understand regeneration more broadly so as to encompass the entire Christian life (Berkhof 1938, 466–467; Hoekema 1989, 93–94), and in Arminian thought the term is still largely used in the same sense. Conceptually, calling and regeneration are coupled in order to clarify how the call of salvation is received by fallen human beings while preserving monergism. It is here that the first point of the TULIP, total depravity or inability, intersects the *ordo*. Human beings, though not absolutely deprived of goodness or common grace, are considered dead in sin (Eph. 2.1–5) and unable in any way to respond to the call to salvation (*Canons*, 3/4.3). The work of the Holy Spirit in salvation is the regeneration of the heart, the spiritual resurrection of dead sinners so that they might turn and believe and thus be saved, that is, justified (*Canons*, 3/4.11–12; *WCF*, 10.1–2). Since God is absolutely sovereign and always accomplishes his purpose, and the spiritually dead are incapable of positive response, the grace of effectual calling-regeneration is both necessary and irresistible.

After regeneration, the subsequent moments and works of salvation in the *ordo* do involve human response. As part of his quickening work, the Spirit gives the gifts of faith and repentance (Eph. 2.8, Acts 11.18) to the regenerate so that they might be converted and believe (*Canons*, 3/4.14). Conversion is a genuine response and may even be considered a human work (Hoekema 1989, 114–115), but it must always be acknowledged as only the result of a gift sovereignly bestowed by God upon the elect (Boettner 1932, 101–102). It is not a choice that lies within natural human ability, as per Pelagianism, or the will liberated by prevenient grace, as per Arminianism (Berkhof 1938, 247; Olson 2006, 141–146). The Father responds to this conversion by



justifying and adopting the believer, and with these the Christian life is fully entered. Sanctification is the lifelong experience of salvation and is synergistic (Berkhof 1938, 534–537; Boice and Ryken 2002, 152); this affirmation of human cooperation in an aspect of salvation may be considered a faltering, if inconsequently, in the system's otherwise consistent monergism. While the roles of grace and faith are acknowledged, the law holds a special place in the reformed tradition as a means of sanctification (Hoekema 1989, 225–228). The ultimate perseverance and glorification of the saints is of course monergistic and has perfect correspondence to the decree of election; none of the elect are lost, and none other than the elect are saved (*Canons*, 2.9, 5.8). Along all the steps of the *ordo*, God alone is the author and completer of salvation, and to him alone belongs all glory. Though human responses are required at some points, even these are gifts of his grace and ultimately stem from his choice in election, not human will or power (Boice and Ryken 2002, 32–38).

### **3.2.2 The Axis of the TULIP: Limited Substitutionary Atonement**

The atoning work of Christ does not typically feature in the *ordo salutis* but the locus of Christology. In synthesizing the *ordo* and the five points, it chronologically and logically belongs between the decree of election and the gospel call to salvation as the divinely ordained event that accomplishes salvation. Theologically, limited or particular atonement—the latter designation, though not as widely used, is more accurate and preferred by many to the former—serves as the axis of the TULIP and the hub around which all aspects of reformed soteriology revolve. It is here that the coherence of the doctrine of the work of Christ and soteriology achieved by the reformed tradition is manifest. This interpretation of the atonement is controlled by the antecedents of salvation, namely the eternal decree to save some of humanity: Christ died to save the elect and them only (*Canons*, 2; *WCF*, 3.6, 8.8). In turn, it controls how the subsequent aspects of salvation are defined. Thus, the reformed doctrines of atonement and salvation exist in a reciprocal relationship. Both are held to arise directly from the teachings of Scripture; neither is prior to or independent of the other, but rather they are interlocked and interdependent. Acknowledgment of this interdependence is necessary for the integrity of the whole reformed system of redemption and salvation.

Limited or particular atonement is also the weakest point of the system, widely challenged both from within and from without the tradition (Blacketer 2004, 304–305). From a historical perspective, it is a doctrine that has been held by a very small minority of the church, a fact that should give pause to claims that it is essential to Christian orthodoxy (e.g., Packer 1959) or, because of the remonstrance, the common but misleading framing of its dispute as just one more objection of Arminian heterodoxy to Calvinist orthodoxy (e.g., Palmer 1980, 41–55). While elements of the

doctrine may be traced to Augustine, his position is ambiguous. The earliest incontrovertible teacher of an atonement limited in intent to the elect was the Carolingian neo-Augustinian, Gottschalk of Orbais, whose teaching was rejected by the catholic church (Blacketer 2004, 308–313; Pelikan 1978, 90–95, 108–109). Even Calvin’s views on this subject are not entirely clear, though on the whole his thought seems to point in its direction (George 1988, 222). Luther also affirmed limited atonement (George 1988, 77), but later Lutheranism did not; the radical reformers also held to universal atonement (Kraus 1992, 302). In modern times, limited atonement is held only by some of the reformed. The biblical difficulties with the doctrine have been well-documented; texts such as John 3.16, 1 John 2.2, and 1 Tim. 2.5–6 stand as *prima facie* evidence against it. Exegetical attempts at demonstrating that these passages do not teach an unlimited atonement have been unconvincing to many, and besides Arminians, Lutherans, and Roman catholics, there are more than a few “four point” Calvinists who reject the doctrine as unbiblical and untenable despite its affirmation by the major confessions.

Defenders of reformed orthodoxy insist that the doctrine is both biblical and essential for the theological system as a whole. Besides rejecting the Arminian position, they contend that four point Calvinism, Amyraldian or otherwise, is also untenable as denial of the particularity of the atonement destabilizes the entire soteriological paradigm. In a highly-charged, polemical introduction to John Owen’s *The death of death in the death of Christ*, the preeminent treatise on the doctrine in the English language, J. I. Packer (1959, 6) defends the logic of Dort:

For the five points, though separately stated, are really inseparable. They hang together; you cannot reject one without rejecting them all, at least in the sense in which the Synod meant them. For to Calvinism, there is really only *one* point to be made in the field of soteriology: the point that *God saves sinners*.... This is the one point of Calvinistic soteriology which the “five points” are concerned to establish and Arminianism in all its forms to deny: namely, that sinners do not save themselves in any sense at all, but that salvation, first and last, whole and entire, past, present and future, is of the Lord, to whom be glory for ever; amen.

In a similar temperament, Warfield (n. d., 93–96) criticizes “four point” Calvinism in the form of Amyraldianism or post-redemptionism, the attempted modification of the system by those who otherwise agree with reformed orthodoxy. He contends that it is a “recognizable form of Calvinism,” because it upholds particularity in salvation, but not “a good form of Calvinism, an acceptable form of Calvinism, or even a tenable form of Calvinism.” Amyraldianism posits the atonement as a “conditional substitution” rather than a real substitution, altering it in such a way that the Calvinist feels “Christianity is wounded at its very heart.”

Their polemical language aside, Packer and Warfield's objections encompass the three principles of the orthodox reformed approach to salvation that necessitate its limitation of the scope of the atonement. The first of these, mentioned in the previous section, is the basis of salvation in unconditional election by the will of God; as Packer says, the one point is that "God saves sinners"—God and God alone. Absolute monergism is frequently portrayed in terms of upholding God's glory (e.g., Boice and Ryken 2002, 33–38)—*solī Deo gloria*—but it also serves the purpose of ensuring the efficacy of the salvation he accomplishes by his sovereign power. The cross accomplishes, not merely provides for, salvation. J. Murray (1955, 63–64) explains:

Christ did not come to make God reconcilable. He reconciled us to God by his own blood. The very nature of Christ's mission and accomplishment is involved in this question. Did Christ come to make the salvation of all men possible, to remove obstacles that stood in the way of salvation, and merely to make provision for salvation? Or did he come to save his people? Did he come to put all men in a salvable state? Or did he come to secure the salvation of all those who are ordained to eternal life? Did he come to make men redeemable? Or did he come effectively and infallibly to redeem? The doctrine of the atonement must be radically revised if, as atonement, it applies to those who finally perish as well as to those who are the heirs of eternal life. In that event we should have to dilute the grand categories in terms of which the Scripture defines the atonement and deprive them of their most precious import and glory. This we cannot do. The saving efficacy of expiation, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption is too deeply embedded in these concepts, and we dare not eliminate this efficacy.... Security inheres in Christ's redemptive accomplishment.

Again, redemption is not provisional but actual; those for whom Christ died *are* saved. Since all are not saved, the atonement must necessarily be limited in some dimension. Warfield (n. d., 95–96), again speaking with reference to Amyraldianism, sets forth the possibilities plainly:

The things that we have to choose between, are an atonement of high value, or an atonement of wide extension. The two cannot go together. And this is the real objection of Calvinism to this compromise scheme which presents itself as an improvement on its system: it universalizes the atonement at the cost of its intrinsic value, and Calvinism demands a really substitutive atonement which actually saves.

An unlimited or universal atonement, as understood in Calvinism, would mean either universal salvation, which has normally been rejected by the orthodox of all traditions, or mere hypothetical redemption—Christ's death does not actually secure, but only contingently provides for, the salvation of an unspecified number. The factor of contingency must be some quality or action in those humans who believe, which is unacceptable. Reformed polemicists contend that this latter position implies that Christ's death hypothetically could have saved no one, unacceptably nullifying God's sovereign power to save (Boettner 1932, 154–156; Warfield n. d., 99). Arminians and

others demur at this line of argument, perceiving it as more rhetorical than logical or theologically necessary (Erickson 1998, 851–852), but one can acknowledge it as wholly consistent with the plan of salvation outlined by the reformed *ordo* and the five points.

The second principle, cited by the initial reference from Warfield, restates the first from the vantage of the elect rather than the power of God. This is the principle of particularity. As noted earlier, “particular” is the more preferable descriptor of the reformed understanding of the atonement than “limited”; the objects of the atoning work of Christ are specific persons, namely the elect. Salvation originates in the decree, yet the decree is not a generalized plan of redemption; it is for the salvation of specific, foreknown individuals. Warfield (n. d., 87) understands this particularity or individualism as an essential mark of reformed theology:

The Calvinist is he who holds with full consciousness that God the Lord, in his saving operations, deals not generally with mankind at large, but particularly with the individuals who are actually saved. Thus, and thus only, he contends, can either the supernaturalism of salvation which is the mark of Christianity at large and which ascribes all salvation to God, or the immediacy of the operations of saving grace which is the mark of evangelicalism and which ascribes salvation to the direct working of God upon the soul, come to its rights and have justice accorded it... [T]he denial of particularism is constructively the denial of the immediacy of saving grace, that is, of evangelicalism, and of the supernaturalism of salvation, that is, of Christianity itself. It is logically the total rejection of Christianity.

Particularity thus aligns the decree of election with the recipients of the salvation accomplished by Christ (Hodge, C. 1997b, 544–548). E. H. Palmer (1980, 44) makes explicit the connection between the decree, the work of Christ, and the objects of God’s love:

Since the objects of the Father’s love are particular, definite, and limited, so are the objects of Christ’s death. Because God has loved certain ones and not all, because He has sovereignly and immutably determined that these particular ones will be saved, He sent His Son to die for them, to save them, and not all the world. Because there is a definite election, there is a definite atonement. Because there is a limited election, there is a limited atonement. Because there is a particular election, there is a particular atonement. God’s electing love and Christ’s atonement go hand in hand and have the same people in view.

Thus, particularity characterizes all of God’s dealings with human beings, and there is complete consistency throughout the entire plan of salvation, from decree to glorification, as to the individual human subjects who will partake of it. In orthodox reformed thought, there is no place for any form of universalism that widens the scope of salvation beyond the recipients foreordained by the decree. In fact, according to Warfield (n. d., 27–28, 88), it is this accent on particularism—taken too far, in his

view—that lies behind the lapsarian controversy. The supralapsarian position places this discrimination in the choosing of the elect even before the decree of creation, or at least that of the fall.

The third principle, also educed from Warfield (n. d., 94), is the affirmation of the death of Christ as a “substitutive atonement, which is as precious to the Calvinist as is his particularism, and for the safeguarding of which, indeed, much of his zeal for particularism is due.” A substitute means a replacement, an agent who perfectly fills the function and role of another. In this form of atonement, Christ in actuality goes through the judgment and reckoning with God that leads inevitably to the justification of each elect sinner. There is no provisional or hypothetical atonement that falls outside the determination of the eternal decree or goes unrealized in the salvation of particular elect individuals. As its initial proposition by Gottschalk demonstrates, the limitation of the atonement to the elect has only been envisaged within the context of strict double predestinarianism, but retrospectively, it is also evident that it can only be sustained as a viable doctrine when backed by a substitutive atonement theory, the most mature form of which only developed during the reformation. Penal substitution has been the one theory historically in which limitation of the atonement is a possibility, if not an outright necessity. Again, according to the broader Western tradition, the primary problem of the human condition is sin, both original and actual, and the resultant guilt before God. Without the intervention of grace, the only fate for sinners is punishment by an all-holy God. In Anselm’s original thought, Christ’s death was a positive offering of infinite value that satisfied the honor of God and averted his wrath. It was not precisely a substitution as it later came to be understood, and it was not punitive. As Boersma (2004, 158 n. 16) explains, “Anselm viewed satisfaction and punishment as mutually exclusive and thus had a nonpenal understanding of the cross.” The joining of the two—satisfaction through punishment—was wrought by Thomas Aquinas, and it was this interpretation of Anselm that formed the basis of the reformed theory (McCormack 1998, 300). Christ did not so much avert God’s wrath as bear it in the just punishment for the sins that were laid upon him—the sins of those elected by God’s decree and saved by his grace. In this sense, it became a real and effective substitution.

Because of the manner in which it aligns those elected by the decree with the death of Christ, penal substitution has been referred to as a commercial or transactional theory, and it deserves this description more than any other interpretation of the atonement (Boersma 2004, 169–170). While the infinite value of Christ’s sacrifice is always affirmed (e.g., Berkhof 1938, 393; Hodge, C. 1997b, 544), it is clearly understood that his punishment was specifically for the sins of the elect only and precisely equal to the punishment those collected individuals deserved. As Owen

(1959, 154) writes, “For to make satisfaction to God for our sins, it is required only that he undergo the punishment due to them; for that is the satisfaction required where sin is the debt.” The penalty borne by Christ is a “*solutio ejusdem*, payment of the same thing that was in the obligation” (Owen 1959, 155). The purchase of the elect requires as precise a balance as any double-entry bookkeeping system: debits must equal credits; the redeemed must equal the elected; Christ bore only the amount of punishment due them. All other logics are rejected. If he atoned for the sins of all, it is argued, all would be saved, since they would no longer face the penalty due them. (Some universalists among the reformed do hold this.) Conversely, it would be unjust of God to extract a penalty from the non-elect a second time if Christ truly bore their sins and God accepted his offering for such (Boettner 1932, 154–155; Murray 1955, 61–62; Palmer 1980, 41–42, 47; Grudem 1994, 594–595). If, as Arminians and others hold, Christ died for all but all are not saved, then some of his sacrifice was wasted or in vain (Palmer 1980, 41).

As presented within the overall context of reformed systematics, limited penal substitution is nearly unassailable logically. Attempts at mediating positions that affirm both the atonement’s universality and its penal and substitutionary character tend to falter on one point or the other. As Cave (1947, 228) notes, “The Penal theory finds its most consistent expression when the sins whose penalty Christ was believed to have borne are regarded as the sins of the definite number of the elect.” An illustration of this difficulty is J. M. Campbell, who was laicized by the Church of Scotland for teaching unlimited atonement. He eventually devised a new theory of the atonement based on the idea of Christ’s perfect confession of humanity’s sin. Although largely in continuity with the reformed tradition by affirming a form of satisfaction, he ultimately rejected retributive justice as the framework of God’s plan of salvation, instead stressing his love and mercy (Van Dyk 1999). Many four point Calvinists and conservative Arminians, including pentecostals, are convinced that Scripture teaches both the penal nature of the atonement and its universal extent, and so they affirm both regardless of the resulting logical tensions. Other Arminians, especially those more directly related to the remonstrance, defuse the problem by moving away from the model of penal substitution to the governmental theory, which Warfield (n. d., 95) describes as “the very highest form of doctrine of atonement to which... [Amyraldianism can] attain.” As noted in the previous chapter, this theory is still constructed around the framework of retributive justice and satisfaction, but because of the problem of universality, it proposes a demonstrative payment or *solutio tantidem* rather than the exact payment or *solutio ejusdem* of the reformed model (Owen 1959, 155ff.). The governmental theory, however, fails to satisfy the reformed requirements of a genuinely particular and substitutive atonement, and it also falters

from a lack of clear biblical grounds, which makes it suspect among many conservative Arminians. Ultimately, the latter are left without a means of resolving the problem of universality and particularity within the penal framework, and this unalleviated tension contributes to the instabilities, even critical flaws, in their soteriologies.

Logical as it may be, limited atonement is difficult to defend or even substantiate on the basis of the New Testament. As noted above, many even within the reformed tradition have objected to this point because of the universality of key passages such as John 1.29, 3.16–18, 1 John 2.2, and 1 Tim. 2.4–6. One approach to explain these has been to assert that “all” does not mean “all” and “world” does not mean “world” within a given context (e.g., Murray 1955, 59–61, 73–74; Palmer 1980, 52–53). Such explanations may fairly be described as “contortive,” and to many this difficulty with foundational texts is a sign that doctrinal construction has taken a wrong turn. Faced, on the one hand, with the logical problems limited penal substitution solves and, on the other, the biblical problems it creates, the researcher proposes an alternative tack from that which evangelical Arminianism and pentecostalism have normally taken. That is, rather than preserving penal substitution while denying its limitation and accepting the soteriological tensions it creates, it is better in the main to turn from the theory and re-evaluate the basis of redemption. As has been argued, the biblical and theological case for retributive justice, manifested in the vicarious punishment of Jesus, as the basis from which God relates to humanity is not nearly as strong as what is commonly claimed, and the theory contains serious flaws. The older *Christus victor* and recapitulative interpretations of Christ’s saving work are to be preferred. Once any movement is made away from penal substitution, all problems attendant to the extent of the atonement immediately vanish, and its universality can be affirmed without contradiction.

### **3.2.3 Penal Substitution and the Limitation of Salvation**

Aside from the inherent biblical, theological, and ethical problems associated with penal substitution, the theory also has deleterious effects on soteriology. As stated at the outset of this study, it is the researcher’s contention that penal substitution, even in unlimited form, is inadequate to support the soteriological paradigm of pentecostalism because the theory does not encompass the broad saving mission of Christ as depicted in the New Testament and as intended to be proclaimed and ministered by his church. These problems are attendant to any presentation of penal substitution, whether it is within the framework of orthodox Calvinism or otherwise. However, they are exacerbated, and thus easier to identify, by adherence to particular atonement, which by intent and design, is a circumscription of the effects of the work of Christ. The words of Warfield (n. d., 95–96), quoted above, can be

recalled at this point. As he argues, an atonement doctrine may be either wide or deep, that is, limited either in extent or in power. From his perspective, limited substitutionary atonement is deep, that is, monergistically and utterly efficacious, but narrow because it does not extend to all of humanity. However, in effect this narrowness applies not only to the number atoned for but also to the nature and character of the salvation procured by Christ. That is, salvation is limited to the elect, because Christ bore their sins alone, and the salvation of the elect is also limited in nature because Christ only bore their sins. If the meaning of atonement is restricted to the bearing of sin, it follows that salvation is limited to dealing with the problem of guilt and forgiveness, that is, justification. Again, redemption is understood as the resolution of the estrangement of God and human beings by the vicarious punishment of their sins on the cross. From such a definition, it is difficult to expand it outward to encompass other aspects of the human situation, to say nothing of non-human creation. Of course, proponents of penal substitution are aware of these objections and address them in their writings; no Christian theologian desires to minimize or depreciate the wondrous salvation purchased by Christ. However, the nature and design of an atonement model largely determines how realistically soteriological claims can be maintained, and the deficiencies of specific systems become apparent not so much in the writings of their proponents but in their encounters with other theologies making disparate claims. These constraints placed on salvation by the penal substitution theory will now be examined.

### **3.2.3.1 The Limited Subjects of Salvation**

While there is significant overlap and interplay among them, the major limiting effects of the penal substitution theory on salvation may be divided into two broad categories: the subjects or recipients of salvation and the nature and dimensions of that salvation. An additional issue intertwined with all of these is the relationship of Christ's death as saving work to his life and ministry. With regard to the recipients of salvation, first and most obviously, salvation is limited to the elect; the work of Christ is not intended to be efficacious for the non-elect. The latter are excluded from the atonement; their sins and the punishment due them were not vicariously borne, and they have been eternally determined by the decree not to receive salvation (*Canons*, 1.15, 2.8; *WCF*, 3.7). That said, many reformed theologians who affirm this point of the tradition also speak of other benefits, albeit non-saving, that come to the non-elect from the work of Christ. Murray (1955, 61–62), for example, writes:

Consequently, since all benefits and blessings are within the realm of Christ's dominion and since this dominion rests upon his finished work of atonement, the benefits innumerable which are enjoyed by all men indiscriminately are related to the death of Christ and may be said to accrue from it in one way or another.... It is proper, therefore, to say that the enjoyment of certain benefits,



even by the non-elect and reprobate, falls within the design of the death of Christ.

What these specific benefits are or how they may be distinguished from common grace or providence is not exactly clear (cf. Berkhof 1938, 432–439). However they are understood, these derivative blessings are incongruous with the reformed doctrines of predestination, atonement, and salvation as traditionally stated. To begin with, the claim that lesser benefits are extended to the reprobate is of small comfort when the way of salvation is eternally barred to them, especially when the traditional teaching about the fate of the reprobate is recalled. Next, the transactional character of the atonement when defined as a penal substitution contradicts the idea of peripheral and indiscriminate benefits. Christ took the penalty justly due the elect—a *solutio ejusdem* in Owen’s (1959, 155) words—and thus turned aside the wrath of God from them. Such a transaction has no direct correlation to God’s other, providential dealings with humanity. After all, this is exactly the objection to the pentecostal teaching of healing in the atonement that is raised by the doctrine of penal substitution; it is excluded because it is not a subject of atonement or reckoning with God. If this argument is correct in the specific example of the healing of sickness, which is at the very least a possibility from Scripture, it must also apply to these vaguer generalities.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to revisit the doctrine of recapitulation, first discussed in §2.2.2.1, for the present objections to the soteriological restrictions caused by the reformed doctrine of atonement ultimately concern the significance of Christ’s union with humanity in the incarnation: is the union with the elect only or with all of fallen humanity in its entirety? The problem of particular atonement does not arise just from the demands of strict predestinarianism but also from the increased distancing of the doctrine of the person of Christ from his work in Western theology in comparison to ancient and Eastern theology. Again, the doctrine of recapitulation concerns the “summing up” of humanity in Christ in the incarnation, the primary focus of early Christology; to repeat the words of Brunner (1952, 309), “All that [the fathers] said about the fact of the Incarnation, as such, also expressed what they had to say about the work of Atonement.” The opposite may be said of Western theology, including the reformed. As observed earlier in connection with Anselm’s revision, over time the doctrine of recapitulation contracted from the general union of humanity with Christ from the incarnation onwards, to the representation or substitution of humanity and humanity’s sins on the cross, then finally to that of the elect only (e.g., Hodge, A. A. 1867, 198–211). The theory fails to grapple with the full implications of the early church’s incarnational theology and Chalcedon’s formulation of Christ’s ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν.

A prime illustration of this is Berkhof's (1938) standard text. Berkhof of course affirms Chalcedonian Christology, but he speaks of the necessity of Christ's humanity only in terms of atonement and that understood strictly as the paying of the due penalty for sin (319). His chapter (447–453) on the “mystical union” with Christ only concerns that union with the elect, decreed from eternity, “objectively realized by Christ” and “subjectively realized by the operation of the Holy Spirit.” It is in this capacity that Christ stands as the second Adam (447), a subject that also arises in connection with his active obedience (380–381), of which more will be said in the next section. No mention is made of the intrinsic salvific function of the incarnation itself; mercy through vicarious retribution has become its end, and the full significance of the recapitulation has been lost. Yet, Christ's union with human nature is certainly not limited to redeemed, elect humanity; the incarnation preceded the atonement and summed up all of Adam's line, fallen, corrupted, and in need of redemption (cf. Karras 2003, 113–115). The omission of this union from penal substitution and the difficulty of its rectification represents a critical flaw in the theory. A recovery of this link between the incarnation and the atonement will universalize the latter but not necessarily lead to universal salvation as it does in Barth's (1957; 1956b) modification of the reformed system, which is in part an attempt to redress this problem from a different direction. Irenaeus, the great teacher of recapitulation, affirmed free will, as have most in the Christian tradition. Although all human beings share the one human nature assumed by the Son of God and are subjects of his reconciling work, the response of faith is necessary for them to enter the new life he procured (Boersma 2004, 123, 129–132; Lossky 1957, 120–124, 142).

Returning to the implications of the penal theory, the limitation of the atonement to the elect imposes a second restriction on the subjects of salvation. In the orthodox reformed doctrine as well as mediating, conservative evangelical presentations, penal substitutionary atonement is particular; that is, Christ atoned for specific individuals. All aspects of salvation, from election onwards, concern individuals, not humanity in general or collectively in Christ as in the remonstrance or Barth (1957). Again, the words of Warfield (n. d., 87) explain this clearly:

The Calvinist is he who holds with full consciousness that God the Lord, in his saving operations, deals not generally with mankind at large, but particularly with the individuals who are actually saved.... [T]he denial of particularism is constructively the denial of... Christianity itself.

As has been shown, this particularity or individualization of salvation originates in the decree and is carried into the atonement by Christ specifically bearing the sins only of those who are ultimately saved. As envisioned and advocated, this form of atonement is “deep”; it unfailingly saves those individuals who are chosen. This depth, however,

comes at a steep cost; it produces a soteriological paradigm incapable of encompassing social, institutional, or other collective aspects of human existence that are also in need of redemption, liberation, and transformation. An atonement that is strictly particular and individual yields a salvation that is strictly personal and then strictly private. Barth's (1956b, 150) judgment is moving:

It was an intolerable truncation of the Christian message when the older Protestantism steered the whole doctrine of the atonement—and with it, ultimately, the whole of theology—into the *cul de sac* of the question of the individual experience of grace, which is always an anxious one when taken in isolation, the question of individual conversion by it and to it, and of its presuppositions and consequences. The almost inevitable result was that the great concepts of justification and sanctification came more and more to be understood and filled out psychologically and biographically, and the doctrine of the Church seemed to be of value only as a description of the means of salvation and grace indispensable to this individual and personal process of salvation....

Our theme is the reconciliation of the world with God in Jesus Christ, and only in this greater context the reconciliation of the individual man. This is what was completely overlooked in that truncation. And if it is to be brought to light again, the prior place which the Christian individual has for so long—we might almost say unashamedly—claimed for himself in the dogmatics of the Christian community must be vacated again.

Boersma (2004, 166–167) elaborates exactly the problem the prevailing Western atonement model creates:

...Western thought has suffered from a preoccupation with the individual that goes well beyond a biblical appreciation for individual responsibility. When Augustine's follower Gottschalk... restricted the significance of the atonement to the elect, the result was that atonement was from then on related to the invisible Church, that is to say, to those individuals whom God had chosen from eternity. Vicarious substitution came to mean that Christ took the place of certain (elect) individuals. On the cross Christ bore the penalty of *my* particular sins that *I* have committed. Notions of corporate or institutional guilt cannot possibly have a place in such a scenario. The result has been a tendency toward a transactional or mercantile understanding of the atonement. It is a far cry from the Irenaean concept of recapitulation, in which Christ represented all humanity.

J. W. de Gruchy (1991, 178) judges that, "This privatized, individualistic understanding of Christian faith has, more than anything else, undermined the Reformed tradition's commitment to the transformation of society." The critique by liberation theology of this individualization and compartmentalization of salvation is well-known and severe (e.g., Gutiérrez 1973, 149–178; Segundo 1976, 136–151; Ray 1998, 85–86). It should be quickly added that the reformed system is not the only one that has been affected by this individualism; non-Western theologians raise this criticism of traditional Western theology perhaps more frequently than any other, and few theologies of any tradition can escape it. Perhaps more than in any other area, this

problem demonstrates how culture and context and not necessarily strict biblical exegesis shape and determine belief. The only means of rectifying this deficiency at its roots is in the reconstruction of a broader atonement doctrine capable of bearing the weight of a soteriology addressed not only to individuals but to all dimensions of human existence. Contrary to Warfield's warning, movement away from the strict particularity of the past will not necessitate the denial of Christianity. Indeed, it may be the only means of saving its future.

The third observation about the subjects or recipients of the benefits of Christ's atoning work in the traditional protestant theory is the limitation to elect *humanity*; that is, atonement concerns human beings and not the rest of creation. Again, this is necessitated by the nature of the atonement. If it is a penal substitution, it does not pertain, at least not directly, to non-human creation that is not guilty of sin but nevertheless affected by the corrupting fall; the saving work of Christ is restricted to the settling of the problem of guilty sinful agents. The universalistic atonement passages, however, point beyond just the sum of humanity to the rest of creation as well. As John 3.16 proclaims, "God so loved the world," not just its people (Jacobson 1994), and the apostle Paul integrated the redemption and liberation of creation into his great treatise on human justification (Rom. 8.19–23). Of course, this salvation of the world has been addressed at times in traditional Western theologies, especially in the locus of eschatology, but it does not figure at all in Christology or soteriology; the latter normally only treats the effects of the atonement on the elect human individuals, usually according to the steps of the *ordo*. As J. J. Davis (2000, 285) concludes after conducting a survey of evangelical systematic theologies, which normally favor penal substitution or at least the governmental theory,

It is likewise apparent that evangelical theologians generally do not see any connections between the atoning work of Christ and the future of the earth and Christian responsibility for its proper stewardship.

Again, as with liberation, God's redemptive and restorative plan for the cosmos may be addressed in passing in the loci of creation and providence, the church, the kingdom, and finally the last things, but what is not made clear in any of these is how this redemption of creation is related to the work of Christ on earth. When redemption is construed strictly as a penal substitution, it inevitably constrains the potential recipients of salvation. If non-elect humanity is excluded, having no portion in the substitution, then non-human creation must inevitably be omitted from its intent as well. It is now widely realized that Christianity needs a more robust theology vis-à-vis the ecological crisis, creation, and its liberation and preservation, but as traditionally formulated, the Western doctrine of atonement provides virtually no resources for its construction.

### 3.2.3.2 The Limited Nature of Salvation

Of a different concern are the nature and characteristics of the salvation, as informed by the theory of penal substitution, received by elect human beings. Extra care must be taken at this point. It is the thesis of the present work that atonement theories shape and govern soteriologies, and for consistency and vigor, theologies should seek to align these two doctrinal loci. However, the influence of the former on the latter cannot be ascertained completely by examining the soteriology that follows the atonement presented by any given theology. Although the dependency described here is a real one, theologians have other resources within their traditions for constructing their soteriologies. Salvation may stem from the work of Christ on the cross, but there are also doctrines of the Holy Spirit and of the church, and they, too, contribute to this area. Thus, while penal substitution places severe restrictions on soteriology as herein described, this does not mean that traditions that affirm it necessarily lack robust soteriologies, only that they may be inconsistent with their atonement doctrines. Wesleyanism may disagree with Calvinism's doctrine of sanctification, for example, but it cannot deny that it has one; likewise, pentecostalism may view reformed pneumatology as insufficient, but in no way can it be argued that the Spirit's work is absent from that tradition's theology. The point under consideration, however, is that while Wesleyans and pentecostals reject the reformed doctrines of sanctification and the Holy Spirit, to a large extent they accept the reformed theory of the atonement, if not the logic of the decrees from which it stems, and this has significant ramifications for their soteriologies. Care must be taken, then, to extract the direct inputs atonement doctrines make to soteriology from enhancements that are contributed by other theological loci. It must also be borne in mind that just as reformed positions were sharpened in conflict with Arminianism, so too were they further clarified after contact with Wesleyanism and its descendants; it is, for example, difficult to find a detailed reformed discussion of Holy Spirit baptism or healing prior to the nineteenth century, but they are abundant now. In other words, the reformed tradition, while largely consistent throughout its history, has been far from static.

At this time more can be said about the vital question of the relationship between Christ's saving work in death and his life and ministry as a whole, for what a theology says about this relationship also affects its understanding of atonement and salvation. Reformed theology attempts to relate the two together, and to an extent it represents an improvement over the original satisfaction theory. For Anselm, at least as argued in *Cur Deus homo*, the life of Christ is unimportant in terms of its salvific value. All that matters is that he was sinless and therefore able to make the perfect offering to God, not being liable for punishment—thus the purpose of the incarnation

and the virgin birth; the judgment of Harnack (2005, 76) may be recalled here. By contrast, in Calvinism, the death and life of Christ are brought together in the concepts of his passive and active obedience. Passive obedience is Christ's obedience in death, the only subject of real concern in the satisfaction theory. Calvin (1997, 2.16.5) and his theological heirs (e.g., Turretin 1994, 445–455; Berkhof 1938, 380–381) expanded this by recognizing the active obedience of Christ, which corresponds to his blamelessness in the keeping of the law and actual sinlessness in life beyond his escape from original sin via the incarnation. The full meaning of these two forms of obedience becomes clear when penal substitution is properly related to the protestant doctrine of justification as both the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Only the former, the result of Christ's vicarious bearing of the just punishment due the elect, has been emphasized thus far, but it does not comprise the sum of his reconciling work. Justification also means that the righteousness of Christ is counted as that of the elect when they believe, and this is made possible or merited because of his active obedience prior to his crucifixion (McGrath 1998, 231–235). Thus, some salvific significance is assigned to the entire life of Jesus.

This improvement over Anselm is commendable but insufficient. There is a reason why the phrase “the work of Christ” has come to be automatically understood as a synonym for his death. Anselm's groundwork still holds great sway over Western theology, and the cross is still seen as the point when the real work of salvation took place, the preceding three years of ministry practically being relegated to the status of mere narrative background. The leap in the theological narrative from Candlemas to Maundy Thursday is little different than the leap from Christmas to Good Friday; the perennial preoccupation with the law of Western theology generally and the reformed tradition in particular affords little space for assigning real salvific significance to the acts of Christ unrelated to, and even in tension with, the law, such as his healings and other liberative works. Again, the self-imposed constraints of this theological paradigm are revealed even as it attempts to say more about the work of Christ through the concept of the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. This, it would seem, would be an ideal place to further explicate how all dimensions of the life of Christ are saving, but largely it fails to do so, and the priestly office preponderates to the neglect of the other two (Forde 1984, 26). It is the prophetic office that most closely corresponds to Christ's ministry on earth, yet the salvific significance of it is little expanded over what has been noted about his active obedience and is largely restricted to his teaching ministry both in life and after the ascension (e.g., Turretin 1994, 397–403; Hodge, C. 1997b, 462–463; Shedd 2003, 682–685). Healings, exorcisms, and the proclamation of immediate salvation, which featured so prominently in his actual ministry, do not figure into the locus except for brief

mention in passing and then primarily as confirmation of the truth of his teaching. They are not connected up with the “real” saving work of the cross and thus fail to pass into the soteriology of the church, at least as far as salvation is understood as an application of the work of Christ.

A similar problem is found with the role given to the resurrection. As has been seen in §2.2.2.1 and elsewhere, in the thought of the ancient church, the resurrection of Jesus was essential to the work of redemption; humanity is freed from corruption through its union with Christ, human and divine, and his triumph over the grave. It is the completion of the healing of the problem disrupting the divine-human relationship. The function within the satisfaction and penal theories is less clear, and it is ironic that polemical theologies (e.g., Hodge, A. A. 1867, 234–239; Turretin 1994, 417–426) that challenge other theories over about the necessity of the cross may themselves be challenged about the necessity of the resurrection; indeed, the treatment given this cardinal doctrine of the faith by the less careful (e.g., Shedd 2003) can only be described as negligent. Weaver (2001, 54) observes of the Anselmian tradition as a whole that “the focus is on the penalty-paying death, and resurrection occurs at an entirely different place in the theological outline.” For example, Turretin (1994, 364–366) places his treatment of the resurrection within his thirteenth topic of the person and states of Christ, where it occupies a scant two pages in the English translation. As previously cited (418), he does not list it as a requirement of redemption, and it does not feature as a central question in his lengthier treatment of atonement and mediation (403–482); in the main he reserves its significance for eschatological salvation (1997, 565–566, 617–621). For many, the resurrection primarily signifies the vindication of Christ and the confirmation of his accomplishment of reconciliation via the cross (e.g., Berkhof 1938, 346–349; Hodge, C. 1997b, 626–627); Barth’s (1956b, 299–357) deeper extraction of its significance is a noteworthy reformed exception. Once again, the reconciliation of God and human beings is effected by the vicarious bearing of punishment or making of satisfaction to God. Functionally, the resurrection is detached; it serves as the beginning of the subsequent work of Christ’s exaltation, “God’s reward for the obedience and sacrifice of his Son” (Beker 1980, 209). As such, it does not fundamentally contribute to redemption, and thus its use for describing the nature and dimensions of salvation will also be limited. This marginalization of the resurrection with regard to salvation, however, is foreign to the apostolic teaching of the New Testament and the faith of the early church.

With this background, it is clear that the reformed soteriological paradigm will be developed within the parameters indicated by this forensic interpretation of the divine-human reckoning that takes place on the cross, with Christ’s life contributing principally through his active obedience to the law; the non-forensic aspects of his

ministry as well as his resurrection give inputs only at the margins of soteriology and non-dogmatically. To review the groundwork laid previously, within this system the problem in the divine-human relationship is perceived primarily as human guilt before God because of sin. It is essentially a legal problem, and the remedy to it likewise is essentially legal. Christ vicariously bears the punishment due the elect so that their sins might not be counted against them; instead, his righteousness is imputed as their own. This is the application of the passive and active obedience of Christ, respectively, which manifests as the justification of the elect (Shedd 2003, 793–796); although the centrality of justification is more acutely seen in Lutheran theology, the forensic transaction that takes place on the cross also governs the reformed soteriological paradigm (McGrath 1998, 231–238). In the penal substitution theory affirmed by the tradition, the object or terminating point of the work of the cross is God himself; that is, the redemption wrought by Christ primarily works on God, not human beings or a third party (Warfield 1950, 366–369). The problem in the divine-human relationship is essentially remedied by a “change” in God, or at least in how he deals with humanity, that is, the elect. While there are subjective aspects to salvation as it is applied by the Holy Spirit, the paramount feature of salvation is the change of status before God and how, while not detracting from his immutability, God now relates to justified individuals. Substitutionary atonement is rightly called the “objective” theory, and while the reformed tradition does not deny the subjective aspects of salvation, it is this objective and forensic character that dominates.

Beyond the limitations of the subjects or recipients of salvation discussed in the above section, this interpretive framework places limitations, intentional and unintentional, on the nature and characteristics of Christian salvation (Boersma 2004, 163–170; Weaver 2001, *passim*). Again, it bears repeating that some of these limitations can be circumvented, at least partially, by other resources within the tradition. The purpose of the present study, however, is to ascertain, from an outside perspective, the direct effects of atonement theory on soteriology and then the implication of a non-reformed soteriology accepting an essentially reformed atonement theory. Thus, the immediate discussion must be restricted to these parameters. The first limitation that naturally arises from this framework is that salvation is given a forensic or juridical character and is expressed primarily in legal language. While not neglecting the non-judicial themes of reformed soteriology—in particular, its teaching of salvation as mystical union with Christ is a major contribution to protestant theology that should not be overlooked (McGrath 1998, 223–226)—the reformed tradition has afforded a greater place for the law in the Christian life than many others. It maintains the protestant concern, over against Roman catholicism, for distinguishing sanctification from justification, but it does not



distance them as greatly as in Lutheranism. Initial salvation, the regeneration-conversion-justification complex, is a change in legal status; it also constitutes the beginning of sanctification as “definitive” or “positional” sanctification (Hoekema 1989, 202–206). The two are thus closely connected. Progressive sanctification in life is the work of the Holy Spirit and the believer’s subjective experience of salvation. The contours of this paradigm, however, should be carefully examined. Berkhof (1938, 536) states,

Justification is the judicial basis for sanctification. God has the right to demand of us holiness of life, but because we cannot work out this holiness for ourselves, He freely works it within us through the Holy Spirit on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to us in justification.

Several points may be inferred from this statement. Sanctification, in reformed thought, is the Holy Spirit applying or realizing the righteousness of Christ in the believer’s life. This righteousness, the positive dimension of the reconciling work of Christ, stems from his active obedience, which, as has been noted above, is largely defined as his perfect keeping of the law in his life (Berkhof 1938, 448; Hoekema 1989, 181–182; Shedd 2003, 720–722). Thus, even in its subjective application, the development of the character of Christ in the saved is still understood largely in legal categories. In comparison to some others, Berkhof is more consistently, if not completely, monergistic, emphasizing God’s gracious work in sanctification. Other representatives of the tradition, however, dwell more extensively on the “third use” of the law, its keeping for sanctification, and are openly synergistic about this point of the *ordo* (e.g., de Gruchy 1991, 166–171; Boice and Ryken 2002, 152; Hoekema 1989, 225–228). While this legal orientation does not necessitate a devolution into legalism, it may produce conflict with other approaches to salvation not so oriented; Hoekema (1989, 228), who has dialogued extensively with other positions, states, “The law... is one of the most important means whereby God sanctifies us.” It may also be noted that by deriving sanctification from the imputed righteousness of Christ and therefore his active obedience, the actual work of sanctification is distanced from the atoning work of the cross, whereas in Wesleyanism and pentecostalism, sanctification is generally depicted as an immediate outcome of Christ’s atoning death (Taylor 1985, 105–106; Riss 1988). (Wesley, however, also emphasized the importance of keeping the law as part of sanctification.)

The second limitation of salvation within this theological system arises from its characterization as an essentially objective rather than subjective reality; another way of saying this is the elect, those whom God saves, are more passive than active in the reception and actualization of salvation (Weaver 2001, 79). Again, this is a result of identifying salvation primarily as forensic justification. Although not as singularly

focused on justification as the Lutheran tradition and more inclined to give balanced attention to all the points of the *ordo*, justification is still paramount in reformed soteriology; Calvin identified it as the “main hinge upon which religion turns” (McGrath 1998, 223). As a change of status before God through the imputation of an alien righteousness, justification is a completely objective work, originating in the decree and actualized by the substitutionary atonement apart from any human contribution or involvement. Given its importance and role in the *ordo*, it is not surprising that the objective, passive nature of justification colors the entire soteriological paradigm. McGrath (1998, 237) lucidly explains:

The Reformed understanding... is much simpler and more coherent [than the Lutheran]. Man’s justification is the temporal execution of the decree of election, effected through grace. The fact this proceeds through a complex causal sequence [i.e., the *ordo*] does not alter the fact that the entire sequence of events is directly to be attributed to God... Faith is a divine gift effected within man, functioning as the instrument by which the Holy Spirit may establish the *union mystica* between Christ and the believer, whose three-fold effect is justification, sanctification and glorification... Man’s rôle at each and every stage of the *ordo salutis* is purely passive, in that the elect are called and accepted *efficaciter*.

At one point here, sanctification, the outsider observes a tension within the tradition and a faltering in its otherwise consistent monergism. On the one hand, human works do not contribute to salvation, and sanctification, as part of the *ordo*, is by grace. On the other, sanctification is synergistic and largely accomplished by the third use of the law. For the purpose of this work, it is not necessary to resolve this conflict, but one can conclude that it is the passive character of salvation that dominates reformed soteriology and bears the most influence in its interactions with the paradigms of other systems.

While not depreciating the positive effects of this approach, three common points of objection to this passivity can be raised. First, this passivity can be seen in reformed discussions of sanctification. Although the tradition certainly has a workable doctrine of sanctification that characteristically distinguishes it from the other great magisterial tradition, Lutheranism (Fackre 2003, 62–63), the reformed doctrine falls short of other movements’ teachings of the extent of holiness realizable in the Christian life (e.g., Dieter 1987a; Horton 1987). Sanctification is a real outcome of the Holy Spirit’s application of the work of Christ, but it always remains an inchoate work, its fruit difficult to discern as well as to affirm. For Warfield (1932, 113–132), sanctification must always be spoken of within the framework of what he calls “miserable-sinner Christianity.” *Simul iustus et peccator* ever characterizes the life of the redeemed, and pardon—the outcome of justification—holds “the primary place in salvation... not merely in time but in importance” (130). Hoekema (1987a, 74),

writing in dialogue as a representative of the reformed perspective, contends that “as long as they are in this present life, [believers] must struggle against sin, and they will sometimes fall into sin.” Like Warfield, he denies that they may live, even temporarily, without sin (Hoekema 1987b, 48–49); the condition of *non posse non peccare* apparently governs the regenerate elect until death. W. A. Hollenweger (1972, 325–330), a sympathetic reformed critic of pentecostalism, goes further and rejects definitive approaches to sanctification because of the challenge they present to the certainty of salvation and, by implication, *solafidianism*. This limitation on salvation, however, is unacceptable to Wesleyans and many others as falling short of the gospel (Dieter 1987a, 93). Nazarene theologian R. S. Taylor (1985, 108), linking this passivity directly to the penal substitution theory, speaks clearly from the Wesleyan perspective:

What this does is to make final salvation totally a matter of justification, with holiness being essentially an imputation, and only nonessentially a subjective, real work of the Spirit. Subjective sanctification is not denied by this scheme, but it is seen as a serendipity, not a requisite for eternal salvation.

Next, and more broadly, this interpretation of salvation as chiefly passive manifests in a resistance to expansion of the *ordo* by the addition of other discrete crises of grace subsequent to justification. This objection is encountered in discussions of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification and even more commonly with regard to the holiness and pentecostal doctrines of subsequent Spirit baptism. The revivalist case for these is built primarily from the book of Acts, and while reformed theologians and others who reject this case are by no means unanimous as to how the events of Acts should be interpreted vis-à-vis the *ordo*, there is a consensus that such experiences are not to be actively sought, and by no means are they obtained through obedience, seeking, or any other activity that might be construed as a “work” (e.g., Bruner 1970, 114–117; Kaiser 2004, 31–34; cf. Elbert 2004). Again, as salvation has a primarily passive character, if such events were meant to occur as part of the normal Christian life, they would do so automatically; to suggest otherwise may threaten *solafidianism* and forensic justification. The researcher has discussed this problem at length in his prior work, particularly noting how subsequence can defend, rather than weaken, justification by faith (House 2006, 52–59). Subsequence allows soteriology to be expanded to describe all of God’s saving work while maintaining the integrity of justification qua justification. Denial of subsequence can result either in the collapse of all of soteriology into the event of justification, thus threatening its objective character, or the reduction of salvation to justification, thus denying any salvific work beyond pardon. What is more difficult to establish, however, and what the reformed response illustrates, is how to substantiate these subsequent steps in the *ordo* and the

expansion of salvation when soteriology is developed solely from the foundation of Christ's work interpreted as a penal substitution.

Finally, an objective or passive approach to salvation can manifest in a resistance to experiential verification of theology. Pentecostal teaching has frequently been accused of relying more on experience and emotion than sound theology and biblical interpretation, but this point is more than just polemical. Pentecostalism, along with pietism, Wesleyanism, and other forms of revivalism, has always held that the benefits of Christ's saving work should be experientially realized within the life of the believer, but this has not been the expectation of all historical Christian traditions. For example, passivity in salvation can be observed in any context where paedobaptism is practiced. However its purpose is explained, the recipient is a passive, not active, participant in salvation. Likewise, according to the reformed perspective, the various events or moments of the *ordo* occur objectively and thus largely outside of the experience of the participant. Hoekema (1989, 102), again a lucid, representative voice, states:

Regeneration is deeply mysterious—first, because it is by definition a supernatural work of God; second, because we can never observe or experience regeneration; we can only observe its effects.... we can never be certain when it occurs.

He then describes regeneration as “instantaneous, supernatural, and radical,” a real change but one that takes place “below consciousness” (104). To this characterization the pietist, Wesleyan, or pentecostal can only agree but also only express amazement that such a miracle cannot be observed or experienced. If the work of Christ is so efficacious, then its reception should have verifiable, even tangible, results in the life and experience of the one being saved. Hoekema and those who share his position, of course, believe in external manifestations of the salvation that God has wrought internally, but the tradition does not pursue this line of thought to the same extent or manner that revivalism does. This belief in the experiential verification of doctrine is in part the reason for the pietist and Wesleyan pursuit of holiness and was also the driving force behind the pentecostal doctrine of evidential tongues (Goff 1991; Synan, V. 1971, 99–102, 121–122). For revivalists, experience does not determine doctrine, but correct doctrine and theology should result in a noticeably transformed life, even the life of the New Testament church.

