‘Passing Beyond the Angels’: The Interconnection Between Irenaeus’ Account of the Devil and His Doctrine of Creation

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ABSTRACT

Irenaeus' pro-material theology, arguing specifically against Gnostic anti-materialism, has received much attention in Ireanean scholarship. Likewise, Irenaeus' account of the Devil has been similarly noted. What is missing, however, is a study that shows the interconnection between Irenaeus' account of the Devil and his larger doctrine of creation. This thesis will build upon, and then go beyond the work of previous Irenaeus scholars, by showing how Irenaeus' cosmology and anthropology are deepened by his account of the Devil. By connecting these various strands of Irenaus' thought, something scholarship hitherto has not yet undertaken, this thesis, first, demonstrates the occasionally questioned unity of Irenaeus' theology as a whole, and, second, brings to the fore a so far underaccentuated early Christian tradition that allows for a full appreciaton of the created world as the stage within which God intends to perform his drama of human salvation.

In Irenaeus' view, the Devil was appointed by God to be a steward of the material world until such time as humanity could come of age and assume its proper lordship. Given this backdrop, Irenaeus offers us an account of the Devil's fall in which the Devil was motivated by envy of humanity, rather than pride against God, as other later Christian writers would have it. The world was the prize that humanity originally possessed and that the Devil, through subterfuge and deceit, stole. Humanity's loss of the world's throne sets the stage for the soteriological narrative that Irenaeus tells.

From this starting point Irenaeus constructs an anthropocentric, terrestrial eschatology that necessarily climaxes with the overthrow of the Devil and the re-enthronement of a resurrected humanity upon a renewed earth. Irenaeus' narrative can be set in contrast with the Gnostic narrative, which culminates in the denouement of humanity's materiality. Likewise, Irenaeus' account can be set in contrast with later Platonized Christian soteriological accounts (e.g. Origen and Augustine) which move away from Irenaeus' account of the Devil and thus arrive also at different anthropological and soteriologcal conclusions. This thesis will highlight how Irenaeus, resourced by his account of the Devil, is able to capture the terrestrial and anthropocentric nature of the canonical storyline in a way that is unique among the early Christian writers.

DECLARATION

Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all materials from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Gerald Hiestand

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ancient Christian Writers	*ACW*
Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why Did God Become Man?*)	*Cur.*
Ante-Nicene Fathers	*ANF*
Aristotle, *Rhetorica* (*Rhetoric*)	*Rhet.*
Ascension of Isaiah	*Ascen. Isa.*
Athanasius, *Contra gentes* (*Against the Pagans*)	*C. Gent.*
De incarnatione (*On the Incarnation*)	*Inc.*
Orationes contra Arianos (*Speeches against the Arians*)	*C. Ar.*
Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* (*Plea for the Christians*)	*Leg.*
Augustine, *Confessiones* (*Confessions*)	*Con.*
De agone christiano (*On Christian Combat*)	*Agon.*
De civitate Dei (*City of God*)	*Civ.*
Contra Iulianum (*Against Julian*)	*C. Iul.*
De Genesi ad litteram (*On Genesis Literally Interpreted*)	*Gen. litt.*
Barnabas	*Barn.*
Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature	*BDAG*
Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*(*Tusculan Disputations*)	*Tusc.*
Clement, *1 Clement*	*1 Clem.*
Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* (*Christ the Educator*)	*Paed.*
Protrepticus (*Exhortation to the Greeks*)	*Prot.*
Stromata (*Miscellanies*)	*Strom.*
Commodianus, *Instructions*	*Instr.*
Corpus Apologetarum	*Cor. apol.*
Cyprian, *De bono patientiae* (*The Good of Patience*)	*Pat.*
De zelo et livore (*Jealousy and Envy*)	*Zel. Liv.*
Ehprem, *Commentary on Genesis*	*Comm. Gen.*
Homily on Our Lord	*Hom.*
Hymn on the Nativity	*Hymn. nat.*
Hymns on Paradise	*Hymn. par.*
Epictetus, *Diatribai* (*Diatribes*)	*Diatr.*
Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Ecclesiastical History*)	*Hist. eccl.*
Fathers of the Church	*FOTC*
Gregory the Great, *Expositio in Librum Job, sive Moralium libri xxv* (*Moralia)*	*Moral.*
Gregory the Wonder-Worker, *Homily Concerning the Holy Mother of God Ever-Virgin*	*Hom. sanc. Mat.*
Herodotus, *Historiae (Histories*)	*Hist.*
Hesiod, *Opera et Dies* (*Works and Days*)	*Op.*
Hippolytus, *Commentarium in Danielem* (*Commentary on Daniel*)	*Comm. Dan.*
De antichristo (*On the Antichrist*)	*Antichr.*
Fragment on Proverbs	*Fr. Prov.*
Refutatio omnium haeresium (*Refutation of All Heresies*)	*Haer.*
Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*	*Eph.*
To the Trallians	*Trall.*
To the Romans	*Rom.*
Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* (*Against Heresies*)	*Haer.*
Epideixis tou apostolikou kērygmatos (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*)	*Epid.*

Jerome, *Epistulae* (*Epistles*)	*Epist.*
Josephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae* (*Jewish Antiquities*)	*A.I.*
Contra Apionem (*Against Apion*)	*C. Ap.*
Justin Martyr, *Apologia i* (*First Apology*)	*1 Apol.*
Apologia ii (*Second Apology*)	*2 Apol.*
Dialogus cum Tryphone (*Dialogue with Trypho*)	*Dial.*
Latin Vulgate	*VUL*
Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*	*LSLD*
Liddle and Scott, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*	*LSJ*
Life of Adam and Eve	*LOAE*
Livy, *Ab urbe condita* (*History of Rome*)	*Ab urbe cond.*
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*	*Med.*
Martyrdom of Polycarp	*Mart. Pol.*
Methodius, *Banquet of Ten Virgins*	*Banq.*
Disourse on the Resurrection	*Res.*
Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series	*NPNF2*
Oxford Latin Dictionary	*OLD*
Origen, *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* (*Commentary on John*)	*Comm. Jo.*
Commentarii in evangelium Matthaei (*Commentary on Matthew*)	*Comm. Matt.*
Commentarii in Romanos (Commentary on Romans)	*Comm. Rom.*
Contra Celsum (*Against Celsus*)	*Cels.*
De principiis (*First Principles*)	*Princ.*
Homiliae in Exodum (*Homilies on Exodus*)	*Hom. Exod.*
Homiliae in Jeremiam (*Homilies on Jeremiah*)	*Hom. Jer.*
Homiliae in Leviticum (*Homilies on Leviticus*)	*Hom. Lev.*
Papias, *Fragments of Papias*	*Frag.*
Patrologia Graeca	*PG*
Patrologia Orientalis	*PO*
Philo, *De Opificio Mundi* (*On the Creation of the World*)	*Opif.*
De vita Mosis (*The Life of Moses*)	*Mos.*
Plato, *Apologia* (*Apology of Socrates*)	*Apol.*
Leges (*Laws*)	*Leg.*
Phaedo	*Phaed.*
Respublica (*Republic*)	*Resp.*
Timaeus	*Tim.*
Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*	*Alex.*
Life of Lycurgus	*Lyc.*
Polycarp, *To the Philippians*	*Phil.*
Pomponius Porphyrio, *Commentum in Horatii Carmina* (*Commentary on Horace's Odes*)	*Comm. Hor.*
Seneca, *Ad Marciam de consolatione* (*Consolation to Marcia*)	*Marc.*
Thyestes	*Thy.*
Septuagint	*LXX*
Shepherd of Hermas	*Herm.*
Sophocles, *Ajax*	*Aj.*
Sources Chrétiennes	*SC*
Tatian, *Ad Graecos* (*To the Greeks*)	*Graec.*
Tertullian, *Ad martyras* (*To the Martyrs*)	*Ad mart.*
Ad nationes (*To the Heathens*)	*Nat.*
Apologeticum (*Apology*)	*Apol.*

Contra Marcionem (*Against Marcion*)	*Marc.*
De anima (*The Soul*)	*An.*
De carne Christi (*The Flesh of Christ*)	*Carn. Chri.*
De cultu feminarum (*The Apparel of Women*)	*Cult. fem.*
De idolatria (*Idolatry*)	*Idol.*
De paenitentia (*Repentence*)	*Paen.*
De patientia (*Patience*)	*Pat.*
De pudicitia (*Modesty*)	*Pud.*
De resurrectione carnis (*The Resurrection of the Flesh*)	*Res.*
De spectaculis (*The Shows*)	*Spect.*
De virginibus velandis (*The Veiling of Virgins*)	*Virg.*
Testament of Levi	*T. Levi*
Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* (*To Autolycus*)	*Autol.*
Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*	*Sum.*
Wisdom of Solomon	*Wis.*
Vitruvius, *De architectura* (*Architecture*)	*Arch.*

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Introduction

Irenaeus, the Devil and Contemporary Scholarship

'*The world is all the richer for having a Devil in it, so long as we keep our foot upon his neck'*.[1]

William James

Matthew Steenberg, in the opening sentence of his monograph on Irenaeus, observes, 'Irenaeus of Lyons has earned the reputation of a theologian of creation'.[2] A factual claim that can be defended by the relevant statements in Irenaeus. But Colin Gunton goes further, stating that Irenaeus' 'defense of the goodness of the material creation is without equal in the history of theology'.[3] Gustaf Wingren is no less generous. When it comes to affirming a positive material anthropology, Wingren states that 'it would be difficult to find anyone who surpasses Irenaeus either then or in the later period'.[4] Such statements are, in my estimation, justly earned. Irenaeus' polemic against his Gnostic opponents pushed his overall theological system in a strongly pro-material direction. His cosmology and anthropology are well developed and thoroughly integrated into his overall theological system. Arguably, these twin doctrines serve as the theological foundation of his entire thought. Given Irenaeus' reputation as a theologian of creation, a great deal of scholarship has focused on this point. This dissertation intends to further the discussion regarding Irenaeus' doctrine of creation by looking at an under-researched aspect of his thought—Irenaeus' account of the Devil.

The present project will demonstrate the ways in which Irenaeus' account of the Devil pushes his telling of the overall Christian narrative in a distinctly pro-material direction, specifically as it relates to the goodness of the material world and the significance of human embodiment. As will be shown, Irenaeus offers us a Christian narrative that climaxes with the re-enthronement of a resurrected humanity upon a renewed earth, rather than the removal of human souls into an angelic heaven. In short, Irenaeus offers us an anthropocentric, terrestrial eschatology, rather than a (merely) theocentric, celestial eschatology. And foundational to the framing of Irenaeus' soteriological story is his account of the Devil.

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[1] James, *Varieties*, 50.
[2] Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 1.
[3] Gunton, *Triune Creator*, 62.
[4] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, xii.

In this, the introductory chapter, I begin with a brief statement of my thesis, followed by a survey of relevant scholarship, a discussion of Irenaeus' scant biographical details, an examination of his Gnostic context, and conclude with a short discussion of the relevant extant texts used throughout.

I. Question of this Thesis

It has now been effectively established by Devil scholars that the Christian account of the Devil evolved during the early years of the church. In broad strokes, the Christian accounts of the Devil can be categorized into an 'early' Irenaean account (first and second century) and a 'late' Augustinian account (fourth century and beyond). Origen, given his strong Platonist commitments, has been identified as a key transition point between the early and late accounts.[5] The details of this evolution are too complex to be effectively summarized in the above brief statement. But for the purposes of this thesis, this general characterization suffices as a backdrop for positioning Irenaeus in the larger historical context. The burden of this thesis is not to chronicle the historical development of the Devil. Rather, I draw attention to the historical development as a way of highlighting the inner coherence of Irenaeus' system. By positioning Irenaeus' early account against the later Augustinian account, we are able to see more clearly the connection between Irenaeus' Devil narrative and his anthropology and cosmology. Toward this end, a brief presentation of these 'early' and 'late' accounts is in order. We begin with Origen, as the key transition figure on the way to the later Augustinian account, and then set this in contrast with Irenaeus' early account. Note, the association of Irenaeus and Augustine with the early and later accounts is not meant to suggest that either theologian is the source of their respective views. Rather, I have chosen these two figures because they act as the most important spokesmen for each perspective.

The late account of the Devil begins in earnest with Origen (at least)[6], is championed by Augustine, and then reaches a relatively fixed form with Gregory the Great in the sixth-

[5] For this transition, see Kelly, *Satan*, 175-208; Russell, *Satan*, 80-106; Forsyth, *Old Enemy*, 333-48. My own research on the early Christian literature bears out this conclusion. Beyond Irenaeus, the basic structure of this 'early view' can be seen in Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus. See Appendix B, and the chart on page 272.

[6] Origen is the first to extant writer to connect the 'Lucifer' of Isaiah 14:12 with Satan, 'How you are fallen from heaven, o Lucifer, son of the morning… For you said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God…I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high'. Origen's association of the Devil with Isaiah 14:12 (as well as with the 'prince of Tyre' of Ezekiel 28:12-19), became standard exegesis for later Christian writers, such that the Devil's initial rebellion came to be viewed as the sin of pride vis-à-vis God, rather than

century. In this now standard narrative (which has been popularized in the contemporary English imagination through John Milton's seventeenth-century masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*), the fall of the Devil and his angels occurs prior to the creation of humanity. Satan, not content with his limited status in relation to the Son, leads a rebellion against God in an attempt to usurp the Son's dominion. The coup fails and the Devil and his angels (one third of all the angels) are cast out of heaven. Still determined to strike against God, the Devil avenges this defeat by attacking humanity—God's prized possession. Notably the chief sin of the Devil is pride, and the primary and initial conflict of the narrative is between God and the Devil; humanity becomes involved in the fray only as an overflow of the already existing warfare between heaven and hell. The prize is heaven's throne, and the war is between God and Satan. Humanity suffers as collateral damage, and the earth is simply the battle ground where two extra-terrestrial forces wage war.

This account of the Devil fits well with, and indeed enables, anti-materialist accounts of the Christian soteriological narrative. Early Christian thinkers such as Origen and Gregory of Nyssa tended to downplay the significance of humanity and the material creation. For both Origen and Gregory, creation itself was a result of the fall, and thus not central to God's redemptive purposes; at least not central in any kind of telic sense. Salvation was about leaving behind the material world and shedding the material body. (This general Platonizing tendency can also be found in later medieval theology, on into the present.) While Platonizing Christian thinkers such as Origen and Gregory are careful to leave a place for the body and creation, the overall effect of their system tends to be dismissive of materiality in ways that do not agree with the main concerns of the biblical canon. A late Augustinian account of the Devil is consistent with this basic Platonic narrative, in as much as it sidelines humanity and creation.

Irenaeus' narrative runs in a different direction. It should be pointed out here at the outset that Irenaeus' account of the Devil is not neatly contained within a single segment of his work, but rather can be extrapolated from the relevant passages found throughout his writings. Nevertheless, it coheres as a consistent story despite being dispersed throughout his writings. In Irenaeus' view, the Devil's fall occurs after the creation of humanity, and is detailed in Genesis 3. The Devil's first sin is his temptation of Adam and Eve. Most significantly, Irenaeus offers us an account of the fall in which the Devil is motivated by envy of humanity. The world is the prize that humanity possesses and is the object of the

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the sin of envy vis-à-vis humanity. On the fall of Satan and the angels, see *Princ*. 1.5.5, 8.3. For an extended discussion of Origen's doctrine of Satan and the fall, see Russell, *Satan*, 125-32 and Heine's introductory comments in *FOTC*, vol. 89, 59-65. Origen's account is developed further by Augustine, and then reaches a relatively fixed status with Gregory the Great in the sixth-century. See Russell, *Satan*, 130-131.

Devil's desire. The Devil wishes to be worshipped as God, not by supplanting God in heaven, but by supplanting Adam on earth. As such, the Devil seeks Adam's lordship over the material world, not Christ's lordship over the celestial heavens. In the Irenaean account, the earth is the royal prize, not merely the battle ground. What is more, Satan is a (temporarily) successful usurper of Adam's throne, rather than a failed usurper of Christ's.

Humanity's loss of the world's throne via death thus sets the stage for the outworking of the soteriological narrative that Irenaeus will tell. Not content with Satan's rebellious actions, God enters the war between the Devil and humanity on the side of humanity, and reclaims the world's throne *via* Christ—the God-*man*. For Irenaeus, reclamation of Adam's throne by Christ, the true human being, and reestablishment of human dominion over the world and the angels, is crucial to Irenaeus' biblical narrative in a way not seen in the later Christian writers. While Irenaeus portrays God and the Devil as chief rivals, he does so by grounding this conflict in the primary contest between Satan and humanity. All of this comes together robustly to underscore and support Irenaeus' cosmological and anthropological affirmation of the material world.

The burden of this dissertation, then, is to show the strong coherence between Irenaeus' account of the Devil and his larger anthropological and cosmological framework. As I intend to demonstrate, Irenaeus' account of the Devil moves his overall soteriological narrative in a strongly pro-terrestrial direction. While it would be stating the point too strongly to claim that Irenaeus' account of the Devil is the generative source of his cosmology and anthropology, it is certainly fair to state, and the core hypothesis of this dissertation, that Irenaeus' account of the Devil supports, affirms, and undergirds his broader doctrine of creation.

II. State of Scholarship

Renewed appreciation of, or at least interest in, Irenaeus as an important historical and theological figure has grown in recent years.[7] Yet scholarly interaction with Irenaeus' view of the Devil is of a sufficiently limited nature that it cannot meaningfully be categorized as a specialized field of study. While Irenaeus scholarship abounds (and indeed has made a considerable recovery in the latter half of the twentieth-century), scholars have

[7] For details on this shift in appreciation, see Tortorelli, 'Some Notes'.

tended to focus on topics such as Irenaeus' anthropology,[8] his cosmology,[9] his interaction with the Gnostics,[10] his atonement theory,[11] his use of Scripture,[12] the role he plays in debates regarding apostolic succession,[13] and the way he informs our understanding about the unity (or disunity) of the early Christian communities.[14] But there is not, to my knowledge, a comparable monograph or essay that focuses on Irenaeus' view of the Devil as its main point of attention.

Likewise, scholarly literature on the Devil abounds. But here again the focus of such literature only infrequently concentrates on Irenaeus, tending instead toward questions of theodicy (a conversation in which Irenaeus factors little), and the historical development of the Christian understanding of the Devil—a sort of 'quest for the historical Satan'.[15] Further, I am not aware of any study of the Devil (about Irenaeus or beyond) that analyzes the Devil primarily with a view to anthropological and cosmological concerns.

As such, scholarship on Irenaeus' view of the Devil tends to be tangential. What there is of it can be categorized along two lines: Devil scholarship that touches upon Irenaeus, and Irenaeus scholarship that touches upon the Devil. What is lacking is a full treatment of Irenaeus' view of the Devil, and the manner in which his view of the Devil informs his wider anthropological and cosmological narrative. The present thesis intends to fill this space. What follows here is the requisite summary of the existing scholarship on Irenaeus and the Devil, with a view to showing how the present thesis both corrects and extends the contemporary research. We begin with Irenaeus scholarship that touches upon his view of the Devil, followed by Devil scholarship that touches upon Irenaeus.

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[8] For examples see Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*; Steenberg, *Of God and Man*; Orbe, *Antropología*; Fantino, *L'homme image de Dieu*; De Andia, *Homo Vivens*; Reeves, 'The Glory of God'.

[9] Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*.

[10] Tiessen, 'Gnosticism as Heresy', 31-48.

[11] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 16-35.

[12] See Kannengiesser, *Handbook*, 477-506; De Andia, *Modèles de l'unité des testaments*, 49-59; Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la nouvelle alliance*; Also Presley, 'Intertextual Reception'.

[13] Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 94-107.

[14] Walter Bauer's work was seminal in calling into question the idea of a single, original source for Christianity. Bauer argued that what came be to known as Irenaeus' 'orthodox' party was simply the victorious party in the identity wars between the early Christian communities. See Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei*. For more recent arguments along the same line, see Ehrman, *Lost Christianities*. Contra Bauer and Ehrman, see Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, and Köstenberger and Kruger, *Heresy of Orthodoxy*.

[15] Such is the title of Miguel A. De La Torre and Albert Hernandez's 2011 monograph on the Devil.

A. Irenaeus Scholarship that Touches on the Devil

While Irenaeus scholars have long recognized the presence of the Devil in Irenaeus' soteriological system, and while some have even noted the uniqueness of Irenaeus' early Christian account of the Devil, in the main, only modest attention has been given to this aspect of Irenaeus' thought. Eric Osborne's important treatment of Irenaeus only touches upon the Devil in passing.[16] The same brevity is seen in John Lawson's standard work on Irenaeus' biblical theology,[17] as well as Denis Minns' recent introduction.[18] Paul Foster and Sara Parvis' edited volume on recent trends in Irenaeus scholarship does not take up the subject of the Devil,[19] and John Behr does not focus on the Devil in his two important books on Irenaeus;[20] nor does the French scholar Jacques Fantino in his two volumes on Irenaeus.[21] And where brief mention of the Devil is made, none of the above authors note that Irenaeus' account of the Devil differs distinctly from later Christian accounts.

Ian MacKenzie's commentary on *Epideixis* offers us a bit more. MacKenzie interacts with Irenaeus' account of Genesis 3 and the Devil's involvement in humanity's first sin.[22] In this context MacKenzie includes a helpful section clarifying the relationship between Justin and Irenaeus on the subject of angels,[23] and more importantly, covers much of the relevant textual territory in Irenaeus' account of the Devil (the principle aspects of which can be found in *Epid.* 11-12, and 16). However, MacKenzie's interaction with Irenaeus' *Epideixis* is exegetical and theological in focus, tending toward soteriological and anthropological concerns. In MacKenzie's treatment of *Epid.* 16 (where Irenaeus interprets Genesis 3), MacKenzie is more concerned with Adam than he is with the Devil. Likewise, MacKenzie pays little attention to the shifting historical development of the Christian concepts of the Devil. As such, Mackenzie observes no differentiation between the early Devil narrative found in Irenaeus, and the Devil narrative of the later Christian tradition.

In a similar way, Ysabel de Andia briefly touches on the main points of Irenaeus' account of the Devil,[24] but like McKenzie does so primarily as a context for understanding the fall of humanity. Andia helpfully connects the Devil's temptation of Adam in the Garden

[16] Osborne, *Irenaeus*. Osborne offers a nice one page summary of Irenaeus' basic Devil narrative, including most of the main components. See pp. 216-17. But Osborne does not offer us an extensive integration of the Devil's role into Irenaeus' larger soteriological plotline.

[17] Lawson, *Biblical Theology*.

[18] Minns, *Irenaeus*.

[19] Foster and Parvis, *Irenaeus*.

[20] Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons* and *Asceticism and Anthropology*.

[21] Fantino, *L'homme image de Dieu* and *La théologie d'Irénée*.

[22] MacKenzie, *Demonstration*, 101-30.

[23] MacKenzie, *Demonstration*, 111-12.

[24] De Andia, *Homo Vivens*, 110-16.

of Eden to the Devil's temptation of Christ in the wilderness, but does not chase the thread of Irenaeus' account of the Devil's fall through the whole of Irenaeus' system.

Four works, however, stand out as offering more than a cursory treatment of Irenaeus' account of the Devil. The first is Gustaf Aulén's classic work on the atonement, which presents Irenaeus as the chief representative of what Aulén terms the early 'classic' idea of atonement (set in contrast to what Aulén calls the later 'Latin' idea).[25] Aulén approaches the atonement discussion largely through the lens of the incarnation, and is at pains to show that Irenaeus' focus on the incarnation does not detract from a focus on Christ's redemptive work; for Aulén, these two aspects of Irenaeus' thought hang together. Toward this end, Aulén shows how the soteriological hurdles in Irenaeus are sin, death, and the Devil (i.e. the 'powers' that threaten to destroy humanity because of human rebellion). As such 'the incarnation is the necessary preliminary to the atoning work, because only God is able to overcome the powers which hold man in bondage, and man is helpless'.[26] Thus Irenaeus' doctrine of atonement and incarnation must necessarily include the defeat of these enemies. 'The Divine victory accomplished in Christ [over sin, death, and the Devil] stands in the center of Irenaeus' thought, and forms the central element in the *recapitulatio*, the restoring and the perfecting of the creation, which is his most comprehensive idea'.[27]

Aulén has rightly seen the import of the Devil in Irenaeus' soteriological paradigm. For Irenaeus, salvation is far less about being saved from God the judge (such as we encounter in Anselm), and far more about being saved from the powers of evil that have taken hold of humanity. In particular, Aulén is to be commended for not reducing salvation in Irenaeus to mere deliverance from sin and death while omitting deliverance from the Devil; Aulén correctly insists throughout his treatment of Irenaeus that victory over the Devil is a necessary aspect of Irenaeus' thought.

Yet despite the centrality that Aulén's assessment of Irenaeus gives to the Devil, Aulén's focus on the doctrine of atonement limits the relevance of his commentary for our present purposes. Aulén does not explore Irenaeus' Devil with a view to how this informs our reading of Irenaeus' larger doctrine of creation. Most notably, Aulén seems unaware that Irenaeus is operating with a different view of the Devil from what will emerge in the later Christian tradition. Insofar as Aulén is most concerned to distinguish between the classic

[25] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 16-35. For Aulén, the term 'classic' refers to the early church's view of the atonement (as articulated by Irenaeus), with its emphasis on deliverance from sin, death, and the Devil. Aulén uses the term 'Latin' to refer to the later medieval tradition's eventual emphasis on judicial forgiveness (as articulated by Anselm). In this 'Latin' view, the focus is on deliverance from God as judge, rather than deliverance from oppressive powers (i.e. sin, death, and the Devil).

[26] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 20.

[27] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 21-22.

and later Latin ideas of the atonement, the Devil's identity and aims, and the way this intersects with Irenaeus' larger theological paradigm, do not factor into his assessment.

Gustaf Wingren follows the same basic lines as Aulén, but develops them more fully.[28] Wingren's treatment of Irenaeus has been the seminal work that has helped launch more positive appropriations of Irenaeus in the last half century. The focus of Wingren's work is the intersection of Christology, anthropology, and soteriology in Irenaeus. In this tri-fold assessment of Irenaeus, Wingren devotes the better part of a chapter to a careful and insightful analysis of the Devil's role in Irenaeus' system.[29] Even more, Wingren carries this reading throughout his entire treatment of Irenaeus. For Wingren, 'In Irenaeus every page, and almost every sentence, conveys the idea of a struggle, a never-ending contest, between the two active powers, God and Satan'.[30] And indeed, Wingren notes many of the salient points of Irenaeus' early account of the Devil, in particular the Devil's envy of humanity. Yet Wingren does not seem to grasp fully that Irenaeus' account is different from the later tradition. While Wingren notes that the Devil's temptation of humanity is the occasion of his fall (a chief feature of Irenaeus' early account of the Devil),[31] Wingren still seems to be importing later readings of the Devil into Irenaeus' system. For Wingren, the principal conflict in Irenaeus' system is between God and the Devil. Satan has 'rebelled against God and dragged man headlong with him in his fall'.[32] Here and throughout, Wingren repeatedly implies that humanity has been swept into the Devil's rebellion only subsequently. This way of speaking—of a Satanic fall that precedes the fall of humanity, and that in many ways occurs independently of humanity's first sin—is a chief characteristic of the later Christian account of the Devil. So too is the idea that the chief conflict of the biblical narrative is between God and the Devil, rather than between the Devil and humanity. Thus it is not clear that Wingren has fully grasped the significance of these two distinct Devil traditions and their impact on Irenaeus' interpretation (as will be elaborated in my thesis). The confusion is by no means disastrous for Wingren's reading of Irenaeus, but it does cloud his interpretation of Irenaeus' thought at the one point that Wingren is most concerned to elucidate—namely Irenaeus' anthropology.

The Spanish scholar Antonio Orbe has written extensively on Irenaeus. His two-volume set on Irenaeus' treatment of the parables of Christ provides a helpful picture of how Irenaeus interprets the teaching of Jesus and the weight he ascribes to the four Gospels.[33]

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[28] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*.
[29] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 39-63.
[30] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 52.
[31] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 43.
[32] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 42. See also the same basic sentiment on p. 72.
[33] Orbe, *Parabolas Evangelicas*.

And his *Espiritualidad de San Ireneo* provides an effective overview of Irenaeus' basic soteriological and theological positions on a variety of topics.[34] However, neither work meaningfully interacts with Irenaeus' view of the Devil.[35] We get more in Orbe's *Antropología de San Ireno*. Here Orbe devotes a dozen pages to an exploration of the first sin of both angels and humans.[36] Orbe helpfully emphasizes the role of envy in the Devil's temptation of Adam, connecting this envy with Adam's participation in the divine life (i.e. that Adam is made in the image and likeness of God). But Orbe is keen to downplay the connection between the fall of the Devil and his envy of humanity, stating '[Irenaeus] is not overly concerned about the angel's personal apostasy. If he [the angel] had not intended to drag humanity into it [the apostasy], his crime—first in time—would have gone unnoticed and without consequence for the economy. The serious thing is that he dragged away humanity'.[37] This is significantly understated, as my thesis will show. Orbe here seems to be reading Irenaeus through the lens of the later Devil narrative, namely that the Devil's fall takes place independent of humanity, prior to his temptation of Adam and Eve. Orbe's dislocation of the Devil's fall from his envy of humanity undercuts Orbe's ability to connect meaningfully Irenaeus' account of the Devil with his account of Irenaeus' broader anthropology and soteriology.

In a similar vein, Orbe seems to assume (incorrectly) that Irenaeus is working from the assumption that angels (and thus the Devil) are ontologically superior to embodied humans. Thus for Orbe, the Devil is envious of humanity because God had chosen to 'deposit his treasures [i.e. his image and likeness] in jars of clay' rather than 'in the wealth of the angels'.[38] God in choosing humanity over the Devil had exalted 'the most infinitesimal and weakest over the superior angelic nature'.[39] In this reading, the ontologically superior (i.e. Satan) is envious of the privileges and status of the ontologically inferior (i.e. humanity). But this reading of the Devil's envy, I will show, runs in the exact opposite direction of Irenaeus' anthropological framework when considered against the backdrop of the Devil. Contrary to Orbe's conclusion, the Devil's envy of humanity is not the envy of the ontologically greater toward the lesser, but the envy of the lesser toward the greater.

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[34] Orbe, *Espiritualidad*. For a full list of Orbe's extensive work on Irenaeus, see the bibliography.

[35] In Orbe, *Espiritualidad,* 197-202, Orbe briefly notes the Devil's role in causing humanity to forget God.

[36] Orbe, *Antropología,* 254-66.

[37] Orbe, *Antropología,* 259. The English translation here and throughout is mine.

[38] Orbe, *Antropología,* 268.

[39] Orbe, *Antropología*, 268.

Perhaps the most relevant interpretation of Irenaeus and the Devil for my thesis is found in the work of Irenaeus scholar Matthew Steenberg.[40] Though Steenberg's treatment of the Devil is brief, he nonetheless offers us a number of insightful pages on the Devil's temptation of humanity.[41] Throughout his work, Steenberg is keen to show the cohesion of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative. As such, Steenberg pays special attention to how Irenaeus' narrative of salvation informs, in particular, his anthropology and cosmology. Toward this end, Steenberg rightly argues for the 'commixture of protology and eschatology in Irenaeus' reading of creation'; [42] for Steenberg, one cannot properly understand Irenaeus' eschatological climax until one has properly understood Irenaeus' protological starting point (i.e. the doctrine of creation, with special attention to the creation of humanity). Here one might say that Irenaeus' protology and eschatology form the two poles upon which the cord of his soteriology is strung; humanity's salvation is worked out in light of what humanity was created to be—the lords of creation who uniquely bear the image of the Son of God. Insofar as the Devil is a significant 'actor' in Irenaeus' protological narrative, Steenberg's emphasis on Irenaeus' protology compels him to highlight the Devil's temptation of humanity. In particular, Steenberg notes how the Devil's actions at the beginning of Irenaeus' protological narrative help inform our reading of the climax of Irenaeus' eschatological narrative. In this vein, Steenberg rightly grasps that one cannot do justice to Irenaeus' soteriology without considering the role of the Devil.

Yet the full implications of Irenaeus' Devil narrative are not developed. Steenberg is aware of the differences between Irenaeus' 'early' account of the Devil vis-à-vis the later Christian accounts, in particular the Devil's stewardship of creation and his envy of humanity.[43] But he does not press the distinction or utilize this insight for his reading of Irenaeus. The lack of singular attention to the Devil in Steenberg's work is understandable; the focus of his work does not purport to be a treatment of Irenaeus' view of the Devil. Yet a careful delineation of Irenaeus' account of the Devil would strengthen the larger thesis guiding Steenberg's work: namely that the whole of Irenaeus' work hangs together in a way that magnifies the goodness of God's creation—specifically humanity and the world—through the saving actions of the incarnate Son, the perfect human being. In many respects,

[40] Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*. See also Steenberg's important essay on the infancy of Adam and Eve, 'Children in Paradise'. While the focus of the essay is not the Devil, Steenberg highlights a number of key elements of Irenaeus' account of creation and the fall—all consistent with Irenaeus' early account of the Devil.

[41] Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 169-72.

[42] Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Cr*eation, 172. For more on this connection, see also Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 16-54.

[43] See also Steenberg, *Of God and Man,* 20 where he notes the close connection between Irenaeus' and Theophilus' reading of Genesis 3.

my thesis intends to extend Steenberg's soteriological treatment of Irenaeus, and show how Steenberg's anthropological and cosmological reading of Irenaeus is deepened and resourced when considered in light of Irenaeus' Devil narrative.

B. Devil Scholarship that Touches on Irenaeus

Contemporary Devil scholarship can be categorized along three main lines: 1) theological treatments of the Devil that are focused on theodicy and the problem of evil, [44] 2) systematic treatments of the Devil as contained in Christian Scripture, and 3) historical treatments of the Devil that seek to identify the origins of contemporary notions of the Devil. And of course many of these works blur the distinction between these three agendas.

Irenaeus tends to show up infrequently or not at all in the first two categories of Devil scholarship. Gerald Messadie's *A History of the Devil* makes no mention of Irenaeus.[45] Elaine Pagels' treatment of Satan is an attempt to show how the doctrine of Satan emerged out of the 'orthodox' party's effort to suppress all other variants of Christianity.[46] Irenaeus makes a number of appearances in Pagels' work, but only as a figure who helped to institutionalize the church and suppress dissent; his actual views on the Devil are not developed. Likewise Bernard Bamberger's historical survey of the Devil mentions Irenaeus only briefly in passing, and wrongly attributes to him the ransom theory of atonement.[47] Paul Carus' history makes only a single reference, again wrongly attributing the ransom theory to Irenaeus.[48] Miguel A. De La Torre's and Albert Hernandez's *Quest for the Historical Satan* includes only three incidental remarks regarding Irenaeus, one of which (like Bamberger and Carus) wrongly attributes to Irenaeus the ransom theory of atonement. Charlotte Emily Kingston, in her dissertation on Gregory the Great's view of the Devil, devotes a section of her thesis to the development of the Devil in early Christian thought; here she correctly notes the early tradition regarding the Devil's envy of humanity, but only

[44] See for example Tan, 'Humanity's Devil', 136-154, as well as Russell's four volume set: *Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity, Satan: The Early Christian Tradition, Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages,* and *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World.* Russell has also published a single volume distillation of the above four works entitled *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History*.

[45] Messadie, *History of the Devil*.

[46] Pagels, *Origins of Satan*. Pagels'sbook is a semi-popular account, but draws from her previously published scholarly articles: see Pagels, 'Social History' and 'Social History: Part II'. Along similar lines, see also Pagels, 'The Demiurge and His Archons'.

[47] See Bamberger, *Fallen Angels*, 83.

[48] Carus, *History of the Devil*, 233.

makes a single passing reference to Irenaeus.[49] Henry Kelly's historical survey of the Devil offers a bit more. Kelly provides an assessment of the Devil within the canon of Scripture, and the era immediately following.[50] In his post-biblical historical narrative, Kelly rightly positions Irenaeus within an early Devil tradition distinct from the tradition that will emerge post-Origen. According to Kelly, this early tradition can be traced to its culminating articulation in the *Life of Adam and Eve* (which Kelly dates to the fourth century—a date which scholars are by no means agreed upon),[51] and then to its use in the Koran.[52] But notably, Kelly does not identify Irenaeus as a key player in this transition.

Gregg Allison's *Historical Theology* devotes a chapter to the historical development of the Christian doctrine of angels, demons and Satan.[53] Allison divides his historical survey into four main epochs: the early church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation and post-Reformation period, and the modern period. Irenaeus makes a few appearances in the first section of this historical sweep. In particular Allison notes Irenaeus' affirmation of the watcher tradition, Satan's envy of humanity, and Irenaeus' (incorrect) statement that the Hebrew word *Satan* means 'apostate'. Allison's assessment of the early church is helpful in identifying many of the main ideas that emerged in the early church regarding the Devil. But by lumping together the statements of such diverse figures as Theophilus, Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, and Gregory of Nyssa (and the *Shepherd of Hermas*!) the reader is left with the impression that these figures all told the same basic story regarding the Devil. Allison's failure to distinguish between an early and later Devil narrative is the chief drawback of his work on the Devil.

Yet two historical surveys of the Devil are noteworthy for their attention to Irenaeus. The first is by Jeffrey Burton Russell. Russell's four-volume work explores the identity of the Devil from ancient times until modernity and is the standard scholarly work on the history of the Devil.[54] Like the work of many other Devil scholars, Russell's work is focused on the issue of theodicy, with particular attention to the way good/evil dualism informs the various accounts of the Devil. Russell's second volume in the series, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* devotes a chapter to Irenaeus.[55] Insofar as Russell's chief concern

[49] Kingston, 'Devil in Pope Gregory'.

[50] Kelly, *Satan,* 175-208.

[51] For the dating of this textual tradition, see De Jonge and Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, 75-78. Tromp and De Jonge suggest the wide date range of 100-600 AD.

[52] See Kelly, *Satan,* 175-84.

[53] Allison, *Historical Theology,* 298-308. Allison's work uniquely addresses the traditional categories of systematic theology through their historical development. The blending of genres, while not without its anachronistic dangers, makes for an effective and helpful resource, even if not as sufficiently nuanced as one might find in other works of historial theology.

[54] See note 44 above for titles.

[55] Russell, *Satan,* 80-106.

is theodicy and dualism, his assessment of Irenaeus moves in directions that are only tangential to my present thesis. Yet Russell rightly draws attention to key elements of Irenaeus' account of the Devil. Russell notes that envy of humanity (rather than pride) was the chief sin of the Devil.[56] He notes the lordship of humanity over the Devil and the other angels, and that the Devil's fall is occasioned by refusal to submit to humanity's lordship.[57] There are a few places where one might wish to correct Russell's account of Irenaeus,[58] but the major contribution of Russell—not to be under-appreciated—is the way that Russell clearly demonstrates that Irenaeus represents an early account of the Devil distinct from what will come later. For Russell, Irenaeus' view of the Devil is the culmination of the reflection that had been taking place in the Christian communities from the time of the apostles, on through the 'apostolic fathers', and continuing with the later 'apologetic fathers'.[59] Thus for Russell, though Irenaeus is not the originator of this early Devil narrative, he is the first of the Christian writers to most fully articulate it. Russell's historical analysis provides a solid framework for assessing Irenaeus' narrative with respect to the Devil narratives that come before and after. But as noted above, Russell utilizes the implications of this early account, and its difference from the later account, in the service of his study on theodicy. As such his assessment of Irenaeus' account of the Devil is only tangentially related to our primary focus regarding Irenaeus' doctrine of creation.

The second significant historical treatment of the Devil is Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth.*[60] Forsyth's work stands alongside of Russell's historical survey in terms of importance, even if less comprehensive in scope. Like Russell's work, Forsyth offers us an historical account of the Devil, tracing the development of this account from Gilgamesh to Augustine. Along the way he devotes a chapter to Irenaeus.[61] Forsyth is most concerned to give an account of the way that the Devil is a primary 'actor' in the various Jewish, Gnostic, and Christian narratives. Here Forsyth sets his work in contrast to other historical surveys that analyze the nature of evil in more abstracted

[56] Russell, *Satan*, 81

[57] Russell, *Satan*, 81

[58] Russell's treatment of Irenaeus will likely not satisfy careful Irenaeus scholars. Throughout the chapter Russell often ascribes (or seems to ascribe) positions to Irenaeus that are at best anachronistic and at worst incorrect (e.g. that Irenaeus held to a form of the ransom theory of atonement [he did not]; that Irenaeus had a fully worked out doctrine of original sin [doubtful at best]; or that Irenaeus sought to root out heresy but was incapable of offering a definition of heresy beyond 'that which is contrary to whatever the Bishop says'—a true but unhelpfully truncated way of assessing Irenaeus' position).

[59] Russell correctly notes that Theophilus, Athenagoras, and Tatian all worked within the same basic tradition, a tradition that Irenaeus continued and expanded. For Russell, the break with this early tradition begins with Origen. See Russell, *Satan*, 78-79.

[60] Forsyth, *Old Enemy.* Russell's work remains the more comprehensive.

[61] Forsyth, *Old Enemy*, 333-42.

philosophical and theological categories. 'My own position, however, is that Satan is first, and in some sense always remains, a character in a narrative…that is we must try to see him as an actor, or what Aristotle called an "agent", with a role to play in a plot, or *mythos'*.[62] This agenda is traced throughout Forsyth's work. According to Forsyth, the Jewish, Gnostic, and Christian theologians were concerned to present a coherent 'mythos'—an intelligible story that accounted for the presence of evil while preserving the goodness of God. These mythic stories were designed as rebuttals to competing narratives (e.g. the Christian mythos of the Devil was developed in response to the Gnostic narrative). Insofar as the competing narratives shifted and evolved, the various Christian accounts concerning the Devil likewise evolved and developed—moving from a focus on lust, to envy, and finally settling on pride as the Devil's chief sin.

This narrative reading of the Devil's thus shapes Forsyth's reading of Irenaeus. For Forsyth, Irenaeus is keen to present a Devil narrative that is coherent in the face of the Gnostic threat, while at the same time consistent with a number of disparate data points that have been handed to him from Scripture and the Jewish tradition—the Eden tradition, the watcher tradition, two distinct Pauline theories of redemption, an 'Adam myth' and so on.[63] Forsyth ultimately judges Irenaeus' attempt a failure, and instead points to Augustine as the Christian thinker who will finally be able to achieve the master synthesis that will eventually become fixed dogma in the Christian tradition.

Forsyth's narrative treatment of the Devil is helpful at many key points. Forsyth is a professor of English, and his attention to a narrative reading of the Devil as a key character in a plot gives his treatment of the Devil a perspective unique from the other historical surveys. In my estimation, Forsyth's insight about narrative readings is consistent with how the Devil functioned in the thought of the early Christian writers, and parallels the way I am likewise interested in reading Irenaeus. Also, Forsyth, along with Russell, identifies Origen as a key turning point in the development of early Christian accounts of the Devil.

However, Forsyth's treatment of the Devil in Irenaeus, like the other Devil scholarship, only tangentially touches on the key themes of my thesis. Forsyth's primary aim is to show how Irenaeus' account of the Devil emerged out of his conflict with the *external* force of Gnosticism. As such, Forsyth does not focus on the *internal* coherence of Irenaeus' account of the Devil with respect to Irenaeus' larger soteriological system—most especially the way in which Irenaeus' anthropology and cosmology neatly coheres with his account of the Devil.

[62] Forsyth, *Old Enemy*, 4.
[63] Forsyth, *Old Enemy*, 345.

C. Conclusion

Devil scholars—especially those working on the historical development of the Devil—often note the transition between the early and later accounts of the Devil in the Christian tradition (as can be seen with Kelly, Russell, and Forsyth). In particular, they make the observation (with varying degrees of force) that Irenaeus stands at the end of the early tradition, just before it gives way to the emerging later tradition. Origen is often identified as the initial shaper of this later account that eventually reaches culmination in Augustine (or Gregory the Great). These observations are particularly relevant for my thesis. But these Devil scholars, on the whole, have little interest in mining this insight for how it deepens our understanding of Irenaeus' cosmology and anthropology.

Likewise, Irenaeus scholars note (though not as often as one might prefer) the significant role that the Devil plays in Irenaeus' system. But in the main, they fail to recognize that the Devil of Irenaeus' system is distinct in important ways from the Devil that will emerge in the later Christian tradition. This oversight obscures the deep coherence of Irenaeus' thought, and impoverishes our reading of Irenaeus' anthropology and cosmology. What is needed therefore, and what I hope to provide, is a reading of Irenaeus that combines the best insights of these two scholarly fields, while extending them into a study of Irenaeus' account of the Devil and its relation to his doctrine of creation.

III. Biographical Details and Context

The biographical details of Irenaeus' life are little known. What we do know is gleaned from *Adversus haereses* as well as from two letters preserved in Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiasica.* The first of these letters sheds light on the place and date of his birth. In a letter to Florinius, Irenaeus recounts an early boyhood memory of listening to the teaching of Polycarp (d. ca. 155), who was Bishop of Smyrna and the disciple of the apostle John.[64] This memory, along with his claim that the Book of Revelation was written toward the end of Domitian's reign (98), and near to the time of Irenaeus' own generation,[65] suggests that

[64] Eusebius preserves Irenaeus' letter to Florinius, in which Irenaeus recounts listening to Polycarp: 'I remember the events of that time more clearly than those of recent years. For what boys learn, growing with their mind, becomes joined with it; so that I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and the manner of his life, and his physical appearance…" Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.20.4-7.

[65] *Haer.* 5.30.3.

Irenaeus was born of Greek descent, most likely in Asia Minor, between the years 130-140.[66]

Irenaeus' adult life begins for us in 177, in the Roman city of Lugdunum in the province of Gaul (modern Lyons in southeastern France).[67] Lugdunum was a city of some import in the Western Empire during the time of Irenaeus, as can be seen by the imperial visits to the city. Claudius was born at Lugdunum, and Caligula put on mixed games there, as well as a competition in Greek and Latin oratory.[68] The decisive battle of a civil war was fought in the city in 200AD, with the Emperor Severus securing for himself the purple against his rival Albinus. (Irenaeus was likely in the city during the battle).[69] Lugdunum was an economically important city as well. The gold mints at Lugdunum produced coinage for the whole empire, and the silver mints for the western providences. This was at a time when the world was at an unprecedented point of industrialization. Analysis of arctic ice floes shows that the levels of metal released into the atmosphere were at the world's highest in the first two centuries of the first millennium, and were not equaled again until the industrial revolution.[70] Given the influence of Lugdunum within the empire, Irenaeus' bishopric was not without corresponding influence in the Christian community.[71]

Sometime after Irenaeus' arrival in Gaul, a bloody pogrom was carried out against the Christians, and the Christians in Lugdunum suffered greatly. At this time Irenaeus carried a letter from the churches in Lugdunum to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome. This letter records the sufferings and faithfulness of the Christian confessors, and identifies Irenaeus as a presbyter of the parish in Lugdunum.[72] Irenaeus later succeeded Pothinus, Bishop of

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[66] There is a wide variety of opinion regarding the date of Irenaeus' birth. Osborn helpfully catalogs the various positions: Dodwell (98 AD), Grave (108 AD), Tillemont and Lightfoot (120 AD), Ropes (126 AD), Harvey (130 AD), Dupin, Massuet, and Kling (140 AD), Boringer, Ziegler (147 AD). See Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 2. Osborn himself follows Benoit, who places the birth date between 130 and 140 AD. See A. Benoit, *Saint-Irénée*, 50.

[67] For the social, cultural, and historical context of second century Latin Gaul, see Secord, 'The Cultural Geography of a Greek Christian', 25-33. See also Nasrallah, 'Mapping the World'. Nasrallah explores how Justin, Tatian, and Lucian—second sophistic 'truth seekers from the eastern ranges of the empire'—viewed the Roman world in which they lived. Irenaeus, who would not readily have identified himself with the philosophers and rhetoricians of the second sophistic, may nonetheless, also journeying from the east, have encountered the Roman world through a similar lens.

[68] Suetonius, *Gaius Caligula*, 20.

[69] See Kulikowski, *Triumph of Empire*, 86-87, for an account of the battle.

[70] See Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 94. Goodman draws upon Hong, Candelone, Patterson and Boutron, 'Greenland Ice Evidence', 1841-1843.

[71] Contra Jonathan Hill who minimizes the importance of Irenaeus in the early church. See Hill, *History of Christian Thought*, 26.

[72] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.1. For the letter, see all of 5.1. Somewhat surprisingly, Irenaeus is nonetheless generally positive toward Rome and the empire. He writes appreciatively of the Romans that 'through their instrumentality the world is at peace, and we walk on the highways without fear, and sail where we will,' *Haer.* 4.30.3.

Lugdunum, who died during these persecutions. Irenaeus' bishopric seems to have extended over both Lugdunum and Vienne, and continued on into Victor's bishopric in Rome, Eleutherus' successor.

A key event in Irenaeus' life—one in which he lived up to his name, and which likewise shows the reach of his influence—is preserved in Eusebius. Eusebius records a letter of Irenaeus, written to Victor, Bishop of Rome (c. 190), in which Irenaeus seeks to reconcile diverging opinions between the East and the West with respect to the dating of Easter.[73] At the height of the tension, Victor was threatening excommunication to the churches in Asia Minor. Irenaeus interposed, and through his efforts Victor came to agree that each church should set the date for Easter in keeping with its own traditions.

Irenaeus has often been construed as a biblical theologian who was 'not a very good philosopher'.[74] The first charge is certainly true; he was indeed a biblical theologian. And while Irenaeus avoids the finely tuned speculative reasoning and language one finds in the later Christian Platonists, he arguably demonstrates a robust awareness of and adeptness in the use of the philosophical categories of his day.[75]

The exact date of and occasion for Irenaeus' death are not known. There is a tenuous tradition that Irenaeus was martyred during the persecution of Septimius Severus in 202 or 203. Jerome is the first to assert this in 410 in his commentary on Isaiah (chapter 64). However, Jerome does not make this claim in his earlier *De viris illustribus*—where one would naturally expect to find it. Osborn suggests the discrepancy may be the result of an interpolation from later Gallic traditions.[76] The relatively late date of the tradition and the absence of Irenaeus' martyrdom in *De viris illustribus* point away from Irenaeus' martyrdom.[77]

IV. Gnostic Context

The Gnostic conflict figures significantly in Irenaeus' work, and thus a sketch of this context at the outset of this thesis will be helpful for my argument to come. In recent years,

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[73] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24. For more on this event, see Osborne, *Irenaeus,* 5; Grant, *Irenaeus,* 8-10; Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons,* 54-57.

[74] Norris, 'Irenaeus and Plotinus', 23.

[75] See Briggman, 'Irenaeus' Christology of Mixture'; Osborne, *Irenaeus,* 15-16, 255; Lashier, 'Irenaeus as Logos Theologian'.

[76] Osborn, *Irenaeus,* 2.

[77] For more on Irenaeus' general biography, see especially Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons,* 13-66. Also Paul Parvis, 'Who Was Irenaeus?', 13-24; Grant, *Irenaeus,* 1-10, Osborn, *Irenaeus,* 1-6; and Harvey, *Saint Irenaeus,* clii-clxii.

Michael Williams has argued that 'Gnosticism' is the wrong label for the group of texts traditionally classified as such.[78] What ties these texts together, Williams has argued, is not *gnosis*, but rather the consistent presence of a 'biblical demiurge'.[79] Williams suggests 'biblical demiurgical' as the best label for referring to the body of literature now commonly referred to as Gnostic.[80] Williams' work has been widely accepted, and has been almost single-handedly responsible for putting the term 'Gnosticism' in quotes. I am in agreement with Williams regarding a biblical demiurge as the unifying element of Gnosticism. However, I depart from Williams insofar as he goes on to argue that these texts do not offer a consistently negative portrayal of the demiurge.[81] Here I am more inclined to follow Irenaeus, who, contra Williams, insists that the Gnostic portrayal of the demiurge is almost universally negative.[82] Throughout his writings, Irenaeus clearly views the Gnostics as anti-body and anti-material. The demiurge is always the villain (or the dupe) in the Gnostic story, as recounted by Irenaeus. The work of the demiurge—namely all things material and earthly, including the body—are the dregs of the universe. Salvation is about being delivered from the material world of the demiurge. In response to this, Irenaeus goes out of his way to affirm both the goodness of the Creator and the goodness of the creation—both of which are directly attacked by the Gnostic systems.

I would therefore adjust Williams' label of 'biblical demiurgical' to 'malevolent biblical demiurgical', emphasizing the universally negative characterization of the demiurge in Gnostic thought. However, for consistency with past Gnostic scholarship, and for ease of use, I here retain the traditional term, while affirming Williams' basic critique regarding the inadequacy of the label 'Gnostic'.[83]

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[78] See Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*. Williams' work challenged the scholarly consensus on Gnosticism as articulated at the Gnostic conference held in Messina, Italy, in 1966.

[79] Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 52.

[80] Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 52.

[81] Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 27-52.

[82] See Irenaeus' account of the Cainites, *Haer*. 1.31; the Ophites, *Haer.* 1.30.5 ff.; the Barbeliotes, *Haer.* 1.29.4; Marcion and Cerdo, *Haer.* 1.27.2; Cerinthus, *Haer.* 1.26.1; Carpocrates, *Haer.* 1.25.4; Saturninus and Basilides, *Haer.* 1.24; the Marcosians, *Haer.* 1.18.4, 1.19.1; Valentinus, *Haer.* 1.4-5. All of the above cast the demiurge in strongly negative terms. Similarly, the strain of teaching associated with Simon, though not having a single demiurge, maintained that the world was shaped by evil angels. In this sense, Simon's narrative consists of many evil demiurges. See *Haer.* 1.23.2. The only exception on this point found within Irenaeus is the Ebionites. The Ebionites practiced circumcision, followed the Jewish laws, and acknowledged Jesus. Arguably, their Jewish commitments to the Torah kept them from demonizing the Creator. See *Haer.* 1.26.2.

[83] For a helpful summary of the Gnosticism that Irenaeus was battling, see Grant, *Irenaeus*, 11-28; Minns, *Irenaeus*, 15-29; and Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 17-21.For a general introduction to the Nag Hammadi literature, and Gnosticm generally, see Meyer and Pagels, 'Introduction', 1-13.For a concise overview of the Valentinian school, see Thomassen, 'The Valentinian School, 790-94. For a concise overview of the Sethian school, see Turner, 'The Sethian School', 784-89.

Of course, my departure from Williams presupposes that Irenaeus' account of Gnosticism is largely accurate. While some scholars question the reliability of Irenaeus' account,[84] many others have defended Irenaeus on this point.[85] I am sympathetic with the defenders of Irenaeus regarding the general accuracy of his account of Gnosticism. But in many respects the accuracy of Irenaeus' account is tangential to my main concern, namely the way in which Irenaeus' account of the Devil fits with his broader anthropological and cosmological framework. For my purposes then, we need only concern ourselves with what Irenaeus *thought* the Gnostics taught, and how this understanding (whether fully accurate or not) influenced the way he articulated his overall theological system.[86]

V. Texts and Translations

Irenaeus' two extant works are *Adversus haereses*, his major work against the Gnostics, and *Epideixis tou apostolikou kērygmatos* (hereafter *Epideixis*), which offers a short summary of the biblical storyline. Both works were originally written in Greek, but now remain complete only in Latin and Armenian translations, respectively.

When and how the Greek text of *Adversus haereses* disappeared is uncertain; Greek copies existed as late as the ninth-century in Baghdad;[87] the remaining Latin copies range from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.[88] Some of the Greek of Book One has been preserved by Ephiphanius, and smaller fragments of all five books have been preserved in Hippolytus, Eusebius, Theodoret of Cyrus, St. John of Damascus, and the *Catenae Graecorum Patrum*. Despite the loss of the Greek original, the Latin translation is as well preserved.[89] For the

[84] See for example, Pagels, 'Conflicting Versions of Valentinian Eschatology', 35-53.

[85] For an extensive list of scholars sympathetic to Irenaeus' doctrinal characterization of Gnosticism, see Tiessan, 'Gnosticism as Heresy', 31-48. Tiessen himself concludes, 'The Nag Hammadi discoveries have, for the most part, confirmed the reliability of Irenaeus and demonstrated his knowledge of the various gnostic traditions which appear in those texts' (32). In any event, differences between Irenaeus and the Nag Hammadi collection need not mean that Irenaeus got it wrong. Papandrea rightly points out that, based on the poor transmission accuracy of fragments from Plato's *Republic* found in the Nag Hammadi collection, an impeccable transmission accuracy of the Nag Hammadi collection should not be assumed. See Papandrea, *Five Images*, 19-20.

[86] Here I follow the same basic approach as Eric Osborn, 'Since my concern is to understand Irenaeus, his criteria and his concepts, I have taken the account of his Protean opponents at face value'. Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus*, xiv.

[87] For a helpful analysis of the extant Latin manuscripts, see Unger, *ACW 55*, 12-13. For a helpful analysis of the existing print editions of the Latin, see Parvis, 'Packaging Irenaeus', 183-98.

[88] The Greek of *Adversus haereses* was used by the translators of the Armenian version in the sixth-century, and excerpts can be found in the *Sacra Parallela* (eight-century). Photius, in the ninth-century, read a Greek copy in Baghdad. See Unger, *ACW* 55, 12.

[89] See the introductory comments of Unger in, *ACW* 55, 14. Notably, Unger observes that the Latin translation is slavishly literal. While this makes for an awkward Latin reading, it carries the advantage of more transparently conveying the underlying Greek.

purposes of this study, I have followed the consensus of Irenaean textual scholarship which dates the original Latin translation to the early third-century, not long after Irenaeus' own time, and while Gnosticism remained a threat.[90]

For the Latin text of *Adversus haereses*, I have followed the relevant volumes in Rousseau, ed., *Sources Chrétiennes*. For the Greek text I have followed W. Wigan Harvey, *Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons: Five Books Against Heresies*. The English translations of *Adversus haereses* I have revised and updated as necessary from A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut.[91] I have likewise consulted the English translations of Unger, found in *Ancient Christian Writers*, volumes 55, 64, and 65, as well as the French translation found in the relevant volumes of *Sources Chrétiennes.*

The Armenian text of *Epideixis* was only relatively recently discovered in 1904, and made available in print in the 1919 edition of *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. 12, edited by K. Ter-Mekerttschian and S. G. Wilson. The English translation for *Epideixis* used throughout is based on Armitage Robinson's 1920 translation from the Armenian, unless otherwise noted. The English translations of Joseph Smith and John Behr,[92] as well as the French translation by Rousseau found in *Sources Chrétiennes*, were likewise consulted. Bracketed Armenian transliterations are drawn from Smith. The translation of *Epid.* 12 and 14 used in Chapter Two, Section V follows the work of Matthew Steenberg in his essay, 'Children in Paradise: Adam and Even as "Infant" in Irenaeus of Lyons'. Steenberg bases his translation first on Rousseau's retrograde Latin edition of *Epideixis* which can be found in *Sources Chrétiennes*, vol. 406, and secondly on the Armenian text of 1919. Any departures from Steenberg's English translation in my Chapter Three are identified in the notes. Bracketed Greek terms throughout are from Rousseau.

The English translations of all non-English secondary works are my own, unless otherwise noted. All Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

[90] Tertullian appears to have used the Latin *Adversus haereses* as some of the passages in his *Adversus Valentinianos* quote it verbatim. And Feuardent even speculated that it was written by Irenaeus himself (though this seems unlikely given the poor quality of the translation). See Feuardent, *Commonitio ad lectores de sua quinque librorum D. Irenaei edition* (*PG* 7.1340C-D). Certainly it was extant by the time of Augustine, who quotes from it in the year AD 421 (*C. Iul.*1.3.5). For arguments in favor of early third-century, see Unger, *ACW* 55, 14-15; Grabe, *Prolegomena*, 1.2.3 (*PG* 7.1356), 1702; Harvey, *St. Irenaeus*, 1.144; D'Ales, 'La date de la version latine de saint Irenee', 133-37.

[91] *ANF*, vol. 1.

[92] Smith, *Proof*, and Behr, *Apostolic Preaching*.

Section One

Irenaeus' Cosmology and Anthropology

Chapter One
Irenaeus' Cosmology

'*And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good*'.

Genesis 1:31

Irenaeus' account of the Devil, while significant in its own right, is an important aspect of his general thought insofar as it sets in motion his broader soteriological and theological narrative, which in turn informs his overall theological framework—most especially his anthropology and cosmology. Arguably, the theological conclusions that emerge out of the pages of *Adversus haereses* in large measure find their genesis in Irenaeus' account of the Devil's identity and fall.

The goal of Chapters One and Two, therefore, is to offer a brief summary of the important cosmological and anthropological themes in Irenaeus that will inform our understanding of Irenaeus' demonology. Toward this end, there are a number of core questions I intend to answer in this chapter and the next. What is Irenaeus' basic stance toward materiality? What does he think about the human body and the material world? What is the destiny of the material creation? What is the ultimate destiny of humanity, and how does this inform the opening act of Irenaeus' drama? What does it mean for humanity to be made in the 'image and likeness' of God? What is the destiny of humanity? When we consider at the outset the *telos* of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative, namely the exaltation (indeed divinization) of humanity and the redemption of the material world, our capacity to read Irenaeus' opening narrative account of the Devil is deepened accordingly.

Central to Irenaeus' cosmology is the basic contention that a good world was created for good humans by a good God. Irenaeus' affirmation of the goodness of the material world can be seen in at least six ways, 1) the demiurge is identified as the true Father, 2) God creates the world directly with his own two hands (i.e. the Son and the Spirit), 3) creation is accomplished *ex nihilo*, 4) the material world is given as a gift to humanity, 5) God will renew the present earth to its pristine condition in a literal millennial kingdom, and 6) God will create a perpetual new heavens and new earth in the eternal age.

In the following, each of these points will be examined in turn, with a view to showing how they inform our understanding of Irenaeus' Devil narrative.

I. The Demiurge as the True Father

Most basic to Irenaeus' doctrinal system is his insistence that God is the Creator of the material world. 'Now this world is encompassed by seven heavens,[1] in which dwell powers and angels and archangels, doing service to God, the Almighty who created all things'.[2] And again, 'The church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: a belief in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them'.[3] Of special note is the way in which Irenaeus underscores the import of God's identity as Creator by linking this doctrine to his famous 'rule of truth'. For Irenaeus, the 'rule of truth' (or alternately 'rule of faith') is the summation of the apostolic deposit—a body of truths that mark the boundaries for what constitutes true Christianity.[4] Each time Irenaeus explicitly mentions this foundational body of doctrinal content, he includes a clear and extended statement about God as Creator. Arguably, this aspect of the rule is its chief feature. He writes, 'The rule of truth which we hold, is, that there is one God Almighty, who made all things by his Word, and fashioned and formed, out of that which had no existence, all things which exist'. [5]

Irenaeus is keen to press this point precisely because it lies at the heart of his debate with the Gnostics, who generally worked hard to put distance between God and the material world. For the Gnostics, the world was not made by God, but by a lesser (and typically evil and ignorant) demiurge.[6] The term 'demiurge' is taken from the Latinized rendering of the

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[1] Irenaeus' conception of a 'seven-heaven' cosmology is not unique to him. See for example *T. Levi*, 3 and the *Ascen Isa.*10. Uniquely however, Irenaeus connects the names of the seven heavens with the gifts of the Spirit (see *Epid.* 9). Seven-heaven cosmology was likewise present in late Jewish thought; see Thackeray, *St Paul and Contemporary Jewish Thought,* 172–79. Irenaeus' cosmology is significantly less speculative than the Gnostic cosmologies he combatted. Gnostic teachers (e.g. Saturninus and Basilides) typically maintained a series of descending heavens (even up to 365) with each emanation containing its own host of powers and angels. Irenaeus has little patience for such cosmologies, '…nor are there a series of heavens…madly dreamt', *Haer.* 2.30.9. For an extended discussion on Irenaeus' 'seven-heaven' cosmology, see MacKenzie, *Demonstration,* 91-100; Smith, *Proof,* 146-47, no. 57; and Wingren, *Man and Incarnation,* 8-10.

[2] *Epid.* 9.

[3] *Haer.* 1.10.1.

[4] In content the 'rule' overlaps somewhat with the Apostles' Creed; it does not, however, come to us through Irenaeus in a fixed creedal form. Irenaeus links the rule to baptism in *Haer.* 1.9.4, which suggests that it had a catechetical function. For an analysis of Irenaeus' rule, see Stewart, 'The Rule of Truth', 151-58; also Peter-Ben Smit, 'The Reception of the Truth', 354-373.

[5] *Haer.* 1.2.1. For other explicit references to the rule in *Adversus haereses,* see 1.9.4, 3.1.1-2, 3.11.1. In *Epid.* 6, Irenaeus likewise details the substance of the rule, again beginning with God as Creator as the first principle. See also *Epid.* 3, where Irenaeus begins with baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit, with God as Creator immediately following.

[6] Here I depart from Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 98-100, who does not see a consistently negative portrayal of the demiurge as a unifying element of Gnosticism.

Greek δημιουργός, literally meaning 'public worker'. It first gained philosophical currency in Plato's *Timaeus,* where it is used to refer to the divine being who gave form to the material world. For Plato, the demiurge is not the creator of the material world, but rather its 'craftsman' or 'shaper'. The Platonic demiurge is well-intentioned but limited; he does his best to shape the chaotic material of creation into order, but is met with limited success. In Plato's *Timaeus,* and throughout the Platonic tradition, the demiurge is cast in a generally positive light. [7]

However, the concept of a demiurge is utilized within the Gnostic texts in more pejorative ways. For the Gnostics, the demiurge is not a benevolent maker/shaper of the material world, but a lesser god who most often functions as the primary villain of the Gnostic narrative. The identity and nature of the Gnostic demiurge was variously explained, but in nearly all instances the accounts were negative. He was he was one of the weak creating angels;[8] he was less enlightened than Satan;[9] he was ignorant of the heavenly realm above him;[10] he wrongly presumed himself to be the true God;[11] he was ontologically inferior to enlightened humans;[12] he was envious of humans;[13] his work was destined to come to ruin;[14] he was the unintended and degenerate offspring of a wayward Aeon;[15] and (most memorably) humans, upon their death, were to insult him as the means of ascending to the heavenly realm.[16]

Both implicitly and explicitly, the Gnostic demiurge is set in stark contrast to the 'true Father' –the beneficent, even if unknowable source, of all that is. The demiurge, in varying accounts, is either ignorant of the higher heavens and the existence of the true

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[7] For more on the Platonic demiurge, see Wainwright, 'Concepts of God'. Also Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 20, and Gerson, 'Demiurge'.