The third limitation imposed on soteriology by the interpretation of the saving work of Christ as a penal substitution directed towards God is the restriction of salvation primarily to the spiritual dimensions of human existence. One aspect of this was noted in the previous section's discussion of particularity; restriction of atonement to specific, elect individuals precludes it from encompassing a social

dimension or affecting the non-human natural world. Beyond these limitations, the salvation as enjoyed by the elect is not considered to involve the physical life of the body; this limitation is intensified by the tendency in the reformed tradition, going back to Calvin, towards anthropological dualism (de Gruchy 1991, 115–116). Berkhof (1938, 533), for one, affirms that sanctification, as an aspect of salvation, “affects the whole man: body and soul,” but then qualifies that “The sanctification of the body takes place especially in the crisis of death and in the resurrection of the dead.” Reformed treatments of salvation rarely discuss healing of the body, and if the doctrine of healing in the atonement devised by the Wesleyan holiness movement in the nineteenth century (Chappell 1988, 356–360) is addressed at all, generally it is rejected (e.g., Erickson 1998, 852–858). A large component of the theological reasoning that has evolved for this rejection stems from the nature of the atonement as a penal substitution. As sickness is not sinful, guilt and penalty do not attach to it, and there is therefore no need for Christ to bear or atone for it (Mayhue 1995). It is interesting to note, however, that when Irenaeus depicts the work of Christ in terms of propitiation, he also attaches the ministry of healing to it to some extent (Bandstra 1970, 59–60). The doctrine of the cessation of the *charismata* also precludes healing as an aspect of the salvation obtained by Christ. Warfield (1918, 26–27), the chief formalizer of this teaching, reduced the function of New Testament miracles, including healing, to signs confirming God’s revelation. Beyond that, they have no role in the economy of salvation; again, Christ’s active obedience to the law, not his ministry of liberation, is the redemptive component of his life. Warfield (1918, 177) takes this line of theological thought to its logical end, a salvation that is otherworldly and nearly entirely spiritual in nature:

Our Lord never permitted it for a moment to be imagined that the salvation he brought was fundamentally for this life. His was emphatically an other-world religion. He constantly pointed to the beyond, and bade men find their true home, to set their hopes, and to place their aspirations, there.

Similarly, as the work of Christ has its terminating point on God himself and most directly concerns his acceptance of human beings, it follows that salvation as an outcome of that work is limited primarily to that aspect of human spirituality, i.e., the human relationship to God. It only indirectly concerns the “third party” to the story of the fall and redemption, Satan and the powers, whether they be understood traditionally or demythologically. As has been shown earlier, with the formalization of the satisfaction theory by Anselm, the patristic doctrine was overturned, and the conquest of the devil was pushed away from the center of the theology of redemption. In many ways, this marked the beginning of the demythologization of theology, but Anselm, however, still makes repeated references to this conquest throughout *Cur*

*Deus homo*. As the Western theory evolved, this aspect of redemption gradually diminished in importance, and salvation no longer was conceived in terms of liberation and deliverance from external oppression. W. G. T. Shedd (2003, 702), discussing the patristic theory, illustrates this trend amply:

This captivity to Satan is related to the work of the Holy Spirit more than to the atoning efficacy of Christ's blood; and deliverance from it makes a part of the work of sanctification, rather than of justification. This deliverance is preceded by another. In the order of nature, it is not until man has been first redeemed by the atoning blood from the claims of justice, that he is redeemed by the indwelling Spirit from the captivity and bondage of sin and Satan.

For Shedd, Satan is no way a party to the work of redemption, which solely concerns God's disposition toward humanity. In passing he affirms that deliverance is part of the work of sanctification, but he does not mention it at all in his brief treatment of the latter (Shedd 2003, 803–806). In the New Testament, however, the delivering ministry of Jesus is at the core of the apostolic testimony (Acts 10.38), and it comprises a large portion of his public ministry as recorded in the Gospels. Moreover, John 12.31–32 directly connects the cross to the overthrow of Satan. In traditional protestantism, however, redemption and salvation have been distanced from this central theme.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to reaffirm the positive aspects of atonement and salvation that the reformed tradition has advanced. Its concern for upholding the sovereignty of God, the seriousness of sin, and utterly gracious character of salvation are important contributions to universal Christian theology. As a systematizer of protestant theology, the tradition is unparalleled in its breadth, depth, and sophistication, and with regard to the question being studied, the relationship between atonement doctrine with soteriology, it has put together a most coherent statement of their mutual interdependencies. However, as the analysis above has demonstrated, this aspect of its theology suffers from several limitations imposed by its theory of atonement and its failure to integrate the life and resurrection of Christ into his saving work. The fullness of salvation depicted in the New Testament, especially as it was proclaimed and ministered by Jesus himself, encompasses many dimensions of human existence not explicitly addressed, and at times explicitly excluded, by the soteriological paradigm of the dominant form of protestant thought.

### **3.3 The Soteriological Expansion of Revivalism and the Resultant Tensions in Atonement Doctrine**

The development of protestant theology did not stop with the reformation and the subsequent period of orthodoxy. New protestant movements, from pietism to Wesleyanism to pentecostalism—to say nothing of liberalism, which must largely be laid aside at present—have desired to recover the full gospel of salvation from the

New Testament and to replicate it experientially in the Christian life. In many ways, these movements sought to revive and renew the theological traditions from which they emerged. On the one hand, they were theological and religious innovators, but on the other, they did not intend to break from orthodoxy, as liberalism was less hesitant to do. Orthodox theology was the beginning point, and as the reformers before them, they returned to Scripture to ascertain if the doctrines they had received were taught therein. As deficiencies or limitations, some of which were described above, were discerned, they accordingly revised doctrine as well as practice in order to adhere more closely to their interpretation of the Bible. Soteriology was the major locus in which this occurred, and as this process of development has continued down to the present day, revivalism's doctrines of salvation now differ drastically from the *ordo* and scheme of traditional reformed theology. The doctrine of the work of Christ, however, was less radically revised; the chief modifications to it were simply the rejection of its limitation to the elect and, in the later holiness movement and pentecostalism, the addition of human sickness as a malady vicariously borne by Christ. As far as classical pentecostalism is concerned, the atonement's fundamental nature as a penal substitution has never been seriously questioned. It is this lack of systematic reflection and revision that has produced many of the tensions and instabilities in the movement's system of theology.

The theological history of protestant revivalism, from pietism to the present day, is vast, and many of its concerns lie outside of the scope of the present work. However, the innovations it made to basic reformation soteriology and the reasoning behind them are highly relevant. As pentecostalism is a chiefly Anglo-American movement in origin, if not growth, it is appropriate to begin with John Wesley, its historical progenitor. In Wesley, many of the driving forces behind revivalism, including pietism and catholic mysticism, find their convergence. His influence on American religious life is arguably greater than it was in his homeland; in the new nation his teaching flourished and was radicalized, especially in the nineteenth century holiness movement that emerged from methodism. By the end of that century, this movement had united all the elements, save one, catalytic to the birth of the modern pentecostal movement at the next century's dawn (Dayton 1975, 47–53). Although this latter movement is hardly known for its theological scholasticism, its informal doctrinal constructions have, in the researcher's view, more intuitively captured the breadth of salvation depicted in the New Testament, even if pentecostalism has not yet constructed a completely cohesive system of theology from which to express these insights.

### 3.3.1 The Wesleyan Contribution

John Wesley has been claimed as a “confused Calvinist” (Olson 2006, 55) or “Calvinist at heart” (Boice and Ryken 2002, 36) by many who are unable to reconcile his Arminianism with his evangelistic fervor and otherwise orthodox theology. It is arguable, however, that Wesley was the most important Arminian, contributing far more to the growth and success of that theological movement than Arminius himself. In terms of sheer numbers, the methodist, holiness, and pentecostal movements utterly dwarf the Arminian churches that emerged from the remonstrance, and it is impossible to understand the beliefs and practices of these revival movements apart from the thought of their progenitor. Yet, in this rather tenuous claim on him by the reformed there is a grain of truth: Wesley’s theology, particularly in the areas of concern to this work, cannot be wholly separated from the Calvinism he denounced. A comparison of Wesleyan Arminianism with the classical Arminianism of the remonstrance shows that the former has been less hesitant in many areas such as its decisive rejection of the inevitable perseverance of the saints, about which the articles of remonstrance only demurred. At the same time, much of conservative Wesleyanism is more in line with certain features of orthodox reformation thought such as the present topic of the nature of the atonement. These continuities and discontinuities create tensions and instabilities in its allied theological systems. These systems are also not monolithic; just as it is sometimes necessary to distinguish Calvin from Calvinism, it is necessary to distinguish Wesley from later methodism, the post-methodist holiness movement, and even post-pentecostal Wesleyanism, thus complicating the task.

About one thing, however, there should be no doubt: the theology of Wesley and all of these associated movements is truly Arminian in soteriology. One of the organs he published was simply titled *The Arminian magazine*, and his writings, particularly his sermons, which contain some of the most important presentations of his theology, are replete with anti-Calvinist polemics. Like most Arminians, his dissent from reformed orthodoxy was not due to a desire to exalt human freedom at the expense of divine sovereignty but rather to uphold the utterly loving character of God, which is perceived as threatened by strict determinism (Wesley 1999b). Wesley (1999j) flatly rejected the reformed *ordo* and instead put forward a typically Arminian understanding of salvation. Following the sequence of Rom. 8.29–30, he taught that God’s foreknowledge of faith is prior to, and the basis of, predestination and does not nullify the freedom of the will:

Yet what he [God] knows, whether faith or unbelief, is in nowise caused by his knowledge. Men are as free in believing or not believing as if he did not know it at all. Indeed, if man were not free, he could not be accountable either for his thoughts, word, or actions. (Wesley 1999j, ¶¶ 5–6)



Salvation is all of grace, but its gracious nature is neither negated nor precluded by the need for human cooperation (Wesley 1999l). This grace is also not irresistible, lest it void human moral agency (Wesley 1999k, ¶ 9). Calling is an aspect of preventing or prevenient grace that powerfully but non-coercively enables repentance and faith, leading to salvation (Wesley 1999l, ¶ II.1; Taylor 1985, 79–80). Wesley’s contradictory affirmation of both baptismal regeneration and the evangelistic call to the “new birth” makes it difficult to neatly fit regeneration into his *ordo* (Lindström 1980, 105–117), but he clearly holds that it, like justification, is dependent on, and thus subsequent to, repentance and a living faith (Wesley 1999d). (Wesleyan-Arminian systems that do not practice paedobaptism are relieved of this theological difficulty.) Justification ultimately leads, via sanctification, to final glorification (Wesley 1999j, ¶¶ 10, 16). As mentioned above, unlike the remonstrant Arminians, Wesley firmly rejected the inevitable perseverance of the saints (Wesley 1872b). The derivative holiness and pentecostal churches have largely followed him on this point.

This salvation, of course, stems from the work of Christ, but while Wesley freely modified the reformed *ordo*, he essentially accepted the traditional theory, at least as regards its nature as a penal substitution (Olson 2006, 231–233; Peterson and Williams 2004, 193). His understanding of the problem in the divine-human relationship and how it is remedied in Christ corresponds very closely to the reformed. Lindström (1980, 64–65) summarizes Wesley’s teaching from his various writings:

Apart from his general solidarity with Anglicanism, his conception of sin... would in itself lead us to expect his concurrence in the doctrine of the work of Christ as satisfaction and in the related idea of the merits of Christ.... It was through the sin of Adam, who was not only the father but also the representative of mankind, that all became subject to sin and punishment; similarly Christ, as the second Adam and representative of the human race, bore the sins of all. He suffered on behalf of all. His sacrifice was a full, perfect and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Christ bore our punishment. He paid the price for us. Consequently man has nothing to offer to God but the merits of Christ. Because of their inward and outward evil all that men deserve is the wrath of God and eternal damnation. Yet they can do nothing to assuage that wrath, atone for their sins, and escape the punishment they rightly deserve. They have no means of making satisfaction to the justice of God for their sins. Thus their only hope is the vicarious suffering of Christ.

Significantly for this study, Lindström (1980, 72) further notes that for Wesley,

Although... atonement can sometimes appear as an act of liberation, this is never more than ancillary to the main train of thought. The characteristic expression of the idea of atonement lies in satisfaction.

Thus, his doctrine of the atonement lies firmly within the stream of historical protestant orthodoxy and the Anselmian tradition. His major modification, common not only to Arminianism but to the majority of the Christian tradition, was to expand

its scope to include the world, that is, all human beings universally and not just the elect.

A more significant deviation from the mainstream of reformation thought was made in the relationship of the overall work of Christ to justification: Wesley denied the imputation of the righteousness of Christ stemming from his active obedience (McGrath 1998, 239). Again, Lindström (1980, 73) summarizes his position:

Wesley virtually confines satisfaction to comprise passive obedience. He contends that it was the passive obedience of Christ that laid the foundation of justification. True, he speaks also of the meritorious life of Christ, but always in connection with His atoning death. Christ's fulfillment of the moral law, moreover, is not regarded as essential to our redemption. The satisfaction through the death of Christ is sufficient for our full forgiveness. Christ was a substitute only in suffering punishment, not in His fulfilling of the law.

Lindström (1980, 83–84) further notes, “In the strict sense, however, justification only implies... the forgiveness of sins and the acceptance incident to it.” Thus, Wesley (1999i, ¶ II.5) understood justification only as the non-imputation of sin; he therefore transferred “the fulfillment of the law... from justification to sanctification” (Lindström 1980, 99). He primarily objected that the doctrine of imputed righteousness contributed to antinomian abuses (1872c, 315). If right standing with God is based solely on the objective work of Christ without reference to his subjective work in the individual, personal holiness could, even should, be neglected. On one occasion, he dramatically placed his interpretation of this argument in the mouth of Simon Magus:

“that Christ had done, as well as suffered, all; that his righteousness being imputed to us, we need none of our own; that seeing there was so much righteousness and holiness in Him, there needs none in us; that to think we have any, or to desire or seek any, is to renounce Christ; that from the beginning to the end of salvation, all is in Christ, nothing in man...” (1872a, 366)

Wesley countered that this was a “‘blow at the root,’ the root of all holiness, all true religion”:

For wherever this doctrine is cordially received, it leaves no place for holiness.... It effectually tears up all desire of it, all endeavour after it. It forbids all such exhortations as might excite those desires, or awaken those endeavours. Nay, it makes men afraid of personal holiness, afraid of cherishing any thought of it, or motion toward it, lest they should deny the faith, and reject Christ and his righteousness[.]

Ultimately, Wesley (1999i, ¶ II.4) dissented from the reformation standard of justification as a forensic declaration external to the justified individual:

Least of all does justification imply, that God is deceived in those whom he justifies; that he thinks them to be what, in fact, they are not; that he accounts them to be otherwise than they are. It does by no means imply, that God judges

concerning us contrary to the real nature of things; that he esteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous when we are unrighteous. Surely no. The judgment of the all-wise God is always according to truth. Neither can it ever consist with his unerring wisdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, because another is so.

At this point, it may appear that Wesley and his followers have fallen away from the reformation's teaching of salvation and relapsed into a Roman conception of justification as infused righteousness. Yet, he fully defended the doctrine of justification by faith alone (Wesley 1999i; 1999e). It is from within this space of controversy—dissent from the legal fiction of forensic justification with simultaneous affirmation of the reformation's material principle—that emerge his teaching of Christian perfection and virtually all revivalist expansions of protestant soteriology. Viewed charitably, the conflict is over two opposing yet equally noble goals. For the reformed, and even more for the Lutheran, sanctification is controlled by the truth of *simul iustus et peccator*; to “go beyond” this truth is to go beyond grace into the trap of human merit. Salvation must always be confessed as only the result of God's sovereign, monergistic grace, lest it give way to boasting (Eph. 2.8–9). Warfield's (1932, 113–132) description of real Christianity as “miserable-sinner” Christianity may be recalled at this point. From the perspective of Wesleyanism and revivalism, however, this representation of the faith diminishes the effectiveness of the salvation wrought by the work of Christ and can even lead to a depreciation of that work itself. Salvation is not only from the guilt and penalty of sin but from the power, even the presence, of sin. Wesley (1872a, 367) urged, “You are really changed; you are not only accounted, but actually ‘made righteous.’” Neither boasting nor scrupulous dwelling on the miserableness of the sinner are appropriate; firm confidence should be placed in the effectiveness of the redemption wrought by Christ:

Do not say, “I can do nothing.” If so, then you know nothing of Christ; then you have no faith: For if you have, if you believe, then you “can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth you.” ...Cleave to Christ, till his blood have [*sic*] cleansed you from all pride, all anger, all evil desire.... Exalt Christ as a... Saviour both to give remission of sins, and to create in you a new heart... This is the gospel, the pure, genuine gospel; glad tidings of great salvation. (Wesley 1872a, 369)

The desire of revivalism is not simply for pardon before God on the basis of his grace but actual transformation by that grace. “Full salvation” is a term that has been used by Wesley (1999g) and revivalists ever since to describe this goal, the reception of all that the Bible promises for salvation and all that Christ accomplished in his work. Ultimately, this point of theology and religion is a question about the latter: what exactly has Christ accomplished in his life and death? In the above discussion of the reformed doctrine of limited atonement, Warfield's (n. d., 95–96) argument that an

atonement doctrine may either be broad or deep was put forward. Wesleyans reject the reformed answer as inadequate, first because it restricts the work of Christ to the elect when the Scripture says “world” and “all,” and second because it limits the efficacy of the atonement to merely a forensic declaration of righteousness. This, in their view, is neither wide nor deep. As Nazarene theologian R. S. Taylor (1985, 105) puts it, “The great, fundamental question challenging the Church is: Is Jesus an adequate Savior? Does He save *in* sin or *from* sin? If from sin, is it *all* sin—now?” The reformed and the Wesleyans both ask Taylor’s first question; the former give an answer that upholds God’s utter sovereignty and glory in salvation, the latter one that confesses the efficacy and reality of that salvation.

Revivalists have characterized and depicted the contours and themes of full salvation in different ways. For Wesley, salvation was to be thought of primarily in terms of holiness (Lindström 1980, 102), and most of his theological innovations were in the area of sanctification, his term for which was “Christian perfection” (Wesley 1968; Bassett and Greathouse 1985, 203–235). Wesley saw salvation as renewal of human beings in the image of God and not just an alien right standing before God. Sanctification was not optional but the very essence of salvation; it begins in regeneration and consists of a “real change” (Lindström 1980, 98–100). From the crisis of justification-regeneration, gradual growth in holiness is made. While often overlooked by both aficionados and detractors alike, this progressive aspect was essential to Wesley’s teaching (Lindström 1980, 116, 120–124), and by and large it conforms to the consensus of the broader Christian tradition about sanctification, including the reformed. Indeed, in comparison to more radical perfectionists, his anthropology was pessimistically realistic. Wesley (1999c) and all of his theological descendants openly confessed the continuation of sin in the believer’s life after justification and regeneration. For Christians, to the feeling of continual praise and gratitude towards God there

...is joined a loving shame, a tender humiliation before God, even for the sins which we know he hath forgiven us, and for the sin which still remaineth in our hearts, although we know it is not imputed to our condemnation. Nevertheless, the conviction we feel of inbred sin is deeper and deeper every day. The more we grow in grace, the more do we see of the desperate wickedness of our heart. The more we advance in the knowledge and love of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, (as great a mystery as this may appear to those who know not the power of God unto salvation,) the more do we discern of our alienation from God, of the enmity that is in our carnal mind, and the necessity of our being entirely renewed in righteousness and true holiness. (Wesley 1999f)

Thus, the attitude of the Christian remains one of repentance even after conversion. With this specific belief few traditions should find theological difficulty.

Despite this pessimistic realism, however, there is also a great optimism: Wesley believed that victory over this tendency to sin may be attained. This is his doctrine of Christian perfection:

...to this day both my brother and I maintained—(1) That Christian perfection is that love of God and our neighbour which implies deliverance from *all sin*; (2) that this is received merely *by faith*; (3) that it is given *instantaneously*, in one moment; (4) that we are to expect it, not at death, but *every moment*; that *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of this salvation. (Wesley 1968, 41)

Again, belief in a decisive liberation from the power of sin is not alien to the broader Christian tradition; the innovation put forward by Wesley has to do with its timing. He contended that it could be received prior to death, rather than only afterwards, and that it was an expected outcome of the application of Christ's work in the believer's life and not just an eschatological hope. It may be received through a "second blessing" experience (Bassett and Greathouse 1985, 218), a discrete and instantaneous crisis subsequent yet analogous to justification-regeneration. Most commonly this experience is called "entire sanctification," on the basis of 1 Thess. 5.23, in order to distinguish it from the gradual increase in holiness. Like justification, it is wholly a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or merited. Faith is its only condition, and thus entire sanctification may be received any moment by faith:

I have continually testified in private and in public, that we are sanctified as well as justified by faith. And indeed the one of those great truths does exceedingly illustrate the other. Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the *condition*: none is sanctified but he that believes; with out faith no man is sanctified. And it is the *only condition*: this alone is sufficient for sanctification. every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is sanctified till he believes: every man when he believes is sanctified. (Wesley 1999g)

The perfection received in entire sanctification is not a sinless perfection, as it is sometimes characterized; Wesley never allowed for the cessation of growth throughout life and even after death (Lindström 1980, 121). Nor does it imply that one has attained an absolute perfection, free from error or mistake or even from the ability to sin (*non posse peccare*). It is simply a freedom of holiness that allows the Christian, on the basis of Christ's merit alone, to perfectly love God and neighbor (Lindström 1980, 152–154) and therefore refrain from all willful sin (*posse non peccare*).

Thus, apart from his basically Arminian outlook, Wesley's major alteration of protestant soteriology is the inclusion of this second work in the *ordo*, which necessitates a corresponding distinguishing of different stages or levels in the Christian life:

...[H]e made this entire sanctification one of the stages in the process of the Christian life. It became another and higher stage after new birth. A gradual and an instantaneous work were conjoined in the order of salvation. New birth, which took place instantaneously, was followed by a gradual sanctification preceding the instantaneous event of entire sanctification. A subsequent continued gradual development was thought to follow this. Whereas gradual sanctification was due to God's grace and man's obedience to it, instantaneous sanctification was considered exclusively God's own work. In this way he distinguished between gradual, and instantaneous sanctification, but to some extent the latter was nevertheless made dependent on the former. Man could not expect entire sanctification unless he had already undergone the previous gradual work of sanctification. (Lindström 1980, 134)

From Scripture, this gradation can be illustrated by the transition that occurs in Rom. 7.14–8.8. The Christian life prior to entire sanctification corresponds to the struggle Paul vividly describes in 7.14–25: “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate” (v. 15). The sanctified life, then, corresponds to the victory of 8.1–8: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (vv. 1–2). It is at this stage that the inner war (7.23) is believed to have ceased; “A Christian is so far perfect as not to commit sin” (Wesley 1968, 19). It is this claim and its implicit discrimination that has, on the one hand, roused the ire of the magisterial protestant traditions (e.g., Hoekema 1989, 17–27, 205–225). On the other hand, as will be seen, the idea of a second grace or blessing is foreign neither to the New Testament nor the broader church's historical theology; the real question is whether its primary purpose and character is the type of perfecting that Wesley proposed.

Even when viewed favorably, this expansion of the received paradigm is not without problems, the pertinent one at this juncture being how to relate these subsequent experiences to the saving work of Christ. As has been seen, Wesley essentially accepted the reformed view of the atonement as a penal substitution, albeit unlimited in extent. Logically, his soteriology should be limited along the same lines as were outlined above in §3.2.3.2, perhaps even more so because of his rejection of the application of Christ's active obedience as imputed righteousness. H. R. Dunning (1988, 334) observes,

The absence of a systematic treatise by Wesley on the Atonement is a serious weakness and creates a profound tension, since it results in his apparently adopting or at least using the formulations of some form of the satisfaction theory. He was constantly having to fight against its implications. Had he developed a logical analysis of his own, he might have become aware that this view did not support, in fact was antithetical to, his major theological commitments.

Yet, Wesley claims that sanctification is to be thoroughly grounded in the atonement

(Bassett and Greathouse 1985, 207–208; Taylor 1985, 105–106), and 1 Cor. 1.30, “Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” is frequently invoked to support his doctrine. Still contending against incautious usage of the concept of the imputed righteousness of Christ, he nevertheless confessed, “It is through [Christ’s] merits alone that all believers are saved; that is, justified—saved from the guilt,—sanctified—saved from the nature, of sin; and glorified—taken into heaven” (Wesley 1999a, ¶ 6).

Sanctification, like justification, is achieved through Christ’s work on the cross, the effect of which is not only legal pardon but also the removal of the power and presence of sin; this constitutes full salvation. Unlike later Wesleyans, John Wesley said little about the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. Dayton (1975, 41–42), citing McGonigle, observes that, “[H]is development of the doctrine in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* is almost entirely Christocentric in character,” and on the work of the Spirit in fullness of the Christian life, McGonigle (1973, 65) judges that he is “strangely silent.” From within the framework of this particular theological question, then, one inevitably concludes that sanctification is the renewal of believers through the subjective application of the benefits of Christ by the Spirit (Bassett and Greathouse 1985, 222, 231). The experiential means (instantaneously, by faith) and extent (entirely) of sanctification have been changed in Wesleyanism, but at least as far as the movement’s founder is concerned, no real modification from the traditional protestant perspective has been made in how this aspect of salvation is wrought through, and proceeds from, Christ’s saving work. For all its boldness, Wesley’s teaching of Christian perfection left much undefined, and subsequent generations of his followers had to fill in the gaps in his theological legacy. His teaching survived and flourished in the centuries following his death, but not without change.

### **3.3.2 Theological Evolution in Revivalism after Wesley**

Wesleyanism evolved as a theological tradition just as rapidly as it grew as a revival. Most important for this study is the emergence of the nineteenth-century holiness movement in the United States after the “cooling down” of the flames of revival in American methodism. As methodism settled into the process of becoming a mainline denomination, some adherents became dissatisfied because of the church’s perceived neglect of its distinctive doctrine of sanctification. Various groups, publications, and eventually denominations were formed to preserve and promulgate the message of “Scriptural holiness” (Peters, J. L. 1985, 133–180). Theologically, the holiness movement essentially radicalized Wesley’s original teaching, taking it to its extreme but not unpredictable conclusion, stressing the instantaneous experience and de-emphasizing the gradual process that was equally important to Wesley. Describing the new holiness churches, J. L. Peters (1985, 149–150) writes,

With regard to the doctrine of Christian perfection these groups were united in presenting it with a strong, if not exclusive, emphasis upon its instantaneous feature—entire sanctification, almost always defined as a “second definitive work of grace, subsequent to regeneration.” It was early recognized as, and has remained, the distinctive doctrinal emphasis in these organizations. Their ministers and in large part their lay leadership are expected not only to endorse but to have come into the actual experience of entire sanctification.

This may be contrasted with Wesley’s reluctance to personally claim the experience even while teaching perfectionism (Peters, J. L. 1985, 201–215). Indeed, the subsequent Wesleyan movement has not hesitated at all to modify his teaching to make it, in their view, more correct biblically and theologically (Grider 1980, 9). Ultimately, these modifications led to the birth of modern pentecostalism at the turn of the next century.

The most significant development for the life of the movement itself was the transition from entire sanctification as “Christian perfection” to equating it with the baptism of, with, or in—there has been an extensive but not particularly helpful exegetical and theological debate over this preposition both in Greek and in translation—the Holy Spirit (Dayton 1975). Wesley himself never made this identification. It was the English methodist leader John Fletcher who first used the term in this connection, though not unambiguously or in the same sense as the later American movement; his actual views were very close to Wesley’s (McGonigle 1973, 68–69). As noted above, the holiness movement came to emphasize the instantaneous nature of sanctification. While the early methodist heritage provided a biblical and theological basis for perfection as the goal of the Christian life, it furnished less so for it as an identifiable crisis experience to be expected within the context of revival camp meetings. Within the New Testament, the only express support for an evangelistic experience beyond conversion is that of Spirit baptism or fullness, chiefly as described in the narratives of Acts. As the nineteenth century progressed, the holiness movement increasingly employed “pentecostal language” to describe sanctification; “pentecostalism” prior to the events of 1901 and 1906 simply meant this energized form of Wesleyanism. Dayton (1975, 48–50), however, pointedly outlines the theological significance of this transition:

The usual holiness interpretations of this shift, where it has even been noticed, have minimized its significance. It has been seen as a valid extension of Wesleyan doctrine and primarily a terminological shift. But it is much more than that. It is a profound transformation of theological ideas and associated contents.... The shift in terminology involved, in the first place, a shift from Christocentrism to an emphasis on the Holy Spirit.... ..in the second place, a movement away from the goal and nature of Christian perfection to an emphasis on the event in which it is instantaneously achieved....

In the third place, there is an almost complete shift in the exegetical foundations of the doctrine.... most of the crucial texts are taken from the



Book of Acts.... This exegetical shift involves an intensification of the sense of eschatology and the use of predictive prophecy.... finally, [it] turns attention to a new set of ideas and associated contexts. A new emphasis falls on the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Dayton concludes that

...one can find in late nineteenth century holiness thought and life every significant feature of pentecostalism. The major exception would be the gift of tongues, but even there the ground has been well prepared. Once attention had been focused on the Book of Acts, on Pentecost as an event in the life of each believer, and on the gifts of the Spirit, the question inevitably arose.

The story of how this theological transition gave birth to pentecostalism has been told in detail elsewhere (Synan, V. 1971, 95–139; House 2006, 12–16). Just as the doctrine of Spirit baptism arose to justify the claim of the experience of entire sanctification, the doctrine of evidential tongues arose to confirm the experience of Spirit baptism. The early leaders of the pentecostal revival quickly took the shift in theological reasoning outlined above to its logical conclusion. Spirit baptism, which is characterized in Acts 1.4–8 as an empowerment for witness, was not the same thing as entire sanctification but rather an experience distinct from but dependent upon it (Riss 1988, 306–307). The first pentecostals, coming out of Wesleyan churches, simply added it as a third crisis experience subsequent to sanctification; they described it as “the gift of God upon a sanctified life” (Land 1993, 89–90). Although several Wesleyan denominations rapidly converted en masse to this three-staged soteriological paradigm (Synan, V. 1971, 137–139), this teaching set off considerable controversy. On the one hand, other Wesleyan denominations rejected the doctrine of evidential tongues and the third experience entirely, vehemently retaining the nineteenth-century teaching and, in the case of the young Church of the Nazarene, removing the descriptor of “pentecostal” from its denominational name in disassociation (Synan, V. 1971, 143–146). On the other hand, the pentecostal movement rapidly saw the entry of non-Wesleyans to its ranks who never accepted the teaching of Christian perfection and held to only two stages of salvation, salvation as new birth and justification and a subsequent Spirit baptism (Synan, V. 1971, 147–153). These controversies led to numerous and often rancorous splits, and eventually the movement organized itself into two stage and three stage, Wesleyan or “methodistic” and non-Wesleyan or “baptistic,” denominations (House 2006, 16). As the construal of Spirit baptism as empowerment normatively accompanied by tongues essentially annexes the theological case built for instantaneous sanctification in the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that the vast majority of pentecostals today, especially outside of the United States, fall within the latter classification, and that the doctrine of Christian perfection is regarded by many as a doctrinal vestige.

While much of the development of the holiness-pentecostal movement in this area is only tangential to the thesis of the current work, two points emerge from it that bear directly on the question of how the work of Christ is to be understood. First, the conclusion by Dayton that this transition represented the shift from a Christocentric to a pneumatological approach to sanctification/Spirit baptism must be qualified. Pentecostalism, like the holiness movement that preceded it, remains a highly Christocentric movement. Obviously, by asserting the recovery of the biblical teaching of Spirit baptism, considerable attention is given to pneumatology, but as pentecostalism has always stressed, it is Christ who is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3.16, Acts 1.5). As Dayton (1987, 15–23) shows in his longer study and the researcher (House 2006) has explored previously, the movement’s unifying symbol of faith is the “fourfold” (baptistic pentecostalism) or “fivefold” (methodistic) gospel of Jesus as savior, (sanctifier), baptizer, healer, and coming king. The fourfold gospel is a form of functional Christology, confessing how Christ performs the work of salvation in the believer, and Christ is ever the central focus of the faith (MacDonald 1988). While it is the movement’s distinguishing teaching, Spirit baptism is but one aspect of the full salvation he provides. Accordingly, the question of this thesis—how Christ saves—touches the very doctrinal center of classical pentecostal faith. The multi-dimensional soteriology of the fourfold or fivefold gospel requires a robust and cohesive atonement doctrine, but in the researcher’s view, the movement has historically lacked this.

Second, while the majority of later pentecostals, as non-Wesleyans, rejected the experience of entire sanctification, especially as a requirement for the baptism of the Holy Spirit they professed to have received without it (Riss 1988, 308), the alternative doctrine of sanctification that they proposed warrants careful examination, particularly given how it is sometimes characterized. Two-staged or “baptistic” pentecostals are sometimes referred to as “reformed” (e.g., Althouse 2003, 12–14; cf. Dieter 1990, 6–7), but this is an inaccurate shorthand for “non-Wesleyan”; outside of some smaller European groups (Hollenweger 1972, 231–241), the reformed tradition does not figure strongly in the background of most classical pentecostals (Synan, V. 1971, 217; van Vlastuin 2007), including the two-staged. Nineteenth-century Keswickian and “new school” presbyterian “higher life” teachings did contribute to the growth of the holiness movement and thus pentecostalism, but as M. E. Dieter (1990, 7) observes, “The ultimate charge that Warfield and his friends [i.e., the old school Princeton theologians] leveled against the [new school] movement was that it was really ‘Methodist.’” Most of the original non-Wesleyan pentecostals came from baptist or Christian and missionary alliance churches (Menzies, W. W. 1975), and while they did not accept Wesleyanism, their theology as pentecostals can only

properly be categorized as Arminian. As regards sanctification, they rejected instantaneous perfection, instead emphasizing its progressive nature. This similarity to the reformed perspective leads to their misclassification as such (Menzies, W. W. 1975, 90–91), but their doctrine of sanctification differs both from Wesleyanism and traditional protestant theology in significant ways. It also bears directly on the question of the work of Christ on the cross.

The firestorm over sanctification that erupted in the early pentecostal movement and led to the formation of non-Wesleyan denominations, including the Assemblies of God, is known within the movement as the “finished work controversy” (Riss 1988; Synan, V. 1971, 147–153). As eluded to above, it began with the entry of non-Wesleyans into the movement, most notably W. H. Durham, a pastor from a baptist background. It was Durham who coined the term “finished work” to describe what would become the standard teaching of non-Wesleyan pentecostals who denied an instantaneous experience of entire sanctification. R. M. Riss (1988, 308) usefully summarizes Durham’s teaching:

He believed that the finished work of Christ on Calvary provided not only for the forgiveness of sins but for the sanctification of the believer. Thus for sanctification the believer need only appropriate the benefits of the finished work of Calvary that were already received at the time of regeneration. Sanctification for Durham was a gradual process of appropriating the benefits of the finished work of Christ, not a second instantaneous work of grace subsequent to conversion. Durham therefore did not restrict the time of sanctification either to the moment of regeneration or to any other particular subsequent moment in the Christian experience. He objected to the doctrine of entire sanctification because he felt it circumvented the need for an ongoing sanctification process in the life of the Christian.

Durham’s position became irreconcilable with the older teaching of the movement and was one of the major factors shaping the formation of the various American pentecostal denominations in the classical era. Unquestionably, his perspective shared several features with the basic reformed teaching. Instantaneous perfection as a crisis experience is rejected; the emphasis is on the progressive nature of sanctification throughout life. Moreover, the very phrase “finished work” conveys the idea of imputed righteousness (cf. Land 1993, 186–187). All has been obtained by Christ; all that is required is the subjective appropriation of his benefits as they are applied by the Holy Spirit. Left at this point—and if this were the only point of the *ordo* to be considered—the designation of this form of pentecostal theology as reformed might be appropriate.

Yet the finished work teaching may not be left here. Durham’s own words reveal differences with the reformed perspective:

I began to write against the doctrine that it takes two works of grace to save and cleanse a man. I denied and still deny that God does not deal with the nature of sin at conversion. I deny that a man who is converted or born again is outwardly washed and cleansed but that his heart is left unclean with enmity against God in it... This would not be salvation.... [Salvation] means that all the old man, or old nature, which was sinful and depraved and which was the very thing in us that was condemned, is crucified with Christ. (Menzies, W. W. 1971, 75)

Like the reformed tradition, Durham denied sanctification as a second work of grace and stressed its progressive nature in experience, yet statements such as this also show that the finished work teaching contained elements of perfectionism. Indeed, in one reading it can seem more optimistic than Wesleyanism. This statement by Durham conveys the sense that the believer's conflict with sin is actually resolved at the point of justification-regeneration itself, rather than after a long period of struggle and crisis as taught in Wesleyanism (Synan, V. 1971, 148). In any case, pentecostals who hold the finished work position expect real victory over sin in this life, to an extent greater than that suggested by Calvinists such as Warfield or Hoekema in §3.2.3.2 above. Writing in an official teaching capacity on behalf of the Assemblies of God, Menzies and Horton (1993, 152) state, "Even though we never come to the place in this life where we are not able to sin, we can have help so that we are able not to sin." In fact, the "Statement of fundamental truths" originally adopted by the Assemblies of God in 1916 used clearly perfectionistic language: "Entire sanctification is the will of God for all believers, and should be earnestly pursued by walking in obedience to God's Word" (Leggett 1989, 115; Hollenweger 1972, 515). The statement was moderated in a more "reformed" direction in 1961. As D. Leggett (1989, 120–122) concludes, however, the finished work teaching contains elements of both Wesleyanism perfectionism and Calvinist progressivism. The relevant point for the present study, however, is the attempt by this branch of classical pentecostalism to directly tie this area of soteriology to the saving work of Christ; sanctification is explicitly designated as an outcome or benefit of his death.

The other major development in the nineteenth century was the addition of vicarious bearing of sickness to the work of Christ on the cross, the doctrine of physical healing in the atonement, which also came to be accepted by much of the holiness movement (Dayton 1987, 122–137). The doctrine was popularized by A. B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian and missionary alliance church and an important forerunner of the pentecostal movement. Essentially, the belief is based on a literal and physical interpretation of Is. 53.4–5, Matt. 8.17, and 1 Pet. 2.24: "by his wounds you have been healed." Human sickness, as an outcome of the fall, was held to have been included in the atonement of Christ along with sin:

Man has a two-fold nature. He is both a material and a spiritual being. And both natures have been equally affected by the fall. His body is exposed to disease; his soul is corrupted by sin. We would, therefore, expect that any complete scheme of redemption would include both natures, and provide for the restoration of his physical as well as the renovation of his spiritual life. Nor are we disappointed. The Redeemer appears among men with both hands stretched out to our misery and need. In the one He holds salvation; in the other, healing. (Simpson, A. B. 1893, 9–10)

It was Simpson who originally formulated the theme of the fourfold gospel within the holiness movement (Sawin 1986), and through his influence and that of other early leaders, it became an integral part of pentecostalism (Chappell 1988; Theron 1999, 50–51). Healing, not just as a spiritual gift but as a direct outcome of the work of the cross, is an article of faith for nearly all of the major classical denominations, Wesleyan and non-Wesleyan.

This development is the most significant for this study; indeed, it is most illustrative of the correlation between atonement doctrine and soteriology. Physical healing has been added to the Christian belief of salvation, and the doctrine of the work of Christ has been expanded, if imperfectly, to account for it. As M. Volf (1989) has noted, pentecostals have added a material, or non-exclusively spiritual, dimension to soteriology, similar in some respects to aspects of liberation theology. This development opens a fertile yet under-explored field for the revisioning and expansion of Christian theology in many areas of contemporary interest. Menzies and Menzies (2000, 168) insightfully summarize the importance of the doctrine:

The doctrine of healing in the atonement not only calls us to take an aggressive posture toward physical suffering, it also challenges us to see the largeness of God's cosmic plan and concern. God is concerned about the physical dimensions of life, about physical suffering, and about the world he created. Healing, although but a foretaste of the ultimate transformation we await, is a powerful reminder of this larger purpose. It serves, then, as a catalyst for our involvement in Christ's ministry to a broken world.

As an aspect of his saving work in death, Christ's provision of healing is strictly analogous to his vicarious bearing of sins as in the penal theory:

Jesus not only heals the sick, but He is said to have borne our sicknesses and carried our pains. As the Lamb of God He took away the sins of the world. He also bore the burden of our sicknesses. The Lord laid on Christ the iniquity of us all. Jesus also shouldered our diseases. (McPherson and Cox 1969, 151)

Perhaps more than any other factor, it is this belief that solidified the acceptance of penal substitution within the pentecostal movement; the substitutionary bearing of sickness cannot be joined as harmoniously to the governmental theory that some in the holiness movement eventually embraced. As originally formulated, this doctrine is not without difficulties, and ironically, it is its use of the analogy to Christ's vicarious

bearing of the punishment for sin penal substitution that has opened the vector for its strongest attack and the subsequent weakening of the affirmation of this physical dimension of full salvation (Menziez and Menziez 2000, 160–161). This problem is representative of the greater tensions present in pentecostal soteriology, the subject of the next section of this chapter.

Finally, although it lies outside of the scope of the present work, it may be noted that the Wesleyan movement continued to evolve even after the birth of pentecostalism. While many of the older holiness denominations converted en masse to three-stage pentecostalism, other groups denounced both the distinction between Spirit baptism and entire sanctification and the doctrine of evidential tongues, often with great vehemence. These groups, such as the Church of the Nazarene, have remained staunchly Arminian and become at least partially cessationist with regard to spiritual gifts (Dunning 1988, 427; Taylor 1985, 196–199), rejecting healing in the atonement (Petts 1993a, 6); in some respects, they have also been less influenced than pentecostalism by certain pressures from neo-evangelicalism and fundamentalism, such as dispensational eschatology and strict biblical inerrancy (Ingersol 2004). Significantly for the present subject, they have shown more favor towards the governmental theory of the atonement, noting several problems with the penal substitutionary theory from the perspective of their theologies (Dunning 1988, 332–394; Taylor 1985, 107–110; Wiley 1999, Ch. 23–24). In their view, the governmental theory better accommodates the basic trajectory of Wesley’s theology. In particular, it allows the avoidance of the concept of imputed righteousness and the antinomian abuses they believe it inevitably encourages. Additionally, the governmental theory overcomes the problem of the limitation of the extent of the atonement. In this manner, Wesleyan theology is able to resolve some of the tensions created by the penal theory while still maintaining a framework of retributive justice for God’s dealings with humanity.

### **3.3.3 Ongoing Tensions within the Classical Pentecostal System**

The preceding narrative has shown the interaction between atonement theories and soteriology in the theological forerunners of classical pentecostalism, the Christian tradition central to this thesis. Protestant orthodoxy, as exemplified by traditional reformed theology, set the standard for the conservative Western interpretation of the problem in the divine-human relationship and its remedy in Christ: Christ’s vicarious bearing in death of the sins of the elect, which separate them from God. This paradigm has defined the parameters for understanding salvation within protestantism, and the reformed have ably defended this system and its logical cohesiveness. John Wesley launched arguably the strongest conservative challenge to reformed orthodoxy with his perfectionistic, revivalistic form of Arminianism, which

diverges as well as converges with reformed thought on several key points. After Wesley, revivalistic Wesleyanism continued to evolve, ultimately giving birth to the modern pentecostal movement in America, the classical, formative period of which was 1901–1916. Pentecostalism absorbed and retained significant aspects of the traditions that preceded it as well as those present in the environment from which it emerged. As a theology, the resulting synthesis exhibits both stabilities and instabilities.

Examining the theology of pentecostalism with regard to the criteria and questions established earlier in this work presents several challenges, far more so than it did for reformed theology or even the various forms of Wesleyanism. To a much greater degree than these other movements, classical pentecostalism has eschewed formal theology and doctrinal statements as inimical to a vibrant, biblical faith. The statements of faith adopted by the diverse classical denominations are generally simple and brief; where there is greater explication, it is usually in reaction to particular issues emerging from their immediate contexts, such as the controversy over the Trinity and rebaptism in the nascent Assemblies of God (Dayton 1987, 17–19; Hollenweger 1972, 311–312). This practice continues to the present with the denominations releasing occasional “position papers” and resolutions (e.g., Menzies and Horton 1993, 12), but no pentecostal equivalent to the Westminster or similar protestant confessions exists. The common symbol of faith for most is the fourfold or fivefold “full gospel,” and the major denominations can still be classified into the three major groupings that emerged during the classical period of three-stage “methodistic,” two-stage “baptistic,” and monarchian oneness or “Jesus only” pentecostals. The movement has produced few systematic theologies, and many are heavily dependent on conservative evangelical works (Nichols 1984, 57), simply integrating pentecostal innovations without wholesale revision. In recent years, individual pentecostal theologians have arisen in different contexts and have begun producing significant works, but some of these have embarked on non-traditional trajectories and are not necessarily representative of mainstream pentecostal thought (e.g., Yong 2005). Still, from the extant works and statements that are reflective of mainstream preaching and belief, it is possible to elucidate a classical pentecostal understanding of the theological points currently under study.

As a general characterization, it may be said that classical pentecostal denominations, despite their revolutionary innovations in the doctrine of Spirit baptism and evidential tongues, have tended toward conservatism in their theological formulations and statements. Pentecostalism’s internal narrative, its interpretation of its origins and purpose, is that of restoration. It perceives itself as standing in succession to the other great movements of revival and reformation in the church,

namely those of Luther and Wesley; pentecostalism represents the third reformation or restoration (Land 1993, 18, 118). Recognizing that those movements recovered part of the biblical truth felt to be lost by the earlier church, pentecostalism seeks to build upon, not replace, their theological rediscoveries. Thus, as pentecostalism began to mature, it was natural that it began to reflect on other areas of theology beyond the movement's distinctive teachings and incorporate elements of other theologies that were not perceived as contradicting it. Moreover, it came to resist other theologies, namely more liberal ones, that were perceived as hostile towards this deposit of truth (King 2008). It has previously been noted that pentecostalism was not a party to the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and that it cannot properly be considered a section of fundamentalism as historically defined by that conflict (Cox 1995, 74–76; Macchia 2006, 52). Yet, this does not mean that pentecostalism has been free of fundamentalist influence, particularly the predominantly white and non-Wesleyan denominations that emerged in the latter part of the classical period such as the Assemblies of God (Menzies, W. W. 2007, 83–85). (Older, black denominations such as the Church of God in Christ have retained a stronger Wesleyan and liberative-prophetic character (House 2006, 127–129)). Fundamentalism in its dispensational form gained egress into this branch of pentecostalism through the final, eschatological point of the full gospel, Jesus as coming king (King 2008, 77 n. 11). As the twentieth century progressed, warming relations with neo-evangelicalism led to greater openness to that movement's concerns and incorporation of various elements of its theology. A significant constituency of pentecostalism seeks a stronger evangelical identity, and this desire is reflected in its theology and practice (Robeck 2002, 924–925). Significantly, as Calvinism is presently experiencing a resurgence in American evangelicalism largely at the expense of non-charismatic dispensationalism, this segment of pentecostalism has begun to take more positive notice of the reformed tradition. Above the use of “reformed” to designate non-Wesleyan pentecostal groups was noted; a more intriguing illustration of this trend may be found in the writings of Assembly of God theologian W. W. Menzies. In an earlier essay titled “The non-theological roots of the pentecostal movement” (Menzies, W. W. 1975), the bulk of attention is given to the Keswick higher life movement (85–90), with shorter references to fundamentalism (84–85) and the baptist-origin “finished work” doctrine of sanctification (90–92), which is briefly compared to the reformed view. However, in a more recent paper (Menzies, W. W. 2007), he argues—some would say unsuccessfully (van Vlastuin 2007)—for “the reformed roots of pentecostalism,” emphasizing the movement's commonalities with Calvin, Edwards, C. Finney, and A. Kuyper, among others. This line of exploration reflects the search for an evangelical identity as well as some of the theological tensions within the movement.



Beginning the exploration of classical pentecostalism's theology of salvation and atonement, it should be recognized that like Wesley, the movement affirms a doctrine of total depravity, if not inability, that approximates the reformed (Marino 1995); sin is the primary problem disrupting the divine-human relationship (Arrington 1993, 133ff.). Most pentecostal theologians take the typical Arminian approach and deny that the transmission of sin also communicates inherited guilt (Menzies and Horton 1993, 89; Williams, E. S. 1953, 144–146), but some appear to affirm the latter (Arrington 1993, 138–142; Nelson 1981, 26). In general, the emphasis is on the seriousness of sin and its effects on the will. If pressed, this understanding of depravity would differ from the more fully articulated reformed interpretation of total inability. What is important for revivalism is that the gospel be preached and that sinners repent and be received by God. In the pentecostal *ordo*, repentance and faith precede regeneration; there is no question of those evangelistically called being unable to respond. This practical concern has priority over any ramifications it may have for the *ordo*, *sola gratia*, or questions of monergism versus synergism. When this problem is addressed theologically, if at all, appeal is made to the Arminian concept of prevenient grace (Williams, E. S. 1953, 142–143, 147).