[8] *Haer.* 1.23.2, 24.4-6, 25.1.

[9] *Haer.* 1.5.4.

[10] *Haer.* 1.5.3, 1.17.1.

[11] *Haer.* 1.29.4, 1.30.6.

[12] *Haer.* 1.7.1, 1.25.2.

[13] *Haer.* 1.30.

[14] *Haer.* 1.17.2.

[15] *Haer.* 1.5, 1.16.3, 1.18.4, 1.19.1, 1.29.4. In the Valentinian account, the various heavenly Aeons come into being as emanations from the true Father. Sophia, the 'last and youngest of the Aeons' is a female aeon who leaves her consort (Desired) and strives to comprehend the unknowable Father; this knowledge is beyond her grasp. Her passion to know the unknowable causes her to fall into grief and despair, out of which the material content of creation springs into being. But being female, she can only give birth to substance, not form (for the Gnostics, 'form' comes from the male). This unformed material substance is personalized as Achamoth—a being with substance but no form. Form is granted to her by one of the higher male Aeons, and then from her are formed three types of substances – the spiritual, the ensouled, and the material (in descending levels of ontological worth). The demiurge, who is himself an ensouled being, owes his existence to Achamoth, who is his mother. The demiurge separates the ensouled substance from the material substance, thus shaping the material world that is visible to humanity. The demiurge mistakenly supposes that he has made all of these things himself, and that he is the true and only high God.

[16] *Haer.* 1.21.5.

Father, or he is jealous and envious that he has been relegated to the lower material world. Indeed, the demiurge is set in contrast with all that is good in the celestial realm. For the Gnostics, the greater Aeons who dwell within the Pleroma (i.e. the highest heavens) are in closer geographical and ontological proximity with the Father, and are opponents of the demiurge.[17]

For the Gnostics, this unhappy account of the demiurge served to darken their cosmology. The Gnostic sects offered varied accounts regarding the creation of matter, but none of them were flattering. For the Valentinians, matter was created out of the sorrow, grief, and tears of a wayward Aeon whose passions had led her astray.[18] In another passage this wayward Aeon is compared to Judas, and then again to the hemorrhaging woman of the gospels (with matter analogously compared to her hemorrhage).[19] In Simon and Saturninus, matter was formed by envious and evil angels, of which the demiurge was one.[20] The material world, insofar as it owes its origin or form to the demiurge, is guilty by association.[21] Further, the existence of matter was never intended by the true Father and is thus incapable of salvation; it will ultimately and permanently be destroyed by fire.[22] Thus the Gnostic association between the demiurge and the material world served to slander in a single stroke both the demiurge and his creation.[23]

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[17] The Gnostics generally maintained a hyperized version of Platonic emanation, taking the Platonic concept of emanation and expanding it (often to absurd limits). The true unknowable Father was the ontological source of the succeeding pantheon of celestial beings, who were in turn the ontological source of lesser beings, on down to humans. The number of emanations varied in the Gnostics sects—from thirty to as many as three hundred and sixty, and beyond. See *Haer*. 1.24.3-4, 2.16.2, 30.9.

[18] *Haer.* 1.2.3, 1.3.1, 1.4.1-3, 1.5.1, 2.13.7.

[19] *Haer.* 1.3.3.

[20] *Haer.* 1.23.2-3, and 1.24.1, respectively.

[21] In many respects, the Gnostics begin with a general Platonic suspicion about the material world, but they turn this suspicion into outright hostility by demonizing the demiurge.

[22] *Haer.* 1.6.1, 1.7.1, 2.29.3. See also Tatian, *Graec.*12, who suggests that the angels fell when they turned to what was inferior in matter and conformed their life to it. A similar sentiment as Tatian is conveyed in Origen, *Princ*. 1.8, 1.3-4, and Gregory of Nyssa, see Moore and Wilson, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 9-10. While Tatian, Origen, and Gregory do not insist that the material world is evil, they nonetheless have a basic metaphysical pessimism about the material world. On this point, they share more with Gnosticism than they do with Irenaeus.

[23] Here again I depart from Williams' view that the Gnostics were not anti-materialist. The evidence he cites seems rather to invalidate the position he is arguing for. Williams argues unconvincingly that the social and political life of the average Gnostic was not anti-material, and therefore it is improper to use the term 'anti-material' as a label to describe Gnosticism (*Rethinking Gnosticism*, 100-01). Yet Williams himself admits that there is a paucity of evidence that gives us insight into the lives of average Gnostics (101), leaving his argument largely one of conjecture. No more convincing is Williams' argument about the close connection between Gnosticism and Platonism (107-08). According to Williams, insofar as the Gnostics were making 'efforts to reduce the cultural distance' between themselves and the reigning philosophical system of their world, we should understand them to be world-affirming. Williams is correct that the Gnostics were drawing upon Platonic categories, but this is hardly evidence that Gnostics were world-affirming. Indeed, just the opposite might more naturally be argued. Williams does not take seriously enough the anti-

Clearly much is at stake for Irenaeus on this point. Irenaeus cannot grant the Gnostic separation between the demiurge and the 'true Father' without simultaneously demonizing the Creator God of the Old Testament (who Irenaeus insists is the father of Jesus)[24] and the material world (into which Jesus incarnated himself). It will not surprise us, then, to discover that Irenaeus will, on occasion, refer to God as the *demiurgus*. While this is not his only way of referring to God as Creator (he seems more typically to use *conditor* and *factor*) he nonetheless is quite willing at times to press the terminological association between God and the demiurge. In the first book of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus spends the majority of his efforts simply cataloguing the various strands of Gnostic teaching to serve as a negative foil before developing his own thoughts. But as he starts his second book, he more purposefully begins to establish the basic contours of his own system and engages with Gnostic thought more directly and critically. Toward this end, he refers to God as the *demiurgus* in the first chapter of book two; for Irenaeus, the fact that God is the demiurge is the 'greatest principle' that undergirds the entire Christian faith handed down by the apostles and taught in Scripture. He writes,

> It is necessary, then, that we begin with the first and greatest [*primo et maximo*] principle, that is, the Creator God [*Demiurgo Deo*], who made [*fecit*] the heaven and the earth, and all things [*omnia*] that are therein (whom these men blasphemously style the fruit of a defect), and to demonstrate that there is nothing either above him or after him; nor that, influenced by any one, but of his own free will, he created all things [*fecit omnia*], since he is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator [*Conditor*], the only Father, alone containing all things, and himself commanding all things into existence [*et omnibus ut sint ipse praestans*].[25]

And again in book four of *Adversus haereses*,

> There is therefore one God, who by the Word of Wisdom created and arranged all things [*fecit et aptavit omnia*]; but this is the Creator [*Demiurgus*] who has granted this world to the human race, and who as regards his greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by him

material elements in Platonism. While the Platonic tradition offers varied accounts of the material world, some more positive than others, assessed on the whole, the entire soteriological narrative of Platonism leans strongly in a non-materialist (indeed often anti-materialist) direction.

[24] *Haer.* 1.22.1.

[25] *Haer.* 2.1.1.

> for no one has searched out his height, either among the ancients who have gone to their rest, or any of those who are now alive; but as regards his love, he is always known through him [i.e. Christ] by whose means he ordained all things. [26]

The Gnostics tried to slander Irenaeus' God by associating him with the demiurge; Irenaeus turns this on its head and lifts up the demiurge by associating him with the true God. What is more, by insisting that the demiurge and the true God are one and the same, Irenaeus is, at the same time, insisting upon the goodness of the material world. Insofar as the demiurge is indeed the true and high God, what he has willfully and purposefully made is necessarily good and worthy of admiration.

II. God Creates Directly with His Own Two Hands

As we have seen, Irenaeus is not content to merely assert that God is the ultimate source of creation (through endless emanations). For Irenaeus, God is the willful and personal Creator who himself personally makes and forms all things. Yet here Irenaeus must strike a balance. While he is keen to maintain the direct and personal involvement of the Father in creation, he is likewise compelled to ascribe a robust place to the Son and the Sprit as the means by which the Father created the world. Irenaeus is led into this tension through his commitment to the apostolic teaching contained in Scripture, most notably John 1:3. 'All things were made by him [the Word], and without him nothing was made'.[27] It is at this point that Irenaeus' proto-Trinitarian framework emerges. It is important for Irenaeus that the activity of the Son and the Spirit in creation not be severed from the creative will of the Father. He writes,

> It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor anyone else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things [*neque*

[26] *Haer.* 4.20.4. See also 4.2.1. In book five Irenaeus begins with regular frequency to use the term 'demiurge' as a way of referring to the true God. See also Justin, *1 Apol*. 8, 58, who likewise refers to God as the demiurge.

[27] Steenberg remarks, 'No single verse of New Testament writing is of stronger influence on Irenaeus' cosmological consideration than John 1:3'. See Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 69. Steenberg lists some of the following uses of this text in Irenaeus: *Epid.* 43; *Haer.* 1.8.5, 1.9.2, 1.22.2, 2.2.5, 3.8.2-3, 3.11.1-2, 8, etc.

> *virtus longe absistens a Patre universorum*]. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to accomplish what he had himself determined with himself beforehand should be done, as if he did not possess his own hands [*quasi ipse suas non haberet manus*]. For with him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, he made all things…[28]

This basic Trinitarian starting point is consistent throughout Irenaeus' writings, and is established early in *Epideixis*, where Irenaeus holds together the creative activity of God the Father through the Son in the Spirit. He writes,

> Thus then there is shown forth One God, the Father, not made [ἀγένητος], invisible, Creator of all things; above whom there is no other God, and after whom there is no other God. And, since God is rational [λογικός], therefore by the Word he created the things that were made; and God is Spirit, and by the Spirit he adorned [κοσμέω] all things: as also the prophet says: 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens established, and by his Spirit all their power'. Since then the Word establishes, that is to say, works bodily [σωματοποιέω] and grants existence, and the Spirit arranges and forms the various powers, rightly and fittingly is the Word called the Son, and the Spirit the Wisdom of God. Well also does Paul his apostle say: 'One God, the Father, who is over all and through all and in us all'. For 'over all' is the Father; and 'through all' is the Son, for through him all things were made by the Father; and 'in us all' is the Spirit, who cries 'Abba Father', and fashions man into the likeness of God. Now the Spirit shows forth the Word, and therefore the prophets announced the Son of God; and the Word utters the Spirit, and therefore is himself the announcer of the prophets, and leads and draws humanity to the Father.[29]

[28] *Haer.* 4.20.1.

[29] *Epid.* 5. This same basic Trinitarian formula is likewise highlighted in *Epid.* 6, as part of the 'rule of faith'. Here Irenaeus speaks of God the Father, the Creator of all things; the Word of God, through whom all things are made; and the Spirit of God who is poured out upon the earth, renewing humanity unto God.

Here the Father creates all things; the Son 'establishes and grants existence' to all things; and the Spirit 'arranges and forms' all things.[30] This tri-fold unity is neatly captured in Irenaeus' reading of Romans 11:36. For Irenaeus, the 'over all' refers to the Father, the 'through all' refers to the Son, and the 'in all' refers to the Spirit. Thus for Irenaeus, the personal, creative activity of God is not compromised by the creative activity of the Son and the Spirit. The Father, 'by his Word and Spirit, makes, and disposes, and governs all things'.[31]

Irenaeus does not utilize the language of 'trinity' or the later catch-words of the fourth century, but his conceptual framework is substantively consistent with the later accounts of the Trinity that will emerge in the Nicene formula.[32] For Irenaeus, the relational and organic unity between Father, Son, and Spirit is such that the creation of the world by the Father via the Son and the Spirit is not a mediated act of creation by the Father, but is the very means by which the Father himself creates directly.

Here we encounter Irenaeus' famous 'two hands' analogy.[33] For Irenaeus, the Son and the Spirit are not intermediate agents of creation (like the Gnostic angels or the demiurge) but rather the 'two hands' of the Father himself. 'Now humanity is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was formed after the likeness of God, and molded by his hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom also he said, "Let us make humanity"'.[34]

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[30] Cf. Irenaeus' translation of Genesis 1:1 in *Epid*. 43, 'Moses says in Hebrew, *Baresith Bara Eloim Basan Benuam Samenthares*, the translation of which . . . is: A son in the beginning God established then heaven and earth'. The underlying Armenian is difficult and Irenaeus scholars do not agree about the best way to translate the text. The translation depends on whether one takes 'son' as nominative or accusative. Smith, 'Hebrew Christian Midrash in Irenaeus', argues in favor of the accusative, and Behr, in his translation of *Epideixis* leaves it intentionally vague. See note 121 in Behr, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, 109 for a helpful summary of the issues.

[31] *Haer*. 1.22.1.

[32] That Irenaeus' 'Trinitarian' framework is substantively consistent with the later Nicene articulation, see Gunton, *The Triune Creator*, 52-56; and especially Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 61-100. Steenberg helpfully observes, 'Irenaeus' perception of the eternal life in the relationship of the three is indicative of the kind of Trinitarian language and vision that would be expounded more fully in the debates following Arius; and though we must not overestimate his Trinitarian articulation, we must not underestimate it either', (63).

[33] Just as Irenaeus' 'two hands' metaphor underscores the Father's immediate involvement in creation, a similar point could be made through an exploration of Irenaeus' 'Logos' theology. See Lashier, 'Irenaeus as Logos Theologian'.

[34] *Haer*. 4. preface, 1. See also 4.20.1. The 'two hands' metaphor seems original to Irenaeus. Yet it occurs later in the non-Gnostic *Teaching of Silvanus*, part of the *Nag Hammadi* collection (the only non-Gnostic tract in *Nag Hammadi*). The text is of Alexandrian origin and likely late third century. The author writes, 'Only the hand of the Lord created all these things. For this hand of the Father is Christ, and forms it all. Through it, all has come into being, since it became the mother of all. For he is always Son of the Father'. For more on the origin and dating of this tract, see Pierson, 'Introduction', 499-503. For more on the 'hands' metaphor in *Silvanus*, see Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 81-84. The Egyptian province of *Silvanus*, along with its later date may suggest that Irenaeus' 'hands' metaphor was quickly and widely distributed. Steenberg observes that this is not an entirely unrealistic possibility, given that the *Oxyrrhynchus Papyri* 3.045, which dates from the close of the second century and is likewise of Egyptian locale, contains the earliest known fragment

The proto-Trinitarian implications here are fascinating. But for our purposes the salient point to note is the way that Irenaeus insists on a Father-Son-Spirit formula that holds all three together in a way that preserves the personal creative activity of the Father.[35] Given Irenaeus' confrontation with the Gnostics, it is not sufficient to simply assert that the Father is the ultimate and indirect agent of creation—as though God were like a king who gave commands to have a palace built. Rather, Irenaeus is at pains to insist that the *Father himself* is the Creator of the world, without mediators. Thus the Son and the Spirit do not merely work alongside the Father (as second and third independent creating agents), or serve as proxies or mediators of the Father's creative power, working on the Father's behalf. Instead, the Son and the Sprit must in some way be an extension and embodiment of the Father's personal creative will. Thus the 'two hands' metaphor works powerfully to convey the creative unity that Irenaeus is so keen to preserve, insofar as the hands of an individual are organically (even ontologically) unified with that individual. To say that John built a cabinet with 'his own two hands' is saying (essentially) the same thing as 'John built the cabinet himself'. As Lawson rightly notes, '"The Two Hands of God" is much more than a corollary of the doctrine of Creation. It is itself the expression of the doctrine of an immediately present and active God'.[36]

All of this serves to underscore the goodness of creation. God not only approves of the material world; he has not only ordained that it comes to pass; he has even further called it into being with his own Word, and has arranged it and shaped it by his own Spirit. He has himself, with his own two hands, brought life and existence to the material world. The overall effect of Irenaeus' 'two hands' metaphor is to highlight his basically pro-material cosmology. The Gnostic 'Father' will not sully himself with matter. But Irenaeus' God is not afraid to dig his hands into the rich black soil.

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of Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* (cf. Grant, *Irenaeus*, 6-7). Or it may mean that the 'hands' metaphor was not unique to Irenaeus, and was a common trope in early Christian writing. Both possibilities are intriguing with respect to the wider currency of Irenaeus' proto-Trinitarianism.

[35] Some scholars have suggested that Irenaeus maintains a 'Spirit-Christology'—namely that he collapses the Holy Spirit and the person of Jesus into each other, resulting in a binitarian view of God. Irenaeus' 'two hands' metaphor pushes against this claim. In defense of Irenaeus' proto-trinitarianism, see Briggman, 'Spirit-Christology'.

[36] Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 122. For more on the 'two hands' motif in Irenaeus, see Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 199-39, Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 21-24; Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 80-84; and Gunton, *Triune Creator*, 52-56. Throughout his work, Gunton adopts Irenaeus as his patron saint, drawing heavily on Irenaeus' notion of the 'two hands'.

III. Creation *Ex Nihilo*

For Irenaeus, the fact that God created the world out of nothing is as important as the fact that God created it. Irenaeus is one of the earliest Christian writers to affirm the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*.[37] Here Irenaeus claims for the Christian tradition a doctrine that was still up for grabs among at least some otherwise 'orthodox' Christian thinkers. While non-Gnostic Christianity universally affirmed God as Creator, some early Christian writers seem to suggest an eternal creation. Origen is noteworthy here, as is Justin and Athenagoras.[38] But Irenaeus takes it as axiomatic that God is not only the shaper of the material world, but also the originator of the material world.[39] He writes,

> The rule of truth which we hold is that there is one God Almighty, who has made all things [*qui omnia condidit*] by his Word, and has fashioned and formed, out of that which had so far no existence, all things so that they may have existence [*et aptavit et fecit ex eo quod non erat ad hoc ut sint omnia*]. Just as Scripture says: 'By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them, by the Spirit of his mouth'. And again, 'All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made'. There is no exception or deduction stated; but the Father made all things by him, whether visible or invisible, objects of sense or of intelligence, temporal, on account of a certain character given them, or eternal; and these eternal things he did not make by angels, or by any powers separated from his thought. For God is not in want of all these things [*nihil enim indiget omnium Deus*], but

[37] Theophilus also articulates a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. See his *Autol*. 2.4, 2.13. So too Tatian, *Graec*. 5. For more on the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* in Irenaeus, see Gavrilyuk, 'Creation in Early Christian Polemical Literature'; Fantino, 'La creation ex nihilo'; O'Neil, 'How Early is the Doctrine of Creation *Ex Nihilo*?'; and Busher, 'Joining the End to the Beginning', 34-73.

[38] See Origen, *Princ*. 1.4.3. Athenagoras seems to assume the basic Platonic account of creation, where the demiurge shapes matter, rather than bringing it into existence. See *Leg*. 10.2f. Scholars are divided about this doctrine in Justin. The relevant passages are *1 Apol*. 1.10, 58, where Justin speaks of God shaping unformed matter. Notably, Justin does not make a statement one way or the other regarding how this unformed matter came to be. Osborne states, 'If one looks to concepts rather than to words…. it is clear that Justin would never have considered the concept of unoriginated matter because it contradicted his central belief about God, the sole unoriginate' (*Irenaeus*, 67). That Irenaeus so clearly articulates a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* where Justin fails to do so shows that Irenaeus is willing to push beyond Justin, despite the close association of their thought. For a general assessment of this doctrine in early Christian thought, see Gunton, *Triune Creator*, 57-96. For a helpful assessment of this doctrine in Irenaeus see Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 38-49, and May, 'Monotheism and Creation', 449-50.

[39] Thus Irenaeus' insistence of creation *ex nihilo* also served not only to distinguish Christianity from Greek thought, such as we find in Plato's *Timaeus* and Aristotle's *Physics*, but also to clarify for the Christian community what he believed to be correct Christian teaching vis-à-vis Christianity.

> is he who, by his Word and Spirit, makes, and sets up, and governs all things, and commands all things into existence [*sed et per Verbum et Spiritum suum omnia faciens et disponens et gubernans et omnibus esse praestans*],—he who formed the world, for the world is of all [*etenim mundus ex omnibus*],—he who fashioned [*plasmavit*] humanity,—he [who] is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, above whom there is no other God, nor initial principle, nor power, nor pleroma; he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall prove.[40]

> And again,

> While humans, indeed, cannot make anything out of nothing, but only out of matter already existing [*quoniam homines quidem de nihilo non possunt aliquid facere sed de materia subiacenti*], yet God is in this point pre-eminently superior to humans, that he himself invented the matter of his work, since previously it had no existence [*eo quod materiam fabricationis suae cum ante non esset ipse adinvenit*].[41]

Irenaeus' doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* stood in strong contrast to Gnostic thought.[42] For the Gnostics, as we have already seen with the Valentinians, the true Father does not willfully create the material world out of nothing, but rather the material world is (even if indirectly) ultimately sourced in his own being. The Gnostics' descending ontological chain of being, originating from the Father all the way down the hemorrhage of a wayward Aeon (who was herself an emanation ultimately sourced in the Father), requires that the material world is ultimately of the same essence as the Father; the account is essentially monistic. Thus the demiurge, for his part, does not create matter but only shapes what is already pre-existent. None of this, in itself, necessitates the demonization of the demiurge or the

[40] *Haer.* 1.22.1.

[41] *Haer.* 2.10.4.

[42] The one exception possibly being that of Basilides. 'God is non-being because he is above being, the cosmos pre-existing in the world seed is non-being because it has still to be realized in time and space, and the world seed is created out of non-being in the absolute sense, out of nothing'. Quoted in Osborne, *Irenaeus*, 68. Cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7.22.1.6; 10.14.2. The meaning of the passage is unclear. Osborne rightly observes that Basilides' contention that 'God is non-being' introduces an element into his thought that makes his expression of creation *ex nihilo* distinct from Irenaeus and Theophilus. What does it mean that creation is out of nothing, when God himself is non-being? See Osborne, *Irenaeus*, 68-69. Notably, Basilides is the one Gnostic sect that neither demonizes the demiurge nor separates the demiurge and the true God.

material world. Indeed, in some respects, this is not far off the basic Platonic narrative.[43] Yet this monistic account creates theodicy problems for the Gnostics. At various points, the Gnostics posit that the high God 'has something subjacent and beyond himself, which they style vacuity and shadow [*vacuum et umbram*]'.[44] This vacuity and shadow account for the original chaos out of which ignorance has its origin. But if all things are sourced in the Father's own essence, then is not the Father in some way the cause and source of ignorance and evil?

The Gnostics generally attempted to handle this difficulty by positing a vast 'geographical' distance between the true Father and the material world of ignorance. The material world, and the demiurge that dwells therein, are pushed to the bottom of the ontological ladder. With each step down the ladder, there is a bit of an 'ontological leak' that accounts for an increasing level of ignorance and chaos. Minns helpfully summarizes the effect of all this on Gnostic cosmology, 'All the distress we suffer is simply part of the cosmic rubbish left behind by the primordial near-catastrophe within the divine realm. The gnostic knows this, and knows that he or she does not belong to the shadowy world of matter and soul, multiplicity and diversity, but to the divine Pleroma of light and spirit…'[45] But as a theodicy goes, this is not entirely successful; [46] Irenaeus seizes the opportunity and presses the point:

> But whence, let me ask, came this vacuity [*vacuitas*]? If it was indeed produced by him who, according to them, is the Father and Author of all things, then it is both equal in honor and related to the rest of the Aeons, perchance even more ancient than they are. Moreover, if it proceeded from the same source it must be similar in nature to him who produced it, as well

[43] The Gnostic scheme (while different) is clearly indebted to the basic philosophical and ontological framework found in Plato's *Timaeus*. In *Timaeus*, matter is already pre-existent, and the demiurge shapes matter according to the eternal forms which stand above him and are independent of him (28b-29d). (In this respect the Gnostic 'true Father' stands in for the Platonic 'forms'.) The demiurge creates the gods, who are then told to create humans and beasts, lest humans and beasts, created directly by the demiurge, rival the gods (see 41b-d). Thus the Platonic scheme, like the Gnostic scheme, assumes some measure of ontological 'leak' at each stage of creation. The Gnostics lay hold of this basic insight and exploit it, using it to demonize the demiurge and the material world. A notable difference, however, between the *Timaeus* and the Gnostics is that Plato in his *Timaeus* does not suggest a doctrine of emanation that necessitates a strict ontological unity between the forms, the demiurge, and the material world. The Platonic tradition, including Neo-Platonism, is dualistic, rather than monistic like the Gnostics.

[44] *Haer.* 2.3.1.

[45] Minns, *Irenaeus*, 25.

[46] This is, admittedly, a perennial problem for all monist accounts—not just the Gnostics. Vast ontological chains of being generally only serve to mask theodicy problems, not resolve them. For more on how Gnostic cosmology was driven by theodicy, see Paul Gavrilyuk 'Creation in Early Christian Polemical Literature', 22-32.

> as to those along with whom it was produced [*Si autem ab eodem emissum est, simile est ei qui emisit, et his cum quibus emissum est*]. There will therefore be an absolute necessity, both that the Bythus [i.e. Father of all things] of whom they speak, along with Sige, be similar in nature to a vacuum [*vacuo*], that is, that he really is a vacuum [*vacuum*]; and that the rest of the Aeons, since they are the brothers of vacuity [*vacui*], should also be devoid of substance [*vacuam et substantiam habere*]. If, on the other hand, it has not been thus produced, it must have sprung from and been generated by itself, and in that case it will be equal in point of age to that Bythus who is, according to them, the Father of all; and thus vacuity [*vacuitas*] will be of the same nature [*eiusdem naturae*] and of the same honor with him who is, according to them, the universal Father.[47]

As Irenaeus points out, it is difficult to impugn one aspect of reality without simultaneously impugning the Father with whom all things share in essence. But Irenaeus' doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* avoids the pitfalls of the Gnostics' monist account. Irenaeus does not need to demonize creation or the demiurge in order to articulate a coherent theodicy. For Irenaeus, creation is inherently good precisely because it was made by God himself. Yet it is made from previously non-existing matter, and thus is ontologically differentiated from God. As such, any defects in the creation need not be ascribed to God's own nature or essence.

What is more, for Irenaeus, evil is not sourced in ontology, but in the will. At one point, the Gnostics critique Irenaeus' position by arguing that God should not have made angels and humans in such a way that they could rebel. This is seen by the Gnostics as evidence of weakness on the part of the demiurge, and is proof that the god of the Old Testament is not the true Father. Irenaeus responds by saying that if God had made angels and humans impeccable by nature, rather than by will, then their goodness would amount to nothing. They would in such case be ignorant of goodness and thus not truly possess it. He writes,

> Thus it would come to pass, that their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature [*natura*] rather than by will [*voluntate*], and are possessors of good spontaneously, but not by choice [*sed*

[47] *Haer.* 2.4.1. Irenaeus uses the same basic argument in 2.7.2 and 17.1-8. Either the Father shares the passion of Sophia (which besmirches the Father), or Sophia is without passion (which wrecks the Gnostic narrative).

> *non secundum electionem*]; and for this reason they would not understand this fact, that good is a comely thing, nor would they take pleasure in it. For how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those who have not aimed at it? And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest? [48]

Irenaeus' doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* makes it possible for evil to be sourced in creaturely will, rather than in God's own being. Further, the goodness of the material world is likewise safeguarded. It is creaturely freedom (not God's own essence) that has brought death into the world; this in turn has distorted the integrity of creation.[49] The net effect of all of this is that Irenaeus is able simultaneously to maintain the integrity of God's own ontological goodness, while at the same time safe-guarding the original goodness of humanity and the material world.

Along with creating theodicy concerns, the Gnostics' monism threatened to undermine any sense of divine transcendence in Gnostic theology. The Gnostics' true Father cannot achieve transcendence and dignity by ontology, since he ultimately shares his essence with all things. Indeed, in some Gnostic accounts, enlightened humans are of the same untainted substance as the Father, in so far as they owe their origin to him.[50] Again, the Gnostics must deploy geography in the place of ontology. For the Gnostics, the 'unknowable' and transcendent Father is unknown and transcendent only because he is so far away, not because he is wholly other. In order to make the Gnostic Father worthy of worship and adoration, he must be pushed far above and away from the world of materiality. Again, this monistic account need not have resulted in a negative view of the material world. But the vast distance between the Father and the world served to emphasize and heighten the negative cosmology of the Gnostic system. The further one moved away from the world of materiality, the closer one drew to God. The implied critique of the material world is evident.

But Irenaeus' doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* establishes the transcendence of God by highlighting the ontological inequality that exists between Creator and creature. The Creator and creature are wholly other—the latter completely dependent on the former for both form and being. This ontological gap between Creator and creature allows Irenaeus' God to draw near to his creation without confusion of being, or compromising his transcendence. And indeed God does draw near to his creation via the Word and the Spirit. This geographic

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[48] *Haer.* 4.37.6.
[49] *Epid.* 17.
[50] See *Haer.* 1.6-7 and 1.8.3.

nearness in turn creates space for a more generous account of the material world; God, while remaining completely other, dwells close to the world he has made and lovingly cares for it.

We might summarize it thus: for both Irenaeus and the Gnostics, God is the ultimate source of the material world; but only Irenaeus' God will admit to it.

IV. The Material World Is Given as a Gift to Humanity

Irenaeus' positive cosmology is evident in the way he frames his account of the material world as a gift to humanity. For Irenaeus, humanity is the highpoint of creation, the apex of God's creative artistry—even over and above that of the angels; humanity uniquely alone bears the image and likeness of God (for more on Irenaeus' anthropology see the following chapter). As such, Irenaeus emphasizes the human 'dominion' aspect of the Genesis account,[51] and assigns the material world to humanity's lordship. In the opening chapters of *Epideixis* (a key passage to which we will return numerous times) he writes,

> But the man[52] he formed [πλάσσω] with his own hands, taking from the earth that which was purest and finest [λεπτός],[53] and mingling in a measure of his own power [δύναμις] with the earth. For he traced [περιτίθημι] his own form [πλάσμα] on the formation, [54] that that which should be seen should be of divine form [θεοειδής]: [55] for the image of God was the man formed and set on the earth. And that he might become living, he breathed on his face the breath of life; that both for the breath and for the formation the man should be like unto God.[56] Moreover he was free [ἐλεύθερος] and self-controlled [αὐτεξούσιος], being made by God for this end, that he might rule all those things that were upon the earth.[57] And this great created world, prepared by

[51] Genesis 1:26-28.

[52] Here the reference is to Adam, the first human, rather than humanity generically. Cf. Gen 2:7. Eve is not introduced until *Epid.* 13. The Greek glosses here and throughout are drawn from *SC*, vol. 406.

[53] McKenzie notes the explicit connection made elsewhere by Irenaeus between Adam's creation out of 'virgin' soil and Christ's virgin birth (*Haer.* 3.18.7, 3.21.10) thus heightening the divine and Christological identity of Adam. See MacKenzie, *Demonstration*, 101-02.

[54] Robinson notes that the Armenian text here is equivalent to the Latin *plasma* or *plasmatio*.

[55] Smith glosses the Armenian here as 'godlike'.

[56] McKenzie appropriately comments, 'The opening phrase of this Section 11 is forceful in setting out that which is peculiar to man by way of contrast with all that has gone before as background'. McKenzie, *Irenaeus's Demonstration*, 101.

[57] Smith, 'in order to be master of everything on earth'.

God before the formation of man, was given to the man as his place [χωρίον], with all things whatsoever in it.[58]

With the above passage we have reached the climax of Irenaeus' creation narrative in *Epideixis.* Adam is formed from the purest and finest material of the earth, with a mixture of God's own divine power mingled in. The man is then given lordship over the 'great created world' which has been 'given to the man as his place'. Irenaeus will go on to note that the Devil's envy of humanity is ignited because of 'the great gifts of God which he had given to humanity'.[59] Irenaeus does not specify the nature of these 'great gifts' but certainly lordship of the world looms large in Irenaeus' narrative as an obvious gift that God has given to humanity.

Here we see the native connection between Irenaeus' cosmology and anthropology. For Irenaeus, anthropology and cosmology rise and fall together. The goodness of the world is seen clearly in the fact that the world has been given to God's highest creature—humanity. And the goodness of humanity is seen clearly in the fact that humanity has been given the bounty of the good material world. (The Gnostics, of course, use parallel logic to disparage both humanity and the material world). The principle point here will be strengthened when seen in light of Irenaeus' 'high anthropology', considered in the following chapter.

V. Pro-Material Eschatology

Irenaeus' commitment to the goodness of the material world can be seen clearly in his pro-material eschatology.[60] Irenaeus closely follows the ordering of the eschatological

[58] *Epid.* 11. See Robinson who notes a parallel in Papias, *ANF*, vol. 1, 52, no.45. With respect to the last phrase, 'with all things whatsoever in it', I follow Smith's translation *pace* Robinson. Robinson offers the primary translation of, 'containing all things within itself', yet recognizes the awkwardness of the rendering; see his no. 44 on the passage. 'So both the German translations; but they transfer the words so as to link them with "this great created world." What we seem to want is, "to have all as his own," if the words can bear that meaning'. Smith's primary translation 'with all things whatsoever in it' and Robinson's alternate rendering of 'to have all as his own' are both more intelligible to the context. Rousseau's retrograde Latin version reads, '*habens in se omnia'*. Regardless the translation, the larger point is clear: the man is given the world as his place.

[59] *Epid.* 16.

[60] For a helpful summary of the main lines of Irenaeus' eschatology, see Wood, 'Eschatology of Irenaeus'. Wood's focus is on the question of hell and universalism, which is only tangential to our primary concern. But the overall presentation of Irenaeus is helpfully summarized.

events found in Revelation 20-21.[61] For Irenaeus, the defeat of the Anti-Christ ushers in the resurrection of the righteous, which is the definitive event that marks the dawn of the new age.[62] The righteous are raised to co-reign with Christ in a renewed earth for one thousand years.[63] Then follows the second resurrection and the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20,[64] which is itself followed by the passing away of the 'fashion of this world'[65] and the ushering in of the new heavens and a new earth of Revelation 21:1-7.[66] The eternal state then commences, in which the people of God dwell with God in heaven, paradise, or the New Jerusalem (each according to their just desserts). Irenaeus offers only the briefest of speculations about the eternal state; redeemed humanity will contain and be contained by the Word, 'passing beyond the angels', and made after the image and likeness of God.[67]

Two aspects of this eschatological narrative are especially relevant to his broader pro-cosmological outlook: Irenaeus' chiliastic eschatology[68] and his affirmation of an eternal 'new heavens and new earth' (following Revelation 21:1-7). We begin with Irenaeus' chiliastic eschatology.

A. Irenaeus' Chiliastic Eschatology

The bulk of Irenaeus' eschatological thought is found in the last five chapters of book five of *Adversus haereses*.[69] In these five dense chapters Irenaeus unpacks his vision for the redemption and consummation of the material world. As noted above, Irenaeus closely follows the timeline of Revelation 20-21. As such Irenaeus works within the

[61] The only significant departure that Irenaeus makes from Rev 20-21 is that he does not mention the release of Satan and the subsequent rebellion of the wicked and the great white throne (Rev 20:7-15); instead he skips past this to John's vision of the new heavens and the new earth.

[62] *Haer.* 5.35.1.

[63] See the whole of *Haer.* 5.32-35.

[64] *Haer.* 5.35.2.

[65] *Haer.* 5.35.2.

[66] *Haer.* 5.35-36. See also *Epid.* 61.

[67] *Haer.* 5.36.3.

[68] 'Chiliasm', from the Greek χιλιάς, for 'thousand'. Also referred to as 'millenarianism', the belief—drawn from a literal reading of Rev 20:1-10—in a thousand year reign of Christ at the end of the world before the final judgment, in which the righteous dead are raised to co-reign with Christ.

[69] These chapters do not appear in all Latin manuscripts. This need not be grounds to deny their authenticity, and is perhaps more easily explained by the fact that the medieval tradition viewed chiliastic thought as heretical, and would have been inclined to purge Irenaeus' writing of such ideas. Quotations from these chapters have been collected by Harvey from Syriac and Armenian manuscripts (see Coxe, *ANF*, vol. 1, 561, no. 1), suggesting their authenticity. In support of the authenticity of these chapters, see Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 188-89; and Minns, *Irenaeus*, 142-44.

chiliastic framework of early Christian thought.[70] This thousand year span is referred to variously as 'the times of the kingdom' or more simply 'the kingdom'.[71] Throughout the chapters Irenaeus clarifies—in strong contrast to Gnostic teaching—that just as God will raise believers bodily from the dead, so too will he bring the material world to life again. He begins these five chapters by summarizing his vision of the kingdom:

> Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the kingdom which is the commencement [*principium*] of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of God [*capere Deum*]; and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it becomes the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which

[70] Irenaeus is not without precedent in his view that there will be a literal thousand year reign of Christ upon a renewed earth. Justin affirmed a literal thousand year millennium (while acknowledging that some Christians reject it). See *Dial.* 80. So also Papias, *Frag.* 3.11-13, 5.1-4. Eusebius states that it was due to Papias that 'many church writers after him held the same opinion, relying on his early date: Irenaeus, for example, and any others who adopted the same views'. See *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.11-13. See also Crutchfield, 'The Apostle John and Asia Minor' for a detailed look at early Christian writers/leaders who held this view.

[71] There is debate about the extent to which Irenaeus maintained a literal thousand year reign. A number of recent interpreters of Irenaeus have attempted to distance Irenaeus from traditional chiliastic thought by arguing that Irenaeus makes no mention of a literal thousand years in *Haer.* 5.32-36 (or elsewhere). See Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 190-92; Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 52-53. For the definitive treatment on this perspective, see Smith, 'Chiliasm and Recapitulation in the Theology of Irenaeus', 313-20. This claim is only narrowly accurate. While Irenaeus does not use the term 'millennium' or 'thousand' in the Latin text of these chapters, he is clearly working within the constraints of the events and timeline found in Revelation 20-21. For Irenaeus the 'kingdom' has a beginning and an end, and is marked on both sides by the first and second resurrections (Rev 20:4 and 20:12, respectively). Thus Irenaeus' many references to the 'kingdom' throughout *Haer.* 5.32-36 are most naturally understood as a reference to the millennial kingdom of Rev 20:1-10. (Even Wingren notes this point, stating that 'the *regnum* is not described as being of a thousand years' duration, but in fact corresponds to the millennium of the Book of Revelation', *Man and Incarnation*, 191). Further, it is clear that Irenaeus believes himself to be faithfully transmitting the chiliasm of Papias, who clearly maintained a literal thousand years (see *Haer.* 5.33.4). Likewise, Eusebius believes Irenaeus to be transmitting Papias, see *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.13. Even more convincingly, Minns (as recently as 2010) has shown that the 1910 Armenian text of *Adversus haereses*, does indeed include an explicit reference to the 'thousand' years of Rev 20:1-10. The relevant passage occurs in the last paragraph of the last chapter of the last book of the Armenian *Adversus haereses*, where we find a reference to 'the seventh thousand years of the kingdom of the just', after which kingdom follows the new heavens and the new earth. See Minns, *Irenaeus*, 143-44. This corresponds to Irenaeus' view of the 'kingdom' as a Sabbath rest, the final seventh age where God's people are rewarded. See *Haer.* 5.33.2, 'These [earthly rewards are granted] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day'. In any case, whether the kingdom is for Irenaeus a literal thousand years, or more abstractly an extended age of time, is a question largely tangential to my primary concern, namely that Irenaeus conceives of a future earthly kingdom of limited duration preceding the general resurrection of the dead and the eternal age when God will raise the righteous dead to reign with Christ upon a renewed earth.

> God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated [*in conditione hac quae renovatur*], and that the judgment should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled [*in qua enim conditione laboraverunt*] or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain [*et in qua conditione interfecti sunt*] because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude [*et in qua conditione servitutem sustinuerunt*], in that they should reign. For God is rich in all things, and all things are his. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself [*oportet ergo et ipsam conditionem*], being restored to its primeval condition [*redintegratam ad pristinum*], should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous [*sine prohibitione servire iustis*]; and the apostle has made this plain in the Epistle to the Romans, when he thus speaks: 'For the expectation of the creation [*creaturae*] waits for the manifestation of the children of God. For the creation [*creaturae*] has been subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; since the creation [*creaturae*] itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God'.[72]

Three important themes emerge from this passage. First, Irenaeus envisions a renewal of the earth during the time of the kingdom. According to Irenaeus, God will 'renovate' creation to 'its primeval condition', returning it to its Edenic state. Irenaeus will go on to clarify that this 'primeval condition' includes the restoration of the animal world, and its harmonious subjection to humanity's benevolent lordship.[73] Likewise, days will come 'in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine'.[74] Thus for Irenaeus, the 'kingdom' is not merely an earthly kingdom in which the righteous co-reign with Christ, but even more an entire (indeed miraculous) restoration of the natural world back into the condition that God intended all along.

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[72] *Haer.* 5.32.1. The remaining chapters (up until 5.35.2., where he begins to discuss the new heavens and earth) are an extended development and apologetic for the claims he has made here.

[73] *Haer.* 5.33.4. Irenaeus arrives at this conclusion through a literal reading of Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25.

[74] *Haer.* 5.33.3. This fecund vision is drawn from the 'elders who saw John'.

This raises the interesting question about the extent to which Irenaeus viewed the material world as 'fallen' in some way. In *Epid.* 17 Irenaeus notes the curse of the ground from Genesis 3:17, writing 'For under the beams of this sun man tilled the earth, and it put forth thorns and thistles, the punishment of sin'. Yet he does not press this idea throughout his writings, no doubt in part because of his anti-Gnostic context. Denigrating the material world would have played too much into the Gnostic's hands. But in *Haer.* 5.32.1, Irenaeus does seem to imply that Adam's failure in the garden prevented the material world from becoming all that God had intended it to be. It is only after the perfection of humanity and the overthrow of the Devil that creation is able to flourish. Irenaeus' perspective on patience, growth and gradual maturity seems to be at work here. Just as Adam was perfect yet infantile, so too Adam's world was perfect yet infantile. The maturing trajectory of both was forestalled by sin. In redemption, both are together brought to full maturity in the millennial kingdom.

Throughout these last five books of *Adversus haereses* Irenaeus shows a tenacious refusal to adopt an allegorical interpretation of the biblical texts that speak of a renewed earth and an earthly kingdom. Irenaeus is aware that other Christian writers have adopted allegorical approaches to the prophetic visions of a renewed earth, but he views such interpretations as inadequate.[75] Those who do not leave room for a literal renewed earth are 'ignorant of God's dispensations' and have derived their opinions from 'heretical discourses'. No doubt the heretical discourse Irenaeus has in mind here is the Gnostic variety, which maintained the ultimate destruction of the material world (including human bodies) in a cosmic conflagration.[76] But he also has in mind other Christian writers who—

[75] *Haer.* 5.33.4. Minns appropriately remarks, 'So much of Irenaeus' fight had been in favour of the positive value of the material creation, and especially of the human body, that he could not countenance so spiritualizing an interpretation'. Minns, *Irenaeus*, 142. Though see also *Epid.* 61, where Irenaeus is understood by some scholars to have changed his mind in favor of the allegorical interpretation of these passages. So Smith, *Proof*, 196, no. 270. But *Epid.* 61 need not be read in this way. Rather Irenaeus seems to be affirming both interpretations. He begins *Epid.* 61 by stating that 'the elders say that it really will be even so at the coming of Christ'. The key interpretive phrase then follows: 'Indeed, even now this symbolically signifies the gathering together in peaceful concord people of dissimilar races and dissimilar customs through the name of Christ'. (The Latin retrograde reads, '*Iam enim symbolice significat dissimilis generis et[dis]similium morum hominum per nomen Christi congregationem concordem in pace'.*) If Irenaeus intends the reader to understand that he is rejecting the elder tradition, he is too subtle. The passage is more naturally read as a development and further application of the elder tradition. For Irenaeus, it need not be 'either or'. The future literal concord of the animals is symbolically portrayed by the human concord that has already been achieved by the work of Christ in the present.

[76] On this point Irenaeus complained that according to Gnostic thought, there would be nothing left of humans to enter the pleroma. See *Haer.* 2.29.3. This vision also set Irenaeus apart from much of the later Christian tradition. Eusebius, for instance, rejects Irenaeus' chiliasm by saying that Irenaeus received it from Papias, who according to Eusebius, was 'a man of very limited intelligence', see *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.13. The general movement of Christian theology in Platonic directions, embodied most fully in Origen (of which Eusebius was an unapologetic heir), was no

perhaps nervous about such 'crass' interpretations—have adopted allegorical approaches. He writes,

> If, however, any shall endeavor to allegorize [*allegorizare*] these [passages], they shall not be found consistent with themselves at all points, and shall be confuted by the teaching of the very expressions… For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord.[77]

Irenaeus' commitment to a literal reading of the biblical prophecies can be seen throughout *Haer.* 5.32-36. With repeated force, Irenaeus links together the scriptural promises of earthly reward with the 'times of the kingdom'. Notably, Irenaeus views the restoration of the material world as a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12-15 regarding his seed inheriting the land of Canaan. Insofar as Abraham's seed had not yet inherited the land, we are to understand this promise as literally fulfilled in the church at the end of the age, when the Antichrist has been defeated and the world restored.[78] Likewise Isaac's prophecy concerning Jacob and his seed (Genesis 27: 27-29), Isaiah's vision of a pacified animal kingdom (Isaiah 65:25), [79] Jeremiah's prophecy about God's people inheriting the land (Jeremiah 23:7-8), Ezekiel's vision of God's people dwelling securely with houses and vineyards (Ezekiel 28:25-26), Daniel's promise that the whole kingdom under heaven should be given to God's people (Daniel 7:27), Jesus' promise that the meek shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5), Jesus' promise to drink again from the cup of the vine in the age to come (Matthew 26:27), and the apostle Paul's vision of creation being set free into the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:19-22)—all of these are linked to the 'kingdom' rather than symbolically portraying the eternal age. 'Now all these things being such as they are, cannot be understood in reference to super-celestial matters'.[80]

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doubt responsible for much of the demise of early chiliasm. For more here, see Minns, *Irenaeus,* 140-42.

[77] *Haer.* 5.35.1.

[78] *Haer.* 5.32.2. See also the same in *Epid.* 91-95.

[79] Throughout this section of *Adversus haereses* Irenaeus leans most heavily upon Isaiah's prophetic vision of earthly salvation. The references to Isaiah are many throughout these four chapters of *Adversus haereses* (e.g. Isaiah 6:11, 11:6-9, 26:19, 30:35-26, 31:9, 56:17-25, 58:14, etc.).

[80] *Haer.* 5.35.2.

Second, Irenaeus' recapitulation theme is at work here.[81] For Irenaeus, it is *iustos* and necessary that the same creation in which humanity suffered should be the same creation in which humanity is restored. And likewise, it is just and proper that creation itself, insofar as it is the reward of the righteous, should be renewed before it is returned to humanity. Such recompense is the vindication of God's people and God's plan. Later in *Haer.* 5.34.2 (quoting Isaiah 30:35-26[82]), Irenaeus remarks, 'Now the "pain of his stroke" is that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient humanity in Adam, that is, death; which stroke the Lord will heal when he raises us from the dead and restores the inheritance of the fathers'.[83] As we have already seen, for Irenaeus the 'inheritance of the fathers' is the promise to Abraham that the church would inherit the land and rule the nations. Thus the pain of God's 'stroke' brought not only death, but the loss of humanity's intended inheritance (i.e. possession of the earth). As such, the healing of the stroke brings not only life, but a restoration of humanity's earthly inheritance. What humanity lost in Adam, God has given back to humanity in Christ.

Thus recapitulation is not merely an interpretive lens through which Irenaeus exegetes the relevant biblical passages.[84] For Irenaeus, the eschatological recapitulation of creation is the great and necessary *telos* of God's redemptive activity that has been ever at work since the fall of humanity in Adam.[85] Irenaeus' eschatological interpretation is

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[81] Irenaeus' recapitulation theme is a well-tread aspect of Irenaeus scholarship. Much of the discussion centers around its overall place and import in Irenaeus' thought, as well as its origin; is it the unhelpful product of Hellnistic thought (Harnack and other earlier interpreters), or a deeply biblical and important theme (Wingren, Lawson, and other more recent interpreters). The conversation merits discussion, but need not detain us. It is enough to observe, that here and throughout, Irenaeus views the redemption secured in Christ as a 'summing up' and eschatological fulfilment of God's original intent for creation. For more on the theme of recapitulation in Irenaeus, see Holsinger-Friesen, *Irenaeus and Genesis*, 1-41, where he helpfully details the history of interpretation of Irenaeus on this theme, from Harnack to the present; also Osborn, who identifies eleven ideas contained within Irenaeus' use of the term—unification, repetition, perfection, inauguration and consummation, totality, triumph of *Christus Victor*, ontology, epistemology and ethics. See his *Irenaeus*, 97-98, and all of Chapters Five and Six. An effective summary of recapitulation and its function in Irenaeus can be found in Minns, *Irenaeus*, 108-110.

[82] 'And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every prominent hill, water running everywhere in that day, when many shall perish, when walls shall fall. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, seven times that of the day, when he shall heal the anguish of his people and do away with the pain of his stroke'.

[83] *Haer.* 5.34.2.

[84] Smith ably makes this point in his 'Chiliasm and Recapitulation'.

[85] This is a point that was obscured in much nineteenth and early twentieth century Irenaeus scholarship, but has more recently been acknowledged and expounded by contemporary Irenaeus scholars. See Smith, 'Chiliasm and Recapitulation', 313-15. Smith highlights the trend in Irenaeus scholarship to dismiss or downplays this aspect of Irenaeus' thought. It is variously 'ignored', treated as an 'unfortunate mistake', an 'over-reaction' to Gnosticism, or a 'regrettable but inevitable consequence of [Irenaeus] insisting too strongly in the idea of recapitulation'. Smith argues persuasively and correctly that such approaches to Irenaeus' chiliasm fail to do justice to the import it plays in his overall system. See also the positive treatments of Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*,

soteriological to the core, and integral to his overall project. To remove or minimize this aspect of his thought is to do violence to his overall cosmological and soteriological framework. The restoration of the material world is the necessary means by which God makes good on his promises of 'reward', and thus serves as a climactic moment in Irenaeus' broader soteriological narrative.

And finally, for Irenaeus there is strong continuity between the 'times of the kingdom' and the eternal age to come. For Irenaeus, the restoration of creation that takes place in the 'times of the kingdom' marks the 'commencement of incorruption'; it is the dawn of the eternal age (which as we will see, is also an earthly age). It is in the 'times of the kingdom' that the redeemed of God 'become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels and union with spiritual beings, and those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh awaiting him from heaven'.[86] This partaking of God is learned 'gradually' and over time.[87] Notably Irenaeus does not mention the rebellion and defeat of Satan contained at the end of the chiliastic vision found in Revelation 12:7-10.[88] Instead he moves from his chiliastic vision immediately to the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 12:11-15, which marks the dawn of the eternal age. It is impossible to know if this omission is intentional, or merely an oversight. In any case, by leaving out this cosmic conflict, Irenaeus conveys a smoother continuity between 'the times of the kingdom' and the 'new heavens and the new earth'.[89] This strong continuity can likewise be seen in the way Irenaeus applies Isaiah's prophetic eschatological vision to both the 'times of the kingdom' (with its vision of harmonious animal relations) and the 'times after the kingdom' (with its vision of a new heavens and a new earth).[90]

49-60; Osborne, *Irenaeus*, 138-40; Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 181-92; Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 279-91; and most especially Minns, *Irenaeus*, 141-47.

[86] *Haer.* 5.35.1.

[87] This is consistent with Irenaeus' emphasis on growth as a key component of being made into the likeness and image of God. See *Haer.* 4.11.1-2, 4.38.1-3, and 5.36.3.

[88] In Revelation 20:7-10, Satan is released from the abyss and marshals the wicked to his side. Fire comes from heaven and consumes the wicked and Satan is thrown into the lake of fire.

[89] The continuity between these two ages is so strong in Irenaeus that some scholars have suggested that Irenaeus completely conflates the two into a single epoch, thus denying his chiliasm altogether. Smith's work has been most influential here (see Smith, 'Chiliasm and Recapitulation'). Yet however much Irenaeus posits continuity between the 'times of the kingdom' and the 'new heavens and new earth', he is indeed careful to distinguish the two. See in particular his comments in *Haer.* 5.35.2, where he states, 'But in the times of the kingdom', and then a few sentences later, 'For after the times of the kingdom'—with the former a clear reference to the millennium and the latter a clear reference to the new heavens and new earth.

[90] Notably, however, Irenaeus is careful to apply Isaiah 11 (which makes no mention of a new heavens and earth, but does include a reference to a pacified animal kingdom) to the 'times of the kingdom' (*Haer.* 5.33.4), while applying Isaiah 65 (where there is a reference to the new heavens and earth, as well as a reference to the pacified animal kingdom) to the 'new heavens and new earth' (*Haer.* 5.35.2).

Thus Irenaeus' vision of a renewed creation in the millennium marks the inauguration of a progression toward a cosmic perfection that is naturally and (almost) seamlessly brought to completion in the new heaven and the new earth of Revelation 21. For Irenaeus, the resurrection of the just and the renewal of their creation is the climax of his soteriological story; to limit this renewal to a thousand years would undercut the full redemptive scope of God's salvific activity. (More on this in the following section).

Ultimately, Irenaeus' chiliasm is entirely consistent with his broader soteriological narrative and should not be viewed as a mere appendage. For Irenaeus, the material world is itself the reward that God gives to the righteous, for the material world was intended as their possession all along. Were God to fail in restoring creation, or fail to restore it to his people, he would fail in redeeming his people. Further, it is in the kingdom that God's people learn to live with him and are nurtured into the fullness of the image and likeness of God. All of this serves to highlight the innate connection between Irenaeus' anthropology and cosmology, and necessarily underscores the goodness of creation. Creation is the place in which humanity comes to know and learn that God is good. As such, creation itself is destined for renewal and redemption every bit as much as humanity.

B. An Eternal New Heaven and an Eternal New Earth

Our understanding of Irenaeus' pro-material cosmological framework is likewise informed by his eschatological vision of an eternal new heaven and earth. In the final two chapters of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus turns his attention away from the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20:1-11, and begins to speak about the eternal state. In doing so he explicitly draws upon the 'new heavens and new earth' language of Revelation 21 (and Isaiah 65:17-18). He writes,

> For after the times of the kingdom [*Post enim regni tempora*], [John] says, 'I saw a great white throne, and him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no place for them'. And he sets forth too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning the 'dead, great and small'….And after this, he says, 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away'… and Isaiah also declares the very same: 'For there shall be a new heavens and a new earth, and there shall be no remembrance of the former,

> neither shall the heart think about them, but they shall find in it joy and exultation'.[91]

Here we see the full expression of Irenaeus' confidence in God's cosmic redemption. The earth and heavens will indeed pass away[92] (as the Gnostic and Stoics declare), but they will pass away only to be replaced by an eternally fixed new heaven and an eternal new earth.[93] The holy city, the New Jerusalem, which is the anti-type of the old earthly city[94], will descend from above and 'then all things will be made new, and [the righteous] will truly dwell in the city of God'.

This vision is in keeping with Irenaeus' larger cosmological outlook. He cannot cede the Bible's vision a of new heaven and earth without undermining the integrity of the argument that he has made throughout the whole of *Adversus haereses*. This is perhaps even more fundamentally true with respect to the eternal state than his chiliasm. Creation is good because it has been made directly by God; and God is good because he has made such a great and good creation. To end his soteriological narrative with a super-celestial vision that does away with the cosmos would call into question the very integrity of God and his faithful commitment to humanity. In the final chapter of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus again connects anthropology and cosmology, insisting that the 'loyalty' of God is contingent upon the 'real establishment' of creation. He writes,

> For since there are real [*veri*] humans, so must there also be a real establishment [*veram plantationem*], that they not vanish away among non-existent things, but progress among those which have an actual existence. For neither is the substance nor the essence of the creation annihilated [*Non enim substantia neque materia conditionis exterminatur*], for true [*verus*] and steadfast [*firmus*] is he who has established it. But 'the fashion [*figura*] of the world passes away;' that is, those things among which transgression has occurred, since humanity has grown old in them [*quoniam veteratus est homo in ipsis*]. And therefore this fashion has been formed temporary [*temporalis*], God foreknowing all things; as I have pointed out in the preceding book, and have also shown, as far as was possible, the cause of the creation of this world

[91] *Haer.* 5.35.2.

[92] Here Irenaeus references Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 7:31, 'The fashion of this world passes away', and Christ's words in Matthew 26:35, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away'.

[93] See Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 80-85, who notes Irenaeus' unique emphasis in the Eastern Orthodox tradition regarding the salvation of the material world.

[94] See *Haer.* 5.32.2.

> of temporal things. But when this fashion passes away, and humanity has been renewed [*renovato*], and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old ever again [*ut non possit iam veterescere*] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new humanity shall be remaining [*in quibus novus perseverabit hom*], always holding fresh converse with God. And since these things shall ever continue without end [*Et quoniam haec semper perseverabunt sine fine*], Isaiah declares, 'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain'.[95]

For Irenaeus, 'real' humans require a 'real' creation, so that they do not vanish away. Here Irenaeus takes it as axiomatic that human beings are by nature tangible, embodied creatures. As such, humans will always require a material creation in which to live. Were God not to provide humans with a material creation, this would prove their undoing, and he would prove himself less than 'true' and 'loyal' to his children. Irenaeus' eschatological vision here eclipses even that of the renewed earth of the preceding chapters. The chiliastic kingdom is indeed a renovation of creation, but this final stage of cosmic salvation represents the ultimate perfection of God's creative and redemptive work. No longer will humanity be able to 'grow old' but will continue eternally ever young, 'holding fresh converse with God' in the new creation that 'shall continue without end'.

Notably Irenaeus goes on in the next two paragraphs to argue for a three-tiered eschatological reward system that seems to suggest a preference for a celestial (rather than terrestrial) redemption. He writes, 'And as the presbyters say, then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendor of the city; for everywhere the Savior shall be seen according as they who see him shall be worthy'.[96] Irenaeus ascribes this system to the 'presbyters', who 'affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature'.[97] In many respects this move seems surprising and runs somewhat counter to his strong terrestrial eschatology; it is, one might have thought, too perilously close to the Gnostic three fold division of humans as 'spiritual', 'ensouled' and 'fleshly'—each of whom have different experiences in the afterlife.[98] Yet

[95] *Haer.* 5.36.1.
[96] *Haer.* 5.36.1.
[97] *Haer.* 5.36.2.
[98] See *Haer.* 1.6-7, where the 'spiritual' enter into the pleroma, the 'ensouled' dwell halfway between the material world and the pleroma, and the 'fleshly' are ultimately destroyed with the material world.

Irenaeus is consistent in his dependence on the traditions that have been handed to him; the 'presbyters' gave him his chiliasm and his vision for a new heaven and earth; he adopts their three-tiered reward system as well. Perhaps Irenaeus senses the ill-fit of this system; he does not spend much time discussing the three-tiered system, and even seems to suggest a certain fluidity between these three realms, with the saints moving back and forth throughout eternity. In any case, he immediately returns to the theme of cosmic and terrestrial renewal, which is how he finishes his book.

In the final chapter of book five, Irenaeus sums up the preceding chapters by again stressing the non-allegorical nature of the Scripture's promise for terrestrial redemption and God's people inheriting an earthly kingdom. Here again he blurs the lines between his chiliasm and the eternal state, with the former passing naturally and seamlessly into the latter without an earth shattering apocalypse. He ends his work with a moving vision of cosmic and terrestrial redemption.

> And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned humanity, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers [*et hereditatem terrae promisit patribus*], who brought it forth at the resurrection of the just, and fulfills the promises for the kingdom of his Son [*et promissiones adimplet in Filii sui regnum*]; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has arisen within the heart of humanity.[99]

V. Conclusion

Irenaeus' pro-material cosmology is consistent throughout his work. He never vacillates about the goodness of creation, and his insistence on the inherent integrity of creation provides a clear coherence to his system. For Irenaeus, the creation is inherently good because it has been given by a good God to a good humanity. More aspects of Irenaeus' cosmology could be marshalled in defense of this assertion,[100] but the salient point

[99] *Haer.* 5.36.3.

[100] One might also note here the fascinating way that Irenaeus connects the Eucharistic meal with the goodness of creation. He writes, 'But our opinion [regarding the goodness of creation] is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion' (*Haer.* 4.18.5; see all of 4.16.5-18.6; also 5.2.2). For more on the connection between the Eucharist and Irenaeus' cosmology, see Kurz, 'The Gifts of Creation'.

has been made. All of this provides an important context for understanding Irenaeus' Devil narrative. For Irenaeus, creation is not merely a temporary backdrop for an otherwise celestial narrative. Indeed, creation itself (the earth most especially) is the gift that God has given to humanity. It is the royal prize awarded to creation's lord and lady. This then informs our understanding of the Devil's motivation in his temptation of Adam and Eve. If we do not begin with this understanding of Irenaeus' pro-material cosmology, the Devil's aims will be viewed as out of synch with Irenaeus' broader soteriological narrative.

But before we examine Irenaeus' narrative, we must turn our attention to his anthropology. As with Irenaeus' cosmology, an understanding of Irenaeus' anthropological framework informs our understanding of his Devil narrative, as well as his larger soteriological account.

Chapter Two

Irenaeus' Anthropology

'The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man'.

Psalm 115:16

Irenaeus' anthropology is richly textured. It is this aspect of his thought that has perhaps received the most attention from contemporary theologians. Irenaeus' anthropology is highly developed precisely because it is organically and deeply linked to his cosmology, Christology, soteriology, and eschatology; quite arguably, it lies at the heart of his thought.[1] For Irenaeus, humanity is the 'beginning of creation' [*initium facturae*], the chief conduit through which God's glory is expressed to all of creation. And so for Irenaeus, *Gloria Dei est vivens homo* ('the glory of God is a living human').[2] This is said most truly with respect to the Son, who is the true human. Insofar as God has revealed himself in Jesus, and insofar as Jesus is typologically revealed by humanity,[3] humanity thus becomes the focal point and pinnacle of God's self-revelation in creation through the Son. This central insight was forged in conflict with the Gnostics (who generally viewed *human* being and fleshly embodiedness as ontological deficits—something to be overcome), and proved a formidable weapon against them.

Irenaeus's anthropology has been the focus of much Irenaean scholarship, and a great deal can be said here. Yet given the aim of my thesis, my goal in this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of Irenaeus' broader anthropology—fascinating as it is— nor is it my goal to offer a revisionist or 'fresh' account of Irenaeus' anthropology. Rather my aim is to highlight briefly those aspects of Irenaeus' thought that have the most direct relevance for understanding his Devil narrative. Accordingly, we here focus our attention on six well-known aspects of Irenaeus' anthropology, and show how these aspects of Irenaeus'

[1] Thus Wingren, 'For Irenaeus, the central problem of theology is man and the becoming-man, or man and the incarnation'. *Man and the Incarnation*, ix.

[2] *Haer.* 4.20.7. The rest of the sentence reads, '*vita autem hominis visio Dei'*—'the life of the human is the vision of God'. There are echoes here and elsewhere throughout Irenaeus of 1 John 3:2, 'but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is'. For Irenaeus (like Athanasius) human existence is stabilized and perfected in the vision and knowledge of God. The results are an anthropology of radical dependence on God as Creator, and the rejection of human autonomy. Mary Ann Donovan offers a helpful analysis of this sentence in Irenaeus, showing that within its context the statement refers to human fulfillment in God, rather than human fulfillment independent of God. See her 'Alive to the Glory of God', 283-97.

[3] More on this below; see section III of this chapter.

thought—taken together—inform our understanding of his demonology. The six aspects are: 1) Irenaeus' concept of the 'image and likeness' of God, 2) the typological relationship between Irenaeus' Christology and anthropology, 3) the inevitability of the incarnation, 4) Irenaeus' 'human infancy' theme, 5) the ultimate destiny of humanity as co-rulers with Christ of the material and angelic worlds, and 6) the notable absence of 'angelic soteriology' in Irenaeus' anthropology and soteriology.

I. The Image and Likeness of God

Central to Irenaeus' anthropology is the idea that humanity was created in the 'image and likeness of God' [*imago et similitudo Dei*].[4] This basic anthropological insight is rooted in the opening chapters of Genesis, and is central to Jewish and Christian anthropologies.[5] A wide range of opinions can be found in both traditions about the exact meaning of this phrase. Very often in both traditions, the human body does not factor as part of the divine image stamped on humanity.[6] Such is not the case however, for Irenaeus. In his treatment of the Genesis creation account, Irenaeus clearly links the image of God to the visible, material 'form' of humanity. He writes,

> But the man he formed [πλάσσω] with his own hands, taking from the earth that which was purest and finest [λεπτός], and mingling in a measure of his own power [δύναμις]with the earth. For he traced [περιτίθημι] his own form [πλάσμα] on the formation, that that which should be seen should be of divine form [θεοειδής]: for the image of God was the man formed and set on the earth. And that he might become living, he breathed on his face the breath of

[4] This aspect of Irenaeus' thought has been the focus of much Irenaean scholarship. See Minns, *Irenaeus*, 72-76; Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 29-54; Cartwright, *Image of God*, 173-181; Osborne, *Irenaeus*, 211-16, Purves, 'The Spirt and the *Imago Dei*', and especially Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 14-26.

[5] The use of Genesis 1:25-27 is found in Gnostic writings as well. See for example the thought of Saturninus and Basilides as detailed by Irenaeus in *Haer.* 1.24.1 and the Valentinians in *Haer.* 2.30.3. See Bouteneff, *Beginnings*, for Patristic readings of Genesis 1-3, and especially pp. 82-83 for Irenaeus on the image of God.