As Hollenweger (1972, 313) writes, “The fundamental experience, necessary to salvation, for the Pentecostal believer is conversion or regeneration.” Other observers of the movement have noted that the crisis of salvation is depicted more frequently in terms of regeneration or the “new birth” than the more traditional reformation category of justification (Macchia 2003, 133–134; Karras 2003, 99). Regeneration is the first step of the new life, a life that is to be totally transformed and renewed by submission to the Holy Spirit's application of the work accomplished by Christ. It includes the benefits of justification but goes beyond the forensic declaration of right standing; in the pentecostal *ordo*, justification logically leads to regeneration, not the reverse (Arrington 1993, 213–219; McPherson and Cox 1969, 276–280). Rather than detracting from the sovereignty of grace in justification, subsequent experiences of sanctification and Spirit baptism help to effect this total transformation of life. Pentecostals follow the Wesleyan tradition in the pursuit of full salvation, and regardless if they affirm two stages or three, all agree that Christians cannot rest in the state of pardon of forensic justification. Salvation is also not limited to just the spiritual dimensions of human life. As noted above, physical healing is an article of faith for all pentecostal denominations, and liberation from oppressive demonic powers is also a part of the full gospel (Hollenweger 1972, 377–384).

Clearly, up to this point, classical pentecostal soteriology greatly resembles conservative Wesleyanism, differing only in the distinguishing of Spirit baptism from entire sanctification and with added emphasis on the *charismata*. However, significant

differences emerge when the movement's interpretation of the atonement is examined. In order to support its expanded soteriological paradigm, one might surmise that it would follow a path similar to later Wesleyanism, perhaps adopting a modified form of the governmental theory to become more consistently Arminian and resolve outstanding theological tensions. As noted above, this has not been the case. Classical pentecostalism has increasingly opted for the more conservative penal substitution theory, either obliquely expressing it in doctrinal works or explicitly confessing it as an article of faith. For example, W. W. Menzies and S. M. Horton (1993, 99), explaining Assembly of God teaching in an official capacity, describe the atonement in explicitly penal and retributive terms. Penal substitution is "the plan of redemption" according to the "Declaration of faith" of the Foursquare church (McPherson and Cox 1969, 275, §6). In the holiness pentecostal camp, it is affirmed in the Church of God (Cleveland) systematic theology of F. L. Arrington (1993, 61). Many pentecostal groups have gone further back than even Wesley, affirming the doctrine of imputed righteousness he saw as so detrimental to Christian holiness. The Pentecostal holiness church has included it in the treatment of justification in its amplified articles of faith (Synan, J. A. 1961, §3), as do Menzies and Horton (1993, 106). In a later article, Menzies (2007, 88) himself expands that his Assemblies of God soteriology is "clearly based on a Reformed understanding, rather than on the Wesleyan." The theological trajectory of a significant portion of pentecostalism is clear.

The reasoning behind this trajectory warrants examination. The standard but facile reason for the acceptance of the penal substitution theory is that it is the most biblical. It was observed in the previous section that one factor contributing to the entrenchment of penal substitution was the belief in healing in the atonement, even though the theory opens an avenue for the destabilization of that belief. It is a point of faith, however, in pentecostalism that Christ bore sickness as he did sin so that he might bring wholeness to both spirit and body. Perhaps more significantly, a large component of the acceptance of the theory lies in its devotional attractiveness. Hollenweger (1972, 313) vividly describes how "In hundreds and thousands of prayers the blood of Jesus is called down to sprinkle the meeting room and purify the hearts and minds of those present"; the "scarlet thread of redemption" is a recurrent theme within pentecostal preaching (e.g., McPherson and Cox 1969, 69–92). Devotion to the cross and the blood of Jesus shed for sinners is non-negotiable. The tendency towards conservatism should also be recalled. The penal theory, as popularly and formally presented, appeals to some as most strongly honoring the sacrifice of Christ, whereas known alternatives, automatically suspect for associations with liberalism, may be perceived as doing otherwise (Hollenweger 1972, 313). When this devotional concern is coupled with increasing identification with reformed-dominated

evangelicalism, the elevation of penal substitution to the level of essential dogma seems inevitable.

However, the problems with the penal substitution theory and the limits it places on soteriology as discussed in §3.2.3 do not simply vanish by tying it to the fourfold gospel; indeed, they may be exacerbated. Most sharply, the penal substitution theory mounts a direct challenge on the point of Jesus as healer through his atoning work, and this challenge has made inroads into the movement. The vanguard of the internal attack has come primarily from within British pentecostalism (Kay 1999, 116–118), chiefly by scholars D. Petts (1993a; 1993b) and K. Warrington (1998; 2003, 79–84). Petts's (1993a) primary study, his unpublished doctoral thesis, has become a definitive work on the pentecostal, rather than cessationist, dissent against the teaching of healing in the atonement. Unfortunately, it is encumbered by numerous methodological flaws that complicate its use, either constructively or critically, within the context of this present study in systematic theology; nevertheless, because of the significance of its challenge, a few points will be considered here. Petts's concerns are not primarily theological but practical and exegetical. His practical issues are valid and worthy of addressal, but as he documents, the pentecostal movement has not refrained from introspection in this area. His lengthy exegetical study (1993a, 101–162) only examines the New Testament quotations of Is. 53.4–5 (i.e., Matt. 8.17 and 1 Peter 2.24) and not the Isaianic servant song itself, which is the foundation of both the penal theory and the doctrine of healing in the atonement. To allow it for the former but disregard its implications for the latter is disingenuous (similarly, Warrington 2003, 82 n. 81), especially since the New Testament never invokes the penal language of the song but does repeat its wording with regard to sickness and healing. Petts also largely restricts his interaction with the traditional pentecostal case to the works of popular preachers and not pentecostal scholars, but this is more excusable given the date of his study; his rebuttal, however, draws on the best evangelical and non-evangelical authorities. More detrimentally, Petts fails to provide an adequate theological definition of atonement beyond the simple, prescriptivist English meaning of the term as “reconciliation” and then becomes stuck at this narrow, semantical level of meaning. Despite a later clarification in this direction (1993a, 280–284), his general course of argument neglects to grapple with the fact that theologically the term has come to mean more than just reconciliation and is frequently used as an abbreviation for the overall saving work of Christ in death (see §§2.1.1, 2.1.2, above); pentecostal proponents of the doctrine are aware of, and use the term in, this sense (e.g., Bosworth 1973, 29–32). Without a more adequate definition, it is unclear why physical healing must be excluded from this work. At no point does Petts make clear his own theory of the

atonement, but a few points where he (Petts 1993a, 93–94, 288) approvingly quotes J. R. W. Stott (1986, 244–246) suggest that the penal version is accepted as correct as well as complete. There, Stott rules out the possibility of a vicarious bearing of sickness, which is “not intelligible” because sickness, unlike sin, does not attract a penalty, which is the sole concern of atonement (cf. Mayhue 1995). One is led to wonder how much this a priori assumption, accepted but never explicitly stated by Petts, colors the rest of his study. He does, however, acknowledge that healing could perhaps be included in the work of atonement when viewed from the *Christus victor* perspective, but this suggestion is not pursued (1993a, 236–239, 283–287). In the end, Petts affirms healing but largely empties it of its Christological component, restricting it to a pneumatological gift (1993b, 35). While this is somewhat of an improvement over strict cessationism, Petts voids one of the great theological intuitions of the pentecostal movement and returns to a soteriology largely reduced to the spiritual only.

Warrington continues this line of criticism, making explicit the penal theory’s contradiction of the doctrine of healing in the atonement (1998, 169–170). In addition to this commonality with Petts, he later challenges core pentecostal beliefs, including Jesus’ role as a model for imitation even in the ministry of healing (Warrington 2003); the importance of this aspect of pentecostalism’s functional Christology will be explored further in the next chapter. Likewise, Warrington (2006) denies that the apostles’ continuation of Christ’s healing in Acts is suitable for contemporary emulation. Despite his protests, his theology has less in common with classical pentecostalism than cessationism, in which Christ and his Spirit become remote from Christian experience (cf. Shelton 2006). Beyond the details of individual arguments, one cannot help but see here the influence of conservative evangelicalism and its pressure on pentecostalism to improve the consistency of its theology. One leading component of this pressure is the evangelical non-negotiable of penal substitution and the effects that it produces when both Christology and soteriology are refracted through it. When penal substitution and its corollary beliefs are accepted a priori as the correct approach to the work of Christ, as has been seen it is difficult to consistently and logically incorporate physical or material aspects into the salvation provided by that work. For pentecostalism, the price for this logical consistency is the renunciation of some of its greatest theological discoveries and the restriction of salvation to only spiritual and juridical concerns. In the researcher’s estimation, this price is too high; the doctrine of healing in the atonement, despite its weaknesses and scandal, offers too much promise to relinquish. It thus represents one of the greatest contemporary challenges that pentecostal theology must resolve. The path to resolution, however, lies neither in acquiescence to evangelical demands nor in

unwavering adherence to the traditional formulations of the full gospel without reform. Rather, pentecostalism needs to develop a new—for the movement—interpretation of the saving work of Christ capable of supporting the broad soteriological paradigm it correctly intuits from the New Testament. The remainder of this work is given over to the construction of such a theology.

## CHAPTER 4

### REVISIONING PENTECOSTAL SOTERIOLOGY THROUGH APPROPRIATION OF A CHRISTUS VICTOR MODEL OF THE ATONEMENT

#### 4.1 The Theological Matrix

In an echo of the Wesleyan epistemological quadrilateral of reason, tradition, Scripture, and experience, four sources of theological knowledge lead to the present problem and also inform its solution. These sources are the critical analysis of atonement theory, the patristic tradition, the witness of Scripture, and the internal resources and values of classical pentecostalism. Presently, the role of each of these in the solution of the problem will be examined. The first of these sources, the critical analysis of atonement doctrines, their histories, and corresponding soteriological paradigms, was the subject of the previous chapters. It was shown why the prevailing Western interpretation of the atonement as a penal substitution or satisfaction is considered untenable: its absence from early Christian teaching, its failure to do justice to the full witness of Scripture regarding redemption, its moral difficulties, and finally the constraints it places on soteriology. These points need not be elaborated further here.

As has been openly indicated throughout this work, it is proposed that a resolution of the problem will involve the retrieval of what Aulén calls the “classical” view of the atonement associated with the traditions of the ancient and Eastern church. It is contended that this interpretation avoids the problems of the Anselmian tradition and provides a broader platform for a more holistic soteriology. From a protestant perspective, it may be challenged that this approach opens the avenue towards the elevation of tradition and erosion of *sola Scriptura* accompanied by the possibility of reversion. The anabaptist precedent strongly suggests that this is not inevitable, and such an appropriation need not be uncritical any more than an appropriation of, say, Augustinianism need be. Likewise, it should not be assumed a priori by a theology always reforming that the Latin, natural theology-derived approach, which is the foundation of the Anselmian tradition, will be more consistent with the biblical witness. The major points of the more ancient atonement perspective were sketched in §2.2; their critical analysis and appropriation are integrated below in the theological construction of §4.2.

Scripture, of course, must be the foundation of a Christian atonement doctrine, new or old; moreover, criticisms or rejections of received views that have the weight of history and orthodoxy behind them must be able to justify themselves from the Bible. The critical analysis in the second chapter revealed that a major problem in the Western traditions was the historical movement away from an external, third party of evil as the terminating point of the work of Christ and towards a narrower focus on the Father as the party reconciled (not reconciling, contra 2 Cor. 5.19) by that work. The loss of this pole of redemption naturally resulted in a more restrictive soteriological paradigm, explored more fully in the third chapter, that is difficult to reconcile with the holistic salvation proclaimed and realized in the New Testament. As will be seen, this problem arose in large part from a particular hermeneutical approach that selectively prioritizes certain portions and concepts of Scripture over others. Resolution of the problem requires a different hermeneutic that better accommodates the broader biblical narrative and recovers this neglected dimension of redemption. This alternative hermeneutic and the findings of its employment are explored in the section that immediately follows.

In the end, a solution to this theological problem for pentecostalism must be consistent with the theological values present within pentecostalism. Although this tradition has been shown to be firmly within the penal branch of the Anselmian tradition, it also contains resources more compatible with the theology of the Christus victor model. While a protestant form of Christian faith, it takes a considerably different hermeneutical approach to the New Testament than the magisterial traditions, which leads it to a widely divergent theology at many points. Although not widely recognized, its worldview and soteriology have considerable points of contact with Eastern orthodoxy. Finally, it adds its own contributions to Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology that build upon these other resources and point the way to a satisfactory resolution of the present problem. These pre-existing resources will be examined before their integration into the new theological construction.

#### **4.1.1 Scripture, Hermeneutic, and Narrative**

Ultimately, in order to be credible, a Christian doctrine of atonement must show that it is derived from Scripture. This task presents several challenges for the systematic theologian. One obvious problem is the breadth of relevant biblical material and the overwhelming volume of literature from the discipline of biblical studies examining it in excruciating detail. Further complicating the task for the systematizer is the lack of decisive conclusions to the biblical investigation. Any persuasive argument is matched by equally persuasive counterarguments from equally authoritative exegetes. The gulf between systematic theology and biblical studies is as well-known as it is lamented, but unfortunately, no comprehensive solution has yet

been devised. Nevertheless, the responsible theologian is required to interface with the text as skillfully as possible.

The task of biblical investigation, however, requires more than just word studies and proof-texting. In the critique of the Anselmian family of doctrines presented in §2.3.2, it was briefly noted how these doctrines interface not only with Scripture but also with a particular metanarrative framework used to interpret Scripture. The atoning work of Christ is interpreted in conjunction with assumptions about the nature and purpose of sacrifice, the continuity of the two Testaments, and the ministry of a holy, loving God to sinners (e.g., Chan 2009, 20–23; cf. Schwager 1999, 16–18; Weaver 2001, 2–7; Green 2006, 111–112). Behind this set of assumptions were other questions even more basic to the metanarrative—the underlying perception of the nature of the problem in the divine-human relationship and what is necessary to remedy it. More than straightforward, objective exegesis, these assumptions rule the findings used to formulate a particular atonement theory; in other words, they create a “canon within the canon” to guide exegesis towards a conclusion that reinforces the metanarrative. Accordingly, these assumptions must be continuously examined along with the more explicit arguments used to define a doctrine.

With regard to protestant orthodoxy, this canon within the canon is essentially the Pauline corpus. As it was the apostle’s teaching of justification by faith in Romans and Galatians that ignited the reformation, protestantism has traditionally prioritized Paul’s epistles in theological formation over other portions of the New Testament. Contemporary conservative evangelicalism, not in least in response to the claims of pentecostalism (Fee 1976; Stronstad 1984, 5–12; Menzies and Menzies 2000, 37–45; Williams, J. R. 1997; Wyckoff 1995, 433–437), has reaffirmed this priority through the recognition of the greater theological authority of the “prescriptive,” didactic portions of the New Testament (i.e., primarily the epistles) over the “descriptive,” narrative portions (the gospels and especially Acts). When coupled with what P. Elbert (2004) calls an “apostolic age” hermeneutic—the dispensational interpretation of the gospels and Acts as a foundational, extraordinary, transitory, and therefore non-dogmatically normative epoch prior to the normal time of the church—this principle has resulted in a rigid theological grid through which all doctrinal questions must pass. Interpretations and theologies not conforming to the expected patterns of Pauline doctrinal construction have difficulty obtaining a hearing by the orthodox.

Contemporary pentecostal and charismatic scholars such as R. Stronstad (1984), Elbert (2004), and others have given strong responses to evangelical criticisms, but their concern has chiefly been pentecostalism’s distinctive doctrine of subsequent Spirit baptism. While evangelical hermeneutical strictures are not entirely



without value, it is appropriate to meet them with a hermeneutic of suspicion. The account of H. Cox (1995, 252) about the tremendous growth of pentecostalism in Africa amply illustrates the need for this suspicion:

The theme of liberation by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit from European domination is central to many of the African independent churches. In fact, in some the conviction emerged that the Europeans had purposely not told Africans about the Holy Spirit, but had brought them instead a trimmed-down edition of the faith; and it was now the responsibility of the Africans to restore the full Gospel.

The researcher has already explored how, by explicit design, the evangelical approach works to exclude the book of Acts, the foundation of pentecostal soteriology and applied pneumatology, from theological formulation (House 2006, 108–110). Yet, Peter’s speech in the story of Acts 5.1–11 is frequently cited by conservative authors as a prime proof-text for the full divinity of the Holy Spirit; its suitability for doctrinal formation is never questioned for that end. If that is the case, then it is also appropriate to ask why the teaching of Jesus in Luke 11.5–13 and the puzzling query of Paul in Acts 19.2—“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?”—should be excluded from the construction of pneumatology. In the end, the hermeneutical rule can be said to accomplish little beyond strengthening the priority of the canon within the canon; the less charitable reading is that it seeks to prevent the reopening of doctrinal questions long considered settled by the established theological tradition (Hollenweger 1972, 335–341).

The same hermeneutic of suspicion may also be brought to bear on Christology, especially on penal substitution, the atonement theory promoted by this restrictive perspective. One of the major problems with the theory is the paucity of scriptural support and its notable absence from the life and teaching of Jesus himself. This problem is not unknown to the theory’s defenders; the words of Berkhof (1938, 383) may be recalled:

It is true that it does not stand out so clearly in the teachings of the Gospels as in those of the Epistles, but this is due to the fact (to express it in the words of Crawford) “that the purpose of our Lord’s personal ministry in His life and death were not so much the *full preaching* of the atonement, as the *full accomplishment* of the atonement in order to [*sic*] the preaching of it.”

This admission should give pause to dogmatic assertions of penal substitution as the singularly biblical and orthodox theory and prompt its careful reexamination, but instead, a narrative is constructed to circumvent the problem. Berkhof quotes T. J. Crawford (1871, 385), who proposes that

There would seem to be a fitness and congruity in the arrangement, according to which redemption by the death of Christ should first of all be actually accomplished as a matter of fact, in order to be openly set forth as a matter of

doctrine. At all events, we may venture to affirm that our Lord's chief concern as a Saviour was to accomplish it. Others might preach redemption after it had been secured; but it was *His* special and exclusive function to secure it. (386)

Crawford (1871, 387–389) further appeals to progressive revelation to explain the absence of a full teaching of the doctrine by Christ. He then proceeds to repeat all the sayings of Jesus from the gospels that connect his death to salvation in some manner as evidence that Jesus' teaching supports the theory but without explanation or comment as to how they explicitly teach the penal theory (389–392). However, he himself sees a stronger case in the analogy of the last supper to the Old Testament sacrificial system (393–395). Ultimately, it is the accepted metanarrative itself that circularly shows that the interpretation made within the metanarrative is correct.

The criticism—usually characterized by the orthodox as “liberal”—raised against this process of doctrinal construction encompasses much greater issues such as the nature of the inspiration of Scripture and the unresolvable question of the self-understanding of Jesus, issues that lie outside of the scope of the present work. One germane issue, felt most acutely within the satisfaction paradigm, is the well-known problem of the disjunction between the preaching of Jesus and the preaching of the early church, the problem of how the proclaimer of the good news became the one proclaimed as good news. Schwager (1999, 96–101), who has attempted to construct a biblical doctrine of atonement from the narrative perspective of Christ's life and work as drama, contrasts these as “*basileia-soteriology*” versus “*vicarious atonement*.” Rather than accepting them as irreconcilable theologies arising from separate traditions, he ably contends that the latter is the radical response of God to the human rejection of the former. The story of Jesus is the story of God's turning towards his enemies. Reconciliation was offered immediately in the announcement of the dawning of the kingdom, but when this was rejected, God continued this turning through the greater but contiguous offering of his Son (111–114). Importantly, the story of Jesus is not interrupted by an alteration in the disposition of God to either his people or his Son; the character of God remains constant throughout the drama:

Certainly the dark night was possible only because the Father permitted it, but it should not be concluded from this that he was struck directly by his God, who had suddenly transformed himself from a kindly father into a despotic master. Even in this hour it was Jesus' experience and his activity (and not that of his adversaries) which portrayed God. (Schwager 1999, 116)

Schwager demonstrates that it is possible to maintain a more consistent interpretive narrative of the life and death of Jesus than the equally reductionist approaches of liberalism and orthodoxy. From the perspective of the researcher, his work is lacking in that it largely overpasses the “third party” disrupting the divine-human relationship; although prioritizing the Scriptures, he follows Anselm's thought

in many ways (Schwager 1999, 13–15). Two recent theologians have affirmed the Christus victor perspective while seeking to reframe the metanarrative of Scripture. Weaver (2001), in fact, has named his theory “narrative Christus Victor,” understanding the more ancient interpretation of the cross as more consistent with the message of the New Testament. G. A. Boyd (1997; 2001) has recast—to rather extreme conclusions—the entire narrative of both Testaments as one of spiritual conflict in order to address the problem of evil. (Interestingly, the latter two theologians both affirm Christian non-violence as an ethical consequence of their theologies. By contrast, the lack of a positive connection to Christian ethics is a frequent complaint raised against the penal theory.) Again, it is clear that these theologies also derive their meaning and explanatory powers from a metanarrative, but it is neither possible nor desirable to avoid this dependence entirely; the postmodern incredulity cannot be completely entertained. One way of reducing its hazards, however, is to remain conscious of the metanarrative’s existence, and the Christus victor narrative has the advantage of at least being demonstrable from the climax of the telling of redemption, the story of the gospels.

All of the above mentioned theological works either explicitly or implicitly have the goal of better unifying the doctrines of the person and work of Christ, his life and his death, within the overall framework the narrative of Scripture provides. The present work shares this goal. Taking its cue from the early theologians of the church (Brunner 1952, 309), its general hermeneutic is simple: the person and work of Christ are one (Barth 1960a, 61–62), and the work of Christ in life is one with his work in death as well as his work in the resurrection and beyond. The salvation he procured is the same as the salvation he dispensed. In the words of Heb. 2.3, it was the Lord himself who first declared this salvation, and this salvation is one; there are not two versions of it, one proper to his mission and one proper to those who later attested to him. The overall narrative of his mission is constant from the annunciation of his birth to his departure, and it continues through the Spirit-empowered witness of his church. Put differently, this thesis seeks to do for these loci of systematics what J. H. Yoder (1972, 11–25) has done for ethics: to reassert Jesus himself as the norm for theology. While not neglecting substantive critical concerns, it is proposed that he meant as normative what he said and did as is recorded in the Gospels. Within a Christian context, this assertion should require no defense. As Elbert (2004, 205 n. 65) stresses,

This main character [of the gospel of Luke] is no less than the son of God, the man to whom all the prophets witness, the character who exhorts his hearers to put his teaching into practice and who says that his real relatives are those who obey his teaching.

Implementation of this hermeneutic requires a prioritization of the gospels and Acts and, to some extent, a deprioritization of the epistles as a corrective to earlier theologies that take the opposite approach (cf. Yong 2005, 84–86). The reasons for this are manifold. The first is the problematic exegetical jump of the penal theory from Is. 53 to Rom. 3.25, 8.3, and 2 Cor. 5.21 (e.g., Calvin 1997, 2.16.5). While these texts are important, this approach leaps over a substantial portion of Scripture, to say the least. Because one particular metanarrative is presupposed, the texts claimed to support it are prioritized, while the crucial narratives that do not support it are sent to the background. However, as has been maintained throughout this work, any attempt to formulate a theory of the work of Christ in death not undergirded by an understanding of his work in life will be unsound. The solution to this problem is not, of course, a mirror image of the penal theory's procedure. With regard to the present question, it is by no means the case that the cosmic conflict narrative of Christus victor is absent from the epistles and thus the gospels must be prioritized to make a plausible case for this narrative framework and avoid difficult texts. Rather, the gospels play an indispensable role in the formulation of atonement doctrine because they reveal the continuity of Christ's work in resolving this conflict through his life, death, and beyond. The more propositional teachings of the epistles are recognized as inspired reflections on that work, and because they are generally earlier in origin than the canonical gospels, they are crucial for uncovering normative apostolic teaching and the theology of the earliest Christian communities. Nevertheless, as is widely acknowledged, the epistles tell very little about the earthly life of Jesus, and they cannot be allowed in any way to eclipse the revelation of Christ attested in the gospels. Christians may no longer know Christ *κατὰ σάρκα* (2 Cor. 5.16), but the witness of those who did so know him and his works is still of vital importance to their present faith.

Second, in a reversal of the evangelical rule, it can be argued that narrative, descriptive passages should be approached prior to didactic, reflective ones when seeking the theological significance of moments and events of revelation that occurred in time and space. Several recent authors (e.g., Marshall 1970; Stronstad 1984; Menzies, R. P. 1994) have made strong cases for laying aside the artificial Pauline lens and reading the New Testament historical books on their own terms and with an openness to the distinctive and authoritative theologies contained in their narratives. From within the discipline of systematic theology, J. R. Williams (1990, 182) has also advocated, as a general principle, beginning with the descriptive accounts of these theological events prior to interpreting their briefer references in the epistles. With regard to pneumatology, he writes,

...we will focus primarily on these passages in Acts because they alone depict the event of the Holy Spirit's coming.... This is by no means to suggest that... the Epistles are of less importance. However, they are generally quite brief and compact; moreover, they refer to something that has *already* happened and thus give little or no detail.

Again, this discussion has taken place primarily around the issue of the reception of the Spirit in Luke–Acts, the main support of the pentecostal doctrine, but a similar principle can be applied to the atonement question and related areas of theology. While the significance of the cross is grasped fully only by looking back from the resurrection (Luke 24.25–27, 44ff.), the statements of Jesus and the evangelists regarding his mission also reveal its meaning. A model of the atonement that seeks derivation from his ministry and stated message in life has a greater probability of being a faithful interpretation than ones finding only indirect hints in the canonized recollections of Jesus' life but otherwise judged more "fitting," to use the common term of Crawford (1871, 386) and Anselm. Likewise, salvation can be understood by its manifestations; on this point, Luke 18.42 and 19.9–10 are instructive: in the first, healing is salvation, and in the second it comes after a promise of restitutive giving. The epistles legitimately can and must be used to further explain these points but not to supplant them.

Third, the differing character of the gospels and epistles as theological works suggests a changing of their priority for theological construction. While the epistles represent a mature, reflective theology, they are also fundamentally occasional works. As such, they are responsive to particular contexts and controversies and do not always present a more general theology. This occasional character is at the heart of the controversy over the "new perspective" on Paul. Rather than teaching a timeless, universal propositional theology as protestant tradition maintains, Paul's *magna opera* of Romans and Galatians are actually responses to a very specific, contextually contingent problem, and thus their theology is also contextually contingent and even contextually limited in intelligibility and applicability. Similarly, Weaver (1994a, 285) describes how different New Testament writers reframed their presentations of Christology and adopted new terminology as the gospel entered different cultural settings, which suggests that "modern Christians have options open to them beyond simply repeating the language of the New Testament." For this reason, it may not be necessary to accommodate, say, all of the sacrificial imagery of the epistle to the Hebrews within an atonement model in order for it to be biblically faithful and valid. The differences between Matthew and Luke amply illustrate that the gospels and Acts are also contextual works, but in comparison to the occasional letters, they represent more complete, self-contained messages that require less knowledge of the occasions that prompted their writing or of other, prior teaching given to the intended audience.

It may thus be possible to obtain a more complete, if simpler, theology from Matthew or Luke or John than from a selection of Pauline writings. Ultimately, their theologies must be coordinated with the Pauline teaching, but not subordinated; by no means should their distinctive theologies be marginalized or annulled simply because of the presence of elements absent from the Pauline corpus.

#### 4.1.1.1 Redemption as Cosmic Conflict

As stated above, it is neither possible nor desirable to entirely avoid the phenomenon of metanarrative or systematic theology's dependence upon it. The common descriptors of various Christus victor perspectives as "classical," "dramatic" (Aulén 1931, 4–7; Schwager 1999), and "narrative" (Weaver 2001) reveal that these theologies acknowledge the importance of narrative for biblical interpretation and Christian belief. Accordingly, retrieval and reappropriation of this atonement theory requires the sketching of an alternative metanarrative to that of the Western tradition and its paradigm of retributive justice. This narrative may be described as a "cosmic conflict": the work of God in Christ in struggling against and conquering the forces of darkness oppressing humanity and all of creation. Aulén (1960, 38) relates this theme to the whole of Christian revelation and faith:

The divine revelation appears to Christian faith against the background of enmity to God... The divine will, as it reveals itself, is continually subduing and overpowering opposition. In this conflict both the law and the gospel are used as means. The purpose of the law is to restrain and suppress the hostile powers. But, as already indicated, the decisive victory in this struggle belongs not to the law but the gospel. The victory has been won through the crucified and risen Christ.

The divine revelation is therefore *a tense drama*. The biblical message appears as one large and continuous drama, beginning on the first page of the Bible and continuing until the last. In this drama the victory of Christ is the central act.

This foundational narrative informed the development of early Christianity and its theology; modern deletion or neglect of the powers opposing God, however they may be understood, will lead to misapprehension of the Scriptures and deformation of the faith (Aulén 1960, 176). Qualifications may be given to Aulén's zealous pronouncements—there are other important motifs in Scripture—but it is not possible to rightly construct of a doctrine of redemption apart from this narrative. Importantly, unlike the competing Western theory, redemption as liberation from this cosmic conflict can be demonstrated from the message of Jesus himself; it also does not contradict the character of the God he revealed.

A sketch of this narrative of Scripture has several viable beginning points. Weaver (2001, 19–33), in introducing his "narrative Christus victor" version of the theory, takes the Revelation of John as his starting point. This approach is impractical

for general purposes but illustrates the vigor of the cosmic conflict motif. The book is “virtually an extended, multifaceted statement of the Christus Victor image” (Weaver 2001, 20), and Christus victor would emerge as the obviously correct paradigm for any theology of the atonement that begins there. Another approach might begin with the gospels and interpret both the Old Testament before them and the letters of the church that follow them in the light of the conflict of redemption that is portrayed in them. The gospels clearly communicate the cosmic conflict theme and depict the death and resurrection of Jesus as its climax; further strength is given to this approach by the prioritization of the works and words of Jesus advocated in the preceding section. This is indeed the approach that will be taken in the present work when it arrives at the task of constructive theology later in this chapter. However, as it is argued that the cosmic conflict is a valid metanarrative for the entirety of Scripture, it is appropriate to begin at its beginning, the saga of the creation and fall in Gen. 1–3.

As has been discussed throughout this work, the fall of Gen. 3 is important for all traditional Christian theologies. Though its principal literary function is to provide an etiology for human death, the story also depicts the initial breaking in the divine-human relationship, and regardless of their interpretation of the atonement, all theologies look to it for aid in diagnosing the problem in the human condition, how it continues to estrange humanity from God, and how it might be remedied. However, the passage demands great care in handling. From the perspective of both Old Testament and comparative religious studies, the theological conclusions about the fall made by the later Christian tradition can only be considered anachronistic and not original to the text. Christian theologians must constantly remain aware that their extrapolations, particularly with regard to the doctrine of original sin and the identification of the serpent with the devil, are guided more by later Scriptures and tradition than strict exegesis (Walton 2003). Still, by the time of Christ, much of contemporary Judaism had thoroughly imbibed the apocalyptic and elevated the early origins story to one of a heavenly, cosmic conflict. Wis. 2.23–24, for example, assigns culpability for the instigation of the fall to the devil; here the outlines of the Christian interpretation had already begun to take shape. Regardless of his absence from the pentateuch, the gospels consistently identify Satan or the devil as “the tempter” (Mark 1.13 and parallels), and the Johannine writings explicitly refer to him as “the serpent” (Rev. 12.9, 20.2; cf. John 8.44). Likewise, Christian tradition interprets Gen. 3.15, the *protoevangelium*, not only messianically but within the Christus victor paradigm. The appearance of this theme at the beginning of the canon establishes it as a valid reading of the overarching narrative of Scripture.

As argued in §2.2, part of the strength of the Christus victor theory is its recognition of the three parties involved in the fall and redemption; the other theories

were criticized for the flattening of the dimensions of the atonement, and therefore salvation, by removing one of the parties. Against this advantage stands a feature of the classical ransom theory, related to the story of the fall, considered deeply disturbing by many: the idea of the “rights” of the devil in creation and over humankind and the overt dualism it suggests (Aulén 1931, 45). Gregory of Nyssa (1999, 24) put it baldly when he wrote of the measures God took “in order to secure that the ransom in our behalf might be easily accepted by him who required it,” as if the devil were the one who set the terms of redemption. Even in the classical period many objected to this conclusion, and one reason Anselm devised his theory was to completely dispense with the problem (Weaver 2001, 189). However, the New Testament itself employs equally shocking language and imagery that does not allow for the easy dismissal of this idea. In the fourth gospel, Jesus thrice speaks of the “ruler of this world” (John 12.31, 14.30, 16.11), and by such he means the adversary, not God. Similarly, in Luke 4.5ff. and its parallels, the adversary’s claim and offer of the kingdoms of the world is rejected by Jesus but not denied as invalid. Paul is even bolder and calls this adversary the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4.4). From this language, it is reasonable to infer that some sort of “rights”—the exact nature of which is undefined and probably undefinable—were obtained by the devil through the defection of the primal humans to his proxy, the serpent, and the fact that Jesus had to engage this power shows that it was not without authority. While the dualistic implications must be addressed, it is clear that the New Testament does not portray the accomplishment of redemption as frictionlessly issuing from the sovereign decree, unperturbed by any serious external opposition.

From the perspective of Christian theology, the New Testament’s handling of the story of the fall is sufficient to establish the cosmic conflict as an overarching narrative behind the earthly narrative of God’s covenantal interaction with Israel. Beyond this initial calamity, the cosmic conflict—not unlike other spiritual realities affirmed by the New Testament—largely retreats to the background of the Old Testament except for occasional, fleeting glimpses (Boyd, G. A. 1997, 79–83). Christian theologians have attempted to use the Hebrew Scriptures to further develop demonology, particularly with regard to the alleged angelic fall and the origins of Satan, but the more traditional interpretations of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 (Boyd, G. A. 1997, 157–162) go well beyond what can be demonstrated exegetically or by instruction from the New Testament. On the other hand, over the spiritual warfare of passages such as Dan. 10 and 2 Kings 6.15–17 there can be little debate. Of the possible allusions, the most relevant for the present work are those that reveal the role that foreign gods played in the sins of Israel that estranged them from Yahweh. From the first commandment of the decalogue to the last words of Deuteronomy and



through the ministry of the prophets, the Israelites are constantly warned of the danger foreign deities pose to them, and the pre-exilic history of Israel is essentially a catalogue of their fallings into the bondage of these powers. Israel's sins and failings were not limited to idolatry, but the worship of other gods frequently served as the gateway to other sins (e.g., Num. 25, Deut. 4, 1 Ki. 16.29–34, 2 Ki. 21.1–16, Ezek. 22). The persistence of this problem reveals that sin is not just a ubiquitous tendency towards disobedience in human beings but also an unholy allegiance to powers in opposition to the living God. Again, a theory of redemption that merely addresses the effects of the former tendency without also nullifying the latter tie will remain incomplete.

Another crucial event stands out as a climax of the narrative of the Hebrew Bible: the sacrifice of the passover lamb. It is of special significance for Christian theology because of the events of the last supper and the explicit words of Paul in 1 Cor. 5.7 that identify it as a type of the death of Christ. Often, this usage is cited as an obvious proof of the satisfaction and substitution models of sacrifice, but it is in fact the opposite. M. D. Hooker (1994, 97–98) notes that the passover sacrifice did not concern the removal of sin. In the original context of the Exodus, the blood of the passover lamb warded off the destroyer who executed Yahweh's judgment "on all the gods of Egypt" (Exod. 12.12–13); the conquest of the opposing powers, not the reconciliation of human beings through vicarious punishment, is its direct concern. Likewise, John's gospel, even though it introduces Jesus as "the lamb of God," does not envisage salvation as being accomplished through an expiatory or propitiatory sacrifice; Jesus' death is rather portrayed as "an eschatological battle, in which Jesus triumphs over evil" (Hooker 1994, 102). The lamb who takes away the sins of the world is the same lamb who in the apocalypse wages war—nonviolently—against the enemies of God and his saints (Weaver 2001, 20–33). Redemption again has the character of conflict, struggle, and victory.

With the opening of the New Testament in the gospels, the covert cosmic conflict bursts into the foreground of the biblical narrative, both in the words of mission proclaimed by Jesus and his actions to carry them out. Significantly, in the synoptics his ministry is prefaced by his temptation by Satan in the wilderness; the early church fathers, such as Irenaeus, quickly latched onto this as a parallel or recapitulation of the temptation of the primal couple in the garden (Boersma 2004, 124–126, 128). Luke's gospel continues with the famous Nazareth manifesto (4.16ff.), which, by quoting Is. 61.1–2a, specifically announces his ministry as one of liberation from oppression while not personifying the oppressive forces—the impoverisher, the captor, the blinder. At the same chronological point, Matthew 4.15–17 instead quotes Is. 9.1–2, the Greek rendition of which conveys the same message,

perhaps less dramatically but just as powerfully, as the Nazareth manifesto; in Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom, light has overcome darkness, life has overcome death (cf. Matt. 11.4–5). All three of the synoptics are replete with pericopes of direct confrontations between Jesus and the demonic as he demonstrates the power of the kingdom. Luke follows up his prophetic statement of mission with an illustrative encounter (4.33–37) and Matthew with a summary (4.24); Mark's accounts of healings and exorcisms are too numerous to list. Interestingly, healing and exorcism pericopes have the same basic form, language, and character as stories of the forgiveness of sin, and sometimes two or even all three (e.g., Mark 2.1–12, 5.1–20, Matt. 8.5–13, 9.32–33, Luke 13.10–13, 18.35–43; cf. John 4.46–53) of these salvific moments are merged into one; the New Testament meaning of "salvation" differs greatly from the later church's usage. Jesus specifically states that this work is a binding of Satan and a plundering of his house (Matt. 12.22–30); in other words, it is the cosmic conflict come to earth. The ministry to which he commissions his disciples is the same (Mark. 6.7–13, Luke 10.1ff), and through their work he witnesses the downfall of Satan from heaven (Luke 10.17–20). That the cosmic conflict is at the heart of the coming of the kingdom proclaimed in the synoptics there can be little doubt. By contrast, the penal and satisfaction paradigm of relationship to God is noticeably absent.

John's gospel contains fewer direct encounters with the demonic but is even more explicit in linking the work of Christ to the cosmic conflict. The work of the enemy is ascribed to Jesus' opponents in the controversial debate of 8.39–47, and the devil is plainly named as the orchestrator of Jesus' betrayal (6.70, 13.2, 27). One difficult but meaningful image, is the analogy of the cross in John 3.14–15 to the serpent pole of Num. 21.4–9. While this analogy is imperfect, as all analogies are, it communicates how the work of the cross rescues those who believe from the forces of destruction and grants them eternal life; it also suggests healing in this work. At three places (John 12.31, 14.30, 16.11), Jesus describes his going to the cross as an encounter with and judgment of "the ruler of this world"; his true antagonist is not any one of his human opponents, whoever they may be, but the real enemy behind all earthly strife and violence. In sum, these passages establish the cosmic conflict with the devil as the context in which the work of redemption is carried about. Again by contrast, what is noticeably absent in the fourth gospel is any hint of separation, strife, or difference in disposition or purpose between the Father and the Son. They are perfectly united in the mission of salvation, and the Father loves the Son (10.17) because the Son lays down his life to defend the sheep from the thief and destroyer (10.7–15).

The theme continues in the Acts of the apostles in a manner similar to the synoptics, though Acts gives it less attention in favor of other matters. The apostles and others continue the same sort of mission as Jesus in healing, deliverance, and forgiveness. More significant at present are a few summary statements of the good news that was believed and preached by the early church. Peter's sermon at Pentecost is important because it introduces the gospel message that is carried throughout the book. The message is light on the "cosmic" aspect but completely concerned with the "conflict." Peter's position is what must ultimately be concluded by the church: Jesus was killed not by God but by his opponents, yet in accord with the plan of God (Acts 2.23, 36). This perspective is repeated throughout all the early proclamations of the gospel (e.g., 3.13–15, 4.10–11, 5.30, 7.52, 10.39–40, 13.28–30); only Jesus' opponents and never God, who is his vindicator and exalter, are set as his punishers or slayers. Peter later shares the same message with the gentiles, also informing them of Jesus' liberative ministry:

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (Acts 10.38)

Likewise, the mission that Jesus' himself gave to Paul was also in this context of liberation from the cosmic conflict:

"to open [the gentiles'] eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26:18)

In sum, these passages reveal that even within the context of the justification of the gentile mission, the apostolic kerygma in Acts was equivalent to the message of Jesus as reported in the gospels, and there is no substantial basis for the contention of a disjunction between the accomplishment and the proclamation of redemption (contra Crawford 1871, 385–386).

As may be supposed, the epistles are useful for their theological reflection on the events recorded in the gospels. In contrast to some later theologies and spiritualities, the cross, resurrection, and frequently, the ascension and session of Jesus are not separated but held together as comprising the one work of redemption (e.g., Rom. 4.24–25, 5.9–10, 6.3ff., 8.34, 2 Cor. 5.15, Phil. 2.8–9, Col. 2.12); the New Testament rules unsound the practice of developing a doctrine of atonement separate from doctrines of Christ's incarnation and exaltation. The epistles often view these events from a heavenly or "from above" vantage, and while the vital God-ward element of Christ's saving work must not be neglected, the cosmic conflict remains a prominent theme. Indeed, it is in the epistles that the language of "the powers" is most commonly employed (Boyd, G. A. 2006b, 28–29; Wink 1984). It was out of their

ignorance of the wisdom and plan of God that “the rulers of this age... crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor 2.8), but it was through that wicked act that God accomplished the redemption of humanity, and the powers themselves were disarmed:

And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it. (Col. 2.13–15)

Although more overt in the disputed letters of Colossians (1.13–16, 2.8–15) and Ephesians (1.21, 2.2, 3.10, 6.12), the cosmic conflict forms the background and context in which the work of redemption and reconciliation is performed in the core of the undisputed Pauline writings (Rom. 8.38–39, 1 Cor. 2.6, Gal. 4.3) as well as the other New Testament letters (e.g., 1 Peter 3.21–22, Heb. 2.14–15, 1 John 3.8) and, as already mentioned, the apocalypse (e.g., Rev. 12). At the end of Revelation, the conflict is resolved, the effects of the primal fall reversed, and the drama ended: the deceiver is executed (20.10), humanity is restored to the presence of God (21.3–4), and the tree of life reappears in the midst of the city of God (22.1–2).

In summary, given its prevalence throughout the Bible, the theme of cosmic conflict must find a place in Christian doctrines of redemption and salvation. Nearly all theologies would acknowledge that it plays a role in the work of atonement; after all, even though Anselm rejected the patristic interpretation, *Cur Deus homo* repeatedly mentions Christ’s victory over the devil. Yet, his theology also represents a distancing of the work of reconciliation from redemption, and this trend was continued by other Western theologies. An extreme example of this is found in Ritschl (1872, 4–11, 19–21), who bypasses the concept and very term of redemption, colored as it is by the ancient view, to get to the proper subject of his history of the doctrine of reconciliation. Aulén (1931, 71) rejects this dichotomy as a misapprehension of even the Pauline teaching:

...this work of salvation and deliverance is at the same time a work of atonement, of reconciliation between God and the world. It is altogether misleading to say that the triumph of Christ over the powers of evil, whereby He delivers man, is a work of salvation but not of atonement; for the two ideas cannot possibly be thus separated. It is precisely the work of salvation wherein Christ breaks the power of evil that *constitutes* the atonement between God and the world; for it is by it that He removes the enmity, takes away the judgment which rested on the human race, and reconciles the world to Himself, not imputing to them their trespasses (2 Cor. v. 18)... The double aspect which is inherent in the classic ideal of atonement is expressed by [Paul] even more trenchantly than by [the church fathers], in his view of the Law as on the hand holy and good, and on the other as a power which held mankind in bondage. It is therefore more abundantly clear that the Pauline doctrine of salvation is also a doctrine of atonement: God through Christ saves mankind from His own judgment and his own Law, establishing a new relation which transcends the order of merit and of justice.

More recent conservative theologians, conversant with Aulén and concerned with plenary adherence to the words of Scripture, try to incorporate the conflict and victory motifs into their atonement doctrines, but they are subordinated to the main work of the satisfaction of God, which is the controlling paradigm (e.g., Erickson 1998, 838–839; Packer 1974, 20–21; Stott 1986, 227–251). It may be questioned whether these attempts are ultimately successful. Though nominally acknowledged as affected by the work of the cross, the devil, the third party to the conflict, remains essentially deleted from the equation of atonement, leading to grave problems, chief of which is the conflation of the work of God with that of the crucifiers of Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 2.8). The present proposal goes beyond this attempted subsumption. Resolution of the cosmic conflict is not merely an aspect of the work of salvation; rather, it is an indispensable theme of the overarching metanarrative of Scripture. While not an all-explaining hermeneutical key, it drives the interpretation of other narratives and aspects of redemption and salvation, which must be integrated into its paradigm. Conversely, the revelation of God in Christ forbids the elevation of the paradigm of retributive justice to this role. It is within and despite this conflict that God, by his power and his love, reconciles humanity to himself (Aulén 1960, 196–213).

#### **4.1.1.2 Defining the Demonic**

From the beginning, this work has assumed that the atonement as the conquest of the powers of darkness is a valid interpretation of the biblical narrative of Christ's work. It will now engage a major obstacle to this viewpoint: the problem of the demonic for modern theology. Although orthodox Western theologians from the time of Anselm onwards questioned the involvement of the devil in the atonement, they never questioned his reality; this cannot be assumed as given for moderns. The famous words of Bultmann (1961a, 4–5) put the problem baldly:

Now that the forces and the laws of nature have been discovered, we can no longer believe in *spirits, whether good or evil*. We know that the stars are physical bodies whose motions are controlled by the laws of the universe, and not daemonic beings which enslave mankind to their service.... Sickness and the cure of disease are likewise attributable to natural causation; they are not the results of daemonic activity or of evil spells.... It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles.

The significance of this problem is such that it cannot simply be ignored by contemporary theologians; it is for this reason that a new affirmation of Christ as victor must be referred to as a “retrieval” or “appropriation.” Unquestionably, Satan and demons are a reality from the perspective of the New Testament and its authors, but this simple acknowledgement does not lead directly to a conclusion about how modern and postmodern readers must perceive this category. Theologians from

different eras and contexts have devised numerous explanations for the demonic; they can be summed up as four basic interpretive approaches.

The first approach, ruled out from the start, is that of classic liberalism, which accommodates the objection of modernity by simply deleting the demonic from Christian theology. While often called demythologization—and despite his protests or intentions, Bultmann’s own type of demythologization very often closely approximates it—it is more appropriately named disbelief; the demonic has no real existence of any sort. At best, the Bible’s depiction of the demonic is an attempt by less sophisticated minds to cope with such unexplainable phenomena as mental illness, but the very idea of a real devil and demons is a superstition rejected by rational, modern minds. So-called miracles, if not mere fable, have some form of natural explanation (e.g., Schweitzer 1911, 41, 52, 63–64). This position, however, must be firmly rejected for at least three strong reasons. First, from the perspective of Christian faith, the category of the demonic cannot be deleted for the simple reason that it was a primary matter of engagement for Jesus himself. His mission cannot be comprehended apart from his work of deliverance through exorcism, and part of the reason for the failure of the liberal “lives of Jesus” of the eighteenth and nineteenth century was because of their attempt to do so. In the words of Bultmann (1961a, 12), “They threw away not only the mythology but also the kerygma itself.” Later, more mature critical scholarship has retreated from the excesses of classic liberalism and has reached the general consensus that, at the very least, Jesus was a genuine healer and exorcist (Meyer 1992, 781–782), without necessarily reaching a firm conclusion about the nature of those healings. To put it another way, Christianity must have an interest in the exorcism of the demonic because its founder did. Second, it is questionable whether the older liberalism, in its age of enlightenment haste to jettison superstition, really grasped the biblical teaching on the demonic; later theologians including such giants as Barth and Tillich have been far more cautious in this regard. Wink (1984, 4) eloquently describes the sophomoric error modernism easily makes in this area:

We moderns cannot bring ourselves by any feat of will or imagination to believe in the real existence of these mythological entities that traditionally have been lumped under the general category “principalities and powers.” We naturally assume that the ancients conceived of them and believed in them the same way we conceive of and disbelieve them.... We play a double trick on ourselves, first personifying spiritual entities that are in fact not “persons,” and then dismissing the creations of our own personifying as improbable, nonempirical, unscientific superstitions.