[6] See for example, Philo, *Opif.* 69. So too Tatian, who explicitly states that the body does not constitute an aspect of the image of God, but rather is that part of humanity which humanity shares with the animals. See his *Graec.* 15. Purves rightly notes the theological limitations of this emphasis, but never gets around in his treatment of Irenaeus' view of the *imago Dei* to noting that it points toward the *embodied* Son. See Purves, 'The Spirit and the *Imago Dei*'.

> life; that both for the breath and for the formation the man should be like unto God.[7]

And again,

> Now humanity is a mixed organization of soul and flesh [*Homo est enim temperatio animae et carnis*], who was formed after the likeness [*similtudinem*] of God, and molded by his hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom also he said, 'Let us make humanity'…. For whatsoever all the heretics may have advanced with the utmost solemnity, they come to this at last, that they blaspheme the Creator, and disallow the salvation of God's workmanship [*plasmatis Dei*], which the flesh truly is [*quod quidem est caro*].[8]

The connection between the human body and the 'image and similitude' of God is an important polemical counter to the Gnostics, who generally saw all of materiality—including (perhaps especially) the human body—as the dregs of creation, insofar as it is sourced in the ignorant and evil demiurge. Irenaeus, in order to defend the integrity of the Creator, must likewise defend the integrity of creation.[9] The material world must necessarily be good—the human body not least—since it was created by a good and beneficent God.[10] Linking the human body to the image of God underscores and preserves the goodness of creation more generally, and thus the goodness of the Creator.

Irenaeus is not always consistent in his use of the terms *imago* and *similitudo*. Often the terms are used as synonyms (as we see above) to include both the material and

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[7] *Epid.*11. See Smith, *Proof*, 148-49, no. 65 for the connection between the body and the image of God.

[8] *Haer.* book 4, preface, 4. For additional passages in Irenaeus, see *Haer.* 1.24.1, 2.30.3, 3.22.1.

[9] Along these lines, Holsinger-Friesen, in his *Irenaeus and Genesis,* 119, 216, suggests that we see in Irenaeus a non-Platonic form of Christianity. O'Keefe concurs, 'Irenaeus represents a nonphilosophical refutation of Gnosticism distinctly different from the overtly Platonic anti-Gnosticism characteristic of Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Thus, Irenaeus might most adequately be characterized as representing an anti-Platonic, or perhaps pre-Platonic, form of Christianity that was deeply committed both to a positive and celebratory cosmology and to a physicalist eschatology…" O'Keefe, 'The New Irenaeus', 118-19. Irenaeus' main opponents were the Gnostics, not the Platonists; but Holsinger-Friesen and O'Keefe are certainly right that much of Irenaeus' critique of the Gnostics represents an indirect critique of Platonic notions of materiality and eschatology.

[10] So Minns, 'Irenaeus also proposes the much more striking and daring idea that a two-fold similarity between us and God is to be found in the human body'. *Irenaeus,* 74. For more occurrences of *imago* throughout Irenaeus, see *Haer.* 3.17.3, 4.36.7, 4.37.7, 5.9.3, 12.4; *Epid.* 22, 55.

immaterial part of humanity.[11] But sometimes he distinguishes between the terms, using *imago* to refer to that part of humanity which *physically* or *visually* resembles the incarnate Word, and more narrowly, *similitudo* to designate that part of humanity which resembles the immaterial divine nature and character of God (or, more specifically, the Word).[12] In this way, the 'image of God' for Irenaeus speaks to humanity's physical appearance, and is thus something possessed by all living people—pagan or Christian; whereas the 'likeness of God' is something possessed only by Christians. In an illustrative passage in *Adversus haereses,* Irenaeus makes a distinction between image and likeness; both the image and likeness of God were given at the time of creation. But when Adam and Eve sinned, though they retained the image of God (i.e. the form, appearance of God), they lost the likeness of God. Irenaeus writes,

> For in times long past, it was said that humanity was created after the image of God, but it was not shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image humanity had been created [*cuius secundum imaginem homo factus fuerat*]. Wherefore also [humanity] did easily lose the likeness [*similitudinem*]. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, he confirmed both these: for he both showed forth the image truly, since he became himself what was his image [*ipse hoc fiens quod erat imago eius*]; and he re-established the likeness [*similitudinem*] after a sure manner, by assimilating humanity to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.[13]

Note here that it is only the likeness that was 'easily lost' when humanity sinned. But when Christ appeared, being the true image of God, he reoriented humanity back to God and restored both the image and likeness of God in humanity. We see the same distinction again in *Adversus haereses,* where Irenaeus writes,

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[11] See Osborn's helpful discussion of these terms in his *Irenaeus,* 211-16.

[12] Steenberg sees the 'likeness' of God for Irenaeus as, 'the personal appropriation of the divine image that is the foundation principle of human existence…brought about only through the anointing of the Holy Spirit…' Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 43. Irenaeus does not press 'reason' or 'rationality' into service as the core basis of the image of God, a move that will be made later in the Christian tradition. Yet he does make a connection between the two in *Haer.* 4.4.4, 'But humanity, being endowed with reason, and [is] in this respect like to God [*homo vero rationabilis, et secundum hoc similis Deo*]…'

[13] *Haer.* 5.16.2.

> Now God shall be glorified in his handiwork [*plasmate*], fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modeled after, his own Son [*conforme illud et consequens suo puero adaptans*]. For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, [all of] humanity, and not [only] a part of humanity, was made in the likeness of God [*fit homo secundum similitudinem Dei, sed non pars hominis*]. Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a part of the human, but certainly not the human; for the perfect human consists in the comingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was molded after the image of God [*et admixtae ei carni quae est plasmata secundum imaginem Dei*]….But when the Spirit here blended with the soul is united to [God's] handiwork, the human is rendered spiritual and perfect because of the outpouring of the Spirit, and this is the one [i.e. the human] who was made in the image and likeness of God [*secundum imaginem et similitudinem factus est Dei*]. But if the Spirit be wanting to the soul, he who is such is indeed of an animal nature, and being left carnal, shall be an imperfect being, possessing indeed the image [of God] in his formation *[imaginem quidem habens in plasmate*], but not receiving the likeness through the Spirit [*similitudinem vero non assumens per Spiritum*]; and thus is this being imperfect.[14]

Here the imperfect human [i.e. the human devoid of the Spirit of God] is 'of an animal nature,' possessing the 'image of God' in his appearance, but not having the 'likeness' of God through the Spirit.[15]

Yet, as noted above, Irenaeus is not entirely consistent in his use of these terms. Elsewhere in *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus states that Christ was made incarnate, '…so that what we lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—we might recover in Christ Jesus'.[16] As seen in the preceding, Irenaeus will often use the term 'image' as a catchall to denote both concepts, or he will use both terms interchangeably without the fine distinction noted above. Regardless, he nonetheless maintains humanity's likeness to God as both a material and immaterial reality. His polemic against the Gnostics

[14] *Haer.* 5.6.1.

[15] So Cartwright, 'Irenaeus often emphasizes the body in order to establish that the whole person is in God's image, contra "Gnostic" spiritualizing tendencies. Nonetheless, this strategy signifies the belief, not only that people are properly physical but that human flesh is part of what resembles God'. From, '"The Image of God" in Irenaeus', 175.

[16] *Haer.* 3.18.1.

is greatly served by linking the image of God to human flesh; yet he wants to push beyond this to insist that Christ restores in humanity our potential to partake of the divine 'likeness' beyond mere appearance.[17]

Much could be said here, but two points are particularly salient. First Irenaeus' emphasis on humanity as made in the image and likeness of God serves to underscore the high place in creation that humanity occupies in Irenaeus' broader cosmology. For Irenaeus, humanity is the pinnacle of creation, the supreme created being; no angel or archangel or power or throne is greater than humanity, for only humanity was made according to the image and likeness of God. In a telling passage where Irenaeus speaks of Christ's overthrow of the Devil, Irenaeus asks,

> How, too, could he [Jesus] have subdued him [the Devil] who was stronger than humanity [*adversus hominem fortis erat*], who had not only overcome [*vicit*] humanity, but also retained humanity under his power, and [how could Jesus have] conquered him who had conquered, while he set free humanity who had been conquered, unless he had been greater than humanity who had thus been overcome [*nisi superior fuisset eo homine qui fuerat victus*]? But who else is better [*melior*], and more preeminent [*praecellentior*] than, humanity who was formed after the likeness of God [*similitudinem Dei*], except the Son of God, after whose likeness [*similitudinem*] humanity was created?[18]

The release of humanity from the captivity of the Devil requires a savior with more strength than humanity. But who could possibly have more strength than humanity, which has been made according to the image of God? Irenaeus' answer is the Son, who is himself the image of God after whom humanity has been made.[19] This logic shows not only

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[17] Irenaeus will also at times speak eschatologically of the image and likeness of God—as a reality to be obtained in the last day. He writes, 'He [God] knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it; but through love and power, he shall overcome the substance of created nature. For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that humanity should be made after the image and likeness of God…' *Haer.* 4.38.4. This eschatological focus is best understood in light of Irenaeus' concept of human maturation (more on which below), and shows that he has a category for realized eschatology; humanity has now in seminal form what it will have in full at the end of the age.

[18] *Haer.* 4.33.4.

[19] One might wonder here how humanity ever came under the power of the Devil to begin with. Irenaeus will answer that it was because humanity was yet infantile when tempted by the Devil (see *Epid.* 12). Thus for Irenaeus, humanity is ontologically superior to the Devil (and the rest of the created beings), but needed to grow into full stature for this greatness to be realized. More on this below.

humanity's innate superiority over the Devil (obviously relevant for my thesis), but over the whole of creation. As we will take up again in Chapter Four, this helps us to understand the Devil's envy of humanity.

Second, Irenaeus is keen to stress the connection between the body and the image of God. Human embodiment is not something to be overcome, or a sign of creaturely weakness. Indeed it is what distinguishes humanity from the angelic realm, and demonstrates human superiority. It is precisely because humans are embodied that they can be said to be made according to the image of God.[20] Again, we will pick this up below in Chapter Four, but we can briefly note here that Irenaeus' emphasis on human embodiment informs our understanding of the Devil's envy, and gives us an indication of what, for Irenaeus, motivated the Devil in his temptation of Adam and Eve. In some way, the Devil's envy is linked to human embodiedment. Which leads us to the next salient aspect of Irenaeus' anthropology—its connection to his Christology.

The connection between the body and the image of God only makes sense when considered in relation to the *human* Jesus Christ, who is simultaneously the very Son of God. For Irenaeus, humanity is made according to the image of God insofar as humanity is made according to the image of the *incarnate* Son. To Irenaeus' Christology we now turn.

II. Anthropology as Christology

As becomes quickly evident, the interpreter of Irenaeus cannot go far into Irenaeus' anthropology without encountering his Christology. These two aspects of Irenaeus' thought mutually inform the other, and cannot be properly understood in isolation. Central to Irenaeus' anthropology is the idea that the Son is the image and likeness of God after which humanity is made. While humanity is made *according to* [*secundum*] the image and likeness of God, the Son *is* the likeness and image of God. Irenaeus writes, 'For he made humanity in the image of God; and the image of God is the Son, after whose image humanity was made:

[20] Here Behr helpfully notes the effect of this on Irenaeus's overall anthropology by comparing the anthropology of Irenaeus with Clement of Alexandria. Behr observes that for Irenaeus, since the body is part and parcel of the *imago Dei*, bodily pleasure is not castigated in Irenaeus, nor reduced to a necessarily evil. Clement, on the other hand, given his prioritization of the mind as the locus of the *imago Dei*, is far more given to an anti-body asceticism. See all of Behr's *Asceticism and Anthropology*, but especially his helpful summary, pp. 209-24. See also Behr, 'Ireaneus AH 3.23.5', 309-10.

and for this cause he [the Son] appeared in the end of the times that he might show the image [i.e. humanity] to be like unto himself'.[21]

Humanity is made according to image of the Son, who is himself the image of God. This helps us understand how Irenaeus conceives of the body as related to the image of God. Insofar as humanity is made according to the image of the Son of God, thus far must humanity have a body, since the Son himself is embodied.[22]

It is precisely at this point that we must recall that for Irenaeus the Son's existence as the image of God is not an abstraction independent of the man Jesus Christ. The Son who is the image of God is the Son who 'appeared in the end of times' and who manifested God through the flesh. Steenberg presses this point forcefully throughout his work on the Christology of early Christianity—specifically focusing on Irenaeus. Steenberg insists that for much of early Christianity generally, and Irenaeus in particular, 'What it means for humanity to be "after the image and likeness of God" is apprehended in the one "who dwelt among us", the very Word of the Father'.[23] An accurate reading of Irenaeus's Christology, then, must begin with the man Jesus Christ who is also the eternal Son, rather than the reverse. 'To abstract the Son, or the divinity of the Son, from the person of Jesus Christ … is to disfigure the language of Christianity's earliest testimony…'[24] 'The one after whose image humanity is fashioned, is the one who *is* the Image in flesh in Galilee'.[25] For Irenaeus, humanity is made according to the image of the Son insofar as the Son himself is *enfleshed* humanity.[26] This emphasis on the Son's incarnation is seen clearly in a passage where Irenaeus discusses how Christ was God's means of self-revelation to both Old Testament and New Testament saints. We examine the passage in two separate sections, with comment in between:

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[21] *Epid.* 22. See also 11 and 55 where Irenaeus speaks of humanity as made in the image of and likeness of God.

[22] Irenaeus' conceptual link between the body and the image of God the Son is clarified when set alongside the sort of logic one finds in the work of Gordon Clark (to cite just one example). Clark writes, 'God has created man after his image and likeness. This image cannot be man's body... God is spirit or mind and has no body. Hence a body would not be an image of him'. Clark, 'The Image of God in Man', 216. Clark clearly has his horizons limited to the image of God as it relates to God the Father, and has not linked the image of God with God as Son. So too Tatian, *Graec.* 15.

[23] Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 8.

[24] Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 4.

[25] Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 8-9. See his whole work, but especially 1-54. Wingren also makes this point in his, *Man and the Incarnation*, 14-26. So too Cartwright, 'The Image of God in Irenaeus', 173-76.

[26] So Minns, 'When God fashioned the earth creature from mud he did so after the pattern of the body of Christ (*Dem* 22; *AH* V.16.2). Thus we are in the image of God because our bodies have been shaped after the pattern of the body of the incarnate God', see Minns, *Irenaeus*, 74.

> But the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without him no one can attain the knowledge of God *[et sine illo nemo potest cognoscere Deum*]. For the Son is the knowledge of the Father; but the knowledge of the Son is in the Father, and has been revealed through the Son [*et per Filium revelata*]; and this was the reason why the Lord declared: 'No one knows the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal [him]'. For 'shall reveal' was said not with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when he was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time [*sed communiter per totum tempus positum est]*. For the Son, being present with his own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all; to whom he wills, and when he wills, and as the Father wills. Wherefore, then, in all things, and through all things, there is one God, the Father, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in him.[27]

Here Irenaeus insists that the Son is the sole means of the Father's revelation; no one can see the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son chooses to reveal the Father. And lest one think that the Son's ministry of revelation began when he was born of Mary, Irenaeus states that the Son has been revealing the Father 'throughout all time'. This might seem to suggest, against what I have argued above, that the Son reveals the Father independent of the incarnation. Yet Irenaeus' commitment to the Son's incarnational identity is seen in the remainder of the passage. We pick up the passage from where we left off above. He continues,

> Therefore Abraham also, knowing the Father through the Word, who made heaven and earth, confessed him to be God; and having learned by an announcement that the Son of God would be a human among humans [*inter homines homo*], by whose advent his seed should be as the stars of heaven, he desired to see that day, so that he might himself also embrace Christ; and, seeing it through the spirit of prophecy, he rejoiced. Wherefore Simeon also, one of his descendants, carried fully out the rejoicing of the patriarch, and said: 'Lord, now let me, your servant, depart in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared before the face of all people: a light for

[27] *Haer.* 4.6.7.

> the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people Israel'. And the angels, in like manner, announced tidings of great joy to the shepherds who were keeping watch by night. Moreover, Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my salvation';—the rejoicing of Abraham descending upon those who sprang from him,—those, namely, who were watching, and who beheld Christ, and believed in him; while, on the other hand, there was a reciprocal rejoicing which passed backwards from the children to Abraham, who did also desire to see the day of Christ's coming. Rightly, then, did our Lord bear witness to him, saying, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad'.[28]

Abraham experienced the revelatory ministry of the Son prior to the Son's incarnation, but only insofar as Abraham prophetically looked forward 'through the spirit of prophecy' and saw the day of Christ's incarnation. Abraham, even prior to the Son's incarnation, does not know the Son except in the incarnation. Thus Abraham saw the Father through the Son in the same way that Simeon, the shepherds, Mary and the Angels saw the Father—namely through the incarnation. In this way, Irenaeus maintains the centrality of the incarnation in the Son's identity and God's revelatory actions. For Irenaeus, Jesus Christ the embodied human, who is also the Son of God, is the one who 'showed forth the image truly'. [29] Humanity knows no other Son than the embodied Son, the Word made flesh.[30]

This blending together of anthropology and Christology is deepened further when we consider the typological relationship between Adamic humanity and Christ's humanity. For Irenaeus, it is only insofar as Adamic humanity participates in Christ's humanity that Adamic humanity becomes truly human. To this point we now turn.

III. The Typological Nature of Humanity

Our explication of Irenaeus' anthropology takes us yet deeper into Irenaeus' Christology. The resemblance of humanity to the incarnate Son must be understood with

[28] *Haer.* 4.7.1. Note the future aspect of Irenaeus' statement in this passage that the Son '*would* be a man among men'. Irenaeus' insistence that we only know the Son as *incarnate* Son should be understood epistemologically, rather than ontologically. That we can only know the Son as incarnate does not mean that the Son has been eternally incarnate.

[29] *Haer.* 5.16.2.

[30] This strongly materialist conception of the image of God (both for Christ and humanity) is woven throughout Irenaeus' anthropology and Christology, and establishes a formidable defense against Gnostic anthropologies and cosmologies.

respect to Irenaeus' typological anthropology; or again, Adamic humanity is typologically oriented toward Christ's humanity. For Irenaeus, Christ's incarnation forms the pattern for humanity's creation, rather than the reverse. As Minns aptly states, 'Adam was consequent on Christ, and not the other way around'.[31] In like manner to the typological logic of the Apostle Paul,[32] Irenaeus insists that Adam's humanity is made according to the image of Christ's humanity, not the other way around. He writes,

> For in times long past, it was said that humanity was created after the image of God, but it was not shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image humanity was created [*cuius secundum imaginem homo factus fuerat*]. Wherefore also [humanity] did easily lose the likeness [*similitudinem*]. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, he confirmed both these: for he both showed forth the image truly, since he became himself what was his image [*ipse hoc fiens quod erat imago eius*]; and he re-established the likeness [*similitudinem*] after a sure manner, by assimilating humanity to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.[33]

And again he writes, 'For he made humanity in the image of God; and the image of God is the Son, after whose image humanity was made: and for this cause he appeared in the end of the times that he might show the image [to be] like unto himself'.[34]

For Irenaeus, embodied humanity is made according to the image of the embodied Christ. Though humanity was first in order of time, Christ's humanity was first in order of divine intent and pre-eminence. Irenaeus' typology here is helpfully clarified by setting it in parallel with the New Testament's typological reading of the Passover lamb. For the New Testament, the Passover Lamb of the Exodus was first in order of time, but was nonetheless understood by the New Testament writers to be patterned after the future sacrifice of Christ; the lamb of the Passover is but a shadow of the Lamb of God, and the lesser (historically earlier) lamb finds its meaning and identity in the fact that it points to and participates in the greater (historically later) Lamb.[35] In the same way, Irenaeus understands humanity, though historically earlier than Christ, to be typologically pointing toward the true human, Jesus.

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[31] Minns, *Irenaeus*, 100.

[32] In Rom 5:14, Paul speaks of 'Adam, who was a type [τύπος] of the one who was to come'. Irenaeus quote this passage with commentary in *Haer.* 3.22.3.

[33] *Haer.* 5.16.2.

[34] *Epid*. 22. See also 11 and 55 where Irenaeus speaks of humanity as made in the image and likeness of God.

[35] See John 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7. This example is not used by Irenaeus, but it helpfully illustrates his logic with respect to the typological nature of humanity.

For Irenaeus, Adamic humanity is made according to the image of Christ's humanity. It is this typological relationship between humanity and Christ that for Irenaeus provides the basis of humanity's value and worth.

Notably, the typological relationship between humanity and Christ underscores the value of not only Adam's humanity, but even more so, Christ's humanity—an important point in Irenaeus' larger polemic against the Gnostics. Christ's humanity, indeed Christ's flesh, is the arch-type according to which fleshly humanity is made. For Irenaeus, since Christ' incarnation precedes (logically, even though not temporally) the creation of Adam, it is valuable in its own right, and part of the Son's identity. Yet until Christ's incarnation, it was not clear in what way humanity was made according to the image of God. But the coming of the Word reveals the typological relationship between humanity and Christ. Humans possess the image of God insofar as they resemble the incarnate Son.

Fascinatingly, Irenaeus states that Christ 'became himself what was his image'. Here we might conceive of Adam as a living pencil sketch, a self-portrait drawn by Christ himself as a prophetic witness pointing toward his own incarnation. Or again, using a modern analogy to illustrate the point: in the popular 1940 Disney adaptation of Carlo Collodi's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Pinocchio is a wooden puppet who dreams of becoming a real boy. At his creation, Pinocchio occupies a middle space between not real and real. He is more than an inanimate doll, but less that a real boy. He is stuck between non-being and full being. Thus what he is at creation is not a fulfillment of his real destiny, but only a shadow (or a type) of what he has the potential to become, i.e. a real boy. As the story unfolds, Pinocchio falls in with some bad characters and through his naiveté and bad choices becomes even less than what he was when he began. His resemblance to a real boy is marred by the addition of donkey ears and a tail. But through his repentance and the love of his maker Geppetto, the effects of his poor choices are taken away and he becomes what he typologically pointed toward on the day of his creation—a real boy. Thus the redemption story of Pinocchio (at least in the Disney adaptation[36]) is not a story about a return to an original condition, but rather a story about a progression into the archetype. This in a way is also true for Irenaeus' conception of humanity. Humanity on the day of creation is like Pinocchio—more than mere creatures, but not yet fully human. In Christ (and ultimately our participation in his resurrection) we become what we were typologically pointing toward; which is to say we become full human beings.[37]

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[36] In Collodi's original novel Pinocchio is hanged and killed!

[37] Thus Behr rightly observes, 'It is only in the eschatological event…that the full perfection of man is manifested. Thus the truth of man is eschatological, not protological'. *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 57. Fantino makes the same basic point in 'Le Passage du Premier Adam au Second Adam', where he examines Irenaeus' interpretation of 1 Cor 15:20-21. 'Let us remember that the life

Yet the above analogies fail to convey the complexity of Irenaeus' thought in its entirety. For Irenaeus, the movement from creation to new creation is not a movement from natural to supernatural (as the above analogies might suggest). Irenaeus' conception of human 'infancy' must be taken into account. This topic will be taken up later in the chapter, and thus I will postpone a detailed exposition until then.[38] But this much bears stating at present: for Irenaeus, humanity at creation possessed *in toto*, even if in seminal form, all that was necessary to grow fully into the image and likeness of the Word. Wingren helpfully uses the illustration of a child who has not yet learned to talk, but who possesses the inherent native resources to grow into this skill (baring unusual circumstance or injury).[39] Unlike the pencil sketch and Pinocchio, both of which must undergo a change in ontology to realize their full transformation into the archetype, Irenaeus conceives of humans moving forward in growth into what they already are in seminal form.[40] Thus Irenaeus can affirm that those who are redeemed in Christ regain the 'likeness' of God—the very likeness which humanity had at creation before the fall. 'Wherefore also [humanity] did easily lose the likeness [*similitudinem*]. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, he confirmed both of these: for he both showed forth the image truly, since he became himself what was his image [*ipse hoc fiens quod erat imago eius*]; and he re-established the likeness [*similitudinem*] after a sure manner'.[41] Yet the likeness humanity is restored to is not the seminal likeness of infant humanity, but rather the mature, perfect likeness of the incarnate Son. In this way, the return is not simply a return to original perfection, but a return to the future, a return to the end toward which original perfection typologically pointed from the start.[42]

This way of conceiving of Christ and humanity serves to collapse Irenaeus' Christology and anthropology into each other. For Irenaeus, the only true human is the divine human—the archetype. He writes, 'How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet

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possessed by Adam at his creation was not strictly speaking a spiritual life' (420). This life of the Spirit was typologicaly portrayed in Adam, but only eschatologically fulfilled in Jesus.

[38] See section V of this chapter.

[39] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 20, and 27.

[40] Here Wingren rightly observes, 'Those who make a distinction in Irenaeus between the natural and the supernatural always fail to interpret…[Irenaeus] satisfactorily'. *Man and Incarnation*, 24.

[41] *Haer.* 5.16.2.

[42] Both types of illustrations—Wingren's 'speech' illustration and my sketch/Pinocchio illustration are important for capturing the full scope of Irenaeus' thought. Wingren's illustration of speech development accurately reflects Irenaeus' emphasis on a return to original perfection. And the sketch/Pinocchio illustration helpfully captures the movement from type to archetype in Irenaeus' soteriology. These two concepts are compatible, and we need not, like Loof, resort to speculations about different sources as a way of explaining these complementary emphases. See also Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 211-13, who likewise notes this 'return to the future' motif in Irenaeus' anthropology and soteriology.

been made a human?'[43] The remark is fascinating, and underscores the deep connection in Irenaeus' between anthropology and Christology. Insofar as humanity is typologically related to Jesus Christ—the true human being, humanity is not yet fully human. So Cartwright astutely comments, '[For Irenaeus] Christ not only reveals Adam but also fulfills Adam; he is, in a sense, more Adam than Adam'.[44] Thus human beings are such only in hope—only insofar as we come to fully participate in the likeness of true human being, Jesus. The full and final realization of the *imago Dei* in humanity is accomplished at the resurrection. Drawing upon the language of 1 Corinthians 15—Paul's extended discussion about bodily resurrection—Irenaeus writes,

> For after his great kindness he graciously conferred good [upon us], and made human beings like to himself regarding his own power [*et similes sibi suae potestatis homines fecit*]; while at the same time by his prescience he knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it; but through love and power, he shall overcome the substance of created nature. For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that humanity should be made after the image and likeness of God [*secundum imaginem et similitudinem Dei*], having received the knowledge of good and evil.[45]

Here also we see the basic form of Irenaeus' concept of divinization. For Irenaeus, it is only insofar as humanity participates in Christ's divine humanity that we become fully human.[46] Or again, it is only when the pencil sketch becomes a fully living, three

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[43] *Haer.* 4.39.2. This same basic sentiment, even if left undeveloped, can be found in Ignatius: 'Suffer me to receive the pure light [of martyrdom]; when I shall have arrived there, I shall become a human being. Suffer me to follow the example of the passion of my God'. *Rom.* 6. For Ignatius, to become like Christ in his death is to become, at last, a true human being.

[44] Cartwright, '"The Image of God" in Irenaeus', 175. So too Osborn correctly observes that for Irenaeus, 'Other men are not true men because they have not yet reached the likeness of God'. Osborne, *Irenaeus*, 213.

[45] *Haer.* 4.38.4

[46] Irenaeus' account of divinization could be treated at length as a topic in its own right. I have however, treated this theme adequately enough for our present purposes under the headings of 'the image of God' and 'typological anthropology'. For a helpful look divinization in Irenaeus, see Litwa, 'The God "Human" and Human Gods', 70–94. Litwa helpfully demonstrates that Irenaeus' clear Creator-creature distinction pushes his divinization motif in a substantially different direction than the Gnostic *Apocryphon of John*. For Irenaeus, true deity is not native to human nature. Thus humans can become god-like only insofar as God first becomes human. But for the *Apocryphon of John* (consistent with other Gnostic texts), human nature is already divine insofar as it is an emanation (albeit indirectly) from God. Thus divinization in the *Apocryphon of John* is about losing

dimensional being that the pencil sketch (now no longer a pencil sketch) can be said to be truly human.

IV. The Inevitability of the Incarnation

Irenaeus' typological anthropology raises a question that is perhaps the first salvo in a debate that will emerge in the later Christian tradition regarding the necessity of the incarnation.[47] Would the Son have incarnated if Adam had not fallen? Theologians who answer this question negatively typically view the incarnation solely as a response to sin. But Irenaeus foreshadows the logic of Athanasius and seems to view the incarnation as inevitable due to human mutability, and not solely a result of sin.[48] It is because humanity is inherently (even prior to the fall) ontologically contingent that the Son—who is not ontologically contingent—must incarnate. In an extended passage that draws upon Irenaeus' 'human infancy' motif (more on which below), Irenaeus argues for the necessity of the incarnation of the Son based primarily upon the creaturehood of humanity. Irenaeus writes,

> If, however, anyone says, 'What then? Could not God have exhibited humanity as perfect [τέλειον] from the beginning?' let him know that, inasmuch as God is indeed always the same and unbegotten as respects himself, all things are possible to him. But created things must be inferior to him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin [τὰ δὲ γεγονότα καθὸ Μετέπειτα γενέσεως ἀρξην ἰδίαν ἔσχε]; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect [ὑστεροῦνται τοῦ τελείου]. Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile [νήπια]; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline. For just as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant [βρέφει], but the [infant] is not yet able to receive substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God himself to have made humanity

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the outer shell of materiality so that one's 'real' humanity—that part of one which has always been divine—can shine through unsullied.

[47] John Duns Scotus argues for the necessity of the incarnation apart from sin. Robert Grosseteste, the first Chancellor of Oxford tentatively suggests the same. See his *De Cessatione Legalium,*1.8.7-13.

[48] For Athanasius, human nature occupies a place of inherent 'ontological poverty' (a phrase coined by Khaled Anatolios) quite apart from sin. See Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius,* 58. For an extended discussion on this aspect of Athanasius' thought, see Hiestand, 'Not Just Forgiven', 47-66.

> perfect from the first, but humanity could not receive this, being as yet a child [νήπιος].[49]

Irenaeus is here providing a theodicy against the accusations of the Gnostics who claim that God was somehow impotent because he did not create humanity perfect at the beginning. Irenaeus is thus keen to maintain both God's unlimited power to do anything, and yet offer an apologetic for the necessity of God not creating humanity perfect at the beginning. The problem, Irenaeus' argues, is with the inherent limitations of the finite creature, not with any deficiency in the power of the Creator. He continues in the same passage,

> And for this cause our Lord, in these last times, when he had summed up all things into himself, came to us, not as he might have come, but as we were capable of beholding him. He might easily have come to us in his immortal glory, but in that case we could never have endured the greatness of the glory; and therefore it was that he, who was the perfect bread of the Father, offered himself to us as milk, [because we were] as infants [ὡς νηπίοις]. He did this when he appeared as a human, that we, being nourished, as it were, from the breast of his flesh, and having, by such a course of milk-nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, may be able also to contain in ourselves the bread of immortality [ἀθανασίας], which is the Spirit of the Father.
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> And on this account does Paul declare to the Corinthians, 'I have fed you with milk, not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it'….so, in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to the man [διδόναι τὸ τελειον τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ]; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it. It was for this reason that the Son of God, although he was perfect [τέλειος ὢν], passed through the state of childhood [συνενηπίαζεν] in common with the rest of humanity, partaking of it [i.e. human infancy] thus not for his own benefit,[50] but for that of the infantile stage of humanity's existence [ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ τοῦ

[49] *Haer*. 4.38.1.

[50] I take the phrase 'not for his own benefit' to be referring to Christ's participation in human infancy, not the incarnation generally. In other words, Christ did not pass through human infancy for his own sake, but for the sake of humanity.

> ἀνθρώπου νήπιον οὕτω χωρούμενος], in order that humanity might be able to receive him [ὡς ἄνθρωπος αὐτὸν χωρεῖν ἠδύνατο]. There was nothing, therefore, impossible to and deficient in God that humanity was not an uncreated being; but this merely applied to those who were lately created, [namely] human beings.[51]

Thus for Irenaeus, the incarnation is first a response to human contingency, before it is a response to human sinfulness. Only the one who is inherently perfect, namely the Son, can grant perfection to those who are inherently imperfect, namely creatures. Of course for Irenaeus the incarnation overcomes human sinfulness just as much as it overcomes human contingency; it is not a zero sum game. But Irenaeus' atonement theology takes seriously the question of human contingency in ways that later atonement theories will not.[52] And the overall effect is to position the incarnation as a necessity.[53]

Here we can fruitfully revisit Irenaeus' Christological typology. Deepening and solidifying Irenaeus' position on the incarnation is the manner in which he typologically links the image of God in humanity to the incarnate Son. Those theologians who argue against the necessity of the incarnation tend to link the image of God in humanity to the non-embodied Father. From this perspective, humanity can exist fully in the image of God quite apart from the incarnation. But this is not possible for Irenaeus. For Irenaeus, humanity is made according to the image of the incarnate Son. As such, the Son's incarnation logically, even if not temporally, comes first in the divine plan. From this typological starting point, the incarnation becomes a necessary fulfillment of the type—even apart from sin. Christ's identity as incarnate savior precedes those on whose behalf Christ would incarnate in order to save. Commenting on Paul's typological connection between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:14, Irenaeus writes,

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[51] *Haer.* 4.38.1-2. See Brown, 'Necessary Imperfection', who finds Irenaeus' logic hopelessly flawed at this point. For my part, I am sympathetic to Irenaeus' basic point. Very simply, he is arguing that not even God can create God, for being 'uncreated' is precisely what it means to be 'God'. As such, whatever God creates is, by nature of it being created, contingent and passable and in need of divine aid. This is the same basic logic one finds in Athanasius' *De incarnatione*.

[52] The atonement theories that emerge out of Anselm, and on through the Protestant reformers, tend to focus on sin and the satisfaction of divine justice, rather than on death and overcoming the inevitable contingency of human creature-hood.

[53] MacKenzie, in his commentary on Irenaeus' *Epideixis,* likewise suggests that Irenaeus' logic here pushes strongly toward the inevitability of the incarnation. 'Incarnation, therefore, is not only the conclusion of the work of creation, but the very initial purpose of it, the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of creation'. *Irenaeus's Demonstration*, 117.

> Hence also was Adam himself termed by Paul 'the figure [*typus*] of him that was to come', because the Word, the maker of all things, had formed beforehand for himself the future dispensation of the human race, connected with the Son of God [*quoniam futuram circa Filium Dei humani generis dispositionem in semetipsum Fabricator omnium Verbum praeformaverat*]; God having predestined [*praedestinante*] that the first man [*hominem*] should be of an animal nature, with this view, that he might be saved by the spiritual One. For inasmuch as he had a pre-existence as a saving being [*Cum enim praeexsisteret salvans*], it was necessary that what might be saved should also be made [*oportebat et quod salvaretur fieri*], in order that the he who saves should not exist in vain [*uti non vacuum sit salvans*].[54]

For Irenaeus, Christ had a 'pre-existence as a saving being'. Here Irenaeus pushes, almost to the limit, not only the necessity of the incarnation—but indeed the necessity of humanity! In logic similar to Origen (i.e. that an eternal Creator requires an eternal creation),[55] Irenaeus seems to be positing that God is in some way—however mysteriously and freely—bound up eternally and necessarily in the existence of creation and the salvation of that creation.[56] Again, it is important to point out here that Irenaeus' soteriology is not limited to salvation from sin. Christ's identity as a pre-existent saving being has significance for Irenaeus independent of human sinfulness; humanity must necessarily be saved from its innate ontological contingency.

Yet even given the above, Irenaeus does not explicitly address the question of the incarnation's necessity. Whether he followed his own logic to its end remains uncertain. In any event, the overall effect of Irenaeus' incarnational theology underscores the significance of humanity in the divine economy. Even more, one is left with the strong impression,

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[54] *Haer.* 3.22.3.

[55] Origen, *Princ.* 1.2.10.

[56] See Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 33-36, who argues in this direction, focusing on the goodness of God as God's inevitable motivation in creating. Minns rejects Steenberg's interpretation of Irenaeus on the grounds that it raises significant problems for Irenaeus' perspectives on divine freedom and goodness, and further, that it suggests a co-eternality of creation—a position that Irenaeus explicitly rejects (see *Haer.* 2.28.3). See Minns, *Irenaeus*, 44. In my estimation, it seems likely that Irenaeus' thought at this point is not fully systematized. Steenberg's reading of Irenaeus follows naturally from much of Irenaeus' thought. But Minns is right to caution us from reading more into Irenaeus than he intended, however logically such a reading might follow. As Minns rightly observes, 'There are, no doubt, problems about time, freedom and necessity bound up in all this, but they are not problems that Irenaeus addresses'. Minns, *Irenaeus*, 102. Likewise MacKenzie, reads *Haer.* 4.20.4 as seemingly indicating the inevitability of the incarnation, even apart from sin, yet resists the temptation to speculate about what Irenaeus may have thought on this matter, minus an explicit statement. 'It is better to leave such questions unanswered, for only conjecture upon conjecture would ensue'. *Irenaeus' Demonstration*, 118.

especially in passages like that quoted above, that for Irenaeus, the incarnation was not ultimately a detriment to the person of Christ—a medieval hair shirt, worn perpetually as a testimony of divine condescending love—but rather humanity was a gift from the Father to the Son and the very means by which the Son is exalted. Though certainly the Son's incarnation of *mortal* flesh was an act of divine condescension, the ultimate victory of the Son over sin, death, and the Devil leads to the Son's final and eternal exaltation. In this sense, Adam's humanity was created for the sake of Christ's future humanity, rather than the other way around. Thus for Irenaeus, the humanity by which we are human is God's own humanity. Such logic serves in Irenaeus to simultaneously underscore the massive significance of humanity in creation, while likewise repositioning humanity in a typological and subordinate role that undercuts human pride and independence.[57]

All of this will be relevant to our examination of the Devil's envy. Whatever place the angels have in the divine economy, for Irenaeus, it pales in comparison to the preeminence of humanity-in-the-Son.

V. The Infancy of Humanity at Creation

As can be seen in Irenaeus' typological anthropology, Irenaeus conceives of salvation as a process of maturation; the created being must grow and increase in capacity to receive the uncreated God. This basic theme is woven throughout Irenaeus' corpus. He writes,

> For he formed him for growth and increase [*Plasmavit enim eum in augmentum et incrementum*], as the Scripture says: 'Increase and multiply'. And in this respect God differs from humanity, that God indeed makes, but humanity is made; and truly, he who makes is always the same [*Et quidem qui facit semper idem est*]; but that which is made must receive both beginning, and middle, and addition, and increase [*quod autem fit et initium et*

[57] The debate regarding the centrality of humanity in Irenaeus' theology is often unhelpfully polarized as an 'either-or'. Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 91, points to Mark Werner as one who argues strongly that Irenaeus' soteriology must be understood as primarily anthropocentric, as opposed to theocentric. See Werner, *Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas*, 275, 390, 477. But Wingren rightly challenges this binary interpretation and insists that we need not pit Irenaeus' anthropocentrism against his theocentrism. See Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation*, 91-96. It is in Irenaeus' Christology that both anthropology and theology come together. Humanity finds its identity and *telos* in Christ, while Christ is ultimately exalted through and reigns as human.

> *medietatem et adiectionem et augmentum accipere debet*]. And God does indeed create after a skillful manner, while [as regards humanity] it is created skillfully. God also is truly perfect in all things, himself equal and similar to himself, as he is all light, and all mind, and all substance, and the fount of all good; but humanity receives advancement and increase towards God [*homo vero profectum percipiens et augmentum ad Deum*].[58]

This soteriological theme of human maturation is not unique to Irenaeus;[59] however, it takes unique shape in Irenaeus with his idea of the infancy of Adam and Eve at the time of creation.[60] Irenaeus, with the exceptions of Theophilus (and possibly Clement) is the only extant early Christian writer to speak about the infancy of humanity at the time of creation.[61] The idea is likewise absent in early Jewish or Gnostic writings.[62] According to Irenaeus, the first human pair was created as *infantes*—as children who needed to grow into physical adulthood. This idea occurs five times in Irenaeus—two times in *Epideixis* and three times in *Adversus haereses.*[63] For Irenaeus, the physical growth of the first human pair underscores their need for spiritual and mental growth.[64] Irenaeus writes,

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[58] *Haer.* 4.11.1-2. For more on this same theme see also *Haer.* 4.38.1-3.

[59] See Balthasar's account of Gregory of Nyssa, in his *Presence and Thought*.

[60] See Steenberg, 'Children in Paradise' for the definitive treatment on this theme.

[61] For this idea in Theophilus, see his *Autol.* 2.25, where he writes, 'But Adam, being yet an infant in age, was on this account as yet unable to receive knowledge worthily. For now, also, when a child is born it is not at once able to eat bread, but is nourished first with milk, and then, with the increment of years, it advances to solid food. Thus, too, would it have been with Adam; for not as one who grudged him, as some suppose, did God command him not to eat of knowledge. But he wished also to make proof of him, whether he was submissive to his commandment. And at the same time he wished man, infant as he was, to remain for some time longer simple and sincere'. See also Clement, *Prot.* 11 where Clement refers to Adam as a παιδίον τοῦ Θεοῦ prior to his fall, and then remarks that through the fall he became a grown man, ὁ παῖς ἀνδριζόμενος ἀπειθείᾳ. The reference is suggestive, but only passing, and therefore difficult to associate with Irenaeus' concept of human infancy. See also Clement's comment in *Strom.* 3.17, likewise passing and suggestive. Behr sees a clear connection between Irenaeus, Theophilus, and Clement on this point. See his *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 135, 143-44.

[62] See Steenberg, 'Children in Paradise', 20-21.

[63] *Epid.* 12, 14; *Haer.* 3.22.4, 3.23.5, 4.38.1-2.

[64] In his commentary, Ian MacKenzie rightly notes the link between human infancy and Irenaeus' maturation theme, 'This idea of the potential of growth of Adam from infancy to the fullness of human stature in the Word, and therefore in perfect community of union with God, whereby Adam will be made like unto God points to an integral characteristic of Irenaeus' theology; namely that humanity is given the opportunity to grow and advance in the knowledge of God'. See MacKenzie, *Demonstration*, 116.

> And Adam and Eve…'were naked, and were not ashamed',[65] for there was in them an innocent and infantile mind,[66] and they thought or understood nothing whatsoever of those things that are wickedly born in the soul through lust [*hešt c'ankut'iwnk'*][67] and shameful desires [*amawt'ali c'ankut'iwn*][68]. For at that time they preserved their nature intact, since that which was breathed into the handiwork was the breath of life; and while the breath remains in its order and strength, it is without comprehension or understanding of what is evil. Thus 'they were not ashamed', kissing and embracing each other in holiness in the manner of children.[69]

The focus in this passage is on the pre-pubescence of Adam and Eve, and their lack of awareness of sex and sexual desire.[70] Thus Irenaeus' concept of infancy does not equate to a literal baby, but rather seems to have something more like 'young child' in mind.[71] This same basic idea is also found in *Adversus haereses,* where the infancy of Adam and Eve is again identified as a pre-pubescent state.

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[65] Gen 2:25.

[66] Smith's translates the Armenian, 'for their thoughts were innocent and childlike.' Robinson, 'for there was in them an innocent and childlike mind'. Rousseau, 'car il y avait en eux un esprit ingénu et enfantin'.

[67] The Armenian is literally 'pleasurable desire, concupiscence'; often a translation for ἡδοναί. See Smith, *Proof,* 151, no. 81.

[68] The Armenian is literally, 'shameful desire'. See Smith, *Proof*, 151, no. 81.

[69] *Epid.* 14. The translation of *Epid.* 12 and 14 used in this section follows the work of Steenberg in his essay, 'Children in Paradise', 1-22.

[70] The phrase 'in the manner of children' introduces a certain amount of ambiguity regarding the exact nature of this infancy. Are Adam and Eve only acting like children, but are not really such themselves? Or are they acting 'in the manner of children' because they are indeed themselves children? I take Irenaeus to mean the latter. See the note below.

[71] Commentators of Irenaeus are divided about how to interpret Irenaeus at this point, with the majority of Irenaeus scholars interpreting Irenaeus as speaking of Adam and Eve as spiritual children, not literal children. See for example, Orbe, *Antropología*, 210-14. But of the five passages that reference the infancy of Adam and Eve, only one seems more naturally read as spiritual infancy. The passage is found in *Haer.* 3.23.5, where Irenaeus writes, 'For [Adam] showed his repentance by his conduct, through means of the girdle [which he used], covering himself with fig-leaves, while there were many other leaves, which would have irritated his body in a less degree. He, however, adopted a dress conformable to his disobedience, being awed by the fear of God; and resisting the erring, the lustful propensity of his flesh (since he had lost his natural disposition and child-like mind, and had come to the knowledge of evil things), he girded a bridle of continence upon himself and his wife, fearing God, and waiting for his coming'. It is difficult to suppose of Adam here as a literal young child, for his sin makes him immediately aware of sexual lust and a desire—a post-pubescent reality. But this passage notwithstanding, the other four passages seem difficult to interpret as anything other than a reference to physical childhood. For a detailed analysis of the infancy motif in Irenaeus, along with an examination of the relevant Latin and Greek terms, see Matthew Steenberg, 'Children in Paradise', 1-22. Steenberg himself leans strongly toward a literal interpretation, while noting that some of the ambiguities in Irenaeus make a final assessment difficult. He concludes, 'One can be certain that Irenaeus did not mean "children" to imply [merely] adults with a simple lack of experience…but this is as far as one can go with any attempt at a "physical" description of the first humans' (21). I agree with Steenberg's assessment.

> …and even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin [*virgo tamen adhuc exsistens*]. For in Paradise 'they were both naked, and were not ashamed', inasmuch as they, having been created a short time previously [*quoniam paulo ante facti*], had no understanding of the procreation of children: for it was necessary that they should first come to adult age [*opportebat enim primo illos adolescere*], and then multiply from that time onward.[72]

As noted above, the introduction of Adam and Eve as children serves Irenaeus' larger maturation motif. The linking of these two themes finds full expression in an extended passage of *Adversus haereses* (a portion of which we have already seen above). Irenaeus writes,

> But created things must be inferior to him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin [τὰ δὲ γεγονότα καθὸ Μετέπειτα γενέσεως ἀρξην ἰδίαν ἔσχε]; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect [ὑστεροῦνται τοῦ τελείου]. Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile [νήπια]; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline. For just as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant [βρέφει], but the [infant] is not yet able to receive substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God himself to have made humanity perfect from the first, but humanity could not receive this, being as yet a child [νήπιος]…
>
> And on this account does Paul declare to the Corinthians, 'I have fed you with milk, not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it'….so, in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to humanity [διδόναι τὸ τελειον τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ]; but as the latter was only recently created,

[72] *Haer.* 3.22.4. Notably Irenaeus does not associate procreation with human sinfulness. Procreative sexuality is the destiny of Adam and Eve when they reach adulthood. Irenaeus, unlike many of the later Christian writers, does not rail against sex and sexual desire; what we find in *Epid.* 14 above is about as critical as he gets—which is to say, not very critical. Irenaeus' desire to preserve the goodness of the human body and of the material world prevents him from becoming overly critical of sexuality. See Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 209, who rightly observes, 'For Irenaeus, sexuality is a fundamental characteristic of human existence as a fleshly being, a permanent part of the framework within which men and women grow towards God'.

> he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it. It was for this reason that the Son of God, although he was perfect [τέλειος ὢν], passed through the state of childhood [συνενηπίαζεν] in common with the rest of humanity, partaking of it thus not for his own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of humanity's existence [ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου νήπιον οὕτω χωρούμενος], in order that humanity might be able to receive him [ὡς ἄνθρωπος αὐτὸν χωρεῖν ἠδύνατο]. There was nothing, therefore, impossible to and deficient in God, [implied in the fact] that humanity was not an uncreated being; but this merely applied to them who were lately created, [namely] humanity.[73]

For Irenaeus, the concept of human infancy explains how humanity is simultaneously good and in need of growth; complete and yet moving toward completion. As Lawson rightly observes, the human infancy motif in Irenaeus 'lights up his work', [74] and allows us to see how Irenaeus is able to both preserve the goodness of the original creation, while at the same time making room for genuine progress beyond original perfection.

But most salient for our purposes, this theme also shapes the opening of Irenaeus' biblical narrative. Here, direct relevance regarding the role of the Devil comes into focus. The infancy of Adam and Eve becomes for Irenaeus an explanation for the occasion of Genesis 3 and the success of the Devil in his temptation of Adam and Eve. For Irenaeus, it is because Adam and Eve were infants at the time of creation that they were so easily deceived by the Devil. Irenaeus writes,

> Therefore, having made the man[75] lord [κυριος] of the earth and of everything that is in it, [God] secretly appointed him as lord over those [angels] who were servants [δοῦλοι] in it. They, however, were in their full development, while the lord, that is the man, was very little, for he was an infant, and it was necessary for him to reach full development [*karelut'iwn*]

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[73] *Haer.* 4.38.1-2.

[74] Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 213. Lawson helpfully continues, 'Irenaeus does not indeed explicitly say that there is one perfection of the infant, innocent, and complete in every faculty appropriate to infancy, and another perfection, which is the crown of the saint who has contended with sin and triumphed. This vital distinction is, however, not far from being implied by what is said of Adam as on the one hand perfect, and on the other hand, as possessed only of the destiny and equipment to perfection'.

[75] 'Man' in this passage is a reference to Adam specifically, rather than a general reference to humanity. Eve is not created until *Epid.* 13, the following chapter.

by growing [76]….But the man was a little one, and his discretion still underdeveloped, wherefore also he was easily misled by the deceiver.[77]

The infancy of humanity at creation serves to highlight the egregious nature of the Devil's assault upon humanity. The Devil (as we will see in the following chapters) was appointed by God to care for and steward the material world on behalf of humanity—the world's rightful lords. Rather than faithfully fulfilling this stewardship, the Devil took advantage of humanity's weakness and exploited it for his own gain. Irenaeus will go on to assign the fall of the world and the birth of sin most fully to the Devil, for the Devil was in his full development, while Adam and Eve were mere children. As such, Irenaeus interprets the divine cursing of Genesis 3 to be directed chiefly at the Devil; Adam and Eve are only cursed indirectly via the curse of the ground and childbearing.[78]

The significance of this infancy narrative vis-à-vis the Devil is helpfully elucidated when set in contrast to John Milton's later retelling of the Devil's fall in his *Paradise Lost*. For Milton the Devil's envy is directed toward Christ—a power mightier than himself. The initial conflict in heaven—short as it is—results in the Devil's expulsion from Paradise and banishment to hell. From hell, the Devil plots his futile war against the greater divine power. This narrative has resulted in a long history of interpreters who view Milton's Devil as a tragic and sympathetic figure—a Spartacus against the immovable might of the Roman Empire.[79] He is doomed to failure, yet bravely contends for his autonomy and self-rule. God is the indomitable Creator who crushes the smaller creature beneath his feet. It is doubtful in my estimation that Milton intended his account of the Devil to be read in such a way; in any case, it is certain that Irenaeus did not. There is nothing tragic in Irenaeus' account of the Devil, nothing admirable. For Irenaeus, the Devil betrayed his charge and took advantage of those who were weaker than himself—the very persons who were depending upon him. The Devil is the greater power crushing the lesser power, unprovoked and unjustly.[80]

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[76] Smith remarks, 'The [Armenian] word so rendered is *karelut'iwn*, which would mean "possibility". See his *Proof*, 150.

[77] *Epid.* 12. Steenberg's translation does not include the last sentence of this paragraph. Here we follow Robinson's translation.

[78] *Haer.* 3.23.5.

[79] Forsyth comments, 'A sign of Satan's power [in *Paradise Lost*] is the way some editors fill their commentaries with anxious notes warning us against deciding it in his favor'. See Forsyth, 'Satan' in the *Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost*, 17. For such sympathetic readings, see Steadman, 'The Idea of Satan as the Hero of "Paradise Lost"', 253-294. For a concise summary of sympathetic interpretations of the Devil in Milton, see Shawcross, 'An Early View of Satan as Hero of Paradise Lost', 104-5; also Russell, *Mephistopheles*, 97-99. C. S. Lewis argues persuasively against a sympathetic reading in his *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 73-81, 94-103.

[80] Irenaeus' account stands in contrast with Tertullian on this point. For Tertullian, humanity was created in power and glory, as bearers of the image of God. The Devil resorts to subterfuge precisely because of humanity's greater power. Tertullian writes, 'No doubt it was an angel who was

VI. Humanity as Ruler of the World and Angels

Fundamental to our understanding of Irenaeus' account of humanity is the manner in which Irenaeus frames up humanity as the original and eschatological rulers over the material world and the angelic realm. In the opening chapters of *Epideixis*, Irenaeus introduces Adam (and thus humanity) as the appointed ruler of the material world and the angels in it. He writes,

> Moreover he [Adam] was free and self-controlled, being made by God for this end, that he might rule all those things that were upon the earth. And this great created world, prepared by God before the formation of humanity, was given to the man as his place, with all things whatsoever in it.[81] And there were in this place also with [their] tasks the servants of that God who formed all things; and the steward, who was set over all his fellow-servants received this place. Now the servants were angels, and the steward was the archangel. Therefore, having made the man lord [κυριος] of the earth and of everything that is in it, [God] secretly appointed him [i.e. Adam] as lord over those [angels] who were servants [δοῦλοι] in it'.[82]

Irenaeus begins his creation account with a statement that Adam was lord of the earth, and likewise lord of the 'steward' and the other servants (i.e. the Devil and his angels).[83] As we have seen above, this lordship was not fully realized at the beginning of creation, due to humanity's infancy. Yet the clear trajectory of humanity in Irenaeus' narrative is toward exaltation and lordship over both the material world and the steward (soon to be Devil).[84]

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the seducer; but then the victim of that seduction was free, and master of himself; and as being the image and likeness of God, was stronger than any angel; and as being, too, the *afflatus* of the divine being, was nobler than that material spirit of which angels were made', Tertullian, *Marc.* 2.8. And again in 2.9, 'Undoubtedly, when you demand for it [the soul] an equality with God, that is, a freedom from fault, I contend that it is infirm. But when the comparison is challenged with an angel, I am compelled to maintain that the head over all things is the stronger of the two, to whom the angels are ministers, who is destined to be the judge of angels, if he shall stand fast in the law of God—an obedience which he refused at first'.

[81] See no. 58 in Chapter One for the translation of this phrase.

[82] *Epid.* 11-12.

[83] For the Devil as 'steward' in this passage see the following chapter of this dissertation.

[84] Thus Wingren rightly remarks, 'There was no creature within creation who stood over man—and it was this pre-eminent life which Satan had succeeded in obtaining by false pretense and subjecting to death'. Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 96.

This positioning of humanity will serve as an organizing principle in the rest of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative. Though humanity is the rightful ruler of both the material and celestial realms,[85] the first human pair is deceived by the Devil and forfeits their rule. Immediately following the Devil's assault upon humanity God sets about to undo the Devil's work; the divine plan will not be thwarted by the Devil's apostasy. For Irenaeus, it is absolutely essential that humanity becomes what God intended it to be from the start—namely the ruler of the earth and all things in it.[86] Irenaeus writes,

> For it is just [*iustum*] that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived [*vivificari*] again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude [*servitutem*], in that they should reign in it [*in ipsa regnare eos*]. For God is rich in all things, and all things are his. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval [*pristinum*] condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous [*sine prohibitione servire iustis*].[87]

Irenaeus goes on in the above passage to quote Paul in Romans 8:19-21, clearly linking together the exaltation of humanity with the renewal of the material world. The restoration of humanity to the world's throne means the restoration of creation.

Likewise for Irenaeus, the restoration of humanity coincides with humanity's victory over the Devil. The scope of humanity's original lordship was not merely terrestrial, but extended into the celestial realm. Just as humanity must once again assume dominion over the material world, so too over the angelic world. In this vein, for Irenaeus it is not sufficient that God *qua* God defeat the Devil and undo the curse of death. The Devil had defeated humanity, and by humanity must be defeated. 'For if humankind had not overcome the enemy of humankind, the enemy would not have been justly overcome' [*Si enim homo non*

[85] For Irenaeus, the original scope of humanity's rule over the angels seems limited to those angels specifically tasked with caring for the material world. Irenaeus acknowledges other angelic 'powers' and 'thrones' beyond the Devil and his angels, but it does not seem that Irenaeus intends humanity's initial lordship to extend beyond the domain of the earth into the whole of the 'seven heavens'. See *Epid.* 9-10. Of course, the final mature lordship of humanity-in-Christ would extend as far as Christ's earthly and heavenly rule, to include the whole of the angelic realm.

[86] So Wingren, 'When man becomes man and reaches his destination, God's decree for Creation is fulfilled. And it is an integral part of this original decree that man is to "rule" all other living creatures on earth'. Wingren, *Man and Incarnation,* 184.

[87] *Haer.* 5.32.1.

vicisset inimicum hominis, non iuste victus esset inimicus].[88] And with specific reference to humanity's future conquest of the Devil, Irenaeus writes,

> For this end did he put enmity between the serpent and the woman and her seed, they keeping it up mutually: he,[89] the sole of whose foot should be bitten, having power also to tread upon the enemy's head; but the other biting, killing, and impeding the steps of humanity, until the seed did come appointed to tread down his head, [the seed] which was born of Mary, of which the prophet speaks: 'Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the basilisk; thou shalt trample down the lion and the dragon';[90] indicating that sin, which was set up and spread out against humanity, and which rendered them subject to death, should be deprived of its power, along with death, which rules; and that the lion, that is, Antichrist, rampant against humanity in the latter days, should be trampled down by him; and that he should bind 'the dragon, that old serpent'[91] and subject him to the power of humanity, who had been conquered so that all his might should be trodden down [*et subiciens potestati hominis qui fuerat victus ad calcandam eius omnem virtutem*].[92]

This victory, of course, is accomplished in Christ—the perfect human being. But it must be noted that for Irenaeus, Christ's lordship over the material world and the angelic

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[88] *Haer.* 3.18.7. Beyond this passage, Irenaeus speaks of the Devil being 'justly' overcome in *Haer.* 3.23.1, 5.1.1, 5.2.1, 5.21.1, 5.21.3. It is generally agreed that Irenaeus did not hold to a ransom theory of atonement, wherein Christ's death constituted payment to the Devil. See Rivière, 'La mort du Christ et la justice envers le démon', 57-60, and Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 173-74. The idea that Satan had a just claim upon humanity because of sin is not found in Irenaeus. For Irenaeus, the Devil is an imposter, an unlawful tyrant who unjustly stole what did not belong to him. Thus *Haer.* 5.24.4., 'Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man's territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the Devil, being one among those angels who are placed over the spirit of the air, as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law'. God owes Satan nothing, for Satan is a thief and a robber; the Devil possesses humanity 'unjustly' (*Haer.* 5.1.1, 5.21.3). It was fitting and proper that since the Devil was the cause of humanity's undoing, humanity would be the cause of the Devil's undoing. Steenberg rightly comments, 'There can be no doubts that for Irenaeus the devil possessed the human race and ruled over it unjustly, holding no genuine rights over humanity, and God was not obliged to him in any way'. Steenberg goes on to effectively show that here and throughout such passages, *iustum* has the meaning of 'proper' or 'fitting'. See Steenberg's comments in volume 64 of *ACW*, 173-75, no. 42. See also Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 128-29, who similarly argues that for Irenaeus, the Devil had no just claim over humanity; Christ's death is not a ransom paid to the Devil.

[89] Lat. *illo*, a reference to Jesus Christ and Gen 3:15.

[90] Psa 91:13.

[91] Rev 12:9.

[92] *Haer.* 3.23.7.

realm is not *in place* of humanity's lordship. Rather it is in and through Christ that humanity regains its place of dominion. Indeed Adam himself must become all that God intended, lest Paul's prophetic word in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 regarding Christ's victory over death fall to the ground.[93]

We are, of course, getting ahead of ourselves in Irenaeus' narrative. I will press this point further in the next chapter when we discuss Irenaeus' soteriology. But for now, it is sufficient to note that humanity's lordship over the material and angelic realms serves as the backdrop for the Devil's envy of humanity. Humanity was created 'higher' than the angels, even if in infancy. This exalted status was never the possession of the angels, nor their destiny.

VII. Absence of 'Angelic Soteriology'

Following closely on the heels of the above point is the notable absence of what one might call 'angelic soteriology' in Irenaeus. By 'angelic soteriology' I here refer to the idea, especially prevalent in Irenaeus' Gnostic opponents as well as the later Christian tradition, that the soteriological goal of humanity is to become like the angels.[94] This idea has no place in Irenaeus' soteriology precisely because it has no place in his anthropology.[95] Undoubtedly Irenaeus' fierce contest with the Gnostics, who aggressively and explicitly maintained an 'angelic soteriology', helped push his anthropology in anthropocentric and terrestrial directions. For Irenaeus, the soteriological goal of redemption is not to become like the angels, but rather to transcend the angels—as God intended all along—and to become fully human.

While stopping short of the full blown Gnostic account, examples of angelic soteriology can be found all throughout the writings of Tertullian, Clement, Origen, Augustine, and beyond—all the way to Anselm (who, like Augustine, speculates that

[93] See *Haer.* 3.23.7.

[94] I am using the term 'angelic soteriology' to refer primarily to ontology, i.e. that the goal of salvation is for human beings to shed or modify their humanity such that they become ontologically like the angels. But it is important to distinguish between ontology and function with respect to the term 'angel'. Irenaeus on a number of occasions (most especially with reference to Isa. 9:6) refers to Christ as an 'angel'. Here he has in mind Christ's function as a divine 'messenger', rather than any ontological status. See Junker, 'Christ as Angel', 238-45. The Gnostics, however, most typically seem to use the term 'angel' in an ontological sense to denote ontological superiority of angels over humans. It is this latter sense that underlies my use of the phrase 'angelic soteriology.'

[95] Thus Behr rightly notes, 'Neither in protology nor in eschatology does Irenaeus ever characterize or assimilate man or human life to the angelic'. Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 43.

humans were created to make up for the number of fallen angels).[96] Short samples from Tertullian and from the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* are sufficient to illustrate the point: Tertullian writes, 'Wherefore we can now recall to our own minds, and remind the heretics also, that he has promised that he will one day form humans into angels, who once formed angels into humans'.[97] Tertullian again: 'You are about to pass through a noble struggle, in which the living God acts the part of superintendent, in which the Holy Ghost is your trainer, in which the prize is an eternal crown of angelic essence, citizenship in the heavens, glory everlasting'.[98]

The same sort of sentiment can be found in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. 'For they kept before their view escape from that fire which is eternal and never shall be quenched, and looked forward with the eyes of their heart to those good things which are laid up for such as endure; things "which ear hath not heard, nor eye seen, neither have entered into the heart of man," but were revealed by the Lord to them, inasmuch as they were no longer men, but had already become angels'.[99]

The entire thrust of Irenaeus' anthropology runs against such sentiments. For Irenaeus, the pinnacle of God's creation is humanity. The creature made in the image and likeness of God knows no equal save the one after whose image he is fashioned. Angels, however exalted, fall short of human glory, indeed cannot even comprehend it. Irenaeus writes,

> For there is the one Son, who accomplished his Father's will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, 'which the angels desire to look into';[100] and they [i.e. the angels] are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which his handiwork [i.e. humanity], confirmed and incorporated with his Son, is brought to perfection; that his offspring, the first-begotten Word, should descend to the creature, that is, to what had been

[96] For examples of angelic soteriology, see *Herm.* 3.9.25, 27; Tertullian, *Res.* 36, 42, *An.* 56; Clement, *Paed.* 2.10, *Strom.* 6.13, 7.10, 12, 14; Origen, *Cels. 4*.29, *Comm. Jo.* 2.16; *Comm. Matt.* 12.30; Augustine, *Civ.* 11.15, 12.16, 22, 22.1; Aquinas, *Sum.* 1.62.5, and 1.93.3, where Aquinas states that angels, insofar as they are endowed with a higher intellect than humans, are in some ways more in the image of God than humanity; and Anselm *Cur.* 1.16-18.

[97] Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.9.

[98] Tertullian, *Ad mart.* 3. Tertullian's idea that we become like angels at the resurrection is not a denial of the resurrection of the body. He affirms the resurrection of the flesh throughout his writings, and is more careful elsewhere to insist that we do not actually become angels (see *Res.* 62). But his repeated emphasis that the highpoint of salvation is to become like the angels pushes his soteriology in a celestial rather than terrestrial direction. Irenaeus' anthropology prevents this soteriological direction at the outset.

[99] *Mart. Pol.* 2.

[100] 1 Pet 1:12.

> molded [*plasma*], and that it should be taken hold of by him; and, on the other hand, the creature should take hold of the Word [*capiat Verbum*], and ascend to him, [*et ascendat ad eum*] passing beyond the angels [*supergrediens angelos*], and be made after the image and likeness of God.[101]

Being created according to the image and likeness of God gives humanity its exalted status with respect to the rest of creation. Humanity, in so far as it 'takes hold of' the Word of God, ascends beyond the angels. Here we probably read Irenaeus correctly if we interpret him to teach that humanity transcends the entire angelic host, not merely the 'steward and his angels'. And again, in a striking passage that we have already seen, Irenaeus positions Adam as ontologically superior to the Devil. He writes,

> How, too, could he [Christ] have subdued him [the Devil] who was strong against the human [*qui adversus hominem fortis erat*], who has not only overcome the human, but also retained him under his power [*qui non solum vicit hominem, sed et detinebat eum sub sua potestate*], and conquered him who had conquered, while he set free humankind who had been conquered, unless he had been greater than the human who had been vanquished [*nisi superior fuisset eo homine qui fuerat victus*]? But who else should be superior to, and more eminent than that human who was formed after the likeness of God [*Melior autem eo homine qui secundum similitudinem Dei factus est et praecellentior quisnam sit alius*], except the Son of God, after whose likeness the human was created [*nisi Filius Dei, ad cuius similitudinem factus est homo*]?[102]

A lofty anthropology indeed! Only the Son of God himself is 'superior to, and more eminent' than the human who was formed after the likeness of God. While the Devil was 'strong against the human' in the beginning, due to humanity's infancy, this superior strength was short lived and destined to be eclipsed. This exalted view of humanity as ontologically superior to the angels has obvious relevance for Irenaeus' Devil narrative, particularly the Devil's envy of humanity.