Of this more will be said. Third, just as the enlightenment shattered the ancient worldview, the horrors of the postmodern age have shattered the worldview of

enlightenment liberalism. World war, the ecological crisis, and the threat of nuclear annihilation have proven the existence of the satanic; postmoderns cannot deny its reality, and Christian faith must therefore have a doctrine of it. Despite his difficulties, even Bultmann (1961b, 119) affirmed the value of the category of the demonic or evil spirits in “enshrin[ing] the important truth of the trans-subjective reality of evil.” Now, only the nature, not the reality, of this evil can be debated.

A second interpretation is also opted against, with some qualification, by the present work. Diametrically opposed to the above interpretation, it may be described as a “fully mythological” view of the demonic: demons are evil personal spirits, or fallen angels, of which Satan is the chief. This is the majority viewpoint of traditional Christianity, including both the church fathers who developed the ransom theory and the protestant orthodox who rejected it; a prominent non-traditional advocate of the personal nature of the diabolical is G. A. Boyd (1997, 58–63, 273–276, 283–287), who uses the cosmic conflict to explicate both the problem of evil and the atonement. While defense of the traditional belief in the face of modern skepticism and materialism is a courageous counter-cultural act, its value is dubious, and it may create more problems that it solves. The first problem, and the one that should be of greatest concern to traditionalists, is its questionable biblical character. As even Boyd (1997, 60) acknowledges, much of the demonic mythology of traditional Christianity is more dependent on medieval European religion and art than Scripture, and unfortunately the reformation was not sufficient to counteract these accretive influences. The mainline of biblical demonology arguably resembles the thought of Barth (1960b, 519–531) or Tillich (1963, 102–106) more than it does that of Dante or Milton—or Pseudo-Dionysius or Thomas Aquinas, for that matter. Only traces of the story of the angelic fall and later caricatures can be found in the Bible, that too largely on the fringes of the canon (Jude 6, 2 Pet. 2.4) and in the apocalyptic (e.g., Rev. 12), which should not be taken as photographic depictions even when interpreted literally (cf. Barth 1960b, 520, 530–531). To project these images back on to all encounters with the demonic inside as well as outside of the Scriptures is to press them beyond their original purpose and potentially mask the real nature and character of these encounters.

Second, the personalization of the demonic can lead to practical theological difficulties, for a serious fascination with this subject can become as unhealthy as its denial or neglect, even in the supposedly objective realm of academic theology. Barth (1960b, 519) unrelentingly presses his point throughout his treatment of the subject:

The very thing which the demons are waiting for, especially in theology, is that we should find them dreadfully interesting and give them our serious and perhaps systematic attention. In this way they can finally catch out, not bad theologians, but good. For this reason... we shall take only a brief look at this

matter. It is not a question of treating them lightly, but of handling them as best befits their nature. A quick, sharp glance is not only all that is necessary but all that is legitimate in their case.

Though a legitimate subject of theology, the demonic is not an object of faith like other doctrines Christians affirm; such is an entirely improper orientation towards this force of nothingness:

We cannot believe in the devil and demons as we may believe in angels when we believe in God. We have a positive relationship to that in which we believe. But there is no positive relationship to the devil and demons. (Barth 1960b, 521)

The history of theology is replete with examples of lack of prudence in this area; again, Barth (1960b, 521) sounds the alarm eloquently:

So great was the honour which it was thought must be paid to this sphere that the doctrine of the devil and demons became an integral part of the Christian message, and in many cases the part in which Christian preachers and theologians believed they should display their zeal and realism. The result was that all Christianity, even when there were no witch-hunts and the like, acquired a more or less pervasive odour of demonism, becoming something which from this dark chamber seemed to spread abroad, and did actually spread abroad, menace, anxiety, melancholy, oppression, or tragic excitement.

This warning is all the more urgent within the context of pentecostal-charismatic folk piety. To put it plainly, a revivalistic form of faith that lays great emphasis on a personal relationship with God should not foster an equally personal relationship with the devil. Unfortunately, evidence of such can easily be gleaned from popular publications and sermons, and shamanism lurks near the door of many a pentecostal pulpit and prayer room.

An additional problem with the traditional interpretation of the demonic as personal evil spirits is its inadequacy for grasping the full range of trans-subjective evil, to borrow J. Schniewind's (1961, 92) phrase from Bultmann. Specifically, it follows in the error of individualization that has been seen in other areas of Western theology. The perception of the demonic as individual spirits akin to angels and humans can result in a neglect in recognizing the corporate aspects of evil; just as salvation primarily concerns the reconciliation of individuals, the primary activity of the demonic is in tempting and harassing individuals (e.g., Hodge, C. 1997a, 643–648; Erickson 1998, 470–474). Again, more than exegesis, tradition has shaped the contours and determined the content of this area of belief. Of course, incidents of what has unfortunately and imprecisely come to be named as “demonic possession” do occur in the New Testament, and they feature prominently in Jesus' engagement of the enemy in his ministry. Arguably more important theologically are the forces that are collectively referred to as “the powers” (Wink 1984), which enslave humanity and



stand arrayed against the activity of the kingdom of God and the church on earth (e.g., 1 Cor. 15.24, Gal. 4.8–9, Col. 2.15, Eph. 2.1–2, 6.10ff.) These forces were behind the sinful structures that led to the crucifixion of Jesus (1 Cor. 2.6–8) and perpetuate oppression in human societies and nations. The latter has been the particular interest of theologians of liberation, who have retrieved and demythologized the concept of the demonic to help explain the corporate dimensions of evil; this is the interpretation that will be examined next. Unfortunately, traditional theology has had little to say about this aspect of the diabolical; its definition is too limited. Having said all this, the traditional view is still superior to the simple deletion of classical liberalism, and it may be possible and even preferable in certain cultural and church contexts to expand this perspective on the demonic beyond individualization without altering its underlying doctrinal structure. Formal theology, however, needs to look for better answers, even if they do not easily lend themselves to popularization.

The third perspective, more viable than the previous two, is what may be called “full demythologization.” This is the interpretation of more recent theologies such as liberation theology and some feminist theologies that, in the researcher’s view, have accomplished what Bultmann only proposed. Full demythologization may be distinguished from the method of deletion of classic liberalism in that it attempts to recover the meaning and significance of the diabolical from its mythological form. It fully recognizes its reality and power; what it rejects is the traditional conception of the demonic as evil personal spirits. Notable examples of this are Weaver and Ray, who have taken this approach in their retrievals of the patristic atonement. For them, the demonic is basically a symbolic or mythical way of speaking about human evil in all its breadth. Weaver follows the ground-breaking work of Wink (1984; 1986; 1992) in elucidating the New Testament concept of powers, explaining the demythologized interpretation perhaps even more clearly than Wink himself:

...[T]he devil or Satan [is] the accumulation of earthly structures that are not ruled by the reign of God. This devil is real, but it is not a personified being who may or may not have rights in the divine order of things.... [The] principalities and powers, demons, and so on of the Bible are not independent entities that inhabit a place. Instead, they are the “spiritual” dimension of material structures. All powers in the world—the state, corporations, economic structures, educational institutions, and so on—have inner and outer, or spiritual and material dimensions.... The inner essence is the collective cultural ethos that surrounds a specific outer manifestation. Thus the powers are real, although not separately existing, independent entities; and their moral identity and character depend on whether or not they assert their existence over against or under the lordship of Christ.... The devil or Satan is the name for the locus of all power that does not recognize the rule of God. (Weaver 2001, 210–211)

Weaver gives ample examples of this meaning of the powers in the construction of his

“narrative Christus victor” theory—all the myriad actors involved in the crucifixion of Jesus, the oppressive power of the Roman state as mythologized in the book of Revelation (Weaver 2001, 24–30), and the various forms of oppression that are the concerns of different liberative and contextual theologies. Ray’s (1998, 131) understanding is similar:

...[W]hat is confronted and overcome by Jesus the Christ is not merely individual or personal sin... rather, Satan or the devil represents countless ways in which human evil manifest itself interpersonally, communally, institutionally, and globally.... To talk about evil as “cosmic,” I argue, is not necessarily to render it ahistorical or transcendent but to identify the scope and impact of human rapacity and ignorance, the depth of social dis-ease. In sum, a contemporary reconstruction of the patristic model suggests an understanding of human evil expansive enough to speak to the countless ways in which human beings are mired in, even bound by, the powers of evil.

The category of the demonic or “powers” thus encompasses more than individual sins and evils; it is a way of personalizing and describing for the purpose of resistance the structural sins in human society that perpetuate oppression and disorder beyond individual agency. When such becomes the target of the work of Christ, salvation may be envisioned in similarly expansive terms (Ray 1998, 131–134).

Full demythologization is a powerful approach to the problem of the demonic and yields impressive results. It overcomes the modern objection to a demon-haunted worldview, yet it illuminates the reality and scope of evil in a way that simple disbelief and denial of the satanic cannot. It also represents a theological and ethical improvement over the traditional interpretation that pays too great attention to marauding personal spirits and not enough to human corporate sins. As Wink, Weaver, and Ray have shown, this approach can be a useful tool in the development of powerful, sophisticated, and relevant theologies. However, it is not without weaknesses, the chief of which is revealed by a survey and comparison of the three authors referenced above. Wink (1984, 103) identifies the problem in many theologies that have taken this interpretive approach:

...a simply reductionistic explanation of the Powers is closed to us. They cannot be treated as “nothing but” the personification of human institutional and cultural arrangements, since these institutions and cultural arrangements are just as much the creation of the Powers as their creators. Reductionistic explanations are inadequate because they omit the one essential most unique to the New Testament understanding of power: its spiritual dimension. There is a certain irony in the fact that liberation theologians have, in the main, followed the reductionist path and treated the Powers as *just* institutions and systems, with little attempt to comprehend their spiritual dimension or take seriously their mythic form.

Many who do attempt to demythologize ultimately arrive at precisely this reductionism; the evil overcome by Christ in his defeat of sin and the devil is limited

to human evil. This is revealed in the above quotes from Weaver and Ray. Despite their initial “cosmic” language, the discussion quickly moves on to human sins and evils, whether individual or corporate. Little to nothing is said of the broader problem of evil outside of that which has direct or indirect human causation, such as natural evil, and especially the problem of death. J. Schniewind (1961, 92) raises this concern in his initial critique of Bultmann:

The real issue is the trans-subjective reality of evil. ...[T]he opposition of the whole universe to the will of God is so deliberate and so well organized that it is more than the product of the human will. Hence the New Testament is obliged to bring in the figure of Satan, though it does so with remarkable reserve.... The trans-subjective reality of the evil one is inseparable from that of evil itself. Evil is a cosmic reality, not a notion of man imposed upon the universe. Death, mourning, crying, and pain (Rev. 21.4) ought not to be. They are “powers” which have enslaved man and cut him off from communion with God.

Wink (1986) attempts to push the mythological imagery further but ends with a difficult system that affirms belief in angels of nations and of nature and even “gods,” and ultimately it is unclear how far he himself escapes the problem of reductionism. Theodicy is a major problem for all Christian theologies, but those taking the fully demythological approach are ill-equipped to handle it, lacking terms of reference for evil beyond human causation and agency. Their choices are limited. They deny the traditional belief in independent spirits as a cause of evil; they also cannot affirm with tradition that all suffering, including natural evil, is otherwise an outcome of the primordial fall or the just punishment of sin (e.g., Erickson 1998, 452; cf. Hick 1978, 172–176). They should not join with Leibniz and the optimists in declaring that metaphysical evil is necessarily intrinsic to creatureliness (Barth 1958, 388–414; Macchia 1995, 201–202) and thus ultimately assign culpability for it to God himself. Silence is the only option left. Likewise, demythologization of the cosmic conflict addressed in the work of Christ inhibits a full appropriation of the *Christus victor* imagery; the resulting models resemble more a hybrid with the subjective or exemplar type than a clear affirmation of the objective victory won by Christ and a definite change in the state of the conflict (e.g., Ray 1998, 127–129, 142–145). Like the traditional perspective, the fully demythologized demonology of liberationist theologies says something important, but in the end, it does not say enough.

In this light, the question of the demonic requires an approach that can mediate between the previous two, combining their strengths while mitigating their weaknesses, one that depersonalizes and demythicizes the demonic while maintaining its metaphysical distinction from human activities and sins as well as creation in general. This fourth approach finds significant expression in Barth’s doctrine of *das Nichtige* or nothingness, which is chiefly elaborated in the third part of “The doctrine

of creation” of his *Church dogmatics* (Barth 1960b, 289–368, 519–531). Like many aspects of his thought, the doctrine of nothingness is incomplete, difficult to summarize succinctly, and controversial (McDowell 2002), but it holds the potential for overcoming the major problems detailed above, lending great aid to the present work. According to Barth (1960b, xi), nothingness is the “kingdom of the left hand” of God. It is the possibility of the chaotic, mythic cosmos bypassed and rejected by God at the original creation of Gen. 1.1–3 (1958, 108–110; 1960b, 352–353); from the perspective of another theologian (Moltmann 1981, 108–11; 1985, 86–93), it is the *nihil* produced by God’s self-limitation in order for there to be “room” for a *creatio ex nihilo*. This “nothingness,” however, is not “nothing”; it has its own sort of reality:

Nothingness is that which God does not will. It lives only by the fact that it is that which God does not will. But it does live by this fact. For not only what God wills, but what He does not will, is potent, and must have a real correspondence. (Barth 1960b, 352)

Nothingness must not be confused with either God, making it a second, Manichaean god, or creation, even in its “shadow side” (*Schattenseite*), thus ascribing the origin of evil to what God called “very good” and took into himself in the incarnation of Jesus Christ (1960b, 292–302). Nothingness is an “ontic peculiarity,” reality in a third way (1960b, 353), and not without power; Satan and demons are mythological personifications of this power (1960b, 522ff.) G. A. Boyd (2001, 285) summarizes Barth’s essential thrust:

[Nothingness] is a perpetually “menacing” pervasive reality that is menacing precisely because it has no reality of its own. It is a realm of nonbeing perpetually trying to be, as it were, over and against the creation that God has chosen. Hence Barth can appropriately characterize *das Nichtige* as a realm of falsehood that becomes evil when it encroaches on the realm of creation. Indeed, in Barth’s view, all the personifications of evil in Scripture (that is, the devil, demons, Leviathan) are mythological expressions of this cosmic menacing force.

Barth (1960b, 521) contends that these agents of nothingness need to be demythologized not through deletion but through the denial of the positive relationship of “belief” and the grouping of them with the “exalted company” of God and the holy angels. All that needs to be said positively of their nature and work is that

They can only hate God and His creation. They can only exist in the attempt to rage against God and to spoil His creation.... This disruptive being is what God never willed, and never does nor will. It is that which, because its being is improper being, can only stand to all eternity under His non-willing, on His left hand, condemned by Him and hastening to destruction. (Barth 1960b, 523)

Barth’s interpretation has much to commend it. It overcomes the major problems of the three previous approaches. It refutes the simple denial of the demonic of classical liberalism, remaining truer to the scriptural teaching, yet is capable of

sloughing off the offensive and extra-biblical accretions of more traditional theology. More importantly, it provides a framework for the integration of all types of evil—natural and moral, individual and social—which the other views all must partition to some degree:

We have called sin the concrete form of nothingness because in sin it becomes man's own act, achievement and guilt. Yet nothingness is not exhausted in sin... It [sin] is not merely attended and followed by the ills which are inseparably bound up with creaturely existence in virtue of the negative aspect of creation, but by the suffering of evil as something wholly anomalous which threatens and imperils this existence and is no less inconsistent with it than sin itself, as the preliminary experience of an absolutely alien factor which is radically opposed to the sense and purpose of creation and therefore to the Creator Himself. Nor is it a mere matter of dying as the natural termination of life, but of death itself as the intolerable, life-destroying thing to which all suffering hastens as its goal, as the ultimate irruption and triumph of that alien power which annihilates creaturely existence and thus discredits and disclaims the Creator. There is real evil and real death as well as real sin. In another connexion it will fall to be indicated that there is also a real devil with his legions, and a real hell. But here it will suffice to recognise real evil and real death. "Real" again means in opposition to the totality of God's creation. That nothingness has the form of evil and death as well as sin shows us that it is what it is not only morally but physically and totally. It is the comprehensive negation of the creature and its nature. (Barth 1960b, 310)

Viewed this way, the demonic is the coalescence and personalization of nothingness, of any and all forces that array themselves against God's purposes in creation and redemption. As a negative reality that can threaten a good creation not yet consummated in perfection, the power of nothingness was greatly augmented by the fall of humanity, granting it access to the world and the lives and history of human beings. Satan, as the power of nothingness, attempts to subvert them and all of God's creatures from the kingdom of the right hand to the kingdom of the left, from the life of God to non-being. The satanic manifests in the work of sin, death, and destruction, but Christ has overcome this power (John 10.10, Heb. 2.14). Thus, the work of redemption not only settles the matter of human sin but is the victory of God over evil in all of its forms.

Barth's doctrine of nothingness holds great potential for the revisioning of many areas of Christian theology, not the least of which is the retrieval of the Christus victor theory. That said, a few weaknesses must also be noted. The exact origin and necessity of nothingness is not completely clear; why must there be a "kingdom on the left hand" (Hick 1978, 137–144)? While Barth did not intend to produce a philosophically completely satisfying theodicy (Barth 1960b, 365–368; McDowell 2002, 323–324), the challenge of the problem of evil still persists, though it perhaps is less acutely felt. It may also be asked how nothingness obtains power beyond human accession via sin, that is, in its manifestation as natural evil. G. A. Boyd (2001, 289–

290), coming from the position of extreme free-will theism, insists that it may be attributed to demons as “free, morally responsible” agents, thus returning to the fully mythological worldview. While containing some salvageable points, for many Boyd’s conclusion is unacceptable in its deviation from more classical theism, and the question of how evil may irrupt apart from being willed may have to remain open. Its resolution is far beyond the scope of the present work, but the continuance of this question urges careful consideration of the matters it touches on vis-à-vis the work of atonement.

In sum, the cosmic conflict theme of the Bible, especially the New Testament, demands a thoughtful and responsible theological treatment of the demonic. Of the available options, the Barthian one, which demythologizes the diabolical but acknowledges its distinct ontic reality as nothingness, seems the most responsible and widely applicable. Indeed, in the relevant portions of *Dogmatics* III.3 (1960b, 289–368, 519–531), Barth gives the impression of laying the groundwork for the statement of a Christus victor interpretation of the atonement; many pages of quotations pointing in this direction could be reproduced. Ultimately, he could not break completely with his tradition and retained a legal framework for his own doctrine of atonement (Barth 1956b, 274); in opting for a form of penal substitution, J. Macquarrie (1956, 62–63) argues, he unnecessarily deviated from the mainline of New Testament, patristic, and possibly modern, as it gives way to postmodern, theology. Nevertheless, Barth’s exploration of nothingness is of great value, and this is the interpretation of the demonic that the present work chooses in its appropriation of the classical theory of the atonement. At several points its explanatory power will be directly invoked and elucidated; otherwise it may safely be assumed to be the interpretation behind the traditional language employed with regard to the devil.

#### **4.1.1.3 Problem Texts**

The preceding discussion has presented the theme of cosmic conflict that arcs through the narrative of the Bible, especially the New Testament, and has positively argued that it provides a better framework for explaining atonement and salvation than the narrative of retributive justice told by the penal substitution theory, a concept that, it has been observed, is notably absent from the message and work of salvation as presented by Jesus himself. There is thus ample justification for the revisioning of atonement theology, the chief task of the present chapter. Yet, the penal theory stakes claim to the strongest biblical support, and the vehemence of this claim prompts a final examination. G. Bahnsen (1993) shares the view of many when he writes,

The doctrine of penal substitution could be expunged from the Biblical witness only by a perverse and criminal mistreatment of the sacred text or a tendentious distortion of its meaning.

As this thesis is not an exegetical work, it is not possible to address all of the relevant texts used to substantiate this claim and the history of their interpretation. However, there are several key passages frequently championed as explicitly teaching penal substitution that cannot be responsibly bypassed in route to the construction of an alternative theory (cf. Packer 1974, 44–45). These texts furnish the nuclei of concepts that are vital for the construction of the penal theory and simultaneously the most objectionable for other theories: the relating of divine punishment to the death of the messiah and its establishment as the precondition for reconciliation, and the portrayal of the opposition of the Father to the Son in the moment of atonement. Collectively, these texts form the keystone of the metanarrative behind penal substitution and distinguish it from all other approaches to the work of Christ. It will be argued that these texts receive their meaning in the traditional perspective from the presupposed metanarrative, not dispassionate exegesis, and consequently, if interpreted otherwise, that metanarrative itself will collapse.

#### **4.1.1.3.1 The Servant Song of Isaiah 52.13–53.12**

The importance of Is. 52.13–53.12, the fourth servant song, for the penal substitutionary theory cannot be overstated; it features prominently in most presentations of the doctrine (e.g., Calvin 1997, 2.16.5; Murray 1955, 76–78; Williams, J. R. 1988b, 358–360; Schreiner 2006b, 86). Many use this messianic passage to retrospectively interpret the sacrifices of the Torah and prospectively explain specifically how Christ fulfills them; it also serves as the interpretive key for the other New Testament passages discussed below. More than any other passage, it weaves together the scarlet thread connecting the Testaments. These dependencies immediately complicate the theological handling of the passage, for its use in these roles is predicated on assumptions about how the Old Testament and prophecy should be related to the New, and any assessment, agreeing or dissenting, must also work through the questions these assumptions raise. Most importantly, when interpreted as a prophetic description of the crucifixion, it is the only place in Scripture where God is cast as the punisher or afflicter of the servant (vv. 4–5, 10), that is, of Jesus, which is vital to the theory and the crux of its differences with dissenting theories. The passage is further complicated as a problem text because it is also the basis of the pentecostal doctrine of healing in the atonement. Indeed, in comparison to other traditions, classical pentecostalism is ostensibly the most consistent in affirming both aspects of the servant's work being accomplished on the cross. In light of this, the text represents a significant problem for the present work, which affirms that the atonement provides healing but contests its penal nature. At present, these issues must be settled as far as possible.

From the perspective of the Christian faith, the question of whether or not the passage may be interpreted as a prophetic description of Christ's suffering and death can only be answered affirmatively. It is quoted or alluded to in the New Testament by a range of authors, and it has been recognized as messianic throughout the history of the church. What must be examined, however, are the questions of how specifically the authors of the New Testament use it and how it should then be used by Christian theology. These questions are more complicated than simple, conservative transferences of the passage to the penal theory suggest. The assumption usually made when working from the perspective of plenary verbal inspiration is that since the New Testament accepts the servant song as messianic, all of its details may safely be transferred to the crucifixion of Jesus independently of how it is actually used by the New Testament writers; in other words, the song is used to determine not just the meaning of direct quotations and allusions but also of conceptually related New Testament passages and not vice versa. The result is that presentations of the penal theory read the song as a whole into the New Testament, conflating the entire song with its partial quotations, and thus draw conclusions that are not clearly present in the actual text of the New Testament.

The penal theory must take this approach because of the simple fact, mentioned previously, that the New Testament never applies language of "penalty" or "punishment" to God's part in the event of Jesus' crucifixion: God does not "punish" his Son or "pour out his wrath" on him (e.g., Grudem 1994, 574–575). As Barth (1956b, 253) admits, "The concept of punishment has come into the answer given by Christian theology to this question from Is. 53. In the New Testament it does not occur in this connexion." The only verses in the canon of Scripture that suggest this are Isaiah 53.4b ("we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted"), 5b ("upon him was the punishment that made us whole"), and 10a ("it was the will of the Lord [יהוה] to crush him"). That even these expressions explicitly teach divine satisfaction through vicarious punishment is debatable, but more importantly, these phrases from the servant song are neither directly quoted nor alluded to in the entirety of the New Testament (Aland, et al. 1993, 888, 897), even despite the widespread employment of the servant image. Yet, in presentations of the penal theory, such language is unconsciously read into unrelated texts that describe the death of Christ as an offering or sacrifice, such as Rom. 3.25 and 8.32, or describe how through the death of Christ God overcame sin; several representatives of this type are treated in more detail below. Sacrifice does not, however, necessarily involve punishment (Finlan 2005, 36–38), nor should God's opposition to sin necessarily imply his opposition, even for a moment, to the one who does not own it but vicariously carries it away. It bears repeating that from the perspective of the present work, this is the



chief problem of the penal theory. That the wrath of God is turned towards human sinners in their estrangement, that Christ dies on their behalf, and that by doing so he frees them from sin and its penalties are points that are not disputed. What must be rejected are the contentions that, first, God is only merciful after punishment has been meted out, which is contradicted by the life and teaching of Christ, and that, second, this mercy through justice can only be accomplished by a violent rending, even momentarily, of the intra-Trinitarian fellowship through the Father's punishment and abandonment of the Son. The Christian doctrine of God precludes this doctrine of the work of Christ, which in any event does not find its origin in the New Testament.

Even beyond this dubious theological usage, the question remains open as to how and to what extent the New Testament actually draws upon the servant song. The question also exemplifies the difficulty experienced by systematic theologians in utilizing contemporary New Testament scholarship; equally skilled exegetes can arrive at radically different conclusions. As an important authority from a significant era of biblical studies, Cullmann (1963, 80), for example, states,

Concerning the *earthly* work of Jesus, we can say that the *ebed Yahweh* concept comprehends the central Christological event in a way which does full justice to the total witness of the New Testament.

On the other hand, Hooker (1959, 154), another important scholar writing in the same era, argues that "The influence of the Servant Songs upon early Christian thought has, in fact, been greatly over-estimated, as the paucity of genuine references has shown." Her in-depth study of the question leads her to conclude that the writers of the New Testament retrospectively accepted the Deutero-Isaianic song of 52.13–53.12 as a prophetic indicator of Jesus' death as the messiah, but they did not rely upon the passage to establish the meaning of his death:

Much of the so-called 'evidence' for a New Testament Servant-Christology is therefore based upon a fundamental error: for in the absence of any passage in the primitive tradition which clearly applies Isa. 53 to the *meaning* of Christ's death, and not merely the *fact* of that event, it is impossible to accept linguistic similarity as evidence that any connection was intended *doctrinally* with the Servant concept; if quotations from Deutero-Isaiah are used only as 'proof-texts', we have no right to assume that mere words and phrases were intended to bear any other significance. (Hooker 1959, 155)

Hooker establishes stricter criteria for determining the validity of the influence of the servant songs on New Testament writers than what some might deem necessary. Her study, however, presents many useful findings for the present concern, not the least of which is her demonstration that previous scholars had been too quick to conclude a deliberate link to the song wherever any language of service or suffering is found.

Particularly relevant from the perspective of the current work is Hooker's (1959, 107–116) analysis of the use of the servant image in Acts. In this book, Jesus is called the “servant” of God multiple times (3.13, 26, 4.27, 30); the author uses the word *παῖς*—the translation preferred by the Septuagint for the *עֶבֶד* of Deutero-Isaiah—not *δοῦλος*. Acts 8.32–35 also quotes Is. 53.7–8, apparently directly from the LXX. From this evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that the author believed Jesus was the fulfillment of the fourth servant song and was conscious of its text while writing. What is most significant, however, is how he does *not* use the passage. Regarding the quotation in Acts 8, Hooker (1959, 113–114) observes,

The judgement of the onlookers that the Servant has suffered on account of their sins, expressed in the original in the verses immediately preceding this passage, and in the last line of v.8, is strangely missing in Acts. While it may be argued that the verses quoted are meant to convey the meaning of the whole passage,... it is still remarkable that he has chosen these particular words. ...[T]he choice is not a haphazard one. It seems that the significance of Isa. 53 lay, for the author of Acts at least, not in the connection between suffering and the sin of others, but in the picture of humiliation: thus yet again the chapter is used as a proof-text of the necessity for Christ's Passion, and not as a theological exposition of its meaning.

This practice of conscious, selective shortening of quotations is not alien to the author of Acts; the same phenomenon also prominently occurs in Luke 4.18–19, where the reading of Isaiah 61.1–2 is deliberately interrupted when it stops being applicable to that particular moment of messianic fulfillment. Beyond Hooker's observations, it is also revealing that despite the frequent allusions in Acts to Jesus as the *παῖς*, the significant detail from Is. 53.4–10 of God punishing or afflicting the servant is never raised. On the contrary, as has been shown above in §4.1.1.1, Acts is completely consistent in assigning the unjust punishment and execution of Jesus to his opponents. Indeed, the quotation of Acts 8.33a (=Is. 53.8a) clearly rules that “justice was denied him”; still the penal theory contends that it was through this injustice that God's justice was satisfied. Luke knows nothing of that theology. The point remains that if the punishment of the servant was so vital to his mission or, in the language of later theology, his saving work is one of penal substitution, which constitutes “the heart and soul of an evangelical view of the atonement” (Schreiner 2006b, 67), it is remarkable that this work of New Testament literature that is so in touch with the Isaianic passage would omit this crucial aspect of the good news of Christ. The same may be asked, to a greater or lesser extent, of the other writings that either quote or allude to the song.

In the end, the answer to this biblical question can only be found in a deeper theological issue, that of the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. The traditional approach, which sees the servant song as undergirding all of the New Testament

witness to Christ, depends upon a strict form of the doctrine of verbal inspiration. In this system at its most heavy-handed, every word of Scripture is inspired to an equal extent, and every passage that is judged doctrinally authoritative is utterly authoritative. All that is necessary to authorize the use of Is. 52.13–53.12 in toto to interpret the meaning of Christ's death, and therefore to ascertain the Bible's teaching of atonement, is a single usage by the New Testament of the language or imagery of any portion of the passage. The rest of the passage then automatically comes into force as an indicative prophecy that both predetermines the accomplishment of the crucifixion and fixes its meaning. The Spirit's inspiration does not free but rather constrains the subsequent writers of Scripture to follow the path previously dictated. Under this scheme, penal substitution may well be correct, but this conclusion can only be reached through eisegesis forced by the theology of the accepted metanarrative, which has already decided that the servant song is the paramount, controlling passage of the entire Bible's story of redemption. It is not the result of exegesis of the actual, inspired New Testament writings.

Neither responsible exegesis nor systematizing theology can allow a single passage to wield such influence when the canon of Scripture itself forbids it from doing so. A holistic, biblical doctrine of atonement should be recognizable and justifiable from multiple textual bases. While a complex interpretive challenge from any theological perspective, ultimately the servant song is not problematic if the same approach is taken as that of the New Testament itself, affirming what it affirms but refraining from conclusions the New Testaments does not make. Hooker's verdict that the events of the life of Jesus led the church to the song and not vice versa is a useful guideline. When read cautiously but messianically, the song is a poetic and dramatic description of both the servant's work in life and his salvific death. It takes the perspective common to the Hebrew Scriptures that God is behind and sovereign over all things even when he is not the immediate actor, and that he permits sinful human beings to act against his will even as he uses their rebellion to accomplish it. This view was shared by the early church as Peter's message at Pentecost (Acts 2.22–36) demonstrates. Read as a complete unit or oracle (Is. 52.13–53.12), the song is a vivid depiction of the servant's plight from the perspective of other human onlookers; the prophet primarily reports the reactions and responses of those who witness the servant and his death. The statements about God's relationship to him are principally these onlookers' interpretation and viewpoint. How these images correspond so closely to the passion of Jesus gives the passage its great messianic power, and it is no wonder that it has captivated and moved Christians throughout the ages. That it provides a clear glimpse at the intra-Trinitarian relationship in the moment of redemption and thus should be used as foundation, even the singular key, for constructing a theory of

the atonement is rather more of an overreach, stretching the passage far beyond its purpose or its appropriation by the New Testament, which provides its own, far clearer explanations of the meaning and means of redemption.

In closing, a word must be said about the use of the servant song, specifically Is. 53.4–5, in the pentecostal doctrine of healing in the atonement. Previously in §3.3.3, Petts's (1993a) criticism and rejection of the pentecostal doctrine was itself criticized for the methodological choice of exegeting only the New Testament's quotation of the passage in Matt. 8.17 and 1 Pet. 2.24 rather than beginning with Deutero-Isaiah itself, which is the starting point of the doctrine's proponents (e.g., Simpson, A. B. 1893, 19–21; McPherson and Cox 1969, 150–152). In essence, Petts argues that while Matt. 8.17 concerns physical healing, it does not concern Christ's death, and while 1 Pet. 2.24 concerns Christ's death, it does not concern physical healing; accordingly, the doctrine has no New Testament basis and is thus invalid. Although never explicitly stated, it can be reasonably inferred that penal substitution is the definition of atonement that he uses in analyzing and judging the contrary interpretations of these passages. In light of the discussion immediately above, it might seem that Petts's conclusions about Matt. 8.17 and 1 Pet. 2.24 should be accepted on the same basis that the use of the song to force a penal interpretation on the New Testament is rejected, that is, through a prioritization of the New Testament and its specific appropriation of the passage. The vital difference here is that while the New Testament never connects Isaiah's image of the punishment of the servant to the saving work of God in Jesus Christ, it explicitly appropriates its language about his bearing of sickness and healing. Healing is unquestionably a major aspect of Christ's saving work in life, and as has been repeatedly argued throughout this work, it is a theological fallacy to qualitatively distinguish his work in life from his work in death, a point that was raised early on by A. B. Simpson (1893, 22–25), the great proponent of this doctrine. The alternative reading of salvation as a holistic liberation and healing of the human person through Christ's recapitulation and ransom, rather than principally as the settling of a legal problem, establishes the grounds for healing in the atonement, "atonement" here being broadly defined as Christ's saving work in death and not strictly as reconciliation. As will be discussed shortly, healing is a vital element of his work, and beyond the language of Is. 53.4–5 and its various appropriations in the New Testament, it is also strongly suggested by passages such as John 3.14 and other explanations of the meaning of the cross.

#### **4.1.1.3.2 The Cry from the Cross**

The cry of Jesus from the cross, reported in Mark 15.34 and Matt. 27.46, plays a similar, if simpler, role in the formulation of atonement theories. Throughout church history and in contemporary times, a wide range of interpretations have been given to

it, and many hold it out as the key to understanding the atonement, the humanity and divinity of Christ, and his relationship to the Father. G. Rossé (1987, 73–100) has made a detailed study of this saying, including the history of its interpretation by the church. During the patristic era, the cry was given relatively less attention. Though opinions varied, it was largely interpreted as the conclusion of Christ’s humiliation as a human being and not the disclosure of a direct act of abandonment by the Father; at most, it indicated God’s abstention from intervening in the crucifixion (Rossé 1987, 73–77). Over time and chiefly in the West—and this development could be correlated with the rise of satisfaction atonement and the “deletion of the devil” from its equation—the abandonment becomes a direct act of God akin to the dark night of the soul experienced by mystics. This shift indicates the trajectory that was eventually taken by the reformers, as well as some later Roman Catholics, who identified the abandonment as part of the punishment meted out by God in the crucifixion:

A threshold has been crossed... placing Jesus directly under the anger and vindictive justice of God expressed in the cry of abandonment, a cry that shows that Jesus would have suffered the pains of the damned in his soul, i.e., would have had the experience of hell... It is a question rather of a real abandonment, a punishment of God in his wrath, even if at bottom this abandonment remains provisory, an act of justice performed on an innocent man who has taken the place of the truly guilty. (Rossé 1987, 84)

Calvin (1997, 2.16.10) goes so far as to liken Christ’s punishment and abandonment to the sufferings of hell; this is proper meaning of the creed’s *descendit*:

Nothing had been done if Christ had only endured corporeal death. In order to interpose between us and God’s anger, and satisfy his righteous judgment, it was necessary that he should feel the weight of divine vengeance. Whence also it was necessary that he should engage, as it were, at close quarters with the powers of hell and the horrors of eternal death... Hence there is nothing strange in its being said that he descended to hell, seeing he endured the death which is inflicted on the wicked by an angry God.

This view finds its most extreme expression, interestingly enough, in the charismatic-associated “Word of faith” movement, which holds significant influence on popular pentecostal and charismatic spirituality. Many Word of faith leaders teach that Christ not only suffered this agony on the cross but was literally tormented as lost in hell until he was “born again” there (Abanes 1997, 374, 376–377; Atkinson 2007). Although roundly condemned as heterodox at the very least, the Word of faith doctrine must be acknowledged as an extrapolation of the general trajectory of more orthodox protestant thought (Macchia 1995, 200 n. 59).

The main line of conservative protestant theology held to the idea of the cry as indicative of a genuine and willful abandonment by God, and today it is axiomatically accepted as the correct interpretation, perfectly in harmony with the logic of penal

substitution (e.g., Packer 1974, 39–41). Despite the occasional circumlocution to the contrary, the cry is invoked to demonstrate a key tenet of the penal theory referenced above, the Father’s separation from the Son in the moment of atonement, and to which objection was made due to its rending of the intra-Trinitarian relationship. H. D. McDonald’s (1994, 31–32) weaving of the cry into the penal narrative is representative of many others’:

To bear in himself sin’s curse and judgement meant Jesus being forsaken by his God and Father. The awful isolation of the cry of Jesus on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34) cannot be separated in the experience of Christ from some real, if mysterious, connection with the sin he came to deal with in his death on the cross. The sense of God’s presence was lost to Christ... taken from him— that unbroken awareness of the nearness of God his Father which had hitherto been his constant experience. At Calvary God the holy Father who cannot look on sin or behold iniquity dare not lift his eyes on the Son of his love laden with transgressions. He must turn himself away from the terrible scene... So on Calvary’s tree did Christ by taking to himself the sin of all sinners, experience the God-forsakenness of sin’s judgement.

Barth goes further and integrates the cry into his theological system as a whole. He cites Mark 15.34 frequently (e.g., 1957, 365, 738; 1958, 109; 1956b, 185, 215, 239) to substantiate Jesus Christ as the one human being both elected and rejected by God, which is the organizing center of his dogmatics.

This usage of the cry is a prime example of how metanarrative, rather than strict exegesis, can drive interpretation; the saying is here required to support far more doctrinal weight than it should reasonably be made to bear. Barth accepts that it teaches a willful abandonment by God because that interpretation strengthens his theology, and general presentations of the penal theory use it because it fits into the narrative framework of reconciliation via retributive punishment. Rossé’s study reveals that its interpretation is rather more complicated than this particular appropriation suggests. Space forbids exploration of all of the issues involved with the text here, but one alternative interpretation that deserves consideration is the possibility that Jesus, in keeping with a known convention, cried out the first line of Psalm 22 to direct his audience to the Psalm as a whole. Rossé (1987, 103–105) doubts this possibility, chiefly because Jesus recites it in Aramaic and not Hebrew, and the previous section’s caution against careless expansions of New Testament quotations of the Old Testament beyond their actual texts should also give pause. However, the circumstances of the saying from the cross are radically different, and the facts that it is indeed a recitation and that the Aramaic saying is preserved not just in Matt. 27.46 but also in Mark 15.34 are highly significant; more is indicated by this outburst than the simple nullity of forsakenness that the penal theory infers. The Christian interpretation of Psalm 22, especially vv. 6–18, as a prophecy of the

crucifixion is well-known, and ultimately, the psalm is a declaration of trust, not doubt, in God. Moreover, beyond the perceived absence of God, a malevolent third party plays a role in the psalm; it is a “company of evildoers” (v. 16) that causes the afflictions of the psalmist, not God. As has been repeatedly stated throughout this work, the neglect of the role of these third parties has contributed to the problems of the Western atonement theory and its handling of Scripture; the common interpretation of Jesus’ cry is another example of this.

Apart from this question, to conclude that the cry indicates a literal and active abandonment by the Father as part of Jesus’ punishment is an unwarranted leap beyond what the saying communicates in context and the teaching of the Christian canon as a whole. At the most, it conveys that the man Jesus felt or perceived an abandonment by God in the agonies of his death. As the Christian faith confesses the full humanity of Jesus Christ, including the complete range of human emotions, needs, and weaknesses, this is a perfectly plausible and acceptable conclusion. From the verse itself, however, it cannot be determined whether or not God abandoned him in actuality; Jesus’ feelings at this moment cannot be relied on as a statement of theological fact. John 16.32, which describes the Father’s accompaniment of the Son in his hour of betrayal despite his abandonment by his friends, militates against this conclusion. The full meaning of this saying may remain a puzzle, but what is plain is that it is inappropriate to claim that it gives a clear insight into the intra-Trinitarian relationships and even more so to set it as a controlling text for determining the nature of the atonement. Its use as such is again eisegesis prompted by metanarrative.

#### **4.1.1.3.3 “Made to Be Sin”: 2 Cor. 5.21 and Related Texts**

The Pauline corpus contains similarly challenging texts that seem to lend theological support to the penal theory and place in doubt the possibility of alternative perspectives. Perhaps the clearest and most frequently cited of these is 2 Cor. 5.21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Others such as Rom. 8.3 and Gal. 3.13 make similar points and may be grouped with 2 Cor. 5.21 in treatment (e.g., Barth 1956a, 398; 1956b, 165). These texts strongly communicate Christ’s vicarious bearing of sin, even to the point of identification or equation with not just sinners but with sin itself. Moreover, from the penal perspective, they imply a temporary transmutation in the Father’s orientation to the Son while he makes atonement. When coupled with the passages discussed in the previous sections, the descriptions of Christ as being “made to be sin” and “cursed” strongly suggest that he became the target of God’s punishment and the object of his wrath. It is this conjunction of passages and images that gives the penal theory its confidence as the biblically correct theory of the atonement and accordingly, casts suspicions on alternative views.

Many of the arguments against the penal theory's usage of the servant song of Is. 52–53 and the cry from the cross also apply to its handling of these Pauline passages; namely, the penal theory extrapolates beyond what the verses explicitly say to unwarrantably establish a division or conflict in the intra-Trinitarian relationship. It maintains this division because of a prior theological decision of removing the “third party” to the atonement and restricting it to the reckoning between a holy God and sinful, elect humanity, which is represented in the person of God's Son. This failure to accommodate the role of the third party causes distortion both in theology and biblical interpretation, for it demands that all events surrounding the crucifixion be assigned to the will and action of God himself. For example, Gal. 3.13 maintains that Christ “became a curse for us” because of the teaching of the law, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.” From the two-dimensional perspective of penal substitutionary atonement, Christ must be cursed because of this pronouncement of God's law; as the bearer of sin before a holy God, he is justly judged by God as such in that moment (McCormack 1998, 297). As Justin Martyr (1999, 96) corrects, however, it was not God but those who are responsible for his death, the human agents of the power of darkness, who cursed him (cf. Rom. 15.3). By leaving out the role of the power of nothingness in the crucifixion, the penal interpretation falls into the error, discussed previously, of uncritically conflating the actions of Jesus' enemies with God's actions. Schwager (1999, 162–169), in particular, has explored this theme in depth, including how it relates to the texts under discussion. He demonstrates from Scripture how sin can distort even the law of God and its institutions so that they may be used contrary to God's purposes, and it is from this perspective that these texts must be interpreted:

The power of sin is so cunning that it can get completely within its grasp the good and holy law and can so distort it that it works against God and his envoy. If Jesus in the name of the divine law was condemned as a “blasphemer” and thus was made into a curse, even into Satan (John 10:33; 19:7), it was consequently not God, the originator of the law, who cursed his Son. The power of evil rather turned back the command which came from God against the Son. Working from this insight, we are finally led to the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:21, that God did not himself destroy Christ in judgment. Certainly, he sent him into the world of sin, but entirely with the aim of saving humankind. However, the power of sin was so great that it was able by means of its mechanism and dynamic to draw him into its world and thus to make him into sin. (Schwager 1999, 168)

As Weaver (2001, 58), following Schwager, concludes,

...[I]t is clear that texts such as 2 Corinthians 5.21 do not constitute incontrovertible proof of satisfaction atonement. ...Paul sees the death of Jesus, not in terms of compensatory violence (restore justice by punishing a Jesus made sin in place of punishing sinful humankind), but as the confrontation between the reign of God and evil power. Resurrection then becomes the victory of the reign of God over the power of sin.



The reconciliation of sinful humanity with God involves a conflict, but not the one proposed by the penal substitution theory. Reconciliation is effected by the overcoming of the power of sin, and in his death Christ does indeed come in such close contact with human sin so as to be identified with it. Yet, this identification is for the purpose of its removal and the destruction of its power, and this work of redemption is performed by the Father and the Son together in the unity and power of the Holy Spirit, not through a sundering of this unbreakable and perfect union, which is explicitly affirmed throughout the fourth gospel (e.g., 5.19–24, 10.17–18, 16.32, 17.1–5). Justice and love are properties of both the Father and the Son (Aulén 1960, 56–57; Schmiechen 2005, 110–113), and the Father has no need to punish the Son in order to forgive humanity’s sins, for punishment is not the basis of forgiveness. The cross is indeed a judgment, but it is first and foremost a judgment of the illegitimate “ruler of this world” (John 12.31, 16.11). Together, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the divine Persons are victorious in the real conflict with the powers, classically depicted as the unholy triad of sin, death, and the devil, which separate humanity from God:

Since the divine will is radically antagonistic to evil, and since God cannot therefore be reconciled to evil, this reconciliation entails the destruction of the power of evil and its dominion. The reconciliation implies furthermore that the finished work of Christ has a positive significance for the divine will as such and thereby accomplishes reconciliation. (Aulén 1960, 201)

The penal theory falters from the very beginning by misapprehending the nature of this conflict and its participants. As Aulén (1960, 176) forcefully asserts,

The conflict motif has a central place within primitive Christianity. Every attempt to understand primitive Christianity without giving sufficient attention to this fact is doomed to failure.... For the Gospels it is fundamental that there is a struggle between the divine will and the power of evil, however this power may be described.

A proper interpretation of these challenging texts, therefore, first requires a recovery of the cosmic conflict perspective that informs the teaching of the New Testament writers. Only then can an atonement doctrine be formulated that will be faithful to the gospel teaching even while responding to contemporary concerns.

#### **4.1.2 Pentecostal Values and Resources**

The internal values and praxis-oriented beliefs of classical pentecostalism constitute the final theological source for the present task of the positive construction of doctrine. Although pentecostalism is hardly known for its contributions to formal systematic theology, from its very beginning it has exhibited flashes of great theological intuition, even at times anticipating developments in more mainstream theological movements. The potential of these insights has rarely been explored in

depth by either those inside or outside of the revival, and the historical practice of pentecostals has been to simply append them to the collection of more or less standard conservative doctrinal points affirmed by the adherents of the movement without fuller integration or consideration of their systemic implications. The present work shall unpack some of these intuitions in the process of retrieving and revisioning the Christus victor model. This task is all the more urgent given pentecostalism's strong confessional and devotional investment, discussed above in §3.3.3, in the penal substitutionary theory. Movement away from this model can only be suggested with great consideration for this investment and with a decisive demonstration that Christus victor is not an alien theory but a biblical one that richly resonates with deeply held pentecostal beliefs and practices. Some of its points of contact with these beliefs may now be delineated.

First, the cosmic conflict worldview of the Bible is alive and well across a broad section of the pentecostal movement. Pentecostalism believes in spiritual warfare and takes it quite seriously; it permeates its hymnody, preaching, counseling, and prayers. To speak of this warfare in the context of the work of Christ is thus not to apologetically introduce a foreign innovation to a closed and skeptical system; indeed, the challenge at times can be safeguarding against a runaway demonology that can potentially devolve into shamanism. Official, denominational pentecostal organs are aware of this problem, and while they do not deny the reality of the demonic, they generally speak circumspectly of it and folk practices associated with it. F. D. Macchia (1995, 207–208), writing in the authorized Assembly of God systematic theology, assesses:

Unfortunately, in Pentecostal and charismatic movements spiritual warfare and deliverance ministries abound, giving deliberate attention to the realm of the demonic.... The devil is often referred to as the exclusive or, at least, dominant element in all opposition to God's redemptive purpose for humanity. God's whole redemptive activity is narrowed to destroying the devil, so that soteriology, Christology, pneumatology, and all other areas of theology, are discussed almost exclusively in the light of fighting demons!... In such a context, demonology is granted a glory and theological significance beyond biblical boundaries. In such a vision of reality, it is believed that the horizon of the Christian's world is filled with dangers of demonic attack and conquest at every turn.