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[101] *Haer.* 5.36.3.
[102] *Haer.* 4.33.4.

VIII. Conclusion

Irenaeus's anthropology is remarkable for its consistent affirmation of the goodness—indeed preeminence—of humanity. For Irenaeus, humanity is the highest of all of God's creatures, uniquely sharing in the image and likeness of God. This exalted status is not merely positional, but is ontological. The human being is not merely a lowly creature treated as though he or she were something special; in the divine ordering of creation humanity *is* truly special, for only humanity participates in the divine life via union with the Word.

The relevance of all of this for our examination of Irenaeus' Devil narrative becomes plain when we understand that for Irenaeus, the Devil's fall takes place due to envy of the first man and woman. Without an awareness of Irenaeus' anthropology, the Devil's envy of humanity seems out of place. But once we consider the high status of humanity in Irenaeus' divine economy, the cohesiveness of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative becomes plain.

To Irenaeus' Devil narrative we now turn.

Section Two

Irenaeus' Account of the Devil

Chapter Three

The Devil's Pre-Fall Identity: Temporary Angelic Steward of Creation

'What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels'.

Hebrews 2:6-7

Having surveyed the basic contours of Irenaeus' cosmology and anthropology, we are now positioned to see how Irenaeus' account of the Devil coheres with his doctrine of Creation. For Irenaeus, the Devil was not always the Devil. Irenaeus, like other early Christian writers, posits a 'fall' in which the Devil loses his place in the heavens and becomes the enemy of God, of the good angels, and of humanity. Irenaeus does not offer us an exhaustive portrait of the Devil's pre-fall identity, which is consistent with his general anti-speculative posture. Yet given the paucity of scriptural information available on the topic, he has more to say on this matter than we might otherwise expect.[1]

Here in this chapter I provide an overview of the Devil's identity prior to his fall, as described by Irenaeus, with particular attention to those aspects of the Devil's pre-fall identity and status that influence the overall direction of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative. Irenaeus' account of the pre-fall Devil includes five notable features: 1) The Devil began as an archangel, 2) the Devil was a servant of God, 3) the Devil was the chief steward of the material world, 4) the Devil was limited in power and knowledge, and most significantly, 5) the Devil was destined to be subject to humanity.

Insofar as the Devil is a vital character in Irenaeus' soteriological plotline, these five elements of the Devil's pre-fall identity provide the necessary backstory for understanding the Devil's subsequent motivation and activity in Irenaeus' narrative—especially with respect to the Devil's assault upon humanity.

We begin with a general account of Irenaeus' angelology.

[1] Whatever the origins of Irenaeus' narrative, it is clear that he has not constructed it whole cloth; significant pieces of Irenaeus' pre-fall account of the Devil can be found in earlier Christian writers. See Ignatius, *Rom*. 5, *Trall*. 4.2; Papias, *Frag*. 11, 24; Justin, *2 Apol*. 5; Tatian, *Graec*. 7; Anthenagoras, *Leg.* 10, 24, 25; and Theophilus, *Autol*. 2.28-29. No single one of these authors mirrors exactly Irenaeus' account of the pre-fall Devil, yet the similarities are too alike to be a coincidence. The extent to which Irenaeus was immediately aware of these works, or only derivatively influenced, is difficult to determine. See Appendix B of this thesis for an extended discussion about the possible influences that shaped Irenaeus' account of the Devil, as well as the chart on page 272.

I. Irenaeus' Angelology

Fundamental to Irenaeus' perspective on the Devil is the idea that the Devil began as one of the angelic host, a 'creature of God, like the other angels'.[2] Insofar as the Devil began as an angel, all that Irenaeus says regarding angels has application by extension to the Devil. In what follows, I offer a detailed account of Irenaeus' larger angelology, with particular attention to how this shapes Irenaeus' understanding of the Devil's pre-fall identity. This general analysis of Irenaeus' angelology is followed by a narrower examination of the Devil as pre-fallen archangel. Four general features of Irenaeus' angelology can be observed: 1) excessive speculation about the nature of angels should be avoided, 2) the angels are expressions of God's great power, 3) the angels are servants of God, and 4) the angels are caretakers of the material world.[3]

A. Excessive Speculation about the Nature of Angels Should Be Avoided

For Irenaeus, angels are spiritual beings, created by God to reside in the heavens. 'Now this world is encompassed by seven heavens, in which dwell powers and angels and archangels, doing service to God, the Almighty who created all things'.[4] The angels, then, are spiritual beings made directly by God.[5] Their primary abode is the heavens, and their primary function is to perform service to God. Beyond this, Irenaeus is not particularly interested in explicating the mysteries of the heavenly beings or their realm, and he roundly criticizes the Gnostics for their excessive speculation about the Pleroma.[6]

Yet Gnostic fascination with the Pleroma compels Irenaeus to comment on the nature of the angelic beings and their relationship to the Creator.[7] In doing so, he

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[2] *Haer.* 4.41.1. For a list of references about the Devil as an angel in Irenaeus, see the chart in the Appendix B. The idea that the Devil began as an angel is not original to Irenaeus. See Justin, *Dial*. 79; Tatian, *Graec.* 7; Athenagoras, *Leg*. 24; and Theophilus, *Autol*. 2.28. Russell, *Satan*, 78 notes that this view was fixed in the Christian tradition from Theophilus onward (c. 170). Russell's comment implies that there were alternative early Christian perspectives on the Devil's origin. However, I am not aware of any ancient Christian writer (here we exclude Gnostic writings) before or after Irenaeus who offered an alternative understanding of the Devil's original ontology.

[3] Irenaeus' angelology is generally consistent with late Jewish and early Christian thought. See Thackeray, *St. Paul*, 172-79; Anderson, *Genesis of Perfection*, 21-41.

[4] *Epid.* 9.

[5] That God himself directly created the angels, see also *Haer.* 2.28.7, 2.30.3. This is in contrast to many Gnostic accounts, wherein the angels come into being only indirectly by the 'Father', and apart from his will.

[6] *Haer.* 1.11.4.

[7] In many Gnostic systems, the angels were the framers of the material world, and the demiurge the chief among them. This generally cast the angels in a negative light (e.g. Simon,

underscores his primary point that detailed information about the angelic hosts lies outside the purview of human knowledge. In an extended section of the second book of *Adversus haereses,* Irenaeus critiques the Gnostic quest for secret knowledge. Some things, Irenaeus tell us, are known only to God. Questions such as, 'What was God doing before he made the world?'[8] or, 'How was the Son produced by the Father?'[9] are questions about which 'Scripture has not informed us, nor has an apostle told us, nor has the Lord taught us. It becomes us, therefore, to leave the knowledge of [such matters] to God…'[10]

> In like manner, also, we must leave the cause why, while all things were made by God, certain of his creatures sinned and revolted [*transgressa sunt et abscesserunt*] from a state of submission to God, and others, indeed the great majority, persevered, and do still persevere, in subjection to him who formed them, and also of what nature [*naturae*] those are who sinned, and of what nature [*naturae*] those who persevere,—[we must, I say, leave the cause of these things] to God and his Word, to whom alone he said, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool'. But as for us, we still dwell upon the earth, and have not yet sat down upon his throne.[11]

For Irenaeus, we should not be surprised that we cannot penetrate the mystery of heavenly things—such as the nature of the angels who fell, and the nature of those who persevered—when we have not yet mastered earthly things. 'And there is no cause for wonder if this is the case with us as respects things spiritual and heavenly, and such as require to be made known to us by revelation, since many even of those things which lie at our very feet (I mean such as belongs to this world, which we handle, and see, and are in close contact with) transcend our knowledge, so that even these we must leave to God'.[12]

That the Scriptures declare the existence of angels is plain enough, but substantive knowledge of the angelic realm has not been revealed by God, and thus is not to be a matter of speculation. MacKenzie aptly summarizes Irenaeus' approach: '…to indulge in such

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Saturninus, and Basilides; see *Haer.* 1.23.3-4, 24.4). But Gnostic accounts could also depict the angels in a positive light. In the Valentinian system, at least some angels are portrayed positively as the 'body guards' of Jesus, having the same nature as Jesus. See *Haer.* 1.2.6. And some angels were associated with the seven heavens, with each heaven being an intelligent being. See *Haer.* 1.5.2.

[8] *Haer.* 2.28.3.

[9] *Haer.* 2.28.6.

[10] *Haer.* 2.28.7. Here Irenaeus follows the spirit of Deuteronomy 29:29 without quoting it: 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed to us and to our children forever…'

[11] *Haer.* 2.28.7.

[12] *Haer.* 2.28.2.

speculations, even if they were within his theological priorities and approval, which they were not, would give opportunity for gnostic exploitation, the very tendency which he opposed'.[13] We who dwell upon the 'footstool' should not expect to understand all that happens upon the throne. Those who presume to know more than is possible in this age (i.e. the Gnostics) cast themselves headlong into error, arrogance, and ultimately judgment.

This epistemically modest approach to the angelic realm helps to temper excessive speculation by Irenaeus regarding the Devil. The bulk of what Irenaeus has to say about the Devil finds its origin in various New Testament passages—especially the gospels and Revelation. And for the most part, Irenaeus' comments do not attempt to 'go beyond' the scriptural content. Like knowledge of the angels, knowledge of the Devil belongs to the world above the footstool. Only with respect to the Devil's origin and motivation for tempting humanity do we see Irenaeus reaching beyond Scripture. And even here Irenaeus seems to be drawing upon an already established tradition within early Christianity (more on this to follow in Appendix B).

B. Angels as Expressions of God's Power

While it is impossible to arrive at an exhaustive knowledge of the angels, Irenaeus nonetheless views them as significant manifestations of God's greatness and power. In his polemic against the Gnostics, Irenaeus offers the angelic hosts as evidence of the Creator's superiority over the 'enlightened' Gnostic teachers. The Gnostics maintained that they had achieved a state of enlightenment that was superior to the earthly demiurge. Irenaeus recounts their scheme:

> For they themselves, in as far as they are souls, remain in the intermediate place; while, in as far as they are body, they will be consumed with the rest of matter. Such being the state of the case, these infatuated men declare that they rise above the Creator [*demiurgum*]; and, inasmuch as they proclaim themselves superior to that God who made and adorned the heavens, and the earth, and all things that are in them, and maintain that they themselves are spiritual, while they are in fact shamefully carnal on account of their so great impiety,—affirming that he, who has made his angels spirits [*angelos suos spiritus*], and is clothed with light as with a garment, and holds the circle of

[13] MacKenzie, *Demonstration*, 111.

> the earth, as it were, in his hand, in whose sight its inhabitants are counted as grasshoppers, and who is the Creator and Lord [*demiurgum et Dominum*] also of all spiritual substance [*et universae spiritalis substantiae*], is of an animal nature,—they do beyond doubt and verily betray their own madness.[14]

Irenaeus concludes this passage with the following challenge to the Gnostic teachers: 'The superior person is to be proved by his deeds. In what way, then, can they show themselves superior to the Creator?' In answering his own question, Irenaeus provides a litany of God's accomplishments, not unlike what we find in the latter chapters of Job. Throughout, Irenaeus appeals to the wonders of creation. God has made the earth and called into existence the stars and planets; he brings rain and snow and frost, each of which is suited to its season; likewise, he brings heat and dryness. He has made the rivers and the fountains, the flowers and the trees. He has created the multitude of animals—some rational and others irrational, but all adorned with beauty.[15] Notably, Irenaeus' defense of God's power reaches its climax with a description of the heavenly hosts. Irenaeus writes,

> And who can enumerate one by one all the remaining objects which have been constituted by the power of God, and are governed by his wisdom? Or who can search out the greatness of that God who made them? And what can be told of those existences which are above heaven, and which do not pass away, such as Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, and Powers innumerable [*Angeli, Archangeli, Throni, Dominationes, Potestates innumerabiles*]? Against what one of these works, then, do they [the Gnostics] set themselves in opposition? What have they similar to show, as having been made through themselves, or by themselves, since even they too are the workmanship and creatures of this [Creator]?[16]

For Irenaeus then, the angelic powers have been created by God as a high expression of his divine power. Though they are not to be objects of worship, or of excessive speculation, the angels nonetheless clearly convey God's greatness and transcendence—

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[14] *Haer.* 2.29.3-2.30.2.

[15] It is not likely that Irenaeus' logic here would have been immediately convincing to the Gnostics, who viewed the material world as inherently corrupt. For the Gnostics, the fact that Irenaeus' God was the Creator and Lord of the material world was not a mark in his favor, but rather evidence of his corruption. Irenaeus attempts to tightens his argument in 2.30.6, but it is doubtful any but the already convinced would have found his logic compelling.

[16] *Haer.* 2.30.3. See also 3.8.3, where Irenaeus again uses the angels as evidence of God's greatness.

especially over and against the Gnostic teachers. It is from this class of beings that the Devil emerges. As such, the Devil once possessed in himself the capacity to show forth God's great power. And he still does after his rebellion—even if not to his credit. Just as God shows forth his power through the creation of the angels, he will show forth his power though the destruction of the Devil and those who fell with him.

C. Angels Are Servants of God

Yet despite the greatness of angelic power, the angels, insofar as they are creatures, are subordinate to God. '[God] has a vast and unspeakable number of servants. For his offspring and his similitude do minister [*ministrat*] to him in every respect; that is the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Word and Wisdom; whom all angels serve [*serviunt*], and to whom they are subject' [*subiecti*].[17]

Notably, Irenaeus is keen to insist that God is self-subsisting. As such, the service rendered by the angels does not fill a vacancy in God. The angels serve God, not because he is in need of their service, but because they need to serve him. Irenaeus writes '…in [the heavens] dwell powers and angels and archangels, doing service to God,[18] the Almighty and maker of all things: not as to one having need of anything, but lest they too[19] be idle and useless and accursed'.[20] The creature must orient his life around the Creator, for the sake of the creature.[21]

The exact nature of the angel's service is not made explicit by Irenaeus.[22] Given Irenaeus' adoption of the existing late Jewish/early Christian 'seven-heaven' cosmology, examples of which can be found in the *Testamentum Levi* and the *Ascensio Isaiae*, it is possible that he has something in mind similar to what we find in these two works. In the *Testamentum Levi,* the angels in the third heaven (from the bottom) are the angels who will execute God's judgment upon the earth at the time of the apocalypse. In the fourth heaven

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[17] *Haer.* 4.7.4.

[18] Smith suggests, 'giving homage'. *Proof,* 53.

[19] Smith sees an allusion to the rebel angels in 'too'. *Proof,* 146-47, no. 57. Compare with Robinson's translation, which leaves out the adverb, 'but that they may not be idle…'

[20] *Epid.* 9. Compare Irenaeus' logic here with a similar reason given by Justin for the temple sacrifices (*Dial*. 22), namely that offering sacrifices is not for God's benefit, but for his people insofar as it keeps them away from idolatry.

[21] See MacKenzie's helpful comments about angels as creatures of God. *Demonstration,* 112.

[22] MacKenzie suggests that for Irenaeus, 'the seven forms of service, represented by the seven heavens, are primarily and fundamentally the ways of the ministering relation of the Spirit to the incarnate Word', *Demonstration*, 97.

are the 'thrones and dominions' which offer hymns to God. At the next level are the angels who bear the prayers of the saints up to angels above, who in turn are the angels in the highest heaven who are in 'the presence of the Lord. These highest angels minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the ignorance of the righteous'.[23]

Yet as noted above, Irenaeus is keen to avoid any speculation about angelic activity. As such, Irenaeus nowhere offers us even a modest level of detail about angelic activity such as we find in (for example) the *Testamentum Levi*. For Irenaeus, at least some of the angels were initially assigned to care for the material world (more on which below). And Irenaeus often quotes Scripture (typically without comment) that notes angelic activity (e.g. Gabriel appearing to Mary, angelic visitations to Peter and Cornelius, etc.). Beyond this, we are not told in detail exactly how the angels 'minister' to God. Yet the angels' identity as 'servants' is common throughout Irenaeus, and serves to underscore their subservient relationship to the Creator. The nature of this relationship will bear significantly on the Devil as one who was created to be a servant of God but who subsequently rebelled.

D. Angels Are Caretakers of the Material World

In many Gnostic schemes the angels are the makers and framers of the material world, along with the evil demiurge—who is himself one of the angels.[24] But for Irenaeus, the angels are most certainly not the framers of the material world; as we have already seen, this task is reserved directly for God. Irenaeus writes,

> For the Son, who is the Word of God, arranged these things beforehand from the beginning [*ab initio praestruebat*], the Father being in no want of angels [*non indigente Patre angelis*], in order that he might call the creation into being, and form humanity, for whom also the creation was made; nor, again, standing in need of any instrumentality for the framing of created things, or for the ordering of those things which had reference to humanity; while, [at the same time,] he has a vast and unspeakable number of servants.[25]

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[23] See *T. Levi*. 3. Likewise *Ascen. Isa.*10 classifies the angels of each heaven as distinct, though we do not see what function they perform. Both works are dated by scholars between 100-200 AD. Whether Irenaeus was aware of either is not certain. See Smith, *Proof*, 146 no. 57, who notes a number of similarities between Irenaeus and *Ascension of Isaiah*.

[24] *Haer.* 1.24.4.

[25] *Haer.* 4.7.4.

The angels are not the framers of the material world. Yet as servants of God, the angels do have an important role to play in administering the affairs of the cosmos. Irenaeus writes, '[God] has established with the Word the whole world, and the angels too are included in the world; and to the whole world he has given laws, that each one keep to his place and not overstep the boundary laid down by God, each accomplishing the work marked out for him'.[26] The nature of this angelic 'work' is clarified in the next chapter. 'In the domain [i.e. the world] were also, with their tasks, the servants of that God who fashioned all, and this domain was in the keeping of the steward,[27] who was set over all his fellow servants. Now the servants were angels, but the steward the archangel'.[28] The picture requires some piecing together, but Irenaeus appears to be suggesting that at least some of the angels—and the steward in particular—had the unique responsibility to care for the material world. The same idea is again mentioned briefly in *Adversus haereses,*

> Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man's territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the Devil, being one among those angels who have been placed over the spirit of the air [*sic autem et Diabolus, cum sit unus ex angelis his qui super spiritum aeris praepositi sunt*], as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians'.[29]

The *spiritus aeris* here is a reference to the lowest level of heaven, and is a reference to Satan and the angels who dwell in the firmament, and who thus presumably, from this position in the cosmos, exercise their stewardship over the material world.

Our understanding of Irenaeus' position here is informed by other early Christian writers, who explicitly taught some form of angelic stewardship over the material world. So Papias, 'Some of them—obviously meaning those angels that once were holy—he assigned

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[26] *Epid.* 10. Irenaeus here seems to be making a distinction between terrestrial and celestial angels. See Smith, *Proof,* 148, no. 63.

[27] I am here following Robinson's translation. Smith glosses the Armenian *tnawren hazarapet* as 'administrator in chief', suggesting an equivalent to οικονόμος χιλίαρχος (colonel manager). See Smith, *Proof,* 150, no. 68. For the military and political associations with *hazarapet,* see Gignoux, 'Chiliarch', 423-24. Wilson and Mekerttschian suggest 'Steward-Ruler' here and throughout. See their translation in *PO,* vol. 12, 668.

[28] *Epid.* 11.

[29] *Haer.* 5.24.4., cf. Eph 2:2.

to rule over the orderly arrangements of the earth, and commissioned them to rule well'.[30] Likewise Justin, 'God, when he had made the whole world . . . committed the care of humanity and of all things under heaven to angels whom he appointed over them'.[31] And Athenagoras, *Plea*, 24, 'For this is the office of the angels: to exercise providence for God over the things created and ordered by him, so that God may have the universal and general providence of the whole, while the particular parts are provided for by the angels appointed over them…'[32] Taken together, it is likely that Irenaeus has something similar in mind when he speaks of the angels as serving God by 'keeping' the domain of the earth.[33] But exactly what this care consisted of is not certain. In pre-first century Jewish thought the angels were said to have dominion over nations and peoples,[34] but Irenaeus seems to suggest something different—since for Irenaeus, the angelic stewardship seems to be in effect from the very beginning of creation (and thus prior to nations and peoples). Was it the ordering of the powers of the natural world—the winds, the snows, the rivers, the oceans, etc.? Or perhaps watch-care of the animals?[35] Irenaeus does not tell us.

In any event, this care of the material world was, it appears, temporary. Irenaeus insists that the world was ultimately made for humanity. 'And this world of creation, prepared by God before he fashioned the man,[36] was given to the man as his domain,[37] with all things whatsoever in it'.[38] Yet the man, at the time of his creation was still a 'little one',[39] and not yet able to 'be master of everything on earth'.[40] The angels, however, were 'in their

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[30] Papias, *Frag.* 11. Here it is the 'earth angels', i.e. the steward angels, that 'once were holy'. The implication is that it was these angels in particular that fell. This fits neatly with Irenaeus' account of the fall of the angels.

[31] Justin, *2 Apol.* 5.

[32] Athenagoras, *Leg*. 24. See also 10, 25.

[33] However, see MacKenzie who argues for less similarity here between Irenaeus and Justin and Papias. For Mackenzie, Irenaeus is hesitant to assign the angels a stewardship role over the material world, since such a role would play into Gnostic cosmologies. 'Irenaeus does not approach anything as definite as angelic dominion. Dominion could imply territory, and territory ownership, and ownership that the holder had created that domain. Irenaeus deliberately removed himself from such a train of thought; it was too near the tenants of the gnostic system'. *Demonstration,* 113. While I am sympathetic to MacKenzie's point, based on Irenaeus' comments, it seems he is content to work within the 'angelic stewardship' framework, even at the risk of it being deployed against him by his Gnostic opponents.

[34] See for example Daniel 10:13, 20 which makes reference to the 'prince of Persia' and the 'prince of Greece' and to 'Michael, your prince' [i.e., Daniel's]. Justin's singular comment in *2 Apol*. 5 might point in this direction as well.

[35] Something along this line seems suggested in *Herm*. 1.4.2.

[36] Eve is not introduced until *Epid.* 13, indicating that Irenaeus has only Adam in mind when he references 'man'.

[37] Smith views the Armenian *vayr* [domain] as the equivalent of τόπος. See Smith, *Proof*, 149, no. 67.

[38] *Epid.* 11. See no. 58 in Chapter One for the translation of 'all things whatsoever in it'.

[39] *Epid.* 12. See also *Epid.* 14. Reynders offers νήπιος and *infans* as the Greek and Latin parallels for the Armenian. See Reynders, *Vocabulaire de la Demonstration et des Fragments*, 52.

[40] *Epid.* 11.

full development'.[41] The implication here is that it was the duty of (at least some) of the angels to keep and govern the world until such time as humanity came of age.[42]

Here Irenaeus is unique among the other early Christian writers. Papias, Justin, and Athenagoras, all who make some mention of angelic stewardship, do not speak of it as a temporary stewardship, nor do they mention Irenaeus' human infancy perspective. Note, however, that the relevant passages from Papias, Justin, and Athenagoras comprise the sum of nearly all that remains extant regarding their views on angelic stewardship. As such, we do not find passages in these authors that explicitly deny the temporary nature of this stewardship; the paucity of their comments and their silence on the duration of the angelic stewardship cannot be taken as a refutation of Irenaeus' position. Regardless, this aspect of Irenaeus' angelology has significant implications for how he recounts the Devil's fall and the subsequent conflict between the Devil and humanity.

All of the above thus deepens our basic understanding of Irenaeus' account of the Devil's origin and ontology. Insofar as the Devil began as an angel, the Devil, like his angelic peers, began as a creature and servant of God, and a high expression of God's great power. Having explored Irenaeus' angelology more generally, we can now turn our attention to his more explicit comments regarding the Devil.

II. The Devil Began as an Archangel

For Irenaeus, the Devil began as an archangel over the other angels assigned to care for creation. 'Now the servants were angels, but the steward the archangel'.[43] As Irenaeus unfolds his narrative in the subsequent chapters of *Epideixis*, the 'steward' is clearly identified as the Devil.[44] It is against this backdrop that we can understand the Devil as a fallen archangel. The Devil, even as an archangel, is not unique in ontology or power. As we have already seen in *Epid.* 9, Irenaeus frames up a 'seven-heaven' cosmology in which exist

[41] *Epid.* 12.

[42] Irenaeus' position on angelic stewardship is consistent with his account of the fall of the 'watcher angels'—the idea that the 'sons of God' in Genesis 6 were angelic stewards who fell because of their lust for human women, and the spirits of whose offspring became 'demons' (as distinct from fallen angels). See *Epid*. 18, *Haer*. 4.16.2, 36.4. The idea is sourced in 1 Enoch 1-36, and is likewise affirmed by Justin in *2 Apol*. 5; Athenagoras, *Leg*. 24-25, Clement, *Paed*. 2.2; and Tertullian, *Marc*. 5.18, *Idol*. 4, 9, etc. See the chart on page 272 for all references. Notably, Irenaeus does not seem to view the Devil as one of these angels, but rather seems to view the Devil as their leader. For Irenaeus, the Devil 'falls' in Genesis 3 when he tempts Adam and Eve. For the relationship between Irenaeus and the Enoch tradition, see Schultz, 'The Origin of Sin in Irenaeus'; for the watcher tradition more generally, see Bauckham, 'The Fall of the Angels'.

[43] *Epid.* 11.

[44] *Epid.* 16. It is 'the' angel who becomes envious of humanity and tempts Eve.

many archangels. For Irenaeus, there 'dwell powers and archangels, doing service to God' throughout all seven heavens. The lowest heaven for Irenaeus (the seventh) is our firmament. It is in this lowest heaven that the Devil and his angels reside. Thus it is by no means obvious in Irenaeus that the Devil, prior to his apostasy, occupied a place of exalted power above all the heavenly hosts (an idea that emerges later in the Christian tradition). Rather the Devil is introduced as one among many of the archangels assigned to various tasks by the Creator's designs.

Despite the initial introduction of the Devil as an archangel, the identity of the Devil as an angel will go on to figure little in Irenaeus' later narrative. Only seven times in *Adversus haraeses* is the Devil referred to as an angel.[45] And four of these seven references are associated with his apostasy. For Irenaeus, the Devil is not an angel, but rather the 'apostate angel' (*apostata angelus*)—highlighting the extent to which the Devil no longer occupies his original place.[46] The overall effect is to distance the Devil from his association with the angelic realm.

With his fall from grace, the Devil largely ceases to be identified by Irenaeus as one of the heavenly hosts, and rather is commonly referred to by Irenaeus in terms that more closely associate him with his post-fall identity (i.e. 'Satan', 'the serpent', 'the Devil', etc.).

III. The Devil Was a Servant of God

For Irenaeus, the Devil began as a servant of God, like the other angels. We return again to the opening chapters of *Epideixis* where Irenaeus writes,

> And this great created world (κτίσις), prepared by God before the formation of man, was given to man as his place (χωρίον), with all things whatsoever in it.[47] And there were in this place also with their tasks the servants (δοῦλος) of that God who formed all things; and the steward (ἐπίτροπος), who was set over all his fellow servants (σύνδουλος), received this place. Now the servants were angels, and the steward was the archangel.[48]

[45] *Haer.* preface, book 4; 4.40.3; 5.19.1; 5.21.2, 3; and 5.24.3, 4.
[46] *Haer.* 5.24.4. See also 4.40.3 and 5.21.2, 3.
[47] See Chapter One, no. 58 for the translation of 'with all things whatsoever in it'.
[48] *Epid.* 11.

For Irenaeus, the Devil was a servant of God insofar as he was a creature made by God. Against his Gnostic interlocutors, Irenaeus is keen to insist on God's direct sovereignty over creation, and thus the subservience of all creation—including the angels—to God. Whereas for the Gnostics, the 'Father' is neither the creator of the material world, nor its ruler, for Irenaeus, the true Father creates the world via the active agency of the Son and the Spirit, and thus is also its rightful ruler. In many Gnostic schemes, the angels are at odds with the evil demiurge, and are often themselves evil. In some schemes they owe their origin to the demiurge, and in other accounts they are of the same basic nature as the demiurge, both owing their origin to a greater Aeon above. But in almost every case, the angels do not owe their immediate origin to the eternal 'Father'.[49]

As we have already seen, Irenaeus roundly repudiates this scheme. For Irenaeus, the eternal Father and the demiurge are one and the same. This basic truth about the Father is central to Irenaeus' entire polemic against the Gnostics.[50] Inasmuch as God is creator, all of creation owes its allegiance to him. This is as true of the angelic realm, as it is of humanity. The angelic hosts, like humanity, have been created directly by God and have been given laws and boundaries that are to govern the limits of their activities. 'He by his Word has created the whole world, and in the world are the angels; and to all the world he has given laws wherein each several thing should abide, and according to that which is determined by God should not pass their bounds, each fulfilling his appointed task'[51]. The Devil then, insofar as he was once an archangel of God, was likewise a creature created directly by God and like the other angels, was a servant of God and subject to God's laws and decrees.

However, beyond Irenaeus' opening comments in *Epideixis*, the language of 'servant' (*servus*) in reference to Satan occurs only two other times in Irenaeus, both in *Adversus haereses*. The Devil is the 'apostate servant' [*servus apostata*] who, as the strong man, is defeated by Christ.[52] And again, the Devil, 'although a servant [*cum sit servus*], wishes himself to be proclaimed as king'.[53] Like Irenaeus' infrequent use of *angelus* to refer to the Devil, his infrequent use of *servus* suggests that Irenaeus is more concerned with the Devil's post-fall identity, than with his pre-fall status. The Devil was once an angelic servant of God; but having apostatized and forfeited this identity, he has come to be identified almost entirely with his sin.

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[49] For the role of the angels in the Gnostic scheme, see *Haer.* 1.24.1-2, 4-6; 2.4.2.

[50] 'God the Father, not made, not material, invisible; one God, the Creator of all things: this is the first point of our faith'. *Epid.* 6.

[51] *Epid.* 10.

[52] *Haer.* 3.8.2. See also 4.7.4 for a general reference to angels as *servi*.

[53] *Haer.* 5.25.1. The reference here may be to the Antichrist; the Latin is not conclusive. But the preceding comments at the end of ch. 24 are clearly a reference to Satan, and thus the beginning of ch. 25 is most naturally read as a continuation of Irenaeus' comments regarding the Devil.

IV. The Devil Was the Steward of the Material World

The Devil, as an archangel, was by nature (presumably) like the countless other archangels that paid homage to God. Yet in Irenaeus, the Devil stands apart from the other angels and archangels insofar as he was once the chief steward of the material world.[54] This was a unique role assigned to the Devil alone.[55] 'And there were in this place also with their tasks the servants (δοῦλος) of that God who formed all things; and the steward (ἐπίτροπος), who was set over all his fellow servants (σύνδουλος), received this place. Now the servants were angels, and the steward was the archangel'.[56] Thus the Devil was the archangel assigned to give leadership to the angels who were themselves assigned to care for the earth.

In some Gnostic schemes, the Devil's association with the material world is a black mark on the Devil's profile in so far as spirits associated with the material world are viewed as less enlightened than those above. Such a perspective is found in the Valentinian system. Irenaeus summarizes,

> They [the Valentinians] further teach that the spirits of wickedness derived their origin from grief ['Εκ δὲ τῆς λύπης τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας διδάσκουσι γεγονέναι]. Hence the Devil, whom they also call Cosmocrator [κοσμοκράτορα καλοῦσι], and the demons and every spiritual substance of wickedness, found the source of their existence. They represent the demiurge as being the son of that mother of theirs [Achamoth], however Cosmocrator as the creature of the Demiurge [τὸν δὲ κοσμοκράτορα κτίσμα τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ].…Their mother dwells in that place which is above the heavens, that is, in the intermediate abode; the demiurge in the heavenly place, that is, in the hebdomad; but the Cosmocrator in this our world [ἐν τῳ καθ' ἡμᾶς κόσμῳ]. The corporeal elements of the world, again, sprang, as we before remarked, from bewilderment and perplexity, as from a more ignoble source. Thus the earth arose from her state of stupor; water from the agitation caused by her fear; air from the consolidation of her grief; while fire, producing

[54] While Justin and Papias speak of angelic stewardship generally, Athenagoras is the only other extant early Christian writer who assigns this role to the Devil specifically. See *Leg.* 24, '…so also do we apprehend the existence of other powers, which exercise dominion about matter, and by means of it, and one in particular, which is hostile… to the good that is in God, I say, the spirit which is about matter, who was created by God, just as the other angels were created by him, and entrusted with the control of matter and the forms of matter…'

[55] Along these lines, Smith observes that for Irenaeus, the 'steward' (i.e. the Devil) and the 'servants' under him (i.e. the angels) appear to be uniquely 'subcelestial'. See Smith, *Proof*, 150.

[56] *Epid.* 11.

death and corruption, was inherent in all these elements, even as they teach that ignorance also lay concealed in these three passions.[57]

In the Valentinian system, the material world represents the wrong side of town, and owes its origins to fear, grief, death, passions, and ignorance; it is certainly not a place for a respectable spirit to dwell. Thus for the Valentinians, both the demiurge and the Devil are mutually slandered in their association with the material world.

But for Irenaeus, the material world is inherently good, and serves as a visible witness to God's inherent goodness and wisdom. Thus it would be inappropriate to read Irenaeus' association of the Devil with the material world as a slur against the Devil.[58] Rather, the Devil's association with the material world serves in Irenaeus to underscore the Devil's uniqueness, and highlights the egregious nature of his rebellion. The Devil had been assigned to steward that aspect of creation which housed God's prized creation—humanity. This great responsibility resulted in a great fall.

V. The Devil Is a Limited Creature

The Devil's inherent angelic power—which remains undiminished after the fall—is nonetheless limited; he is not God's equal-opposite, and is neither omniscient nor omnipresent, i.e. there is no ontological dualism between God and the Devil.[59] The Devil, even prior to his fall, is clearly portrayed by Irenaeus as limited and finite. Notably, the Devil must learn from Eve about God's prohibition against eating from the Tree of Knowledge. [60] Insofar as 'knowledge' was at a premium in Irenaeus' dialogue with the Gnostics, Eve's greater knowledge in the face of the Devil's ignorance underscores both Irenaeus' high anthropology and modest angelology. The Devil, great as he was, knew less than humanity (at least on this point).

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[57] *Haer.* 1.5.4.

[58] MacKenzie rightly cautions against reading a strong hierarchical structure into Irenaeus' cosmology. With respect to Irenaeus' broader cosmological framework, MacKenzie, *Demonstration*, 97 writes, 'There is no cosmological speculation…neither is there any rumination in questions of angelic hierarchy'.

[59] Russell's four volume work on the Devil traces the themes of theodicy and good vs. evil dualism. Russell, *Satan*, 81 notes, 'Irenaeus granted Satan less power than did the Gnostics or the other fathers, emphasizing human responsibility for sin instead . . . his powers over us are limited, for he is only a usurper of authority that legitimately and ultimately belongs to God, and he cannot force us to sin'.

[60] *Haer.* 5.23.1.

Even more poignantly (and perhaps pathetically), the Devil wrongly supposed that he could hide himself from God under the guise of a serpent, thus bringing about humanity's downfall unnoticed. 'The apostate angel, having affected the disobedience of humankind by means of the serpent, imagined that he escaped the notice of the Lord'.[61] This naiveté does not reflect well on the Devil, and is a useful means by which Irenaeus puts the Devil in his proper place. The Devil's ignorance continues unabated after his fall. He is unaware of the prophetic timeline and does not learn of his ultimate end until the time of Christ; [62] he is baffled by Christ's human nature in the wilderness temptation;[63] he is unable to know anything about God except what the Word of God reveals to him;[64] he claims to have the kingdom of the worlds at his disposal, but this is a lie, for only God is sovereign.[65]

All throughout his writings, Irenaeus is careful to emphasize the limitations of the Devil. Great as he is in power, he is less than a shadow when compared to the Creator. This positioning of the Devil as a limited creature helps us see that for Irenaeus, the primary conflict of his soteriological narrative is not between God and the Devil (a mismatch that would not, for Irenaeus, amount to a conflict of significance) but rather between the Devil and humanity. Thus the initial conflict is not between the omnipotent Creator and his finite creature, but rather between two creatures. This is where the drama of his soteriological narrative lies.

VI. The Devil Is Ultimately Destined to be Subject to Humanity

Here we arrive at what is perhaps the most central aspect of the Devil's pre-fall identity. According to Irenaeus, the Devil's stewardship of the material world was always intended to be of limited duration. The stewardship of the angels generally, and the Devil specifically, was necessary in light of humanity's original infancy. Adam was created as 'lord of the earth and all things in it', but it was necessary that 'humanity grow, and so come to perfection'[66] before they would be able to properly exercise this lordship.

Humanity's lordship over creation extended even to the angels—and most importantly—to the steward assigned to care for it. 'Now, having made the man [Adam]

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[61] *Haer.* 5.26.2. See also *Haer.* preface, book 4.
[62] *Haer.* 5.26.2.
[63] *Haer.* 5.21.2. Cf. Origen, *Hom. Luc*. 6.5.
[64] *Haer.* 2.30.9.
[65] *Haer.* 5.22.2, 5.24.1. See the helpful comments from Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 11-14.
[66] *Epid.* 12. For the human maturation theme, see Chapter Three, section V of this thesis.

lord of the earth and all things in it, he secretly appointed him lord also of those who were servants in it'.[67] Notably, Irenaeus suggests that Adam's lordship over the angels was 'secret' [*zanxlabar*].[68] Presumably, this means that knowledge of Adam's lordship over the servants was kept from the servants. Along these lines Smith remarks, 'The "secrecy" is probably to be explained by the fact that man, though lord by right, and destined to rule in fact, was not yet capable of doing so…, so that his lordship was not yet made known to his subjects'.[69] This reading makes good sense, given that Irenaeus immediately follows his comment about the secrecy of Adam's lordship with comments about Adam's infancy and the maturity of the angels. Irenaeus will go on to say in *Epid.* 16 that the steward's motivation in tempting Adam and Eve was one of envy because of 'God's many favors which he had bestowed on the man'.[70] The preceding chapters of *Epideixis* do not specify what these 'many favors' might be, but would most naturally be understood to include humanity's lordship over the material world. Thus I take Irenaeus to mean that the steward and other angels knew that the man had been made lord of the world, but did not know that this lordship extended even to them.

Even without direct knowledge of Adam's future lordship over the angels, the steward and angels knew themselves to be caring for the world on behalf of humanity. Thus Irenaeus introduces the Devil into the creation narrative as not only a servant of God, but more pointedly, as a servant of humanity. The Devil, much like the steward of a child-king, is granted only temporary leadership of the earth until such time as the heir can assume the full responsibility of his throne, at which time the steward is required to relinquish his lordship. This, of course, is precisely what the Devil will refuse to do.

Ultimately then, the Devil's rebellion is as much a rebellion against humanity's lordship over the material world, as it is against God's. The implications here are significant for Irenaeus' larger narrative. As will be developed in the following chapter, this way of framing the Devil's initial relationship to humanity emphasizes the enmity between humanity and the Devil as the chief enmity of the Christian narrative. To be sure, Satan is an enemy of God; but as concerns the narrative Irenaeus will tell, the Devil is principally an enemy of humanity. The resolution of this enmity, and the eventual victory of humanity in Christ over the Devil, will figure as the climax of Irenaeus' narrative.

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[67] *Epid.* 12. In *Epid.* 11, Irenaeus refers to the 'steward' and his 'fellow-servants'. As such, I take Irenaeus to mean that Adam's lordship over the 'servants' includes lordship over the 'steward'.

[68] Used only here in *Epidixeis.* Variously translated elsewhere as 'in secret', 'furtively', 'stealthily'.

[69] Smith, *Proof,* 150, no. 69.

[70] Robinson's translation reads, 'great gifts of God…'.

VI. Conclusion

As we have seen, Irenaeus's account of the Devil's pre-fall identity offers us the portrait of an exalted angelic being, unique not in his ontology, but nonetheless unique in his role as steward and keeper of the earth. This stewardship was intended by God to be of a temporary nature, and was to be concluded when humanity—the rightful lords of the earth—'came of age' and were able to take possession of their inheritance. As we will see in the following chapter, the Devil's pre-fall identity as temporary angelic steward of the earth provides the necessary context for understanding the Devil's envy of humanity and his subsequent fall.

Chapter Four

The Devil's Envy and Fall

'But I say to thee, Gandalf Mithrandir, I will not be thy tool! I am Steward of the House of Anarion. I will not step down to be the dotard chamberlain of an upstart. Even were his claim proved to me, still he comes but of the line of Isildur. I will not bow to such a one, last of a ragged house long bereft of lordship and dignity'.[1]

J. R. R. Tolkien

'*Jealousy like lightning seeks the heights*'.[2]

Livy

Having established in the preceding chapter the basic contours of the Devil's pre-fall identity, we may now turn our attention to the Devil's fall. Central to our examination of the Devil's fall is the idea of the Devil's envy of humanity. Irenaeus highlights the Devil's envy of humanity as the Devil's chief motivating impulse in his temptation of Adam and Eve. As already observed, the Devil was created to be a steward of the material world on behalf of humanity. As we enter into the details of Irenaeus' soteriological plot, we find that the Devil rejects this subservient role; he does not want to be a mere steward, but rather covets lordship of the world for himself. This is made explicit in both *Adversus haereses* and *Epideixis,* and serves as an organizing 'first scene' in Irenaeus' narrative that helps to establish his larger soteriological plotline. Importantly, the Devil's envy of humanity constitutes the Devil's first sin and the occasion for his fall.

The present chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section of the chapter analyzes the occasions of non-Satanic envy in Irenaeus, with a view to establishing a larger context in which to examine the Devil's envy of humanity. The second section of the chapter offers a detailed examination of the Devil's envy of humanity in light of the forgoing. And the final section of the chapter examines the timing of the Devil's fall, showing how, for Irenaeus, the Devil's fall occurs in Genesis 3 when, driven by envy, he tempts Adam and Eve. This stands in marked contrast to later Devil accounts which portray the fall of the Devil as having occurred in heaven, prior to his temptation of humanity. The anthropological and cosmological implications of the Devil's envy of humanity, as well as the timing of his subsequent fall, are noted at the conclusion of the chapter.

[1] Tolkien, *The Return of the King*, 130.
[2] Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 8.31.1.

Our examination of the larger theme of envy in Irenaeus will demonstrate three basic patterns of envy. The first pattern of envy is what I refer to as 'political' envy. I am here using the term 'political' to denote power and authority (formal or otherwise) in an established governmental, political, or cultural system. 'Political' envy is the type of envy wherein envy is the attitude of the one in the politically superior position directed toward the one in the politically inferior position.[3] A key component of 'political' envy is that the envious party views the object of envy (i.e. the one in the politically inferior position) as a threat to the maintenance of their political power; they are afraid that the one in the politically inferior position will rise to supplant them. And indeed, the fears are well grounded. In Irenaeus, a reversal does take place in all instances of political envy. The politically inferior person ultimately supplants (or is destined to supplant) the one in the politically superior position. A key secondary feature of political envy in Irenaeus is that the politically superior person is often ontologically[4] inferior to the person being envied, as will be shown in my following analysis. Or again, in terms of political position, the greater envies the lesser; but in terms of ontological status, the lesser envies the greater. When the secondary feature of ontology is present, the ontologically greater person ascends to the politically greater position, supplanting the envious party, and thus harmonizing political power and ontological status in a single person.

The second pattern of envy we encounter in Irenaeus is what is traditionally referred to in classical scholarship as the 'envy of the gods'.[5] In the 'envy of the gods' motif, the ontologically and politically superior gods envy the happiness and successes of the ontologically and politically inferior humans.

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[3] Note the similar categories of 'ascendant' and 'descendant' envy used by Lanzillotta in his essay, 'The Envy of God in the Paradise Story', 537-50. Rather straightforwardly, 'ascendant' envy for Lanzillotta is where the lesser envies the greater, and 'descendant' envy is where the greater envies the lesser. Lanzillotta's essay explores the theme of envy in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*, and notes both Eve's envy of God (an example of ascendant envy) and the Devil's (false) construal of God's envy of humanity (descendant envy). Lanzillotta's categories of ascendant and descendant envy, while accurate, do not specify what makes the 'greater' party (i.e. God) superior to the 'lesser' party (i.e. humanity). Is it God's power, God's ontology, God's political superiority? My use of 'political' as a means of describing the theme of envy in Irenaeus is meant to more specifically note the kind of superiority that one agent has over another.

[4] I am here using the term 'ontological' in a technical, philosophical sense to denote 'essence' or 'being'. Thus, by way of example, in classical Christian theism God is ontologically superior to humans, in that he is infinite, immutable and uncreated, whereas humans are finite, mutable and created. Humans, for their part, are ontologically superior to donkeys, insofar as humans are made in the image of God and share potentially in God's immutability and uncreated life, whereas donkeys do not (medieval *asinus* Christology withstanding!). These same sorts of ontological distinctions are consistent with the metaphysics of the Greek philosophical tradition.

[5] Classicists have long recognized this theme in Greek and Roman religion. For examples see Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.32, 3.43, 7.10e; Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 5.21.12; Plutarch, *Alex.* 30.7; etc. For an argument against this theme as an aspect of ancient Mediterranean religion, see Lanzillotta, 'The So-Called Envy of the Gods', 75-93.

The final pattern of envy in Irenaeus is what I here refer to as 'common' envy. This is the sort of run of the mill envy that one finds woven throughout human relationships: one land owner envies the property of another; one man envies the wife of another, etc. The issues of political and ontological status are not a factor in 'common' envy.

As our examination of the theme of envy in Irenaeus will demonstrate, each pattern of envy is present throughout Irenaeus' writings, with the majority of instances of envy taking the form of political envy. The pattern of political envy is particularly relevant for our examination of the Devil's envy of humanity, insofar as the Devil's envy of humanity adheres to this basic pattern.

I. Non-Satanic Envy in Irenaeus

In Irenaeus, the Devil is not the only one who casts an invidious gaze. Setting aside for a moment the Devil's envy of humanity, Irenaeus highlights six key sets of relationships that are plagued by envy: 1) the demiurge and humanity, 2) the Pharisees and Jesus, 3) God and humanity, 4) Cain and Abel 5) the Gnostic Father and humanity, and 6) the Gnostic teachers and the orthodox bishops. These six relationships constitute the sum total of non-Satanic envy in Irenaeus' corpus. By attending closely to how envy functions in these relationships, we are able to establish a larger context for exploring the more particular occurrence of the Devil's envy of humanity.

A. The Demiurge Envies Humanity

The Gnostic heretics whom Irenaeus confronts weave together a dizzying array of competing narratives regarding humanity's history, the history of the gods, and the origin of the one true, unknown Father. Many of these narratives utilize canonical references, and we often find within Gnostic teaching a recasting (or subversion) of the biblical characters and events (e.g. humanity's eating of the tree results in human enlightenment, rather than death). As Michael Williams has rightly argued, a unifying element of nearly all Gnostic teaching is the consistent presence of a biblical demiurge.[6] As we have already seen in Chapter One, in nearly all of the Gnostic systems that Irenaeus recounts (with the exception of the

[6] Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 27-52. The exception here is Simon Magus, who maintained that the world was made by evil angels. Thus we have in Simon not one, but many demiurges.

Ebionites)[7], the demiurge is the villain of the Gnostic story. And in three of these Gnostic systems, the demiurge is said to be envious with respect to humanity.

1. The Demiurge of Simon Magus

Irenaeus, like many of the other early Christian writers, sources all heretical teaching in Simon Magus.[8] According to Irenaeus, Simon 'represented himself, in a word, as being the loftiest of all powers, that is, the Being who is the father over all'.[9] Irenaeus recounts that Simon traveled with Helena, a prostitute he had redeemed from the slave market, and whom he proclaimed as the 'first conception of his mind, the mother of all, by whom, in the beginning, he conceived in his mind the forming of angels and archangels'.[10] This Helena, also called by Simon his 'Ennoea' (i.e. Understanding), in the beginning comprehended Simon's desire to make the angels and powers. She thus descended to the lower regions and generated the angels, who in turn made the material world. (We have here in Simon not a single demiurge, but multiple demiurges—though the term is not used in reference to the angels). However, the angelic demiurges resented being considered the 'progeny' of another being; moved by envy, they detain the 'mother' (i.e. Helena) who made them and did not let her return to the Father. Irenaeus writes,

> But after she [Ennoea] had produced them [the angels], she was detained by them because of envy [*propter invidiam*], because they were unwilling to be looked upon as the progeny of any other being. As to himself [Simon], they had no knowledge of him whatever; but his Ennoea was detained by those powers and angels who had been produced by her. She suffered all kinds of contumely from them, so that she could not return upwards to her father [Simon], but was even shut up in a human body, and for ages passed in succession from one female body to another, as from vessel to vessel.[11]

[7] See the Introduction, no. 82. Arguably, the Ebionites do not qualify as a Gnostic sect. They do not demonize the Creator, and their view of the material world is not negative like the other Gnostics. Irenaeus acknowledges as much, but includes them in his list of Gnostic sects. See *Haer.* 1.26.2.

[8] Irenaeus connects Simon Magus with the sorcerer of the same name in Acts 8. See *Haer.* 1.23.1.

[9] *Haer.* 1.23.1.

[10] *Haer.* 1.23.2.

[11] *Haer.* 1.23.2.

Simon's Ennoea, imprisoned by the angels in a female body, has been forced to pass from once successive female body to the next (at one time being in the body of Helen of Troy), and at last becoming Helena. The suffering of Simon's Ennoea at the hands of the angels is the occasion for Simon's entry into the world. 'He had come that he might win her first, and free her from slavery, while he conferred salvation upon humanity, by making himself known to them. For since the angels ruled the world ill because each one of them coveted [*concupisceret*] the principal power for himself, he had come to amend matters…he pledged himself that the world should be dissolved, and that those who are his should be freed from the rule of those who had made them'.[12]

As is common in Gnostic thought, the makers of the material world are cast in a negative light; the material world, and especially the body, is a prison from which humanity needs to be delivered. The Gnostic myth associated with Simon inserts the vice of envy directly into the beginning of the larger narrative; the creators of the material world (in this case the angels), covet primacy for themselves and are driven by envy to rebel against their creator and rightful ruler (Simon's Ennoea). They take Simon's Ennoea captive and imprison her in a human body. Thus she suffers under their power and can only be delivered by the intervention of Simon.

Notably, we have here an example of the one in the politically superior position envying the one who is ontologically greater. The angels have assumed political power over Simon's Ennoea. Yet she is nonetheless ontologically superior to them, in that she created the angels and derives her being directly from Simon himself (whereas the angels are made by Simon's Ennoea). Her captivity to the angels is only temporary; Simon has come to deliver her from her captors and return her to a politically superior position, thus reestablishing the proper order to the cosmos.

Arguably, the creator-angels' envy of Simon's Ennoea extends to humanity. Here we need to channel the Valentinian anthropology in order to fill out Simon's system.[13] In the Valentinian system, only a certain sub-set of humans will be redeemed. These are the 'spiritual' ones, the ones who are made of the same ontological stuff as the higher heavenly beings.[14] Even though these spiritually enlightened humans are trapped in fleshly bodies, their true essence is superior to that of the demiurge, who is merely an ensouled being. Irenaeus does not provide enough detail of Simon's system for us to determine if Simon

[12] *Haer.* 1.23.3.

[13] There is no explicit justification in Irenaeus to import Valentinian anthropology to Simon Magus. Yet the similarities in their respective theological and soteriological frameworks make it likely that their anthropology was similar as well, even if not identical. This also suggests that envy may have been at work in the Valentinian demiurge, even though it is not explicitly mentioned.

[14] See *Haer.* 1.6-7.

viewed human nature in the same way. But we do know that Simon has come not only to redeem his Ennoea (who is trapped in a human body), but also at least some human beings as well. Thus at least some humans will, like Simon's Ennoea, be released from bodily captivity and ascend above the creator-angels. Presumably, the creator-angels' envy of Simon's Eenoea would, by the same logic, extend to human beings as well. In such a case, we would once again have an example of the one in the politically superior position envying the one in the ontologically superior position, with a reversal of political positions ultimately ensuing.

2. The Demiurge of the Sethians and the Ophites

In *Haer.* 1.30, Irenaeus summarizes at length the creational and soteriological narrative of two more Gnostic sects—the Ophites and the Sethians. Here the reader can discern distinct parallels between the Sethian portrayal of the demiurge and Irenaeus' portrayal of the Devil. Notably, the demiurge within the Sethian and Ophites narrative is a prideful, negatively cast character who is driven, in part, by jealousy (*zelus*) of humanity.

In keeping with the other Gnostic narratives, the Sethians and Ophites postulate a true Father who is unknown and above all, and who generates a host of heavenly beings who in turn generate lower heavenly beings, in a descending chain, until finally a 'first mother' generates the demiurge, called Ialdabaoth. Ialdabaoth in turn generates a son without the aid of his mother. This son likewise generates a son, and so forth for a total of six offspring. The Sethian narrative quickly casts Ialdabaoth in a negative light; Ialdabaoth, we are told, 'holds his mother in contempt, inasmuch as he produced sons and grandsons without the permission of anyone'.[15]

However, Ialdabaoth's offspring strive and quarrel with him about the supreme power (presumably Ialdabaoth's offspring insist that he is not the supreme power). This 'deeply grieved Ialdabaoth, and drove him to despair'.[16] In this frame of mind,

> He cast his eyes upon the subjacent dregs of matter, and fixed his desire upon it, to which they declare his son owes his origin. This son is Nous [*Nun*][17] himself, twisted into the form of a serpent; and hence were derived the spirit, the soul, and all mundane things: from this too were generated all oblivion,

[15] *Haer.* 1.30.5.
[16] *Haer.* 1.30.5.
[17] The Latin text here and later in this passage retains a transliteration of the Greek term νοῦς, i.e. 'mind'.

> wickedness, jealousy, envy, and death [*omnem oblivionem, et malitiam, et zelum et invidiam et mortem*]. They declare that the father imparted still greater crookedness to this serpent-like and contorted Nous of theirs, when he was with their father in heaven and Paradise. Whereupon, Ialdabaoth, becoming uplifted in spirit, boasted himself over all those things that were below him, and exclaimed, 'I am father, and God, and above me there is no one'.[18]

Notably *zelus* and *invidia* are derived from the twisting of material matter, casting both the creator and creation in negative terms. Ialdabaoth's boasting, however, is checked by his mother's rebuke from above. She calls him a liar and declares that the true father is above him. Not to be deterred, Ialdabaoth purposes to make humanity after 'our own image'.[19] Ialdabaoth's mother is behind this impulse, for through the creation of humanity she intends to 'empty' Ialdabaoth of his power. Ialdabaoth's offspring create the first man, but the result is a tragic figure who is so large he can only writhe upon the ground. The sons bring the newly formed man to Ialdabaoth in hope that he can remedy the situation. Herein lies the trap, for when Ialdabaoth breathes into the man the breath of life, his power is emptied into the man. The first man immediately recognizes the true power over and above Ialdabaoth [i.e. the higher aeons], and forsakes Ialdabaoth and his offspring.

> They declare, then, that by breathing into the man the spirit of life, he was secretly emptied of his power; that hence the man became a possessor of mind and thought; and they affirm that these are the faculties which partake in salvation. He [the man] at once gave thanks to the first [heavenly] Anthropos, forsaking those [i.e. Ialdabaoth and his offspring] who had created him.[20]

It is at this point that the theme of jealousy is introduced into the narrative. Ialdabaoth, upon seeing that the newly created man possessed the capacity to reconnect with the powers above, is filled with jealousy toward the man, and determines to create the first woman, by whom he hopes to empty the man of his power. 'But Ialdabaoth, feeling jealous [*zelantem*], was pleased to form the design of again emptying man by means of woman'.[21]

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[18] *Haer.* 1.30.5-6.
[19] *Haer.* 1.30.6.
[20] *Haer.* 1.30.6.
[21] *Haer.* 1.30.7. For a helpful discussion on the role of demiurgical envy in the Gnostic *Treatise without Title*, see Crislip 'Envy and Anger', 285-310. In particular Crislip highlights the

This plan ultimately fails, for Ialdabaoth's mother again intervenes, emptying the woman of her power to empty the man (how she does this is unclear from Irenaeus' text). Ialdabaoth's mother then turns the man and the woman, who are called Adam and Eve, away from Ialdabaoth, convincing them to eat from the tree of knowledge, whereby they come to recognize the power that is above all and thus depart from Ialdabaoth.[22] Ialdabaoth's mother rejoices when she sees that Ialdabaoth and his offspring are baffled by the humans who have been made by the angels. Ialdabaoth, in his anger, curses Adam and Eve and casts them out of the heavenly paradise into the material world.[23]

The narrative continues apace, intersecting at times with various elements of the biblical narrative. Adam and Eve beget Cain, who is laid hold of by the serpent and induced to kill Abel, and is the 'first to bring to light jealousy and death [*zelum et mortem*]'.[24] Ialdabaoth floods the world in anger against humanity; he speaks through the Old Testament prophets. The narrative, as recounted by Irenaeus, ends with Christ seated at the right hand of Ialdabaoth (who is unaware of Christ's presence), stealing away the human souls from Ialdabaoth such that, 'in proportion as Jesus enriches himself with holy souls, to such an extent does his father [Ialdabaoth] suffer loss and is diminished, being emptied of his own power by these souls'.[25] (Again, how this emptying actually happens is unclear).

Here, as in Simon Magus, we see an account of envy wherein the one in the politically superior but ontologically inferior position envies the one in the politically inferior but ontologically superior position. Ialdabaoth unwittingly empties himself into the man and thus loses the qualities that would otherwise fit him for life above. The man is the recipient of this emptying; he becomes a possessor of mind and thought, and thus is ontologically superior to Ialdabaoth. Yet humanity, though ontologically superior, remains under the political power of Ialdabaoth. It is humanity's future exaltation over the demiurge that evokes the envy of the demiurge. The narrative ends with humanity ascending above and beyond Ialdabaoth, who remains trapped in the lower heavens. Though the demiurge is politically superior to humanity at the outset, the narrative ultimately places humanity over the demiurge. Thus ontological superiority and political superiority are brought together as a unity in the age to come.

The above three accounts (Simon, Sethians and Ophites) are the only occasions where Irenaeus explicitly notes the demiurges' envy of humanity. However, the theme of

close semantic connection between anger and envy, noting that in Jewish, early Christian, and Gnostic writings, envy leads to anger which in turn leads to death.

[22] *Haer.* 1.30.7.
[23] *Haer.* 1.30.8.
[24] *Haer.* 1.30.9.
[25] *Haer.* 1.30.14.

envy also shows up tangentially in Irenaeus' account of the Barbeliotes. The Barbeliotes source envy and jealousy in the demiurge (much like the Sethites and Ophites source envy in Nous). According to this sect's teaching, the demiurge formed 'angels and firmaments and all things earthly…', and being united to Audacity, produced 'Wickedness, Jealousy [ζῆλος], Envy [φθόνος], Fury, and Lust'.[26] Most English translations, following the Latin, transliterate these terms from the Greek and thus render these negative character traits as proper names. Though we do not have an explicit statement that the demiurge himself is envious, and less, what the object of his envy might be, nonetheless the association of envy with the demiurge is suggestive of what we have seen above.

3. Demiurgical Envy: Conclusion

Significantly, at least three Gnostic accounts utilize the theme of envy with respect to the demiurge. And when they do, they all follow the same basic pattern of 'political' envy. The demiurge is in the power-position with respect to humanity. Yet he is earthly and trapped within the material realm; humans (at least the 'spiritual' humans) are of the same substance as the higher Father and his Aeons;[27] they are ontologically superior to the demiurge and destined to be led out of the material world and into a place of political exaltation over the demiurge. Thus the demiurge, with respect to humanity, presently occupies the politically superior, but ontologically inferior position. Yet he is destined to lose this political advantage and be supplanted by humans, who inherently occupy a position of ontological superiority. In this way, cosmic harmony is achieved; ontological power and political power are united in the same being. The envy of the demiurge is thus grounded in his inferior ontological status, and his fear that his political advantage over humanity will be reversed.[28] As we will see, the similarities between this basic Gnostic account of the demiurge and Irenaeus' account of the Devil are significant.

[26] *Haer.* 1.29.4.

[27] This is made most explicit in the Valentinian system, with its three tiered anthropology of fleshly humans, ensouled humans, and spiritual humans. The latter two groups are ontologically superior to the demiurge, and able to ascend politically over the demiurge when they die and are released from the body. See *Haer.* 1.6-7, and 1.8.3.

[28] For a helpful treatment of demiurgical envy consistent with my treatment above, see Lanzillotta, 'The Envy of God', 545-50.

B. The Pharisees Envy Jesus

This same basic framework of 'political' envy can be observed in Irenaeus' account of the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees. Referencing the Pharisees' envy of Christ at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Irenaeus writes,

> And for this cause, upon his entrance into Jerusalem, all those who were in the way recognized David their king in his sorrow of soul, and spread their garments for him, and ornamented the way with green boughs, crying out with great joy and gladness, 'Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord: hosanna in the highest'. But to the jealous wicked stewards [*Zelantibus autem malis dispensatoribus*], who circumvented those under them, and ruled over those things with respect to which it was not right that they should do so,[29] and for this reason were unwilling that the king should come, and who said to him, 'Do you hear what these are saying'? did the Lord reply, 'Have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have perfected praise?'—thus pointing out that what had been declared by David concerning the Son of God, was accomplished in his own person; and indicating that they were indeed ignorant of the meaning of the Scripture and the dispensation of God; but declaring that it was he himself who was announced by the prophets as Christ, whose name is praised in all the earth, and who perfects praise to his Father from the mouth of babes and infants; wherefore also his glory has been raised above the heavens.[30]

And again, 'For while they [the Pharisees] were thought to offer correctly so far as outward appearance went, they had in themselves jealousy similar to that of Cain [*similem zelum Cain habebant*]; therefore they slew the Just One, slighting the counsel of the Word, as did also Cain'.[31]

[29] The Latin reads, *dominabantur eorum, quibus ratio non constabat*. Here I follow the alternate rendering suggested by Cox, *ANF*, vol. 1, no. 4. Coxes' primary reading is '…who circumvented those under them, and ruled over those that had no great intelligence'. Coxe's alternate rendering (above) fits best with the immediate context, as well as Irenaeus' overall theme of envy, wherein the lesser party unjustly usurps the rightful position of the greater.

[30] *Haer.* 4.11.3.

[31] *Haer.* 4.18.3.

Those who oppose Christ at his triumphal entry are 'envious, wicked stewards'. It was their place to rule until the coming of the King. But unwilling to be displaced by their rightful Lord, they enviously covet authority and power for themselves. On this point a notable parallel is discerned between the Pharisees and Satan, both of whom are referred to by Irenaeus as 'stewards', and who both envy the one who has been appointed, from the beginning, to supplant them.[32]

Here we have again the main lines of Irenaeus' 'political envy' motif. The politically superior but ontologically inferior Pharisees are envious of the politically inferior but ontologically superior Jesus. In one sense, for Irenaeus, Jesus shares the same ontology as the Pharisees insofar as their mutual humanity is concerned. But the incarnation does not set aside Jesus' eternal existence as the Word of God. Thus Jesus is ontologically superior to the Pharisees insofar as he remains the true Word of God. And what's more, Irenaeus' typological anthropology places the human ontology of Jesus over and above the human ontology of the Pharisees. Jesus is the true human, the ultimate expression of God's intent for humanity as made in the image and likeness of God. Adam and his descendants are types and shadows of Christ, and do not become fully actualized as true human beings until they are made fully into the image and likeness of the Son. As such, even Christ's humanity is, in some sense, ontologically superior to the humanity of the Pharisees.

And as we have seen with the demiurge, Irenaeus emphasizes that the envy of the Pharisees is linked to the ultimate political reversal that will take place between Christ and the Pharisees. For now Christ is (in an earthly sense), under their power; they will kill him. But Jesus is destined to be raised above the heavens into a position of ultimate political power. According to Irenaeus' reading, the Pharisees sense the danger of Christ's ascending political power, and thus envy and resent him. They are the 'stewards' who will not give up their rule to the rightful king.

C. God Does not Envy Humanity

A third instance of the notion of envy appears when Irenaeus discusses God's relationship to humanity and emphasizes God's complete lack of envy. Here we find the same pattern of 'political envy', but in the negative. The true God, unlike the Gnostic demiurge, is explicitly said *not* to be envious of humanity. *Invidia* is always a negative character trait, and thus for Irenaeus, God cannot be envious. Irenaeus writes, 'For the love of God, being rich and without envy [*sine invidia*], confers upon the suppliant more than he

[32] *Epid.* 16.

can ask from it'.[33] And, 'God...bestows what is good without envy' [*sine invidia*].[34] And again, 'But he has increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all, granting to human beings largely and without envy [*sine invidia*], by means of adoption, to know God the Father, and to love him with the whole heart...'[35] This is a direct assault on the Gnostic position, which claims to know God apart from the creator, and through means that 'regular' Christians in the orthodox church cannot access. Against the Gnostics, Irenaeus is keen to insist that God freely discloses himself, making himself openly known in Jesus. God does not envy humans their knowledge of God, but rather takes measures to broadcast this knowledge to one and all.

The above comments regarding God's lack of envy toward humanity are an implicit critique of the Gnostic demiurge. Unlike the Gnostic demiurge, the true God is free and generous toward his creation. Whereas the Gnostic demiurge is envious of humanity and thus drives the first pair of humans out of the Garden, the true God removes Adam and Eve from the Garden out of pity, lest humans live perpetually as broken icons.[36] And when God does limit his creation, it is not because he is envious of humanity or concerned that humanity will usurp him. Quite the contrary, God's ultimate goal is the exaltation and deification of humanity. In an extended discussion regarding the deification of humanity, Irenaeus writes,

> For we cast blame upon him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely human, then at length gods; although God has adopted this course out of his pure benevolence, that no one may accuse him of being envious or grudging [*invidiosum aut impraestantem*]. . . . For after

[33] *Haer.* 3. preface.

[34] *Haer.* 4.38.3.

[35] *Haer.* 4.16.5. Cf. the Greek *LOAE*, 18:4, where the Devil suggests to Eve that God has withheld the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge because he envies humanity, 'τοῦτο δὲ γινώσκων ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἔσεσθε ὅμοιοι αὐτοῦ, ἐφθόνησεν ὑμῖν καὶ εἶπεν…' Beginning with the second temple, focus on Adam and Eve began to emerge in Jewish literature. The *LOAE* represents the basic contours of much of this focus, and runs in a direction similar to Irenaeus' basic account of the Devil. In the Latin *LOAE*, Satan claims that he tempted Adam and Eve out of envy; Michael had instructed the angels, including Satan, to worship Adam. When Satan refused, he was cast out of heaven. His anger and envy toward Adam on account of this, led him to tempt Adam and Eve in order that they might likewise be cast out of their paradise (11:2-16:3). In the Greek *LOAE*, God comforts Adam by promising him that 'I will return you to your rule and seat you on the throne of your deceiver' (39:2). Scholarship on the *LOAE* tends to date it later than Irenaeus by two or three centuries. For more on the literature of the Adam and Eve tradition, see De Jonge and Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature*, and Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*. See Tromp, *Life of Adam and Eve*, for the critical Greek edition. For a side by side comparison of the Greek, Latin, Armenian, Georgian and Slavonic accounts of the Adam and Eve tradition, with English translation for each, see Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis*.

[36] *Haer.* 3.23.6.

> his great kindness he graciously conferred good, and made humans like to himself, in their own power; while at the same time by his prescience he knew the infirmity of human beings, and the consequences which would flow from it; but through love and power, he shall overcome the substance of created nature.[37]

God did not refrain from making humans as gods in the beginning because he was anxious about his own exalted status. Rather he refrained from making humans as gods at the beginning because it was necessary, in light of their infirmity, that they grow into this reality over time. God's intent from the very beginning has been to 'overcome the substance of created nature' by love and power. In short, God loves humanity and desires to share his power and glory with us; he does not begrudge humanity a share in his happiness.

Likewise, in a passage critiquing Marcion, who posits an unjust demiurge and a just Father, Irenaeus insists that the Father and the creator are one God, and that he is good, and therefore without envy. Toward this end Irenaeus deploys Plato (whom he doesn't refer to often, but when he does he generally treats as an ally) and writes,

> Plato is proved to be more religious than these men, for he allowed that the same God was both just and good, having power over all things, and himself executing judgment, expressing himself thus, 'And God indeed, as he is also the ancient Word, possessing the beginning, the end, and the mean of all existing things, does everything rightly, moving round about them according to their nature; but retributive justice always follows him against those who depart from the divine law'.[38] Then, again, he points out that the Maker and Framer of the universe is good. 'And to the good', he says, 'no envy [*invida*] ever springs up with regard to anything';[39] thus establishing the goodness of God, as the beginning and the cause of the creation of the world, but not ignorance, nor an erring Aeon, nor the consequence of a defect, nor the Mother weeping and lamenting, nor another God or Father.[40]

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[37] *Haer.* 4.38.4.

[38] Cf. Plato, *Leg*. 4.716a.

[39] Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 29e.

[40] *Haer.* 3.25.5; see also 5.24.4 'for envy is a thing unbecoming to God'. Athanasius makes the same basic point about God's non-envy in *C. Gent.* 41 and *Inc.* 3. For a discussion of this theme in Athanasius, see Petterson, 'A Good Being Would Envy None'.

The demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus*, unlike the demiurge in the Gnostic system, is good and benevolent. On this point Irenaeus and Plato are in agreement. Irenaeus' emphasis on the non-envy of God toward humanity is, in negative relief, consistent with his general motif of 'political envy', wherein the politically superior but ontologically inferior envies the politically inferior, but ontologically superior. Given this general framework, it makes good sense that for Irenaeus the true God must be without envy. The true Creator is without need; he is self-sustaining and the source of all good. He is ontologically superior and as such, can rest confidently in his political superiority over humanity. He need fear no reversal and thus humanity has nothing for him to envy.

D. Cain Envies Abel

The theme of 'political' envy is found in Irenaeus' use of the Cain and Abel story. The connection of envy to Cain is found elsewhere in early Christian writings,[41] and is drawn from Genesis 4, where Cain kills his brother Abel because Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God, while Cain's was not.[42] Irenaeus writes, 'For at the beginning God had respect to the gifts of Abel, because he offered them with single-mindedness and righteousness; but he had no respect unto the offering of Cain, because his heart was divided with jealousy and malice [*cum zelo et malitia*], which he cherished against his brother...'[43]

In a particularly notable passage, Irenaeus describes Cain's overthrow of Abel in terms that are contextually and thematically linked to Satan's overthrow of humanity. The text below begins with a paragraph that describes God's curse upon the Devil (found in Gen 3), followed by a paragraph that links Cain's sin to that of Satan's. Irenaeus writes,

> But the curse in all its fullness fell upon the serpent, which had beguiled them. 'And God,' it is declared, 'said to the serpent: Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all the beasts of the earth'. And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father has prepared for the Devil and his angels';

[41] See A.Y. Kim, 'Cain and Abel in the Light of Envy'.

[42] Notably, neither the Hebrew of the MT nor the Greek of the LXX explicitly mention envy as the source of Cain's actions. The Hebrew reads, חָרָה (to become hot, indignant) and the LXX reads, ἐλύπησεν (to grieve, become distressed).

[43] *Haer.* 4.18.3.

> indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for humanity, but for him who beguiled humanity, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.
>
> Just as [*quemadmodum*] Cain, when he was counselled by God to keep quiet, because he had not made an equitable division of that share to which his brother was entitled, but with jealousy and malice [*zelo et militia*] thought that he could domineer over him, not only did not acquiesce, but even added sin to sin, indicating his state of mind by his action. For what he had planned, that did he also put in practice: he tyrannized over and slew him; God subjected the just to the unjust, that the former might be proved as the just one by the things which he suffered, and the latter detected as the unjust by those things which he perpetrated'.[44]

Cain perpetuates and participates in the same sort of disobedience typified by the Devil and his angels. Just as the Devil domineered over humanity, so too Cain 'with jealousy and malice' domineered over his brother.

A similar sentiment can be found in *Epid.* 17 (quoted below), which though an indirect reference, further highlights the connection between Cain's envy of Abel and the Devil's envy of humanity. As in *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus again links the Devil's sin against humanity with Cain's sin against Abel. Immediately following his comments in *Epid.* 16 about the Devil's envy of humanity, Irenaeus writes,

> Now the apostate angel, who led man into disobedience and made him sinful and caused his expulsion from Paradise, not content with the first evil, wrought a second on the brothers; for filling Cain with his spirit he made him a fratricide. And so Abel died, slain by his brother; signifying thenceforth that certain ones should be persecuted and oppressed and slain, the unrighteous slaying and persecuting the righteous.[45]

Notably, the Devil fills Cain 'with his spirit'. Irenaeus is not explicit about what this 'spirit' is, but given the context we may safely assume it is the spirit of envy. Satan, driven

[44] *Haer.* 3.23.3-4.
[45] *Epid.* 17.

by envy, unjustly conquers humanity. Satan implants this motivation in Cain, who likewise driven by envy of his brother's blessed status in relation to God, unjustly conquers Abel.

And in a way similar to how Irenaeus links together the envy of Cain with the Devil, so too he links together the envy of Cain with the envy of the Pharisees. Just as the jealous Cain slew the righteous Abel, so too the jealous Pharisees slew the righteous Christ. 'For while they [the Pharisees] were thought to offer correctly so far as outward appearance went, they had in themselves jealousy similar to that of Cain [*similem zelum Cain habebant*]; therefore they slew the Just One, slighting the counsel of the Word, as did also Cain'.[46]

The connection that Irenaeus makes above between Cain's envy of Abel and Satan's envy of humanity is obviously relevant for our larger discussion of the Devil's envy of humanity. But noteworthy here is the manner in which, for Irenaeus, the Cain and Abel story approaches the same basic model of 'political envy' we have already seen in the Gnostic demiurge and the Pharisees. Cain is the older brother, and thus occupies a position of political power with respect to his younger brother Abel. Yet Abel is uniquely blessed by God and this blessing is perceived as a threat by Cain and is thus a source of envy. This is consistent with the pattern of reversal that is part of Irenaeus' 'political envy' motif. According to Irenaeus, Abel is a prefiguring of Christ insofar as Abel, like Christ, was unjustly murdered.[47] Just as Christ will rise above his adversaries, so too will Abel.[48] As is the case with the whole of Irenaeus' system, the righteous are destined to rise above the unrighteous, regardless of the present political advantage of the unrighteous over the righteous; the day of resurrection and judgment is the great reversal, the great day of vindication for the righteous over the wicked. As with the Gnostic demiurge and the Pharisees, an eschatological reversal of political fortunes is destined to take place, wherein the older Cain will be supplanted by the younger Abel. Thus the same basic reversal framework that we have seen with the Gnostic demiurge and the Pharisees, obtains for Irenaeus' use of the Cain and Abel story.

Of course, Cain's envy of Abel is not is not an exact fit with respect to our secondary category of ontology. In a technical sense Cain and Abel are ontologically equal. Irenaeus goes out of his way elsewhere to insist that there are not two distinct ontological classes of

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[46] *Haer.* 4.18.3.

[47] *Haer.* 4.25.2. Christ's death is the recapitulation of all the righteous prophets who have been killed, beginning with Abel. See *Haer.* 5.14.1, where Irenaeus references Jesus' quote in Matthew 23:35-36: 'that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation'.

[48] *Haer.* 4.34.4.

human beings (i.e. the wicked and the sinful); for Irenaeus, against the Gnostics, humans are sinful by choice, not by nature.[49] In any case, the political disparity and future reversal puts Cain's envy of Abel more in the camp of 'political' envy, rather than 'common' envy.

The connection of the Cain and Abel story to the Devil's envy of humanity (explored more fully below), shows the interconnectedness of the envy motif in Irenaeus. Insofar as Cain's envy of Abel is explicitly set in parallel with the Devil's envy of humanity, as well as the Pharisee's envy of Christ, and insofar as the Devil's envy of humanity (as we shall see) is a near exact parallel of the Gnostic demiurge's envy of humanity, the connection between Cain and Abel, the demiurge and humanity, the Pharisees and Christ, and the Devil and Adam, shows that Irenaeus is working within the same basic framework of envy for all four sets of relationships.

E. The Gnostic Father Envies Humanity

Our fifth instance of relational envy in Irenaeus is the Gnostic Father's envy of humanity. This instance of envy runs more in parallel with the 'envy of the gods' motif common in the larger Greek and Roman tradition. As we have just seen in Irenaeus, 'envy is a thing unbecoming to God'.[50] Irenaeus uses this basic premise as a way of besmirching the Gnostic Father. Irenaeus counters the Gnostic narrative by insisting that it is not the demiurge who is envious, but rather their unknown 'Father'. At the beginning of book five of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus accuses the Gnostic Father of being either impotent or envious. Irenaeus constructs his argument against the Gnostic Father as part of a larger discussion regarding the resurrection of the body. The Gnostics (as presented by Irenaeus) are universal in their agreement that the material body is of lesser worth than the soul, and to be discarded; thus the body will not partake in any type of resurrection. Irenaeus seizes upon this as a sign of weakness or, alternately, envy, within the Gnostic Father. He writes,

> Those persons who feign the existence of another Father beyond the Creator, and who term him the good God, do deceive themselves; for they introduce him as a feeble, worthless, and negligent being, not to say spiteful and envious [*lividum et invidum*], inasmuch as they affirm that our bodies are not quickened by him. For when they say of things which it is manifest to all do remain immortal, such as the spirit and the soul, and such other things, that

[49] See *Haer.* 4.37.1-5.
[50] *Haer.* 5.24.4.

> they are quickened by the Father, but that another thing [the body] which is quickened in no different manner than by God granting [life] to it, is abandoned by life,— this proves their Father to be weak and powerless, or else envious and spiteful [*aut invidum et lividum*]. For since the Creator does even here quicken our mortal bodies, and promises them resurrection by the prophets, as I have pointed out; who is shown to be more powerful, stronger, or truly good? The Creator who vivifies the whole human, or their Father, falsely so called? He feigns to be the quickener of those things which are immortal by nature, to which things life is always present by their very nature; but he does not benevolently quicken those things which required his assistance, that they might live, but leaves them carelessly to fall under the power of death. Whether is it the case, then, that their Father does not bestow life upon them when he has the power of so doing, or is it that he does not possess the power? If, on the one hand, it is because he cannot, he is, upon that supposition, not a powerful being, nor is he more perfect than the Creator; for the Creator grants, as we must perceive, what he is unable to afford. But if, on the other hand, [if he does not grant this] when he has the power of so doing, then he is proved to be not a good, but an envious and negligent Father [*invidus et neglegens Pater*].[51]

Irenaeus takes it for granted in this passage that the immaterial parts of a human being (i.e. the soul and spirit) live on into eternity because they are 'immortal by nature'. Thus the fact that the Gnostic Father vivifies the soul and spirit is no credit to the Gnostic Father's power or benevolence. These would live on without the Father's help. The one place where humans really need help is with respect to their bodies, which are not by nature immortal. But this is precisely the one area where the Gnostic Father either cannot or will not help. According to Irenaeus, the Father of the Gnostics is either powerless, insofar as he is unable to resurrect the body although he desires to do so, or 'envious and spiteful' (*invidum et lividum)*, insofar as he refuses to grant life to that which needs it (i.e. the human body). Irenaeus does not make explicit the logic of his charge of envy. Presumably, he means that the Gnostic Father refuses to help vivify the human body because he himself does not have a body and envies humanity in this respect. Thus the Gnostic father enviously denies humanity what he himself wished he had but does not.

[51] *Haer.* 5.4.1. Harvey's text reads, *invidus et malignus Pater*.

Irenaeus' logic here would not have been particularly compelling to his interlocutors, since his argument depends upon the premise that the body is a good thing which the Father does not possess (and thus something that he enviously denies humanity). The goodness of the body was, of course, a chief ground of contention between the two parties.

It is difficult to categorize the nature of envy in the Gnostic Father's relationship with humanity, in large part because the relationship in question is partially imaginary for both Irenaeus and the Gnostics. The Gnostics do not grant that the Father is envious of humanity (such as they do with the demiurge), and Irenaeus does not grant that the Gnostic Father exists. As such, it is not possible to examine this relationship from a shared vantage point—either Gnostic or Irenaean.

Granting the forgoing difficulty, an examination of the Gnostic Father's envy of humanity does not follow the pattern of 'political' envy and reversal we have seen in the previous four relationships. The envy of the Gnostic Father, unlike the envy of the Gnostic demiurge, is the envy of the one in the greater ontological and political position envying the one in the ontologically and politically lesser position. Nor does Irenaeus posit a reversal between the Gnostic Father and humans, which of course is to be expected, since Irenaeus does not grant the existence of the Gnostic Father. Yet the Gnostic Father's envy of the body (if the human body is indeed the object of envy) seems intended by Irenaeus to call into question the Gnostic Father's contentedness with respect to humanity, for he lacks a mode of being that humans alone possess. Here Irenaeus sets the Gnostic Father in contrast to the true God. Whereas the true God does not envy the blessing and deification of humanity, the Gnostic Father begrudges any happiness to humanity that he himself cannot likewise possess.

In this respect, the envy of the Gnostic Father toward humanity runs in tighter parallel with the traditional classical notion of the envy of the gods. Just as the ontologically and politically superior pagan gods begrudge humans too much happiness, so to the Gnostic Father begrudges humans the happiness of a resurrected body.

F. The False Teachers Envy the 'Orthodox' Bishops

The final relational instance of envy in Irenaeus is that of the false teachers and the 'orthodox' bishops—an example of what I have called 'common envy'. Throughout his work Irenaeus sets the false teachers in contrast with those of the orthodox party. A chief difference between them is that the false teachers, unlike the true teachers (of which Irenaeus counts himself one), are motivated by envy. The Gnostic teachers are secretive and

speak in complex riddles, while a true teacher of God preaches the gospel simply, freely, and without envy. Irenaeus writes, 'Thus did the apostles simply, and without envy towards anyone [*nemini invidentes*], deliver to all what they had themselves learned from the Lord. Thus also does Luke, without envy to anyone [*nemini invidens*], deliver to us what he had learned from them, as he has himself testified, saying, "Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word"'.[52]

In contrast, the false teachers are seductive and envious. 'And if he [Jesus] did indeed teach us to call one Being Father and God, while he does from time to time himself confess other fathers and gods in the same sense, then he will appear to enjoin a different course upon his disciples from what he follows himself. Such conduct, however, does not bespeak the good teacher, but a seducer and envious one [*sed seductoris et invidi*]'.[53]

Irenaeus does not specify precisely what, exactly, the Gnostic teachers envy. But it seems likely from the context that Irenaeus believes them to be envious of the attention and honor given to the orthodox bishops. The good teacher—exemplified by the apostles and the orthodox bishops—stands in a position of bounty. The gospel, the greatest gift one human being can pass on to another, has been handed down from the Lord himself through the apostles, who have in turn handed it down to the bishops who still hold to the rule of faith. In possessing this gospel, the church and her teachers possess everything. Thus there is nothing left for the true teacher of God to envy; giving everything, they need nothing, for they are confident of their reward from God. But the Gnostic teacher stands in a position of need. He is a seducer and envious, desiring to possess through trickery and false teaching the attention and devotion that rightfully belongs to the heirs of the apostles, the true teachers of God.

This reading is supported by the parallel found in Philippians 1:15-17, where Paul writes, 'Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry [φθόνον καὶ ἔριν], but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry [ἐριθείας], not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment'. For Paul, the envy of the 'other' teachers is clearly directed against him. Irenaeus is likely drawing from this passage and extending the point to his present context. Irenaeus and his fellow orthodox bishops, like Paul, preach Christ freely and are motivated by love. The Gnostic teachers, like Paul's opponents in Rome, preach Christ out of envy and are motivated by rivalry.

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[52] *Haer.* 3.14.2. Harvey translates *invidentes* and *invidens* in this passage as 'without respect to persons'.

[53] *Haer.* 4.1.2. See 1.13.4, where Irenaeus says that Satan has sent the false teachers for the 'seduction and perdition of those who do not hold fast to the truth'.

The categories of 'political' and 'ontological' that we have been tracking are muted between the false teachers and the orthodox bishops. It is not obvious that Irenaeus would consider the Gnostic teachers to be politically superior to the orthodox bishops. Although Irenaeus adopts a somewhat besieged tone when speaking of the Gnostic teachers, neither side could reasonably be said to be in a position of political power vis-à-vis the other. So in this sense, the Gnostic teacher's envy of the orthodox bishops is not a clear case of the politically superior envying the politically inferior. The question of ontology is likewise not an exact fit, since Irenaeus would not insist on an ontological difference between himself and his Gnostic opponents. However, the theme of ascendancy—even if not reversal—while not explicit in these passages, is nonetheless woven throughout Irenaeus' larger polemic against the Gnostics. The true bishops will one day be vindicated over their Gnostic opponents, who are doomed to be defeated together with Satan and his angels.

On the whole, there is not enough difference in political power (or ontological distinction) between the Gnostic teachers and the orthodox bishops to classify this relationship as a case of 'political envy'. More simply, the envy of the false teachers toward the orthodox bishops is best categorized as 'common envy'.

G. Conclusion: Facets of Non-Satanic Envy

We have explored the six instances of non-diabolical relational envy in Irenaeus: the demiurge's envy of humanity; the Pharisees' envy of Christ; God's non-envy of humanity; Cain's envy of Abel; the Gnostic Father's envy of humanity; and the Gnostic teachers' envy of the orthodox bishops. The first four instances of envy follow a general pattern of 'political' envy in which the one in the politically superior position envies the one in the politically inferior position, with an ultimate reversal of political power taking place. Thus the politically superior demiurge envies humanity, and is eventually subordinated to humanity; the politically superior Pharisees are envious of Christ at the occasion of his triumphal entry, and fear he will supplant them (which he does); the true God, who is politically superior to humanity is, according to Irenaeus, emphatically not envious of humans precisely because his political superiority and greatness is unthreatened; and the politically superior Cain (being the elder brother), is envious of Abel, the divinely favored younger brother, who will eventually supplant Cain at the resurrection of the dead. These political reversals, then, bring together into harmony ontological and political power. Further, with the exception of Cain's envy of Abel, our secondary category of ontology is also at work. The one in the politically superior position is ontologically inferior to the one

in the politically inferior position. Thus the envious demiurge is ontologically inferior to humans, the envious Pharisees are ontologically inferior to Jesus, and, in the case of God's non-envy of humanity, God is not envious of humanity (thus the same pattern is seen in the negation of God's envy).

The last two relational categories do not follow the pattern of political envy. The Gnostic Father's envy of human embodiment maps more closely on to the traditional 'envy of the gods' motif found throughout the classical world. And the Gnostic teachers' envy of the orthodox bishops mirrors the sort of common envy seen between humans who occupy the same ontological status. We can thus summarize as follows:

RELATIONSHIP	**TYPE OF ENVY**
The Demiurge and Humanity	Political Envy (with Ontological Envy)
The Pharisees and Jesus	Political Envy (with Ontological Envy)
God and Humanity	Lack of Political Envy (with Ontological Envy)
Cain and Abel	Political Envy
The Gnostic Father and Humanity	Envy of the Gods
The Gnostic Teachers and the Orthodox Bishops	Common Envy

The most relevant of these six relationships for our examination of the Devil's envy is that of the demiurge and humanity. The politically superior but ontologically inferior demiurge envies the politically inferior but ontologically superior humanity. The demiurge's political power is eventually subordinated to humanity. As we will see below, the envy and reversal that can be seen in the demiurge's relationship with humanity is a near exact parallel of Irenaeus' account of the Devil's envy of humanity. Indeed, insofar as Gnostic exegesis tends to offer a 'reverse reading'[54] of the biblical narrative, it should not surprise us to find that the Gnostic demiurge functions as the villain of the Gnostic narrative in the same way that the Devil functions in Irenaeus. As we will see below, Irenaeus' view of the Devil's envy of humanity, is—like the envy of the demiurge—an instance of political envy wherein the one in the politically superior (and ontologically inferior) position envies the one in the politically inferior (and ontologically superior) position—all in the context of a future reversal of political power between the one envying and the object of envy.[55]

[54] See no. 98 in this chapter for more on Gnostic 'reverse readings'.

[55] The Devil's envy of humanity is not unique to Irenaeus. It shows up in the Wis 2:24, 'Through the envy of the Devil death entered the world'. It makes an appearance in Jewish

II. The Devil's Envy of Humanity

In the first two books of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus devotes nearly all of his effort to describing the various Gnostic heresies, and very little to explicating Christian doctrine. But with books three through five, Irenaeus moves toward a more constructive posture. While the Gnostic error figures prominently throughout—and indeed continues to serve as an organizing foil—Irenaeus now forcefully advances the 'biblical' narrative as an alternative to the Gnostic narrative. It is within this context that the theme of the Devil's envy of humanity is developed.[56]

In the last two books of *Adversus haereses*, and again in *Epideixis*, we find five extended passages in which the Devil's envy of humanity is explicitly discussed. Taken together, these five passages comprise the sum of Irenaeus' comments on the subject. Happily, all five passages are consistent with each other and provide substantial context, allowing the reader to see clearly the way the Devil's envy functions in Irenaeus' larger narrative. In what follows I offer a close reading of the five passages, and show how the Devil's envy of humanity parallels the same pattern of 'political envy' and reversal of political power that we have seen at work in Irenaeus' writing—most especially in the envy of the demiurge.

As will be observed, the Devil's envy of humanity is sourced in two key factors, 1) humanity's existence in the image and likeness of God, and, 2) humanity's lordship over the material world.

A. *Epid.* 16

We begin with Irenaeus' account of the Devil in *Epideixis.* Though *Epideixis* was written subsequent to *Adversus haereses*, the systematic and narrative nature of the book

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Gnosticism, as well as Rabbinic thought before and after Irenaeus' time. See Altman, 'Gnostic Background', who traces the Adam rabbinic traditions which speak of the Devil's envy of Adam (such as we find in *LOAE*), back to Jewish Gnosticism; also Grant, 'Gnostic Origins'. It likewise shows up in Theophilus, *Autol*. 2.29 and Clement, *Strom*. 2.13, 4.4. The idea of an envious Devil, without specification as to who he is envying, can be found prior to Irenaeus in Ignatius, *Rom*. 5, *Trall*. 4.2, and *Mart. Pol*. 17.1. Throughout his work, Irenaeus does not cite a source for his view of the Devil's envy, but rather states it as a given premise. The concept occurs with more frequency after Irenaeus. For more on possible sources and similarities in pre and post Irenean writings, see Appendix B and the chart on page 272.

[56] The theme of the Devil's envy of humanity is not found in first three books of *Adversus haereses.* For a helpful, even if brief treatment of this topic, see Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 160-72.

provides the most complete account of Irenaeus' Devil narrative and is thus the best lens through which to read Irenaeus' more passing comments in *Adversus haereses*. *Epideixis* ignores the Gnostic debate altogether and instead serves as an executive summary of the true faith as conceived by Irenaeus. The work is arranged mostly chronologically with respect to the biblical timeline, and thus follows the same basic sequence of events as the opening chapters of Genesis and the subsequent scriptural narrative.

Irenaeus begins *Epideixis* with an account of the world's creation. This account runs through Genesis' six days of creation. In chapter ten Irenaeus notes the creation of the angels and the heavenly hosts, making an explicit statement regarding the fact that they have boundaries. This reference to angelic boundaries sets the stage for the coming angelic crossing of these boundaries. In chapter eleven, Irenaeus details the creation of humanity. He writes,

> But the man[57] he formed (πλάσσω) with his own hands[58], taking from the earth that which was purest and finest, and mingling in a measure his own power with the earth. For he traced his own form on the [man's] formation (πλάσμα),[59] that that which should be seen should be of divine form (Θεοειδής)[60]: for it was as an image of God the man was formed and set on the earth. And that he might become living, he breathed on his face the breath of life; that both for the breath and for the formation man should be like unto God. Moreover he was free and self-controlled, being made by God for this end, that he might rule all those things that were upon the earth.[61] And this great created world (κτίσις), prepared by God before the formation of man, was given to man as his place (χωρίον), with all things whatsoever in it.[62] And there were in this place also with their tasks the servants (δοῦλος) of that God who formed all things; and the steward (ἐπίτροπος), who was set over all his fellow servants (σύνδουλος), received this place. Now the servants were angels, and the steward was the archangel.[63]

[57] Here the reference is to Adam, as distinct from Eve, who is not introduced until *Epid*. 13.
[58] Cf. the 'two hands of God'.
[59] Robinson notes that the Armenian text here is equivalent to the Latin *plasma* or *plasmatio*.
[60] Smith glosses the Armenian here as 'godlike'.
[61] Smith, 'in order to be master of everything on earth'.
[62] For the translation of this phrase, see Chapter One, no. 58 of this thesis.
[63] *Epid*. 11.

Here we see Irenaeus' anthropology and angelology in vivid detail. The world was created by God for Adam (and by extension for all of humanity), who is uniquely created by God in his image and likeness. The 'great world' is thus given to Adam as 'his place'. The angels are then introduced as 'servants' of God. The steward (i.e. the Devil) is set over his fellow servants and 'received this place' (i.e. the world). The role of the angels generally, and the steward specifically, is made clear in the following chapter.

> Now, having made the man lord (κύριος) of the earth and all things in it, he secretly[64] appointed him lord (κύριος) also of those who were servants (δοῦλος) in it. They however were in their full development;[65] but the lord, that is, man, was small; for he was a child; and it was necessary that he should grow, and so come to his full perfection.[66] And, that he might have his nourishment (τροφή) and growth with festive and dainty meats, he prepared him a place better than this world, excelling in air, beauty, light, food, plants, fruit, water, and all other necessaries of life, and its name is Paradise. And so fair and good (καλὸς κἀγαθός) was this Paradise, that the Word of God continually resorted there, and walked (περιπατέω) and talked with the man, figuring beforehand the things that should be in the future (προτυπόω), that he should dwell with him and talk with him, and should be with humanity, teaching them righteousness. But the man was a child, not yet having his judgment (βουλή) perfected; wherefore also he was easily led astray by the deceiver.[67]

Irenaeus here describes Adam as a child, perfect yet not come into maturity.[68] Paradise is a distinct place outside the present world,[69] an incubator in which Adam is to reside while he grows and matures. The angels, however, are already fully grown and have fully realized their potential. As such, they are to exercise dominion over the world as stewards until such time as Adam comes of age. Most significantly, God has appointed the

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[64] See Chapter Three, section VI of this thesis.

[65] The Armenian is *karelut'iwn*, 'possibility'. Smith comments, '…the text as it stands is capable of interpretation in the sense evidently required ("possibility" being understood not as undeveloped potentiality but as meaning that what was possible for them, they had)'. Smith, *Proof*, 150, no. 70.

[66] The Aremenian is *katarelut'iwn*.

[67] *Epid.* 12.

[68] For more on the 'infancy' of humanity at the time of creation, see Chapter Three, section V of this thesis.

[69] Cf. *Haer.* 5.5.1.

man as 'lord of the servants'. Irenaeus then goes on in *Epid.* 13-15 to briefly discuss the creation of the animals and of Eve, as well as the prohibition regarding the tree of knowledge. 'And he laid down for him certain conditions: so that, if he kept the command of God, then he would always remain as he was, that is, immortal; but if he did not, he would become mortal, melting into earth, whence his frame had been taken'.[70]

Having set the stage with the principal actors, Irenaeus thus introduces the reader in chapter sixteen to the Eden temptation and the Devil's envy of humanity.

> This commandment the man[71] kept not, but was disobedient to God, being led astray (πλανάω) by the angel who, becoming jealous of the man and looking on him with envy (φθονέω)[72] because of the great gifts of God which he had given to man, both ruined himself and made the man a sinner, persuading him to disobey the commandment of God. So the angel, becoming by his falsehood the author and originator (ἀρχηγός) of sin, himself was struck down, having offended against God, and man he caused to be cast out (ἐκβάλλω) from Paradise. And, because through the guidance of his disposition (κατὰ γνώμην) he apostatized and departed (ἀφίσταμαι) from God, he was called Satan, according to the Hebrew word; that is, 'apostate':[73] but he is also called Slanderer. Now God cursed the serpent which carried and conveyed (βαστάζω) the Slanderer; and this malediction came on the beast himself and on the angel hidden and concealed in him, even on Satan; and man he put away from his presence, removing him and making him to dwell on the way to Paradise at that time; because Paradise receives not the sinful.[74]

[70] *Epid.* 15.

[71] Irenaeus here (like Paul in Romans 5:12-21) places the failure of humanity on Adam, rather than Eve. Eve is not reintroduced into the narrative until *Epid.* 17, where both she and Adam are said to be cast out of Paradise.

[72] 'Looking on him with envy' is from the Armenian *c'arakneal* and is perhaps more literally 'evil-eyeing'. Smith suggests βασκαίνων (envying, grudging) as the underlying Greek for this term. See Smith, *Proof,* 153, no. 88. For more on the 'evil eye' and envy in the Christian tradition, see Aquaro, *Death by Envy*.

[73] Cf. *Haer*. 5.21.2. So too Justin (from whom Irenaeus likely got this linguistically wrong idea), *Dial*. 103.

[74] *Epid.* 16.

Here we have the basic framework for Irenaeus' account of the Devil's fall. The steward is not content to be merely a steward.[75] He knows that his political advantage over humanity—assigned at creation—is only temporary. What is more, he sees that humanity, being made uniquely in the image of God, is ontologically superior to him and thus the rightful and destined ruler of the world. This ontological superiority and future political superiority evokes the Devil's envy. He is jealous of the 'great gifts which God had given to humanity'.[76] Entering Paradise in the form of a serpent, the Devil assaults Adam and Eve while they are yet in their infancy. The impression Irenaeus leaves with us is that the Devil knows he must strike while Adam and Eve are young, before they come into their full power and become too strong for him. The Devil is successful as it relates to overthrowing humanity. The command of God has been broken and the curse of God quickly follows; from the dust humanity has been taken, to the dust humanity will return. Adam and Eve are cut off from the tree of life and cast out of Paradise. But the Devil's plan ultimately fails. The steward is found out by God, and he too falls under the curse and is cast out of Paradise.[77] Insofar as he used a serpent to disguise himself, both the serpent and the steward are doomed together.[78] With this envious act the steward overstepped his boundaries and became the apostate angel, a rebel against God and an enemy of humanity.

This same basic narrative is likewise confirmed and expanded in *Adversus haereses*.

B. *Haer.* Preface to Book 4

The first occasion in *Adversus haereses* where Irenaeus discusses the Devil's envy of humanity is the preface to book four. Here, Irenaeus draws a straight line between the contemporary apostates (i.e. the Gnostic teachers) and the first apostate (i.e. the Devil). The Gnostics are simply following the error of the first apostate, Satan himself, and will suffer his same fate. Relevant for our purposes, Irenaeus links together the Devil's envy of humanity with the *similitudio Dei*. He writes,

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[75] Note the close parallel with *Haer*. 4.11.3, where the Pharisees, like the Devil, are the 'envious wicked stewards' who resist Christ as he rides into Jerusalem to assume his kingdom—a kingdom that they were to rule until his coming.

[76] Irenaeus does not explicitly identify these 'great gifts' but the context strongly indicates that they include humanity's creation in the image of God and humanity's dominion over the world, insofar as these are the only two advantages noted thus far by Irenaeus that humanity is said to have over and above the steward and his angels. This reading is confirmed by the other relevant passages in *Adversus haereses* (see below).

[77] Cf. *Haer*. 4. preface, 4.

[78] Cf. *Haer*. 4. preface, 4.

> For as the serpent beguiled Eve, by promising her what he had not himself, so also do these men, by pretending [to possess] superior knowledge, and [to be acquainted with] ineffable mysteries; and, by promising that admittance which they speak of as taking place within the Pleroma, plunge those that believe them into death, rendering them apostates from him who made them. And at that time, indeed, the apostate angel [*apostata angelus*], having effected the disobedience of humanity by means of the serpent, imagined that he escaped the notice of the Lord; wherefore God assigned him the form and name [of a serpent]. But now, since the last times are [upon us], evil is spread abroad among people, which not only renders them apostates, but by many machinations does [the Devil] raise up blasphemers against the Creator, namely, by means of all the heretics already mentioned. For all these, although they issue forth from diverse regions, and promulgate different [opinions], do nevertheless concur in the same blasphemous design, wounding [people] unto death, by teaching blasphemy against God our Maker and Supporter, and taking away the salvation of humanity. Now the human being/person [*homo*] is a mixed organization of soul and flesh, who was fashioned [*formatus est*] after the likeness of God [*similitudinem Dei*], and formed [*plasmatus est*] by his hands, that is, by the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom also he said, 'Let us make humanity'. This, then, is the aim of him who envies our life [*Hoc ergo propositum est eius qui vitae nostrae invidet*], to render people disbelievers in their own salvation, and blasphemous with respect to the Creator God [*et blasphemos in plasmatorem Deum*]. For whatsoever all the heretics may have advanced with the utmost solemnity, they come to this at last, that they blaspheme the Creator [*Fabricatorem*], and disallow the salvation of God's workmanship [*plasmatis Dei*], which the flesh truly is [*quod quidem est caro*]; on behalf of which I have proved, in a variety of ways, that the Son of God accomplished the whole dispensation [of mercy], and have shown that there is none other called God by the Scriptures except the Father of all, and the Son, and those who possess the adoption [*et eos qui adoptionem habent*].[79]

Here Satan is the 'apostate angel' and the beguiler of Eve. Like the false teachers, he makes promises that he cannot keep. Just as following the false knowledge of the Devil led

[79] *Haer.* 4. preface, 4.

Adam and Eve into death, so too the false knowledge of the heretics leads their followers and adherents to death. And the chief error of this false knowledge is a denial of the goodness of the Creator and of his workmanship (i.e. humanity). The machinations of the heretics in the 'last days' is a continuation (and perhaps for Irenaeus a recapitulation and consummation) of the Devil's first assault upon humanity. The apostate and envious spirit that drove the Devil in the beginning still operates in the heretics of Irenaeus' day.

Notably, Irenaeus' statement regarding the Devil's envy of human 'life' (*vita*) follows immediately on the heels of Irenaeus' statement about humanity being made in the *similitudo Dei*.[80] The connection between the two is not explicit, but near proximity suggests a correlation in Irenaeus' mind between the Devil's envy and humanity's creation in the likeness of God. The near juxtaposition echoes the logic of Wisdom 2:23-24, which likewise suggests a connection between humanity's possession of the *imago Dei* and the Devil's envy. 'For God created the human [τὸν ἄνθρωπον] for incorruption, and made him in the image [εἰκόνα] of his own eternity, but through the Devil's envy [φθόνῳ] death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it'.[81]

In his refutation of the Gnostics, Irenaeus is keen here (and throughout his writing) to emphasize both the creaturely and the divine elements of humanity. Humanity is a 'mixed organization of soul and flesh'. Humans, on the one hand, have an immaterial constitution fashioned after the 'likeness of God'; on the other hand they are a part of the material world. Yet the material world is not a throwaway husk. The human body has been directly crafted by the Creator and constitutes the handiwork of God—*caro quidem est plasmatis Dei*. And humanity uniquely among all created beings—both earthly and heavenly—carries within itself the *similitudo Dei*. It would seem then, that for Irenaeus, the life that the Devil's envies in humanity is the kind of life infused with the *similitudo Dei*. While the Devil may retain political power over humanity, the overall effect here is to position the Devil in an inferior ontological position vis-à-vis humanity.[82] Because the Devil envies humanity's privileged

[80] As we have already observed in Chapter Two of this thesis, Irenaeus is not always consistent in his use of the terms *imago* and *similitudo*. He often uses the terms as synonyms to include both the material and immaterial part of humanity. But sometimes he distinguishes between the terms, using *imago* to refer to that part of humanity which *physically* or *visually* resembles the incarnate Word, and more narrowly, *similitudo* to designate that part of humanity which resembles the immaterial divine nature and character of God (or, more specifically, the Word). If Irenaeus is following a distinction here, we can take him to mean that the Devil is envious of humanity because of that part of humanity which resembles the divine nature. Yet insofar as Irenaeus is not consistent in maintaining a strict distinction between the two words, the point should not be over-pressed.

[81] It is worth noting that Irenaeus nowhere directly quotes this passages (nor any passage from Wisdom), though his view of the Devil seems obviously indebted to it (directly or indirectly).

[82] Recall that for Irenaeus, human beings retain the *imago Dei* even after the fall, insofar as the *imago Dei* is a reference to the human body and its likeness to Christ's human body. And the *similitudo Dei*, though lost at the fall, is regained for the Christian with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Thus even after the fall, humans retain a similarity to the incarnate Word that the Devil can't

ontology, it is his aim (*propositum*) to separate the Creator from his workmanship, thus rendering humans incapable of being saved; the ontological degradation of death is the inevitable result.

Yet God is not content to let the apex of his creation fall into dissolution. The last sentence of the preface to book four is a rather remarkable statement concerning the scope of salvation as Irenaeus conceives it. According to Irenaeus, the Scriptures call *Deus* only the Father, the Son, 'and those who possess the adoption' [*et eos qui adoptionem habent*].[83] Through the redemptive work of Christ, death-pocked humans are adopted into the life of God himself and rise above the Devil and his followers, such that they even bear the name *Deus*. It is this high destiny—temporarily scuttled by the Devil, but restored in Christ—that evokes the Devil's envy.

C. *Haer.* 4.40.3

Toward the end of book four, Irenaeus again mentions the Devil's envy of humanity, this time without reference to the *similitudo Dei*. Yet like the preface of book four, we find here a statement about the Devil being jealous (*zelavit*) of God's workmanship (*plasma*). The salient passage takes place at the end of a chapter in which Irenaeus is underscoring God's commitment to reward the righteous and to punish the wicked. Irenaeus accuses his Gnostic opponents of separating the Creator (who punishes) from the 'Father' (who saves). Irenaeus is thus burdened to insist that the true God both saves the faithful *and* punishes the wicked; anything less would be unbecoming of God. 'It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with himself for those who desire his fellowship, and who remain in subjection to him; and who has prepared the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the Devil, and those who revolted with him'.[84] For scriptural support, Irenaeus turns to Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares. 'The Father, therefore, who has prepared the kingdom for the righteous, into which the Son has received those worthy of it, is he who has also prepared the furnace of fire, into which those angels commissioned by the Son of Man shall send those persons who deserve it, according to

match. And Christians regain their ontological superiority over the Devil because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

[83] Here the 'third member' of the divine triad is not the Spirit, but deified humanity. Irenaeus, of course, speaks at length in various places about the role of the Holy Spirit, particularly with reference to the 'two hands of God'. But the fact that his soteriological framework allows him to place humans alongside of the Father and the Son as worthy of the name *Deus* shows just how robust his anthropology truly is.

[84] *Haer.* 4.40.1.

God's command'.[85] Irenaeus then goes on to explain in detail the meaning of the parable. He writes,

> The Lord, indeed, sowed good seed in his own field; and he says, 'The field is the world'. But while humanity slept, the enemy came, and 'sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went his way'. Hence we learn that this is the apostate angel and the enemy [*Ex tunc enim apostata est angelus hic et inimicus*], because he was jealous of God's workmanship [*ex quo zelavit plasma Dei*] and launched an attack to render this [workmanship] an enemy with God [*et inimicum illum Deo facere aggressus est*]. For this cause also God has banished from his presence him who did of his own accord stealthily sow the tares, that is, him who brought about the transgression; but he took compassion upon humanity, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly, became involved in disobedience; and he turned the enmity by which [the Devil] had designed to make [humanity] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing his own anger from humanity, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent. As also the Scripture tells us that God said to the serpent, 'And I will place enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel'. And the Lord recapitulated in himself this enmity [*Et inimicitiam hanc Dominus in semetipsum recapitulavit*], when he was made a human being [*homo*] from woman, and trod upon his head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book.[86]

Satan is the apostate angel, the enemy that sows the tares within creation. As such, he is the adversary of both God and humanity. Because of the Devil's treachery, God banishes him from his presence. The curse and anger of God is not primarily directed toward those who have been deceived, but toward the deceiver.[87] The curse is laid upon the serpent (and thus the Devil); one—namely Christ—shall arise from the line of Eve who will crush the head of the enemy by summing up in himself the enmity that exists between humanity and the Devil. The political fortunes of the Devil will be short-lived. Whatever

[85] *Haer.* 4.40.2.

[86] *Haer.* 4.40.3.

[87] See also *Haer.* 3.23.3. 'It was for this reason, too, that immediately after Adam had transgressed, as the Scripture relates, God pronounced no curse against Adam personally, but against the ground, in reference to his works, as a certain person among the ancients has observed: "God did indeed transfer the curse to the earth, that it might not remain in man."…. But the curse in all its fullness fell upon the serpent, which had beguiled them'. See MacKenzie, *Demonstration*, 123-29 for helpful commentary on this point.

political advantage he has managed to gain over humanity will be taken away by Christ. Humanity will rise to its intended place of political power in keeping with its ontological superiority.

Notably, the Devil's motivation in assaulting humanity is ascribed to envy. It is because the Devil was jealous (*zelavit*) of God's workmanship (*plasma*) that he turns humanity against God. What is it about God's *plasma* that evokes the Devil's envy? Here again the cause of the Devil's envy is not specified. It is not tied directly to humanity's lordship over creation, nor does Irenaeus make a direct reference to the *simultudo et imago Dei*. Yet the *imago Dei* seems to lurk in the background of this passage. Irenaeus here, as in the preface to book four, refers to humanity as God's 'workmanship' (*plasma*). The Latin noun *plasma* can be translated generally as 'creation/workmanship', but also carries the idea of 'image' and 'figure'.[88] Given Irenaeus' oft repeated emphasis on humanity being made in the *imago Dei*, as well as his claim that this image consists of the human body, which in turn finds its referent in the bodily and incarnated Word, it is very likely that Irenaeus intends all three meanings—creation, figure, image—when he uses *plasma*.[89] Humanity consists of material creation *which is itself* made in the image of the invisible God. Thus, though we do not find the expression *imago Dei*, the concept is present in this passage.

All this suggests that Irenaeus has in mind in this passage the same basic framework for understanding the Devil's envy as is detailed in the preface to book four: the Devil's recognizes the ontological superiority of humans, and thus their potential political superiority. This superiority evokes the Devil's envy and ignites within him a fear of losing his political power. His assault upon humanity follows. A reversal of fortunes is foretold in which an ontologically superior humanity will one day triumph politically over the Devil.

D. *Haer.* 5.24.4

Toward the end of book five, Irenaeus discusses in detail the Devil's temptation of Adam and Eve, the coming of the Anti-Christ, and the Devil's eventual demise.[90] By way of context, in this larger discussion Irenaeus recounts the Devil's temptation of Christ in the

[88] See the entry for *plasma* in *LSLD*, 1385.

[89] Elsewhere Irenaeus uses *plasma* (*Haer* 1.24.1), and the closely associated noun *plasmatio* (*Haer.* 2.30.3, 3.22.1) in close connection with *imago et similitudo Dei*, as we see here and in the preface to book four. It is certainly consistent with Irenaeus' overall anthropology to posit a close connection between *plasma* and *imago et similitudo*; humans are uniquely the *plasma* of God in that they are the physical 'image' and 'likeness' of the invisible God.

[90] See *Haer.* 5.21-32.

wilderness, specifically the Devil's statement that all the kingdoms of the world belong to him (i.e. the Devil), and that he can give them to anyone he desires. Irenaeus declares this to be a lie, asserting that it is not the Devil who dispenses the kingdoms of the World, but rather God. Quoting Proverbs 8:15, Irenaeus states, 'The Word also says by Solomon, "By me kings reign, and princes administer justice. By me chiefs are raised up, and by me kings rule the earth"'.[91] It is God, not the Devil, who has the power to give away kingdoms. What is more, the rulers of the world are not angelic powers, nor Satan himself. Rather God has given governance of the world to humans.

> Now, that he spoke these words, not in regard to angelic powers, nor invisible rulers—as some venture to expound the passage—but of those actual human authorities, he says, 'For this cause pay tribute also: for they are God's ministers, doing service for this very thing'. This also the Lord confirmed, when he did not do what he was tempted to do by the Devil; but he gave directions that tribute should be paid to the tax-gatherers for himself and Peter; because 'they are the ministers of God, serving for this very thing'.[92]

Satan therefore lies when he tells Christ in the wilderness that the world governments belong to him (i.e. the Devil). Truly they belong to humanity, and most especially to Christ himself, who is the recapitulation of Adam. (According to Irenaeus' reading, Satan is ironically offering to Christ the very thing that Christ already rightfully possesses). Satan then, can only hope to deceive humanity into thinking that the world's kingdoms belong not to humanity, but rather to him, and that he can give them out in the place of God. 'The Devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, to deceive and lead astray the mind of the human person [*hominis*] into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavor to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God' [*ipsum autem quasi Deum adorare*].[93] Notably, the Devil masquerades as God in order to lay claim to what properly belongs to humanity. It is in this context that Irenaeus speaks of the Devil's envy of humanity. He writes,

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[91] *Haer.* 5.24.1.
[92] *Haer.* 5.24.1. This argument is carried all the way through 5.24.1-3.
[93] *Haer.* 5.24.3.

> Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man's territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king [*regis gloriam*] among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery [*latro est*], so likewise also the Devil, being one among those angels who have been placed over the spirit of the air [*qui super spiritum aeris praepositi sunt*], as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of humanity [*invidens homini*], was rendered an apostate from the divine law: for envy is a thing foreign to God [*invidia enim aliena est a Deo*]. And as his apostasy was exposed by the human person [*hominem*], and the human [*homo*] became the [means of] searching out his thoughts, he has set himself to this with greater and greater determination, in opposition to the human person [*homini*], envying his life *[invidens vitae eius],* and wishing to involve him in his own apostate power. The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him by means of human nature [*per hominem vincens eum*], and showing him to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put him under the power of humanity [*subiecit eum homini*]. For he says, 'Behold, I confer upon you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy', in order that, as he obtained dominion over humanity [*homini*] by apostasy, so again his apostasy might be deprived of power by means of humanity returning to God [*sic iterum per hominem recurrentem ad Deum evacuetur apostasia eius.*].[94]

The Devil has set himself in the place of God in order that he might usurp what properly belongs to humanity. As an angel—and an apostate one at that—Satan never had true ownership of the world, but only a temporary stewardship. Yet through deception he has 'obtained dominion over humanity'. This dominion is temporary, however. Through Christ, humanity is being turned back to God and thus the proper governance of the world will be reestablished.

Notably, although the Devil masquerades as God, it is humanity that he envies.[95] Here Irenaeus states that the Devil envies human life (*vita*). Though we have here no explicit connection to the image or likeness of God, a suggestive connection can perhaps be made by looking back to the preface of book four. There too the Devil is said to envy human

[94] *Haer.* 5.24.4.

[95] Contra the reading of the later Christian tradition, Irenaeus' Devil desires humanity's throne, not God's.

life (*vita*), and the context clearly connects human life with the *similitudo Dei*. Perhaps here too the image and likeness of God figures implicitly in this passage as that which evokes the Devil's envy. In any event, it is clear from the larger context that the Devil's driving ambition is to possess what rightfully belongs to humanity. Through deception, he has 'seized in a hostile manner another man's territory'.[96] Thus the Devil's envy here—as in our two previous passages—seems explicitly aroused because of humanity's exalted ontological, and future political, status in creation. Humanity, whether presented as the likeness and image of God, as God's unique workmanship, or as the world's rightful ruler, occupies in Irenaeus a place of exaltation over the Devil. It is this place of privilege and status that the Devil envies, and which precipitates his ruin.

E. *Haer.* 3.23.3-4

Our final passage in *Adversus haereses* makes an indirect reference to the Devil's envy of humanity by connecting the Devil and Cain. The connection is similar to what we have already seen in *Epid.* 17, where Satan filled Cain with his spirit, such that Cain slew his brother Abel. Irenaeus writes,

> And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father has prepared for the Devil and his angels'; indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for humanity, but for him who beguiled humanity, and caused him to offend [*sed ei qui seduxit et offendere fecit hominem*]—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy [*qui princeps apostasiae est*], and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps, as Cain [*quemadmodum Cain*] when he was counselled by God to keep quiet, because he had not made an equitable division of that share to which his brother was entitled, but with envy and malice [*sed cum zelo et malitia*] thought that he could domineer over him [*suspicatus est posse dominari*

[96] Here we interpret the 'territory seized' as explicitly humanity's territory, rather than God's. Irenaeus has just established at length in the preceding paragraphs that the ownership of the world's kingdoms belongs to humanity. Additionally, Irenaeus' larger framework does not readily allow for the idea that the finite Devil could actually steal something directly from the omnipotent God.

eius], not only did not acquiesce, but even added sin to sin, indicating his state of mind by his action.[97]

In the larger context of this passage, Irenaeus is making the argument that God's wrath was principally directed against the Devil and his angels, rather than against humanity. Contra the Gnostics, embodied human beings rank highest in God's estimation, and therefore are special recipients of his mercy and grace. Further, the sin of humanity was committed in the ignorance of their infancy. And while not excusable, it is less egregious than the sin of the Devil—who fully knew what he was about and who took advantage of humanity's lesser political strength. Further, Adam and Eve showed contrition and remorse after their sin; the Devil and his angels, like Cain, made no effort to retrace their steps, but instead added to their sin.

The connection to Cain here in this passage is another statement (albeit indirectly) of the Devil's envy of humanity. Irenaeus notes Cain's jealousy (*zelos*) of Abel as the cause of the murder, intentionally linking Cain's fratricide with Satan's assault on humanity. The parallel is all the more noteworthy when considered in light of *Epid.*17. Notably, in *Epid.* 17 the Devil is explicitly said to be envious, and Cain is only indirectly ascribed envy through his association with the Devil. Here we have the reverse. Cain is explicitly said to be motivated by envy, while the Devil is implicitly ascribed the motivation of envy through his association with Cain. Taken together, the passages underscore the motivation of envy as the chief impulse of the Devil in both instances.

F. Conclusion

All of above passages are consistent with the category of 'political envy', and includes the secondary element of 'ontological envy'. The Devil's envy of humanity—like that of the Gnostic demiurge and the Pharisee's envy of Christ—is an example of the politically greater but ontologically lesser person, envying the politically lesser but ontologically greater person. Further, an eventual reversal is destined to take place wherein the Devil will one day be stripped of his political advantage over humanity, and assume his native place (now as conquered) under humanity.

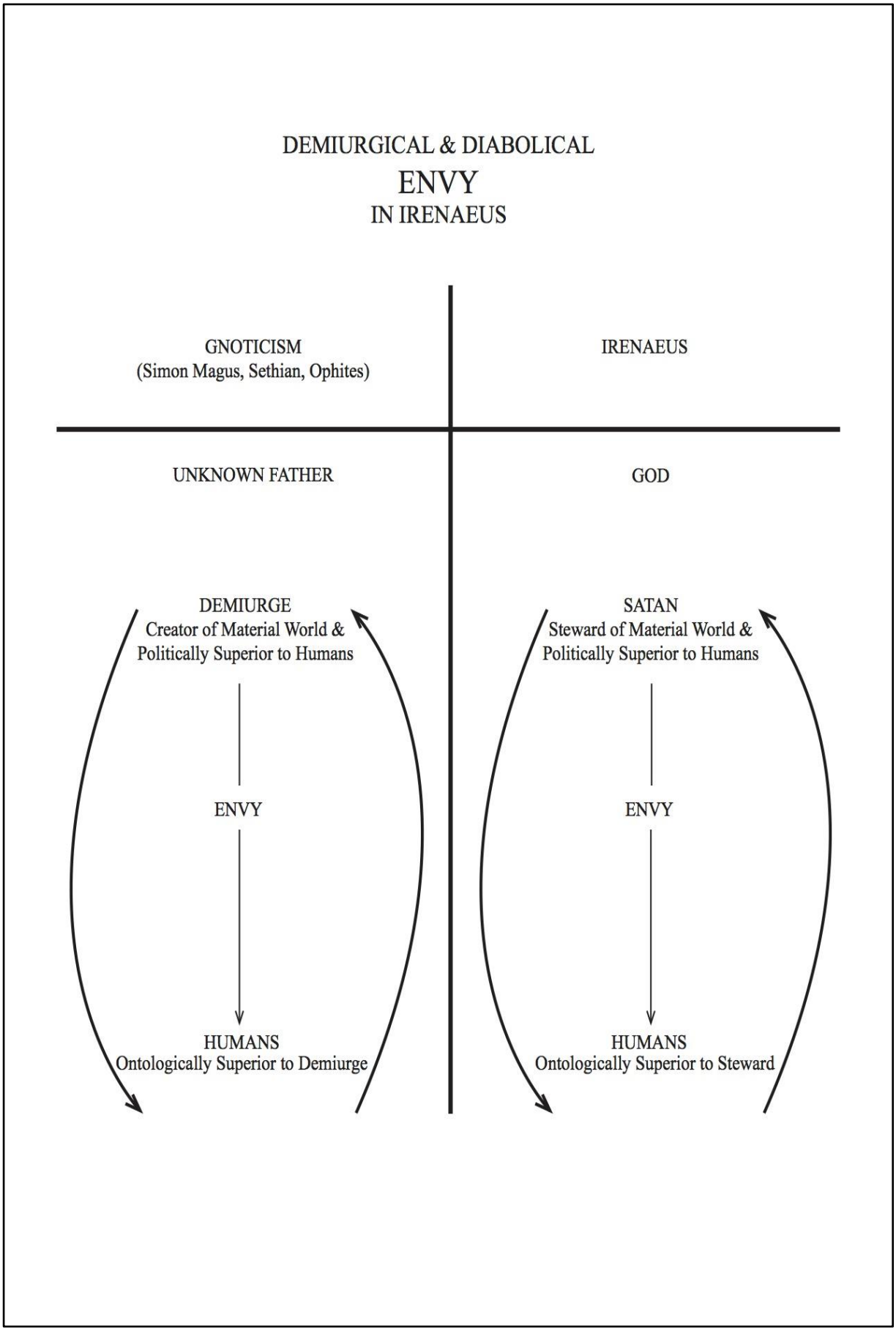
The most notable parallel in our examination of the Devil's envy is that of the demiurge. Just as the demiurge began with a political advantage over an ontologically

[97] *Haer.* 3.23-3-4.

superior humanity, so too did the Devil. And just as the demiurge is destined to be subordinated to humanity, and ultimately destroyed, so too is the Devil. The tight parallel here is not surprising, given that Gnostic exegesis tended to offer a subversive 'reverse reading' of the biblical text. The villain of the Gnostic narrative is the demiurge; as a consequence, the demiurge is assigned actions and motivations that had come to be associated by the orthodox party with the Devil.[98]

The implications of this parallel, which will be explored more fully in the coming chapters, has significance for our discussion regarding the pervasiveness of Irenaeus' Devil narrative in the early centuries of the Christian communities. The parallels between the Gnostics and Irenaeus regarding the envy of the demiurge and the envy of the Devil, respectively, are sufficiently tight that it seems evident that both narratives are drawing from each other or from a common tradition. It is difficult to assign, with certainty, one narrative as the source of the other. But it seems more likely that the Gnostic accounts of demiurgical envy are an appropriation of the orthodox teachings on the Devil, rather than the reverse, insofar as Gnostic exegesis tends to be a reversal of the orthodox interpretation of biblical narratives. In any case, the similarity between the Gnostic account of demiurgical envy and Irenaeus' account of the Devil's envy suggests that Irenaeus' basic framework regarding the Devil was fairly widespread in the early Christian communities—whether Gnostic or orthodox. Rather than inventing his own separate Devil narrative as a bulwark against Gnostic error, Irenaeus capitalized on the account already in currency. The following figure illustrates the parallel relationship between these two narratives.

[98] Williams, in his *Rethinking Gnosticism*, Chapter Three, insists that Gnostic exegesis is too diverse in its posture toward Scripture to be characterized primarily as subversive. Williams likewise argues that the reversals are not uniform throughout Gnostic writings. Thus in Williams' opinion, we should not characterize Gnostic exegesis as an exegesis whose sole purpose is to be subversive (60-63). Jewish and Christian exegetes (Philo, Clement, Origen, etc.) were already in the business of interpreting 'problem passages' in allegorical ways. Williams argues that the Gnostics are 'targeting just the sorts of problematic texts that had tested the ingenuity of generations of interpreters' (67). Thus according to Williams, Gnostic exegesis is not best characterized as 'subversive' but rather as 'an alternate solution to an old problem' (68). But Williams is too generous toward the Gnostics here. His point that not all Gnostic writers engaged in subversive exegesis is fair. But he obscures the subversive nature of the reversals when they do occur, by suggesting that the motivation behind the reversals is simply a further attempt at solving age old exegetical problems. Equating the God of Genesis 1-2 with an evil demiurge is hardly just an 'alternate solution'. Past exegetes like Philo, Clement, Origen, etc., while recognizing the anthropomorphic difficulties in such passages, did their best to defend the God of Genesis 1-2. The Gnostics throw him over entirely. Lanzillotta accurately captures the revisionist framework of Gnostic exegesis: 'In the gnostic retelling of the Genesis story one finds a wholly different conceptual world. For the first time one can speak of *revision* in the strict sense of the word, since the story is included in a completely new narrative frame', 'The Envy of God', 545. For more on Gnostic reverse exegesis, see Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 91-95.


DEMIURGICAL & DIABOLICAL
ENVY
IN IRENAEUS
GNOTICISM
(Simon Magus, Sethian, Ophites)
IRENAEUS
UNKNOWN FATHER
GOD
DEMIURGE
Creator of Material World &
Politically Superior to Humans
ENVY
HUMANS
Ontologically Superior to Demiurge
SATAN
Steward of Material World &
Politically Superior to Humans
ENVY
HUMANS
Ontologically Superior to Steward

I. The Devil's Temptation of Adam and Eve Is the Occasion for His Fall

One of the more striking features of Irenaeus' Devil narrative is the timing of the Devil's fall. For Irenaeus, the Devil's fall occurs in Genesis 3 when he tempts Adam and Eve. This act of the Devil constitutes the Devil's apostasy from God, and brings about his ruin. This stands in meaningful contrast to the later accounts of the Devil (such as we find in Origen and Augustine), wherein the Devil's fall takes place in the heavens, prior to his temptation of Adam and Eve. According to this later account, the Devil's first sin is pride with respect to the Son of God; he will not be subservient to God, and thus he and his angels are banished from heaven. The temptation of Adam and Eve thus follows after, and is a continuation of, the Devil's already existing rebellion against God. But Irenaeus only speaks of the Devil's fall with respect to the circumstances described in Genesis 3:15. We return again to *Haer*. 4.30.3, this time with particular attention to the timing of the Devil's fall. Irenaeus writes,

> The Lord, indeed, sowed good seed in his own field; and he says, 'The field is the world'. But while humanity slept, the enemy came, and 'sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went his way'. Hence we learn that this was the apostate angel and the enemy [*Ex tunc enim apostata est angelus hic et inimicus*], because he was jealous of God's workmanship [*ex quo zelavit plasma Dei*] and launched an attack to render this [workmanship] an enemy with God [*et inimicum illum Deo facere aggressus est*]. For this cause [*quapropter*] also God has banished from his presence [*separavit a sua conversatione*] him who did of his own accord stealthily sow the tares, that is, him who brought about the transgression; but he took compassion upon humanity, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly, became involved in disobedience; and he turned the enmity by which [the Devil] had designed to make [humanity] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing his own anger from humanity, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent. As also the Scripture tells us that God said to the serpent, 'And I will place enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel'. And the Lord recapitulated in himself this enmity [*Et inimicitiam hanc Dominus in semetipsum recapitulavit*], when he was made a

> human being [*homo*] from woman, and trod upon his head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book.[99]

The notable phrase is 'for this cause', signifying that the Devil's banishment from God's presence takes place on account of the Devil's temptation of Adam and Eve. Likewise, Irenaeus here introduces the proto-gospel promise of Genesis 3:15 as a divine response to the Devil's actions in the Garden; it is because the Devil has tempted Adam and Eve, causing them to sin and leading them into death, that he will one day be defeated by Christ. In this way, the culmination of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative—the defeat of the Devil by Christ, and the restoration of humanity—is narratively linked to the sin of the Devil in the Garden of Eden. Thus Irenaeus' soteriological conclusion does not redress a pre-Adamic fall of Satan in the heavens (disconnected from God's purposes for humanity), but rather solves the problem created by Satan's original sin in Eden. Irenaeus' basic framework at this point is found in a number of other passages that we have already examined at length above, the salient portions of which are extracted below:

> …the Devil, being one among those angels who have been placed over the spirit of the air [*qui super spiritum aeris praepositi sunt*], as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of humanity [*invidens homini*], was rendered an apostate from the divine law [*apostata a divina factus est lege*]: for envy is a thing foreign to God [*invidia enim aliena est a Deo*].[100]

> And again,

> This commandment the man kept not, but was disobedient to God, being led astray (πλανάω) by the angel who, becoming jealous of the man and looking on him with envy (φθονέω) because of the great gifts of God which he had given to man, both ruined himself and made the man a sinner, persuading him to disobey the commandment of God. So the angel, becoming by his falsehood the author and originator (ἀρχηγός) of sin, himself was struck

[99] *Haer*. 4.40.3.
[100] *Haer*. 5.24.4.

down, having offended against God, and man he caused to be cast out (ἐκβάλλω) from Paradise.[101]

The Devil 'was rendered an apostate' and 'ruined himself' when he tempted Adam and Eve in the garden. He became by his 'falsehood' in the garden the 'author and originator of sin' being himself 'struck down' by God because of his sin.[102] Nowhere in Irenaeus' writings does he speak of a heavenly fall of the Devil, and he seems unaware that such an account is even an option.

The significance of this timing is seen clearly when Irenaeus' account is set against that of later Christian writers such as Origen and Augustine. Augustine is not dogmatic about when the Devil and his angels fell, but he is of the opinion that it took place at the very beginning of creation.[103] In any case, he is certain that it took place prior to the temptation of Adam and Eve. Origen likewise places the fall of the Devil prior to the fall of Adam and Eve. And his doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul goes even further, making creation in some way a result of the fall, thus placing the fall of the angels prior to the creation of the material world.[104] Given their respective accounts of the timing of the Devil's fall, both Augustine and Origen highlight pride vis-à-vis God as the first sin of the Devil (rather than envy vis-à-vis humanity). [105] This of course makes sense, given that for

[101] *Epid*. 16. See also the similar logic in *Haer*. 3.23.3, where the Devil's identity as an apostate is linked to his temptation of Adam and Eve. Also 3.23. 8, 'Just as the serpent gained nothing by persuading humanity, except that this showed him to be a transgressor, since he had humanity as the beginning and object of his rebellion'.

[102] Unger reveals some of the confusion in Irenaeus scholarship when he asks, 'How did the devil have humanity as the beginning and the object of his own apostasy, which had taken place in the heavens prior to the formation of the human creature?' *ACW*, vol. 64, 208, no. 43. The answer of course, is that for Irenaeus, the Devil's apostasy did not take place in the heavens prior to the formation of the human creature. Unger (needlessly) tries to harmonize Irenaeus' statements about the Devil's fall in Genesis 3 with the later Augustinian account, by suggesting that it was the God-man in the heavens that Satan envied. This envy of Christ is then transferred to humanity when humanity eventually enters the scene. But Unger is solving a problem that does not need to be solved. Irenaeus knows nothing of a pre-Genesis 3 fall of the Devil.