As an unfortunate byproduct of this wariness, Macchia (1995, 209–211) scoffs at the patristic ransom theory, imprudently preferring to confidently affirm God as the receiver of Christ's payment in death; more wisely, he expresses doubt over the traditional proof-texts offered in support of the angelic fall. What is needed to surmount this problem in pentecostalism, however, is not less theology but more. The intuitive recognition of the cosmic conflict by pentecostalism needs to find its

bearings within a serviceable interpretative framework such as that which the Christus victor model provides. An illustration of this need is found in the longer statement of faith of the Church of God in Christ (n.d.), which diverges from the norm of pentecostal denominations in making the demonic an article of faith:

Their [demons'] chief power is exercised to destroy the mission of Jesus Christ. It can well be said that the Christian Church believes in Demons, Satan, and Devils. We believe in their power and purpose. We believe they can be subdued and conquered as in the commandment to the believer by Jesus.

Lacking in the statement is any mention of Christ's work in overcoming the demonic powers; indeed, it lacks any cohesive statement of atonement at all. Nevertheless, this orientation towards the cosmic conflict should not be seen as a hindrance towards the maturation of pentecostal theology but rather a potentially valuable resource. It is a summons to the movement to develop its intuitions and insights into a sound, biblical contribution to the contemporary ecumenical theological conversation.

A second helpful value is pentecostalism's soteriological openness as exemplified by its commitment to the "full gospel" and "full salvation." There are no prescribed limits, at least in theory, to the nature and extent of salvation, but only a continual openness to further recovery of lost or neglected biblical teachings. Chapter 3 demonstrated how not all soteriological paradigms have lent themselves to a similar openness; certain assumptions and core beliefs about the human condition and God's work of redemption in Christ placed limits on the nature, dimensions, and extent of salvation. Pentecostalism has tended to reverse this approach, first beginning with soteriological statements then working back to relate them to Christology and other loci. While this may not be the best approach for methodological reasons, these reasons cannot be allowed to place artificial restrictions on a biblical soteriology. An example of this practice is how the Wesleyan and pentecostal movements recognized—in accord with the Bible as well as the longstanding tradition of the church but contra the innovation of magisterial protestantism (House 2006, 110–112)—that the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation was not singular and restricted to regeneration or conversion-initiation but could encompass multiple, chronologically distinct crises (Land 1993, 117–119). These works of the Spirit were then related to other areas of theology, allowing for their revision. Another example of its soteriological openness is seen in the expansion of salvation to include physical dimensions of human existence through the doctrine of healing in the atonement. Working from within this paradigm, the movement again is well-positioned for contributing new insights to the theological conversation; at the same time, it should be amiable to correction and revision should any of its practices or beliefs be shown to be unsound or deficient. With regard to the specific question at hand, its broad

soteriological orientation should mesh well with the more fully encompassing interpretation of the work of Christ offered by the *Christus victor* model.

Third, pentecostalism offers a powerful theological resource, with wider implications, in its approach to the person of Christ: a fuller appropriation of Jesus as the model for the Christian life. W. G. MacDonald (1988, 486) explains:

Pentecostals have found in Jesus a role model not only for “Christian” [in the most literal sense] character but also for Christian experience—specifically, spiritual experiences analogous to the great ones preserved in the record about him. A holy human being entempling the Holy Spirit, he became the prototype for those recreated in his image.

It is one of the great paradoxes of the movement in that while it otherwise follows the general conservative evangelical habit of almost docetically stressing the divinity of Christ, it has apprehended the significance of his humanity in a way that is largely unprecedented in the broader Christian tradition. The pentecostal appropriation of Christ as model exceeds the traditional restriction of the *imitatio Christi* to “piety and ethics,” which are the norm of “spiritual formation” (Ruthven 2000, 60–61). There are no limits, at least in theory, to how Christ may be emulated in personal experience, ministry, and even the working of the miraculous. For theology, this insight is useful because it allows the life of Christ to be interpreted as a paradigm for the work of salvation wrought in believers; again, it is a means of giving salvific significance to his entire life and not just his death. For example, from this analogy a strong argument can be made in favor of a two-staged experience of the Spirit (MacDonald 1988, 486–487). Jesus was born of the Spirit, and Christians are born again of the Spirit. Subsequently, after his baptism, Jesus was empowered by the Spirit (Luke 4.1, 14); similarly, Christians are later empowered by the experience of Spirit baptism or fullness (Acts 1.5, 8, 2.4). The experiences of Jesus and his followers perhaps differ only in intensity, for Jesus was given the Spirit without measure (John 3.34). In other words, salvation involves the replication of the life of Christ. It is Christification, a mirror-image of recapitulation. This theological resource of pentecostalism has yet to be explored to its full potential.

The fourth resource of pentecostalism, which simultaneously derives from and nurtures the previous points, is the continuation, not cessation, of all the charismata within the church. Engagement of the cosmic conflict, full salvation, and imitation of the ministry of Christ are not possible for the contemporary church if God does not grant to it the same spiritual resources as the apostolic church. Pentecostals and charismatics reject the polemic that the supposed “sign gifts” of Jesus primarily served the purpose of authentication of, first, his divinity (Ruthven 2000, 62–65), and second, the truthfulness of apostolic proclamation, and thus of necessity ceased after

the close of the New Testament (Ruthven 1993, 24–111). With regard to the first, pentecostals believe that most of the miracles of Jesus stem not from his divine nature but his status as a Spirit-filled or Spirit-anointed human being similar to believers:

We now emphasize that the ministry of Jesus, in terms of His preaching the Good News, healings, deliverances, and many miraculous deeds, flowed out of His anointing by the Holy Spirit. It would be a mistake, therefore, to assume that Jesus did such mighty works because He was the Son of God. Rather, it was His Spirit-anointed humanity and the power resting on that humanity that lay behind His ministry in word and deed. In a real sense Jesus as the anointed One may be spoken of as “charismatic.” (Williams, J. R. 1988b, 339)

Accordingly, even the miracles of Jesus belong to his imitation; pentecostals and charismatics take John 14.12 literally and seriously (Williams, J. R. 1988b, 157–158, 168). With regard to the second point of authentication, pentecostals contend that miraculous signs may accompany any faithful preaching of the gospel regardless of time or place. The great commission in the long ending of Mark (16.15–20) is a favorite text in support of this argument; more useful are the express statements of the purpose of the charismata and the lack of any explicit text teaching their early cessation. The primary purpose of all the charismata of 1 Cor. 12–14 is the edification of the church (1 Cor. 12.7, 14.1–5, 12, 26), the need for which will not cease prior to the parousia (1 Cor. 1.7). Moreover, the love of God, not his self-authentication, is the ultimate motive behind his miraculous works, especially healing (Matt. 14.14, Luke 7.11–16; cf. Deut. 7.6–8). Conversely, it is not evident that the later church was in any sense made more mature, obedient, or faithful by the absence of the gifts. In this light, the necessity of the gifts for full salvation becomes clearer. Theologically, the continuation of the charismata is yet another resource for apprehending the broader soteriology of the New Testament; all that is yet needed is a better corresponding doctrine of the work of Christ.

#### **4.2 Renewal Christus Victor: A Pentecostal Negotiation of the Work of Christ**

The name “renewal Christus victor” is proposed for a pentecostal revisioning of the classical interpretation of the work of Christ. “Renewal” suggests two meanings. First, it associates the perspective with pentecostalism and related groups such as the charismatic movement, which together have been collectively described as the (Holy Spirit) renewal movement. Second, it describes the work that Christ does through his victory—the holistic renewal of humanity and the cosmos through the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the eschatological re-creation. In part, this understanding draws inspiration from the words of Wesley (1999h, III.5), which are completely congruous with its intent:

Ye know that all religion which does not answer this end, all that stops short of this, the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of Him

that created it, is no other than a poor farce, and a mere mockery of God, to the destruction of our own soul.... By nature ye are wholly corrupted. By grace ye shall be wholly renewed. In Adam ye all died: In the second Adam, in Christ, ye all are made alive.

The intent of this restatement of atonement and salvation is not a synthesis seeking to harmoniously blend the disparate elements of the various traditional theories. Rather, it is a step towards formulating a more comprehensive doctrine of the work of Christ capable of fully encompassing all the major problems in the human condition and, in turn, adequately supporting the full salvation he brought in his life as well as through his death.

This revisioning of doctrine will be accomplished by employing the same methodology used to analyze atonement theories, that of posing the relevant questions of the fall, redemption, and reconciliation. This time, the answers will be given from Scripture in conversation with the both the Eastern tradition and the values and concerns of pentecostalism; help will also be taken from Barth's (1956b) Christological approach to forming the content of Christian theology. First, the question of the problem in the divine-human relationship will be revisited. Genesis 3, the central chapter used throughout Christian history to explain the breach in this relationship, will be examined through a Christological lens in order to scope out the dimensions of the problem Christ came to remedy. Next, the question of the work of Christ will be reopened. As discussed previously, priority will be given to passages of Scripture that explicitly depict or state this ministry, especially from the gospels, with the aim of unifying his work in life with his work in death. As their validity and worth have already been discussed, the patristic doctrines of recapitulation and ransom or *Christus victor* will be used as the structure around which this area of doctrine is constructed. Finally, in the next section of this chapter, the full salvation Christ procured will be described as it emerges from this construction of his work. It is at this point that the theology and values of pentecostalism will assume a leading role in going beyond the patristic tradition in its appropriation of Christ to describe the salvation to be received and experienced by renewed human beings.

#### **4.2.1 The Fall: Bondage, Estrangement, Corruption**

As discussed previously, the primary meaning of atonement is reconciliation, the healing by Christ of the breach in the divine-human relationship. The consensus of Christian tradition is that this breach is caused by human sin; consensus also holds that the story of the fall in Gen. 3 depicts how this breach occurred. Eastern and Western Christianity, however, differ as to how sin disrupts the relationship. The focus of the former is on the corruption sin causes in the human condition, whereas the latter emphasizes the resulting guilt before God. This difference carries over into

the traditions' theories of Christ's remedy. Given the wide divergence that eventually emerged between Western and Eastern theology in these areas, the passage merits careful consideration as to what exactly it teaches in its own right and as to how it is drawn upon by later writers of Scripture. Although this study begins with Gen. 3 itself, it bears in mind the warning of Barth (1956b, 358–413) that Christian knowledge of not only salvation but also sin and the fall is only obtainable from the revelation of God that takes place in Jesus Christ. Accordingly, what is extracted from Gen. 3 by both the present work and the early fathers about the sin and plight of fallen human beings will be subordinated to and correlated with the word spoken in and by Christ.

A survey of Gen. 3 reveals three parties to the fall, and the effects of the fall are threefold in nature. The story of the fall itself begins with the assault on the primeval humans by the third party, the external power of evil represented by its proxy, the serpent. As discussed in greater detail in §4.1.1.1, the later writers of Scripture and the consensus of Christian tradition identify the serpent with the devil or Satan. The story of the fall is thus pulled into the greater cosmic conflict, which then becomes the framework for interpreting the entire biblical drama of redemption. Whatever else the story discloses about human sin, guilt, and death, the significance of its beginning must not be overlooked; the fall was not initiated by the primeval man and woman but by an external power that hated the human beings made in God's image as well as all of God's good creation (Williams, J. R. 1988b, 226–227; Niebuhr 1964, 179–181). The words of Jesus in John 8.44b are particularly apt in naming the initiator of the fall at the tree of knowledge in Gen. 3 as well as what may be described as the deeper fall of humanity in Gen. 4 and onwards:

[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The long-reaching, myriad effects of the fall ultimately come back to this original assault, and the remedying of the fall will require a decisive addressal of the assailant. More is required here, however, than mere recognition of the tempter as the instigator of the fall. The events of Gen. 3 must be interpreted in terms of their ramifications for the wider creation and the conflict into which the cosmos has been swept.

In Gen. 1, God created the cosmos under his lordship, and the creation of human beings in his image, male and female, was the last of his works. In v. 28—the issue of the unfortunate historical uses or abuses of this passage must be laid aside at present—the human beings were blessed and given a sub-dominion or vice-regency over the earth. Their freedom and rule were checked only by the prohibition against partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2.17). The first

recorded act of significance by the primeval couple was the breaking of this commandment at the serpent's prompting. This act must be seen as more than sinful defiance of the creator's command; the couple's turning towards the serpent also represented a submission or cession of their ordained role to this hostile power. In other words, the humans that were created to exercise delegated authority under God's authority came under the authority or dominion of the serpent, or rather what it symbolizes, and in doing so, they yielded to it a certain measure of the authority they had been granted. From here emerges the idea, seen in the patristic atonement doctrine, of the "rights" of the devil that must somehow be acknowledged, or at least maneuvered around, for humanity to be liberated. However offensive it may be to scholastic theologies of all sorts, the germ of this idea is strongly suggested in the story of the creation and fall; moreover, the later writings of the Bible affirm this conclusion even as they confess the unrivaled sovereignty of God. Repeated mention has been made of Jesus and Paul's blunt descriptions of Satan as the "ruler" or even "god" of this world, and the author of 1 John 5.19 confesses, "The whole world lies under the power of the evil one." As G. A. Boyd (2006b, 27) observes, "While Jesus and his followers of course believed that God was the *ultimate* Lord over all creation, they clearly viewed Satan as the *functional* lord of earth at the present time." The fathers (e.g., Irenaeus 1999, 5.1.1, 5.23.1–2; Gregory of Nyssa 1999, Ch. 6, 22) merely follow on this point; humanity has to be ransomed because of the reality, even legitimacy, of its slavery to this hostile power. Aulén (1931, 48) summarizes the patristic consensus both with regard to the devil's "rights" and the redress of this state:

The most common view is that since the Fall the devil possesses an incontestable right over fallen man, and that therefore a regular and orderly settlement is necessary; but sometimes this view is traversed by another, which regards the devil as a usurper, and therefore as possessing no sort of right over men. Both forms of teaching can, however, speak of the devil as having been deceived by God or by Christ; this idea enjoyed great popularity, and seems to have met with little serious criticism.

He further assesses,

The argument that the devil has rights over men is not intended as a rational theory of the necessity for the drama of the Incarnation and Redemption; the [Greek] writer moves in a wholly different plane from Anselm, whose whole preoccupation is with rational demonstration. (Aulén 1931, 45)

Of the means of humanity's liberation more will be said. What is clear, however, is that humanity's bondage to its adversary is the initial, even primary, element of the fall; accordingly, the role of the devil cannot be deleted or even marginalized in a biblical doctrine of redemption, no matter how great a stumbling block it presents for scholastic theologies.



However, the first human beings cannot be accurately depicted as mere victims of evil needing rescue from its clutches, for they also voluntarily submitted to that power and were willing participants in evil. While the temptation provided the opportunity for the breach in the divine-human relationship, it did not cause it; the serpent could only persuade, not coerce, the primeval couple. Ultimately, the fall was caused by their willing choice; the man and the woman each committed the act that was contrary to the word spoken by God, and they were fully responsible for it. Again, later scriptural writings, especially the central passage of Rom. 5.12–21, and the consensus of Christian tradition make fully explicit that which is implicit in Gen. 3 and identify the acts that took place at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as sin. Patristic writings are in agreement in assigning the first transgression to free human will (Staniloae 2000, 175–178; Meyendorff 1979, 143; Karras 2003, 106–111). Blame for it accordingly can be placed neither on the serpent for instigating it nor on God for allowing it. The story of Gen. 3 is therefore rightly labeled as “the fall” of humanity, for humanity is its subject, and it tells of how humanity through its own acts fell away from the intentions of God in creation.

The nature and character of sin, both the first sin of the fall and all subsequent sins, have been defined and described in myriad ways throughout the history of the church. Ray (1998, 21–34) has concisely and insightfully catalogued and critiqued many of these; despite problems, virtually all contain significant elements of truth and bring out different facets of this malady afflicting the human race. For the purposes of the present work, it is not necessary to develop a comprehensive and definitive hamartiology; the concern is not with sin per se but with its effects and, more important, its remedying by Christ. At the moment, it is sufficient to examine how sin disrupts the divine-human relationship, indeed, the essence of sin may be defined as a power that so disrupts not only this but all relationships. Writing from a feminist perspective, Ray provides a powerful critique of the traditional definition of sin that distills it down to disobedience. Because of the historical and potential abuses of this definition, she instead endorses defining sin as that which disrupts relationships through “distortion of the self’s boundaries” (Ray 1998, 32–33). As it concerns the divine-human relationship, sin disrupts and distorts through a turning away from God and his goodness and all that it entails, both with regard to that relationship immediately and its requirements as mediated through other relationships. It is for this reason that the proclamation of the gospel in the New Testament always began with a call to change the mind and turn back to God: “Repent (μετανοεῖτε)!” In the story of Gen. 3, sin occurred through a turning away from God and a turning towards that which God had explicitly excluded; a turning away from the clear word spoken by God to the word spoken by a crafty (עָרִים) interloper; and through a failure to maintain

the integrity of the good relationship God had instituted for the primeval couple (Gen. 2.23–25) in favor of uncertain, less virtuous gains (3.6–7). The sin of the fall was so serious not because of the act itself but because of its disruption and violation of the relationships that constituted the earthly paradise in favor of heeding the voice of the serpent and thus establishing a new relationship with the power of nothingness.

At this point, it is useful to pause and restate the scenario of the fall in terms of the Barthian concept of nothingness, which unifies the two forces or tyrants active in opposing the human beings: sin and the tempter. To review, in Barth's paradigm, nothingness is the "kingdom of the left hand" of God, that which has not been willed by him and is thus excluded by him:

There is a whole monstrous kingdom, a deep chaos of nothingness, i.e., of what the Creator has excluded and separated from the sphere of being, of what He did not will and therefore did not create, to which He gave no being, which can exist only as non-being, and which thus forms the menacing frontier of what is according to the will of God. (Barth 1960a, 143)

The diabolical is the coalescence and personalization of the power of nothingness (Barth 1960b, 522–523); the story of the fall represents the initial encounter between humanity and this power. By heeding the serpent, the voice of nothingness, the first human beings turned away from God and yielded to evil, thus distorting and disrupting their relationships. According to Barth, therefore,

sin itself is only man's irrational and inexplicable affirmation of the nothingness which God as Creator has negated. (1960a, 143)

The existence, presence and operation of nothingness... are also objectively the break in the relationship between Creator and creature. The existence, presence, and operation of nothingness are not only the frontier which belongs to the nature of this relationship on both sides and which is grounded in the goodness of the Creator and that of the Creature. They are also the break which runs counter to the nature of this relationship, which is compatible with neither the goodness of the Creator nor that of the creature and which cannot be derived from either side but can only be regarded as hostility in relation to both. (1960b, 294)

The fall occasioned by the turning of humanity towards nothingness not only affected them but had wider ramifications. By yielding to nothingness, they also turned over the authority God had delegated to them. In doing so, they opened a way for that which was non-willed by God to enter creation and wield dominion over it; the cosmic conflict was thus brought to earth. Lossky's (1957, 128–129) presentation of the perspective of Eastern theology on this point remarkably mirrors Barth's perspective:

...[E]vil, being in itself non-existent, ought not to be known. Evil becomes a reality only by means of the will, in which alone it subsists. It is the will which gives evil a certain being. That man, who was by nature disposed towards the

knowledge and love of God, could in his will incline towards a non-existent good, an illusory goal, can only be explained by some external influence, by the persuasion of some alien will to which the human will consented. Before entering the earthly world through Adam's will, evil had already had its beginnings in the spiritual world.... And evil is nothing other than an attraction of the will towards nothing, a negation of being, of creation, and above all of God, a furious hatred of grace against which the rebellious will puts up an implacable resistance.

It is thus a false dichotomy to set the dual concerns of redemption, humanity's bondage to its captor and the destructive power of its own sins, in opposition. Both are the encroachment of nothingness on the goodness of God's creation, and both require his remedying in Christ.

In order to more fully understand this encroachment, the severe, immediate effects of the first sin can be briefly described. The fruit of the forbidden tree brought knowledge but also confusion and disorientation to the primeval couple. As Rom. 1.22 bluntly states, "Claiming to be wise, they became fools"; D. Staniloae (2000, 183) expands that "on account of the Fall, the human person was left with the knowledge of evil in himself but overwhelmed by it." The first sin also led to a self-distancing of the humans from God; this breach is masterfully depicted by the attempt of the primal man and woman to hide from the presence of God they had once enjoyed (Gen. 3.8). The sin likewise began to distort all other created relationships, particularly the male-female relationship in which lies the reflection of the image of God (Gen. 1.27, 3.16; Barth 1958, 195ff.) The man blamed the woman as well as God for his act (3.12) and the woman blamed the serpent (3.13). The rest of the Bible, particularly the following chapters in Genesis, is essentially a depiction of the effects of this disruption and disordering of relationships. It can be clearly seen from the words of God's judgment (Gen. 3.17–19) and the later teaching of Rom. 8.19–23 that not just humanity but all of creation suffered and continues to suffer from the fall. Staniloae (2000, 198) elaborates the character of this disruption:

Christian teaching maintains that through the fall into sin, creation has changed from being a transparent means of love between humans and God into what is now a largely opaque wall separating humans from one another, and all humans together from God. Creation is thus a cause not just of union among humans, but also of separation and dissension.

The favored Eastern term of "corruption" very aptly describes this marring and degradation of creation that occurred through the turning of human beings to nothingness and their cession to its chaotic power. The ultimate effect of sin, as forewarned by God (Gen. 2.17), is death (3.19). As discussed in §2.2.1, patristic teaching identifies death and its fear as both the sum and the ongoing cause of human corruption, and from the perspective of its function within the canon of the Bible, the

primary intent of the story of Gen. 3 is to explain the origin of human mortality. Death is the ultimate encroachment of nothingness on the divine goodness of creation; yet, it also becomes an instrument of God's goodness as it places a limit on the evil that humans can cause and experience (Gen. 3.22; Lossky 1957, 132; Staniloae 2000, 202).

The first sin also had an effect on God and his dealings with humanity; he was not merely a passive observer of the fall. While many of the effects of the fall on humanity may be considered the automatic consequences of sin, God also proclaimed his judgment (cf. Rom. 5.16), and it is neither possible nor desirable to completely separate the two. Staniloae (2000, 202) is correct in maintaining that, "Neither corruptibility nor death, therefore, are punishments from God; they are instead consequences of our alienation from the source of life." In one sense, sin is its own punishment, and no further penalty from God is necessary. Indeed, barring one problematic line (Gen. 3.16), God is not the active subject in the pronounced judgment; the deleterious effects of the fall are natural outcomes of the transgression. Likewise, the self-distancing of humanity from God was a voluntary choice. Yet, God did in fact act further in exiling the humans from the garden that he had created for them, the place where they had enjoyed his presence, and from the tree of immortality (Gen. 3.22–24); he thus further separated himself from the humans and their sin (Staniloae 2000, 189–190). To an extent, there was a

... withdrawal of the divine Spirit from the world [that] weakened the character it had as transparent medium between God and humans and amongst humans themselves. (Staniloae 2000, 186)

Because of this withdrawal, the humans no longer had the immediate knowledge of God they were intended to possess by nature; their relationship with him was disrupted to the point that Eph. 2.12 can say that they were "having no hope and without God in the world." Moreover, to use the chosen Barthian terminology, the withdrawal of the Spirit of God, by which at the very least is meant a functional change in his relationship to the creation, did not leave a neutral vacuum but gave opportunity for the nothingness restricted by the initial creation to invade its ongoing life. Accordingly, in order to be remedied the fall of humanity and judgment it incurred require both reconciliation and redemption, restoration to God and liberation from the power of sin, death, and the devil.

As stated at the beginning of this section, the Christological method of the present work requires that these findings regarding sin and the fall be correlated with the word of Christ. The malady afflicting humanity described herein, which both corrupts human beings and separates them from God, is squarely addressed in the words and works of Jesus in the gospels. John's gospel is the most explicit and direct;

all the points discussed above, including the unholy triad of sin (8.31–36, 9.39–41), death (5.25–29, 6.40, 11.25–26), and the devil (10.10, 12.31 16.11), are overcome in his ministry, death, and resurrection. The synoptics do not make grand theological pronouncements like those of the fourth gospel, but as has already been observed, Jesus' ministry as depicted in them is one of a holistic rescue and renewal of the human person through the proclamation of good news, the unmediated forgiveness of sins, healing and exorcism, and the overturning of social and spiritual hierarchies and dominations. In other words, the saving work of Jesus in life corresponds very closely to the dimensions of human need sketched above on the basis of the story of the fall and in contrast to the chief historical concerns of Western Christianity, encompasses more than human guilt before God and pardon. It necessarily follows, then, that atonement, his saving work in death, will also have such a correspondence and lead to a similarly holistic soteriology.

Returning to the interpretation of Gen. 3, mention must be made of two elements that are notably absent from the story of the fall and the subsequent judgment. The first is an abiding, hereditary guilt. It was discussed in §2.2.1 how the doctrine of inherited guilt entered Western Christianity via Augustine largely through a mistranslation of Rom. 5.12; all human beings are deemed participants in Adam's sin and sharers of his guilt. The fall certainly had generational implications, which all Christian traditions affirm, but the Augustinian doctrine of original sin goes far beyond what can be substantiated on the basis of either Gen. 3 or Rom. 5. The widespread acceptance of this doctrine, however, gave Western atonement theory and soteriology an overly juridical and retributive cast that was largely carried over into magisterial protestant theology. The latter's reform of Roman soteriology was stunted because of its failure to correct its anthropology and hamartiology, and this has caused it to remain preoccupied with guilt to the neglect of other factors salvation also concerns. The second element missing from Gen. 3, affirmed by many of the reformed (Turretin 1992, 611–613; Hoekema 1986, 71–72), is the identification of the image of God with original righteousness (cf. Eph. 4.24) and therefore its complete loss in the fall. Barth (1958, 198–201) has shown how this interpretation is alien to the Hebrew Bible and indeed ruled out by it. Eastern theology, which gives considerable importance and theological treatment to the idea of the *imago* (Rybarczyk 1999, 61–102), also rejects this Western interpretation. Lossky (1957, 116) states,

The number of... definitions and their variety show us that the Fathers refrain from confining the image of God to any one part of man. In fact, the Biblical narrative gives no precise account of the nature of the image; but it does present the whole creation of man as an act apart, different from the creation of other beings.

As that which sets human creation apart, the image is “indestructible,” though “every imperfection, every ‘unlikeness’ in the [human] nature limits the person, and obscures the ‘image of God’” (Lossky 1957, 124–125). Likewise, Staniloae (2000, 204) notes that the image has been “weakened” but not “destroyed totally.” However the divine image and likeness are defined, their survival of the fall will have implications for soteriology (Karras 2003, 106–110). In sum, a restatement of atonement and salvation must take into account these two points that were assumed as foundational by Western theology but have no basis in the Genesis account itself, the New Testament’s interpretation of it, or the patristic tradition.

On the basis of the preceding study, it can be concluded that the problem disrupting the divine-human relationship is misapprehended when it is framed principally as human guilt awaiting judgment by a wrathful God. In the story of the fall, judgment has already been pronounced as well as administered. The real problem is the state of humanity—and by extension, all of creation (Rom. 8.18–23)—after the fall. Its condition as corrupted, estranged, and co-opted by an alien power cannot be allowed to stand. The breach in the relationship remains because sin also continues to abide, and atonement must address this as well. God in his holy love opposes all evil, and human beings are not just victims of evil but cooperative participants in it. They are thus rightfully subject to his wrath. The remedy to the situation, however, is not found in the compensation of God, for as Aulén (1960, 212) observes, “An opposition to evil which can be satisfied with a compensation is not very radical” (cf. Staniloae 2000, 201–202). Alone, judgment can punish sin but not repair the damaged human condition. The goal of redemption is not the gracious pardon of some of humanity on the basis of substitution and the just punishment of the rest. Rather, evil and the damage it did to the creation must be overcome; it is in the restoration of his good work that God is truly satisfied. In the words of Irenaeus (1999, 4.20.7),

For the glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God. For if the manifestation of God which is made by means of the creation, affords life to all living in the earth, much more does that revelation of the Father which comes through the Word, give life to those who see God.

It was the assault of this glory, the image of God reflected by human beings, that initiated the fall. Redemption and salvation encompass the rebuke of this assault and the complete healing and renewal of humanity, including the *imago*. This salvation includes justification as pardon, but it also goes far beyond it to re-creation, even new creation.

#### **4.2.2 The Remedy of God in Christ**

The beginning point of Christian faith is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son God sent into the world to save it from this state of corruption and bondage (John 3.16–

17); indeed, it may be said that the Christian theology is merely a long commentary on the core confession of the New Testament that Jesus is Christ (John 11.27, Matt. 16.16), savior (Luke 2.11, Matt. 1.21), and Lord (John 20.28, Rom. 10.9–10). As Cullmann (1963, 1–4, 326) has argued, the Christology of the New Testament is principally functional; Christ is known by what he does. A theory of the atonement is simply the formalization of Christ's work into a doctrinal form. At its heart, it is an explanation of how Christ is savior and what the salvation he brings means. Later Western theology, however, stumbled by delving too deeply into natural theology and speculative philosophy. Its doctrines of atonement became too theoretical, too distanced from the actual saving work of Christ as presented in the New Testament. A biblical doctrine of atonement must be rooted in and constantly attached to the actual depictions of Christ's remedying of human corruption and bondage.

The great discontinuity between the work of Jesus in the New Testament and the later soteriologies produced by the Anselmian traditions becomes clear when the Bible's accounts and summaries of his mission are simply allowed to speak without the imposition of outside meanings from the satisfaction metanarrative. The contrast is most striking in the synoptic gospels. Liberationists, in particular, are fond of the "Nazareth manifesto" of Luke 4.16ff. and the concern of God revealed in it for the totality of the human person and especially the poor and marginalized. Given its place in the gospel, the debut of Jesus in Nazareth after his baptism by John, temptation by the devil, and empowerment by the Spirit, it is clear that the author intends for the account of Jesus' life and ministry that follows to be interpreted in the light of and as the fulfillment of this vision of the messiah's work from Is. 61. The placation of his Father's anger does not feature in this mission and indeed is ruled out by Luke 15.11–32. Mark's terser, action-oriented gospel likewise diverges from the satisfaction paradigm of atonement and salvation. Jesus' message of the kingdom encompasses both the immediate dispensation of forgiveness by the Son of Man as well as healing (Mark 2.1–12). The crucial ransom text of Mark 10.45 speaks of both Christ's giving of his life and his mission to serve—and this service can in no way be restricted to only his final act of giving at the end of his life. Likewise, the prominence of exorcisms and miracles of healing throughout all three synoptics' reports of Jesus' ministry is well-known. The nature of salvation as the liberation and renewal of all aspects of the human condition may be most clearly seen in the practically synonymous usage of terms for salvation and healing in the New Testament. Despite the realities of Christian history, the burden of proof lies on theologies that seek to isolate salvation from this holistic ministry that only may rightly be called the work of Christ. Accordingly, it is incumbent on theology to organically connect its doctrine of atonement with this wider work of Christ, which is full salvation.

The present discussion has labored up to now to reattach soteriology to such a New Testament, narrative foundation. At this point, the work of constructing a foundation, a formal atonement doctrine, compatible and congruous with this soteriology may commence. As has been indicated at the beginning of this chapter, this construction will proceed from the biblical sources, especially the gospels, as well as draw inspiration from the dramatic interpretation of Christ found in the patristic tradition. The latter's dual approach to explaining his work as recapitulation and victory will be emulated even as it is revised in light of the perspective of classical pentecostalism. In order to bring correction to the persistent problems in Western theology, the doctrines of the person and work of Christ will be united, as will his work in life and death be united with his resurrection. The end result will be a doctrine of atonement that aligns humanity's need with God's remedy of it in Christ and, in turn, yields a holistic soteriology that can encompass the insights of the pentecostal full gospel as well as reach beyond it to address the concerns of theologies from other contexts.

#### **4.2.2.1 From Person to Work**

Two artificial divisions in the traditional approach to systematic theology have inhibited the development of a more comprehensive doctrine of Christ's work: the separation of his person from his work (Barth 1956b, 127–128), and the separation of his work in life from his work in death. The unification of the former is a precondition for the unification of the latter. While traditional questions of "person," that is, of nature and being, formally lie outside the scope of the present work, the doctrine of the two natures is accepted as essentially correct and congruous with the faith of the New Testament. Modern theology commonly criticizes the gulf between the simple confessions of the primitive church and the metaphysically sophisticated Christology put forth by Chalcedon. However, the New Testament's consistent affirmations of both the humanity and the divinity of Christ inevitably lead to a formulation similar to Chalcedon's, if not necessitating the precise terminology and outlook of the council and its context. The real humanity of Jesus is so intrinsically accepted as given that the New Testament writers show little need to state it plainly; *prima facie* evidence of it confronts the reader on every page of the synoptic gospels, for example. It is only in some of the latest writings when foreign beliefs have started to teach otherwise that explicit confession of his humanity, including his physicality, becomes mandatory (i.e., 1 John 1.1, 4.1ff., 2 John 7). Likewise, the breadth of New Testament literature confesses Christ's divinity, identifying him as God (Cullmann 1963, 234–237). It is affirmed, albeit subtly, even in the less metaphysical, narrative-oriented synoptic gospels: in assignment to Jesus of Old Testament prophecies referring to God and the title of κύριος, even when it stands for יהוה (e.g., Matt. 3.3); in Jesus' tacit acceptance



of worship (Matt. 14.33, 28.17), in contrast to the normal biblical pattern of its disclaimer by holy but non-divine beings such as prophets and angels; and in the ascription to Jesus of divine attributes and activities such as the forgiveness of sins (Mark 2.1–12) and the roles of the commander of angels (Matt. 13.41) and eschatological judge (Matt. 25.31–46). The epistles continue and amplify these indications of divinity, and the open identification of Jesus as God in John’s gospel is well-known. As D. Guthrie (1981, 401) concludes, the New Testament

sees Jesus as both a transcendent pre-existent being (Son of God) who comes to save mankind, and also a perfect human being[;] it is not surprising that the problem of relating both presentations to the same person has exercised the minds of theologians in all eras of church history.... [But] the NT itself shows no awareness of the tension of the two natures.

As unsatisfying as the Chalcedonian dogma may be from some perspectives, it accomplishes the feat of affirming and defending these fundamental elements of New Testament Christology. Conversely, virtually all attempts, ancient and modern, to construct alternative Christologies deny or distort, to some degree, his full humanity or his full divinity or both, or they somehow deform his genuine personhood. Thus, while Chalcedon does not exhaust the subject of the person of Christ, it provides safe parameters from within which to construct Christology.

As previously explored in §2.2.2.1, the theologians of the early church, especially Irenaeus, brought the divine and human in Christ together with human need in the doctrine of recapitulation; whatever else their theology may have lacked, they did not erect the artificial division of person and work that became common later (Brunner 1952, 309). Although Irenaeus preceded the settlement of Chalcedon by centuries, he anticipated (Kelly 1978, 147–149) the most profound insight of the formula and the theological developments leading to it: Christ as ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα, καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα (Schaff 1931a, 62). It is the uniting of these two natures that brings humanity’s salvation; this is the essence of recapitulation and the significance of the incarnation. In the previous chapter, criticism was made of traditional reformed theology’s restriction of humanity’s union with Christ to that of elect individuals after their calling and regeneration. While this perspective highlights an important aspect of New Testament soteriology, it overlooks the greater meaning of the incarnation. In Eastern Christian thought, there is only one human nature common to all human persons (Lossky 1957, 120–124). It was this one human nature, which was grievously wounded by the fall, that Christ took on in the incarnation in order to heal it (Lossky 1957, 142). Gregory of Nazianzus’s (1999b) guiding maxim for Christology may be recalled again: “For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united

to His Godhead is also saved.” The meaning of the ὁμοούσιον is that God has taken on humanity and truly become human in Christ; it also means that humanity has been divinized or lifted in God. The phrasing of the so-called Athanasian Creed, though anachronistic, is moving and correct: “Christ is one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking humanity into God” (*Unus autem, non conversione divinitatis in carnem: sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum*) (Schaff 1931a, 69). This union occurs from the miracle of Christ’s conception, that is, before the cross and the atonement and before the Spirit’s work of calling and regeneration. The mystical union of each person with Christ that takes place after salvation may be distinguished from this, but his overall mission of salvation, which begins with his incarnation, cannot be restricted to a selection of humanity. It must include all who partake of human nature, the entire human race. It likewise follows that his entire life is salvific and that his saving work cannot be limited or reduced to his death. To repeat the words of Irenaeus (1999, 3.18.7), “God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man.”

Biblically, recapitulation is essentially the development of a Pauline teaching, being derived principally from Rom. 5.12–21, 1 Cor. 15, and Eph. 1.10, where ἀνακεφαλαίωσις is used, and subsidiary texts such as Heb. 2.9, 14–15. It can also be inferred from texts that speak of Christ’s incarnation and his humiliation (e.g., Phil. 2.5–11, John 1.14), which contrasts with the first humans’ pride at the tree of testing. These texts suggest that the union of divinity with humanity that occurs in the incarnation has a representative or federal character, in which Christ comes as the last Adam to redeem what first Adam lost. Drawing on the stories of the creation and the fall as it does, however, recapitulation is not directly taught by the gospels, though the Lucan genealogy perhaps hints at it—and thus also Pauline influence—by tracing the lineage of Jesus not just to Abraham, as Matthew does, but to “Adam, the son of God” (3.38). The temptation and testing of Jesus in the wilderness is also a parallel that the church fathers drew upon greatly; as mentioned in §2.2.2.1, ancient expositions of recapitulation brought out how Christ sanctified all the phases of human life, obeying where Adam had disobeyed. Nevertheless, recapitulation is best viewed not as an explicit gospel teaching but as a logical extrapolation constructed from various New Testament sources. It becomes a doctrine of the gospels, however, when its purposes are separated from its more technical formulations and the gospels are allowed to set the agenda for salvation. At its most basic, recapitulation simply means the uniting of humanity in Christ for the purpose of its holistic salvation, which is divinization, union with God and his love and will. As Irenaeus (1999, 5.15.2) describes,

...[T]his hand of God which formed us at the beginning, and which does form us in the womb, has in the last times sought us out who were lost, winning

back His own, and taking up the lost sheep upon His shoulders, and with joy restoring it to the fold of life.

This is the one purpose of Christ in life and in death as reported by the gospels.

Whatever other questions they leave unanswered, a broad survey of the gospels clearly reveals salvation to be the singular purpose of the coming of Jesus; his very naming established this agenda (Matt. 1.21). In Luke's gospel, those associated with his birth prophesied him as the savior (1.67–79, 2.28–32); John the baptizer, his forerunner, foresaw this mission (Luke 3.3–17); and Jesus himself accepted this calling and publicly declared it via the Nazareth manifesto (4.16–21ff.) More important from the perspective of the present work is how he ministered salvation in and through his life. As the theologians of the early church repeatedly state, the work of Christ is deliverance from sin, death, and the devil, and it is highly significant that in his earthly ministry, he delivered people from all three of these oppressors. For example, Jesus offered immediate forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God without a compensatory sacrifice (e.g., Mark 2.5, Luke 19.9–10). Likewise, he contested death by healing conditions leading to death and diminishing life; the gospels also testify to a few cases of his resuscitation of the dead (e.g., Mark 5.39–42, Luke 7.11–15). As much as healing and often in concert with it (e.g., Luke 8.2, 13.10–16), Christ's ministry was also characterized by his engagement of humanity's enemy. This engagement was progressive; Christ's bringing of the kingdom of God began the binding of Satan (Matt. 12.25–29), led to his fall from heaven (Luke 10.17–20), and culminated with his expulsion from the rule of the earth via the cross and resurrection (John 12.31, Rev. 20.1–3). Whether interpreted traditionally or demythologized, this conflict with the enemy is intrinsic to the gospels and their reports of Christ's liberative administration of salvation (cf. Barth 1960a, 599–600).

Such a broad survey of these reports forces a confrontation with three problems of theology to which the doctrine of recapitulation can give an answer. The first, raised in §4.1.1, is the apparent contradiction between the proclamation of salvation by Jesus and the proclamation of the church, that is, the difference between Jesus as the proclaimer of the good news of salvation and the church's proclamation of Christ himself as the good news. It is perceived by some that Jesus' theocentric announcement of the coming of the kingdom, with the way to God already open, was eclipsed by the early church's undue Christocentrism that insisted on Christ's atoning death as the necessary portal to reconciliation with God. In actuality, this problem is more perceived than real. The message of the church does not represent a departure from Jesus' own gospel; rather, even in the synoptics, there is a gradual but steady funneling of the message of the coming of the kingdom of God into the kingdom encounter with God that occurs in the person of Jesus Christ himself. This movement

is perhaps most evident in Mark's gospel, the most primitive of the synoptics and the one with the fewest number of kingdom sayings and lengthy discourses. The beginning of Mark (1.15) preserves Jesus' announcement of the arrival of the kingdom and the call to believe in the gospel. Action, not teaching, characterizes Mark's narrative. After the opening, Jesus proceeds to immediately bring salvation to those to whom he proclaims his message (1.38); it frequently manifests in healing and deliverance from demonic spirits (1.23–26, 30–34, 39, 40–45). Along with these miracles, salvation as the forgiveness of sins is immediately granted by Jesus himself (2.1–12). Similar events continue throughout the first ten chapters of the book. The element common to all these incidents is the encounter with Jesus; to come to him is to come to a point of decision on the threshold of the kingdom of God. The story of the rich man (10.17–31) is both a moral teaching and a proclamation of the way into the kingdom. That way, however, is only through Jesus: "...then come, follow me" (v. 21). The sake of the gospel is the sake of Jesus (vv. 29–30); there can be no separation of the two. The union of the two is made explicit and complete in the healing of Bartimaeus (10.46–52), the last in the book, and his cry to Christ as king: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" The reply of Jesus is the word of salvation (v. 52): "Go; your faith has made you well [lit. "saved": ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκεν σε]." In that word, that encounter, the kingdom comes; it cannot be isolated from the person of the king or abstracted into a general religious teaching. The other gospels may widen in scope but do not differ greatly from Mark's core focus. A similar movement can be extracted from Matthew and Luke, and as is well known, in John the person of Christ himself essentially replaces the kingdom. The proclamation of the church simply follows this trajectory.

This problem has been unnecessarily exacerbated because of a second one prevalent in Western theology: the distancing of Christ's life from his saving work in his death. As has been repeatedly stressed through this work, this distancing has been magnified in and through the prevailing atonement theories to the point that the actions of Christ's life have no practical salvific value and are theologically detached from his accomplishment of atonement by his death. More than anything, this phenomenon has occurred because of the Anselmian tradition's dependence on natural theology, which inevitably results in an ahistorical interpretation of the atonement (cf. Boersma 2004, 168–169); Christ is killed to satisfy an abstract principle. This dogmatic cleavage of Christ's life and death is alien to the Bible, but suggestions of support can be found for it in the various ways the New Testament narrates the story of redemption. Christ's life is full of moments of salvific import, but the gospels agree that his coming death is of special significance. The exact origins and nature of these sayings are hotly debated by biblical scholars, but Jesus' predictions of his death in

the synoptics stand out from his ongoing work of liberation and healing and point to a very different kind of conclusion to the ministry of the kingdom (Schwager 1999, 74–78). The words of institution, also much contested (Schwager 1999, 96–101), designate the shedding of his blood as the basis of the new covenant and the means to forgiveness or reconciliation with God. Paul, of course, continues this teaching (1 Cor. 11.23–26, 15.3); moreover, in proclaiming Christ, he overwhelmingly contracts his time on earth to his death and the resurrection, making virtually no mention of his life and teaching. To some extent, Western atonement doctrines could be said to be simply following this pattern but taking it too far. While according to the Bible there is more to Christ's saving work than just his death, the Bible also does not permit speaking of salvation apart from it as the climax of the work of redemption.

This focus on Christ's death by both the New Testament and later theology leads to a third problem of this area, that of the question of the necessity of his death for salvation. In many ways, this question drives the direction and logic of Western atonement theories; it greatly preoccupied Anselm and his theological descendants (Forde 1984, 20–23). Conservative theology has tended to vigorously affirm the unevadable necessity of the cross for redemption (e.g., Hodge, A. A. 1867, 234–239; Turretin 1994, 417–426), at least insofar as it is possible to say that any action is necessary for God; conversely, much of the dissent against traditional atonement doctrines entails a denial of its necessity as a precondition of reconciliation (e.g., Brown and Parker 1989; Finlan 2005). The question of necessity, however, has served as a trap for the binary thinking of Western theology. If the death of Christ is strictly necessary for salvation, then it is his death itself and nothing else that effects salvation. Liberative moments from his ministry in life are naturally reduced to mere illustrations of the more perfect salvation that is to come or, at the very most, prophetic and anticipatory realizations that are entirely dependent on the future atoning death. If this is not the case—if full salvation could be realized by those who encountered Christ in life and apart from the grace merited by his death—then the cross is not strictly necessary. If forgiveness can be received apart from the placation or satisfaction of God, then the coming and suffering of the God-man was unnecessary, and a giant hole is left in the center of Western theology.

The cleavage in Western theology between Christ's work in life and his work in death—and likewise, between the salvific meaning of his death and his resurrection—is irreparable so long as the underlying assumptions of Western theology about human sin and how it is remedied in Christ remain intact. From the *Christus victor* perspective, the work of redemption primarily concerns humanity's need for deliverance, not an inner need or tension within God that must be resolved. As Forde (1984, 7) summarizes, “Christ's work brings not a change in God or merely

in God's subjects, but a changed *situation*." The doctrine of recapitulation teaches that God's redemptive addressal of this situation began with the incarnation, not the cross; salvation is the taking of humanity into the divine. Jesus means salvation, and there is no good reason, biblically or theologically, to depreciate the genuine liberation he dispensed in his ministry. With regard to the present question, a distinction may be made in terms of the preliminary nature and limited extent of the saving work prior to the cross. Those who met Jesus received forgiveness from sin and reconciliation, yet he and his followers could not finish going through all the towns of Israel with the good news (Matt. 10.23). Jesus healed many, but all eventually succumbed to their mortality. Likewise, the adversary was rebuffed by his work but not yet overthrown. More was yet required; the saving ministry of the God-man had to somehow be universalized.

The death of Christ is best identified as the climax of this work. That which Christ began to do in life finds a provisional completion in his death and resurrection; the latter may not be excluded from the work of redemption, for it is in his rising from the dead that the defeat of humanity's greatest enemy was sealed. To debate the fundamental necessity of the cross for the completion of redemption is to diverge into a realm of unsound speculation. The Christian faith confesses that it was through Christ's death and resurrection that redemption was accomplished; other possibilities for how God may have performed this work do not present themselves historically. Forde (1984, 37–38) analyzes how the fathers who held to recapitulation and Christus victor nevertheless themselves grappled with the question of necessity. Many acknowledged some form of the devil's "rights" that God overcame justly rather than by sheer power. The way of the cross was also the ultimate expression of the divine love (Aulén 1931, 44–45). (For all their frequent divergences and fundamental opposition, the ransom-Christus victor and exemplar theories periodically converge.) Again, too much speculation along any of these lines can lead to an unhealthy disturbance in theology, and all that can ultimately be affirmed about divine necessity is that the death and resurrection of Christ are the means by which God chose to overcome sin, death, and the devil. The advantage of the doctrine of recapitulation is that it provides a means of maintaining continuity between the saving ministry of Christ in life with his saving work in death; it unifies the doctrine of person and work. It also helps to explain how both his death and resurrection save in a comprehensive and meaningful way. Recapitulation is, accordingly, a compelling doctrine from the ancient church, and its retrieval can only benefit contemporary theology.

That said, from this perspective the work of the cross must paradoxically be affirmed as both accomplished and incomplete. The New Testament both reports Jesus concluding, "It is finished" (John 19.30), and Paul claiming, "[I]n my flesh I am

filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Col. 1.24). Strictly speaking, the fullness of salvation that is the end of redemption will not be completely realized until the parousia and *eschaton*; the church is intended to be the instrument of its increasing manifestation prior to then. Aulén (1931, 22–23) explains:

The Divine victory accomplished in Christ stands in the centre of Irenaeus' thought, and forms the central element in the *recapitulatio*, the restoring and the perfecting of the creation, which is his most comprehensive theological idea. The Recapitulation does not end with the triumph of Christ over the enemies which had held man in bondage; it continues in the work of the Spirit in the church... But the completeness of the Recapitulation is not realised in this life: Irenaeus' outlook is strongly eschatological, and the gift of the Spirit in this life is for him the earnest of future glory.

Here the ancient doctrine of Christ's work and the pentecostal interest in the fullness of the Spirit; replication is to follow the recapitulation. In the early church, salvation was not depicted as a forensic justification by faith but as the imitation of Christ (Pelikan 1971, 141–146), in other words, his replication in the Christian. While pentecostalism emerged out of a more or less standard protestant soteriological paradigm, its greater concern for the realization of salvation as subjective transformation than as—but not to the exclusion of—the objective declaration of alien righteousness coincides with the Eastern perspective. Moreover, pentecostalism removes a historical limitation on the *imitatio* through its expectation of all of the Spirit's gifts, which means an imitation of his liberative ministry as well (Ruthven 2000). How pentecostal soteriology can be strengthened through a conscious appropriation of the recapitulation-Christus victor doctrines will be explored later in this chapter, but first, a more detailed, positive statement of the victory of the cross must be made.

#### **4.2.2.2 The Victory of the Cross and Beyond**

The cross represents an intensifying and universalizing of Christ's liberative work that is in continuity with his ministry in life (Aulén 1960, 197–204). It is here that the three tyrants of sin, death, and the devil were not merely rebuffed but decisively overcome. The outcome of the cross is a real saving work, not merely a legal proceeding; through it, humanity's condition and situation are concretely and permanently altered. The classical formulation of Christus victor is useful because of its addressal of all three of the members of the "unholy trinity"; unlike later theories, it does not flatten soteriology by removing or minimizing any of these elements that keep humanity in bondage. However, a revisioning of the theory to encompass both the fullness of New Testament salvation and contemporary concerns requires an expansion of these categories. The death of Christ rescues humanity from sin, but as

has been seen, human need includes more than this effect of the fall. Pentecostalism addresses human physical needs through its doctrine of healing in the atonement, and liberation theologies have exposed the need for corporate deliverance from structural sins. Some of this delivering aspect of the work of Christ may be better apprehended through at least a partial demythologizing of his defeat of the devil that demonstrates how this alteration of the cosmic conflict affects human life on earth. Interestingly, it is through this aspect of *Christus victor* that the most vexing problem of Arminian theology, the doctrine of prevenient grace, finds a valid solution. Likewise, while the defeat of death in the resurrection of Christ gives humanity its ultimate, eschatological hope, it must also be recognized that human beings are not alone in their bondage to this enemy. Full salvation also involves the liberation of all creation; the triumph of Christ over corruption and decay inaugurates the reversal of the fall and the renewal of all things.

#### **4.2.2.2.1 The Bearing of Sin and the Healing of the Human Person**

The task now comes to construct a positive statement of how Christ's death effects atonement, freeing human beings from their sins and reconciling them to God. A difficulty arises at present in employing the preferred methodology of prioritizing Christ's life and teaching in that by themselves, the gospels do not provide a detailed explanation of how exactly his dying accomplished atonement. Within the synoptics, very little is plainly stated about the relationship of Christ's death to sin. The most prominent statement is Matthew's version of the words of institution in which Jesus states that, "this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (26.28). Hooker (1994, 71) observes that, "we have here one of the rare statements in the gospels that attempts to explain what the death of Jesus achieved." The ransom saying (Mark 10.45, Matt. 20.28), of course, assigns some saving value to it, but again the mechanism of atonement is not precisely delineated. As usual, John's gospel makes explicit what can often only be inferred from the synoptics; Jesus is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (1.29). Despite this famous verse, however, how exactly Jesus is a lamb is not explained; that is, the fourth gospel invokes the image without, as might be expected, identifying it with a specific Old Testament sacrifice such as that of the passover or the guilt offering. Whatever the intended meaning, the sacrificial imagery of John is nearly overshadowed by the conquest language of the cosmic conflict. The Son is lifted up to give eternal life to whoever believes (John 3.14–16), but this lifting also accomplishes the defeat of the ruler of this world (12.31–32). Ultimately, within the gospels, the teaching of Jesus' death as the source of forgiveness of sins is the result of the summing up and funneling of the kingdom message into the person of Jesus himself. Only after his death and resurrection is the significance of his death understood,



although even then its mechanism is not explained. The fact that Jesus was the messiah who was prophesied to suffer and die becomes the basis of the gospel of repentance that the early church is commissioned to proclaim (Luke 24.44–47; cf. John 20.31, Mark 16.15–18). This is the message that is taken up in the preaching of Acts and in the teaching of the epistles, which gradually unfold the meaning of the cross. For this reason, it is necessary and appropriate to turn to the latter in order to construct a doctrine of the atonement of sins. However, in keeping with the methodology established above and in contrast to atonement theories that claim a principally Pauline basis, the doctrine developed from these sources must remain in contact with what the life and ministry of Christ reveals about the human condition and the salvific nature of the encounter with God that occurs in his person. Again, the salvation that he procured by his death must be seen as an extension and universalization of that which he administered in life (Hooker 1994, 91) and not qualitatively different.

One alleged weakness of the classical theory in comparison to the Anselmian tradition, especially its penal variant, is its treatment of sin (e.g., Cullmann 1963, 191; Schreiner 2006a). Whatever the deficiencies in past presentations, this fault is not intrinsic to either recapitulation or *Christus victor*. The differences between the theories must be carefully stated. As envisioned herein, renewal *Christus victor* does not dispute the fundamental confession that “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15.3), nor even that Christ vicariously bore human sin (Heb. 9.28, 1 Peter 2.24). It disputes the reasoning behind the substitutionary bearing, its purpose, and what it accomplished (Boyd, G. A. 2006b, 43–44). It rejects the unbiblical transfiguration of 1 Cor. 15.3 into a confession that God killed Jesus for humanity’s sin. Beyond this error, the Anselmian tradition exhibits a further deficiency in that it does not present a real solution to the problem of the existence of human sin. It does not eliminate but rather merely “makes up for” sin. In the satisfaction theory, God receives an alternative compensation to make up for the damage done by sin, whereas in penal substitution, his anger against sin is spent out on an alternative victim. What is needed, however, is not merely an extinguishing of the guilt caused by sin but sin’s removal from humanity, which is the essential idea behind texts such as Gal. 1.4 and 1 Peter 2.24. To again invoke the language of the fathers, it is not sinners but sin itself that needs to be “destroyed” or “killed” (Irenaeus 1999, 3.18.7), and sinners also need healing from sin’s damage, which is the purpose of the incarnation (Gregory of Nazianzus 1999b), not just pardon. Insofar as he is the representative human, Christ’s bearing of sin is a true substitution (Hooker 1994, 35–39). Humanity’s sin is placed upon him not so that he can be punished for it but that he might bear it away into death. By being taken into death, the power of sin is limited (Rom. 6.7), and it, not

just the guilt it incurs, is extinguished. Salvation is from, not through, wrath (Rom. 5.9, Eph. 2.3–7); even though God’s anger over sin is entirely just, human beings are no longer subject to it because he has in Christ done away with sin. Christ’s substitution is a vicarious destruction of sin, not a vicarious punishment.

If classical works in the *Christus victor* tradition have insufficiently described how exactly Christ’s death destroys sin, it could be argued that they are simply conforming to the example set by the New Testament and that the Anselmian tradition commits the opposite error. A mechanism may be posited, however; K. Tanner (2004, 40–43) suggests the combination of the auxiliary atonement model of the “happy exchange,” chiefly associated with Luther, and the incarnational-*Christus victor* approach of the church fathers. The image of the “happy exchange” is commonly linked with the Western theories of satisfaction and penal substitution, and Luther (1988, 186) himself uses it in this sense within the context of explaining the curse of Gal. 3.13. The presuppositions of the penal theory, however, are not strictly intrinsic to the image, and it can be extracted from these theories for appropriation by others. Again, how sin is remedied by God according to the different theories needs to be distinguished. In the penal theory, Christ accepts the burden of humanity’s sin so that God may smite it collectively, in one blow administering its full and just punishment and extinguishing his wrath. This view is ruled out because of the violence it causes to the intra-Trinitarian relationship between the Father and the Son and because it contradicts God’s ministry of forgiveness already manifested in the life of Christ. Rather, the exchange simply describes the solidarity of humanity with Christ in his crucifixion and the benefits received from it:

The primary meaning of “for us”—“Jesus dies for us”—is benefit rather than legal substitution: Jesus dies to benefit us so that we will no longer have to live as we do in a sin-afflicted, death-ridden world. Jesus, as the Word incarnate, does act on our behalf, step into our place, act as our advocate, and thereby does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. But in Jesus the Word makes our cause its own and does what we cannot do, for us, in virtue of the fact of kinship established between the Word and humanity via incarnation, because of the bond with humanity established by the incarnation.... Jesus does not represent us, stand in for us, primarily by taking on the position of guilty, death-deserving persons before the law. That, once again, is not what “died for us” necessarily implies. (Tanner 2004, 44)

Gathering or summing up humanity in himself, Christ accepts the burden of sin in order to liberate humanity from it and destroy it by taking it into death. In exchange, humanity receives his righteousness; this gift of joyful reconciliation, not the transfiguration of the Son, is the essential thrust of 2 Cor. 5.19. The concept of the happy exchange is not alien to fathers but is an integral component of the recapitulation. For example, Gregory of Nazianzus (1999a, 30.6), confesses of the incarnation,

But, in the character of the Form of a Servant, He condescends to His fellow servants, nay, to His servants, and takes upon Him a strange form, bearing all me and mine in Himself, that in Himself He may exhaust the bad, as fire does wax, or as the sun does the mists of earth; and that I may partake of His nature by the blending.

The exchange accomplishes the first moment of salvation, which is justification, but it is far more than just a forensic declaration (Tanner 2004, 43–44). Because Christ’s union with humanity does not begin in the instant human guilt is borne and extinguished but with the incarnation of the Word itself, justification is not simply the response of God corresponding to the work first done by his Son. Rather, it is the beginning of the universal saving work of God in which Christ’s life is transmitted back to those whom he recapitulated. Indeed, through this exchange, all of humanity is justified (Karras 2003, 113–115).

When based on the doctrines of the incarnation and recapitulation, the atonement must of necessity be unlimited in extent; a union of Christ with only elect humanity is a scriptural impossibility. As 1 John 2.2 says, “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world”; the New Testament atonement passages that speak of “many” are far more credibly explained by the “all” passages than vice versa. Universal salvation is not a guaranteed outcome of an unlimited atonement, however, because faith is necessary to effect individual justification, and not all have believed. Likewise, humanity is not free from the ravages of sin because sanctification and *theosis* have not yet been manifested in all. The point of a Christian atonement doctrine, however, is that in Christ God has reconciled humanity to himself. The avenue to him is open for all through the one who is the way (John 14.6–7). Christ did not come, however, merely to remove a legal sentence obstructing the way. Rather, by becoming a human being, he has taken humanity into himself in order to heal the harm caused by sin. The healing and renewal of the entire human person, nature, and race, is the purpose of the incarnation and atonement. From these doctrines of Christ’s person and work must flow all doctrines of salvation.

Within this paradigm, the idea of healing in the atonement is sensible and requires little defense. In Christ, God has helped humanity, not merely dealt with its guilt. Sin and the death it brings are the worst tyrants oppressing humanity but not the only ones. As Jesus did not limit his ministry to forgiving sins but liberated men, women, and children from a wide range of afflictions, it is not at all incongruous that he would do the same in his death. There is no need for an elaborate explanation as to why the New Testament, when invoking the servant image, conflates his healing ministry with his forgiving ministry and his work in life with his work in death (Matt. 8.17, 1 Peter 2.24). Like sin, sickness is an oppressor from which the human race

needs deliverance, so Christ bears it along with sin in order to overthrow it. The criticism from the penal perspective that sickness does not deserve punishment is correct. It is an aspect of the atonement because the atonement does not fundamentally concern punishment but the restoration and reconciliation of humanity to God and his intentions. Movement away from the legal paradigm of salvation through retributive justice removes the necessity to equate the mechanism, extent, or meaning of healing with the forgiveness of sins. This allows for development of a more constructive and practically serviceable doctrine of healing in the atonement. God heals, and healing is in the atonement, because of his love and because of human need. The genius of the pentecostal doctrine is that it supplies theology with a much-needed means of expanding salvation beyond the wholly spiritual and eschatological to include physical and natural dimensions of life in this world. The problem of the classical form of healing in the atonement doctrine is not that it has misinterpreted either the fourth servant song or the New Testament's appropriation of it but that it has been too rigid and legalistic, at times attempting to compress into a formulaic guarantee of an element of salvation that is better viewed as a component of a more organic, holistic renewal. Pentecostals are right in affirming physical healing along with the forgiveness of sins in the saving work of Christ, yet salvation as healing also concerns the mental, emotional, and social well-being of humans as individuals as well as collectively. The image of the happy exchange as the saving mechanism of the cross, as informed by the doctrines of incarnation and recapitulation, has helped to create a space for these aspects of liberation and renewal within Christology and soteriology. At this point, however, only part of the meaning of the cross has been explicated, and this theme can provide only part of the support needed by a holistic soteriology. Beyond recapitulation and redemptive representation, the *Christus victor* model also strengthens and expands soteriology through its affirmation of Christ's defeat of the powers via the cross.

#### **4.2.2.2 Overthrowing the Devil and Subverting the Powers**

As has been repeatedly stressed throughout this work, Christ's "destroy[ing] the works of the devil" (1 John 3.8) is as central to his saving purpose as his dying "for our sins" (1 Cor. 15.3, 1 John 2.2). The gospel is the story of God's decisive joining, as one man, the terrestrial theater of the cosmic conflict and bringing it to a decisive conclusion in the death and resurrection of Christ. Atonement doctrines not oriented to this conflict diverge from the New Testament narrative and falter at many theological points, from the nature of God's disposition towards sinful human beings to his role in the crucifixion, and leave themselves open to distortion of questions relating to the nature, extent, and consequences of salvation. Indeed, the meaning of the cross is properly apprehended only when Satan, God and humanity's mutual

adversary, is restored to the equation of redemption and recognized as the prime actor in the crucifixion (Weaver 2001, 72–74). Again, given its prominence in his public ministry, the cosmic conflict must be kept in the foreground when interpreting his death; the work of Christ in death is not discontinuous from his work in life. Just as the happy exchange at the cross of humanity’s sin for Christ’s righteousness is a continuation and universalization of the ministry of forgiveness he performed in life, the end of his life represents the culmination, prior to the *eschaton*, of his engagement of the enemy he had harried through his proclamation and demonstration of the liberating power of God’s kingdom. The cross brings together the three concerned parties from the fall—God, humanity, and the adversary—and seemingly the devil wins the conflict with the death of Christ. As the resurrection demonstrates, however, God in Christ has conquered, and humanity as a whole goes free, being reconciled to God.

As was discussed in §2.3.2, Satan must be identified as the primary actor in the death of Christ. Jesus’ Father placed the cup before him, but it was the devil and his agents who supplied the nails. The role of the adversary in this conflict and how the death of Christ led to his defeat must now be considered in greater detail. It is on these points that *Christus victor* traditionally generates the most controversy, chiefly because the prominence it gives to the devil can be perceived as infringing upon the sovereignty of God; concerns are also raised about the means by which the devil is defeated. First, it must be asked whether the adversary should be considered an active, willing participant or a passive spectator in the crucifixion. If the latter is the case, then his role in redemption is minimal; all he can do is watch as his house is plundered, and there is no question of infringement upon God’s sovereignty. However, this question has already been answered to the contrary in §2.3.2, where it is shown from the New Testament how Satan instigates the betrayal and the execution of Jesus; only a willing participation can be construed from the narratives of the gospels. Second, it must be asked whether in this active, willing participation the devil knowingly or unknowingly cooperates with the plan of God. The former may be immediately ruled out as an absurd impossibility, a bald contradiction of the meaning of adversary (ἰπῆρ). Accordingly, it must be concluded that the devil was a willing participant in the crucifixion but unaware of what its consequences would be. This line of thought leads to the greatest controversy at the heart of the *Christus victor* theory, which is also known as the ransom to Satan: can the death of Jesus be viewed in any way as a payment to the devil, and if so, is the Divine guilty of deception?

This line of questioning has persistently followed the *Christus victor* model, particularly its most famous, and infamous, statement, Gregory of Nyssa’s vivid metaphor of the ravenous fish, bait, and hook. While often disparaged as “grotesque,”

it ties together several important threads of the theological appropriation of the biblical narrative and thus cannot be dismissed hastily. As generally accepted by the tradition, at the fall the primal human beings not only disobeyed God but surrendered their freedom and the power that been delegated to them to the instigator of the fall, Satan. This cession of power had real and lasting effects; along with the punishment their own sins inflict upon them, human beings also remain captive to this enemy. Accordingly, the liberation Christ came to bring requires a canceling of Satan's hold, legitimate and otherwise, on them. This was his mission on earth, and the enemy rose up to meet his challenge. Not content with merely holding humanity in bondage, the devil also desired to destroy God's beloved Son. Some (e.g., Boersma 2004, 191) dispute this, chiefly because of Jesus' identification of Satan as the motivator behind Peter's attempt to dissuade him from the way of the cross (Matt. 16.21–23). However, this no more negates the logic of the ransom theory or the enemy's ambitions than demonic confessions of Jesus as the Son of God (e.g., Mark 1.25, 3.11) demonstrate the underworld's affirmation of Chalcedonian Christology (Boyd, G. A. 2006b, 36–37). That the devil was behind the original attempt to take Christ's life is a reasonable inference from the story of Matt. 2.1–18, and after again failing in his attempt to co-opt Christ at the beginning of his ministry (Matt. 4.1–11), the devil tried a variety of tactics to thwart his mission. Ultimately, the only thing that could stop Jesus from plundering the strongman's house (Matt. 12.28–29; cf. Luke 10.17–20) was taking his life (Luke 22.3). The enemy was, however, utterly mistaken in what the death of Christ would accomplish. Instead of leading to total victory, it led to his complete ruin.

Now it falls to the *Christus victor* theory and Gregory's image in particular to explain the mechanism of the devil's defeat and the loss of his power and holdings. While the tradition recognizes, on the basis of the New Testament (cf. §4.2.1), humanity's captivity to the enemy as the root of its plight, it also teaches that God does not overcome it by "sheer force" (Aulén 1931, 47–55); otherwise, a means other than Christ's death would have been used to accomplish it. Likewise, though the devil is an usurper, humanity's yielding to him at the fall gave a certain legitimacy to his malevolent reign. At this point, many of the fathers employ the language of ransom; in Christ, God furnishes a payment to the enemy that effects the release of those he holds captive, one life that he will accept in the place of many (cf. Mark 10.45). As distasteful to some as this idea is by itself, its implications are even more so. The transaction between God and Satan is a sham or feint. The devil possesses his payment only momentarily; the lure of Christ's flesh traps the devil on the hook of his divinity. Through the resurrection, Christ and all of humanity go free, and the devil's power is broken (Heb. 2.9, 14–15). As this was of course God's intention from the

very beginning, the appearance of a divine deception is given. To many Christians, this suggestion is as preposterous as it is offensive. A holy God, it is deemed, would not deign to act in such a manner, and some other explanation of redemption must be given.

What is described by the ransom doctrine is clear and understandable; what is often forgotten is that even Gregory of Nyssa's outrageous description is a simile. The atonement accomplished in Christ cannot be fully analogized to any other phenomenon in nature, human experience, or religion, and figurative language must always be employed, to a greater or lesser extent, to communicate it. Whatever failings may be found in its imagery, the classical ransom theory rightly recognizes the essential elements and dimensions of the New Testament's narrative of redemption within the context of the cosmic conflict. It directs the work of redemption towards the external party outside of God and humanity that has sought to destroy humanity and thwart God's purposes from the beginning. God's love is shown in Christ in that God has taken it upon himself to bear the cost and suffer the pain necessary to free humanity. The ransom locates the accomplishment of atonement within the person of Christ himself; it is through God's union with humanity in Christ and his recapitulation of humanity as a whole, not just as a mere substitute, that his death can be effective as a reconciliation for all. Through his resurrection—of which more will be said in the next section—the situation vis-à-vis the powers holding humanity in bondage has been permanently altered, those powers being broken, and human beings are free to come to God. The barriers that Christ tore down for many in his life have been torn down for all. These are the theological elements that constitute the core of the Christus victor theory, which the mythic imagery and language should not be allowed to obscure. The idea of God striking a formal bargain or deal with the devil, for example, that some of the fathers imply or even overtly state is absent from the New Testament, but ultimately, the bargain and the implied deception that accompanies it are irrelevant to the theory's basic idea. No contract need be signed for the payment to be effective towards its end of destroying the one who takes it. In the words of Christ in John 14.30b, "[T]he ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me." The enemy's deception was his self-deception in believing his power to destroy, the power of nothingness, could be extended limitlessly, but in overextending his reach to strike the Son of God, he effected his own ruin. This was the means by which God in Christ conquered:

In and through Jesus, God is understood to struggle against evil, but not with the tools of evil itself—not with coercive power, not with unjust force—but unconventionally, indirectly, immanently, incarnationally, using "weakness" to confront and confound "dominance." (Ray 1998, 138)

According to the patristic model, this redemptive relocation and redefinition take place in moments of crisis when the glutton chokes on his food—when the greed or violence of the powerful becomes so indisputable, so clear, that it ignites moral outrage and is discredited in the public eye. (Ray 1998, 140)

At this point brief attention must be given to the historic confession of Christ's harrowing of hell, though the controversial speculation over what exactly he accomplished in the abode of the dead when he "made a proclamation to the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3.19) need not be entered. If the creed's *descendit ad inferna* is to be affirmed, however, it must somehow be related to Christ's overall saving work. Within the context of this study, it is clear that preference must be given to the patristic, as well older Lutheran, interpretation of the descent as the actualization of his defeat of the powers and the prelude to, if not the beginning of, his exaltation, over against the reformed interpretation of the descent as either a continuation or a symbolization of his suffering and humiliation (Bloesch 1984, 314; Scaer 1992, 96–99). By the time the last words are spoken from the cross (i.e., John 19.30, Luke 23.46), it is too late for any further assault, any further humiliation of Christ. It is also too late for the devil; the trap has been sprung. In Christ's entering of hell—the house of death, the realm of the diabolical, the kingdom of the left hand—the veil of his humanity shrouding his divinity is pulled back; to borrow from Gregory's image, the hook of his divinity is loosed to accomplish its purpose, the bait of his flesh not being abandoned or separated but given a time to rest in the earth. The harrowing of hell is, in Eastern theology, "God's intrusion into the domain usurped by the devil and the breaking up of his control over humanity" (Meyendorff 1979, 162). Early Lutheranism, as it followed Luther, confessed the same. "The solid declaration of the formula of concord" (1921, 9.2), comments on this article of the creed, states

[W]e simply believe that the entire person, God and man, after the burial descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his might.

Through his death on the cross, Christ "disarmed the rulers and authorities" (Col. 2.14); the harrowing of hell was the private captivation of captivity (Eph. 4.8–9), the binding of the powers, that preceded their "public example" (Col. 2.15), his more visible triumph in his resurrection and ascension.

Again, Barth's concept of nothingness is extremely useful for reframing and partially demythologizing the Christus victor theory. Nothingness, it may be recalled, is that which is not willed by God; it is the "kingdom of the left hand," that which he has rejected but may be given existence, of a type, when chosen and willed through disobedience and turning away from God. This is the essential meaning of the fall: when confronted with a choice, the primal human beings chose that which was not



God's choice. In doing so, they not only gave place to nothingness in their minds and hearts (sin) and incurred its natural conclusion (death); they also yielded their delegated authority to it, empowering it in its tyranny (devil). It was this unholy power in its threefold form that Christ confronted in his life and seized in his death in order to bring it to destruction, leaving it behind in the grave instead of his body. Barth explains in his inimitable manner:

It must be clearly grasped that the incarnation of the Word of God was obviously not necessary merely to reveal the goodness of God's creation in its twofold form.... Yet much more than this was involved. It is written that "the Word became flesh," i.e., that it became not only a creature, but a creature in mortal peril, a creature threatened and actually corrupted, a creature which in face and in spite of its goodness, and in disruption and destruction of its imparted goodness, was subject not to an internal but to an external attack which it could neither contain nor counter. The Word became a creature which had fallen under the sway of a possessive and domineering alien, and was therefore itself alienated from its Creator and itself, unable to recover or retrace its way home.... That God's Word, God's Son, God Himself, became flesh means no other than that God saw a challenge to Himself in this assault on His creature, in this invading alien, in this other determination of His creature, in its capture and self-surrender. It means that God took to heart the attack on His creature because He saw in it an attack on His own cause and therefore on Himself, seeing His own enemy in this domineering alien, intruder, usurper and tyrant. God therefore arose, and in His Son gave and humbled Himself, Himself becoming flesh, this ruined and lost human creature, setting Himself wholly in the place of His work and possession.... And therefore in His Son He exposed Himself with it to this assault, to this alien, to this hostile determination, yielding to this adversary in solidarity with His creature, and in this way routing it, achieving what the creature, who was and is only secondary in this matter, could not accomplish but yet required for its deliverance. (Barth 1960b, 303–304)

In the incarnation God exposed Himself to nothingness even as this enemy and assailant. He did so in order to repel and defeat it. He did so in order to destroy the destroyer. The Gospel records of the miracles and acts of Jesus are not just formal proofs of His Messiahship, of His divine mission, authority and power, but as such they are objective manifestations of His character as the Conqueror not only of sin but also of evil and death, as the Destroyer of the destroyer, as the Saviour in the most inclusive sense. He not only forgives the sins of men; He also removes the source of their suffering. He resists the whole assault. To its power He opposes His own power, the transcendent power of God. He shows Himself to be the total Victor. (Barth 1960b, 311)

In the unveiled encounter with God in Christ, the power of nothingness is utterly broken and overwhelmed. The descent of Christ is not a further affliction placed upon him but the beginning of the filling of the void by the divine life and the reclamation of God's subverted creation. (Its ongoing reclamation is the subject of soteriology, its complete reclamation that of eschatology.) Barth (1960b, 311) concludes this lengthy yet moving appropriation of the cosmic conflict and victory themes with a pointed warning of the need to recover the fullness of Christ's saving work that unfortunately he himself did not completely heed:

For here [i.e., the New Testament] there not only speaks but acts the One who has come to hurl Himself against the opposition and resistance of nothingness in its form as hostile and aggressive power. Here there speaks and acts the One who for the salvation of the creature and the glory of God has routed nothingness as the total principle of enmity, physical as well as moral. He is not only the way and the truth; He is also the life, the resurrection and the life. If He were not the Saviour in this total sense. He would not be the Saviour at all in the New Testament sense. It is a serious matter that all the Western as opposed to the Eastern Church has invariably succeeded in minimising and devaluating, and still does so to-day, this New Testament emphasis. And Protestantism especially has always been far too moralistic and spiritualistic, and has thus been blind to this aspect of the Gospel.

It is in the Eastern doctrine of redemption, whether designated as recapitulation, ransom, or *Christus victor*, that lies the means of retrieving the holistic soteriology of the New Testament that is so desperately sought by contemporary Christianity.

As per the doctrines of the incarnation and recapitulation, the victory accomplished by Christ was a victory for all of humanity in union with him. The chief outcome of this triumph is, of course, reconciliation with God; it is in breaking the power of evil that God reconciles humanity to himself (Aulén 1931, 71; cf. §4.1.1.1 above). Christ's ministry and life itself demonstrated that the way to God was open; what more was required was the universalization of this revelation that he brought. This is the accomplishment of the cross; within the Arminian tradition, it is called *prevenient grace*. Not incidentally, within the *Christus victor* theory lies the solution to the problems of this controversial doctrine. Outside of its different understanding of the character and eternal purposes of God, it is the teaching of *prevenient grace* that most distinguishes classical Arminianism from orthodox reformed theology.

R. E. Olson (2006, 160–161) describes the general Arminian view:

Grace heals the deadly wound of sin and enables humans, who are otherwise in bondage of the will to sin, to respond freely to the message of the gospel.... Grace is the first cause of genuine free will as liberation from bondage to sin, and grace is the source of anything good. In its *prevenient* (going before) form, it... awakens the prisoner lying helpless in the dungeon of nature's night and breaks off his chains so... [that] he can rise up and follow Christ.

Arminianism agrees with Calvinism that because of original sin, human beings lack any ability to turn towards God, but it diverges by averring that

the most devastating consequences of original sin upon the human race have been mitigated by the intervention of God to preserve His creation from self-destruction. (Dunning 1988, 296)

This liberation of the will is a universal benefit for humanity effected by Christ on the cross (Dunning 1988, 339). Thus, Arminianism is able to affirm both that is only by God's grace that anyone is saved and that all humans are capable of responding by faith to the gospel call prior to the more radical work of the Holy Spirit in

regeneration. As traditionally formulated, however, prevenient grace is also perhaps the weakest point of Arminian theology, chiefly because it is more an inference than an overt biblical teaching. Moreover, it conflicts with the penal theory of the atonement that is affirmed by many conservative Arminians but is most coherent in its more traditional, limited form (Dunning 1988, 363–365). If the atonement is limited, however, a universal prevenient grace is not a possible outcome of the cross, and indeed it is displaced in the *ordo* by irresistible, regenerative grace.

This problem persists because Arminianism, like Calvinism, has deleted the third dimension of the captivating power from its atonement doctrine, which, regardless of its specific variety, remains within the Anselmian tradition. Prevenient grace becomes a far more viable doctrine when it is reframed from the perspective of recapitulation and the narrative of cosmic conflict. Human inability to respond to the call of God does not stem from a total depravity transmitted via inherited guilt. Rather, it stems from bondage to an alien, external power opposed to God’s will in creation. Several texts make the nature of the bondage clear. In this context, Paul writes,

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor. 4.3–4)

The work that is needed to bring human beings to God involves first removing their blindness caused by the hostile power. Even Eph. 2.1ff., a common proof-text for contemporary Calvinism’s teaching of total inability and the necessity of regeneration prior to faith (e.g., Berkhof 1938, 472; Hoekema 1989, 82, 95, 103) points in this direction. Human beings are spiritually dead because of sin (v. 1)—though this metaphor should not be taken absolutely literally any more than Paul’s statement that “the body is dead because of sin” in Rom. 8.10—and in this life they follow “the course of this world... the ruler of the power of air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient” (Eph. 2.2; cf. 4.17–24). Again, liberation from this bondage or spiritual death comes through Christ’s defeat of these powers (cf. Col. 2.13–15). This is the prevenient or enabling grace that was accomplished by the cross and extends to all of humanity because of Christ’s unity with them from the incarnation (John 12.31–32). Human beings come to God not because of an involuntary, monergistic conversion by God (as per Calvinism) nor because of a residual ability inherent within them despite sin (as per semi-Pelagianism), nor even through a universal but non-salvific and partial healing of original sin (as per Arminianism), but because Christ, “the true light,” has overcome the forces of darkness hindering them (John 1.5, 9–13).

From this basis, other benefits of the liberating work of Christ may be explicated. Caution is needed, however, that theory does not overstate its claims and degenerate into an intemperate triumphalism. The nature and extent of the conquest of the enemy claimed by Christus victor must be carefully delimited; helpfully, the New Testament does just that. The victory of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of darkness is a real one, but like all the other aspects of the kingdom, it lies under the paradox of the already/not yet, the immanent presence of the kingdom that still must be fully realized only eschatologically. This tension is observed in the New Testament's seemingly contradictory descriptions of the state of the cosmic conflict, not just between different authors but even within individual books. For example, in John 12.31 Christ victoriously states that through his lifting up, "the ruler of this world will be driven out;" similarly, 1 John 3.8 declares that he was revealed "to destroy the works of the devil." A later verse in the same book (5.19) seems to present a retraction: "We know that... the whole world lies under the power of the evil one (ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται)"; passages such as this seem to militate against a universal victory through the cross. Balance and understanding may be attained through taking this doctrine, as well as the Johannine literature, to its eschatological conclusion. Theologically speaking, to faithfully represent the breadth of the New Testament teaching the Christus victor theory requires the support of an amillennial interpretation of Rev. 20.1–3, which describes the binding of Satan and locates it chronologically in the redemption wrought by Christ (Williams, J. R. 1992, 422–424). In the words of the author of the apocalypse, Satan is sealed in the pit "so that he would deceive the nations no more" (Rev. 20.3); this is the primary scope of the conquest of the enemy. The binding of Satan's power by Christ's work on the cross and in the grave is not absolute; it extends principally to the lifting of the deception blinding humanity from seeing God and the opening of salvation to them without restriction. Neither the New Testament nor human history at all suggest that the power of nothingness has been completely neutralized and evil eradicated, and for theology to assert such would be a fatal naivete. Rather, it may be contended that in Christ nothingness has been pushed back, and space has been made for the liberation of humanity as well as the rest of creation. The importance of this eschatological perspective is discussed further in §4.3.4.

To affirm atonement as the victory of Christ is not to simply exult passively in his triumph; rather, it is to hear the call to participate in the spiritual conflict that he has brought to a decisive turn (e.g., Eph. 6.10–12ff.) As acknowledged in §4.1.1.2, the demythologized interpretations of the spiritual battle are not wholly misguided, for they have summoned the church to enter the struggle against trans-personal evil as it manifests in myriad human social structures. It is striking that the most common

language employed in the New Testament to describe the theater of the cosmic conflict is that of power, hierarchy, and structure (Wink 1984), and as salvation begins with release from their tyranny (e.g., Gal. 1.4, Eph. 2.1–10, Col. 1.13–23, 2.13–15), it is completely appropriate to revision soteriology to include the collective and social dimensions of liberation for humanity and even the creation as a whole. Zeal for this conflict must be tempered through the acceptance of the tensions of the kingdom. While Christ has crushed the head of the cosmic forces of evil (cf. Gen. 3.15) and shone light on blinded eyes that they may see (2 Cor. 4.3–6), the seeds that the enemy has sown continue to plague the bountiful harvest and will do so until the end (Matt. 13.24–30, 36–43). The triumph and rest of the church will come only with the new heavens and earth, but because of Christ's conquest of the power, confidence is warranted that the ceaseless struggle will yield tangible results. The resurrection of Christ is God's assurance that the victory is indeed won.

#### **4.2.2.2.3 The Defeat of Death and the Renewal of Creation**

All theologies acknowledge the importance of the resurrection for the Christian faith. The resurrection is the vindication of Christ and his mission, demonstrating that he is indeed God's Son (Rom. 1.4); for the believer, Christ's resurrection is the promise of eternal life (1 Cor. 15.12ff., 1 Thess. 4.14). Traditional Western theology, however, falters by not giving the resurrection a decisive place within the schema of redemption. The cause of this is not oversight or skepticism but a consequence of the Western understanding of both the problem in the divine-human relationship and the remedy that God accomplishes in Christ. Minor variations aside, Western orthodoxy holds that the need of humanity is for God's justice or honor to be satisfied in order to effect reconciliation. The death of Christ, the God-man, is the entire mechanism by which this is accomplished, thus its synonymy with "the work of Christ" (cf. Forde 1984, 24; Moltmann 1990, 186; Green and Baker 2000, 148). The resurrection hangs outside of the doctrine of atonement as an appendage—though no doubt one of great benefit and import—the redemptive function of which cannot quite be identified (cf. Macchia 2000, 9). There is thus a theological disjunction between the foundational miracle of the Christian faith—Christ is risen from the death—and its foundational message—God has reconciled the world by the death of his Son.

Yet, this narrowing of the theological vision of redemption to the cross alone is alien to the New Testament, which nearly always treats it in tandem with Christ's resurrection and often with his exaltation, and also to the theology of the ancient church, which gives the resurrection greater prominence than the later Western church. As Weaver (2001, 54) observes, in order to be considered biblical or even Pauline, an atonement theory must give a meaningful place to the resurrection. This shall now be done for the renewal Christus victor perspective of the present work. On

this point, the methodological preference giving priority to the gospels over the epistles must be suspended because of the relative lack of theological reflection on the resurrection in the former. N. T. Wright (2003, 599–615) strongly argues this feature as evidence of the early dating and historicity of the traditions behind their Easter accounts. For the present purpose, however, this means that the epistles and the writings of the fathers must be drawn upon to grasp the full significance of the resurrection, but this by no means requires a retraction or contradiction of the gospels' teachings of redemption and salvation.

Ironically, it is in two of the New Testament books purported to clearly teach penal substitution, Romans and Hebrews, that the redemptive purposes of the resurrection are most clearly revealed. In particular, Romans gives great salvific significance to the resurrection and prohibits its delinking from the cross, and Hebrews 1–2 give perhaps the clearest presentation of the mechanism of redemption and its relationship to the incarnation, and the structure of these two chapters parallels the pattern of later patristic thought to a large extent. In describing his exalted position above the angels, the first chapter of Hebrews strongly suggests Christ's divinity, whereas the second strongly establishes his joining to humanity in the incarnation (2.9ff.); the foundation of the faith of the later councils is clearly evident. Heb. 2.14–15 succinctly sets forth the essence of the classical theory of the atonement:

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

Verse 16 even communicates the idea of the atonement as a rescue, an intervention by God to rescue his children from bondage. The book's subsequent likening of Christ's death to old covenant sacrifices must be interpreted in the light of the setting of this preamble as well as its constant refrain of Christ's exaltation.

Taking its direction from the New Testament, for the classical *Christus victor* model the resurrection of Christ obviously signifies his conquest of death. The cross can only be considered a victory in any way because his death was not his end. Theologically, the resurrection accomplishes two major purposes. First, as the beginning of his exaltation—the New Testament regularly joins and even conflates his resurrection, ascension, and session—which reverses his humiliation, the resurrection demonstrates Christ's decisive victory over each of the powers he engaged in ministry even to the conclusion of his life: sin, death, and the devil. The raising of Christ shows that in him God has truly triumphed over these powers. Christ's return to life shows that the assault upon him, and therefore upon God's creation in union with him, has been rejected and rebuffed by God. As Gregory of Nyssa and other church fathers

rightly perceive, God's permission for Christ to be handed over to death was in fact a stratagem designed to "destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2.14). Neither the divine nature nor the divine purpose could allow Christ's death to be a real defeat. The resurrection was the beginning of his true lifting up (cf. John 12.31–32) to the right hand of God so that all of his enemies are (literally, so far as the language of theological metaphor conveys) under his feet (Eph. 1.20–23, 4.8–10, 1 Cor. 15.25–26); the devil may be the "ruler of the power of the air" (Eph. 2.2), but in his triumph, Christ has been raised higher still (Williams, J. R. 1988b, 393). Likewise, the resurrection is the defeat of sin. Sin leads to death (Rom. 6.23) and gives it its sting (1 Cor. 15.56), but the resurrection demonstrates that sin and death do not have the final word over human fate. Christ's resurrection is the emergence of a new humanity that has been liberated from sin; the happy exchange is successful, and sin is left behind in his grave. Finally, the resurrection is the fundamental breaking of the power of death and corruption. Though human beings are still subject to it, they can be freed from the fear of it (Heb. 2.14–15) because Christ has already taken their deaths as his own (Heb. 2.9, 2 Cor. 5.14–15) and emerged victorious. According to patristic thought, it is the fear of death that disorders the soul's desires and leads humans to sin; therefore, freedom from this fear is the beginning of the holiness that ultimately leads to glorification. Having triumphed over this last enemy, Christ triumphs over all.

The second, more positive purpose of the resurrection is the communication of this divine life to humanity as it is united with Christ (Rom. 8.11, 2 Cor. 4.10). According to Paul's words in Romans, the raising of Christ is human justification (4.24–25), and having been reconciled by his life, his resurrection opens for them the hope of an even greater salvation (5.10). The nature and character of this salvation and how human beings participate in it are the subject of the following section, which explores the interfacing of the *Christus victor* theory with pentecostalism's themes of full salvation. Viewed in the broadest sense, however, salvation can only be understood as this impartation of life, of which justification, sanctification, and so forth are but aspects. Humanity is saved simply because it is united by nature to Christ, who died and rose again. Here at the resurrection the theology of redemption comes around full circle again to the incarnation and recapitulation. Even in death, the hypostatic union of the Word of God with the human nature Christ shares with the entire race was preserved. All that afflicts that nature was left behind in the grave, and rising forth the Word divinized humanity, imparting Christ's life (Meyendorff 1979, 161–162). It is from this vantage of the rescue and healing God accomplishes in the death and resurrection of Christ that redemption and salvation must be apprehended in the attempt to construct a more holistic theology.

In the recognition of the completion of salvation in the coupling of the cross and resurrection, there is space for the widening of salvation beyond humanity. Final salvation consists in the future glory of the resurrection of the dead, and the complete liberation of the creation transpires through the “revealing of the children of God” (Rom. 8.18–25). While the full realization of this hope is truly eschatological, it follows that just as the resurrection of Christ proleptically brings hope and renewal to human beings who are nevertheless still subject to death, the present transformation of the children of God can bring liberation and renewal to creation in anticipation of the eschatological new heaven and earth (e.g., Matt. 5.9; cf. Yong 2005, 91). To confess faith in the resurrection is to acknowledge that God has in Jesus Christ pushed back the forces of nothingness that threaten his good creation with destruction. Other forms of life, the earth itself, and creation as a whole are also subjects of redemption, and followers of Christ are called to join, not hinder, God in his renewing work. It is fitting that human beings, as the last creation of God and the first to enjoy the fruits of redemption, would labor with him in loosing the bonds of corruption afflicting creation because of the fall, the penultimate responsibility for which lies with them. Many perceive the urgent need for Christian theology to produce a stronger response to the ecological crises threatening the earth. By returning to the *Christus victor* model and its themes of triumph of life and renewal, the loci of the person and work of Christ can become useful for constructing a soteriology that is not exclusively oriented to human beings and their other-worldly salvation but has applicability to life in this world and solutions for a creation in peril.

#### **4.3 Full Salvation**

The above *Christus victor* perspective largely follows Aulén’s reading of the early church doctrine yet seeks to avoid a major criticism frequently raised against him: a tendency towards docetism (e.g., Peters, T. 1972, 306–308; Boersma 2004, 185). Aulén contrasts the patristic interpretation with the other two major theories by repeatedly stressing how the atonement as victory is exclusively the work of God and not human beings. While he certainly affirms the humanity of Christ (Aulén 1960, 191–196), it does not feature prominently in his theology, and its importance seems to go unnoticed; Christ’s human nature seems but a passive bystander to the work of the divine. This tendency, however, is not present in the mainstream of the tradition, which was of course acutely aware of the dangers of docetism (e.g., Irenaeus 1999, 3.18.7), and it can be further averted when the life and ministry of the man Jesus are allowed to take on their full theological significance. The truth of Chalcedon must be paired with the equally true insights of kenotic Christology. While fully divine in nature, in the incarnation Christ also emptied



himself of what have been referred to as the divine relational attributes (Phil. 2.6–8; Erickson 1991, 82). Profoundly, the gospels largely do not depict Christ as a God clothed in human flesh, occasionally exerting his omnipotence as he walked the earth; Christ's mighty works are rarely, if ever, attributed to his divinity but rather to his condition as a Spirit-filled human. The Holy Spirit fully accompanied the Logos in the incarnation (Moltmann 1992, 60–65; Yong 2005, 86–88), and the work of Christ is coextensive with the work of the Spirit of God. The most important moments of the life of Jesus were effected by the Holy Spirit, as were his mighty works, especially his engagement of the adversary. The words of Jesus as reported in Matt. 8.28 summarize the gospel from the renewal Christus victor perspective: “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you.”

Salvation is the coming of the kingdom that Christ brings, the Spirit-filled life he lived on earth, the divine life communicated to humanity by his resurrection. All of soteriology must be viewed through the lens of Christ's life as a whole:

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. (Rom. 5.10)

Christ is the center of the Christian faith, the source and norm through which Christians have knowledge of God, themselves, and what God has done for them. Pentecostalism's potential for making significant contributions to contemporary Christian theology lies in its willingness to fully accept the implications of Christ as prototype without a priori limitations such as the cessation of the charismata, the circumscription of the Spirit's work after Pentecost, or the restriction of salvation to solely spiritual matters. Although not systematically arrived at from this basis, the chief doctrinal innovations of the movement may be grounded in the replication of the life of Christ. The goal of pentecostalism is the restoration of the biblical “full gospel,” which brings “full salvation”; the objective of the present study is to show how a recovery of the patristic model of the work of Christ, both as recapitulation and as victory, can support and enhance pentecostalism's soteriology while eliminating some of the problems created by the penal theory. The movement's symbol of the fourfold or fivefold gospel is used as the framework for this demonstration of how salvation may be holistically understood as Christification or a functional replication of the person and work of Christ. Although the descriptor of this soteriological paradigm as “full salvation” implies a conclusive completeness, openness to the never-ceasing task of theology requires that this formulation not be dogmatized as a full and final answer to this question. In his previous work, the researcher (House 2006) has demonstrated how pentecostal and ecumenical theologies may edify each other in this area; the present work continues this task by exploring how these

theologies' soteriologies may be responsibly expanded on the basis of this new appropriation of the *Christus victor* model.

#### 4.3.1 The Reality of Salvation: Justification, New Birth, and Sanctification

The first point of the full gospel of pentecostalism is "Jesus as savior." Salvation, however, is such a broad term that for theological purposes, its specific connotation in a particular context must be clearly delineated. The major traditions of the church have emphasized different aspects of salvation. In the East, the primary focus has been on *theosis*, which has taken the orthodox in an entirely different direction than the Western church, where the chief concern for both of its branches has been justification. Indeed, justification by faith alone is the hallmark of protestant theology, the designated article by which the church stands or falls. Although still a protestant tradition, pentecostalism has not retained this preoccupation with justification (Macchia 2003, 133–135). While proclaiming salvation as the gracious forgiveness of sins, the nuances of forensic justification have not found resonance in the piety of the movement. Pentecostal theologian F. Macchia (2003, 135) explains from the perspective of his own theological journey:

The impartial judge of forensic justification who justifies us due to Christ's merited righteousness lacked connection to the biblical stories that nourished me in the faith. This God of legal justification was distant and lifeless and paled in comparison to the God of the Gospel about whom I had learned earlier, a God who pursues humanity through the Spirit-empowered mission of the Church and provides foretastes of the coming resurrection by breaking the bonds of sin and making people whole both spiritually and physically.

Because of its protestant heritage, pentecostal systematic theologies treat justification in a more or less traditional manner, and the movement's commitment to penal substitution prevents it from entirely shedding the inherited forensic and juridical language. In its evangelism and preaching, however, the movement often seems more comfortable with the image of salvation as regeneration, being "born again," as it better conveys the holistic, life-changing nature of salvation as pentecostals experience it (Sepúlveda 1996). The concern of Luther and the other reformers as to how a sinner can be righteous before a holy God is not as central as the question of how a fallen life can be restored and transformed as a new creation of God. S. J. Land (1993, 76) explains further:

Though the earliest Pentecostals certainly understood the meaning of imputation and justification, they were more concerned with the impartation of righteousness and sanctification, the transformation of lives and the empowered mobilization of the church. The emphasis of salvation was not so much on "standing" as it was on "movement". It was not primarily a matter of identification with Christ but of conformity to him. It was not so much a "position" as a "participation".

Sanctification is also essential to the pentecostal understanding of salvation. Older, methodistic holiness pentecostalism includes it as a separate crisis experience subsequent to salvation qua justification and regeneration, but because of the lack of consensus even among the classical groups, it is more logically treated here with justification. While elements of the original Wesleyan teaching—the reality and necessity of sanctification, its appropriation by faith, its vitality as the goal of the Christian life—are theologically sound and need recovery, the more radical teaching of instantaneous, discernible entire sanctification is difficult to sustain practically as well as biblically, the problems with the biblical foundation of the doctrine being exacerbated by the pentecostal reversal of the nineteenth-century assignment of Spirit baptism to sanctification. Non-methodistic or baptistic pentecostalism has outpaced methodistic pentecostalism in growth partially because of these difficulties, and even within many holiness churches, entire sanctification has the character of a vestigial teaching not really borne out in experience. That said, sanctification is still immensely important to all branches of pentecostalism, and the beginnings of salvation cannot be separated from the beginning of personal holiness. Regeneration involves a real change, not just a forensic declaration, and constitutes the beginnings of sanctification. Movement from this point is not optional but the defining character of salvation. Justification and its basis in the grace of God are not forgotten; however, confidence is placed in the fact that the matter of the forgiveness of sins is “settled” in the work of Christ. The next level may be looked to and dared:

The [pentecostal] narrative of justification usually involved confessing the resistances and hold-outs in the believer’s life and the desire to fulfill the will of God. Doing the will of God, walking in the light, resisting the devil, and denying the self were all good. But sanctification involved actively seeking all the will of God for one’s life, loving the Lord with the whole heart and joyfully bearing burdens without grumbling and complaining. Initial sanctification occurred with justification and the new birth, but entire sanctification was to be expected, desired and sought...

If righteousness was a right relationship and direction for life, holiness was the standard for living and the essence of the Christian life. Desire for sin was to be crucified, deeds of the flesh mortified and sinful stains and tendencies cleansed. If justification signaled a radical break with the world, then sanctification was a radical dealing with the flesh, the old nature or the carnal self. The self was denied in justification and was to be so daily thereafter. But in sanctification the self was to come into a new integration of perfect love perpetuated in continual spiritual respiration. Entire sanctification, the complete inner cleansing, would be evidenced in an abiding joy, thanksgiving, and prayerfulness. The Holiness practices were no longer righteous limits to be obeyed whether one felt like it or not. Now they were merely the first steps, the basic training to exercise one in righteousness unto holiness of heart and life. In love the commandments were no longer burdensome or grievous. (Land 1993, 88–89)

Again, the reception of entire sanctification, of perfection in love, as a singular act of grace was the flash point of controversy that shattered the original unity of classical pentecostalism. Nevertheless, for both methodistic and baptistic pentecostalism, *simul iustus et peccator* is acceptable but not *semper simul iustus et peccator*. In order to be worthy of the price it cost God in Christ, the transformation of life called salvation that begins with justifying faith must be real and tangible, not merely legal or positional (1 John 3.8–10; cf. Hollenweger 1972, 129, 315–320).