[103] *Gen. litt.* 11.16. See Augustine's extended discussion on this question in his *Gen. litt.* 11.1-26. Augustine thinks the most likely answer is that the Devil fell immediately after his creation due to pride, never experiencing beatitude with the heavenly angels. Throughout the discussion Augustine demonstrates an awareness of the basic elements of Irenaeus' account (without naming him)—namely that the Devil's first sin was envy, that the Devil was envious of humanity, and the idea that the Devil was the archangel of a select group of terrestrial angels. But he generally assesses such perspectives as unlikely hypotheses given that they cannot easily be advanced from Scripture (*Gen. litt.* 11.27). See also *Civ.* 11.15.

[104] Origen is the first to link the fall of the Devil to Ezekiel 18 and Isaiah 14. On the fall of Satan and the angels, see *Princ.* 1.5.5, 8.3. For an extended discussion of Origen's doctrine of Satan and the fall, see Burton, *Satan*, 125-32.

[105] On the Devil's first sin as pride, see Origen, *Princ.* 3.1.12. For Augustine's preference of pride over envy, see *Gen. litt.* 11.14.

Augustine and Origen the Devil's fall takes place prior to humanity's creation. In both accounts humanity cannot be a factor in the Devil's initial apostasy.[106]

But in Irenaeus' narrative, the Devil's envy of humanity is the occasion for his fall; this positions humanity center stage in Irenaeus' soteriological narrative. Likewise, insofar as it is humanity's lordship over the earth that is the prime occasion of the Devil's envy, this highlights the goodness of creation in Irenaeus' soteriological storyline. The primary conflict of Irenaeus' narrative is between the Devil and humanity, and the resolution of the narrative, already forecast in Genesis 3:15, will be humanity's overthrow of the Devil through the divine aid of the Word made flesh. In contrast, the later Christian Devil narrative leaves humanity entirely to the side at the outset of the narrative. Satan's 'fall' takes place independent of humanity, perhaps even prior to the creation of humanity. As such, the original conflict in the later Devil narrative is exclusively the God/Satan conflict, with the humanity/Satan conflict only brought in as a secondary plot-line. Further, the Devil desires God's throne (or the Son's, depending on the narrative); he is not interested in possessing the material world. The contested territory in this later narrative is heaven, not the earth—a view that is more in keeping with the Platonic soteriology that we find in Origen and beyond. I will press this point further in the conclusion, but it bears stating here that Irenaeus' account of the Devil is resistant to both Gnostic and Platonic accounts of salvation in ways that the later Christian Devil narrative is not.

II. Conclusion

As I have intended to show, the theme of envy runs throughout Irenaeus' corpus, serving as an explanation for the fall of the Devil and his assault upon humanity. Just as the demiurge envied humanity, as Cain envied Abel, and as the Pharisees envied Christ, so too the Devil envied humanity. As is made clear in *Adversus haereses*, and most especially in *Epideixis*, it is humanity's exalted status within God's created order that provokes the Devil's envy and occasions his fall. Though younger than the hosts of heaven, human beings exist uniquely as God's form (*plasma* and *plasmatio*) and as his *imago et simultudo.* As such they will rule not only the world, but the angels themselves. Though the Devil masquerades as God, it is not God's kingdom he covets and usurps. Rather it is humanity's

[106] Augustine maintains the view that the Devil was envious of humanity, but he does not view this envy as the occasion of the Devil's fall. 'Envy does not precede pride, but follows it: envy is not the cause of pride, but pride is the cause of envy', *Gen. litt.* 11.14.

world—and the rightful place of humans as lords of that world—that the Devil covets for his own.

Irenaeus' basic account of the Devil's envy carries significant anthropological and cosmological freight. As we have already seen in chapters one and two, Irenaeus is keen to insist throughout his work on the goodness of the cosmos and humanity. The earth is the crown jewel of creation, and destined to be redeemed; God will not abandon it to decay. Insofar as it is the rightful kingdom of humanity, it must be restored if God's original intent in creation is to succeed. Likewise, humanity is the apex of creation and created superior to the angels. Human beings find their identity in the fact that they are made in the image and likeness of the incarnate Son. They were created as lords of the earth, the highest of all of God's creatures. And what is more, humanity-in-Christ is growing up into full perfection, the very same perfection that Christ himself as the incarnate Word possesses. Unlike what one finds in the later Christian tradition, humans do not arrive on the scene as replacements for the fallen angels[107] (a sort of divine 'plan B'), nor do humans achieve salvation only insofar as they ascend to the angels and become like them. Quite the contrary. In Irenaeus, all of creation, including the angelic host—and especially the Devil and his angels—were created subordinate to humans.

From this vantage point, it is easy to see how Irenaeus' account of the Devil's envy of humanity is consistent with his robust anthropology and cosmology. Irenaeus' recounting of the fall of the Devil and humanity as told in *Epideixis* , and then more fully developed in *Adversus haereses*, sets the stage for his robust anthropology and cosmology. The Devil's envy of humanity clarifies and underscores the greatness of humanity with respect to the Devil and his angels. As great as the Devil is, humanity is greater. The Devil recognizes this and it provokes his envy. Likewise, the Devil's envy of humanity due to humanity's lordship over the earth clarifies and underscores the supreme goodness of the earth and the material world. The material world is so valuable that the Devil himself desires to possess it.

In this way, Irenaeus' account of the Devil's envy and fall is consistent with and advances his primary theological agenda—particularly with respect to the Gnostics—of insisting that the Creator God is a good God, and that humanity is destined to rule through Christ (the Word made flesh) over the good world that God has made.

This account of the Devil's envy and how it intersects with Irenaeus' positive anthropology and cosmology can be further developed when we consider the Devil's post-fall identity and activity, the subject of the next chapter. God created the good material world to be ruled by humanity. The Devil inserted himself as a false god and lord. Christ, as

[107] See Chapter Three, section VII of this thesis.

the true Adam, has been sent by God to undo the work of the Devil and restore humanity to the world's throne. The Devil, despite his machinations, is destined to be defeated.

Chapter Five

The Devil's Post-Fall Identity

'*Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?*'

Isaiah 49:24

The previous chapter explored Irenaeus' account of the Devil's envy of humanity and his subsequent fall. What follows is an exploration of the Devil's post-fall identity with a view to providing a composite sketch of Irenaeus' general demonology. My analysis will pay particular attention to the way in which the Devil's post-fall identity in Irenaeus is in keeping with, and underscores, Irenaeus' larger cosmological and anthropological framework. For Irenaeus, the Devil's identity shifts from that of an angel of God to an apostate from God who has stolen humanity's throne and thus inadvertently set himself against God. The present chapter highlights five key elements of the Devil's post-fall identity: 1) The Devil's identity as the ringleader of apostasy and sin, 2) the Devil as the enemy of humanity, 3) the Devil as the captor and thief of humanity, 4) the Devil as the thief of Adam's throne, and 5) the Devil as an impersonator of God.

I. The Devil as the Ringleader of Apostasy and Sin

A label that Irenaeus frequently assigns to the Devil is 'apostate' (*apostata*). The Devil is the 'apostate angel' (*apostata angelus*),[1] the 'leader of apostasy' (*princeps apostasiae*),[2] and the 'apostate slave' (*servus apostata*).[3] Irenaeus arrives at this label largely by following Justin's incorrect etymological connection of שָׂטָן (*Satan*) with 'apostate'.[4] Despite the flawed etymology, the label 'apostate' is an apt descriptor of Irenaeus' Devil.

For Irenaeus, all sin is merely a manifold expression of apostasy or abandonment (Irenaeus also uses *abscessio* [i.e. leaving] as a synonym for apostasy). All sin, then, is a form of separation, or leaving. Even sexual sin is considered, fundamentally, a form of

[1] *Haer.* 4.41.1-2; 5.24.4, 5.21.2, 3; *Epid.* 16.

[2] *Haer.* 2.20.3.

[3] *Haer.* 3.8.2. For more on Satan as apostate, see *Haer.* 5.25.1, 5.26.2.

[4] Irenaeus writes, 'For the Hebrew word 'Satan' signifies an apostate'. *Haer.* 5.21.2. See also *Epid.* 16., where Irenaeus again translates the Hebrew 'Satan' as 'ἀποστάτης'. For this idea in Justin, see *Dialog*. 103. For more on the connection between Justin and Irenaeus, see Appendix B, pages 250-64 of this dissertation, and Smith, *Proof*, 153.

apostasy. Noting Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 7 regarding marital conjugal rights, Irenaeus observes that God makes provision for human sexual passions lest we step outside his bounds into *apostasia*. Following immediately from this insight, Irenaeus goes on to observe that in the same way, in the Old Testament God,

> permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of his people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God [*apostatae fierent a Deo*], but learn to love him with their whole heart [*sed toto corde discerent diligere eum*].[5]

Thus all sins—whether human or angelic—are subsets of the one meta-sin of apostasy—an abandonment of the creature's proper love and adoration of God. The connection here between apostasy and love is noteworthy. Sin is not merely the breaking of a moral code, but a rejection of the God who is to be loved above all else.

> And to as many as continue in their love towards God [*custodiunt dilectionem*], does he grant communion with him [*suam his praestat communionem*]. But communion with God [*Communio autem Dei*], is life and light, and the enjoyment of all the benefits which he has in store. But on as many as, according to their own choice, depart from God [*autem absistunt secundum sententiam suam ab eo*], he inflicts that separation [*separationem inducit*] from himself which they have chosen of their own accord. But separation from God [*Separatio autem Dei*] is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which he has in store. Those, therefore, who have cast away by apostasy [*per apostasiam amiserunt*] these aforementioned things, being in fact destitute of all good, do experience every kind of punishment.[6]

[5] *Haer.* 4.15.2.

[6] *Haer.* 5.27.2. For more on the connection between sin and love, see *Haer.* 4.37.7: 'The Lord has therefore endured all these things on our behalf, in order that we, having been instructed by means of them all, may be in all respects circumspect for the time to come, and that, having been rationally taught to love God, we may continue in his perfect love: for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of humanity's apostasy'.

Sin therefore is a rejection of communion with God and an abandonment of the love of God, the one true source of life. The contrast between Irenaeus and the Gnostics is striking at this point. The Gnostics likewise construe the first sin as a form of apostasy wherein Sophia, the 'last and youngest of the Aeons' falls away from the higher Aeons in the Pleroma.[7] But in the Valentinian account, Sophia apostatizes from the heavenly Pleroma insofar as she abandons her consort (Desired) and strives to comprehend the unknowable Father; this knowledge is beyond her grasp. Her passion to know the unknowable causes her to fall into grief and despair, out of which the material content of creation springs into being. Thus in the Gnostic account, it is a desire to know the Father that brings about sorrow and grief and apostasy. In Irenaeus' account, it is because humanity rejects the knowledge of God that apostasy is born.

The fundamental difference between these two narratives can be explained, at least in part, by the ontological assumptions that undergird each account. For the Gnostics, Sophia is an emanation from the Father, and thus ontologically one with him. In this sense, she need not seek after the unknown father in order to sustain herself. She is already self-sustaining insofar as she is ontologically equal with the Father. But Irenaeus maintains a strong Creator/creature distinction. Creation is finite and not self-sustaining. As such, failure to seek after and adhere to God in loving union is failure to adhere to life and light and all good things. Humanity is ontologically other than God; the human creature is, by the very definition of its creaturehood, a contingent being that must draw its existence from the only One who is self-sustaining. The human being who loves and seeks after God properly recognizes that God is the ultimate source of life. Sin, then, for Irenaeus is not merely (or even primarily) failure to live up to a moral standard (though it is not less than this),[8] but rather failure to continue to live in loving union with, and thus proper dependence upon, God.[9]

The Devil, then, as the first sinner, is the first apostate. The Devil, like all created beings, owed his allegiance to God, and should have continued in loving union with God.

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[7] See *Haer.* 1.5, 1.16.3, 1.18.4, 1.19.1, 1.29.4.

[8] Irenaeus views sin in objective and traditionally moral terms. His *ad hominin* attacks against the Gnostics show that he is concerned with the basic litany of vices found in the Jewish and early Christian tradition. See *Haer.* 1.6.3, 1.29.3, 2.32.1-2, etc. Greed, sensuality, gluttony, idolatry, envy, adultery, fornication, avarice and such are all noted as actions and attitudes to be avoided and worthy of God's judgment. But all of these sins for Irenaeus can be summed up under the primordial sin of apostasy, insofar as they are manifestations of an abandonment of the love of God. Or again, Irenaeus does not insist upon a 'bare morality' as an end in itself. Morality for Irenaeus serves the higher end of love for God and neighbor.

[9] See Bingham, 'Christianizing Divine Aseity', 55-56, where he helpfully lists the occurrences in Irenaeus of *indigeo* and *indigens* ['need', or 'lack'] with *non*, *nihil*, and *nullius*, said in reference to God, in contrast to the occurrences of *indigeo* and *indigens* without the negative qualifier, said in reference to humanity.

But the Devil, unwilling to content himself with his divinely appointed station, rebelled against the Creator and made himself an apostate. 'Now the law is the commandment of God. The man [i.e. Christ] proves him [i.e. the Devil] to be a fugitive from and a transgressor of the law, an apostate also from God [*fugitivum eum homo eius et legis transgressorem et apostatam Dei ostendens*]'.[10] For Irenaeus, the Devil's rejection of God's law constitutes the first occasion of apostasy—whether that of angels or humanity.

Being the first apostate, the Devil has subsequently become the 'ringleader of transgression' and the 'father' of all who have followed him into apostasy. Interpreting Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares, Irenaeus writes,

> Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels of the Devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared; and as, again, he declares with regard to the tares, 'The tares are the children of the wicked one', it must be affirmed that he has ascribed all who are of the abandonment [*qui sunt abscessionis*] to him who is the ringleader of this transgression [*qui princeps est huius transgressionis*]. But he made neither angels nor humans so by nature. For we do not find that the Devil created anything whatsoever, since indeed he is himself a creature of God [*ipse creatura sit Dei*], like the other angels. For God made all things, as also David says with regard to all things of the kind: 'For he spoke the Word, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created'. Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the Devil has become the cause of abandonment to himself and others [*et diabolus sibimetipsi et reliquis factus est abscessionis causa*], justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of abandonment [*eos qui in abscessione perseverant*] 'sons of the Devil' and 'angels of the wicked one' [*maligni*].[11]

Irenaeus will go on in this passage to state that humans are 'sons of God' by nature, in so far as they were created good by God. But 'with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in him and do his will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey his will, are sons and angels of the Devil, because they do the works of the Devil'.[12] Thus Satan at his fall became the 'chief' of sinners, and the ringleader of all who rebel against God.

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[10] *Haer.* 5.21.3.
[11] *Haer.* 4.41.1-2.
[12] *Haer.* 4.41.2.

After this fall, humanity became the chief target of Satan's deception. Being envious of humanity from the start, the Devil now enviously desires—with increasing intensity—to pull humanity into his own apostasy. 'And as his apostasy was exposed by humanity [*per hominem traducta est apostasia eius*], and humanity became the [means of] searching out his thoughts [*et examinatio sententiae eius, homo factus est*], he has set himself to this with greater and greater determination, in opposition to humanity, envying our life, and wishing to involve us in his own apostate power'.[13] The plot gains further intensity with the advent of Christ. Until this time, Satan believed himself capable of avoiding damnation. But once it was revealed that God had entered the conflict on behalf of humanity in the person of Christ, and that humanity-in-Christ could thus no longer be defeated, Satan moved to open blasphemy.[14]

Irenaeus is perhaps drawing here from Revelation 12, wherein the Devil is said to pursue Christ into the heavens after his ascension. War ensues and the Devil is thrown down to the earth in defeat. A blessing is proclaimed upon the heavens because the Devil has been thrown down, but a woe is proclaimed on the earth and sea, 'for the Devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short' (Rev. 12:12). The picture here is that of a defeated and bitter tyrant determined to pull others down with him in his defeat.

The rise of the Gnostic error thus figures prominently in Irenaeus' emphasis on the Devil's apostasy. The Devil's motivation in raising up the Gnostics is to pull humans into his own apostasy and secure their doom. 'For as the serpent beguiled Eve, by promising her what he had not himself, so also do these men [i.e. the Gnostics], by pretending [to possess] superior knowledge, and [to be acquainted with] ineffable mysteries; and, by promising that admittance which they speak of as taking place within the Pleroma, plunge those that believe them into death, rendering them apostates from him who made them'.[15] By following the false teaching of the Gnostics, people 'render themselves heretics and apostates from the truth [*apostatas faciunt veritatis*], and show themselves patrons of the serpent and of death'.[16] The signs, black magic, and tricks of the false teachers are satanically enabled, and expressions of a dark power that is 'severed from God and apostate'.[17]

For Irenaeus (as we have already observed), it is the Devil's envy of humanity that is the occasion of the Devil's apostasy (rather than an angelic fall from the heavens due to pride, prior to humanity's creation). The Devil desires what humanity possesses—namely

[13] *Haer.* 5.24.4.
[14] *Haer.* 5.26.2.
[15] *Haer.* 4. preface. 4.
[16] *Haer.* 3.23.8. See also *Haer.* 1.10.1, 4. preface. 4.
[17] *Haer.* 1.15.6.

humanity's lordship over the earth. Thus for Irenaeus, the Devil is an apostate not primarily because he rebelled against God directly, but because he rebelled against God indirectly through his rebellion against humanity, i.e. against humanity's privileged status instituted by God at creation—a status ultimately superior to the Devil's own. This way of framing the Devil's apostasy is carried forward into Irenaeus' account of the Devil's post-fall identity. The Devil is considered an apostate in the historical present not only because he continues in rebellion against God, but also because he continues in rebellion against humanity (more on this in the section below). The distinction is subtle, but important. Irenaeus' account of the Devil's apostasy as centered on his posture toward humanity has the effect of pushing Irenaeus' soteriological narrative in a more anthropocentric direction right from the start.

II. The Devil as Enemy of Humanity

Irenaeus frequently refers to the Devil as 'our enemy' (*inimicum nostrum*), 'humanity's opponent' (*contrarium homini*), 'our adversary' (*adversarium nostrum*), or simply 'the enemy' (*inimicum*).[18] This emphasis on the Devil as an enemy *of humanity* is an aspect of Irenaeus' thought that is somewhat muted in the later Christian tradition by an additional emphasis on the Devil as God's enemy. As noted above, Origen's and Augustine's accounts of the Devil's fall tend to place the initial, and thus, primary enmity of the biblical narrative as between God and the Devil (rather than between the Devil and humanity); for both Origen and Augustine, the Devil was an enemy of God before he was an enemy of humanity. But in Irenaeus, the initial, and thus, primary enmity of the biblical narrative is between Satan and humanity.[19] For Irenaeus, the Devil became an enemy of God only insofar as he has set himself against God's anointed—humanity.

This basic framework is captured nicely in a poignant passage late in *Adversus haereses* where Irenaeus is arguing for the goodness of the Creator. In this passage Irenaeus is pressing the point that Jesus has been sent by the Creator [*demiurgus*] to redeem humanity and destroy the Devil. To underscore his point, Irenaeus connects Jesus to the divine

[18] All can be found in *Haer.* 5.21. See also *Haer.* 4.24.1.

[19] Against Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation*, 39, who sees the chief conflict of Irenaeus' narrative as between God and Satan. Wingren properly notes the absence of duality in Irenaeus' thought, contra the Gnostics. For Irenaeus, God is unrivaled and sovereign. For Wingren, this creates tension in Irenaeus' thought when Irenaeus introduces the Devil as God's opposite. Wingren is correct about Irenaeus' rejection of dualism, but incorrect to pit the Devil and God as opposites in Irenaeus. The tension is resolved when we see that for Irenaeus, the chief enmity of the narrative is not that of God and Satan, but rather Satan and humanity. It is Satan and humanity that are opposites, not Satan and God.

promise of Genesis 3:15, namely that one from the line of Eve will come and destroy the serpent. Insofar as this promise was given by the Creator, and insofar as Jesus is the benevolent fulfilment of this prophecy, thus far is the Creator validated as a good and gracious God (contra the Gnostics). Salient for our purposes is how Satan's native and primary enmity of humanity underscores Irenaeus' concept of the incarnation and Adamic recapitulation. For Irenaeus, the enmity between Satan and humanity is the primary (even if not only) occasion for the incarnation. The passage is worth quoting at length.

> [Christ] has therefore, in his work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy [*adversus inimicum nostrum bellum*], and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam [*in Adam captivos duxerat nos*], and trampling upon his head, as you can perceive in Genesis that God said to the serpent, 'And I will put enmity [*inimicitiam*] between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall be on the watch for [*observabit*] your head, and you on the watch for his heel'.[4] For from that time, he who should be born of a woman, [namely] from the virgin, after the likeness of Adam, was preached as keeping watch for the head of the serpent. This is the seed of which the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians, 'that the law of works was established until the seed should come to whom the promise was made'. This fact is exhibited in a still clearer light in the same epistle, where he thus speaks: 'But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman'. For indeed the enemy would not have been justly vanquished [*neque enim iuste victus fuisset inimicus*], unless it had been a human [born] of woman who conquered him. For it was by means of a woman that he got the advantage over humanity at first, setting himself up as humanity's opponent [*contrarium statuens homini*]. And therefore does the Lord profess himself to be the Son of humanity, comprising in himself that original human [*principalem hominem*] out of whom the woman was fashioned [*ex quo ea quae secundum mulierem est plasmatio facta est*], in order that, as our species went down to death through a vanquished human [*per hominem victum descendit in mortem*], so we may ascend to life again through a victorious one; and as through a human death received the palm [of victory] against us, so again by a human we may receive the palm against death. Now the Lord would not have recapitulated in himself that ancient and primary enmity against the serpent [*antiquam illam et primam adversus serpentem inimicitiam*], fulfilling the promise of the Creator

> [*Demiurgi*], and performing his command, if he had come from another Father. But as he is one and the same, who formed us at the beginning, and sent his Son at the end, the Lord did perform his command, being made of a woman, by both destroying our adversary [*destruens adversarium nostrum*], and perfecting humanity after the image and likeness of God. And for this reason he did not draw the means of confounding him from any other source than from the words of the law, and made use of the Father's commandment as a help towards the destruction and confusion of the apostate angel [*destructionem et traductionem apostatae angeli*].[20]

The passage is uniquely instructive for our purposes, in that Irenaeus presupposes throughout his discussion of Christ's recapitulating work the priority of satanic/human enmity in his reading of the bible's soteriological plotline. Christ, as the second Adam has come to resolve the enmity that exists between humanity and the Devil. According to the logic of this passage, the reason for Christ's incarnation is not because God and the Devil are at odds (or even because God and humanity are at odds), but because humanity and the Devil are at odds.[21] The Devil had vanquished humanity; it was necessary that humanity vanquish the Devil in return. 'For indeed the enemy would not have been justly vanquished [*Neque enim iuste victus fuisset inimicus*], unless it had been a human [born] of woman who conquered him'.[22] Thus Jesus did not come primarily as God to destroy God's enemy, as much as he came as a human to destroy humanity's enemy. He is the second Adam, succeeding where the first Adam failed. Of course, Jesus' capacity to destroy the Devil comes from the fact that he is also divine; he has a power that the first Adam lacked. But it is Jesus' identity as human that Irenaeus is most concerned with when he references the Devil's defeat at the hands of Jesus,[23] precisely because it is humanity that has been overcome by the Devil.[24] Thus for Irenaeus, the basic logic of the incarnation presupposes that the primary enmity of the biblical narrative is between Satan and humanity.

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[20] *Haer.* 5.21.1-2.

[21] Here we might think of Irenaeus, Augustine, and Anselm as representatives of the three primary ways that the Christian tradition has emphasized the main enmity of the Christian soteriological narrative. In Irenaeus the primary enmity is between Satan and humanity; in Augustine the primary enmity is between God and Satan. In Anselm the primary enmity is between God and humanity.

[22] Irenaeus is not here espousing a ransom form of the atonement. For more on this, see Chapter Two, no. 88 of this dissertation.

[23] Compare with Athanasius in his *De incarnatione*, who does not use Satan as a primary justification to explain why God became human in Christ.

[24] See also *Haer.* 4.24.1. 'As I have pointed out in the preceding book, the apostle did, in the first place, instruct the Gentiles to depart from the superstition of idols, and to worship one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the Framer of the whole creation; and that his Son was his Word,

Irenaeus' prioritization of human/satanic enmity is further seen in the way he articulates the Devil's use of the serpent as the vehicle of temptation. '…in the beginning [the Devil] led humanity astray through the instrumentality of the serpent, concealing himself as it were from God'.[25] And again, 'The apostate angel, having affected the disobedience of humanity by means of the serpent, imagined that he escaped the notice of the Lord'.[26] And, 'He [the Devil] disputed with her [Eve] as if God were not there, for he was ignorant of the greatness of God'. [27] For Irenaeus, the Devil does not conceive of his actions in Genesis 3 as a direct and public challenge to God's authority. Using the serpent as a disguise, he imagines that his actions will go unnoticed by God. To be sure, he knows that his actions run contrary to God's decree, which is why he takes cover within the serpent. But he hopes to avoid making his Creator his enemy, and instead directs his subterfuge toward humanity. The hope is vain. In his ignorance the Devil fails to understand that God is everywhere present, and thus God is fully aware of all that happens in his creation. As we have already observed, the Devil's assault upon humanity's lordship is the cause of the Devil's banishment from God's presence.[28] Thus it is because of the Devil's (temporarily) successful assault against human authority (rather than a failed assault against God's authority) that Satan is estranged from God. In making himself an enemy of God's chosen—and in being found out—the Devil has made himself any enemy of God. The Devil, 'in advising things contrary to God's commandment…was shown to be an enemy of God'.[29] In the end, the coup against humanity resulted in the Devil's doom and his estrangement from God.

All of this underscores Irenaeus's basic anthropological framework, and the way this framework fits into his larger soteriological narrative. For Irenaeus, humanity is the apex of creation and the primary protagonist of the biblical narrative. The Devil is the primary enemy and antagonist. God enters the story from above (as it were), and wades in to the conflict on the side of humanity. Notably, God's entrance into the conflict does not displace humanity as the primary protagonist, but rather serves to underscore (particularly through the incarnation) that humanity remains the central object of God's creative and redemptive

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by whom he founded all things; and that he, in the last times, was made a human among humans; that he re-formed the human race, but destroyed and conquered the enemy of humanity, and gave to his own handiwork victory against the adversary [*destruxisse autem et vicisse inimicum hominis et donasse suo plasmati adversus reluctantem victoriam*]'.

[25] *Haer.* 5.26.2.

[26] *Haer.* 4. preface. 4.

[27] *Haer.* 5.23.1.

[28] *Haer.* 4.40.3; also 3.28.8.

[29] *Haer.* 5.21.2. The reference here is to the Devil's wilderness temptation of Christ (Cf. Luke 4:1-12, Matt 4:1-11). The backdrop of *Haer.* 5.21 is the Garden Temptation of humanity by the Devil (Gen 3).

work. This positioning of the conflict as primarily between humanity and the Devil thus pushes Irenaeus' narrative in a strongly anthropocentric direction. For Irenaeus, humanity is not a supporting character or collateral victim in a story about a war between heaven and hell. Rather humanity is the main character in a drama of redemption that ends with the Word-of-God-as-Human defeating the ancient enemy of humanity.

III. The Devil as Captor and Thief of Humanity

The Devil's coup against humanity is, at least initially, a smashing success. He strikes the first human couple while they are still in the frailty of their infancy, when they are not yet an even match for his strength. Humanity's potential to grow into maturity and assume functional lordship over the earth has been short-circuited. The divine curse of physical death has rendered the divine life unattainable for humanity. Estranged from God, humanity has fallen prey to death and to the Devil's power. In this sense, the ontological integrity of humanity has been compromised. For Irenaeus, the body is not merely a shell, a throw-away husk. It represents an integral aspect of humanity. As we have already seen, the dissolution of the body into death is the dissolution of the image of God in humanity—i.e. the image of the incarnate, embodied Son who is the true human and Lord over God's good created world. Thus to lose the integrity of the material body—to die—is to lose the integrity to rule the material world.

Yet the ontological integrity of the Devil remains undiminished. Irenaeus gives us no indication that the Devil's power is in anyway lessened by his sin; the Devil's punishment waits for him on the horizon of Irenaeus' narrative. Indeed, the compromise due to death of humanity's ontological superiority over the Devil has (seemingly) guaranteed the Devil's political superiority over humanity. Thus the Devil is not simply the enemy of humanity; more than that, he has become the captor of, and victor over, humanity.

> For at the beginning Adam became a vessel in [the Devil's] possession [*Primum enim possessionis eius uas Adam factus est*], whom he did also hold under his power [*quem et tenebat sub sua potestate*], that is, by bringing sin on him iniquitously, and under color of immortality entailing death upon him. For, while promising that they should be as gods, which was in no way possible for him [i.e. the Devil] to be, he wrought death in them.[30]

[30] *Haer.* 3.23.1.

Irenaeus continues in this passage to speak of Adam as being 'led captive', 'deeply injured', and 'suffering captivity'. What is more, all those begotten by Adam in his captivity have likewise been born into captivity—up until the present day.[31] Just as the children of slaves become the property of their parent's master, so too the children of Adam and Eve remain under the power of the Devil. Death—the great Achilles' heel of humanity—has marked all of humanity sprung from 'Adam's stock', and thus rendered humanity powerless against the Devil.

Irenaeus frequently uses the imagery of imperial conquest and servitude to describe the post-fall relationship between humanity and the Devil. The Devil has taken possession of humanity in the same way that a conqueror takes possession of those he has defeated in battle. Following the Gospel writers, Irenaeus speaks of Satan as the 'strong man' who has enticed humanity away from God and now holds humanity 'under his power'. He writes,

> For as in the beginning [the Devil] enticed humanity to transgress his Maker's law, and thereby got them into his power [*et eum habuit in sua potestate*]; yet his power consists in transgression and apostasy, and with these he bound humanity [*et his colligavit hominem*]; so again, on the other hand, it was necessary that through humanity itself he should, when conquered, be bound with the same chains with which he had bound humanity, in order that humanity, being set free, might return to its Lord, leaving to [Satan] those bonds by which he himself had been fettered, that is, sin. For when Satan is bound, humanity is set free; since 'none can enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods, unless he first binds the strong man himself'....[32] Afterwards, the Word bound him securely as a fugitive from himself, and made spoil of his goods—namely, those people whom he held in bondage [*hoc est eos qui ab eo detinebantur homines*], and whom he unjustly was using for his own purposes [*quibus ipse iniuste utebatur*]. And justly indeed has he been led captive [*Et captivus quidem ductus est iuste is*], who had led humans unjustly into bondage [*qui hominem iniuste captivum*

[31] *Haer.* 3.23.2. This is Irenaeus' notion of 'original sin'—anticipating the later articulation that is made explicit in Augustine and beyond. Irenaeus' focus is less on inherited guilt, and more on inherited corruption. Of course, these twin aspects of this doctrine are not mutually exclusive and Irenaeus affirms both at various points. But his focus is on the transmission of sin as a state of ontological corruption (i.e. death). Or again, for Irenaeus, with respect to the transmission of sin, the connection between Adam and his descendants is ontological, not merely judicial. In this Irenaeus anticipates Augustine.

[32] The Devil as the 'strong man' (drawn from Jesus teaching in Matt 12:29, Mark 3:27, Luke 11:21-22) is a favorite image of Irenaeus, and one that occurs frequently in *Adversus haereses*. See *Haer.* 3.8.2, 3.18.6, 3.23.1, 4.33.4, 5.21.3, 5.22.1.

> *duxerat*]; while humanity, who had been led captive in times past [*qui autem ante captivus ductus fuerat homo*], was rescued from the control of its possessor [*extractus est a possessoris potestate*], according to the tender mercy of God the Father.[33]

The passage moves us forward into Irenaeus' account of the Devil's defeat, the subject of the next chapter. Yet it captures well the way in which Irenaeus conceives of the Devil's initial victory over humanity. The metaphor used here and elsewhere by Irenaeus, common enough in the ancient world, is that of a foreign tyrant taking control of a city that is not his own.[34] Irenaeus' framework in this passage is striking. Apart from the redemptive work of Christ, humanity is 'conquered' and 'bound in chains' of 'transgression and apostasy'; humanity has become the 'spoils' of war, and the Devil now 'uses humanity for his own purposes'.

When set in the larger context of the Devil's envy, humanity is not merely an enemy for the Devil to destroy, but a valuable city to be captured. The Devil seeks to possess humanity not because he esteems humanity little, or because he hates God, but because he envies humanity greatly. But the Devil has stolen something that he is unable to sustain. Humanity's alienation from God, if left unresolved, would ultimately lead to the destruction of humanity. The Devil, for all his power, is unable to sustain the treasure he has stolen, showing himself to be a false ruler and imposter.

In a similar vein, Irenaeus also speaks of the Devil as a thief, with humanity as the stolen property of God. He writes,

> And since the apostasy tyrannized over us unjustly [*Et quoniam iniuste dominabatur nobis apostasia*], and, though we were by nature property of the omnipotent God [*et cum natura essemus Dei omnipotentis*], alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples, the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to his own justice, did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it what is his own [*ea quae sunt sua redimens ab ea*], not by violent means, as the [apostasy] had obtained dominion over us at the beginning [*initio dominabatur nostri*l], when it insatiably snatched away [*insatiabiliter rapiens*] what was not its own, but by means of persuasion, as became a God of counsel, who does not use violent

[33] *Haer.* 5.21.3. Elsewhere in Irenaeus, the Devil is the arch-type of the great whale of Jonah, swallowing the whole of humanity and bringing it down into death. See *Haer*. 3.20.1.

[34] See *Haer.* 5.24.4.

> means to obtain what he desires [*non vim inferentem accipere quae vellet*]; so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction [*neque antiqua plasmatio Dei depereret*].[35]

Humanity is the ancient handiwork and property of God—God's prize possession. The Devil has stolen humanity and rendered humanity his own disciples. The Devil's power over humanity is complete and total. The image of Roman slavery lurks in the background of this passage. Humans were once the 'property' of God; slaves owned by the benevolent and loving master. But the Devil has stolen God's property, and unjustly made us his own.[36] He has 'insatiably snatched away what was not his own'.

As can already be seen in the above passage, the salvation that Christ secures for humanity will necessarily involve—as its central feature—an overthrow of the Devil and a breaking of the Devil's political power over humanity. What is more, it is not sufficient for Irenaeus that humanity simply gets out from under the power of the Devil; but even more that humanity ascend back to its proper and destined place of political superiority over the Devil (more on this in the next chapter). In this way the Devil's captivity of humanity sets the stage for the subsequent development of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative. Thus the fortunes of humanity vis-à-vis the Devil are central to Irenaeus' soteriology, with the general effect of moving Irenaeus' soteriological plotline in an anthropocentric direction.

IV. The Devil as Thief of Adam's Throne

The Devil is a thief who has stolen the property of God, namely humanity. But the Devil is also a thief who has stolen the property of humanity, namely the kingdoms of the world. The world's throne belonged to humanity—a gift from God—but the Devil has set himself up as a tyrant king, claiming for himself the inheritance that properly belongs to Adam and his descendants. This 'Devil-as-thief' motif is worked out in Irenaeus' commentary on Christ's wilderness temptation (found in Matthew 4 and Luke 4). Christ's obedience in the wilderness recapitulates Adam's failure in the garden, and shows the Devil to be an imposter. Irenaeus writes,

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[35] *Haer.* 5.1.1. See also the similar language of 5.2.1. Regarding the idea that God overcame the Devil 'justly' see Chapter Two, no. 88 of this dissertation.

[36] See also *Haer.* 3.17.3, where Irenaeus likens the Devil to the two robbers in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Also see *Haer.* 5.25.1 for the Antichrist as 'robber'.

> As therefore he [the Devil] lied at the beginning [*in principio mentitus est*], so did he also in the end [*ita et in fine mentiebatur*], when he said, 'All these are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give them'. For it is not he who has appointed the kingdoms of this world, but God [*Non enim ipse determinavit huius saeculi regna, sed Deus*]; for…. 'Be subject to all the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: now those which are have been ordained of God'…. Now, that [Paul] spoke these words, not in regard to angelic powers, nor of invisible rulers [*non de angelicis potestatibus nec de invisibilibus principibus dixit*]—as some venture to expound the passage—but of those who are actual human authorities [*sed de his quae sunt secundum homines potestates*], he says, 'For this cause pay tribute also [to earthly rulers]: for they are God's ministers, doing service for this very thing'. This also the Lord confirmed, when he did not do what he was tempted to by the Devil; but he gave directions that tribute should be paid to the tax-gatherers for himself and Peter; because 'they are the ministers of God, serving for this very thing'.[37]

The Devil is an imposter and fake, an illegitimate king. This can be seen by his false promise to give the kingdoms of the world to Jesus. As in the Garden temptation of Adam, the Devil promises Christ what is not his to rightfully give. The kingdoms of the world belong first to God, and then have been given by God to humanity. Notably, Irenaeus explicitly asserts that the kingdoms of the world have been given to human rulers, not angelic rulers, an assertion consistent with his comments in *Epideixis* where Adam is appointed lord of the world and the Devil and his angels as mere stewards.[38]

Here we can see a certain tension in Irenaeus' articulation of the Devil's sovereignty over humanity and the world. On the one hand Irenaeus wants to insist that the Devil has stolen humanity by force and violence and has become a tyrant over humanity and humanity's world. He is the strong man who has overthrown Adam and absconded with Adam's throne. Yet on the other hand Irenaeus wants to insist that the Devil is not really in charge—that God remains in possession of the kingdoms of the world and has given them to human rulers, who to this present day exercise sovereignty on God's behalf. Nor indeed can the Devil actually deprive God of the possession of humanity. In both these respects, the

[37] *Haer.* 5.24.1. For a brief, yet helpful discussion on Irenaeus' interpretation of the wilderness temptation, see Wingren, *God and Man*, 11-12.

[38] See *Epid.* 12. Here in *Adversus haereses* the context of human rule is for the containment of sin. But the general sense is the same in both *Adversus haereses* and *Epideixis.* In both cases God has given authority to rule the world to humanity; the Devil is an imposter and usurper.

Devil's claim to sovereignty is an empty claim. 'For the creation is not subjected to [the Devil's] power, since indeed he is himself but one among created things. Nor shall [the Devil] give away the rule over humans to humans; but both all other things, and all human affairs, are arranged according to God the Father's disposal'.[39]

The tension at this point seems related to the Gnostic polemic that shapes the context for Irenaeus' articulation of the Devil. The Gnostics, with virtual uniformity, demonize the demiurge—whom they view as the inferior god of the material world. Irenaeus will not grant their assertion that there exist two different gods—the lesser 'god of this world' and the greater 'Father' of the Pleroma. So committed is Irenaeus to linking the God of the Bible to the Creator of the world, that he offers a unique[40] interpretation of Paul's comment in 2 Cor. 4:4 about the 'god of this world' blinding the minds of unbelievers. The Gnostics use this passage as a Pauline proof text for showing how there are two gods—the 'god of this world', who is an evil demiurge, and the 'Eternal Father' of the Pleroma. The lesser 'god of this world' does evil things, like blinding minds, while the Eternal Father illuminates humanity and leads humanity to salvation. According to the Gnostics, Irenaeus' God is the lesser 'god of this word'. The easiest way past this Gnostic exegesis of 2 Cor. 4:4 would be to link the 'god of this world' to Satan (as seems the most likely referent in Paul's mind, and as became the customary exegesis of the passage).[41] But Irenaeus will not concede that Satan has any real ownership over the world; to do so would run the risk of separating God from the world, thus playing into the Gnostics' hands. He writes,

> As to their affirming that Paul said plainly in the Second [Epistle] to the Corinthians, 'In whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not', and maintaining that there is indeed one God of this world [*et alterum quidem esse Deum saeculi huius dicunt*], but another God who is beyond all principality, and beginning, and power [*alterum uero qui sit super omnem principatum et initium et potestatem*], we are not to blame if they, who

[39] *Haer.* 5.22.2.

[40] At least unique with respect to what became the standard interpretation of this passage in the later Christian tradition. See note below.

[41] See Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.17, who is aware of this Gnostic reading, but associates the passage with Satan. Tertullian's interpretation is consistent with Jesus' comments in John 16:11 about the Devil as the 'ruler of this world'. Irenaeus does not offer an interpretation of John 16:11. Irenaeus' unwillingness to ascribe to the Devil any type of rulership over the world makes him unique from the other early Christian writers. Ignatius, Athenagoras, Clement, Tertullian, and Hippolytus all, in various ways, refer to the Devil as the ruler of the age/world (see the chart at the end of Appenix B). This is the one element of Irenaeus' Devil narrative that stands in contrast to the other early Christian writers. Undoubtedly Irenaeus' intense polemic against the Gnostics (as noted above) played a significant role in shaping his perspective on this matter.

> give out that they do themselves know mysteries beyond God, do not know how to read Paul. For if any one reads the passage thus—according to Paul's custom, as I show elsewhere, and by many examples, that he uses transposition of words – 'In whom God', then pointing it off, and making a slight interval, and at the same time reads also the rest [of the sentence] in one [clause], 'has blinded the minds of them of this world that believe not', he shall find out the true [sense] that it is contained in the expression, 'God has blinded the minds of the unbelievers of this world'. And this is shown by means of the little interval [between the clauses]. For Paul does not say, 'the God of this world', as if recognizing any other beyond him; but he confessed God as indeed God [*sed Deum quidem Deum confessus est*]. And he says, 'the unbelievers of this world', because they shall not inherit the future age of incorruption…. So therefore, in such passages, the hyperbaton must be exhibited by the reading, and the apostle's meaning following on, preserved; and thus we do not read in that passage, 'the god of this world', but, 'God', whom we do truly call God [*sed Deum quidem iure Deum dicimus*]; and we hear [it declared of] the unbelieving and the blinded of this world, that they shall not inherit the world of life which is to come.[42]

For Irenaeus, the Devil is decidedly *not* 'God of this world' (or even 'god of this world'), but an imposter. Irenaeus' Gnostic context compels him to disassociate Satan and ownership of the world, even if it requires a rather forced exegesis.

It is not clear that Irenaeus is aware of the tension he has created at this point. In any case, he resolves the tension somewhat by suggesting that the Devil is in charge only insofar as he has deceived humanity into thinking so.

> As, then, 'the powers that be are ordained of God', it is clear that the Devil lied when he said, 'These are delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give them' …. The Devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of humanity into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavor to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as if he were God [*ipsum autem quasi Deum adorare*]. Just as if any one, being an apostate, and

[42] *Haer.* 3.7.1-2.

> seizing in a hostile manner another territory [*regionem aliquam hostiliter capiens*], should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant that he is an apostate and a robber [*et regis gloriam sibi vindicet apud ignorantes quod apostata et latro est*]; so likewise also the Devil.[43]

Here the Devil's power over humanity and the world is real, but only because humanity has fallen prey to the Devil's false claim of sovereignty. The great power that Satan wields over humanity is the same from first to last: the power to deceive. Humanity in right relation with God is too great for the Devil. But humanity alienated from God is powerless. Because of the Devil's deception in the garden, humanity chose to live against the laws of God, thus inviting the divine punishment of death. The way back for humanity is offered in Christ, but the Devil continues to deceive humanity, keeping humanity from embracing this second chance. The Devil's war policy then, is to use deception to keep humanity in rebellion against the Creator. 'This, then, is the aim of him who envies our life, to render people disbelievers in their own salvation, and blasphemous against God the Creator'.[44] The Devil has power only insofar as humanity is deceived by the Devil into thinking that the Devil is the rightful owner of creation. The kingdoms of the world belong to God, and he has given them to humanity, whatever the Devil may claim.

Tension still remains in this aspect of Irenaeus' thought. Irenaeus is too insistent throughout his writings that the Devil has real (not just imagined) power over humanity. Humanity's slide into sin and death makes humanity genuine captives of the Devil. Throughout Irenaeus' writings, the Devil's power over humanity is not presented as a state of mind, or imagined, or only real insofar as humanity believes it to be so (like the prisoner in an unlocked cell, who does not believe the cell is unlocked). Yet the debate with the Gnostics compels Irenaeus to neuter the Devil's power and to distance the Devil from ownership of the material world, lest the true God be seen as somehow disconnected from his creation. Here it seems that Irenaeus might have more easily and simply contended, along with the other early Christian writers, that the Devil's power over creation is not absolute, nor does his power operate independent of God's greater sovereignty. It is real power over humanity and the world, but one that will be broken by Christ in the last day. In

[43] *Haer.* 5.24.3-4.
[44] *Haer.* preface, book 4. So also Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7.20.

any case, this is the general sense that Irenaeus gives throughout his writings, his interpretation of the wilderness temptation withstanding. [45]

V. The Devil as Impersonator of God

Notably, the Devil's usurpation of Adam's throne is predicated on the Devil's claim to be God. As we have seen above, the Devil secures his tyranny over humanity by presenting himself as God.

> The Devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of humanity into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavor to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as if he were God [*ipsum autem quasi Deum adorare*].[46]

For Irenaeus, the Devil's impersonation of God takes center stage during the apocalypse and the rise of Antichrist.

> …by means of the events which shall occur in the time of the Antichrist is it shown that he [the Devil], being an apostate and a robber [*apostata et latro*], is anxious to be adored as if he were God [*quasi Deus vult adorari*]; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king [*regem se vult praeconari*]. For he [Antichrist] being endued with all the power of the Devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king in subjection to God, but as an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [humans] that he himself is God [*ad suadendum quod ipse sit Deus*], raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols.[47]

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[45] Wingren rightfully observes that for Irenaeus, while the Devil may claim to have at his disposal all the kingdoms of the world 'it is an impossibility for him to get the whole created order into his control'. *God and Man*, 12.

[46] *Haer.* 5.24.4.

[47] *Haer.* 5.25.1.

Here Irenaeus' articulation of the Devil has touch points with what will emerge in the later Christian tradition, namely that the Devil masquerades as God and presents himself as the sole great power. Yet Irenaeus' larger anthropological and cosmological framework needs to be kept in mind. For Irenaeus, the Devil masquerades as God to humanity precisely because he wishes to present himself as the legitimate king of the *material* world, not because he wishes to present himself as the legitimate king of the *celestial* world. Or again, the Devil's false claim to deity is driven by a desire to possess Adam's throne, not God's. Irenaeus nowhere suggests that the Devil is motivated by a desire to steal God's throne in heaven. Again, this aspect of Irenaeus' thought underscores and affirms Irenaeus' larger cosmological and anthropological framework. The material world and its kingdoms are sufficiently good that the Devil presents himself as God in order to possess them.

With a certain irony, the Devil's attempt to present himself as God is a sort of recapitulation of the Devil's temptation of Adam and Eve. In the Garden of Eden, the Devil deceived Adam and Eve into believing that they were equal to God, and thus worthy to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. He writes,

> …humans should never adopt an opposite opinion with regard to God, supposing that the incorruptibility which belongs to them is their own naturally [*propriam naturaliter arbitrans eam quae circa se esset incorruptelam*], and by thus not holding the truth, should boast with empty superciliousness, as if they were—as it were—naturally like to God [*quasi naturaliter similis esset Deo*]. For he [i.e. the Devil] thus rendered humanity more ungrateful towards their Creator, obscured the love which God had towards humanity, and blinded their minds not to perceive what is worthy of God, comparing themselves with, and judging themselves equal to, God [*comparans et aequalem se iudicans Deo*].[48]

The first great sin of humanity was a vain belief in humanity's independence from God. Humans believed themselves to be like God, and thus not in need of God. So too the Devil presents himself as independent of God. Yet there is a difference between humanity and the Devil at this point. Unlike humanity, the Devil was not deceived in to thinking himself equal to God. The Devil knows that he is only masquerading as God. Here again we see touch points with the later Christian Devil narrative (such as we find in Origen and Augustine), but not direct continuity. In

[48] *Haer.* 3.20.1.

Irenaeus it is Adam and Eve who are deceived into mistakenly thinking they can be equal to God. In the later Christian tradition, it is the Devil who is mistakenly (self) deceived into thinking he can be equal to God. Or again, humanity's sin in Irenaeus is the Devil's sin in the later Christian tradition.

Thus we see the same diabolical and human sin in the early and late traditions, but ascribed to different parties. In both the early and later Devil narratives, it is the creature just below God that mistakenly assumes ontological independence from God. In Irenaeus' tradition, it is humanity that makes this mistake. In the later tradition it is the Devil. This differing order makes sense as we consider the implicit anthropology and angelology of the early and later Devil narratives. In the historically later Devil narrative (such as one find in Augustine and later medieval Christianity), angels and the Devil occupy a higher ontological place than humanity within the order of creation. Thus it makes sense that they would be most likely to mistakenly assume independence from God. But in Irenaeus, it is humanity that occupies pride of place next to God, and thus it makes sense that humanity would be most likely to mistakenly assume ontological independence from God. All of this once again underscores the basic coherence between Irenaeus' Devil narrative and his larger anthropology.

VI. Conclusion

For Irenaeus, the Devil is the first and great sinner, the ringleader of all those who have been seduced into apostasy and sin. In particular, the Devil is the enemy of and victor over humanity. Having deceived humanity, the Devil has stolen humanity's throne like a foreign tyrant who has stolen a city from its legitimate and native rulers. What is more, the Devil's deception of humanity has plunged humanity into death; the Devil has subtly used God's own verdict against humanity, bringing about the dissolution of the image of God in humanity. Humanity, in falling under the divine curse of death, has fallen under both the political and ontological power of the Devil. Left to their own devices, humans have no way to extract themselves from the Devil's grasp and reclaim their place in God's world. The Devil is the 'strong man' that can only be defeated by a yet stronger man. The Devil perpetuates his dominion over humanity and the material world by continuing to deceive humanity and by alienating humanity from God. Central to this deception, particularly in the last days, is the Devil's masquerading of himself as God and claiming for himself the inherent right to rule the kingdoms of the world (a right that properly belongs to humanity).

This entire narrative is consistent with Irenaeus' positive anthropology and cosmology. For Irenaeus, humanity occupies pride of place over and above the angels in God's good creation. And the material world—humanity's native home—is the crown jewel of all that God has made. Thus the Devil's assault on humanity in Irenaeus is an implicit statement about the goodness and greatness of humanity and humanity's world. The Devil desires what rightfully belongs to humanity precisely because what humanity has is so good; the Devil presents himself as God in order to lay claim to the kingdoms of the world, precisely because the kingdoms of the world are full of glory. Notably, the Devil is not motivated by visions of celestial grandeur; he does not desire to replace God in heaven. Instead he desires to replace Adam on earth. All of this sets the stage for Irenaeus' account of the incarnation and the advent of Christ, who will come as the stronger man to break the power of the Devil and restore humanity back to God and to the world.

Chapter Six

The Devil's Power Is Broken

'For thus says the LORD: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued…"'

Isaiah 49:25a

Irenaeus informally frames up the Devil's defeat in a sort of two-step process—the initial breaking of Satan's power over humanity which occurs with the first advent of Christ, and then Satan's final destruction in the fires of hell which occurs with the second advent of Christ. In this chapter we will explore the first step in this two-step process, paying particular attention to Irenaeus' articulation of how the Devil's power over humanity has been broken with Christ's first coming.

Throughout his writings, Irenaeus often speaks of the Devil's defeat without articulating the mechanisms by which the Devil is defeated. But in *Haer.* 5.19-23 Irenaeus goes further. In this extended passage Irenaeus highlights three unique instances of human obedience, each set in contrast to an occasion of original disobedience: 1) Mary's obedience in the place of Eve's disobedience, 2) Christ's obedience in the wilderness in the place of Adam's disobedience in the garden, and 3) Christ's obedience at the cross in the place of Adam's disobedience at the Tree of Knowledge. In each instance, Irenaeus explicitly links the new act of obedience to the defeat of the Devil.[1]

Irenaeus' focus on human obedience toward God as the means by which humanity overcomes the Devil is particularly noteworthy for it shows the extent to which Irenaeus foregrounds the conflict between the Devil and humanity as the primary conflict of his soteriological narrative, as well as the key role that humanity has in defeating the Devil. Insofar as human disobedience toward God resulted in captivity to the Devil, human obedience is the means by which humanity is freed from this captivity. The aim of this chapter is to highlight these three acts of obedience and to show how and why these events serve for Irenaeus as the means by which the Devil's power over humanity is broken, and how Irenaeus' focus on these events undergirds his broader anthropological framework.

[1] I am not aware of any other place in Irenaeus's writings where he specifies, in an explicit manner, other means by which humanity is set free from the Devil's power.

We examine each occasion of obedience in turn, following the same ordering as Irenaeus in *Haer.* 5.19-23.[2]

I. Mary, the Obedient Un-tier of Knots

The Eve-Mary connection is a well-trodden aspect of Irenaeus scholarship.[3] It has likewise made its way into the arts. Ferdinand Max Bredt's 1921 painting, *Eve et Marie*, depicts the contrasting relationship between Mary and Eve in the Christian tradition. In Bredt's painting of Eve and Mary, Eve stands nude, next to the Tree of Knowledge. She is facing the viewer and posed sensually with one arm overhead and the other reaching up to take hold of the forbidden fruit. Her look is brazen and seductive. The serpent's head hovers next to Eve's legs, its body coiled around her feet and then stretched beyond her up the trunk of the tree. Mary, in contrast, is the anti-Eve, standing on the other side of the tree, clothed in modest robes, hands clasped together at her waist, looking chastely and humbly toward heaven. Bredt's painting thus highlights the contrast between Eve as the sensual sinner and Mary as the chaste and humble saint. Bredt is drawing upon a tradition, begun as early as Justin, and continued with Irenaeus, that highlights the relationship and contrast between Eve and Mary.[4] For Irenaeus, just as Christ recapitulates Adam, so also does Mary recapitulate Eve. The connection between Adam/Christ and Eve/Mary is explicit in Irenaeus, as can be seen by the proximate location of both themes in Irenaeus' writings. Just prior to an extended treatment of the typological relationship between Eve and Mary, Irenaeus expounds the typological relationship between Adam and Christ, thus signaling that he intends his readers to view both sets of relationships in the same typological

[2] The whole of this section is devoted to theme of human obedience, with the exception of *Haer.* 5.20. This chapter serves as a parenthetical chapter in which Irenaeus briefly notes the consistency of the Church's teaching contrary to the Gnostics, and the role of the bishops and presbyters in preserving the truth of God. Upon concluding the chapter he returns to the theme of human obedience in 5.21-23.

[3] Such that Jean Plagnieux could write in 1970, 'All, it would seem, has been said, and for a very long time, about the Marian doctrine of Irenaeus', Plagnieux, 'La doctrine mariale de saint Irénéé', 179. This of course, has not stopped scholars from saying things. For just a few of the many examples, see MacKenzie, *Irenaeus*, 161, Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 46, 123-24, Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 151-52, Steenberg, 'The Role of Mary as Co-Recapitulator', 117-37; Kinsella, 'The Tangled Thread of Creation', 92; and Maria Del Fiat Miloa, 'Mary as Un-tier of Knots', 337-61.

[4] For examples see Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 100; Tertullian, *Carn. Chr.* 17; Gregory the Wonder-Worker, *Hom. sanc. Mat.* 1; Jerome, *Epist.* 21, 22; Ephrem, *Hom. nos. Dom.* 3 and *Hymn. nat.*, 15; Augustine, *Agon.* 2.24. In Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Ephrem a specific connection is made between Mary's obedience and the defeat of the Devil.

framework.[5] Just as Adam can only fully be understood in light of Christ, so too Eve's 'betrothed' status can only be fully understood in light of Mary's. Irenaeus writes,

> In accordance with this design [i.e. the design of the incarnation], Mary the virgin is found obedient, saying, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word'. But Eve was disobedient; for she did not obey when as yet she was a virgin. And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin…having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race [*inobaudiens facta, et sibi et universo generi humano causa facta est mortis*]; so also did Mary, having a man betrothed [to her], and being nevertheless a virgin, by yielding obedience, become the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race [*obaudiens, et sibi et universo generi humano causa facta est salutis*]. And on this account does the law term a woman betrothed to a man, the wife of him who had betrothed her, although she was as yet a virgin; thus indicating the back-reference from Mary to Eve [*eam quae est a Maria in Evam recirculationem significans*], because what is joined together could not otherwise be put asunder than by an inversion of the process by which these bonds of union had arisen [*nisi ipsae compagines adligationis reflectantur retrorsus*]; so that the former ties be canceled by the latter, that the latter may set the former again at liberty. And it has, in fact, happened that the first compact is loosed from the second tie, but that the second tie takes the position of the first which has been canceled…. And thus also it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience [*Evae inobaudientiae nodus*] was loosened by the obedience of Mary [*solutionem accepit per obaudientiam Mariae*]. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith.[6]

Irenaeus' logic of betrothal is, admittedly, somewhat difficult to follow.[7] Irenaeus seems to be making a play on the concept of betrothal and union as it relates to the binding of two things together. Eve as betrothed binds humanity to death, Mary as betrothed binds

[5] See Rousseau, *SC* vol. 406, 271, who helpfully comments, 'The "recapitulation", which is for Irenaeus the work par excellence performed by God at the end of time, is here at the same time that of Adam in Christ and of Eve in Mary'.

[6] *Haer.* 3.22.4.

[7] For a helpful syntactical analysis of this passage, see Del Fiat Miloa, 'Mary as Un-tier of Knots', 343-45.

humanity to life. Most basically, Eve is a type of Mary, who is the full expression of betrothal. Just as Christ preceded Adam in divine logic, even if not in order of time, so too Eve as 'betrothed' can only be understood through a 'back reference' from Mary to Eve. Eve has created an inseparable bond of union between humanity and death; she has wed humanity to sin and death. Only the obedience of Mary as the second Eve can invert this union and 'cancel the former ties'. Mary loosens the knot of death that Eve has tied.[8] In a similar vein Irenaeus writes,

> That the Lord then was manifestly coming to his own things, and was sustaining them by means of that creation which is supported by himself, and was making a recapitulation [*recapitulationem*] of that disobedience which had occurred in connection with a tree, through the obedience which was [exhibited by himself when he hung] upon a tree, [the effects] also of that deception being done away with, by which that virgin Eve, who was already espoused to a man, was unhappily misled,—was happily announced, through means of the truth [spoken] by the angel to the virgin Mary, who was [also espoused] to a man. For just as the former was led astray by the word of an angel, so that she fled from God when she had transgressed his word; so did the latter, by an angelic communication, receive the glad tidings that she should sustain God [*portaret Deum*], being obedient to his word. And if the former did disobey God, yet the latter was persuaded to be obedient to God, in order that the virgin Mary might become the advocate [*advocata*] of the virgin Eve. And thus, as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so is it rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience having been balanced in the opposite scale by virginal obedience. For in the same way the sin of the first created man [*protoplasti*] receives amendment [*emendationem accipiente*] by the correction of the First-begotten, and the cunning of the serpent [*et serpentis prudentia*] is conquered by the harmlessness of the dove, those bonds being unloosed by which we had been fast bound to death.[9]

Both Eve and Mary received angelic communication. The virgin Eve, through her disobedience, led humanity astray into disobedience, while the virgin Mary, through her obedience, has led humanity back to God. Mary did what Eve failed to do and thus undoes

[8] For an insightful analysis of Irenaeus' use of the 'knot' metaphor, and its placement in the wider Greco-Roman context, see Del Fiat Miloa, 'Mary as Un-tier of Knots', 337-61.

[9] *Haer.* 5.19.1.

the consequences of Eve's sin. Just as the human race fell into bondage by a virgin, so too the human race is rescued by a virgin. A kind of trifold redemption is seen at the end of this passage: Christ overcomes Adam's failure; the harmlessness of the dove—i.e. the Holy Spirit—overcomes the cunning of the serpent; and Mary's obedience overcomes Eve's disobedience. Everything that went wrong in the Garden with Adam, Eve and the serpent is put right through Jesus, Mary and the Dove. Adam, Eve, and the Devil brought death; Jesus, Mary, and the Holy Spirit bring life. The same sentiment is conveyed again *Epid.* 33,

> And just as through a disobedient virgin humanity was stricken down and fell into death, so through the virgin who was obedient to the Word of God humanity was reanimated and received life. For the Lord came to seek again the sheep that was lost; and humanity it was that was lost: and for this cause there was not made some other formation [πλάσμα], but in that same which had its descent from Adam he preserved the likeness of the (first) formation. For it was necessary that Adam should be summed up [ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι] in Christ, that mortality might be swallowed up and overwhelmed [καταπίνω] by immortality; and Eve also in Mary, that a virgin should be a virgin's intercessor, and by a virgin's obedience undo and put away [ἐκλύω] the disobedience of a virgin.[10]

Here, as in the above, Mary is not merely a contrast to Eve—a success where Eve failed, a stark reminder of the first woman's sin. Irenaeus' posture is more redemptive. Just as Irenaeus vigorously defends the salvation of Adam through the redemptive work of Christ,[11] so too Irenaeus affirms the salvation of Eve through the redemptive obedience of Mary. Mary is the advocate and intercessor of Eve. In this respect, Sr Grace Remington's crayon and pencil drawing from 2005, *Virgin Mary Consoles Eve* is more faithful than Bredt's to the spirit of Irenaeus. Remington's drawing depicts Eve from the side view, standing sorrowfully, head bowed, eyes downcast. Her body is fully covered by her long brown hair, thus eliminating the sensuality of Bredt's Eve. She holds the bitten apple to her breast while the tail of the serpent is intertwined around her feet. A pregnant Mary, dressed in a simple white robe and long blue head dress, stands facing Eve in a posture of comfort and solace. Mary has taken Eve's free hand and placed it on her womb, connecting Eve to

[10] See Smith, *Proof,* 169-171 for an extended discussion on the translation of this passage.

[11] This was a point of contention between Irenaeus and the Gnostics, who insisted that Adam could not be saved. Irenaeus argues for the salvation of Adam as a sign of God's commitment to embodied humanity. See *Haer*. 3.23.

her redeemer. Mary's other hand is on Eve's cheek in a sign of tenderness and affirmation. Most poignantly, the head of the serpent is overturned and crushed under Mary's outstretched foot. The poem *O Eve*, written by Sr Columba Guare to accompany Remington's drawing, captures well the spirit that permeates Irenaeus' basic recapitulative soteriology.[12]

> My mother, my daughter, life-giving Eve,
> Do not be ashamed, do not grieve.
> The former things have passed away,
> Our God has brought us to a New Day.
> See, I am with Child,
> Through whom all will be reconciled.
> O Eve! My sister, my friend,
> We will rejoice together
> Forever
> Life without end.[13]

Benjamin Dunning, in his essay on the Eve-Mary connection in Irenaeus, helpfully asks the question, 'Why Mary?'—what was it about Mary that caused Irenaeus to utilize Mary as a key pivot point in his soteriology? [14] Dunning lists some of the possibilities offered by Irenaeus scholars: Irenaeus' aesthetic sensitivities, coupled with his Adam typology pushed him to insist upon a symmetry that included Eve; Irenaeus was concerned to show the reestablishment of human social integrity; Irenaeus desired to affirm and reestablish virginal integrity.[15] Dunning himself suggests that Irenaeus utilizes the Eve-Mary connection because he is concerned to demonstrate the restoration of sexual difference between male and female. Notably all of these suggestions focus on Mary's ontological status as the new Eve (be it aesthetic, social, virginal, or sexually differentiated). In each

[12] This in contrast to Vladimir Tumanov, 'Mary Versus Eve', 507-21. Tumanov asserts strong discontinuity between Eve and Mary in the Christian tradition (Irenaeus included). For Tumanov, Eve is the sexually unchaste, a mythical creation of males, representing male evolutionary anxiety regarding paternal uncertainty of identifying their legitimate offspring. Mary the ever-virgin represents the male mythical solution to such anxiety. Whatever one thinks about evolutionary anthropology, Tumanov's assertion about the Eve/Mary contrast in the Christian tradition is overblown, at least with respects to Irenaeus. While many early Christian writers note a contrast between Eve and Mary, the pair do not stand in Irenaeus as perpetual and equal opposites. Rather Mary's obedience embraces and redeems Eve. A harmony is achieved in Irenaeus that Tumanov does not account for.

[13] *O Eve!* by Sr Columba Guare.

[14] Dunning, 'Virgin Earth, Virgin Birth'.

[15] Dunning, 'Virgin Earth, Virgin Birth', 58-61.

instance, Mary is, in her being, what Eve failed to be. Such readings have merit, but miss the way Mary's obedience functions in Irenaeus. Mary is not merely the recapitulative, typological fulfilment of Eve, as though her mere existence as a new Eve (however construed) had salvific merit in itself. For Irenaeus, Mary is not merely a *result* of God's recapitulative activity in Christ, but the *means* by which it comes about. As such, Mary's contribution to the plan of redemption is not her existence in the place of Eve, but her conscious act of obedience.[16]

Irenaeus' focus on the redemptive obedience of Mary emphasizes an aspect of his soteriology that will be made plainer as we continue our analysis, namely that it is primarily obedience, not sacrifice as such, that undoes the work of the Devil and redeems humanity. Irenaeus' conception of the atonement, taken up in more detail below, is most concerned with reversing the curse through a recapitulation of what brought it about in the first place—an act of disobedience. Eve's disobedience had real consequence. The curse is not atoned for by skirting around human obedience, or even through sacrifice as a substitute for human obedience, but rather by 'going back' and redoing—correctly this time—the initial point of failure. Eve's disobedience introduced death into the world; Mary's obedience brings life into the world, namely the life that is the Word of God made flesh.