As discovered in chapter 3, the framework erected by the penal theory of the atonement creates difficulties for the pentecostal perspective on salvation and is the source of many of its conflicts with magisterial protestantism. The objectivity and juridical character of reconciliation cordons it off from subjective transformation, and while affirming this transformation through other means, traditional protestant theology ever subordinates the subjective aspects of salvation to the legal declaration of righteousness that governs the relationship with God (Studebaker 2003, 252–255; Fairbairn 1998). As such, it is difficult theologically to develop a tangible expectation of sanctification and transformation not checked by the barriers raised to shield the integrity of objective justification. It was observed previously that the very doctrine of sanctification that many feel distinguishes the reformed tradition from the Lutheran (Fackre 2003, 62–63) itself diverges from the otherwise consistent monergism of the reformed *ordo*, leading to a real conflict with the values of the system but simultaneously, in the perception of many outside the tradition, a less than effective commitment to sanctification. In other words, the reformation doctrine of radical depravity, which requires that salvation be accomplished wholly by God external to anything within the human person, is not matched by a correspondingly radical doctrine of salvation that expects, even demands, a real and tangible change within the individuals God graciously calls and accepts. The atonement theory on which this system depends lends no aid in it developing such a doctrine as salvation simply progresses from election to substitution to monergistic regeneration that, in the words of Hoekema (1989, 102–104) quoted in §3.2.3.2, cannot be observed or experienced because it occurs “below consciousness.” It is difficult to find provision within a wholly objective atonement theory for necessary subjectivities. At best, they are maintained as contingent and subordinate; they can commonly be perceived as essentially optional; and at worst, as Wesley (1872a) charged (cf. §3.3.1), they can be dispensed with as inimical to right Christian belief.

These problems are surmounted in the renewal Christus victor model, in which the work of Christ is interpreted both as recapitulation and the defeat of the enemies of God and humanity. The mission of God in Christ is not the satisfaction of an inner, legal requirement of God but the reconciliation of the world to himself. This

redemption involves a nullification and reversal of the effects of humanity's fall, not just the extinguishing of human guilt; not just limited to the cross, it begins with the incarnation and is actualized through Christ's death and exaltation. As a doctrine of the work of Christ, *Christus victor* thus unifies all the salvific moments of his life and unites them with his person; it similarly requires that salvation be apprehended holistically as well—and that both experientially as well as theologically. G. A. Boyd explains:

[I]n the *Christus Victor* model what Christ does *for* us cannot be separated, even theoretically, from what Christ does *in* us and *through* us. There is, therefore, no temptation to think about Christ's work on the cross as a "legal fiction." Related to this, there is no temptation to even theoretically divorce justification from sanctification. Rather, in the *Christus Victor* model we either participate in Christ's cosmic victory over the powers or we don't. Stated otherwise, what it means to experience "salvation" is that we participate in the cosmic liberation Christ won through his incarnation, life, death and resurrection. Hence, to have faith in what Christ *did* is to walk faithful to what Christ *is doing*.

In this framework, salvation is not merely forensic justification, the pardon of the guilt for sin, but the healing of human corruption, the ongoing cause of sin. It must include, among other elements, regeneration or re-creation, and sanctification or the renewal of the image of God—though as the researcher will contend later, justification may not be supplanted either. Nothing less than the total transformation of human life is worthy of the price paid to acquire it, which was Christ's death.

For this reason, the Eastern concept of *theosis* better encompasses the scope of the salvation wrought by Christ than its division into discrete points of the *ordo* with one particular point assuming paramountcy, as useful as the *ordo* may otherwise be. Summarizing the Eastern orthodox doctrine, V. Kärkkäinen (2004, 95) states,

What salvation is all about is basically a broadening of the divine penetration of Christ to all human nature. From that perspective, the incarnation of Christ already implies the renewal of all humanity, even all creation.

Salvation is the conversion of the human to the divine, the fulfillment of the purposes of God, and humanity's perfect union with him in love. The doctrine of *theosis* is the greatest theological achievement of a rich tradition that is only now being openly and deeply explored by Western Christians. Its transference out of its original context does, however, entail some difficulties; for many Western minds, the word "deification" conjures up images of a pantheistic blurring of the human with the being of God. Thankfully, Eastern theology has developed an alternative depiction of *theosis* that is more useful for present concerns: Christification, the transformation of believers into the image of Christ by his Holy Spirit. Speaking of the place of believers in the church, the body of Christ, Lossky (1957, 174) states,

The Holy Spirit who rests like a royal unction upon the humanity of the Son, Head of the Church, communicating Himself to each member of this body, creates, so to speak, many Christs, many of the Lord's anointed: person in the way of deification by the side of the divine Person.

Salvation as the replication of Christ resonates completely with pentecostalism's Christocentrism and its beliefs about the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. In a criticism of the Eastern doctrine, pentecostal Rybarczyk (1999, 206) raises this very concern:

Christians are not encouraged in the New Testament's apostolic witness to become like God so much as they are exhorted to become like Christ. Stated alternately, *our focus should not so much be upon becoming fully divine as it should be upon becoming fully human*. In this light, authentic Christians are the most authentic human beings. (emphasis original)

It is in Christ that the fullness of salvation is realized; it is in becoming like him that Christians may become conformed to the purposes of God for them as individuals and as Spirit-empowered ministers for others.

The framework of redemption chosen herein supports and corresponds to both the beginning of salvation, the complex of justification-regeneration-adoption, and the ongoing realization of salvation in life as sanctification; casting all of salvation as a replication of Christ further strengthens these points. As observed earlier, in recapitulation, Christ sums up and passes through the stages of human life as symbolized by the last Adam image. Likewise, pentecostals, as well as other Christians, have seen analogies or points of meeting between Christ's life and the new life that is given in salvation. One of these is the analogy between Christ's supernatural conception (Matt. 1.20, Luke 1.35) and the Christian's regeneration or new birth by the same Holy Spirit; neither is possible except by the miraculous working of the Spirit of life. The analogy is, of course, imperfect; the Christian's regeneration cannot be spoken of apart from the previous life of sin, unknown to Christ, and the forgiveness of God in justification that leads to this renewal. Another analogy, more deeply grounded in the teaching of the New Testament, is between regeneration and Christ's resurrection, one purpose of which, as discussed in the previous section, is the communication of the divine life to humanity in union with him. This particular analogy can be extended even further by placing the beginnings moments of salvation in parallel with the states of Christ's humiliation and exaltation. As pentecostal theologian S. M. Studebaker (2003, 269) perceives,

...God's act of justifying the believer recreates in the believer the redemptive work of Christ: death to sin (cross), new life (resurrection), and restoration to fellowship with the triune God (ascension).

These states refer, respectively, to the traditional steps of the *ordo* of justification,

regeneration, and—not separately explored in this study but receiving more attention in pentecostal doctrinal works than in many traditions—adoption (Arrington 1993, 219–227; Pecota 1995, 367–68; cf. House 2006, 60–61). The New Testament itself makes this analogy (e.g., Rom. 5.10, 6.3–11, 8.1–17, 1 Cor. 15.45, Col. 2.11–13, 1 Peter 1.3), and the church declares it in baptism; the analogy of regeneration to resurrection is also essential for the preferred eschatological framework, discussed further in §4.3.4, that can balance potential problems in both the *Christus victor* framework and the pentecostal full gospel. Because of the recapitulation, in being saved human beings are taken into the very life of God that was manifested in Christ. Salvation is utterly rooted in his person and work, which the New Testament itself shows in its perpetual coupling of his person and his activities, his humiliation and his exaltation, and it thus cannot be broken up, ranked, or subordinated to one ruling principle or moment. Barth (1956b, 527) is correct in the conclusion that drives his doctrine of reconciliation and the shape of his theology as a whole:

The *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* is not the doctrine of justification as such, but its basis and culmination: the confession of Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3); the knowledge of His being and activity for us and to us and with us.

From the perspective of renewal *Christus victor*, a pentecostal appropriation of the patristic doctrine of redemption, all the vital elements of salvation are affirmed. “Full salvation” is the holistic transformation of the believing human person in conformity with the image of Christ.

The victory of Christ over the powers is also specifically relevant, both theologically and experientially, to the beginnings of salvation as it is the direct cause leading to human justification and conversion to God. Section 4.2.2.2.2 presented a solution to the problem of the prevenient grace required by the Arminian *ordo* in which faith precedes the complex of justification-regeneration-adoption. To review, because of its union with Christ, human nature as a whole has been healed by his work, and atonement is not limited to a selection. The sum of human sin has been borne by Christ and left in the grave, but salvation is not universal because faith, as ever established by the New Testament, is necessary for receiving the benefit of this work and this union. A positive response to the call to salvation is possible not because of any ability of fallen human beings but because Christ has defeated the powers blinding humanity and universally opened the way to God (John 12.31–32, Eph. 2.1–10, Col. 2.11–21). Faith, coupled with repentance, is the mechanism by which the union with Christ and his victory is actualized in the individual: sin is exchanged for righteousness, life is born anew, and the believer becomes a child of God. The beginning of salvation, the justification of the ungodly (Rom. 4.5), may

indeed be thought of as an imputation, but it is much more than that. Salvation corresponds to Christ's victory over the tyrants by both his death and his resurrection by the Spirit of God; to rightly align with the nature of this work of redemption in which it too is based, the subjective transformation of the individual believer accomplished by the same Spirit must be given equal salvific import as the objective declaration of righteousness settling the divine-human relationship (Rom. 5.1–10; cf. Dieter 1987b, 34–35; Macchia 2000, 9–10).

In this vein, the framework of renewal *Christus victor* can support a vigorous doctrine of sanctification that stands in unbroken continuity, formally and materially, with the beginnings of salvation; freed from the powers of sin and darkness and the fear of death, believers are transformed as the life of Christ is re-created within them. Previously, other doctrines of sanctification were criticized because of the tendency of a strong focus on forensic justification, in which the believer is objectively declared righteous but remains *semper iustus et peccator*, to produce a weak doctrine of subjective sanctification, in which progress in holiness is professed but never really expected—or worse, forbidden—to break free from this forensic equation. Two points from the Wesleyan perspective, shared by many pentecostals, are useful in clarifying this question of the relationship between atonement and sanctification, Christ's work and its realization in transformation. The first is the Wesleyan emphasis on the absolutely gratuitous nature of sanctification and, apart from the practical requirements of spiritual discipline, its appropriation by faith. Even though the experience of sanctification stands as perhaps the ultimate subjectivity of the Christian life and the one area in which some degree of synergism or human cooperation is broadly affirmed by nearly all traditions, including the Wesleyan, the realization of holiness also has an objective basis. Sanctification is the further drawing of the believer, united with Christ by faith, into his life and the re-creation of Christ's image. Like justification, sanctification is not something that can be “worked” or accomplished by human effort; it must be received as a gift. The words of Paul in Gal. 3.2–3 very pointedly charge that sanctification must be received by faith just as justification; indeed, it describes it in the same language as the rest of the letter uses for its major theme:

The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?

The final clause of 3.2 is *vñv sarxì èπιτελεισθε*, which more traditional versions, recalling the connotations of the various forms of *τελέω* employed throughout the New Testament to signify completion or perfection in holiness (e.g., Matt. 5.48, Phil 3.12–15), render as “Are you now being perfected by the flesh?” Completion of the



goal of the Christian life, which is progression in holiness, is likened to its beginning in justification, and Paul makes clear that both are accomplished by the Spirit through faith and not by the flesh through the works of the law. To put it in Wesley's (1999g) words, "Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith." It is Christ himself who is sanctification, just as he is the righteousness that reconciles humanity to God (1 Cor. 1.30). In the same manner that the Christian life begins, through the realization of union with Christ and the reception of its benefits by faith, so the Christian life is continued by the same faith; there never is an occasion for boasting of the achievements of human efforts (Eph. 2.8–10). Even though they themselves deviated from this standard at times, the appropriation of sanctification by faith is arguably the greatest spiritual insight of Wesley and his theological descendants.

A second useful point of the Wesleyan perspective pertains to the extent of sanctification realizable in life. Wesleyanism promotes realism—over against certain aspects of the "finished work" teaching (Rybarczyk 1999, 291)—regarding the continuation of sin in the believer after justification and regeneration. It is an experiential reality that Christians do struggle with sin despite being justified and made new creatures in Christ. This is the most likely meaning of the difficult passage of Rom. 7.14–25; as Kärkkäinen (2004, 7) observes, "whenever Paul is talking about his pre-conversion experience [elsewhere], there is no hint whatsoever of any agony of conscience." The passage vividly depicts the pains of the struggle against sin that so many Christians have experienced. Yet, the agony of Rom. 7 is followed by the triumph of Rom. 8; Wesleyanism is also committed to the reality of the victory of Christ over sin and rejects the unbiblical teaching that sin must to some extent still continue to reign until death. Despite the challenges of the holy life, the idea that sinning is inevitable for the redeemed is alien to the New Testament; the phenomenon of many exegetes and teachers (e.g., Hoekema 1987a, 75, 83–84) citing 1 John 1.5–10 to substantiate and promote this belief is frankly shocking given how frequently this epistle teaches exactly the opposite (e.g., 1.7, 2.1, 4–5, 3.4–10) and the plethora of similar admonitions by other writers (e.g., Matt. 5.48, 1 Cor. 10.13, James 1.12–13). Freedom from the reign of sin and the habit of sinning is a genuine, even mandatory (Heb. 12.14), goal of the Christian life. Where the holiness movement erred—not without some suggestion from Wesley—was in its blithe claim to an immediate and final sanctification subsequent to justification without sufficient regard to the challenges entailed by the Christian pilgrimage in the world. Sanctification is, as nearly all—including Wesley—admit, a progressive work of purification, renewal, and growth. In traditional Eastern orthodox theology, this is the essence of *theosis*; in the renewal Christus victor perspective, it is gradual Christification, the steady replication of the life of Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit, in the believer. The

process of sanctification may indeed include crises, moments when a quantum leap is made in holiness and the life of Christ in the Spirit, as freedom from corruption and as positive holiness, is strikingly made manifest. These crises may even be multiple, not once for all ending the progressive work or even the struggle but punctuating it. Again, freedom from sin is a legitimate goal, even the primary one for individuals, of the Christian life; its pronouncement by the sanctified individual is not. In the end, sanctification is a perpetual looking to Christ, not self, in order that self may perfectly reflect his image.

#### **4.3.2 The Purposes of Salvation: Spirit Baptism**

By and large, the preceding section considered only the experience of salvation by individuals, reframing the traditional doctrines of justification and sanctification from the perspective of Christ's saving work as victory, recapitulation, and replication. A frequent criticism of Western theology—in this case, meaning Western both as Roman catholic and protestant and as typically conditioned by Western culture—is its focus on the salvation of the individual to the exclusion of the concerns of the groups such as the family and society; this objection has been raised in the present work in §3.2.3.1 as one of the problematic limits created or exacerbated by the penal substitution theory. However, this problem is easier to identify than it is to solve. Workable solutions as to how to transition from the individual to the group are less than forthcoming, and despite contemporary theology's increasing focus on social liberation, it is not at all clear that justification and regeneration, for example, can be rightly apprehended in anything other than individual terms. The concept of sanctification can be more easily expanded to encompass collective aspects of human existence such as social structures, but the means by which they are made holy, not just naturalistically reformed, must be explained. The most forthright way of dealing with this problem is not in rejecting or redefining these moments of individual salvation but in augmenting them from the New Testament's witness. Pentecostalism has expressed a legitimate means of doing this in its doctrine of Spirit baptism, the biblical purpose of which is empowerment for witness and ministry (Acts 1.8). Acknowledgment of this work can help theology overcome the limits of salvation discussed in §3.2.3, and *Christus victor* can help Spirit baptism find a sensical place within the order of salvation.

While not the sum of pentecostalism, subsequent Spirit baptism is its *sine qua non* (Williams, J. R. 1988a). The doctrine, especially with its innovative corollary of evidential tongues, is a continual source of controversy both with magisterial protestantism and the earlier holiness movement's interpretation of Spirit baptism as entire sanctification; the attempts by some pentecostal theologians to revise the doctrine in scattered directions have further complicated its discussion. The question

germane at present is the role of Spirit baptism in the Christian life and thus its relationship to the saving work of Christ. Strictly speaking, from the perspective of classical pentecostalism, Spirit baptism is not a soteriological event, at least as salvation is traditionally envisioned, and does not formally figure as a point in the *ordo*. Likewise, Spirit baptism is not a subject of atonement qua reconciliation and thus not related to justification; similarly, it is not to be identified with regeneration, contrary to some later protestant assertions. It does not occur automatically or monergistically, and not all Christian believers experience it in life. Also, while it is suggestive of and may require sanctification as a prerequisite, classical pentecostalism does not understand holiness to be its primary concern. It is agreed by the mainstream of the movement that its chief purpose is not salvation but power for ministry. Charismatic presbyterian J. R. Williams, who articulates the classical view more forcefully than many denominational pentecostals (Land 1993, 27), explains well the purpose of Spirit baptism and its relationship to salvation:

Returning to the matter of power as the purpose of Spirit baptism: Pentecostals emphasize that this is a special anointing of power. Whatever power there may be resident in a believer—and this is surely greatly due to the Holy Spirit within—Spirit baptism is an implication of that power. Pentecostals do not intend to say that the Spirit-baptized have experienced power, for the gospel itself “is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16 KJV). However, they do urge that in addition—and for an entirely different reason than salvation—there is another action of the Holy Spirit that equips the believer for further service. This is not salvation but implementation; it is not transformation of a new creature but his commissioning for the sake of Christ and the gospel. (Williams, J. R. 1988a, 46)

The biblical and theological case for the pentecostal doctrine has been argued in greater detail elsewhere; traditional protestant theology disputes it on many points. It is important to recognize, however, that the reformation traditions’ collapsing of all the works of the Spirit into a singular moment of salvation represents an innovation divergent from the broader Christian tradition. Indeed, one is hard pressed to find in older reformed works a detailed treatment of Spirit baptism at all prior to the promotion of subsequence by the holiness and pentecostal movements; these revivals prompted the reformed tradition to clarify its doctrine (Wyckoff 1995, 423–424). Generally, this has been done by identifying or at least synchronizing Spirit baptism with regeneration (e.g., Hoekema 1989, 47–49; cf. Menzies, R. P. 2008), an equation not directly found in older reformed theologies. Within the catholic tradition, however, Spirit baptism was held distinct from regeneration and sacramentalized as the impartation of the Spirit at confirmation, a view known to and rejected by Calvin (1997, 4.19.8) as an unscriptural “doctrine of Satan.” Pentecostalism maintains that its position is thoroughly scriptural, indeed the recovery of a long neglected biblical

teaching, and its doctrine may be considered a charismatic retrieval of the original meaning of the older sacramental tradition's practice.

As with regeneration, Spirit baptism stands in analogy with the events of Christ's life and further substantiates the framing of the Christian life as a replication of his prototype (Williams, J. R. 1988a, 46). Christ recapitulates humanity, and in him may be seen the plan and intention for redeemed humanity. Again, there are two major works or events of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus. His life began via the miraculous working of the Spirit, which corresponds to regeneration in Christians, first experienced by the apostles on the day of the resurrection itself (John 20.22). The second work was Christ's anointing by the Spirit at baptism, which empowered him for his ministry (Luke 3.21–22, 4.1, 14, 18); this corresponds to the Spirit baptism experienced by Christians subsequent to justification and regeneration. The first outpouring, filling, or baptizing with or in the Spirit occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1.4–5, 8, 2.1–4), several weeks subsequent to the disciples' first post-resurrection experience of the Spirit. The frequent assertion that Pentecost was a one-time event (e.g., Hoekema 1989, 48), a claim necessary for the maintenance of the collapse of Spirit baptism into regeneration, seems quite untenable in the light of texts such as Acts 2.17, 38–39, 10.45–47, and 11.15–17, and the other accounts of the reception of the Spirit in Acts such as the so-called "Samaritan Pentecost" of 8.5–25, when it clearly occurred some period of time after profession of faith and baptism in water.

Again, the purpose of Spirit baptism as indicated by Luke 24.49 and Acts 1.8 is power for witness and ministry. Understood this way, it is a proper object of the work of Christ when the latter is accepted not just as the effecting of the reconciliation of individual human beings but as the reconciliation and renewal of humanity. The works of Christ and the Spirit are reciprocal, reflecting the intra-Trinitarian *perichoresis*. Christ baptizes with the Spirit (Luke 3.16, Acts 1.5), sending the Holy Spirit into the world and believers so that through them the Spirit may reproduce the work of Christ in and for others. As it concerns the individual baptized, Spirit baptism is not a saving event, though it does bring clarity of mission (cf. Acts 1.6, 2.36ff.) For the believer, being baptized in the Spirit is a further step in Christification. Personally called and commissioned by Christ to join him in his work, he or she becomes, like Christ, a "man [or woman] for others" (Bonhoeffer 1971, 381–383). He or she is empowered for the same works, directed towards the benefit of others, that Christ performed on earth: the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom (Mark 1.15, Matt. 28.19–20) and the liberating activities of the Lord's anointed (Luke 4.16–21; cf. John 14.12). The command to be filled with the Spirit is a summons, even—it may be dared—a precondition to joining the continuing battle of the cosmic conflict that still

embroils the earth (Eph. 6.10–20). Objections are raised to the pentecostal teaching of subsequence: why cannot the regenerate be considered filled already, and why must they wait for an amplification of the Spirit's gift? Pentecostals point to the words of Jesus in Luke 24.49 and Acts 1.7–9, where the disciples are commanded to wait, and to the example of the disciples themselves, who waited in prayer for the coming Holy Spirit (Acts 1.12–14, 2.1–4) before beginning their public, post-ascension ministry, which inevitably and immediately led to conflict with the powers. More strenuous objections are raised to the pentecostal identification of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the Spirit's fullness. Pentecostals again point to the book of Acts, where in most—and possibly all—cases of the Spirit's reception, glossolalia manifests (Williams, J. R. 1990, 209–211). They also note that of all the myriad gifts of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues is the only one expressly given for the edification of the self, the recipient of the gift, instead of others (1 Cor. 14.1–5, Jude 20; cf. Williams, J. R. 1990, 232–234). Praying in the Spirit is seen as a vital resource for strengthening all the participants in the work of Christ and the spiritual conflict, hence its availability to all who are joined to him by faith.

That, as part of his saving work, Christ baptizes believers with the Spirit subsequent to the beginnings of salvation has several implications for soteriology as a whole. First, subsequent Spirit baptism utterly negates the limitation of salvation as something strictly individual, personal, and ahistorical. Christ does not solely bring pardon to individuals to settle the disruption in their relationship with God and assure their heavenly destiny. His concern in redeeming individuals also includes the purpose of making them instruments of reconciliation and liberation (e.g., 2 Cor. 5.18ff., John 5.21). Salvation can never remain strictly personal and private as all are intended to be missionaries, ones sent out into the world, to continue his work; Christ's death and resurrection may have finished his work but did not end it. As Acts demonstrates, his followers are intended to carry on a ministry similar to his own. The restriction of the gospel to the personal justification of individuals is out of keeping with the character of the New Testament. The liberation and renewal of other human beings and creation as a whole neither stands outside the gospel as an ethical appendage, a desirable but optional activity for the justified, nor does it replace the heart of the gospel as salvation, supplanting the heavenly concerns of the individual with the earthly needs of the group. Rather, it is a necessary and inevitable outflow, as living water (John 7.37–39), from those who allow the full work of the Spirit, the replication of Christ, to have its way in their lives.

Second, the outpouring of the Spirit as a replication of Christ's anointing necessitates the continuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit beyond the apostolic age. (1 Cor. 1.8). Contrary to Warfield (1918, 21–28), the insistence on the cessation of the

charismata is not a sign of the maturity of the church in the Word but a loss of a vital dimension of salvation and an unwarranted subordination and suppression of the work of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit, with the singular exception of glossolalia at times, are entirely for “the other”; they are the primary means by which the church is to effect its ministry of building up the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12.4–7, 14.3–4, 12, 26, Eph. 4.11–16). The continuation of the ministry of Christ through his Spirit-empowered church is virtually without circumscription in the New Testament, which at no place indicates the sudden or gradual cessation of any of the tools or resources placed at the church’s disposal prior to the *eschaton* (1 Cor. 1.7, 13.8–12). Typically, pentecostals believe that Spirit baptism accompanied by evidential tongues is the gateway to manifestation of the Spirit’s other gifts, and hence, the modern renewal movement represents a supernatural recovery of the vitality and dynamism of the early church. Pentecostals and charismatics take seriously, if not always faithfully, the words of Jesus in John 14.12:

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.

As later witnessed in Mark 16.15–20 and Acts, these “works” do not primarily refer to naturalistic programs and efforts recast in spiritual language but to the literal replication of the signs and wonders wrought by Jesus, “greater” because of the multiplication of ministry through the universal outpouring of the Spirit upon his followers. The divine life gained for humanity in the resurrection is ever to be extended throughout the world, and Christ’s ministry of healing, deliverance from and defeat of humanity’s oppressors, and radical reconciliation to God is to be vigorously carried on by his Spirit-filled followers.

Finally, the continued outpouring of the pentecostal Spirit brings an eschatological expectation to the present experience of salvation (Acts 2.17). Again, eschatological salvation encompasses more than the reconciliation and glorification of redeemed individuals. As described in Rom. 8.19–23, the creation itself will be liberated with the full revelation of the children of God. Prior to this future time, the present gift of the same Spirit of life that raised Christ from the dead means that this eschatological release has already begun. The partial revelation of the children of God now consists in their sanctification, the renewal of the image of God within them, and in their transformation by the fullness of the Spirit, in which the work of God within them overflows into their surroundings. Ideally, the question should never be raised as to whether or not the church has a role in the renewal of society and the world around them. The continued replication and extension of Christ’s Spirit-filled ministry in their midst prohibits Christians either individually or the church as a whole from

withdrawing from the world in ultimate despair, resigning it to the clutches of the powers yet to be placed under Christ's feet, but calls them to hope in fervent expectation for the liberation he has already won to be manifest in its history.

#### **4.3.3 The Extent of Salvation: Healing and Liberation**

The expectation of this liberation in history is affirmed in the pentecostal belief in contemporary, supernatural healings reminiscent of those of Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament. The continuation of healing is already partially addressed through the affirmation of Spirit baptism as an empowerment subsequent to salvation; healing is a gift made available to the church by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12.9, James 5.13–16). The holiness and pentecostal movements went beyond this, however, in postulating physical healing as an outcome of atonement. While not entirely free from problems, the case has been made throughout this work that the doctrine of healing in the atonement as put forward by A. B. Simpson (1893, 18–25) and others is biblically tenable and that the major problems some perceive in it are due to an a priori acceptance of a penal or satisfaction paradigm of the work of Christ (e.g., Warfield 1918, 175–177), which unwarrantedly fractures the mission of Christ by separating the purpose of his life from that of his death. The great value of the doctrine of healing in the atonement lies in its strengthening of the continuity between Christ's ministry in life and his work in death and in its irreversible expansion of the paradigm of salvation beyond only spiritual concerns to include physical and other dimensions of human existence. Thus, to confess Christ as savior is to confess him as healer; this point of the pentecostal fourfold or fivefold gospel is coequal with the others.

At this time, the implications of salvation as healing may be explored in greater detail. Within the paradigm of renewal *Christus victor*, sickness is one of the prime oppressors of humanity combated by Christ in both life and death. Healing, of course, figured in his mission in life, marking it as greatly as his message of the kingdom (Luke 4.18, Matt. 11.2–6, Acts 10.38). Frequently, healings were coupled with his conflict with the demonic; exorcism often resulted in physical restoration as well (e.g., Matt. 9.32–34, 17.14–20, Luke 13.10–13). It follows naturally that if the defeat of the devil is one of the aims of the work of the cross, the infirmities caused by him are overcome by it as well; the victory of Christ is the restoration and renewal of the entire human person. As ministered by Jesus in his life, healing obviously means the curing of illnesses and physical disabilities, but the effects of these acts extended far beyond bodily afflictions; as many pericopes illustrate, the encounter with Jesus resulted in the holistic renewal of the entire person: spiritually, mentally, socially, even economically. For example, working just from within Mark's gospel, the healing of the paralytic was the accompaniment of the forgiveness of his sins (2.1–12); the

exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac restored him to his right mind (5.1–20); the cleansings of the woman with an issue (5.25–34) and the leprous man (1.40–45) presumably ended their social ostracisms and potentially opened the avenue for recovery in earning their livelihoods. Again, these works were all functions of Christ’s ministry in life as declared by the Nazareth manifesto of Luke 4.16–21; they cannot be marginalized as mere confirmatory signs of his greater work in death but are integral components of his mission. His atoning death on the cross does not represent a disjunction from this mission but a universalizing of it. The very words of the fourth servant song, Is. 53.4–5, prophetically interpreted reveal the holistic character of his saving work. The various English translations capture the different aspects of human afflictions Christ bore for humanity along with their transgressions and iniquities: their griefs and sorrows (KJV, RSV), infirmities and diseases (NRSV). Healing belongs to the mission of Christ, both in life (Matt. 8.17) and in death (1 Peter 2.24); it must, therefore, belong to the salvation the church proclaims and demonstrates in his name.

Pentecostals affirm that Jesus still heals today (Heb. 13.8), typically via two means. First, as an outcome of the atonement, healing can be immediately appropriated or “claimed” by faith (Simpson, A. B. 1893, 111–113; Bosworth 1973, 91–99); while this approach is not without problems (Petts 1993a, 298–315), it stands as a practical means of affirming the expectation of Christian salvation to embrace and transform the entire person. Second, as a gift of the Spirit, healing can be ministered mediately through those filled with the Spirit and empowered for service. Healing is one of the “greater works” of John 14.12 pentecostals believe should be commonplace. The words of the great commission in the long ending of Mark are taken literally and seriously by pentecostals and charismatics as both a commandment and the practical instructions as to how to fulfill it:

And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ...they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mark 16.17–18)

All believers are to make themselves available to Christ for continuing his ministry on earth (Hunter and Hunter 1983, 19, 22–37). Many involved in healing ministry strive to pattern their practices after the mechanics demonstrated in healing stories in the gospels and Acts. Interestingly, these largely support the inference that God heals mediately through those gifted by the Spirit as a form of liberative service. Outside of the ecclesiastical instructions of James 5.13–16, New Testament healing rarely occurs within the context of prayer, that is, through the petitioning of God to intervene directly and immediately. Rather, it occurs through appropriation and dispensation by one filled with the Spirit. Jesus administered healing with a touch and a simple word



of command: “Be healed” or “Be cleansed.” The apostles did the same in Acts in Jesus’ name (e.g., 3.6–8, 9.17–18, 9.34, 14.9–10; cf. 4.29–31, 9.40–41, MacNutt 1999, 99–101). Healing is one of the charismata given to the church for its edification (1 Cor. 12.7–11), and pentecostals believe that one reason the Spirit is still poured out is so that this vital ministry work may continue today. The purpose of healing continues to be, as it was in the ministries of Christ and the apostles, a demonstration of divine love (MacNutt 1999, 71–85). As human brokenness will continue until the *eschaton*, so too shall this work of love that repairs it (1 Cor. 13). As F. MacNutt (1999, 85) concludes,

There is a crucial need for a return to the vision of the God revealed in and by Jesus Christ, the tender, loving and compassionate God who raises us up and makes us whole wherever we have been cast down by a world filled with evil—whether we have sinned and need forgiveness, or are sick and need physical healing. Even now the kingdom of God is among us, saving and healing and destroying the kingdom of evil.

Objection is raised to the doctrine of healing in the atonement and pentecostal and charismatic expectations of it on the basis that if sickness is borne the same way as sin is, healing should be automatic, instantaneous, and complete just as forgiveness is. Christian experience, however, demonstrates otherwise. Assessed dispassionately, this observation is true of all aspects of the redeeming work of Christ. Christ bears the sins of the world, not just the elect (John 1.29, 1 John 2.2, 1 Tim. 2.4–6), but not all receive forgiveness; the devil is defeated but not rendered powerless (1 Peter 5.8); and while Christ has partaken of death for all (Heb. 2.9), all still suffer death. Even in life, his healing ministry was partial and temporary. In some places, few were healed because of unbelief (Mark 6.5–6); in one incident, healing required more than one attempt (Mark 8.22–25). In all cases, healing was temporary as complete deliverance from suffering and death is ultimately eschatological; all healed by Jesus, even those raised from the dead, eventually succumbed again to the weaknesses of the body and death. Nevertheless, Christian faith proclaims the victory of Christ over all these tyrants, and faith should not preclude the possibilities of the realization of this victory amidst the struggles of this life.

Theologically, when re-established in the firmer base of Christ’s work as victory and salvation as his replication, the pentecostal doctrine and practice of healing shows great promise for the aid it can lend to expanding soteriology beyond solely spiritual, non-earthly concerns (Volf 1989). If deliverance from physical sickness is part of the saving work of Christ, then it is no longer possible to claim with Warfield (1918, 177) and traditional protestant theology generally (Volf 1989, 449–454) that salvation is principally other-worldly. As the ministry of Christ itself shows, this-worldly deliverance, however, need not be limited solely to the healing of disease

and injury but can be responsibly expanded to include other aspects of the human condition, including the mental and social. In this pentecostalism shares a common cause with liberation theology, and the commonalities between these two movements will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter. As a starting point, however, it may be noted that a chief pentecostal criticism of liberation theology is its overreliance on political and economic theories and naturalistic efforts to the neglect of divine revelation and power (Boff and Boff 1987, 64–65; Volf 1989, 460–461). The doctrine of healing in the atonement can provide a better, more biblical dogmatic base for a holistic soteriology that includes liberation theology's legitimate concerns than these sources external to the faith. It is in responding to the call of Christ to be filled with the Spirit and joining the struggle against the powers that healing can be brought, through prayer and through action, to human beings both as individuals and collectively (cf. Volf 1989, 467).

#### **4.3.4 Rethinking Eschatological Salvation**

With the traditional pattern of systematic theology, eschatology usually does not figure in discussions of atonement doctrine, and it neither determines nor is determined by the theory a particular theology embraces. Within the spectrum of protestant theology, for example, representatives of every major eschatological scheme can be found among adherents of penal substitution. For the mainstream of Christian theology, eschatology is largely a matter of indifference, one of the nonessentials for which charity is the prime obligation. For pentecostalism, however, this is not the case. Pentecostalism is not just a charismatic revival but also an adventist movement, and this is reflected in the final point of its full gospel, Jesus as coming king (Land 1993, 58–81). Distinct from similar movements of the same era, pentecostals viewed themselves as the fulfillment of prophecy, the recipients of the last-days outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.17–21). This gave pentecostalism's eschatology a more optimistic cast than other contemporary millenarian movements that expected only apostasy, not revival, before the end. Pentecostal eschatology is, however, overwhelming premillennial, and the researcher has previously documented the shift, particularly in some of the larger classical denominations, from a positive, prophetic eschatology to a more pessimistic, dispensational apocalypticism (House 2006, 124–125). It has also been argued that this eschatology is the most foreign point of the movement's symbol of faith, not having been inherited from Wesleyan revivalism but the result of cross-pollination with the forbearers of fundamentalism.

On the surface, this point again does not appear directly relevant to soteriology besides its envelopment of the final point of the *ordo*, the ultimate glorification that all Christian traditions affirm. Regardless of theological system, the relationship of the return of Christ to the atonement question seems remote at first. It is here, however,

that the present thesis encounters a serious test on the role that atonement models have in controlling soteriology and the correlation between the two. As alluded to in §4.2.2.2.2, the Christus victor theory is fundamentally incompatible with dispensational premillennialism, the most common eschatological scheme of pentecostalism, and its assessment of the present state of the cosmic conflict in which the church and world are embroiled. The central theme of Christus victor is the accomplishment of redemption through the overcoming of humanity's oppressors. The leader of these is the devil, and however he is interpreted, Christ's work represents his decisive defeat. The premillennial framework of dispensationalism, however, leads at best to the minimization, if not the outright denial, of this victory. As is well known, the very concept of the millennium, and thus the eschatological scheme of dispensationalism, is entirely dependent on a single passage of the Bible, Rev. 20. The passage begins with binding and imprisonment of Satan, which marks the start of the thousand years. The more traditional interpretation of the church, articulated by Augustine (1999a, 20.7–9), avers that this binding occurred in the life and death of Christ and that the other events of the thousand years refer to the spiritual life and reign of the saints. While the premillennial scheme ostensibly acknowledges the judgment of Satan at the cross, it completely delays the actual execution of this judgment until the future (Chafer 1948, 53–61). Satan will not be bound until the second advent of Christ, who reigns on earth during the millennium, and then he will be loosed again to wage a final challenge. Thus, as both the limitation and the ultimate destruction of Satan are yet to come, he has a general free reign over the cosmos (Chafer 1948, 76–86), and Christ's victory over him amounts to little practical or theological significance. Again, as previously argued, that dispensationalism, pentecostal or cessationist, fails to more deeply ponder this omission should not be surprising given the theology's unwavering commitment to the penal theory. With the devil having already been deleted from the equation of redemption, there is little cause to review hermeneutical assumptions about the millennial passage in light of the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. The range of Christ's proper work on the cross is strictly circumscribed to addressing the problem of human sin before God.

Charismatic reformed theologian J. R. Williams (1992, 421–444) has made a thoughtful and biblical case for a historically present millennium, or amillennial eschatology, and further strength is added to this interpretation through the Christus victor theory, the affirmation of which of course accompanied amillennialism in the first thousand years of the church's history. In the researcher's view, adoption of amillennialism is preferable for pentecostalism over attempts to moderate its dispensationalism. While the movement's expectation of the latter-day outpouring of the Spirit in revival somewhat mitigates its eschatological pessimism, it would benefit

from a theologically more robust affirmation of the defeat and limitation of the devil and his activities. As noted above, pentecostalism not only believes in but practices spiritual warfare (Hollenweger 1972, 377–383). Taken to extremes, which is unfortunately not uncommon, this spirituality can devolve into an unhealthy preoccupation with the devil’s activities that loses sight of God’s sovereign love. As an alternative, the coupling of a Christus victor approach to the atonement with an amillennial eschatology can reinforce the positive aspects of pentecostalism’s conflictive worldview while checking its excesses. Additionally, amillennialism does not negate the movement’s unsunderable hope for the imminent return of Christ; it merely informs the role of this expectation in the present life of the church on earth.

In Williams’s scheme of amillennialism or “present millennialism,” the judgment of the devil on the cross has not only been pronounced; the execution of the sentence has also been initiated with his binding and expulsion. The language of the overthrow of Satan in John 12.31, “νὺν ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου **ἐκβλήθησεται** ἔξω,” is the same as that of Rev. 20.3, “καὶ **ἔβαλεν** αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον.” Thus, the millennial binding of Satan represents his overthrow accomplished on the cross (Williams, J. R. 1992, 421–424). Continuing L. S. Chafer’s analogy of a criminal proceeding, at the cross, Satan has been convicted and his sentence pronounced. The day of execution has not yet come but neither has bail been granted; he remains in prison until the final day. Like all analogies, this one is imperfect; as discussed previously, the restriction of Satan’s power and activity is not absolute (cf. 1 Peter 5.8) but relative to the previous state of all the nations lying under an induced blindness to the kingdom of God (Rev. 20.3, Acts 26.17–18, 2 Cor. 4.3–6). Other powers still roam free, and through them Satan continues to exert some of the power of nothingness over the cosmos. His binding has, however, resulted in a real change of order, especially for the church in the world.

The millennium passage of Rev. 20 has, despite its obscurity and isolation, such an inexplicably strong hold on theology because its interpretation drives the orientation of the Christian life, which is salvation. It is this amillennial interpretation that is capable of drawing from it the most practical significance for soteriology. The resurrection of the saints in Rev. 20.4–6 is their coming to life in Christ in response to his call (John 5.25–26; Augustine 1999a, 20.7–9; Williams, J. R. 1992, 425–430); it is their regeneration in union with his resurrection by the Holy Spirit. Their life is one of participation in his victory, including his reign over the powers (Eph. 2.1–10, Col. 2.9–15, 3.1–3). Just as Christ recapitulated humanity, his life, including its exaltation, is replicated in his followers. This perspective keeps perfectly with the pentecostal’s experience of salvation as the present in-breaking of the coming kingdom:

The “full gospel” of the Jesus who is Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and coming King can and should be proclaimed in the fullness of the Spirit so that the kingdom will be manifested in the midst of the world in words and deeds.

When men and women came into Pentecostal services and experienced this eschatological power, this restoration of apostolic age, they saw the Scriptures, themselves and the world differently: the resurrection of Jesus as their own resurrection, the first Pentecost as their own “Pentecost”, the crucifixion of Jesus as their own crucifixion—all these events were telescoped, fused and illumined by the expectation that became the message of the entire Pentecostal movements: “Jesus is coming soon!” ...[This] eschatological key, this apocalyptic revelatory experience, was seen by the Pentecostals as the driving force and galvanizing vision of the entire movement. (Land 1993, 61)

The proposed renewal Christus victor model and its recommended shift to an amillennial eschatology simply serves to align this experience of salvation with a more appropriate interpretation of what God accomplished in Christ and its alteration of the cosmic, spiritual conflict to which believers are summoned as victorious participants. The reign of Christ is to be experienced and demonstrated in the saved, sanctified, Spirit-filled life. The purpose of salvation and Spirit baptism is for good works in the world (Eph. 2.10), which is the in-breaking of the kingdom of God in history. The present millennial reign of the saints is spiritual, but as both dispensationalism and liberation theologies often misapprehend, spiritual does not mean unreal or ineffective; it simply means an orientation towards Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father and at whose petition the Spirit has been poured out on all flesh. It is the power of the Spirit that leads to the irruption of the kingdom of God on earth, which manifests in salvation, deliverance, and healing, spiritually and physically, individually and socially. In other words, it brings the same good news of the reign of God that Christ brought in his life, but it must be brought the same way that he did—in humility, love, non-violence, and radical service to others.

Not incidentally, an amillennial eschatology corrects two excesses to which the Christus victory theory is tempted but need not succumb. The first potential problem is a latent Manichaeism, an unhealthy dualism that can exalt the dark powers to rival God himself. Although the Christian tradition has always rejected this conclusion, some dualist tensions inevitably persist as faith grapples with the strong biblical statements about the power of Satan, the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4.4), and the influence he has had upon humanity in the history of the fall and redemption. Unchecked rhetoric of spiritual warfare, to which the pentecostal and charismatic movements are susceptible, can lead to a practical dualism that produces theological as well as ethical problems (Ray 1998, 126–128). These problems are likewise mirrored in more pessimistic forms of dispensational premillennialism that locate the restriction of the powers of nothingness solely to the unrealized future. Hope is

drained from the present when the powers are viewed as wielding their authority over the earth without restraint, the only victory over evil coming when the kingdom comes physically with the return of the king. The amillennial perspective presented above, however, confidently affirms a decisive defeat of the powers in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and the establishment of his reign, with the church, over them. Although the struggle continues, united with him believers are “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8.31–39) and can believe for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven through the Spirit of life who works in them.

The second potential problem is the opposite of the previous: an unrealistic triumphalism that downplays the present power of evil and overstates its conquest. In its rush to proclaim victory, the narrative of the *Christus victor* theory can bypass, in docetic fashion, the real suffering experienced by Jesus and trade a *theologia crucis* for a *theologia gloriae*. Focusing too intently on the evil caused by external parties, it can fail to heed the warning of the Anselmian tradition to adequately estimate the burden of sin binding each individual as strongly as the devil. Ethically, triumphalism can foster a blindness to the ongoing, very real problem of evil in the cosmos and in human beings (Ray 1998, 128–129). These weaknesses find their mirrors in various postmillennial—whether they use that identifier or not—eschatologies, dominionist and liberationist, political theologies of the right and the left that seek a final victory over the systems of the world apart from the immediate, personal parousia of God in Christ. Amillennial eschatology strives to find a balancing point between affirmation of the primacy of the victory of Christ and cavalier exultation in it. In this theology, the state of the cosmic conflict is ever assessed according to the teaching of Jesus in the parable of the wheat and weeds (Matt. 13.24–30, 36–43): while the children of the kingdom work and grow, the seeds the devil has sown persist among them and also yield a harvest. This condition will persist until the end and the revelation of God’s utter defeat of evil in the parousia of Christ. The victory won by Christ and the present reign of the saints are real, yet not final, and on earth the church is ever the *ecclesia militans*.

In the end, the eschatological question, the Christian hope for and prediction of the future life with God, resolves down to the question of the problem of evil. Pentecostals respond to this question not with an answer but with a shout of praise: “Christ is coming again!” The *Christus victor* interpretation of the atonement can strengthen this shout with its confession that in the cruel death of Christ, God has joined his creation in its suffering (cf. Moltmann 1974) and thereby somehow overcome evil. E. TeSelle (1996, 169) observes the strengths of the model’s interpretation of the significance of evil:

The ransom motif seems, in an almost Manichaean fashion, to ascribe too much power, or too many “rights,” to evil. But in fact most explications of the ransom motif derived the “power” or “rights” of evil from God or from the Law, misused through apostasy. Within that framework they felt compelled to acknowledge the power of evil and to recognize, in a fashion close to the tragic view of life, that evil does have consequences, which cannot be either ignored or easily overcome. It denies the adequacy of notions that the good can simply drive out the bad; it recognizes instead that evil has irreversible consequences and that it must be brought to defeat itself.

Like other theodicies, this perspective does not provide a completely satisfactory solution to this problem, but it vigorously affirms that it has been addressed, is being addressed, and will ultimately be resolved by God himself. In the meanwhile, it gives complete support to the pentecostal full gospel’s claim to God’s present remedy for the problem of sin and evil: holistic salvation and healing for the entire human person, renewed in the image of God by the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, and in the end, eternal life with him.

#### **4.4 Reflective Evaluation: Renewal Christus Victor and the Concerns of Traditional Protestant Soteriology**

The preceding theological construction has endeavored to show how a retrieval and reappropriation of the Christus victor tradition can support and strengthen a broad, holistic soteriology, in this case that of the pentecostal full gospel. Previously, other atonement models had been criticized for their “deletion of the devil” from the equation of redemption, the removal of one of the parties involved with the fall of humanity from its consideration, because of the flattening of the dimensions of salvation this caused in their theological systems. This problem has been rectified primarily through a recovery and recentering of the Bible’s metanarrative of cosmic conflict as the grand theme of redemption; a lengthy criticism of hermeneutical approaches, a survey of thematic texts, and a careful examination of putative contrary texts provided justification for this decision. Finally, the internal values and resources of classical pentecostalism were drawn upon to strengthen both the proposed atonement model and the soteriology derived upon it. It was shown how the developed model, herein called renewal Christus victor, interacts with and strengthens the pentecostal fourfold or fivefold gospel as it is traditionally understood and also provides a basis for expanding this symbol to encompass other soteriological concerns of contemporary theology. A more direct application of this model to these concerns follows in the concluding chapter.

At this time, the developed atonement model shall be reviewed in the light of the concerns of traditional protestant soteriology, starting with the specific issues raised in chapter 3, the problems of the intersection of the reformed atonement theory

with non-reformed soteriological paradigms. In that chapter, reformed theology was examined in detail because of the importance of the tradition as the standard-bearer of protestant orthodoxy and the widespread protestant acceptance of its overall interpretation of the atonement as a penal substitution. Significantly, reformed theology has most successfully achieved the desired goal of coherently aligning its doctrine of the work of Christ with its soteriology via its teaching of limited or particular substitutionary atonement. This coherence, however, has come at a steep cost, specifically a strict limit of the subjects (§3.2.3.1) and nature (§3.2.3.2) of salvation beyond what, in the researcher's estimation, the Bible allows and the broader Christian tradition has periodically affirmed. These points shall now be addressed in a direct summary that shows how the proposed renewal Christus victor model coherently overcomes them.