So strongly does Irenaeus press the salvific nature of Mary's obedience in the face of Eve's disobedience, that these passages, if read in isolation, could almost leave one with the impression that Mary's act of obedience was sufficient in itself to undo the whole of the curse and overthrow the Devil. Here we must keep in mind that the incarnation lies in the backdrop of Irenaeus' thinking. Mary defeats the serpent insofar as her obedience is the means by which she serves as a necessary component in the work of bringing life back to humanity via Christ's incarnation.[17] But contra the Gnostics, she is not merely a conduit though which divinity is once again united to humanity 'as if through a tube'.[18] Christ takes

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[16] As Osborn states, 'The disobedience of Adam and Eve was corrected by the obedience of Mary and Jesus. The obedience and faith of Mary are contrasted with the disobedience of Eve'. See Osborn, *Irenaeus*, 101.

[17] See Lawson, *Irenaeus*, 151-52, for a brief but helpful discussion of the extent to which Irenaeus views Mary as a co-operator in redemption. Lawson (rightly in my estimation) concludes that Irenaeus lays the ground work for later developments in Marian theology, but does not himself teach that Mary—after her initial '*Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*'—maintains a continuing role in Irenaeus as intercessor or co-*redemptrix*, such as will emerge in the later Christian tradition. Contra Lawson, see Steenberg, 'The Role of Mary as Co-Recapitulator', 117-37, and Del Fiat Miloa, 'Mary as Un-tier of Knots', 341-42. The conclusion of such debate is, in the end, only tangentially relevant to my primary point—a point that both sides of the debate affirm, namely that it is through Mary's obedience that the Devil is defeated.

[18] *Haer.* 1.7.2, 3.11.3, 16.1. Irenaeus' reading of Mary is in service of his anti-Gnostic polemic and he chastises those who claim that Jesus received nothing from Mary. For Irenaeus, the fleshly connection from Jesus to Mary to Eve to Adam is all important for his broader soteriological polemic against Gnostic Docetism.

from Mary his own humanity, such that he is born of her flesh, which in turn is Eve's flesh, which in turn is Adam's flesh. Through Mary's obedience, Christ's work of recapitulation is carried forward, and Adam's flesh is once again reintroduced to divinity.

Here we can see that obedience serves a function in Irenaeus distinct from how obedience will come to function in primarily merit-based accounts of salvation (such as we find emerging in earnest in Western medieval theology). For Irenaeus, it is not merely that God imputes Mary's obedience to humanity, as though Mary's obedience stands in the stead of Eve's disobedience (a sort of quasi-proto-Lutheran view of imputation). Rather Mary's obedience itself is the means by which the world is reintroduced to life, for it is through Mary's actions that Christ takes upon himself Adam's flesh, thus making it possible to endow Adam's corruptible flesh with the divine life of incorruptibility. In a beautiful reciprocity, Mary as human takes on the divine in order to allow the divine to take on the human.

Irenaeus' soteriological categories are fundamentally ontological, rather than legal. Thus the need for human obedience in God's redemptive plan is not to satisfy a divine standard of merit, but rather human obedience is the action by which the tri-fold tyranny of sin, death, and the Devil is overcome. Irenaeus' imagery of Mary as the 'un-tier of knots' is apt, for it shows that sin creates a real condition that must be undone. Mary's obedience undoes the curse of God that fell upon humanity through Eve's disobedience, and overthrows the power of the Devil by bringing life into the world.

The salient point to make in all of this is that for Irenaeus, the defeat of the Devil is accomplished through human obedience—in this case Mary's. God does not sidestep humanity in order to defeat the Devil. He does not, through sheer force and power, directly and personally overthrow the Devil.[19] The world was humanity's to loose, and it remains humanity's to win back. Humanity lost the world through disobedience; humanity reclaims the world through obedience. God does indeed defeat the Devil, but he does so only through the agency of obedient humanity. This human obedience is, of course, embodied most fully in the man Jesus Christ, the subject of our next section.

[19] Thus rightly Lawson comments, 'Christ did not save the world automatically, but was dependent to a certain extent upon the moral goodness of the men and women who lived about Him'. *Biblical Theology*, 152.

II. Jesus' Obedience in the Wilderness

If Mary is the means through which the life of God re-enters the world, Jesus is that life. Notably, Irenaeus does not locate the whole of his atonement theology in the ontological dimensions of the incarnation. It is not simply that humanity must once again be united to the immortal life of God. This is no doubt true (and a subject to which we will return below), but Irenaeus is keen to show that what went wrong in Genesis 3 has been put right in the Gospels. Where Adam failed in disobedience to the divine command, Jesus succeeded in obedience to the divine command. In particular, Irenaeus devotes a good deal of attention to Jesus' wilderness temptation (recounted in the Gospels in Matthew 4 and Luke 4). Here we see a direct confrontation between Jesus and the Devil—the over-thrower of the first Adam attempting to overthrow the Second Adam. In the wilderness Jesus 'recapitulated in himself [*in semetipso recapitulatus fuisset*] that ancient and primary enmity against the serpent, fulfilling the promise of the Creator [*Demiurgi*]'.[20] The extended discussion, spanning an entire chapter (and following immediately after Irenaeus' account of Mary's obedience, discussed above), recounts each temptation in turn, noting that in each instance Jesus uses the Law (i.e. the Mosaic Law) to defeat the logic of the Devil—a feat that Adam was not able to manage.[21] In this context Irenaeus stresses Christ's obedience to the divine command as a recapitulation of Adam's disobedience.

> And thus, vanquishing [*vincens*] him for the third time, he spurned him from him finally as being conquered [*victum*] out of the law; and there was done away with that infringement of God's commandment which had occurred in Adam [*et soluta est ea quae fuerat in Adam praecepti Dei praevaricatio*], by means of the precept of the law [*per praeceptum legis*], which the Son of humanity observed, by not transgressing the commandment of God [*quod servavit Filius hominis non transgrediens praeceptum Dei*]. Who, then, is

[20] *Haer.* 5.21.2. The 'promise' referred to here is the promise of Gen 3:15 that an 'offspring' of Eve will crush the serpent's head.

[21] The Gnostic context factors significantly in Irenaeus' reading of the wilderness temptation. The Gnostics stressed discontinuity between the Old Testament God and Jesus. Irenaeus counters this claim by showing that Jesus responds to Satan's three temptations with the use of Old Testament Law, specifically three passages out of Deuteronomy, thus showing that Jesus affirms and legitimizes the God of Moses and the Old Testament. 'Thus then does the Lord plainly show that it was the true Lord and the one God who had been set forth by the law; for him whom the law proclaimed as God', *Haer.* 5.22.1. Christ's obedience to the Law, then, has a two-fold significance for Irenaeus—it shows Christ's obedience in the face of Adam's failure, and it shows Christ's obedience to the God of Moses and the Old Testament, which validates the Demiurge in the face of the Gnostic critique. The first is a general feature of Irenaeus' recapitulative soteriology; the latter is particular to Irenaeus' Gnostic polemic.

> this Lord God to whom Christ bears witness, whom no one shall tempt, whom all should worship, and serve him alone? It is, beyond all manner of doubt, that God who also gave the law. For these things had been predicted in the law, and by the words [*sententiam*] of the law the Lord showed that the law does indeed declare the Word of God from the Father; and the apostate angel of God is destroyed by its voice [*apostata autem Dei angelus per illius destruitur vocem*], being exposed in his true colors, and vanquished by the Son of humanity keeping the commandment of God [*et victus a Filio hominis servante Dei praeceptum*]. For as in the beginning he enticed humanity to transgress their Maker's law, and thereby got them into his power [*quoniam enim in initio homini suasit transgredi praeceptum factoris ideo eum habuit in sua potestate*]; yet his power consists in transgression and apostasy [*potestas autem eius est transgressio et apostasia*], and with these he bound humanity [*et his colligavit hominem*]; so again, on the other hand, it was necessary that through humanity himself he should, when conquered, be bound with the same chains with which he has bound humanity [*per hominem ipsum iterum oportebat victum eum contrario colligari iisdem vinculis, quibus alligavit hominem*], in order that humanity, being set free, might return to their Lord [*ut homo solutus revertatur ad suum Dominum*], leaving to him [Satan] those bonds by which he himself had been fettered, that is, sin.[22]

Through Jesus' obedience to the law, Adam's infringement is 'done away with'. The Devil is 'destroyed' and 'vanquished by the Son of humanity keeping the commandment of God'. The Devil entrapped humanity by enticing Adam into transgression, and humanity is loosed from the Devil when Christ remains faithful to God. What is more, not only is humanity set free from the Devil, but a reversal takes place. The Devil is bound by the very chains of apostasy with which he had bound humanity. Sin has 'back-recoiled' (to quote Milton) upon Satan; his own weapon has been turned against him.

The language here is vivid and encompasses all aspects of redemption. Christ's breaking of the Devil's power seems to take place completely in the wilderness as a result of Christ's obedience to the law of God (rather than later through Christ's sacrifice on the

[22] *Haer.* 5.21.2-3. The passage quoted here is the conclusion of Irenaeus' account of the wilderness temptation. The same basic framework represented in this passage is carried throughout the whole of Irenaeus' treatment of the wilderness temptation (too long to quote) and is worth consulting for further reference.

cross). In the following chapter of *Adversus haereses* Irenaeus again speaks of Jesus' victory in the wilderness as though it were a completed act: 'Then in the gospel [of Matthew], casting down the apostasy by means of these expressions, he did overcome the strong man…'[23] Read in isolation, these passages seem to paint a picture of victory that is complete in itself. To what extent, and in what way, was the Devil 'vanquished', 'destroyed', and 'bound' through Christ's obedience in the wilderness?

Irenaeus does not quite work out all of the details. But the answer to such questions lies, at least in part, with a full appreciation of Irenaeus' strong emphasis on recapitulation as a controlling motif in his soteriology, particularly Jesus' recapitulation of Adam's failure in the Garden. As we have already seen with the Eve and Mary pairing, Irenaeus is concerned to show that Jesus and Mary, through their obedience, undo the mess than Adam and Eve have made. Salvation comes through human obedience in the stead of human failure. But we can say more.

For Irenaeus, obedience is not accrued to humanity in some sort of arbitrary merit based system, but rather as a virtual ontological requirement. Humans are contingent creatures, not independent beings. Humanity, by its very nature as creature, finds its life in obedience to God. 'But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality'.[24] As we have already seen,[25] it is through patient and trusting obedience that humanity is meant to grow up into God and thus become over time all that God intended for human beings to be. This growth is an ontologically necessary process that takes time and cannot be rushed. Obedience along the path that leads to immortality is the necessary steps that finite creatures must tread if they are to share in God's innate immortality. To disobey is to abandon the only One who is able to grant humanity life. Treading this path of obedience requires patience and trust that God's ways are the best ways.

The logic of Irenaeus' polemic against the Gnostics at this very point helps us to understand why Christ's obedience in the wilderness was instrumental in overcoming the Devil. A lack of patient obedience is for Irenaeus a chief error of the Gnostics. The Gnostics try to rush ahead and lay hold of immortality apart from walking the path of obedience established by God. Humans must first be content to be mere creatures if they are ever to be raised up to be gods. This the Gnostics are not willing to do. Irenaeus writes,

> Irrational, therefore, in every respect, are they who await not the time of increase, but ascribe to God the weakness of their nature [*naturae*

[23] *Haer.* 5.22.1.
[24] *Haer.* 4.38.3.
[25] *Haer.* 4.38.1-2.

infirmitatem[26]]. Such persons know neither God nor themselves, being insatiable and ungrateful, unwilling to be at the outset what they have also been created—humans subject to passions [*homines passionum capaces*]; but go beyond the law of the human race, and before they become humans [*et antequam fiant homines*], they wish to be even now like God their Creator, and they who are more destitute of reason than dumb animals [insist] that there is no distinction between the uncreated God and a human, a creature of today. For these, [the dumb animals], bring no charge against God for not having made them humans; but each one, just as he has been created, gives thanks that he has been created. For we cast blame upon him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning [*nos enim imputamus ei, quoniam non ab initio Dii facti sumus*], but at first merely humans, then at length gods [*sed primo quidem homines, tunc demum Dii*]; although God has adopted this course out of his pure benevolence, that no one may impute to him envy or grudgingness. He declares, 'I have said, you are gods; and you are all sons of the Highest'. But since we could not sustain to carry the burden of the power of divinity [*nobis autem potestatem divinitatis baiulare non sustinentibus*], he adds, 'But you shall die like human beings', setting forth both truths—the kindness of his free gift, and our weakness [*infirmitatem*], and also that we were possessed of power over ourselves. For after his great kindness he graciously conferred good [upon us], and made humans like to himself, [that is] in their own power; while at the same time by his prescience he knew the weakness of human beings [*hominum infirmitatem*], and the consequences which would flow from it;[27] but through love and power, he shall overcome the substance of created nature [*vincet factae naturae substantiam*]. For it had been necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited [*oportuerat autem primo naturam apparer*e]; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility [*post deinde vinci et absorbi mortale ab immortalitate, et*

[26] Here I take *infirmitatem* to denote simply 'lack of strength'. Irenaeus' point here is not that something is broken in human nature as such, but that human nature, even on its best day, is weak with respect to immortality. Or again, the *naturae infirmitatem* here is not due to sin, but due to the fact that humanity is created. The use of *infirmitas* in classical Latin bears this meaning, where *infirmitas* is used to denote the physical weakness of women and children vis à vis men. See the entry for *infirmitas* in *LSLD* and *OLD.*

[27] Here a reference to humanity's fall, thus confirming that the 'weakness' of human nature in view is prelapsarian.

> *corruptibile ab incorruptibilitate*], and that humanity should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil.[28]

God has great things in store for his creatures. Through the redemptive work of Christ, the mortal creature grows and matures into the true image and likeness of God and thus becomes like the immortal Son. As such, the human need for patient obedience is not an arbitrary test placed upon humanity by God, with immortality granted as a reward. Rather patience, faith and obedience are the very means by which contingent creatures stay connected to the nourishing life of God and thus grow to become fully human partakers of the divine life. 'If, then, you are the work of God, await the Hand of God, who does everything at the appropriate time—the appropriate time for you, who are being made….If, therefore you offer to him what is yours, that is faith in him and subjection, you will receive his art and become a perfect work of God'.[29] But this is the very thing Adam and Eve failed to do in the garden. Under the sinister tutelage of the Devil, they rushed forward and tried to lay hold of immortality before the appointed time. In so doing they killed in themselves the whole of human nature.[30]

The need for humanity to be obediently patient was not lessened or eliminated by Adam's and Eve's failure. Indeed, the need for obedience is made more acute precisely because Adam and Eve failed. The growth of human nature in Adam and Eve stagnated and stalled. The only way forward for humanity into maturity remains patient obedience and trusting submission to God. Jesus does not return humanity to God primarily through a propitiatory sacrifice,[31] but rather by taking human nature upon himself and (re)connecting humanity back to God by growing up humanity within himself through successfully navigating each successive stage of human maturation. 'It was for this reason that the Son of God, although he was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of humankind, partaking of it thus not for his own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage

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[28] *Haer.* 4.38.4. In the same vein, Irenaeus strikingly asks in 4.39.2, 'How then will you be a god, when you are not yet made a human?'

[29] *Haer.* 4.39.2. Minns captures the sentiment well when he states, 'What the earth creature [i.e. man] needs to learn above all is to relax in the hands of God, to let God be the Creator', *Irenaeus,* 64. See also Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 116-27, for an extended and helpful discussion on the relationship in Irenaeus between obedience and human growth.

[30] For more on the theme of patience, see Vogel, 'Haste of Sin'.

[31] Here interpreters of Irenaeus who read an Anselmic atonement theology back into Irenaeus will miss the logic of Irenaeus' soteriology, and thus fail to appreciate why Irenaeus can speak with such totality about Christ's victory over the Devil in the wilderness. Christ defeats the Devil by maturing humanity within himself, not primarily by sacrifice *per se*. As we will see below, the same logic that Irenaeus uses to interpret the wilderness temptation is followed in how he interprets Christ's faithful obedience at the cross.

of humanity's existence, in order that humanity might be able to receive him'.[32] Christ grows up humanity within himself, walking humanity through the appropriate and successive stages that God has necessarily ordained for contingent creatures. This newly-found human maturity secured through Christ's obedience breaks the Devil's power over humanity and reconnects humanity back to the immortality of the divine life.[33] It was only because of human infancy that the Devil got the upper hand in the first place; now that humanity has come of age, the tables have been turned.

Here it is helpful to underscore the difference in Irenaeus between Christ's obedience and Mary's obedience. For Irenaeus, Mary's obedience provides an occasion for the divine life to reenter the world; Mary's obedience is a reversal of Eve's failure. But Mary is not, for Irenaeus, tasked with growing and maturing humanity within herself. This is Christ's role.[34] Mary's act of obedience makes the incarnation possible; but it is the incarnation itself that makes possible the growth and maturity of humanity-in-Christ. Or again, Mary's obedience gives Christ his humanity; but it is Christ's patient obedience which gives humanity-in-Christ maturity and perfection.

In this way, the wilderness temptation is not for Irenaeus a minor event in Jesus' recapitulative mission, since the wilderness temptation takes place toward the end of Christ's life, just as he is reaching his full human maturity. Christ has taken humanity nearly all the way through life; only the last great test of obedience at the cross remains. Further, Christ's victory over the Devil in the wilderness is the undoing of the very event that led to humanity's downfall in the first instance (i.e. Adam and Eve's failure and disobedience in the garden). Through Jesus' patient obedience, he has matured humanity past the obstacle over which Adam stumbled.

Here again we see that Irenaeus stresses human agency as the means by which the Devil is overcome.[35] For Irenaeus, it is 'necessary' that humanity defeat the Devil.

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[32] *Haer.* 4.38.2. Here we can see an allusion to Irenaeus' idea that humanity was created in a state of infancy. Adam and Eve killed human nature while it was yet infantile. Christ picks up the aborted humanity of Adam and Eve, revives it, and carries it forward on into the maturity that God all along intended.

[33] My reading of the efficacy of Christ's obedience stands in contrast to Loewe, 'Irenaeus' Soteriology', who argues that Christ's obedience in the wilderness and on the cross has atoning efficacy primarily because it contains noetic power to unmask the Devil and reveal him as a liar. This is true enough, but Loewe's perspective does not deal most basically with the problem of death and the need for ontological maturation which serve as the dilemma that Irenaeus' soteriology must address. Ontological renewal into full maturation, not merely more information, is Irenaeus' solution to his doctrine of sin.

[34] See Rousseau, *SC,* vol. 406, 271, who helpfully distinguishes between 'recapitulation' in Adam/Christ and the 'reversal' in Eve.

[35] So too Wingren, though with a slightly different (yet complementary) focus, helpfully notes the importance of Christ's humanity for Irenaeus in the wilderness temptation. See Wingren, *Man and Incarnation,* 118-20.

Certainly it is Jesus' faithful connection to the true God that gives him his power over the Devil. Yet this divine power is manifest and unleashed through Jesus' humanity. It is Jesus as the Son of humanity [*filius hominis*] who defeats the Devil in the wilderness.

Irenaeus does not specify here or elsewhere in what way it is 'necessary' that humanity defeat the Devil. But it seems best to understand this necessity in light of Irenaeus' recapitulation paradigm. The divine demands upon humanity for obedience are not arbitrary, but ontologically necessary. Humanity must grow to maturity, and part of this maturity inevitably means learning to trust God's ways above human passions and desires. Adam and Eve failed to be patient when tempted by the serpent; Jesus did not fail. What is more, it was Adam's destiny to surpass the steward. This destiny must be accomplished if human beings are to become all that God intended. Thus there can be no skirting a human victory over the Devil, for such victory is integral to human growth and maturity. The kingdoms of the world were humanity's to lose, and in Christ they are humanity's to win back.

III. Jesus' Obedience at the Cross

Jesus' death on the cross has long been a focal point of Christian soteriology, even if not uniformly so.[36] While not all Christian theologians have agreed about *how* Christ's crucifixion affects salvation, the main lines of the Christian tradition have generally agreed that Jesus' death on the cross was not merely an ancillary or accidental aspect of God's redemptive work (like, say, Jesus turning water into wine). In this respect, Irenaeus is situated well within the main lines. It would be an overstatement to say that Irenaeus is a 'theologian of the cross', but not by much. Irenaeus' soteriology makes significant room for the cross of Christ as a primary instrument of redemption. For Irenaeus, the soteriological efficacy of Christ's cross is understood primarily through the lens of recapitulative obedience.[37] This can be seen clearly in the way Irenaeus continues his discussion regarding human obedience in *Haer.* 5.19-23.

[36] Jesus' crucifixion received varied emphasis in the earliest post-New Testament writings. See for example *Diognetus* 9, where the author speaks at length of Christ's death as a means of affecting ransom from sins, compared with the *Shepherd of Hermas*, where Christ's sacrifice carries little (if any) soteriological significance. The New Testament epistles likewise offer a varied emphasis. But the inclusion of Christ's death in all four Gospels, and the emphasis in the writings of Paul, Peter, the letter to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse did much to cement the death of Christ as a fixed feature in Christian soteriology. Christian theologians may occasionally drift away from this New Testament emphasis, but the whole of the Christian tradition has not escaped it.

[37] Paul's comments in Romans 5:18-19 seem to be a primary lens through which Irenaeus thinks about Christ's cross. 'Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one

Having discussed Mary's obedience in the stead of Eve's disobedience (*Haer.* 5.19), followed by a discussion of Christ's obedience in the wilderness in the stead of Adam's disobedience in the Garden (*Haer.* 5.21-22), Irenaeus continues his discussion by noting Christ's obedience at the cross in the stead of Adam's disobedience at the Tree of Knowledge (*Haer.* 5.23). Christ's two acts of obedience (i.e. in the wilderness and then again at the cross) undo the same one act of Adamic disobedience, thus rendering the Devil powerless over humanity. Just as the Devil showed himself to be a liar when he asserted that the kingdoms of the worlds were his to give, so too he lied to Adam and Eve in the Garden when he told them they would become like God if they ate from the Tree of Knowledge. In both cases, Satan promised to give something he himself did not possess.

> In the first place, then, in the garden of God [the Devil] disputed about God, as if God was not there, for he was ignorant of the greatness of God; and then, in the next place, after he had learned from the woman that God had said that they should die if they tasted the aforesaid tree, opening his mouth, he uttered the third falsehood, 'You shall not die by death'. But that God was true, and the serpent a liar, was proved by the result, death having passed upon them who had eaten. For along with the fruit they did also fall under the power of death, because they did eat in disobedience [*quoniam inobedientes manducabant*]; but disobedience to God entails death [*inobedientia autem Dei mortem infert*]. Wherefore, as they became forfeit to death [*debitores mortis effecti*], from that [moment] they were handed over to it.[38]

Satan makes a claim about the efficacy of the fruit—that it will give wisdom and eternal life like unto God. But the result of eating the fruit proves Satan to be a liar. Disobedience brings about death. Notably, Irenaeus stresses that Adam and Eve died not simply because they had eaten from the tree, but because they had eaten from the tree 'in disobedience'. As Irenaeus remarks elsewhere,[39] God did not begrudge Adam and Eve the Tree of Knowledge; it was his plan all along for them to eat from the tree. But they needed to grow into their full maturity before partaking. To reach out impatiently and disobediently ahead of time resulted not in the increased knowledge of the divine life (as the Devil had

man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous'.

[38] *Haer.* 5.23.1.

[39] *Haer.* 3.23.6.

promised) but rather in death.[40] Irenaeus then connects Adam's disobedience at the Tree of Knowledge, with Christ's obedience at the cross.

> Now in this same day that they did eat, in that also did they die. But according to the cycle and progress of the days, after which one is termed first, another second, and another third, if anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord [*dispositione Domini*]. For by recapitulating in himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end [*Recapitulans enim universum hominem in se ab initio usque ad finem*], he has also recapitulated its death [*recapitulatus est et mortem eius*]. From this it is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to his Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God [*quoniam in illa die mortem sustinuit Dominus obediens Patri, in qua mortuus est Adam inobediens Deo*]. Now he died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, 'In that day on which you shall eat of it, you shall die'. The Lord, therefore, recapitulating in himself this day, underwent his sufferings upon the day preceding the Sabbath, that is, the sixth day of the creation, on which day the man was created; thus granting him a second creation by means of his passion, which is that [creation] out of death [*secundam plasmationem ei, eam quae est a morte, per suam passionem donans*]…. For they died who tasted of the tree; and the serpent is proved a liar and a murderer, as the Lord said of him: 'For he is a murderer from the beginning, and the truth is not in him'.[41]

Here we see again Irenaeus' recapitulation theme. Through a retrospective logic, Irenaeus argues that Adam ate from the tree and died on the sixth day of the week, since that is the day that Christ died. Through his death, Christ 'sums up' in himself the whole of the human race. Insofar as humanity died in Adam, this 'summing up' necessarily involves Christ entering into death. Christ, taking all of humanity upon himself, rescued humanity from death by entering himself into humanity's death. But it was not enough for Christ simply to die. Whereas Adam entered death through disobedience, Christ entered death through obedience. Adam and Eve entered death naively and uninvited by God, and thus found themselves trapped in death. But Christ entered into death knowingly and through

[40] For more here, see the helpful comments in Minns, *Irenaeus*, 76-78.
[41] *Haer.* 5.23.2.

obedience to the Father, and thus was able to successfully exit the grave, bringing fallen Adam and Eve, and the fallen human nature, with him. This way of thinking about the cross primarily through the lens of obedience can be seen throughout Irenaeus' writing.

> And the trespass which came by the tree was undone by the tree of obedience, when, hearkening unto God, the Son of humanity was nailed to the tree; thereby destroying the knowledge of evil and bringing in and establishing the knowledge of good: now evil is disobedience to God, even as obedience to God is good….So then by the obedience wherewith he obeyed 'even unto death',[42] hanging on the tree, he put away the old disobedience which was wrought in the tree.[43]

And,

> And not by the aforesaid things alone has the Lord manifested himself, but also by means of his passion. For doing away with that disobedience of humanity which had taken place at the beginning by the occasion of a tree [*Dissolvens enim eam quae ab initio in ligno facta fuerat hominis inobedientiam*], 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross';[44] healing that disobedience which had occurred by reason of a tree, through that obedience which was upon the tree [*eam quae in ligno facta fuerat inobedientiam, per eam quae in ligno fuerat obedientiam sanans*]. Now he would not have come to do away, by means of that same, the disobedience which had been incurred towards our Maker if he proclaimed another Father. But inasmuch as it was by these things that we disobeyed God, and did not give credit to his word, so was it also by these same that he brought in obedience and consent as respects his Word; by which things he clearly shows forth God himself, whom indeed we had offended in the first Adam [*quem in primo quidem Adam offendimus*], when he did not perform his commandment [*non facientes eius praeceptum*]. In the second Adam, however, we are reconciled, being made obedient even unto death [ἐν δὲ Τῷ δευτέρῳ Αδὰμ ἀποκατηλλάγημεν, ὑπήκοοι μέχρι θανάτου γενόμενοι]. For we were debtors to none other but to him whose commandment we had

[42] An allusion to Philip 2:8.
[43] *Epid.* 34
[44] Cf. Philip 2:8.

> transgressed at the beginning [οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλῳ τινὶ ἤμεν ὀφειλέται ἀλλ᾽ ἢ ἐκείνῳ οὗ καὶ τὴν ἐντολὴν παρέβημεν ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς].[45]

Adam and Eve's primary failure was disobedience. As such, this failure can only be set right by going back (as it were) and undoing their original act of disobedience. The 'debt' of disobedience can only be paid through an act of obedience.[46] Christ succeeds in faithful obedience at every stage of his life, undoing the effects of Adam and Eve's disobedience. The significance of Christ's cross then, is that he was obedient unto death, obedient at the one place where Adam failed.

Irenaeus' emphasis on the cross as an act of obedience is further seen in the way Irenaeus views propitiation through the lens of obedience. Irenaeus maintains that humanity's sin in the Garden was a personal affront to God, making humanity enemies of God. As such, Christ 'propitiates indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned'.[47] But it is important to note that it is Christ's *obedience* unto death that propitiates the Father on behalf of humanity, not simply Christ's death as an innocent sacrifice.

> Now this being is the Creator [*Demiurgus*], who is, in respect of his love, the Father; but in respect of his power, he is Lord; and in respect of his wisdom, our Maker and Fashioner; by transgressing whose commandment we became his enemies [*cuius et praeceptum transgredientes, inimici facti sumus eius*]. And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through his incarnation, having become 'the Mediator between God and men';[48] propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned [*propitians quidem pro nobis Patrem, in quem peccaveramus*], and cancelling our disobedience by his own obedience [*et nostram inobedientiam per suam obedientiam consolatus*]; conferring also upon us the gift of communion with, and subjection to, our Maker. For this reason also he has taught us to say in prayer, 'And forgive us our debts'; since

[45] *Haer.* 5.16.3. See also the lengthy passage at *Haer.* 3.18.7.

[46] The primary soteriological framework for Irenaeus is ontological. Fiduciary and legal language functions as metaphors for the ontological dilemma of sin. Thus I take the language of 'debt' here and elsewhere in Irenaeus to be a metaphor for 'death'. To be in 'debt' to God because of sin means that humanity has fallen into death and cannot extract itself, just as a financial debtor falls into insurmountable financial debt and cannot extract himself. This is in contrast to the later Anselmic framework, where fiduciary and legal language is not viewed as a metaphor, but as the literal basis for explaining the dilemma of sin. Wingren rightly comments, 'The key to the whole of Christ's dominion is His conquest of evil and death. When evil has been eliminated and death put to flight, the property of the vanquished belongs to the victor', Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, 132.

[47] *Haer.* 5.17.1.

[48] 1 Tim 2:5.

> indeed he is our Father, whose debtors we were, having transgressed his commandment [*cuius eramus debitores, transgressi eius praeceptum*].[49]

Christ, through his obedience, 'propitiates' the Father on behalf of humanity, canceling Adam's disobedience. As noted above, the idea here is not that Christ's obedience at the cross is imputed to humanity in a sort of forensic imputation, nor is it quite right to say that Irenaeus conceives of Jesus 'paying the penalty' for human sin, as though his death satisfied an unmet standard of divine justice.[50] Rather, in the incarnation Jesus takes human nature upon himself and successfully matures human nature into what God had all along intended: a submissive, trusting creation that, when fully grown, becomes capable of sharing in the divine life of God. 'The Lord would not have recapitulated these things in himself *[nec insemetipsum recapitulatus esset haec Dominus*], unless he had himself been made flesh and blood after the way of the original formation [*nisi et ipse caro et sanguis secundum principalem plasmationem factus fuisset*], saving in his own person at the end that which had in the beginning perished in Adam'.[51] Adam killed human nature, estranging humanity from God and making humanity God's enemy. Christ has undone Adam's failure, picking up fallen humanity where Adam had dropped it, and then carrying it forward in his person on to maturity. Adam's disobedience brought death to the whole of the human nature. The obedience of Christ undoes Adam's sin and thus undoes the consequences of Adam's disobedience.[52] Human nature, now reborn in Christ and securely anchored to the divine life through Christ's faithful and perfect obedience, becomes a sort of ark of salvation that sinful humans can flee to in order to be saved.

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[49] *Haer.* 5.17.1.

[50] In *Haer.* 4.17, Irenaeus goes to great length to explain why God did not need the Old Testament sacrifices and oblations. To imply that God required such things would be to lessen God and make him stand in need. Irenaeus then goes on to discuss in 4.17.6-5 the new oblation of the Eucharist. Even here God does not stand in need of it, but has given it to us to give for our sake, because we have need of giving it. For Irenaeus, neither the Levitical sacrifices nor Christ's sacrifice were viewed primarily as payment to satisfy a standard of justice to which God himself is bound to uphold *qua* God. The whole discussion shows the extent to which Irenaeus is moving in a different direction than what one finds in Anselm and the later Reformed emphasis on penal substitutionary atonement. Loewe astutely observes, 'Irenaeus' review of the Old Testament ceremonial law, for example (4.17.1), offers an obvious occasion to present its sacrifices as types of that of Christ, but Irenaeus lets the opportunity pass', 'Irenaeus' soteriology', 8.

[51] *Haer.* 5.14.1.

[52] This emphasis on obedience as a defining characteristic of the people of God can be seen as well in *Haer.* 4. 41.2, 'According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak—we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God. But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in him and do his will. And those who do not believe, and do not obey his will, are sons and angels of the Devil, because they do the works of the Devil'.

Given this framework, propitiation in Irenaeus tends to have a corporate and ontological dimension (rather than a personal and forensic dimension). For Irenaeus, Christ' redemptive work directly secures the salvation of *human nature,* and then indirectly and subsequently secures the redemption of *individual human persons* insofar as individual persons choose to enter into this divinely restored human nature. To repent and enter into union with Christ means new life; failure to do so means remaining in Adam's wrecked and dead humanity.

Irenaeus' corporate emphasis can also be seen in the way he discusses the remission of sin in connection with Christ's death. Irenaeus occasionally notes the connection between Christ's death and the remission of sin.[53] Yet the language of forgiveness is infrequent in Irenaeus. When it does it occur, it is largely introduced with respect to humanity's primordial sin in the Garden, rather than with respect to individual personal sins.[54] For Irenaeus, personal sin is not necessary as an explanation for why every human since Adam has been plagued by death;[55] the sin of Adam and Eve is sufficient to explain why humanity is estranged from God and subject to death. Thus the sin that Christ remits through his death on the cross is Adam and Eve's sin in the garden. Adam and Eve sinned and wrecked all humanity with them. Christ's obedience undoes this first sin, and creates a new humanity now united to God and thus a recipient of God's divine life. Christ's obedience unto death undoes the effects of humanity's first sin, creating a new reality in which personal sins can be remitted through personal repentance and faith.

And perhaps most saliently for our purposes, just as Mary's obedience at the divine conception, and Jesus' obedience in the wilderness, secured victory over the Devil, so too Jesus' obedience at the cross is the final and ultimate means by which the Devil is defeated.

> This also does likewise refute [the argument] of those who maintain that he suffered only in appearance. For if he did not truly suffer, no thanks to him, since there was no suffering at all; and when we shall actually begin to suffer, he will seem as leading us astray, exhorting us to endure buffeting, and to turn the other cheek, if he did not himself before us in reality suffer the same;

[53] See *Haer.* 5.14.3, 17.1-3.

[54] See for example, *Haer.* 5.17.1.

[55] This is similar to Athanasius, who states that saints such as Jeremiah and John were 'hallowed from the womb' and thus 'holy and clean from all sin…nevertheless, "death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression"; and thus humanity remained mortal and corruptible as before, liable to the affection proper to their nature'. *C. Ar.* 3.33. Jeremiah and John underwent death, not for their own personal sin, but because their nature was subject to death through Adam's disobedience. For both Irenaeus and Athanasius, Adam's sin was sufficient in itself to kill the whole of human nature.

and as he misled them by seeming to them what he was not, so does he also mislead us, by exhorting us to endure what he did not endure himself. [In that case] we shall be even above the Master, because we suffer and sustain what our Master never bore or endured. But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of humanity. For he fought and conquered; for he was a human [*homo*] contending for the fathers, and through obedience unraveling disobedience completely [*et per obedientiam, inobedientiam persolvens*]: for he bound the strong man [*alligavit enim fortem*], and set free the weak, and endowed his own handiwork [*plasmati suo*] with salvation, by destroying sin. For he is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race [*humanum genus*].[56]

And again,

For the Lord, through means of suffering [*passionem*], 'ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men', and conferred on those that believe in him the power 'to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy',[2] that is, of the leader of apostasy [*principis apostasiae*]. Our Lord also by his passion destroyed death [*per passionem mortem destruxit*], and dispersed error, and put an end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance, while he manifested life and revealed truth, and bestowed the gift of incorruption [*et incorruptionem donavit*].[57]

And perhaps one of the clearest statements of Irenaeus' soteriological framework can be found in *Haer.* 3.18.7. The passage interweaves the key elements of Irenaeus' soteriology—the incarnation, recapitulation, obedience, union with God, the cross, defeat of the Devil, and victory over sin and death—into a single unified vision.

Therefore, as I have already said, he caused humanity to cleave to and to become one with God [ἥνωσεν οὖν καθὼς προέφαμεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ θεῷ]. For unless humanity had overcome the enemy of humanity, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished [Εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἄνθρωπος ἐνίκησεν

[56] *Haer.* 3.18.6.
[57] *Haer.* 2.20.3. See also 3.18.7, 5.1.1.

τὴν ἀντίπαλον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἄν δικαίως ἐνικήθη ὁ ἐχθπός]. And again, unless it had been God who had freely given salvation, we could never have possessed it securely. And unless humanity had been joined to God, we could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility. For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and humanity, by his relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present humanity to God, while he revealed God to humanity. For, in what way could we be partakers of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from him through the Son that fellowship which refers to himself, unless his Word, having been made flesh, had entered into communion with us? Wherefore also he passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God. Those, therefore, who assert that he appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made human, are as yet under the old condemnation, holding out patronage to sin; for, by their showing, death has not been vanquished, which 'reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression'.[58] But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his kingdom [*regnum quidem eius abstulit*][59], showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer. It laid, however, a weighty burden upon humanity, which had sin in itself, showing that it was liable to death. For as the law was spiritual, it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it. For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over humanity. For it behooved him who was to destroy sin, and redeem humanity under the power of death, that he should himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, human; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by humanity, and humanity should go forth from death *[ut peccatum ab homine interficeretur, et homo exiret a morte*]. For as by the disobedience of the one man [*quemadmodum enim per inobedientiam unius hominis*] who was originally molded from

[58] Rom 5:14.

[59] The intended referent of *eius* here is not clear and could be death, sin, or the Devil. Coxe glosses the Latin pronoun as 'death' (*ANF*) and Unger glosses it as 'sin' (see *ACW*, vol. 64, 176, no. 47). But the language of 'murder' 'robber' and false 'king' are all connected to the Devil elsewhere in Irenaeus. See *Haer.* 3.17.3, and especially 5.1.1, where Irenaeus refers to the Devil as a robber tyrant and false king. It seems that Irenaeus is himself not aiming for precision and slides smoothly from death, to the Devil, to sin throughout the passage. Ultimately, we need not concern ourselves with the exact referent, since Irenaeus' conception of sin, death, and the Devil forms a sort of unholy 'trinity' of evil. While the three can be distinguished, for Irenaeus there is a perichoretic relationship between the three, such that what is said of one can be said of the other.

> virgin soil, the many were made sinners, and forfeited life; so was it necessary that, by the obedience of one man *[per obedientiam unius hominis*], who was originally born from a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation. Thus, then, was the Word of God made human, as also Moses says, 'God, true are his works'. But if, not having been made flesh, he did appear as if flesh, his work was not a true one. But what he did appear, that he also was: God recapitulated in himself the ancient formation of humanity [*Deus, hominis antiquam plasmationem in se recapitulans*], that he might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify humanity; and therefore his works are true.[60]

At the first, the Devil deceived Adam and Eve and gained the upper hand over humanity. Through his act of envious treachery, Adam and Eve were severed from the immortal life of God and human nature was plunged into death. But Christ came as the new and second Adam, bringing in his divine nature the divine life, thus reconnecting humanity back to God. This 'reconnecting' of humanity back to God necessitated that Jesus enter into every facet of human experience, recapitulating in himself the whole of Adamic humanity. Through Jesus' faithful obedience from birth to death, humanity has been set free from death and thus set free from the tyranny of the Devil. Humanity, now securely united with God through Christ, has the power to 'tread upon serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy'. Jesus, as the 'stronger man', has destroyed through his incarnation and faithful obedience, the power of the 'strong man' and has bound the Devil with his own chains of disobedience and apostasy. Christ's victory at the cross 'destroys our adversary and perfects humanity after the image and likeness of God'.[61]

IV. Conclusion

For Irenaeus, the Devil's power over humanity was initially derived from human disobedience, insofar as human disobedience disconnected humanity from the divine life and thus prevented humanity from reaching full maturity. Infantile humanity, under the sway of death and unable to grow to maturity, was rendered impotent in the face of the Devil's greater power. The child-king could not grow to supplant the steward. But through Christ's (and Mary's) obedience, humanity is once again carried forward past the initial

[60] *Haer.* 3.18.7. For another summarizing passage, see *Haer.* 5.1.1.
[61] *Haer.* 5.21.2.

point of stumbling on into maturity. Christ ‘grows up’ humanity in himself and thus neuters the Devil’s power over humanity.

The notable point in all of this is that, for Irenaeus, the Devil’s defeat must be accomplished by humanity. Human obedience, not God’s direct power, was the cause of the Devil’s overthrow; God did not simply step in and squash the Devil (as well he could). Rather, insofar as humanity was destined to rule the steward and his angels, it was necessary that humanity rise to overthrow the Devil through a recapitulation of the initial failed obedience. All of this keeps humanity center stage and underscores that the primary conflict in Irenaeus’ narrative is between Satan and humanity.

Thus far the Devil’s defeat through Christ’s first advent. What remains to be examined is the Devil’s final overthrow at Christ’s second advent, and the corresponding anthropological and cosmological payout that stems from this overthrow, the subject of our next chapter.

Chapter Seven

The Devil's Final Defeat

'*Meanwhile*
The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell;
And, after all their tribulations long,
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With joy and love triumphing, and fair truth'.[1]

John Milton

As we have already seen in *Epid.* 16, the Devil's initial attempt to overthrow Adam was carried out in subterfuge, in the hope of escaping God's notice; he had not dared open war against God.[2] But his assault upon Adam and Eve inevitably and necessarily brought him into open rebellion against God. God entered the conflict between Satan and humanity on the side of humanity. With Christ's first advent, the power of the Devil was broken. Humanity's final victory over the Devil was assured, and even the Devil became a believer in his own demise.[3] But now in his hatred against God and humanity he carries his apostasy forward to a final, even if futile, climax. If he must be damned, then let the world be damned with him. The words of Seneca's despairing and raging Medea could be the words of Irenaeus' Devil: 'Peace can only be mine if I see everything ruined along with me. Let fall the world with me. How sweet to destroy when you die'.[4]

Humanity's final victory over the Devil will be realized with the coming of Christ at his second advent. Irenaeus' draws upon the New Testament prophetic writings, in particular the Apocalypse, to give us an account of the Devil's final defeat. Central to this account are a number of features that are relevant for our examination of the connection between Irenaeus' anthropology, cosmology, and his Devil narrative: 1) the rise of Antichrist is seen as the recapitulation of all evil, 2) the Devil and his angels are destroyed in hell, 3) the flesh of humanity is redeemed, 4) the world of humanity is renewed, 5) the sovereignty of humanity is restored.

[1] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 3.333-38.

[2] *Haer.* 5.26.2.

[3] See *Haer.* 5.25.2, where Irenaeus states that the Devil did not know of his own ultimate defeat until the advent of Christ.

[4] Seneca, *Medea*, 428-30.

I. The Anti-Christ is the Recapitulation of all Evil

The conclusion of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative begins with the rise of the Antichrist. Irenaeus follows closely the New Testament account of the Antichrist, quoting large portions of Revelation, and citing frequently Paul's letters. For Irenaeus, the Antichrist is the vessel of the Devil, raised up by the Devil to deceive the world into believing that he (the Devil) is God, thus leading humanity astray from the true God.

> And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he [i.e. the Devil], being an apostate and a robber [*apostata et latro*], is anxious to be adored as if he were God [*quasi Deus vult adorari*]; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes to proclaim himself king [*regem se vult praeconari*]. For he [Antichrist] being endued with all the power of the Devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king in subjection to God, but as an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [humans] that he himself is God [*ad suadendum quod ipse sit Deus*], raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who worship the Devil by means of many abominations [*ut hi qui per multas abominationes adorant diabolum*], may serve himself by this one idol [*hi per hoc unum idolum serviant ipsi*], of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second epistle to the Thessalonians: 'Unless there shall come a falling away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God'. The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol—for these are indeed so called by humans, but are not gods; and that he will endeavor in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God [*et quoniam ipse se tyrannico more conabitur ostendere Deum*].[5]

[5] *Haer.* 5.25.1.

The Devil's vain ambition to supplant Adam reaches its climax with the coming of the Antichrist. Through the Antichrist, the Devil will seek to concentrate all the multifarious service and worship rendered to the Devil into a single idol. Here we can see where the headwaters of the two Devil narratives (the early Irenaean account, and the later Augustinian account) mingle together. As in the later Devil tradition, Irenaeus views the Devil as seeking to set himself forth as God. Yet unlike what one finds in the later Devil tradition, Irenaeus does not suggest that the Devil intends to supplant God in heaven.[6] Notably, the throne the Devil has stolen, and which he will openly claim for his own in the last days, is the throne God originally gave to Adam.[7] It is from the Adamic throne that the Devil will present himself as God to humanity. The implications of all of this are in keeping with Irenaeus' larger positive anthropological framework. The Devil presents himself as God by supplanting Adam, thereby implicitly indicating the native glory of humanity.

Not only does Irenaeus view the rise of the Antichrist as a means of concentrating all satanic apostasy, but the rise of the Antichrist is also the recapitulation of all apostasy from the first days of creation until the present.

> And there is therefore in this beast [i.e. the Antichrist], when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit [ἀνακεφαλαιωσις γίνεται πάσης ἀδικίας καὶ παντὸς δόλου] in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire [ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ συῤῥεύσασα καὶ συγκλεισθεῖσα πᾶσα δύναμις ἀποστατικὴ κατὰ τὴν κάμινον ὀλισθῇ τοῦ πυρός]. Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he recapitulates in his own person all the commixture of wickedness [ἀνακεφαλαιούμενος ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν πρὸ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ πᾶσαν κακίαν] which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels. . .[8]

Here again we see Irenaeus' recapitulation theme at work. The apostasy that began with the Devil in Eden reaches its climax with the apostasy of the Antichrist. For Irenaeus, the Antichrist 'recapitulates' in himself the apostasy of the Devil and of the other apostate

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[6] Origen is the first to link the fall of the Devil to Ezekiel 18 and Isaiah 14. On the fall of Satan and the angels, see *Princ.* 1.5.5, 8.3. For an extended discussion of Origen's doctrine of Satan and the fall, see Burton, *Satan*, 125-32. See also the Introduction, no. 6 of this dissertation.

[7] *Epid.* 11.

[8] *Haer.* 5.29.2. Following this passage is Irenaeus' rather creative explanation for why the number of the Antichrist is 666. He combines the six hundred years of Noah at the time of the flood, with the height and breadth of Nebuchadnezzar's statue (sixty cubits and six cubits, respectively).

angels. Just as the Devil deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden, so too the Antichrist, under the guidance and power of the Devil, will deceive humanity away from the divine life by presenting himself as Christ. What happened in seminal form with Adam and Eve will happen in full flower with the Antichrist.

The Antichrist will initially succeed. He will 'devastate all things in the world' and will 'reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem'. Yet his success will be short lived. 'The Lord will come from heaven in the clouds in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire'. [9]

While the Devil intends to raise up the Antichrist as a means of concentrating service to himself, God has his own purposes. The concentration of all apostate power into the Antichrist brings everything into one place 'in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire' for a final apocalyptic judgment. All apostasy is concentrated into the Antichrist, so that the judgment and destruction of the Antichrist constitutes the judgment and destruction of all apostasy.[10] With this final cataclysmic apostasy human history draws to its apocalyptic close.

II. The Devil's Final Destruction in Hell

The defeat of the Antichrist is the defeat of the Devil. The fires of hell have been prepared by God for just this purpose—to swallow up the Devil and his angels. It is instructive to first consider Irenaeus' overall framework for hell when considering the Devil's place in it. For Irenaeus, submission to God is eternal rest. This is a law that flows of necessity from the Creator/creature distinction. All creatures must ultimately find rest in God or be destroyed. There can be no middle way. As such, hell is not an arbitrary judgment of a capricious and self-absorbed God. Irenaeus writes,

> And to as many as continue in their love towards God, does he grant communion with him. But communion with God is life and light [Κοινωνία δὲ Θεοῦ, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς] and the enjoyment of all the benefits which he has in

[9] *Haer.* 5.30.4.

[10] See also *Haer.* 5.28.2. Irenaeus' logic here is similar to Jesus' words in Matthew 23:33-35, where he rebukes the scribes and the Pharisees: 'You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar'.

> store. But on as many as, according to their own choice, depart from God, he inflicts that separation from himself which they have chosen of their own accord [ὅσοι . . . . ἀφίστανται κατὰ τὴν γνώμην αὐτῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τούτοις τὸν ἀπ᾽αὐτοῦ χωρισμὸν ἐπάγει]. But separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which he has in store. Those, therefore, who cast away by apostasy these aforementioned things, being in fact destitute of all good, do experience every kind of punishment. God, however, does not punish them immediately of himself [τοῦ Θεοῦ μὲν προηγητικῶς μὴ κολάζοντος], but that punishment falls upon them because they are destitute of all that is good [ἐπακολουθούσης δὲ ἐκείνης τῆς κολάσεως, διὰ τὸ ἐστερῆσθαι πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν]. Now, good things are eternal and without end with God, and therefore the loss of these is also eternal and never-ending. It is in this matter just as occurs in the case of a flood of light: those who have blinded themselves, or have been blinded by others, are forever deprived of the enjoyment of light. It is not, [however], that the light has inflicted upon them the penalty of blindness, but it is that the blindness itself has brought calamity upon them: and therefore the Lord declared, 'He that believeth in me is not condemned', that is, is not separated from God, for he is united to God through faith. On the other hand, he says, 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God', that is, he separated himself from God of his own accord [*id est, separavit semetipsum a Deo voluntaria sententia*].[11]

The judgement of hell, is in one sense, self-inflicted. To refuse communion with God is to refuse communion with life. To move into apostasy is to move into an empty space devoid of all that is good. Only through the immortal life of God can created things find sustenance and rest. To fully and finally reject God is to reject forever all good things. Hell, then, is the inevitable result of turning away from God. God does not need to inflict punishment directly upon those who reject him, since their chosen alienation from him, and the consequent loss of all good things, is itself their punishment.[12] This same basic framework applies equally to the Devil. The Devil too is a creature like the other creatures.

[11] *Haer.* 5.27.2. See also the same basic sentiment in 4.6.5, 4.39.4.

[12] This is the same basic perspective on hell that one finds in Augustine. For Augustine, God's judgment is a privation of the good in the creature; he applies the same basic principle to God's judgment of Satan. See *Civ.* 19.13.

He too is innately dependent on, and in need of, communion with God. But he rejected the reality of his contingency and thus became the chief apostate, the chief agitator and the first among God's creatures to refuse submission to the Creator. As such, there can only be one end for the Devil.

Irenaeus makes it clear that the fires of hell were created first and foremost for the Devil and his angels. Hell is a judgment designed for apostate angels, and only inadvertently for those human beings who follow after them.

> But the curse in all its fullness fell upon the serpent [*omnis autem maledictio decurrit in serpentem*], which had beguiled them. 'And God', it is declared, 'said to the serpent: Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all the beasts of the earth'. And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father has prepared for the Devil and his angels'; indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for humanity, but for him who beguiled humanity and caused humanity to offend [*significans quoniam non homini principaliter praeparatus est aeternus ignis, sed ei qui seduxit et offendere fecit hominem*]—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.[13]

Yet humans, too, will fall under the Devil's judgment if they align themselves with his apostasy. The Devil, in choosing apostasy, chose his own path of destruction. Those who choose to follow him into his apostasy likewise follow him into destruction.

> It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with himself for those who desire his fellowship, and who remain in subjection to him; and who has prepared the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the Devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those human beings shall be sent who have been set apart

[13] *Haer.* 3.23.3.

on his left hand [εἰς ὃ πεμφθήσεσθαι ἔφη ὁ Κύριος τοὺς εἰς τὰ ἀριστερὰ διακριθέντας].[14]

Yet somewhat surprisingly, as Irenaeus concludes *Adversus haereses*, he does not utilize the primary passage in Revelation that speaks of the Devil's final destruction in hell—Revelation 20:7-15. This is all the more surprising since Irenaeus draws heavily upon Revelation 19-20 throughout book five of *Adversus haereses*, and largely tracks along the timeline of John's apocalyptic vision. According to Revelation, the destruction of the Antichrist in hell (Revelation 19:11-21) is a distinct event that occurs prior to the millennial kingdom, and prior to the Devil's final defeat. At the time of the Antichrist's defeat, the Devil is bound with a great chain and thrown into a bottomless pit, to be kept in captivity for the duration of the millennial kingdom (Revelation 20:1-3). After the thousand years are ended, the Devil is released from prison, whereupon he gathers together an evil horde of humanity and leads a rebellion against the saints. Revelation 20:7-10 recounts the Devil's final defeat in hell:

> [7]And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison [8]and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. [9]And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, [10]and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Thus the Devil meets his final end. Notably, it is only after this act of divine judgment that John gives us a vision of the general resurrection, the great white throne judgment, the wedding supper of the Lamb, the Holy City descending from heaven, and the creation of the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 20:11-21:27). But Irenaeus moves from his discussion about the defeat of the Antichrist into a lengthy defense of his chiliasm, and then concludes *Adversus haereses* with a description of the eternal age. The omission of Revelation 20:7-10 is striking, given that John's vision of the Devil's judgment would have served neatly as an exclamation point on the Devil's defeat. It is impossible to know for certain why Irenaeus does not make use of Revelation 20:7-10, or why he does not speak

[14] *Haer.* 4.40.1. See also 4.41.21, 5.26.2.

more definitively in his concluding chapters about the Devil's judgment in hell. The Devil's ultimate defeat in hell is portended, of course, in the destruction of the Antichrist; Irenaeus has recounted the defeat of the Antichrist, the Devil's proxy, and he apparently deems this sufficient to underscore that the Devil is on the losing end of history. And of course, as we have already seen above, Irenaeus has mentioned elsewhere in his writings that the Devil will be cast into the lake of fire.[15] But he does not explicitly mention this event or draw from Revelation 20:7-10 in the last chapters of *Adversus haereses*. Two reasons for this omission present themselves.

First, as noted in Chapter One of this thesis, Irenaeus sees strong continuity between the 'times of the kingdom' (which for Irenaeus is a literal one thousand year reign of Christ upon a renewed earth) and the eternal age of the new heaven and new earth. In Irenaeus' retelling of the apocalypse, all judgment and destruction take place prior to the millennial kingdom, thus allowing for a smooth transition between the 'times of the kingdom' and the 'new heaven and the new earth'. Only a careful reading of Irenaeus allows us to see much distinction between these two ages. But John (rather inconveniently for Irenaeus) places the Devil's final rebellion and apocalyptic defeat between the 'times of the kingdom' and the final age. This runs against the grain of Irenaeus' seamless eschatological vision. By ignoring Revelation 20:7-10, and its great moment of terrestrial upheaval and divine judgment, Irenaeus is able to cast stronger continuity between the millennial kingdom and the final age.[16]

Second, *Adversus haereses* is not written as an explication of the Devil and his activities. As we have seen, the Devil makes frequent appearances throughout Irenaeus' work. Yet such appearances occur only insofar as the Devil is relevant for Irenaeus's larger anti-Gnostic polemic. The focus of Irenaeus' work is primarily dedicated to defending the Creator of the material world as the true God, and refuting the anti-materialism of the Gnostics. As such, Irenaeus does not find it necessary to emphasize and make explicit every aspect of his Devil narrative. He has already commented in passing that the Devil and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire. Irenaeus does not feel it is necessary to defend or state this point again as he details his eschatology. As we have already seen in Chapter One, the more pressing issue for Irenaeus as he concludes *Adversus haereses* is the material nature of his eschatological vision (against a Gnostic, quasi Platonic vision of celestial, disembodied bliss).

[15] *Haer.* 3.23.3. See also 4.40.1. 4.41.21, 5.26.2.

[16] This move is almost certainly part of Irenaeus' larger polemic against the Gnostics. For more on this see Chapter One, page 59.

In any case, even if Irenaeus' account of the Devil's final demise is less satisfying than one might prefer (especially for one writing a dissertation on Irenaeus' account of the Devil), the Devil is nonetheless defeated. The Devil's final defeat in hell spells the final end of sin and death, and marks humanity's ultimate redemption. The defeat of the Devil and the dawn of the eternal age brings with it three key aspects of Irenaeus' soteriology—the redemption of humanity's sovereignty, the redemption of humanity's flesh, and the redemption of humanity's world. Each of these three aspects of redemption is consistent with, and reinforces, the connection between Irenaeus' anthropology, cosmology and his Devil narrative.

III. The Restoration of Humanity's Sovereignty

God had made humanity the lords of the world, a lordship which extended over the angelic stewards appointed by God to help care for the earth. The first sin in Irenaeus' soteriological plotline was the Devil's envy of Adam and his refusal to submit to humanity's dominion. The Devil sought to come out from under human sovereignty by tempting Adam and Eve to disobey God and bring about their own death. His plan, it would seem, succeeded. With humanity's fall into sin and death, human dominion over God's creation was compromised. The Devil then set himself up as a tyrant king, as an imposter ruler who claimed sovereignty for himself. In his guise as legitimate king, the Devil took humanity captive. Redemption then, must necessarily involve a reversal of this development, i.e. humanity's release from the Devil's grasp back into its proper position of lordship over the world and the angels as God originally intended.

Again we see Irenaeus' recapitulation theme at work. God does not step in and simply 'make up' for human failure. To rule over the angelic stewards was the task of humanity. Humanity forfeited this rule when it was deceived into sin by the Devil's entrapment. The only way to move forward is for humanity to once again assert lordship over the Devil. But such a task has slipped beyond the power of mortal humanity; death has made human sovereignty impossible. Yet in Christ—the perfect immortal human—humanity is able to once again establish lordship over the angelic tyrant king. Jesus is the stronger man who is able to overcome the 'strong man'—a task too great for fallen humanity. 'How indeed did he subdue him who was stronger than humans [i.e. the Devil], who not only overcame humanity, but also retained humanity under his power [*quomodo autem eum qui adversus homines fortis erat, qui non solum vicit hominem, sed et detinebat eum sub sua potestate, devicit*], and indeed conquered him who had conquered [*et eum*

quidem qui vicerat vicit], while he set free humanity who had been conquered, unless he had been greater than humanity who had thus been vanquished?'[17] Jesus does as a human, what humanity was unable to do for itself. Yet the salvation that Jesus brings does not absolve humanity of its obligation and privilege to mature into the image of God; rather through Christ's incarnation, humanity-in-Christ is at last able to do what it could not do apart from Christ.[18] As such Jesus' victory over the Devil is not *in place* of humanity's victory, but rather *is* humanity's victory. Irenaeus writes,

> But as our Lord is alone truly Master, so the Son of God is truly good and patient, the Word of God the Father having been made the Son of humanity. For he fought and conquered [*luctatus est enim, et vicit*]; for he was a human contending for the fathers [*erat enim homo pro patribus certans*], and through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for he bound the strong man, and set free the weak, and endowed his own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin. For he is a most holy and merciful Lord, and loves the human race.[19]

Jesus was 'a human contending for the fathers'. Through his obedience to God, Jesus carried humanity forward into the maturity that God had all along intended. This obedience was the means by which Jesus fought and conquered the Devil, showing that true human sovereignty is achieved and maintained, not by human power alone, but by submission to God. It is through reliance upon God, the proper posture of the creature, that humans are set free from the Devil's captivity.

Christ's obedience to God re-anchored humanity back to the divine life of God, thus throwing off the Devil's yoke. The apostate slave, i.e. the Devil, is returned to his rightful position as subordinate to humanity-in-Christ. And now that Christ has been raised from the dead, all of humanity-in-Christ awaits the time when Christ's victory over the Devil will fully and finally become the victory of humanity-in-Christ. 'And being raised from the dead and exalted at the Father's right hand, he [Jesus] awaits the time appointed by the Father for the judgment, when all enemies shall be put under him. Now the enemies are all those who were found in apostasy, angels and archangels and powers and thrones, who despised the truth'.[20] When the Lord returns in glory with the power of God and accompanied by the

[17] *Haer.* 4.33.4.

[18] Irenaeus' vision of a redeemed humanity is limited, of course, to those human beings who are organically connected to God through Christ by the Holy Spirit.

[19] *Haer.* 3.18.6. See the same basic logic in *Haer.* 3.8.2.

[20] *Epid.* 36.

elect angels, Jesus will put a final and decisive end to the Devil's tyranny; humanity-in-Christ will once again achieve sovereignty over the world and the angels.

> For it is just that . . . in the creation in which they endured servitude, they should reign [*in ipsa regnare eos*]. For God is rich in all things, and all things are his. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous [*sine prohibitione servire iustis*].[21]

The righteous, having been set free from the tyranny of the Devil are ushered into the reward of the righteous. For Irenaeus, part of this reward is clearly the reclamation of the dominion of the world. What had been lost in Adam has now been regained in Christ. The proper order of creation is restored, namely that righteous humanity-in Christ—as the living image and likeness of God—sits at last in a seat of dominion over the world and the angels.

IV. The Redemption of Humanity's Flesh

The overthrow of the Devil and the reestablishment of human sovereignty coincide with the redemption of humanity's flesh. For Irenaeus, the goodness of God is at stake in the redemption of the whole human person—material and immaterial. Irenaeus' God is neither too impotent to save, nor too malignant.[22] Rather he is powerful and willing to redeem humanity from sin, death, and the Devil. Central to this redemption is the resurrection of human bodies. 'For if he does not vivify what is mortal and does not bring back the corruptible to incorruption, he is not a God of power'.[23] The resurrection of the body is not ancillary in Irenaeus' polemic against the Gnostics. 'Vain, therefore, and truly miserable, are those who do not choose to see what is so manifest and clear [i.e. the resurrection of the body], but shun the light of truth, blinding themselves like the tragic Oedipus'.[24] The

[21] *Haer.* 5.32.1.

[22] See *Haer.* 5.4.1. The Gnostic context aside, Irenaeus' logic is similar to Athanasius who insists that it would have been unbecoming of God to allow humanity to perish; see Athanasius, *De Incar*. 6. For both Irenaeus and Athanasius, the goodness of God is at stake in the redemption of humanity.

[23] *Haer.* 5.3.2.

[24] *Haer.* 5.13.2.

Gnostic heretics who deny the resurrection of the body are denying the 'entire dispensation of God';[25] though they do not realize it, the Gnostics are denying their own salvation.[26]

The first twenty chapters of book five of *Adversus haereses* are dedicated to proving, exegetically and theologically, the resurrection of the body. Throughout this section, Irenaeus marshals a variety of arguments in support of bodily resurrection. He notes the logic of a material Eucharist, the fruit of Christ's resurrected body ('we are nourished by means of the creation');[27] he points to the example of Christ's bodily incarnation[28] and resurrection;[29] he notes the Old Testament and apostolic prophetic testimony regarding bodily resurrection;[30] he emphasizes humanity's three-fold nature of Spirt, soul, and flesh;[31] he points to the examples of Enoch and Elijah as preludes to fleshly immortality;[32] and he argues that Jesus' healing ministry is best understood as a foreshadowing of ultimate eschatological bodily resurrection.[33]

Irenaeus' proofs are unrelenting and persuasive and show effectively that the entire canon of Scripture points toward a bodily resurrection. A select passage from this section of *Adversus haereses* serves to illustrate Irenaeus' pro-bodily polemic against the Gnostics.

> For the heretics, despising the handiwork of God, and not admitting the salvation of their flesh [*et non suscipientes salutem carnis suae*], while they also treat the promise of God contemptuously, and pass beyond God altogether in the sentiments they form, affirm that immediately upon their death they shall pass above the heavens and the demiurge, and go to the Mother or to that Father whom they have feigned. Those persons, therefore, who disallow a resurrection affecting the whole human person [*universam reprobant resurrectionem*], and as far as in them remove it from the midst [of the Christian scheme], how can they be wondered at, if again they know nothing as to the plan of the resurrection? For they do not choose to understand, that if these things are as they say, the Lord himself, in whom they profess to believe, did not rise again upon the third day; but immediately upon his expiring on the cross, undoubtedly departed on high, leaving his

[25] *Haer.* 5.13.2.
[26] *Haer.* 5.13.1.
[27] *Haer.* 5.2.2; also 4.18.4-5.
[28] *Haer.* 5.14.
[29] *Haer.* 5.7, 5.31.1-2.
[30] *Haer.* 5.15.
[31] *Haer.* 5.6.
[32] *Haer.* 5.5.
[33] *Haer.* 5.12.6-5.13.1.

> body to the earth. But the case was that for three days he dwelt in the place where the dead were, as the prophet says concerning him . . . . This, too, David says when prophesying of him, 'And Thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell' . . . . If, then, the Lord observed the law of the dead [*si ergo Dominus legem mortuorum servavit*], that he might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day 'in the lower parts of the earth'; then afterwards rising in the flesh, so that he even showed the print of the nails to his disciples,[6] he thus ascended to the Father, how must these people not be put to confusion, who allege that 'the lower parts' refer to this world of ours, but that their inner person, leaving the body here, ascends into the super-celestial place [*in supercoelestem ascendere locum*]? For as the Lord 'went away in the midst of the shadow of death', where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up, it is manifest that the souls of his disciples also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in perfection, that is bodily [*et perfecte resurgentes, hoc est corporaliter*], just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God [*sic venient ad conspectum Dei*].[34]

Central to Irenaeus' resurrection logic is the idea that humanity, insofar as it is true humanity, is embodied humanity. Irenaeus insists that the promised resurrection must 'affect the whole human being', thus affirming that human bodies are a necessary and substantial (rather than accidental) component of what it means to be human. For Irenaeus, anything less than a resurrected flesh would result in a subhuman humanity.[35] The Gnostic account of the soul's release from the prison of the body (so in vogue in Stoic and Platonic accounts) is not sufficient for Irenaeus as a description of salvation.

Irenaeus dedicates *Haer.* 5.9-14 to a refutation of the Gnostic interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:50 ('flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God'), a key Gnostic proof-text against the idea of bodily resurrection. For Irenaeus, the future life is the life of

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[34] *Haer.* 5.31.1-2.