To begin with, the reformed theory limits the subjects of salvation to elect individual humans; the atonement—here discussion of the tradition is restricted to this locus alone—has no direct benefit for the non-elect, humanity as groups or as a whole, or non-human creation. Renewal Christus victor addresses this problem primarily through the doctrine of recapitulation (§4.2.2.1). In the incarnation, Christ is united with humanity as a whole, not only the elect, and as his saving work encompasses both his life and his death, atonement cannot be restricted to the elect alone. This is the plain sense of the New Testament's universalistic atonement passage (e.g., John 3.16, 1 John 2.2, and 1 Tim. 2.5–6) and the overwhelming consensus of the Christian church outside of the reformed tradition; Christ died for all, not some. The primary collective benefit for humanity was the altering of the cosmic conflict via the defeat and restraining of the devil (§4.2.2.2.2), which is a form of prevenient grace. Not because of any ability or strength of will within them but because of the removal of the influence of the powers that blinds them from turning (John 12.31–32, Rev. 20.1–3; cf. Eph. 2.1–3) all are now freed to respond to the gospel's offer of salvation, even if all do not do so. They also benefit from the general, if unmeasurable, restriction of evil, of nothingness, accomplished by Christ in anticipation of the full eschatological deliverance (cf. Rom. 8.18ff., §4.3.4). Moreover, humanity as a whole, individually and socially, benefits from the soteriological work of Christification among the elect. Salvation involves the conformity of the children of God to Christ's image (Col. 3.10–11). Through the outpouring of the Spirit upon them (Luke 24.49, Acts 1.8, §4.3.2) in analogy to his own enduement with power by the Spirit at his baptism (Luke 3.21–22, 4.14–21), they are mobilized for ministry “for others,” empowered and commissioned to good works anticipatory of the universal eschatological liberation of all creation.

Along this line, the renewal Christus victor model also addresses the reformed atonement theory's restriction of the nature of salvation. Because of its strictly



objective and forensic character, penal substitution produces a soteriology that is legal in orientation, being concerned principally with the pardon of sins. The subject of this salvation is passive in this work as the acquittal of sinful human beings is a matter transacted apart from them between God and Christ; given this primary purpose, it follows that salvation is restricted almost exclusively to spiritual concerns. Renewal Christus victor avoids this restriction by rejecting the objective-subjective dichotomy that has governed the reformation soteriological paradigm from the beginning (Studebaker 2003, 252–259) and affirming the integrity in salvation of the entire human person, physically and socially as well as spiritually, on the basis of the incarnation. Salvation is accomplished by humanity's union with Christ. Through his death, the dominion of sin and the devil over human beings is broken, and through his resurrection, his divine life is communicated to them by the same Spirit of life that raised him. The work of Christ brings about atonement, reconciliation with God, because of the destruction of sin that takes place in his representation, yet the removal of this barrier in the divine-human relationship cannot be separated from the transformation that begins in those united with him by faith. Passivity in salvation is not an option as Christ sends the Holy Spirit to believers in order to empower them to continue his ministry in the world as his image is replicated in them in sanctification. Nor can salvation be limited to only spiritual, other-worldly concerns; Christ's ministry of healing in life is universalized in his death, and it is one of the gifts given in his name to his Spirit-filled church. As Christ came to heal humanity and liberate it from the devil, the hostile power that seeks control of the earth, his people are charged and enabled to participate in the ongoing cosmic conflict and bring renewal to individual human beings, collective human society, and creation as a whole as they await the perfect renewal that will come at his return. Such a gospel may truly be called full, and Christus victor provides a serviceable, biblical foundation for the responsible expansion of soteriology in these directions.

Beyond these specific issues that form the core of the present thesis, in order to further uphold its viability, it will now be shown how renewal Christus victor interacts with other principal interests of protestant soteriology. The reformation began with an overwhelming concern for the question of how human beings may be right with God, or how the divine-human relationship may be healed. The answer given was justification by faith alone, which became the reformation's material principle and arguably its *sine qua non*. Much of protestant theology, reformed as well as Lutheran, was developed to fence in and protect this non-negotiable. As a wholly objective theory, the penal substitution theory also serves this end. It moves the reckoning that settles the breach in the divine-human relationship outside of the saved human; salvation is effected by the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness. Yet, though

penal substitution successfully upholds this principle, it is not requisite to it. While Aulén's (1931, 101–122) interpretation is disputed, to say the least (e.g., Peters, T. 1972) and Luther did frequently evoke juridical and penal language, it is widely acknowledged that Luther's own view was not precisely penal substitution, and the solidification of Lutheranism within the Anselmian family is best attributed to Melancthon (Pelikan 1984, 161–164; Cave 1947, 158–160). At present it may be considered whether the *Christus victor* theory, which is principally associated with the Eastern tradition, can and should in any form support justification by faith.

By and large, this work has set atonement and salvation, redemption and reconciliation, within the dramatic framework of the cosmic conflict as an alternative to the juridical framework that prevails within traditional Western theology. Forensic language has intentionally been avoided when speaking about how salvation is effected; though not without value, it is at least partially responsible for the cul-de-sac in which traditional protestant theology has become trapped. Although various different expressions have been used herein to convey how salvation is effected, in the end they may be summed up as the union of humanity with Christ and its perfecting and divinizing in him; thus, the concepts of *theosis* or Christification better encompass the overall scope of holistic salvation than the more restrictive courtroom imagery. Christ's recapitulation and defeat of the powers have been explored as the means of atonement, the mechanism through which not only justification and reconciliation but also all other aspects of salvation are accomplished. From this perspective, the doctrine of Christ's saving work can no longer be narrowly equated with what he accomplished on the cross; salvific significance must also be assigned to his incarnation, life, ministry, and exaltation.

The prime concern of the material principle of the reformation in all of this is how this union is actualized and its benefits received. Despite the present work's de-emphasis of forensic justification, it concurs that this union and thus justification and salvation can only be received by faith. Throughout his work, Aulén (1931, 6) contends for the objectivity of the classical theory:

It does not set forth only or chiefly a change taking place in men; it describes a complete change in the situation, a change in the relation between God and the world, and a change also in God's own attitude. The idea is, indeed, thoroughly "objective"; and its objectivity is further emphasised by the fact that the Atonement is not regarded as affecting men primarily as individuals, but is set forth as a drama of a world's salvation.

Again, the development of a broader soteriological paradigm is not helped by further increasing the objectivity-subjectivity dichotomy. The point here, and of Aulén, is that atonement is something accomplished by God in Christ for humanity, not something that human beings achieve for themselves. Union with God in the incarnation, the

hallowing of human existence, the defeat of the powers in the world and on the cross, and the defeat of death itself are all accomplishments for which it is incomprehensible for any human to claim to merit or to effect through his or her individual efforts. Faith is the only way imaginable to receive this grace. Luther's (1988, 186–187) words, even though written within the context of a penal interpretation of Gal. 3.13, convey perfectly how salvation is appropriated according to the *Christus victor* perspective:

By faith only therefore we are made righteous, for faith lays hold of this innocence and victory of Christ. If you believe, sin, death, and the curse are abolished. For Christ has overcome and taken away these in Himself and will have us to believe that, as in His own Person there is now no sin or death, even so there is none in ours, seeing He performed and accomplished all things for us.

Accordingly, the reformation concept of imputation, even imputed righteousness, is useful here; the believer is saved because Christ's righteousness, goodness, and life is assigned as his or her own. Rather than having a deleterious effect on personal holiness, as Wesley averred, imputed righteousness—when not confined strictly to Christ's active obedience to the law but inclusive of his divine-human goodness and life—is the source of sanctification, its manifestation in those united to Christ in the Spirit by faith. The problem with imputation as originally formulated in its traditional juridical context is the paralyzing effect that it has had, in the researcher's view, on conservative protestant soteriology, which is still entrapped within the frames of reference of the conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this context, imputation refers primarily to the assignment of merit, the virtue by which something is deserved; in protestant theology, it is solely Christ's merit, the fruit of his obedience, that earns salvation for any. It may be questioned, however, whether or not the entire concept of saving merit, which is largely a later Western category “foreign to the Eastern tradition” (Lossky 1957, 197), plays any role in a genuinely biblical soteriology that gives full place to God's grace and Christ's assumption of humanity. Indeed, one of the great strengths of *Christus victor* is its avoidance of a merit-based structure to soteriology; in Aulén's (1931, 146) words, “there is no satisfaction of God's justice, for the relation of man to God is viewed in the light, not of merit and justice, but of grace.” Salvation is the work of God alone, created by his grace, and the call to be saved extends beyond the settling of accounts to a total transformation actualized by a participatory faith.

With this in mind, faith is moved to the beginning of the actualization of salvation in the *ordo*; in other words, it follows calling but precedes justification, regeneration, and the other benefits received from God as per the scheme of the Arminian *ordo salutis*. In the New Testament, the call to salvation is an invitation requiring a response—repenting, turning, believing—that precipitates the

manifestation of the salvation procured by Christ in the present moment. It is unfortunate that in certain sections of the contemporary theological discussion, the conversation has degraded to the point that such a view of faith may be perceived, contra Eph. 2.8–9, as a “work” and thus an occasion for “boasting” (e.g., Packer 1959, 3–11; cf. Walls and Dongell 2004, 69–71, 76–79), making it impossible to speak of justification or salvation by faith, only by election and an effectual, irresistible calling synonymous with regeneration (e.g., Boettner 1932, 97–104; Murray 1955, 103–105). Yet in the New Testament, faith, coupled with repentance, always stands at the entrance of the new life (e.g., Acts 2.21, 11.18, 16.31); the entire purpose of John’s gospel, in which both election and regeneration feature so prominently, is that “through believing you may have life in his name” (20.31), this life being none other than the new birth by the Spirit. Faith is that which begins the entire process of salvific transformation or Christification; a gift given by the Spirit, faith accompanies every step of the redeemed life.

Within classical pentecostalism, faith has always been viewed as the condition for the three great crises of the Christian life: salvation, entire sanctification, and Spirit baptism. Since the beginning, this expanded *ordo* has received constant criticism from different directions. Magisterial protestantism has attacked its doctrine of subsequent crises, preferring its consolidated, singular moment of grace; it has also objected to its perfectionism and many of its experiential claims about the Spirit’s fullness. On the other side, there have been various pentecostal and charismatic attempts at altering this *ordo*. One prominent trend has been the attempt to maintain the Spirit’s fullness in tandem with either a consolidation of the crises or the elimination of their distinction and subsequence (e.g., Sepúlveda 1996, 105–106; Studebaker 2003, 260–269; Yong 2005, 101–106; cf. Dunn 1996, 112–113). Though well-intentioned, these adjustments are to be resisted. From the beginning, pentecostalism has affirmed the reformation as a recovery, albeit partial, of the New Testament’s doctrines of salvation. This recovery is not to be rejected. In the oneness controversy, pentecostals have experienced first hand the problems created when Spirit baptism and sanctification are equated with the beginnings or the sum of salvation; sectarianism overtakes renewal, and justification by faith is lost (Reed 2002, 943–944). At its best, however, pentecostal theology, systematic and applied, is not a rejection of the heart of the reformation and the gospel, nor does it contend that other Christians who do not agree with all of its teachings have not partaken of the salvation the Spirit brings. Rather, it is a challenge to the Spirit’s fullness, to the next moment of salvation, to full participation in Christ’s work of redemption, his victory.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### **5.1 Summary: Christus Victor and the Possibilities of Pentecostal Soteriology**

In traditional Eastern icons of the resurrection, Christ rises grasping Adam and Eve by their wrists—symbolizing their powerlessness—and raising them up. The gates of hell lie broken under his feet; below them Satan lies bound. This imagery beautifully conveys the ancient doctrine of atonement. In Christ, God has come to rescue and heal humanity from the effects of the fall: sin, death, and bondage to a hostile power. Redemption is a unified work and begins with the incarnation itself and God’s union in it with all of humanity. The life, ministry, and resurrection stand in continuity with Christ’s death as his singular work of salvation; the salvation he extended in life as forgiveness, healing, and liberation is the same as that made universally available by his death and subsequent exaltation. The coming of Christ is the turning of God towards humanity and in one victorious movement taking them into his divine life. The primary focus of redemption is not the extinguishing of the guilt of sinful human beings, although this does take place through Christ’s destruction of sin by transporting it into death, but the restoration of the human condition and human nature, the healing of corruption and the renewal of the image of God tarnished by the fall. As such, salvation should not be conceived solely as reconciliation within a juridical framework; rather, it consists of the transformation of all dimensions of human existence as human beings are united with God and his purposes through Christ by grace and faith.

The Christus victor model has been posited as an alternative to the penal substitutionary theory affirmed by pentecostalism because of its ability to support, strengthen, and expand the movement’s holistic soteriology, which is embodied in its symbol of faith of the fourfold or fivefold “full” gospel. The penal theory, the standard of protestant orthodoxy as perfected by the reformed tradition, was largely adopted without question by the pentecostalism from its general protestant heritage and environment but is problematic because of how it alters the equation of atonement and redemption and limits soteriology. In this theory, atonement principally concerns God and humanity and the sin separating them. The devil, the instigator of the fall as

symbolized by the serpent of Gen. 3, is removed from the equation as a subject of reckoning. Elect humanity is reconciled to God because of Christ's vicarious bearing of their sins and the punishment for them God the Father metes out upon him at Calvary. God's wrath being extinguished, elect individuals can now be justified via the imputation of Christ's righteousness by faith. Although revered by both protestant orthodoxy and pentecostalism, this theory is rejected for several reasons: its dubious biblical substantiation and neglect of the Bible's narrative of cosmic conflict; its absence from the patristic tradition; its grave problems in terms of Trinitarian theology as well as ethics; and its location of the saving work of Christ solely in his death, which results in the vacating of his life, ministry, and resurrection of salvific significance. Moreover it has been shown how, in its most coherent form, the theory of limited substitutionary atonement drastically narrows the subjects and nature of salvation from the holistic, life-embracing transformation depicted in the New Testament that pentecostals desire to recover. Conflicts have arisen within the theology of classical pentecostalism because of its affirmation of the reformed theory of atonement, except for its extent, in conjunction with a non-reformed soteriological paradigm. Pentecostalism expands traditional protestant soteriology by the inclusion of physical healing, definitive experiences of increased sanctification, and an empowering baptism of the Holy Spirit subsequent to justification and regeneration. As has been shown in this work as well as elsewhere, there are strong arguments and biblical supports in favor of these augmentations of the *ordo salutis*. The solution to the present theological problem is not a retreat from this full gospel but its pairing with a stronger, more suitable doctrine of the work of Christ.

The atonement model proposed by this study has been called renewal Christus victor. As a critical appropriation of the patristic teachings of recapitulation and ransom, it resets redemption within the Bible's narrative of cosmic conflict, recognizing the need for the overthrow of the devil, the tyrant binding humanity, for salvation to truly be effected. Taking assistance from Barth's concept of nothingness, the diabolical is partially demythologized as the coalescence of all that opposes God and his kingdom, including human sin as well as trans-personal evil. The coming of Christ is God's direct engagement of this power via his anointed one; Christ's ministry of healing and deliverance is his work of liberating human beings from its clutches. In death, Christ decisively defeats the devil, and his resurrection is the pushing back of the power of nothingness by the filling of creation, beginning with human beings who are now freed from the fear of death, with his divine life. Salvation is the communication of this life to human beings united with him by faith; it may be summed up as *theosis* or Christification, the replication of Christ. When understood this way, the soteriology produced by Christus victor corresponds to and coheres with

the vision of the pentecostal full gospel. Besides the conventional soteriological categories of reconciliation—justification, regeneration, and adoption—and sanctification, salvation also includes the healing of afflictions, physical and otherwise, that are contrary to the life Christ came to bring. Salvation extends beyond the concerns of individuals to the social and collective dimensions of human existence. Empowered by the Spirit as Christ was, believers are commissioned as his agents “for others,” ministering and extending the same salvation as reconciliation, liberation, and healing as Christ did. When framed by an amillennial eschatology that celebrates the triumph of Christ but sobers it with recognition of the persistence of evil that must still be resisted, the combination of Christus victor and the pentecostal full gospel yields a powerful theology that is faithful to the biblical teaching of redemption and addresses the many pressing contemporary questions the Christian message of salvation needs to answer.

In conclusion, the present work has demonstrated its thesis and goals. Through a detailed study of atonement theories and their associated soteriological paradigms, the dependencies and interactions between these two loci have been uncovered and the role atonement theories have in shaping and limiting salvation has been exposed. Because of problems with the prevailing Western family of atonement theories, retrieval of the ancient Christus victor model is to be preferred, and when brought into conversation with the concerns of pentecostal theology, it relieves the tensions in the latter’s soteriology and provides a platform for its further development and expansion. The theological conversation and the work of the theologian, however, can never be considered to be concluded. The answering of this particular question can lead to the addressal of other issues, as it should. The task of ecumenical theology is dialogue, and theologies developed in one context should be able to fruitfully speak to and receive from theologies of other contexts. If valid, the renewal Christus victor model should have applicability beyond the concerns of classical pentecostalism that were the primary focus of the work. As a short postscript, this model shall be tested by conversing with three other contemporary theologies that share the interest of expanding soteriology beyond traditional categories.

## **5.2 A Testing: Renewal Christus Victor in Dialogue with Contemporary Theologies**

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Christian church has seen the rapid rise of myriad new theologies. Just as rapidly, many have fallen away into irrelevance or obscurity. Unlike the theologies of past ages, none, not even neo-orthodoxy, have succeeded in gaining a lasting hold on denominations or traditions wholesale; classical pentecostalism was notably the last major new family of denominations launched, or at least distinguished, by a theological innovation. While

more conservative and confessional churches have held to the articles of the past, the theologies of mainline, ecumenical churches are in a state of flux. Modern and post-modern perspectives have created an openness that often leads to a great diversity of beliefs being exhibited within a denomination or even single congregation, regardless of its historic confessional origins, and much of theology being done today is best characterized as trans-denominational or post-denominational. That this state of flux is likely to continue for the foreseeable future is a safe prediction; the overall direction is towards contextualization and situational development and applicability rather than the creation of new so-called universal theologies. Within this particularity, however, contemporary theologies have coalesced around the motif and hermeneutic of liberation, and as this appears to be the one, lasting trend of post-world war, post-colonial, post-modern theology, all new theological works, regardless of origin and orientation, will be forced to address the challenges of liberation.

While the present work has concerned a more traditional theological question, throughout the study attention has been given to, and insights gained from, some of these theologies of liberation. Now the developed atonement model will directly engage three significant contemporary movements: Latin American liberation, feminist, and Indian contextual theologies. It is recognized that these movements have deeper concerns that lead to dissent with much of traditional Christian theology, of which even revivalistic pentecostalism may be considered a part, and that a brief dialogue about the atonement question can only touch the surface of issues that deserve a much lengthier treatment. Likewise, the goal of this dialogue is not to attempt to reabsorb these theologies and extinguish their particularities within a more traditional system. However, an attempt will be made to show how these movements have typically approached and criticized the whole problem of atonement from within a distinctly Western framework and how a reappropriation of the Eastern perspective, as has been done in this study, can help to address the concerns and further the insights and opportunities generated by these theologies.

### **5.2.1 Latin American Liberation Theology**

Although many similar theologies of liberation developed in different global contexts during roughly the same period of the twentieth century, the liberation theologies of Latin America have become for many the prototype or standard for the movement, and their writings are heavily drawn upon, sometimes uncritically, by other contextualists for scholastic support (cf. Erickson 1991, 136). Despite protests to the contrary, Latin American liberation theology still largely approaches the major questions of theology from a very Western perspective; this can be seen in the heavy reliance of its foundational works upon European biblical criticism. Christology, a central concern of the movement, is no exception. Its prime interest is the Jesus of



history (Sobrinó 1978, 3–14; Haight 1985, 106–107), and liberation theologians generally attempt to establish some historical foundation for both their faith affirmations and their prescriptions for ethics and practice. Indeed, as a praxis-oriented movement, liberation theology has little use for dogma or theological speculation perceived as removed from the on-the-ground realities of the task of liberation. With this basic orientation, liberation theology creates an immediate point of contrast, if not outright conflict, with patristic theology's basically opposite approach to Christology and the classical form of *Christus victor* associated with it. The ancient debate is revived again; if *Christus victor* can be tempted towards docetism, liberation theology can be viewed as sympathetic, at the very least, to ebionism and adoptionist Christology (Sobrinó 1978, 332–342). The movement has expressed discomfort with the constraints Chalcedonian Christology has placed upon the exploration of the meaning of Jesus, his person, and his mission.

When it comes to the strict question of the work of Christ, liberation theology and *Christus victor* share considerable common ground. Like the classical atonement view, liberation theology places Christ's death in continuity with his mission in life and assigns redemptive and salvific significance to both (Boff 1987, 22, 63; Haight 1985, 127). Liberation theology also recognizes the great struggle or conflict that leads to Jesus' death; he died because of his actions and purpose in life (Boff 1987, 44–45). Finally, it envisions salvation in holistic terms, the "re-creation and complete fulfillment" of human existence (Gutiérrez 1973, 157–168). Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that the imagery of *Christus victor* is not more widely appropriated by liberation theology, for of the three major types of atonement theories, it most clearly identifies redemption as liberation. The widely divergent orientations and methodologies of these two theologies, however, inhibit their natural confluence. *Christus victor*, both as traditionally stated and as reinterpreted herein, orients itself to the action of God in Christ. It is a Christology "from above," and while not disinterested in the humanity of the historical Jesus, it sees the primary purpose of the incarnation as the healing of human corruption, specifically as mortality, through divinization—the taking of humanity into God, to borrow the language of the Athanasian creed. (It is for this reason that the usage of "Christ" has predominated over the usage of the name "Jesus" in this work.) Within the current context of its appropriation by pentecostalism, this divinization is cast primarily as Christification, the replication of Christ by the transformative work of the Spirit and the imitation of his ministry through the Spirit's never-ceasing anointing.

By contrast, liberation theology uniformly employs the methodology of Christology "from below," and its Christology ever focuses on the significance of Jesus' humanity, retrieving values of his life and teaching perceived as lost by the

church's historic preoccupation with the ontological question. As it presses the edges of Christological orthodoxy, it sees the incarnation more as "the conversion of the Godhead into flesh," to again borrow from the *Quicumque vult*, and radically kenotic (Boff 1987, 52). Fundamentally oriented toward the revelation of God in the experience of oppression, it interprets the meaning of the death of Jesus from this vantage point, and circularly, its imitation of Christ consists of a synchronization of spirituality and praxis with this path of sacrifice and suffering (Boff 1987, 26; Sobrino 1978, 215–217; Haight 1985, 108, 136). Like *Christus victor*, liberation theology recognizes the cosmic conflict behind the narrative of Christ, but it demythologizes to the point that the powers behind the conflict become identified with "corrupt humanity" (Boff 1987, 67). The result is again the omission of the third party from the equation of redemption and a conceptual distancing from the means by which God addresses the problem of evil according to the *Christus victor* view. Doctrinal theories of atonement are not a major interest for liberation theologies, but given the overarching orientation to the human condition, their interpretations of the meaning of redemption, especially as it is located in the cross, inevitably bear the strongest resemblance to the exemplar or moral theories (Haight 1985, 129–130; Boff 1987, 116; Sobrino 1978, 198–201). As with nearly all theologies, the victory motif does emerge in liberation reflections on the resurrection (Boff 1978, 122–123) but not as the main trajectory of their mediations of the work of Christ either as doctrine or as the grounds for praxis.

The reduction of these two theologies, a pentecostal appropriation of *Christus victor* and prototypical Latin American liberation theology, to their most fundamental elements reveals profound agreement as to the purpose of the work of Christ—the total liberation and transformation of human existence—and profound disagreement as to the means by which it is effected (cf. Volf 1989). While pentecostalism can learn much from liberation theology in terms of the wider, social dimensions of human existence to which they are also called as agents of transformation, the reverse is also certainly true (cf. Elizondo 1996). It is not mere coincidence that in the region of the world where this form of liberation theology originated, pentecostalism has seen its most extraordinary growth, far surpassing the acceptance of the message of liberation theology (Hedlund 1993, 469–476); any characterization of Latin America as monolithically Roman catholic is woefully out of date. Pentecostalism has flourished there not in spite of a lack of social awareness and conscientization but because of its expectation of the immediate intervention of God's delivering power by the Holy Spirit, received in faith. As a pentecostal theological work, the present study would suggest to liberation theology not an abandonment of its agenda but rather a reorientation of the conflict in which it is framed. Despite its protests, liberation

theology is still too bound by the scholastic theology of its formal education and an accompanying enlightenment-era skepticism discordant with the faith experience of the very people it strives to serve. For much of the world, the devil is still alive and active. As liberation theology already recognizes how conflict led to the crucifixion of the historical Jesus (Haight 1985, 128–129; Boff 1987, 10ff.), revisiting the Bible’s framing of this conflict and devil’s role in it could help in the theological furtherance of its agenda. Section 4.1.1.1 of the present work showed the importance of the cosmic conflict for the overall narrative of Scripture, and §4.1.1.2 explored how the category of the demonic could be responsibly reclaimed in the service of explaining redemption and salvation. A criticism to which liberation theology is vulnerable is a severe this-worldly orientation, seen its frequent reliance on naturalistic efforts to accomplish goals, efforts that at their weakest manifest as educative moralism and at their worst as potentially violent opposition to human enemies. The powers behind the conflict of which the New Testament speaks so frequently are interpreted merely as symbols of human structures and interests (Wink 1984, 103). As Eph. 6.12 makes clear, the struggle for liberation is not against “enemies of blood and flesh,” and the ethic of Jesus precludes identifying any human being as a real enemy. Pentecostalism would remind liberation theology of this conflict, unseen but real, and urge seeking deliverance from oppression of any form first through prayer and reliance on the Spirit’s power that breaks through the darkness of nothingness and transforms the world.

A renewal of belief in the cosmic conflict is not a call to an abandonment of inquiry into the historical Jesus or the return to a pre-critical hermeneutic—though it may necessitate a post-critical one. It is an urging to take more seriously the biblical teaching of spiritual realities that can be known only through revelation. Given this precondition, renewal *Christus victor* can lend considerable aid to the furtherance of liberation both as a theology and as Christian action. The coming of Christ was the coming of God into the human situation as a human being and the engagement of the tyrants oppressing the world. Beginning Christology with the incarnation does not detract from the real humanity or history of the man Jesus—Boff (1987, 88) mischaracterizes the patristic doctrine here—but simply recognizes that from the very start of his earthly life, God was acting in him to overthrow the powers usurping his creation. Additionally, as pentecostalism recovers, Jesus’ ministry on earth was accomplished in his capacity as an archetypal, Spirit-anointed human being, and thus Christians filled the same Spirit can imitate and learn from him. Every aspect of his existence was oriented to the task of liberation: his life, teaching, works of healing, conflict with his opponents, death, and resurrection. The task of liberation, which is salvation, was thus a continual movement from his incarnation to his exaltation;

Through his faithfulness to the mission given to him as God's Son and through the Spirit sent with him, Christ cast down the true enemy behind all powers (Matt. 12.28, Luke 10.18, Rev. 12.7–9, Col. 2.13–15) and loosened the powers' grip upon humanity, allowing human beings to go free. The special, redemptive function of his divinity was its union with his human nature that led to the universalization of his saving work through death and resurrection (cf. Boff 1987, 66). God sends his Spirit into the world and upon his church in a mighty baptism of power to continue this work. None can say yet what the limits of a Spirit-filled humanity, submitted to God's cause, can effect. Liberation theology has done the church a service by asking difficult questions about the dominion of the powers in the world and the church's response to them. It can serve itself and others through a reorientation to the spiritual conflict behind the phenomena of oppression and an earnest appropriation of all the resources made available by the Spirit for the accomplishment of liberation.

### **5.2.2 Feminist Theologies**

Although it may be considered a form of liberation theology and grouped with others of this emergent movement, feminist theology developed independently of the context prompting the Latin American movement and exhibits significant differences from it. To begin with, feminist theology has shown greater interest in more traditional questions of dogmatic and systematic theology. Feminists have produced detailed treatments of every major doctrinal locus, including Christology; indeed, in the researcher's view, feminist theologians have made some of the most significant and useful contributions to the current reexamination of the atonement question. The present work is heavily indebted to D. K. Ray (1998), for instance, who has constructed a retrieval of the *Christus victor* model from a feminist perspective informed by liberation theology. It is not possible to speak of atonement in this day and age without responding to the shocking criticism of the doctrine as a whole by J. C. Brown and R. Parker (1989); meanwhile, other theologians such as K. Tanner (2004), N. J. Duff (1999), and F. A. Keshgegian (2000) have pressed for the rehabilitation of older atonement models in the light of feminist concerns. Accordingly, any attempt to enter dialogue with these theologies must recognize the maturity of the ongoing conversation and their very pointed criticisms of the concerned doctrinal questions.

In contrast to the relative uniformity of the foundational works of liberation theology, however, feminist theology exhibits an enormous amount of diversity. It is in fact impossible to speak of a singular feminist theology but only of various feminist theologies; uniformity of thought is neither a characteristic nor a desired goal of the movement. Outside of the obvious concerns for women's rights and wellbeing indicated by the label of feminist, it is difficult to make any generalizations about

specific feminist doctrinal beliefs, for the movement ranges from the conservative to the radical, from evangelical feminist theologies to post-Christian theologies. One trait, however, characterizes all of these theologies to a greater or lesser extent: in comparison to traditional Christian theology, they prioritize divine immanence over transcendence, and the more radical the theology, the more overwhelming the immanence (Grenz and Olson 1992, 231–233, 235–236). Of the world's religions, traditional Christian theism has perhaps balanced these two attributes the most equally, but it is questionable how far a theology may tilt towards immanence, even pantheism, and still remain authentically Christian. This more fundamental issue casts its shadow on any discussion of other doctrinal points such as the atonement. Hence, while a more traditional theological perspective may engage feminist theologies in dialogue and gain much from them, there are limits as to how successfully concerns of some sections of the movement can be satisfied within the framework of Christian orthodoxy even at its broadest.

At present, two significant points of engagement will be explored. First, in fundamental disagreement with both traditional Christian theology and Latin American liberation theology (Ray 1998, 81–83), many feminists question the validity of redemptive suffering, even that of Christ, which lies at the heart of all doctrines of atonement. The most famous articulation of this criticism is that of Brown and Parker (1989, n. p.), who liken traditional atonement doctrines to divine child abuse and blame this teaching of Christianity for creating a spiritual archetype that has abetted and perpetuated the victimization of women. An open hearing of women's experiences and feminist reflections will grant at least some validity to this argument; the oppressive effects of Christian patriarchy are not an ideological fiction but a historical and present reality. The Anselmian tradition, which teaches that Christ's death is necessary to satisfy some requirement of his Father prior to reconciliation, is most vulnerable to this charge, and the long tradition of moral and exemplar theories has raised the substance of this protest, if not its precise language and perspective, in ethical dissent from the prevailing Western doctrine. Brown and Parker, however, do not stop with the Anselmian tradition but also sweep the atonement teachings of the moral influence theory, critical and liberal theologies, and Latin American liberation theology into their protest:

But to sanction the suffering and death of Jesus, even when calling it unjust, so that God can be active in the world only serves to perpetuate the acceptance of the very suffering against which one is struggling. The glorification of anyone's suffering allows the glorification of all suffering. To argue that salvation can only come through the cross is to make God a divine sadist and a divine child abuser.

Christus victor is not spared either:

In a theological effort to show evil and darkness as not ultimately true, the death of Jesus becomes not ultimately real. The believer whose thoughts and feelings have been shaped by a tradition that teaches or ritualizes in liturgy the Christus Victor view may interpret her or his suffering in this light. In response to suffering it will be said, Be patient, something good will come of this. The believer is persuaded to endure suffering as a prelude to new life. God is pictured as working through suffering, pain, and even death to fulfill “his” divine purpose....

Such a theology has devastating effects on human life. The reality is that victimization never leads to triumph. It can lead to extended pain if it is not refused or fought. It can lead to destruction of the human spirit through the death of a person's sense of power, worth, dignity, or creativity. It can lead to actual death. By denying the reality of suffering and death, the Christus Victor theory of the atonement defames all those who suffer and trivializes tragedy.

Brown and Parker conclude their essay not with a new atonement theory but a rejection of the doctrine in its entirety:

Christianity is an abusive theology that glorifies suffering.... We must do away with the atonement, this idea of a blood sin upon the whole human race which can be washed away only by the blood of the lamb.... Suffering is never redemptive, and suffering cannot be redeemed.

More moderate feminist theologians would disagree with Brown and Parker's absolutism but acknowledge the validity of their basic charge even as they attempt to rehabilitate the traditional theories. Any statement of atonement today must contend with the troublesome association of abuse and suffering with the historical message of Christ's redemption.

A second common feminist theological concern relates to the uniqueness of Christ as redeemer and savior. In accord with their inclination towards divine immanence and religious pluralism, many reject assignment of this exclusivity to Jesus Christ. For example, Brown and Parker state that “Jesus is one manifestation of Immanuel but not uniquely so”; likewise, R. R. Ruether (1983, 121) contends that “Jesus does not think of himself as the ‘last word of God,’ but points beyond himself to ‘One who will come.’” Ray (1998, 142–145), in her demythologized retrieval of the patristic ransom theory, sees in Jesus not so much the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption but the revelation of “a redemptive response to evil” to be critically emulated in the confrontation of injustice. Again, this non-exclusivity is a manifestation of deeper differences with traditional Christian theism, a detailed examination of which lies outside of the scope of this present study of atonement. Movement away from the non-finality of Christ, however, conflicts with any doctrine of the atonement that is deeply rooted in the incarnation, such as Christus victor, and the affirmation that in Christ God has been present among humanity in a unique way.

In response, it may initially be observed that an affirmation of the uniqueness of Christ in line with Christian orthodoxy can help to negate the first feminist concern, that of the glorification of suffering and the tolerance of oppression. Through the work of God in Christ, including his death, the condition and situation of humanity have been irrevocably altered. The redemption he accomplished did involve suffering, but because of the uniqueness of both his person and his purpose, the value of this suffering cannot be generalized to include all others. Duff (1999, 27), mediating feminist and reformed concerns, observes,

If faith does not acknowledge Christ as fully God and fully human, the connection between Christ's death on the cross and our involvement in suffering becomes distorted. When the church confesses the incarnation and the subsequent doctrine of Christ's two natures, the cross cannot rightly be interpreted as something God *required of* or *did to* Jesus, but something God *did for* us. Furthermore, because Christ is the Messiah, fully divine and fully human, the salvific nature of his death has a uniqueness and finality that cannot be repeated. No other person is required—or able—to do what Christ did.

Similarly, M. Vandenberg (2007, 396) argues,

Human suffering is neither redemptive nor intrinsically positive. In fact, suffering is the result of evil in the world; the very evil Christ came to overcome.

Patriarchal interpretations of texts such as Mark 8.34 and Acts 8.32–33 used to cultivate docile submissiveness in everyday life situations find their support in a faulty devotional hermeneutic of universal applicability more than in any actual church doctrine of atonement. Since most of the New Testament's passages about suffering are addressed to contexts in which martyrdom was a very real possibility, the identification of everyday life situations with the taking up of Christ's cross frankly trivializes the meaning of crucifixion. (Misinterpretations of texts to support the *practice* of abuse in complete opposition to the revelation of Christ should not even need to be dignified with a rebuttal.) As M. Schertz (1994, 203–204) shows, the call to take up the cross *daily* is not the call to docile acquiescence to a bad economic situation or dysfunctional relationship but the call to join Christ in his mission. Christ's own death fulfilled a very specific aspect of that mission, a ransom paid only once. Even so, it is an awful thing to profess that in saving the world, God gave up the life of his Son, and his Son willingly gave it. Yet, as the Christian faith proclaims it, that sacrifice was for an incomparably awesome purpose, the reconciliation and liberation of humankind and the granting of eternal life; if this message is truly believed, then what was accomplished through Christ's suffering was worth the bitter price. From the perspective of *Christus victor*, the greatest virtue exhibited by Christ in his self-sacrifice, which was freely given on behalf of others held by an evil enemy

and not in placation of an angry Father, was not submission but heroism (contra Ray 1998, 66–67); the term “passive obedience” should be purged from the theological vocabulary. The present work has endeavored to explain these truths theologically, but in the end, only faith, not reason or ideology, can apprehend them. Feminists are right to protest against other usages of this imagery that frankly miss its point.

More positively, renewal *Christus victor* can constructively address feminist practical concerns through its joining of the patristic atonement perspective with the pentecostal full gospel. In *Christus victor*, the problem between human beings and God is not principally the overwhelming guilt of sin, the preoccupation with which, feminist theologians rightly point out, has spiritually suffocated many women (Ray 1998, 19–36), but the infirmities, spiritual and otherwise, from human sinfulness that hinder the accomplishment of God’s purposes in their lives. Far from encouraging passivity and enabling victimization, this model envisions salvation as deliverance from every form of bondage and a holistic transformation of all dimensions of life, a process of Christification in which believers are increasingly made like him in order to minister to others and effect change in the world around them. Christian feminist theologians think of salvation similarly (e.g., Ruether 1983, 130–138); the present perspective simply employs less radical terminology that preserves the distinction of the divine transcendence and the identity of Jesus Christ as required by Christian revelation and names the practical means by which this is accomplished, the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Real suffering exists in the world and should not be trivialized, but as with liberation theology, feminist theologies sometimes need to be reminded of the spiritual resources given to bring about not the redemption of suffering but the healing and deliverance of those who suffer. In turn, feminist theologies can continue to prophetically identify and denounce areas in which the church acts contrary to its true mission through subconscious and conscious promotion of unholy dominations, areas where Christ’s victory and life in the Spirit still need to manifest. With the Spirit having been poured out on all flesh, female and male (Acts 2.17–18), there should be no place for sexism in the charismatic community. Even if it has not always lived up to its promise, the pentecostal movement has largely believed in the full giftedness of women (Griffith and Roebuck 2002), and its successes in liberation should be acknowledged along with its failures. Again, while not neglecting the tensions of the present kingdom that is yet to come, the limits of renewal that a Spirit-filled humanity can help effect in the world have barely been explored. Increased openness to the Spirit and to each other can help feminism and pentecostalism in furthering the mission of liberation they both believe Christ has given them.



### 5.2.3 Indian Christian Theologies

As with feminist theologies, one can only speak of multiple Indian Christian theologies arising from the myriad contexts and cultures of this vast land. Broadly speaking, Indian contextual theologies may be responsibly assigned to two general categories arising in two specific historical periods. The first originated amid the Indian renaissance of the nineteenth century, chiefly in Bengal, and reflects, to varying extents, attempts to synthesize Christianity with Hindu religious and philosophical systems (Boyd, R. H. S. 1975, 19–39; Thomas 1991). The second is a family of praxis-oriented liberation theologies akin to many similar contextual theologies that arose out of the post-colonial age, though in India they began to flourish only in the 1980's. The most significant of these is that developed by the *dalit* community, the name preferred by those considered outcaste or untouchable by the Hindu caste system. Representing a major section of the Indian Christian community and oriented to subaltern concerns, *dalit* theology rejects the earlier category of theologies as perpetuating the oppressive caste system. Both of these theologies deserve a detailed introduction that the constraints of the present work unfortunately forbid, and strictly speaking, they should be treated separately because of their significant differences. The researcher ventures to engage both briefly and in tandem here, at the close of this study, because the Indian context has, by calling and by choice, become his context, and because of the intriguing questions these theologies raise about the problem of atonement. Despite their Asian origins and deliberate contextualization, the vast majority of—but not all—Indian theologies engage the atonement question on Western terms of reference, and amid all their diversity, they are nearly unanimous in rejecting the penal theory of the atonement. The present discussion will briefly explore the reasons for this rejection and suggest points of engagement from the *Christus victor* perspective.

For the purposes of this brief interaction, some generalizations about the Indian response to Christ may be safely made as long as awareness of this diversity is kept in mind. Within the overall religious context of India and especially the relevant time periods, many have found the person of Jesus Christ strongly attractive, especially his life and teaching. This interest in Jesus is not, however, always accompanied by a full acceptance of the doctrines of Christian orthodoxy, much less membership in the institutionalized, Western-formed churches. Hence, besides baptized, communicant converts to Christianity, other types of thinkers have contributed to the development of Indian Christian theology. These include Hindus, such as Ram Mohan Roy (Boyd, R. H. S. 1975, 19–26; Thomas 1991, 1–37), who have believed in Christ in some fashion and wish to bring him into their own religious system; others, such as M. K. Gandhi (Thomas 1991, 200–205), who have found great

value in Christ's ethical teaching but not professed any form of Christian faith or identity; and still others who identify as followers of Christ but either reject the existing churches or establish their own alternatively structured communities, such as P. Chenchiah (Boyd, R. H. S. 1975, 144–164; Sumithra 1990, 112–132). Within the context of Hinduism and other religions of Indian origin, the divinity of Christ is not a major obstacle for belief, even if Chalcedonian terminology and definitions may not always be accepted (Sumithra 1990, 5–6). The uniqueness of Christ presents more of a challenge. Many Hindus freely accept Christ as one avatar among many, while various Indian theologians have endeavored to show how he differs from other avatars, usually citing how the incarnation produces a permanent change in God himself (e.g., V. Chakkarai in Boyd, R. H. S. 1975, 167–172). From an opposing viewpoint but to similar effect, Dalit theology confesses Christ as the true avatar, even the *dalit* God who was broken and crushed as they are (Nirmal n. d., 63–69; Massey 2009, 97–100).

It is in this breaking and crushing that doctrinally independent Indian theologies come into conflict with the orthodoxies of the Western churches; although there are a few exceptions, most reject the penal interpretation of the cross. H. Hofer (2005, 437) observes that the theory's framework of strict retributive justice conflicts with the long peace traditions of Asia, particularly that of India:

The Western Gospel proclamation often portrays a very violent—even blood-thirsty—God, sacrificing his own Son. We say there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood.... [F]or outsiders, this proclamation portrays a God who seems less than virtuous.... If, by definition, God is the Totally Free One, then he should be free to do what is totally good. He should be totally free to forgive.

This concern is evident in the writings of many of the renaissance period theologians that reflect Hindu interpretations of Christ. When they articulate their own interpretations of Christ's work in terminology comparable to the traditional theories, they tend to favor moral and exemplar models. For example, for Ram Mohan Roy, "The saving work of Christ... is accomplished through his teaching, and his death is simply the supreme illustration of those precepts" (Boyd, R. H. S. 1975, 23–24; cf. Thomas 1991, 27–28). Most show little awareness of the third option. V. Chakkarai is an exception, invoking some of the language of *Christus victor* (Boyd, R. H. S. 1975, 177–178); also in Chenchiah's doctrine of the new creation there can be seen faint traces of the ancient doctrine of recapitulation (Sumithra 1990, 116–122). In all, regardless of perspective, enthusiasm is tempered for the doctrine of atonement as the heart of the gospel; other aspects of Christology are deemed more important. Coming to *dalit* theology, as of yet no detailed atonement theory from this perspective has been articulated, which is not unexpected given the movement's praxis-oriented methodology and young age. Given the movement's similarities to liberation theology

and the strong identification of the *dalit* experience of injustice with Christ's crucifixion (Nirmal, 69), however, the penal theory's framework of retributive justice and salvation via the punishment of another is unlikely to find much acceptance.

The typical Western soteriological paradigm is also problematic in the Indian context. Hoefler (2005, 439) identifies that for many Asians, the great soteriological quest is not for the pardon of the guilt of sin but for spiritual help, including deliverance from sin, not just its penalties. A great and sad—especially to a Wesleyan—illustration of this point is found in the life of Gandhi (1927, 103–104) and his experiences in Pretoria:

...one of the Plymouth brethren confronted me with an argument for which I was not prepared:

“You cannot understand the beauty of our religion. From what you say it appears that you must be brooding over your transgressions every moment of your life, always mending them and atoning for them. How can this ceaseless cycle of action bring you redemption? You can never have peace. You admit that we are all sinners. Now look at the perfection of our belief. Our attempts at improvement and atonement are futile. And yet redemption we must have. How can we bear the burden of sin? We can but throw it on Jesus. He is the only sinless Son of God. It is His word that those who believe in Him shall have everlasting life. Therein lies God's infinite mercy. And as we believe in the atonement of Jesus, our own sins do not bind us. Sin we must. It is impossible to live in this world sinless. And therefore Jesus suffered and atoned for all the sins of mankind. Only he who accepts His great redemption can have eternal peace. Think what a life of restlessness is yours, and what a promise of peace we have.”

The argument utterly failed to convince me. I humbly replied:

“If this be the Christianity acknowledged by all Christians, I cannot accept it. I do not seek redemption from the consequences of my sin. I seek to be redeemed from sin itself, or rather from the very thought of sin. Until I have attained that end, I shall be content to be restless.”

To which the Plymouth Brother rejoined: “I assure you, your attempt is fruitless. Think again over what I have said.”

And the Brother proved as good as his word. He knowingly committed transgressions, and showed me that he was undisturbed by the thought of them.

Gandhiji goes on to speak of better encounters with Christians who held other views of atonement and sanctification; as an accurate summary of many presentations of the Christian gospel, however, the account cannot be doubted. The soteriological principle given primacy by the protestant paradigm, that of forensic justification via imputed righteousness, or *semper simul iustus et peccator*, simply does not answer the longings of many Indians with a favorable disposition to Christ. This paradigm may also be said to be deficient from the perspective of *dalit* theology, which in common

with other theologies of liberation seeks an alteration of the human situation in life, including deliverance from structural sins such as the caste system and the healing of the wounds it has inflicted. As long as deliverance is peripheral to the center of forensic justification as the main outcome of the work of Christ, traditional protestantism will have difficulty engaging the concerns of these communities.

The alternative atonement model of renewal Christus victor proposed in this study can help to address all of these concerns; its means of doing so have already been discussed in greater detail. As a retrieval of the classical, dramatic model of redemption, it avoids the greatest moral problems of the juridical theories. In Christ, God decisively steps into the cosmic conflict and delivers humanity from the powers that seek to destroy it; his mission is principally one of deliverance and renewal. The salvation procured by his life, death, and resurrection encompasses all dimensions of human existence, even the cosmos as a whole, and not just the question of the closing of the breach in the divine-human relationship. This view has been shown to be supportive for the pentecostal full gospel, which as a holistic soteriological paradigm has direct applicability to the concerns of the Indian context and has indeed met with some successes there. Classical pentecostalism, at least in its Wesleyan form, rejects as a lessening of New Testament salvation any quiet resignation to abiding sin, and even if it may not be instantaneously receivable, the victory of entire sanctification is a part of the Christian hope and the response that should be given to Gandhi and others seeking spiritual help. The depiction of salvation as *theosis* or Christification also has obvious points of contact with traditional Indian spirituality, though caution needs to be exercised with Christian contextualizations and appropriations of *advaita* or monism. Likewise, the deliverance and healing that are integral to the pentecostal gospel directly address the *dalit* concern for liberation, as does the Christification and empowerment that occurs with the reception of Spirit baptism. Christus victor's narrative framework of spiritual conflict should also resonate with the *dalit* liberation movement, which already identifies with Christ, his acceptance of and compassion towards the marginalized, and his struggle against entrenched, oppressive powers and structures. The reproduction of his specific ministry of nonviolent resistance to evil is particularly relevant to this context (cf. Ray 1998, 141).

### **5.3 The Way Forward**

The preceding discussion has shown possible beginning points for the engagement of various important theological movements by pentecostalism via an appropriation of the Christus victor model in conjunction with a continued affirmation of its soteriological paradigm, the full gospel. Diverse as they may be, these contemporary theologies share a concern for the liberation and renewal of all dimensions of human existence. Ultimately, this concern is soteriological. It may be

concluded, then, that the pressing need of the current age is, as it has been at many times in Christianity's past, a revival of the doctrines of salvation. As it stands in much of traditional Western theology, however, the word "salvation" has a very specific and narrow meaning, restricted solely to spiritual matters, the reconciliation of sinful human beings with a holy God. New Testament salvation includes this but cannot be limited to it. In its revelation of the person and work of Christ and its account of the early church's following of him in mission, no aspect of human existence, the physical or spiritual, the individual or social, stands outside of redemption; the Bible contains more than sufficient resources for a reexamination of the meaning of salvation and its faithful expansion. The researcher has shown that a specific impression of the meaning of the work of Christ, the atonement accomplished by his death, has largely driven the theological limitation of salvation. This view cannot truly be considered biblical but only derivative of a narrow reading of select biblical teachings and not the content or trajectory of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a whole. The early church knew a better, fully-dimensioned understanding of the work of Christ as recapitulation and ransom, the liberation of humanity by the one united to it. Though this view almost completely disappeared from the faith and theology of Western Christianity, the renewed contemporary interest in both atonement and salvation has led many to revisit the patristic model of *Christus victor*; the present study represents one possible retrieval of it by a major section of the church, classical pentecostalism. It has sought to be faithful to the heart of the Christian message, God's loving lifting up of humanity through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. The way forward is indicated. *Vicit agnus noster, eum sequamur.*

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