[35] Irenaeus' polemic against the Gnostics also serves as an implicit critique of Stoic and Platonic accounts of the body, as well as Christian and Jewish Platonist accounts of the body. See Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 240-48 for a helpful discussion about first century Roman and Jewish perspectives on the body and death. Goodman quotes from Josephus, who attributes to the Essenes a basically Platonic view of the body (243).

the uncreated God, mediated to humanity by the Holy Spirit. Thus it is the Holy Spirit that most properly has the power to inherit the kingdom of God, not the created flesh. But this does not mean for Irenaeus that created flesh is incapable of participating in the Kingdom of God, only that the right of inheritance in the human person belongs to the Holy Spirit in that person. Analogously, when a wife inherits from a rich father, her husband, who is united to her, likewise participates in the blessing of the inheritance. But the right and power of inheritance comes to husband through the wife. In the same way, flesh and blood participate in the kingdom of God because of their union to the Holy Spirit.

While it is true for Irenaeus that human beings can exist independent of their bodies, the specific referent of the *imago Dei* in humanity is the visible image of the incarnate, embodied Son; [36] which is to say, that without a human body to reflect the human body of the incarnate Son, human beings do not convey the *imago Dei* and thus fall short of what it means to be fully human. Irenaeus insists that disembodied existence is temporary, and that all human beings follow the same pattern as Jesus: Jesus died; his soul went to the place of the dead; he was raised bodily; he ascended to God. So too human souls, when they leave their bodies at death, 'go to an invisible place allotted to them by God' where they wait until the resurrection of their bodies, and then 'rising in their entirety', 'come into the presence of God'.

And most saliently for our purposes, God's redemption of humanity from physical death is his consummate act of victory over the Devil.

> For if humankind, which had been made by God that it might live [*si enim qui factus fuerat a Deo homo ut viveret*], but which lost that life when it was injured by the serpent who had corrupted it [*hic amittens vitam laesus a serpente qui depravaverat eum*], would no longer return to life but would be altogether abandoned to death, God would have been overcome [*victus esset Deus*] and the serpent's wickedness would thus have prevailed over God's will [*et superasset serpentis nequitia voluntatem Dei*].[37]

God appointed humans to be the lords of the earth. Satan, through subterfuge, had killed humanity and set himself up as a tyrant king. The Devil's assault upon humanity struck hardest at human embodiment. This was the immediate casualty of the conflict. Tragically, because of physical/bodily death, the image of the incarnate Son contained within the human body was on its way to dissolution. Were God to abandon humans to their

[36] See Chapter Three, section I of this thesis.
[37] *Haer.* 3.23.1.

deserved bodily death, the serpent's wickedness would have prevailed against God's will; his image on earth would have been destroyed.

But God would not suffer the loss of his image; human bodies must be saved from the Devil's assault. For Irenaeus, any soteriological account that failed to include bodily resurrection was a truncated and insufficient view of redemption. Ultimately then, Christ's victory over the Devil needs to be understood in light of human (re)embodiment. The bodily resurrection of the righteous is the undoing of the Devil's work, a putting to rights of the anthropological wrongs that the Devil's tyranny and apostasy had introduced into God's good created order.

V. The Redemption of Humanity's World

Finally, the overthrow of the Devil results in the redemption of humanity's world. The restoration of humanity's world occurs for Irenaeus in a two-step process. We have already examined this in detail, so we need only touch upon the salient points briefly by way of reminder.[38] First will come the 'times of the kingdom' during which the righteous dead are raised to live upon a renewed earth for one thousand years. This is the 'seventh day' of creation, when humanity at last enters into its rest. Here Irenaeus has in mind the present earth, brought forward into the maturity that God had intended for it all along. The bulk of Irenaeus' eschatological vision in *Adversus haereses* is focused on the millennial kingdom, i.e. the time during which 'the whole creation shall, according to God's will, obtain a vast increase, that it may bring forth and sustain fruits'.[39] Most relevant for the purpose of this study, Irenaeus connects the restoration of the world with the defeat of the Antichrist (and by extension, the defeat of the Devil). He writes,

> But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom [*adducens autem iustis regni tempora*], that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham

[38] See Chapter Two, section V of this thesis.

[39] *Haer.* 5.34.2. This millennial vision of renewed materiality is not allegorical or symbolic. See *Haer.* 5.35.1. Though see also *Epid.* 61 where Irenaeus seems more willing to consider a figurative interpretation of at least some aspects of Isaiah's eschatological vision.

> the promised inheritance [*et restituens Abrahae promissionem haereditatis*],[40] in which kingdom the Lord declared, that 'many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'.[41]

The overthrow of the Devil's Antichrist marks the end of the old age, and the dawn of the 'hallowed seventh day' of creation—the eschatological Sabbath rest of God that is realized in the millennial kingdom. During this final seventh 'day' of redemptive history, God will restore all of creation back to its pristine condition, so that humanity can live in harmony with the world as God had all along intended. In a subsequent passage, Irenaeus clarifies the connection between the defeat of the Devil and the restoration of the world. He writes,

> Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are made accustomed to partake gradually of the divine nature [*capere Deum*]; and it is necessary to tell them with respect to those things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it [*et regnare in ea*], when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering [*recipere eos fructus sufferentiae*]; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, they should reign [*in ipsa regnare eos*]. For God is rich in all things, and all things are his. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition, should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous [*sine prohibitione servire iustis*].[42]

[40] Irenaeus views the promises given to Abraham as literally fulfilled through the church in the millennial kingdom. See *Haer.* 5.32.2. See also the same in *Epid.* 91-95.

[41] *Haer.* 5.30.4.

[42] *Haer.* 5.32.1.

Irenaeus does not explicitly mention the Devil in this passage, but the Devil's oppressive tyranny serves as the backdrop for Irenaeus' comments. For Irenaeus, it is 'just' and fitting that righteous humanity should receive their reward in the very same creation where they had been forced to 'endure servitude'. Ultimately, the tyranny of the Devil must be brought to an end in order that creation 'should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous'.

Irenaeus' logic here makes sense given his overall recapitulation framework. Redemption for Irenaeus is not bypassing God's original plan, but rather a 'going back' and redoing what went wrong in the first place. The world had been made for humanity's enjoyment and dominion. This divine design was foiled by the Devil's rebellion and Adam and Eve's subsequent sin. With the entrance of sin and death, humanity was unable to live into the good created world that God had made. The overthrow of the Devil undoes the curse and releases creation into the glory God had all along intended.

For Irenaeus, the millennial kingdom is the 'commencement of incorruption' that flows naturally into the eternal age of the 'new heaven and the new earth'. Both the millennial kingdom and the eternal age, are for Irenaeus, ages of embodiedment.[43] In the eternal kingdom, the glory of the created world will at last achieve full flower 'when this [present] fashion passes away, and humanity has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, [then] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new humanity shall remain, always holding fresh converse with God'.[44]

This final creative act of God marks the dawn of the eternal age. Humanity will live with God, without any fear of 'becoming old'—of regressing back toward death and sin. Human maturity in Christ will at last have been achieved, and human dominion over the world will at last have been restored. And thus will come true Irenaeus' famous maxim: '*Gloria Dei est vivens homo'.*

VI. Conclusion

We have reached the conclusion of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative. The destiny of humanity and humanity's world has at last reached the maturity that God intended from the beginning. In the person of Christ, humanity has grown up without 'growing old'. The good

[43] For Irenaeus' views on an eternal material world, see Chapter One, V. B of this dissertation.

[44] *Haer.* 5.36.1.

world that God made for humans has, in the end, come once again under their dominion. The Devil—the tyrant and false king—has been thrown down, and humanity's throne restored.

It is fitting to conclude our study of Irenaeus' account of the Devil with the final words of the last chapter of *Adversus haereses*—words which aptly summarize the heart of Irenaeus' soteriological project, and likewise clarify the place of humanity and humanity's world with respect to the angels—both fallen and unfallen.

> John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first 'resurrection of the just', and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth; and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize [with his vision]. For the Lord also taught these things, when he promised that he would have the mixed cup new with his disciples in the kingdom. The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation shall be free from the bondage of corruption, [and pass] into the liberty of the sons of God. And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned humanity, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it forth at the resurrection of the just, and fulfills the promises for the kingdom of his Son; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has arisen within the heart. For there is the one Son, who accomplished his Father's will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, 'which the angels desire to look into;' and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which his handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with his Son, is brought to perfection; that his offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature [*descendat in facturam*], that is, to what had been molded [*plasma*], and that it should be contained by him; and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word [*et factura iterum capiat Verbum*], and ascend to him [*et ascendat ad eum*], passing beyond the angels [*supergrediens angelos*], and be made after the image and likeness of God.[45]

[45] *Haer.* 5.36.3.

Conclusion

'Passing Beyond the Angels'

'But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus'.

Ephesians 2:4-6

The burden of the forgoing thesis has been to show the strong continuity that exists between Irenaeus' cosmology, anthropology, and demonology, and, more specifically, to show how Irenaeus' account of the Devil undergirds and supports his overall anthropological and cosmological framework —a burden I hope has been faithfully carried forward (in the spirit of Irenaeus) on to maturity. It remains therefore to briefly summarize the salient points of the argument, and to note three wider implications.

I. Summary of the Argument

Irenaeus' robust pro-material theology in the face of Gnostic anti-materialism has received a good deal of attention in Irenaen scholarship. This thesis has attempted to build upon that good work, and show how Irenaeus' cosmology and anthropology is consistent with, and supported by, his account of the Devil. As the careful reader of Irenaeus will observe, Irenaeus is working from a storyline—a storyline drawn primarily from Scripture and the earlier traditions of the Christian and Jewish communities. This storyline provides the baseline for his theological framework—especially his anthropology, soteriology, cosmology, and eschatology. Specifically, my primary aim has been to show how Irenaeus' account of the Devil shapes and influences Irenaeus' storyline, and most especially the story he tells about humanity and humanity's world. Irenaeus' account of the Devil carries significant import for his larger project precisely because it lies at the very beginning of his soteriological account and thus sets in motion the trajectory of the larger narrative.

In Irenaeus' view, Adam and Eve were created as infants, made in the image of the incarnate Son of God (thus establishing human embodiment as a perpetual and eschatological reality for humanity) and destined to grow into the full likeness of Christ. Being made in the image of the incarnate Son—the true human being—Adam and Eve are

given lordship over the material world. But since they were created as infants, the Devil was appointed by God to be a steward of the material world until such time as humanity could come of age and assume its proper lordship. This lordship of humanity extended not only to the material world, but also over the Devil and those angels under his stewardship. But the Devil was not content with his subordinate position with respect to humanity.

Most significantly, Irenaeus offers us an account of the Devil's fall in which the Devil was motivated by envy of humanity. The world was the prize that Adam and Eve possessed and that was the object of the Devil's desire. The Devil wished to be worshipped as God, not by supplanting God in heaven, but by supplanting Adam on earth. In short, the Devil sought humanity's throne, not Christ's. What is more, in Irenaeus' account, Satan was (at least initially) a successful usurper of Adam's throne, rather than a failed usurper of Christ's. In this account, the earth is the royal prize, not merely the battle ground. While Irenaeus views God and the Devil as rivals, he does so by grounding this conflict in the more primary contest between the Devil and humanity. The Devil became an enemy of God because he first became an enemy of humanity. All of this is consistent with and supports Irenaeus' high anthropology, and places a strong emphasis on the material creation as central to the biblical narrative.

Humanity's loss of the world's throne via sin and subsequent death thus sets the stage for the outworking of the soteriological narrative that Irenaeus tells. Not content with the Devil's rebellious actions, God enters the war between the Devil and humanity on the side of humanity, and reclaims the world's throne *via* Christ, the God-*man*. Through Christ's faithful obedience to God, Jesus does what Adam failed to do. Christ, through his obedience, carries humanity forward to maturity—a maturity that is consummated and finalized at the Lord's second coming and the resurrection of the dead. Humanity-in-Christ is thus delivered from the captivity of the Devil and is raised above the angels as God had all along intended.

In short, Irenaeus offers us an anthropocentric, terrestrial eschatology that necessarily climaxes with the overthrow of the Devil and the re-enthronement of humanity upon a renewed earth. It is particularly noteworthy that for Irenaeus, the terrestrial focus of his redemptive narrative carries on into the new heavens and the new earth; the millennial kingdom is not merely a pen-ultimate and earthy transition point on the way to a strictly angelic, heavenly destiny. For Irenaeus, the reestablishment of human dominion over the world and the angels is central to Irenaeus' soteriological narrative; it is not merely an accidental aspect of his soteriological account. Irenaeus' narrative can be set in strong contrast with the soteriological narratives of his Gnostic opponents, which culminate in the denouement of humanity's earthly and bodily-material nature and conclude with humanity's

salvific escape into an angelic, immaterial heaven. Likewise, Irenaeus' basic soteriological account can be set in contrast with Platonized Christian accounts such as one finds a generation or two later in Origen, and to a lesser extent and much later, Augustine. Irenaeus, rather uniquely among the early Christian writers, is able to capture the terrestrial and anthropocentric nature of the canonical story line. This is not related solely to his account of the Devil, but his account of the Devil certainly enables and supports his overall reading.

II. Implications

The implications of Irenaeus' account of the Devil are no doubt many, and for future scholarship to explore further, but my final remarks will focus on three: 1) the overall coherence of Irenaeus' thought; 2) how a detailed look at the connection between Irenaeus' account of the Devil and his doctrine of creation provides a fresh methodology for assessing the doctrine of creation found in other early Christian writers; and 3) how Irenaeus' account of the Devil reaffirms the pro-terrestrial focus of the canonical storyline of the Bible.

A. The Overall Coherence of Irenaeus' Thought

Perhaps one of the more salient implications of this thesis, specifically as it relates to Irenaean scholarship, is that it argues in favor of the overall coherence and intelligibility of his theological project. My aim has been to demonstrate consistency between Irenaeus' anthropology, cosmology and his account of the Devil. But I believe this dissertation has also pointed in the direction of a broader internal coherence in Irenaeus' thought.

This is in keeping with the growing number of contemporary Irenaeus scholars (such as Wingren, Steenberg, and Behr)[1] who have effectively argued in favor of a general coherent program in Irenaeus, *pace* interpreters such as Loofs and Benoit who have argued (to varying degrees) for broad incoherence in Irenaeus. The debate has swung more in favor of Irenaean consistency in recent years, but doubts still remain.[2] While Irenaeus is certainly not a systematic theologian in any modern sense, he demonstrates a remarkable ability to

[1] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*; Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*; Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation.* See Presley, 'The Intertextual Reception of Genesis 1-3 in Irenaeus of Lyons', who effectively shows the intertextual coherence of Irenaeus' use of scripture, and Jacobsen, 'Importance of Genesis 1-3' who shows the larger coherence between Irenaeus' reading of the early chapters of Genesis and his anthropology, soteriology and eschatology.

[2] See Osborn, *Irenaeus*, 10-12 for an effective summary of the issue.

construct a singularly coherent soteriological narrative from beginning to end, with the end tying up the crises and plot dilemmas laid out at the beginning. A detailed study of Irenaeus' account of the Devil highlights this narrative and compositional coherence.

Likewise, Irenaeus' account of the Devil reveals strong *theological* coherence in his thought. Irenaeus' account of the Devil is freighted with insights from his Christology, anthropology, cosmology, and eschatology, all of which come together to form his soteriology. Each of these aspects of his thought has touch points with his account of the Devil, and they are all woven together harmoniously with each other, and the whole. Irenaeus' Christology, in particular, is remarkably well developed and integrated into his overall pro-material posture. His prioritization of the incarnate, embodied Son (rather than more abstractly the non-embodied Father) as the telos of the *imago Dei* in humanity is worked out with consistency in his overall project. Certainly Irenaeus' account of the Devil coheres nicely with this Christological framework; and likewise Irenaeus' Christology fits neatly with his larger cosmological, anthropological, and eschatological framework. Contemporary standards of theological systemization are only anachronistically forced upon Irenaeus. But even granting these standards, Loof's suggestion that Irenaeus was a muddled and careless theologian,[3] or that Irenaeus is only 'dimly aware'[4] of the foundational inconsistency of his central ideas, is hardly deserved. Irenaeus' account of the Devil argues to the contrary.

B. A Fresh Methodology for Assessing the Doctrine of Creation

Theological studies on the role of the Devil in the Christian tradition have tended to explore the theological subjects of theodicy and evil. Certainly this line of study is a historically interesting and theologically meaningful approach to the Devil. But (as noted in the introduction) the role of the Devil has not been explored as a way of assessing the larger doctrine of creation. I trust that I have demonstrated the appropriateness of such an approach with respect to Irenaeus. But my larger hypothesis is that a similar methodological approach to the study of other early Christian writers would yield similar results.

It is my working hypothesis (one that I hope to demonstrate in future research) that a consistent (even if not perfect) correlation can be identified between a given early Christian theologian's account of the Devil and his or her larger doctrine of creation. The decisive elements of Irenaeus' account, in my estimation, are the Devil's envy of unfallen humanity,

[3] Loofs, *Theophilus,* 432.
[4] Brown, 'Necessary Imperfection', 17.

and the idea that the Devil's fall takes place in Genesis 3 when he tempts Adam and Eve. It is these two elements of Irenaeus' account of the Devil that have the most influence on his larger doctrine of creation. Justin, Tatian, Cyprian, Ephraim, and Tertullian are the only writers I have so far discovered who affirm both of these elements. Would a similar study of their respective doctrines of creation reveal a general pro-material, pro-anthropological framework that culminates in a material eschatology, such as we find in Irenaeus? My provisional analysis suggests this might be so, but not in every instance. In Tertullian's case, the answer is almost certainly 'no'. Tertullian embraces, for the most part, Irenaeus' basic Devil narrative. But his general posture toward human embodiment and materiality is not so nearly as congenial as that of Irenaeus. In this case it would be rewarding to explore the reasons for, and the ramifications of, the way that Tertullian's Devil narrative might differ from that of Irenaeus.

On the other side, Origen and Augustine explicitly reject both of the key Irenaean elements regarding the Devil. My provisional study of both theologians suggests that there is a correspondence between their movement away from Irenaeus' position, and their embrace of Platonic anti-materialism and eschatology. The prioritization of the spiritual over the material, the valorization of heaven over earth, and the assumed superiority of the angels over humanity are all in keeping with the later Devil narrative and theologically consistent with basic Platonic commitments.

C. Reaffirming the Pro-Terrestrial Focus of the Biblical Storyline

While the university context does not typically encourage a Classics scholar to foreground the existential impulses that drive his or her scholarship, such impulses nonetheless exist. Objectivity is better achieved by explicitly stating these impulses, rather than pretending they do not exist. Toward that end, it will be helpful for the reader to know that the entirety of this dissertation was researched and written while serving a congregation in full-time pastoral ministry. The concerns and questions that have arisen out of that context have provided the 'way in' for my study of Irenaeus.[5] However historically interesting, sociologically revealing, culturally influential, or intellectually stimulating the

[5] Here I am persuaded by Hans-George Gadamer's basic epistemic insight that neutrality is not only impossible, but undesirable. For Gadamer, it is our unavoidable prejudices that provide the very means by which we access a particular field of study. In fact, attempts to gain personal remove from the subject at hand—what Gadamer calls 'controlled alienation'—work against our ability to know as we ought. 'What kind of understanding does one achieve through 'controlled alienation'? Is it not likely to be an alienated understanding?' Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 27.

Christian religion may be as a matter of academic inquiry, it remains a very real source of hope, meaning, and purpose for (quite literally) billions of people. My study of Irenaeus was undertaken as a participant of this community, and was conducted with a view to servicing Christians who look to their faith for meaning and purpose in this life and the life to come. In particular, I believe Irenaeus' account of the Devil offers the Christian community an inoculation against unhelpfully anti-material currents present in some streams of the Christian tradition.

While Platonizing early Christians such as Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, et al. are careful to leave a place for the body and creation, the overall effect of their synthesis tends to be dismissive of materiality in ways not faithful to the broad concerns of the biblical canon. An Augustinian-like account of the Devil enables this basic Platonic narrative, insofar as it sidelines humanity's relationship with creation. Irenaeus' account of the Devil resists this Platonizing direction and provides a more terrestrially focused narrative. To the degree that Christian theologians are willing to work with the idea of 'narrative' as a theological category,[6] Irenaeus' account of the Devil provides ample fodder for constructing a soteriological narrative that does not climax in an anti-material eschatology.

And in a remarkably biblical way, Irenaeus' pro-material account of the Devil both affirms the goodness of the material world against pagan Greek philosophy, while at the same time it undercuts the temptation to make an idol of the good world that God has made (the opposite error on the other side of the sub-Christian cosmology coin). In some ways, Irenaeus' strong affirmation of the material world may seem a counterintuitive way to combat the idolization of it. We might expect that the surer way forward is to chastise creation, following the route of the Platonists and the Stoics. Irenaeus is not naïve about the dangers of idolatry. But he would have Christians break free from idolatry not by dismissing God's good creation, but rather by giving thanks for it.

> ...all [things] have been created for the benefit of that human nature which is saved [*pro eo qui salvatur homine facta sunt*]…And therefore the creation is devoted to humanity [*Et propter hoc conditio insumitur homini*]; for humanity was not made for its sake, but creation for the sake of humanity. Those nations however, who did not of themselves raise up their eyes unto heaven, nor returned thanks to their Maker [*neque gratias egerunt factori suo*], nor wished to behold the light of truth, but who were like blind mice concealed in the

[6] One thinks here of Kevin Vanhoozer's *Remythologizing Theology.*

depths of ignorance, the word justly reckons 'as a drop in the bucket, and as the [negligible] movement of the scales—in fact, as nothing'.[7]

Creation has been made by a good God. It has been 'devoted' to humanity, and thus is to be enjoyed by humanity. The problem, Irenaeus tells us, is not that human beings like these good gifts too much, but that we have forgotten to 'return thanks to our Maker'. Irenaeus here is following the logic of Paul in Romans 1:18-25, where Paul states that the things that are made 'reveal God's eternal power and divine nature'. For Paul (and Irenaeus), creation has an iconic function—it is a gift from God that points beyond itself to the giver. And as with any 'icon', creation derives its value and meaning from that to which it points, namely God. But humanity, rather than viewing creation as an icon—a spring board—that led to a knowledge of God, instead severed the connection between the icon and the Creator. Humanity fixated on the gift and lost sight of the Giver. But how did this breakdown occur? The answer is found in Romans 1:21, which serves as the fulcrum of Paul's logic in this passage. 'For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him'. The problem is not that humanity did not recognize the iconic nature of creation, but rather that humanity failed to give thanks for the icon.

To give genuine thanks for creation is to acknowledge that there is One above and beyond humanity who has given it. To give thanks for the world and our bodies necessarily compels us to acknowledge that the Lord *is*, and that he is *good*, and that he *gives*. It reminds us that we ourselves are not the good God, but that we stand in a posture of humility and need; that we are recipients of grace. Thankfulness rightly orders human self-understanding with respect to the creation of which we are a part, and with respect to the God who made and gave it to us. This is why a refusal to give thanks to God for the good world he has given and a refusal to acknowledge the iconic nature of creation go hand in hand. To thankfully acknowledge creation as a good *gift*, is to acknowledge that there is necessarily a good *Giver*. At its core, thankfulness establishes the relationship between the gift, the giver and the one who is given the gift. To quote Seneca's *Thyestes*, 'When you look at the gift, look at the giver too'.[8] It is impossible to give genuine thanks to God for the good things of the world while idolizing these things at the same time.

The basic contours of Irenaeus' Devil narrative do not encourage us to view the material world as a throw-away husk, a ladder to be climbed and then kicked away once we have reached the angelic top. Irenaeus' pro-material account of the Devil reminds us, right at the beginning of the Christian soteriological narrative, that creation is a good gift, given to

[7] *Haer.* 5.29.1. The quotation at the end of this passage is from Isa 4:15.
[8] Seneca, *Thy.* 416.

us by a good Creator. It encourages us to view the materiality of creation as a great blessing that God has given to humanity, and our world as the crown jewel of all the worlds that God has made. Irenaeus' Devil narrative tells us that our home is a prize so rare that one of the high arch-angels of heaven has waged war to possess it. It reminds us that Christ has come not only to save our souls, but to save our home. Indeed, to save *his* home, insofar as he too is now forever an embodied Son of Adam.

Appendix A

A Brief Word Study on *Invidia* and *Zelus*

The two most relevant Latin terms in Irenaeus' corpus related to the Devil's envy of humanity are *invidia* (envy) and *zelus* (jealousy, zeal). These terms occur with some frequency throughout *Adversus haereses* and are used regularly to explain the Devil's motivation in tempting humanity. *Zelus* is derived from the Greek ζῆλος, and *invidia* is the common Latin term used to render φθόνος.[1] In both cases, the Latin terms map tightly on to their Greek counterparts.[2]

I. *Invidia*

Invidia, and its cognates are used universally in Irenaeus in pejorative ways, variously associated with the Devil, Irenaeus' Gnostic opponents, or Gnostic conceptions of the demiurge.[3] Notably, God and the apostles are *sine invidia* (without envy).[4] The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* lists the primary definition of *invidia* as 'ill will, spite, indignation;

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[1] See the *LSJ* entry for φθόνος. See also Crislip, 'Envy and Anger', 288-94, who details the subtle differences between φθόνος and ζῆλος.

[2] Per *LSJ*, ζῆλος is '*eager rivalry, zealous imitation, emulation*, a noble passion opp. of φθόνος… but also *jealousy'*. *BDAG* likewise lists both positive and negative meanings. Positively ζῆλος is 'intense positive interest' (see Sophocles' *Aj.* 503; Judith 9:4; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.271); negatively it is 'intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success, *jealousy, envy'* (see Hesiod's *Op.* 195; Plutarch's *Lyc.* 41; Josephus' *A.I.* 14). Unlike ζῆλος, φθόνος is used only negatively. *LSJ* gives the primary meaning as 'ill-will, envy, jealousy'; *BDAG* as 'envy, jealousy' (see Josephus, *C. Ap.* 222; Philo's *Mos.* 1.2; Philippians 1:15; Matthew 27:18). See Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.2, where ζῆλος and φθόνος are paired together as near synonyms. On the similarities and distinctions between φθόνος and ζῆλος see Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament,* sec. 26. Of special note here is Aristotle's distinction between φθόνος and ζῆλος. For Aristotle, the former is wholly bad, while the latter has a positive connotation. For Aristotle, φθόνος is a negative emotion that arises from the fact that a rival has some good that the envier does not possess. Whereas with ζῆλος, the distress arises 'not from the fact that another has [some good] but that the emulator does not (thus emulation is a good thing and characteristic of good people, while envy is bad and characteristic of the bad; for the former, through emulation, is making an effort to attain good things for himself, while the latter, through envy, tries to prevent his neighbor from having them)', Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.11. Crislip, in his 'Envy and Anger', 290, notes that 'In Aristotle's thinking, it is important that the envier and the envied be similar in status, or at least be perceived by the envier as similar. For no one envies those far above them or far below them'. This observation is particularly noteworthy with respect to the Devil's envy of humanity. Yet Crislip cautions against pressing the distinction too far. At the end of his word study, he concludes, 'The semantics of the competitive emotions are generally more ambiguous in early Christian texts than Aristotle's systematization would allow', 'On Envy and Anger', 291.

[3] For uses of *invidia* in Irenaeus, see *Haer.* 1.23.2, 3. preface, 3.23.6, 3.25.5, 4. preface, 4.1.2, 4.16.15, 4.38.3-4, 5.4.1, 5.25.4.

[4] *Haer.* 4.16.15, 4.38.3.

jealousy, envy'; secondary definitions include 'odium,' and 'dislike'.[5] Lewis and Short offers 'envy, grudge, jealousy' as the primary meaning.[6] This basic meaning of *invidia* is found throughout early Roman literature. Livy recounts how a Roman dictator, after the defeat and plunder of Veii, was concerned that the excessive spoils of the battle might arouse the envy of the gods, and thus prays that if 'his success and that of the Roman people seemed excessive to any of the gods and humans, it might be permitted to the Roman people to appease that envy [*invidia*] with as little detriment as possible…'[7] Likewise, Servillius who chastises the soldiers of the Roman General Paullus because they will not allow him a triumph, accuses them of envy and warns the soldiers to, 'Take care that this action be not looked upon as an instance of envy [*invidia*] and ingratitude towards all our noblest citizens, copying the example of the Athenians, who persecuted their foremost men because they were envious [*invidia*] of their greatness'.[8]

Consistently throughout ancient documents, *invidia* speaks of the resentment and jealousy one feels with respect to another's prosperity. Cicero, in his *Tusculan Disputations*, suggests that the Latin *invidia* derives from *in* (into) and *video* (to see), and has the idea of 'looking too closely into another's fortune'.[9] Arguing that the wise man is free of both compassion and *invidia*, he says that 'he who is uneasy at any one's adversity [i.e. compassionate] is also uneasy at another's prosperity [i.e. envious]', and thus both must be avoided.[10] Whatever one might think about Cicero's etymological analysis, his basic definition of *invidia* is consistent with how the term functions in Irenaeus.

II. *Zelus*

Zelus is used with significantly less frequency than *invidia* in the early centuries of the first millennium.[11] For *zelus*, the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* briefly suggests, 'a spirit of

[5] See *OLD*, 959-60.
[6] *LSLD*, 995-96.
[7] Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 5.21.12.
[8] Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 45.38.6. The allusion to the Athenians likely refers to the trial and execution of Socrates.
[9] Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.9.
[10] Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.9. See also 4.7.16.
[11] By way of comparison, a digital search on *zelus* (in the nominative singular) registers no hits in the Packard Humanities Institute's (PHI) collection of Latin texts (the standard repository of all literary Latin texts written before AD 200), whereas *invidia* (in the nominative singular) registers 473 hits. *Zelus*, in its various verbal and inflected forms, does make occasional appearances in the PHI collection. E.g., *zelo* in Vitruvius, *Arch.*7.4.4, and Pomponius Porphyrio, *Comm. Hor.* 1.17.24-25.1; *zelum* in Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 199.2.3, etc. For all occurrences, see the PHI online collection at: latin.packhum.org.

rivalry or emulation; jealousy',[12] and Lewis and Short, 'zeal, emulation'.[13] *Zelus* is used in Irenaeus as a synonym for *invidia*. Cain, under the thrall of Satan, killed Abel *cum zelo et malitia* (with jealousy and malice),[14] and the Devil purposed to turn humanity against God *ex quo zelavit plasma Dei* (because he was jealous of God's workmanship).[15]

Notably, both the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and Lewis and Short do not list a positive meaning for *zelus*. However, *zelus,* like its Greek counterpart ζῆλος, carries both positive and negative meanings in Irenaeus. In Irenaeus, *zelus* can denote positive zeal or enthusiasm for God or the things of God. Irenaeus says that his teaching is motivated by, 'the fear of God, and zeal for the truth' (*propter timorem erga Deum et zelum veritatis).*[16] And God himself is said to be *zelans.*[17] Explaining the meaning of the divine pronouncement 'I am a jealous God', Irenaeus writes,

> It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with himself for those who desire his fellowship, and who remain in subjection to him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the Devil, and those who revolted with him, into which the Lord has declared those people shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on his left hand. And this is what has been spoken by the prophet, 'I am a jealous God [*Ego Deus zelans*], making peace, and creating evil things';[18] thus making peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to him, and bringing unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them.[19]

Here Irenaeus is paralleling the logic of Exodus 20:5-6, 'You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous[20] God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but

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[12] *OLD*, 2125.
[13] *LSLD*, 2018.
[14] *Haer.* 2.23.4, 3.23.4, 4.18.3.
[15] *Haer.* 4.40.3.
[16] *Haer.* 5.30.3.
[17] *Haer.* 4.40.1.
[18] Irenaeus here combines Exodus 20:5, 'For I the Lord your God am a jealous God', and Isaiah 45:7 'I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things'.
[19] *Haer.* 4.40.1. See also Tertullian, who like Irenaeus, uses the term with reference to both the biblical God, and the false 'God' of Marcion in *Marc.* 2.29 and 4.21, respectively. See also the *VUL*, John 2:17 where Jesus is said to be consumed by *zelus* for the temple.
[20] The LXX is ζηλωτὴς; the *VUL* is *zelotes*.

showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments'.[21] The good Creator God is committed to punishing the Devil and vindicating his people. His 'zeal' thus runs ardently in both directions—peace and friendship toward those who repent, and eternal fire for the impenitent.

[21] The same idea is found in Exod 34:14; Deu 4:24, 5:9, 6:15; Josh 24:19.

Appendix B

Possible Influences on Irenaeus' Account of the Devil

'Christianity commits every Christian to believing that the Devil is (in the long run) an ass'.[1]

C. S. Lewis

Throughout his writings Irenaeus eschews originality and speculation (not surprising given the creative excesses of his Gnostic interlocutors). He claims to offer his readers nothing original, but only what was passed on to him from earlier Christian testimony. Given that Irenaeus' narrative regarding the Devil's pre-fall identity moves beyond Scripture (as it must, since Scripture has little to say on the matter), we might expect him to make explicit his sources regarding his information about the Devil. However, Irenaeus nowhere tells us the source of his views regarding the Devil. This suggests that Irenaeus was likely drawing his account of the Devil from a narrative that was already widely at play in the early Christian communities.

Here in this appendix I offer a summary of the possible influences that may have helped to shape Irenaeus' view of the Devil, the Devil's envy of humanity, angels, and the fall. Toward this end, this appendix is divided into six main subheadings: 1) Scripture, 2) the 'apostolic fathers', 3) Tatian, 4) Athenagoras, 5) Justin, and 6) Theophilus.

I. Scripture

The shaping influence of Scripture is massive throughout Irenaeus' two extant works. John Lawson refers to Irenaeus as self-consciously a *homo unius libri*[2] and Gustaf Wingren rightly notes that any question regarding Irenaeus' use of sources must start at precisely this point.[3] For Irenaeus, the Scriptures are divinely inspired and perfect.[4] The Scriptures, in so far as their origins are from God himself, serve as an ultimate authority on all matters of doctrine, 'But our faith is steadfast, unfeigned, and the only true one, having clear proof from these Scriptures, which were interpreted in the way I have related'.[5] Indeed, the entire *Epideixis* is an extended proof from Scripture. According to Irenaeus, the Gnostic

[1] Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, 95.
[2] Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 23.
[3] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*, xix-xx.
[4] *Haer.* 2.28.2.
[5] *Haer.* 3.21.3; see also 2.35.4, 3. preface, and 3.1.1.

opponents are wrong because they do not conform to Scripture; they either reject it outright, or misuse it to suit their erroneous opinions. (To this latter point, Irenaeus famously offers the illustration of a beautiful mosaic of a king that has been rearranged into the image of a dog.)[6]

Irenaeus, as was common in the early Christian communities, works from the Septuagint, quoting it extensively throughout *Adversus haereses* and *Epideixis*.[7] His acceptance of the Septuagint means that he likewise accepts what later came to be known as the Apocrypha, to include most relevantly for our study, the Wisdom of Solomon. Wisdom 2:23-24 reads, 'For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil's envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it'. Irenaeus never quotes this passage, but his general treatment of the Devil seems evidently indebted to it. Along with the Septuagint, Irenaeus quotes from every book of the New Testament,[8] except for Hebrews, James, 3 John, and Jude.[9] For Irenaeus (in contrast to the Gnostics), there are only four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.[10]

Irenaeus' commitment to the Old and New Testament Scriptures provide the basic framework for his account of the Devil. Irenaeus' conception of the Devil's fall, as well as

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[6] *Haer.* 1.8.1. Irenaeus' illustration here introduces the complex and controversial question about the role of tradition in interpreting Scripture. Irenaeus throughout his writings appeals to the 'Rule of Faith' or 'Rule of Truth'—a summation of true Christian doctrine (e.g. see *Haer*. 4.35.4). Paul Parvis helpfully illustrates the relationship for Irenaeus between Scripture, tradition, and the 'Rule of Faith'; 'We might say that the relation of scripture to the rule of truth is rather like the relation of a jigsaw puzzle to the picture on the box. The picture is not a substitute for the full puzzle, but it does help you make sure you are putting the pieces together properly'. See Parvis, 'Who Was Irenaeus', 20. Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 53 rightly notes that Irenaeus is 'not in the habit of considering the possibility of one religious authority superseding or even contradicting another'. As such, Irenaeus in *Haer*. 2.30.9 can state, 'He it is whom the law proclaims, whom the prophets preach, whom Christ reveals, whom the apostles make known to us, and in whom the Church believes'. For more on the relationship between Scripture, tradition, and the rule of faith, see Osborne, *Irenaeus*, 145-84.

[7] Irenaeus recounts a version of the miraculous story of the Septuagint, according to which seventy Jewish scribes, in isolation from each other, produced seventy identical copies. See *Haer.* 3.21.2.

[8] Irenaeus bases the authority of the New Testament texts on their apostolic authorship, rather than their presence in a not yet established canon. See Lawson, *Biblical Theology*, 32-33, who offers a helpful three stage process of canonization of the New Testament: 1) a recognition of inspiration in particular authors by a community, 2) over time, an axiomatic acceptance of certain authors as inspired, and 3) the acceptance of certain authors as inspired because they are in the holy book. Lawson argues that Irenaeus operates in a well-developed second stage.

[9] See Osborne, *Irenaeus*, 33-34. For Hebrews, see Bingham, 'Irenaeus and Hebrews', 65-79. Bingham argues that Irenaeus was aware of and employed the book of Hebrews.

[10] *Haer.* 3.11.9. To defend his assertion, Irenaeus offers a series of biblical/theological arguments for the harmony and fittingness of four (and only four) gospels in keeping with God's larger pattern, to include: the four faces of the cherubim, the four corners of the earth, the four cardinal winds, and the four covenants (Adam, Noah, Moses, and Christ). See all of *Haer.* 3.11.

the temptation of humanity in the Garden of Eden, draws heavily from Genesis 1-3.[11] His account of the wilderness temptation of Christ draws upon Matthew 4 and Luke 4.[12] Irenaeus' account of the Devil is likewise shaped by Christ's parables (especially the parable of the 'strong man' told by Jesus in Matthew 12, Mark 4, Luke 11).[13] And Irenaeus' eschatological vision of the Devil's final demise is almost a straight restatement of what we find in Daniel[14] and Revelation 19-20.[15] Notably, Irenaeus quotes extensively from Isaiah,[16] yet never associates the Devil with the 'Lucifer' of Isaiah 14 (such as one finds in Origen and beyond).

II. The 'Apostolic Fathers'

The earliest body of Christian writing, often referred to as the 'apostolic fathers',[17] provides a limited window into early Christian accounts of the Devil. Generally, the Devil does not figure prominently in this body of literature (with the exception of *Hermas*), and we find no systematic treatment of his nature, fall, or identity. Nearly all comments regarding the Devil are made in passing, utilizing the language of the New Testament ('Satan', 'Devil', 'evil one', 'ruler of this age', 'adversary', etc.). On the whole, Irenaeus generally includes, but then goes beyond, what one finds in the first-century accounts of the Devil.

The extent to which Irenaeus read and digested these works is uncertain. He mentions Polycarp by name as someone of whom he had a personal recollection as a boy,[18] and Eusebius frequently notes Irenaeus' association with Polycarp.[19] But how aware Irenaeus was of Polycarp's *To the Philippians*, or the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, is uncertain. Irenaeus quotes from the *Shepherd of Hermas* without citation in *Epid.* 4, and again without citation in *Haer.* 4.20.2 (the same quotation in both instances). On the whole, Irenaeus' theology seems far removed from the sort of outlook one encounters in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Irenaeus references five books of Papias, and quotes from the fourth book in

[11] *Epid*. 16; *Haer*. 4. preface, 4.
[12] *Haer*. 5.24.1.
[13] *Haer*. 3.18.6, 4.40.1, 5.21.3, 5.22.1.
[14] *Haer*. 5.25.3.
[15] *Haer*. 5.28-33.
[16] *Haer*. 5.15.1, 5.34.2, 5.35.1-2, etc.
[17] Here I am referring to the texts collected in Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*. All quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from Holmes.
[18] *Haer.* 3.3.4.
[19] Most notably in *Hist. eccl*. 5.20.4-8, where Eusebius copies *en toto* a letter from Irenaeus to Florinus. See also 5.5.8-9, 5.24.16-17.

defense of his millenarian view (which he shared with Papias).[20] Beyond the above, direct quotations or clear statements of dependence by Irenaeus are in short supply. Smith hears echoes of *Barnabas*, *Didache*, and perhaps *1 Clement*.[21] Robert Grant suggests an awareness of *1 Clement*, the letters of Ignatius, Polycarp, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*; he excludes *2 Clement*, *Didache* and *Barnabas*.[22]

Similarities between Irenaeus and the above writings can be seen with respect to two major areas: the identity of the Devil, and the Devil's envy. We will examine each of these in turn.[23]

A. The Identity of the Devil

The precise identity of the Devil prior to his fall is not developed in detail in these authors. Yet enough mention is made of the Devil to identify him as a distinct personality, standing in opposition to God and Christians.[24] Clement urges the Corinthians to seek forgiveness of the sins they had committed 'through the prompting of the adversary [τοῦ ἀντικείμενου]'.[25] In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the Devil is the 'adversary of the righteous race of humans',[26] and stands behind the persecution of Christians.[27] Polycarp names him both 'Devil' and 'Satan'.[28] Ignatius refers to him as 'the ruler of this age',[29] and the 'evil one'[30]—one who was trying to persuade him to forgo martyrdom.[31] *Barnabas* identifies him as the one who 'possesses the power of this world',[32] the leader of the bad angels and the 'prince of the present time of iniquity'.[33] In the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the Devil is primarily presented as a tempter who tries to seduce believers to vice, and thus forfeit their

[20] *Haer.* 5.33.4.
[21] Smith, *Proof*, 37.
[22] Grant, *Irenaeus*, 1, and all of ch. 4.
[23] For the standard treatment of the early Christian conceptions of the Devil, see Russell, *Satan*, 30-50.
[24] Russell, *Satan*, 34.
[25] *1 Clem*. 51.1.
[26] *Mart. Pol*. 17.1.
[27] *Mart. Pol.* 2.4-3.1.
[28] Polycarp, *Phil.* 7. See also *Barn.* 2, 18; Ignatius, *Eph.*13.
[29] Ignatius, *Trall.* 4.2, 7.1.
[30] Ignatius, *Trall.* 7.1.
[31] Ignatius, *Rom.* 17.1.
[32] *Barn*. 2.
[33] *Barn*. 18.

salvation;[34] those who keep God's law are those who have 'wrestled with the Devil and conquered him'.[35]

Little is said throughout these works regarding the Devil's nature or fall. Is he an angel? Is he the serpent in Genesis 3? Did his fall occur in Eden or prior? The documents are silent here. The one exception is the Armenian Fragment 24 of Papias,[36] which offers an extended account of the Devil's fall:

> Heaven did not endure his earthly intentions, because it is impossible for light to communicate with darkness. He fell to earth, here to live; and when humankind came here, where he was, he did not permit them to live in natural passions; on the contrary he led them astray into many evils. But Michael and his legions, who are guardians of the world, were helping humankind, as Daniel learned; they gave laws and made the prophets wise. And all this was war against the dragon, who was setting stumbling blocks for humans. Then their battle extended into heaven, to Christ himself. Yet Christ came; and the law, which was impossible for anyone else, he fulfilled in his body, according to the apostle. He defeated sin and condemned Satan, and through his death he spread abroad his righteousness over all. As this occurred, the victory of Michael and his legions, the guardians of humankind, became complete, and the dragon could resist no more, because the death of Christ exposed him to ridicule and threw him to the earth—concerning which Christ said, 'I saw Satan fallen from heaven like a lightning bolt'. In this sense the teacher understood not his first fall, but the second, which was through the cross' and this did not consist of a spatial fall, as at first, but rather of judgment and expectation of a mighty punishment….

The fragment provides a more extended discussion of the Devil's fall than any other text found in the first and early second-century Christian writers. According to the fragment, the Devil fell to earth from heaven prior to his temptation of Adam and Eve, due to 'earthly intentions' (an obscure and intriguing phrase), arriving on earth prior to humanity. When humans came to where he was, the Devil led them astray into many evils. This timeline coheres best with the 'later' Devil tradition found in Origen and Augustine. But the

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[34] *Herm.* 48-49.

[35] *Herm.* 69.6.

[36] The source of the fragment comes from Andrew of Caesarea, *On the Apocalypse*, at Rev 12:7-9.

fragment leaves enough unsaid—specifically with respect to the Devil's identity and his motive in tempting Adam and Eve—that it is difficult to identify it firmly with one tradition or the other.

Notably, the fragment is only contained in three of the seven fragment collections, indicating a lack of consensus among scholars regarding its authenticity.[37] If the fragment were authentic, it would be, as far as I have been able to discover, the only Christian account in the first two centuries of the Devil's fall taking place outside the Garden.

B. The Devil's Envy

As with the identity of the Devil, the theme of the Devil's envy is present, yet underdeveloped in the earliest Christian writings. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* refers to the Devil as 'the jealous and envious and evil one ['ο ἀντίζηλος καὶ βάσκανος καὶ πονηρός], the adversary of the race of the righteous'.[38] The *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, however, does not expound on the cause or object of the Devil's envy; presumably it is directed against humanity, but the *Martyrdom* is not explicit on this point.

In a similar vein, Ignatius tells the Trallians that 'the envy (ζελος) of the wicked one wars against me. Therefore I need gentleness, by which the ruler of this age is destroyed'.[39] Here 'of the wicked one' is added by Coxe; it is possible that Ignatius is referring to his own envy, or of his human opponents. Given the context, however, it seems likely that Coxe has glossed the passage correctly. In any event, Ignatius' comment regarding the Devil's envy stands in isolation and he does not provide further detail regarding the occasion or cause of the Devil's envy. In a similarly opaque reference, Clement says that envy is the source by which death came into the world, likely an allusion to Wisdom 2:24.[40]

These pre-Irenaean allusions to the Devil's envy are consistent with Irenaeus' account, but they are far less differentiated than Irenaeus. In particular, unlike Irenaeus, they do not clearly identify humanity's exalted status over creation as the chief occasion for the

[37] See Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 7; Kurzinger, *Papias von Hierapolis*; and Norelli, *Papia di Hierapolis*.

[38] *Mart. Pol*. 17.

[39] Ignatius, *Trall.* 4. The above translation follows Coxe, *ANF*, vol. 1. But see Holmes, '…for the envy, though not apparent to many, wages war against me all the more'. The identification of 'the envy' here is not certain, but given the contextual reference to the Devil, it seems likely a reference to the Devil's envy.

[40] '… all follow the lusts of their evil heart, inasmuch as they have assumed that attitude of wicked and unrighteous jealousy (ζηλον) through which, in fact, death entered into the world', Clement, *1 Clem. 3.4*. Both Coxe and Holmes connect this passage with Wis 2:24, and thus indirectly to the Devil. See *ANF*, vol. 1, 1, no. 3.

Devil's envy. In this sense, Irenaeus' position regarding the Devil's envy of humanity incorporates, but goes beyond, what is found in the earliest Christian writings.

In sum, while Irenaeus is clearly aware of some of the texts now known as the 'apostolic fathers', direct dependence on any of them for his account of the Devil is impossible to prove. Smith summarizes my position: 'All these "echoes" [of the apostolic fathers in Irenaeus] however, are but echoes, some of them very faint, and do not prove any real dependence'.[41]

III. Tatian

In general, the similarities between Irenaeus and Tatian are not overt. Irenaean scholarship does not typically suggest a connection between the two (much less dependence).[42] That Irenaeus knew of Tatian is evident by his mention of him as a 'hearer of Justin' who later fell into error upon Justin's death.[43] The only surviving work of Tatian is his *Ad Graecos* (cir. 165). Though general theological similarity between Irenaeus and Tatian is minimal, there is a measure of similarity with respect to their views of the Devil and the fall. Discussing the creation and fall of both the angels and humanity, Tatian writes,

> For the heavenly Logos, a spirit emanating from the Father and a Logos from the Logospower, in imitation of the Father who begat him made humanity an image of immortality, so that, as incorruption is with God, in like manner, humanity, sharing in a part of God, might have the immortal principle also.[44] The Logos, too, before the creation of humanity, was the Framer of angels. And each of these two orders of creatures was made free to act as it pleased, not having the nature of good, which again is with God alone, but is brought to perfection in humanity through their freedom of choice, in order that the bad human may be justly punished, having become depraved through his own fault, but the just human be deservedly praised for his virtuous deeds, since in the exercise of his free choice he refrained from transgressing the will of God. Such is the constitution of things in reference to angels and humans. And the power of the Logos, having in itself a faculty to foresee

[41] Smith, *Proof*, 37.
[42] See Grant's passing reference to the connection between Tatian and Irenaeus. *Irenaeus*, 1.
[43] *Haer.* 1.28.1.
[44] One hears echos of Wis 2:23-24 here.

> future events, not as fated, but as taking place by the choice of free agents, foretold from time to time the issues of things to come; it also became a forbidder of wickedness by means of prohibitions, and the encomiast of those who remained good. And, when humans attached themselves to one who was more subtle (φρονιμωτερῳ) than the rest, having regard to his being the first-born, and declared him to be God, though he was resisting the law of God, then the power of the Logos excluded the beginner of the folly and his adherents from all fellowship with himself. And so he who was made in the likeness of God, since the more powerful spirit is separated from him, becomes mortal; but that first-begotten one through his transgression and ignorance becomes a demon; and they who imitated him, that is his illusions, are become a host of demons, and through their freedom of choice have been given up to their own infatuation.[45]

Two points of similarity stand out. First, in ways that are similar to Irenaeus, Tatian views humanity as somehow incomplete at creation. Here Tatian does not use the language of infancy, such as one finds it in Irenaeus and Theophilus,[46] but the idea that humanity was created with a need to mature is shared between all three writers. Human beings are not created 'having the nature of good' but are 'brought to perfection' through obedience. Second, and more significantly, Tatian seems to associate the Devil's fall with his temptation of humanity—an idea found clearly in Irenaeus.[47] Assuming that Tatian's phrase, 'when humans attached themselves to the one more subtle than the rest', is a reference to the Eden temptation (an assumption that has warrant based on Tatian's use of φρονιμωτερῳ (*subtle*), which is also used by the LXX in Genesis 3:1 to describe the serpent), the Devil's fall seems to take place for Tatian *within* the narrative of Genesis 3 and is occasioned by his temptation of humanity. This would be in keeping with Irenaeus' account.

Yet points of difference are also present; in Tatian, Satan is referred to as 'first-born' (πρωτὸγονον)—an expression one does not find in Irenaeus with respect to the Devil. And unlike Irenaeus, for Tatian, Satan becomes a 'δαιμόνιον' when he falls, as do those who follow him. Notably, Tatian does not seem to follow the 'watcher tradition' account of the origin of demons as the offspring of fallen Angels and human women, but rather seems to

[45] Tatian, *Graec*. 7. The translation used throughout is taken from *ANF*, vol. 2, which I have updated as necessary.

[46] See section VI of this chapter.

[47] *Haer.* 4.40.3, 5.24.4.

conflate fallen angels and demons as one and the same.[48] Again, it is not clear that Tatian intends us to understand that Satan is a demon in a technical sense, and may only intend it as a slur, rather than an actual statement of ontology. In any event, this is not Irenaeus' customary way of speaking about the Devil.

On the whole, the similarities between Irenaeus and Tatian are minimal. Given that Irenaeus views Tatian as an apostate, it is unlikely that Irenaeus would look to Tatian for help in matters of doctrine. In any event, any similarities between Irenaeus and Tatian are likely more a consequence of a general shared tradition, than of direct dependence or influence.

IV. Athenagoras

Athenagoras of Athens is an early contemporary of Irenaeus. Irenaean scholarship does not generally connect Athenagoras with Irenaeus. Irenaeus offers us no explicit indication that he is aware of, and even less, dependent on, the writings of Athenagoras. Athenagoras' only extant work is his *Legatio pro Christianis*, an apology written on behalf of the Christian community in the same genre as Justin's twin *Apologies*.[49] A number of striking similarities between Athenagoras and Irenaeus with respect to the Devil present themselves. Three relevant passages are worth observing at length. In the first, Athenagoras, like Irenaeus, views the angels as ministers of the material world. He writes,

> Nor is our teaching in what relates to the divine nature confined to these points; but we recognize also a multitude of angels and ministers, whom God the Maker and Framer of the world distributed and appointed to their several posts by his Logos, to occupy themselves about the elements, and the heavens, and the world, and the things in it, and the goodly ordering of them all.[50]

[48] Without all of Tatian's writing, it is difficult to know how much to make of this. Justin, in his *Dial.* 79 as well as his *1 Apol.* 5, conflates angels and demons. Yet in *2 Apol.* 5 he clearly affirms the 'watcher tradition'; angels were appointed to govern the earth, but they transgressed this appointment and were captivated by the love of human women. The offspring of these unions were demons. It's possible that Tatian is doing something similar.

[49] According to Coxe, Athenagoras is 'by far the most elegant, and certainly at the same time one of the ablest, of the early Christian Apologists'. See his introductory comments in *ANF*, vol. 2, 127. The translation of Anthenagoras used throughtout is taken from *ANF*, vol. 2, and updated as necessary.

[50] Athenagoras, *Leg.* 10; see also 24.

This treatment of the angels is similar to Irenaeus' description of the same as found in the opening chapters of *Epideixis.*[51] As with Athenagoras, Irenaeus views the angels as appointed by God to help order the material world. A striking difference, however, is that Irenaeus views this 'ministering' function of the angels as temporary—a role occupied until humanity comes of age. For Irenaeus, the world belongs to humanity; angels—and most notably the Devil—are merely stewards of creation, tasked with a temporary administration. Athenagoras, in contrast, gives us no indication that he sees this role as temporary.

This same theme is picked up again in the passage below, with additional commentary about a 'power' and a 'spirit which is about matter', a 'ruler of matter and its forms'—references to an angelic being who functions for Athenagoras much like the Devil does for Irenaeus. Athenagoras writes,

> For, as we acknowledge a God, and a Son his Logos, and a Holy Spirit, united in essence,—the Father, the Son, the Spirit, because the Son is the Intelligence, Reason, Wisdom of the Father, and the Spirit an effluence, as light from fire; so also do we apprehend the existence of other powers, which exercise dominion about matter, and by means of it, and one in particular, which is hostile to God….to the good that is in God, I say, the spirit which is about matter, who was created by God, just as the other angels, were created by him, and entrusted with the control of matter and the forms of matter, is opposed. For this is the office of the angels,—to exercise providence for God over the things created and ordered by him; so that God may have the universal and general providence of the whole, while the particular parts are provided for by the angels appointed over them. Just as with humans, who have freedom of choice as to both virtue and vice (for you would not either honor the good or punish the bad, unless vice and virtue were in their own power; and some are diligent in the matters entrusted to them by you, and others faithless), so is it among the angels. Some, free agents, you will observe, such as they were created by God, continued in those things for which God had made and over which he had ordained them; but some outraged both the constitution of their nature and the government entrusted to them: namely, this ruler of matter and its various forms, and others of those who were placed about this first firmament (you know that we say nothing without witnesses, but state the things which have been declared by the

[51] See *Epid.* 10-11.

> prophets); these fell into impure love of virgins, and were subjugated by the flesh, and he became negligent and wicked in the management of the things entrusted to him. Of these lovers of virgins, therefore, were begotten those who are called giants. And if something has been said by the poets, too, about the giants, be not surprised at this: worldly wisdom and divine differ as much from each other as truth and plausibility: the one is of heaven and the other of earth; and indeed, according to the prince of matter,—'We know we oft speak lies that look like truths'.[52]

Athenagoras again here affirms the idea that angels have been appointed by God to order the material world. He then goes on to speak of 'one in particular' who is opposed to God. Further into the passage Athenagoras states that this 'power' is 'the spirit which is about matter' and that this spirit was 'created by God, just as the other angels', and given 'control of matter and the forms of matter'. The spirit is identified as the ruler of the material world, and presumably the leader of the other angels also tasked with governing matter. Athenagoras' description here finds some continuity with Irenaeus' account of the Devil. But Athenagoras' description of this diabolical power as 'a spirit about matter' casts the material world in a somewhat negative light.[53] Athenagoras comes close here to the Gnostic association of the material world with an evil demiurge, and this is not an association Irenaeus would be comfortable making in quite these terms. For Irenaeus, the Devil is a steward of creation, but creation properly belongs to humanity. If anything, for Irenaeus, humanity—even most explicitly Jesus—is the 'spirit about matter'.

A strong point of similarity between Athenagoras and Irenaeus is how they read Genesis 6. Significantly, and in keeping with Irenaeus, Athenagoras clearly follows the watcher tradition account of Genesis 6. However, he goes further than Irenaeus in his suggestion that the 'ruling spirit' himself participated in the 'impure love of virgins'. Here one wonders if Athenagoras has in mind a 'spirit' other than Irenaeus' Devil, or is perhaps conflating Christian and Jewish extra-biblical accounts of Genesis 6. Irenaeus nowhere explicitly denies the idea that the Devil, as a fallen angel, participated in the apostasy of Genesis 6; but he nowhere affirms it, either.

As a last point of similarity, Athenagoras, like Irenaeus, refers to the demons as being in subjection to 'the ruling prince'. He writes,

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[52] Athenagoras, *Leg.* 24.

[53] For more about Athenagoras' anti-materialism, see May, 'Monotheism and Creation', 444-45.

> …the humans themselves, too, so far as he that made them is concerned, is well ordered, both by their original nature, which has one common character for all, and by the constitution of their bodies, which do not transgress the law imposed upon them, and by the termination of their lives, which remains equal and common to all alike; but that, according to the character peculiar to themselves and the operation of the ruling prince and of the demons his followers, they are impelled and moved in this direction or in that, notwithstanding that all possess in common the same original constitution of mind.[54]

Here Athenagoras' 'ruling prince' is the leader of 'demons', and is the cause of human sin. This manner of framing things is harmonious with Irenaeus, who likewise sees the Devil as a ruler of fallen angels and demons.

Notably, Athenagoras nowhere mentions the 'Devil' as such, nor does he use Irenaeus' other customary names for the Devil (e.g. serpent, Satan, adversary, dragon, strong man). But this may be due to the nature of Athenagoras' work, which was addressed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and intentionally styled as a work of philosophy (much more beholding to Platonic categories than one finds in Justin, for instance). In this vein, Athenagoras does not use the names 'Christ' or 'Jesus' to refer to the Son, but rather 'Logos', a term more familiar to the Platonic tradition. It is possible that Athenagoras, for similar reasons, avoids using more explicitly Christian names for the Devil, but nonetheless has the Christian Devil in view.

In any event, it is possible to see both similarities and differences between Irenaeus and Athenagoras with respect to the Devil. The differences are significant enough that arguments for direct dependence are ill-founded. Yet a shared—albeit differing—account of the watcher tradition, as well as the idea that angels were appointed to govern the material world, suggest a common touch point for both Irenaeus and Athenagoras.

V. Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr was one of the earliest Christian apologists.[55] His three extant works, *1 Apology*, *2 Apology*, and his *Dialogue with Trypho*, make him one of the most substantial

[54] Athenagoras, *Leg.* 25.

[55] A standard work on Justin is Barnard's *Justin Martyr;* for biographical details, see 1-13. For more recent studies, see Parvis and Foster, *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*.

of the earliest Christian writers in the second century.[56] Justin was born in Samaria around 100 AD. He traveled to Rome around 150, and composed *1 Apology* around 152-54—an extended defense of Christianity against both paganism and Judaism. Throughout *1 Apology* he argues that Christianity is the truest expression (and ultimate source) of all that is good in the best of Greek and Jewish thought. His much shorter *2 Apology*, composed between 154-60, was written as a defense of Christians in the face of pagan state persecution. His *Dialogue* was likely written around 160, and offers the reader an extensive look into the way Justin viewed Christianity's relationship with second-century Judaism. Justin was martyred between 163-67. Throughout his works, Justin makes frequent mention of demons, the Devil, and the fallen angels.

There is general agreement among Irenaeus and Justin scholars that Irenaeus was, at the very least, conversant with Justin's corpus. Notably, entire passages of Irenaeus can be set in parallel with the works of Justin. The way Irenaeus reads scriptural texts, as well as the texts he quotes, likewise coheres largely with Justin. Smith notes that Irenaeus not only repeats the exegesis of Justin, but even some of the same wording.[57] Slusser suggests that Irenaeus may have known Justin personally.[58] Barnard, going further than the evidence can likely bear, refers to Irenaeus as Justin's pupil.[59] Grant maintains that Irenaeus, in his *Adversus haereses*, relied primarily on Justin's lost treatise, *Adversus Marcionem*, and was seeking to uphold the tradition of the Roman church as reported by Justin.[60] Robinson argues for dependence based upon strong similarities between Irenaeus and Justin with respect to their treatment of the Jewish prophets.[61] Likewise, Robinson, in a close reading of Justin and Irenaeus regarding their respective views on the Holy Spirit, argues that Irenaeus

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[56] The extant authentic works of Justin are generally agreed to be the two *Apologies* (cir. 151 AD), the *Dialogue* (cir. 160), and the four fragments. Barnard states that Harnack, in his *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur,* I, 99-114, offers 'overwhelming and conclusive' evidence against accepting any works by Justin beyond the above. Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 172. For comments on the fragments attributed to Justin, see Robert Grant, 'The Fragments of the Greek Apologists and Irenaeus'. Eusebius lists, in addition to the *1 and 2 Apologies* and the *Dialogue, A First and Second Defense of Our Faith, Against the Greeks, A Refutation, The Sovereignty of God, Songs for the Harp,* and *On the Soul*—none of which are extant. See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl*. 4.18. The non-authentic extant works associated with Justin's name are generally considered no later than third-century. See *ANF*, vol. 1, 161.

[57] Smith, *Proof*, 37. See also Hitchcock, 'The Apostolic Preaching of Irenaeus', 284-89.

[58] Slusser, 'How Much Did Irenaeus Learn From Justin?'. So also Smith, 'It seems not improbable that Irenaeus knew Justin personally at Rome, and it is certain he knew his works and was influenced by them'. See *Proof*, 37.

[59] Barnard, *Justin Martyr,* 12-13.

[60] Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyon*, 11. See also 1, 7.

[61] Robinson, *St Irenaeus,* 6-14. Robinson highlights nine points of continuity between Irenaeus and Justin. 'These repeated coincidences, in large matters and in small, make us feel that Irenaeus was very familiar with Justin's writings. Everywhere he goes beyond him: but again and again he starts from him'. See also Norris, *God and World,* 71-72.

drew heavily from Justin.[62] Smith summarizes the consensus when he writes, 'The dependence of Irenaeus on Justin has commonly been regarded as evident and extensive'.[63]

On the whole, the case for dependence is strong, but not conclusive. Irenaeus himself only mentions Justin three times: once as the master of Tatian, a second time as the author of the now lost *Adversus Marcionem*, and a third time with reference to Justin's view on Satan[64] (a point of interest to which we will return below). But nowhere does Irenaeus say that he has read all of Justin's works, nor that he is dependent upon Justin. While generally sympathetic to the thesis that Irenaeus was dependent on Justin, I here agree with the caution of Smith, 'It may well be admitted that direct dependence of Irenaeus on Justin cannot be shown to have been so extensive as it has been thought to be'. [65]

In any event, our primary concern regarding Irenaeus' connection to Justin relates to their respective views of the Devil and the fall. Whatever the relationship between the two, notable similarities can be observed at this point. In what follows, I highlight those points of similarity that relate to my thesis, focusing on a number of relevant themes from Justin's twin *Apologies*, as well as his *Dialogue with Trypho* I conclude by noting the differences between Irenaeus and Justin as they relate to my central themes.

A. Angels as Overseers of Creation and Humanity

In Justin's *2 Apology*, he clarifies the role of the angels vis-à-vis creation. For Justin, though the world is subject to humanity, the angels are appointed as overseers to care for both creation and humanity. He writes,

> God, when he had made the whole world, and subjected things earthly to humanity, and arranged the heavenly elements for the increase of fruits and rotation of the seasons, and appointed this divine law—for these things also he evidently made for humanity—committed the care of humanity and of all things under heaven to angels [τὴν μὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίων καὶ των ὑπο τὸν

[62] Robinson, *St. Irenaeus*, 25. See all of 25-68.
[63] Smith, *Proof*, 37.
[64] See respectively, *Haer.* 1.28.1, 4.6.2, and 5.26.2. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.18.
[65] Smith, *Proof*, 38. Smith properly observes that there are notable differences between Irenaeus and Justin that may be better explained by the use of a common source book. See also Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochien*, 5. For an overview of recent trends in Justin scholarship, see Slusser, 'Justin Scholarship', 13-21.

οὐρανὸν πρόνοιαν ἀγγέλοις] whom he appointed over them [οὓς ἐπὶ τούτοις ἔταξε παρέδωκεν].[66]

God has made the world and indeed all things for humanity. Yet both humanity and the world are placed under the care of the angels. Presumably, the angels are to help creation and humanity function in the way that God intended. This idea of angels as overseers is also found in Irenaeus.[67] A notable difference, however, is the extent of this angelic stewardship. For Irenaeus, the angels—with Satan as chief steward among them—are to watch over humanity until such time as humanity comes to maturity and is able to manage creation on their own.[68] Justin, however, makes no mention—here or elsewhere—of the need for human maturation. Thus it is not clear whether Justin views this angelic stewardship as permanent or as temporary. Further, Justin nowhere states (as does Irenaeus)[69] that the Devil is one of these angelic overseers.

B. Affirmation of the Watcher Tradition

In the same passage, Justin explains why it is that Christians are oppressed and persecuted by the wicked. Reaching back to Genesis 6, Justin links evil to the fallen angels and their demonic offspring. He writes,

> But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons [δαίμονες]; and besides, they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and the punishments they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they were enslaved by lustful passions; and among humanity they sowed murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and all wickedness. Whence also the poets and mythologists, not knowing that it was the angels [ἀγγέλους] and those demons [δαίμονας] who had been begotten [γεννηθέντας] by them that did these things to men, and women, and cities, and nations, which they related, ascribed them to God

[66] *2 Apol*. 5. The English translation of Justin throughout this section is drawn from *ANF*, vol. 1, which I have revised and updated as necessary. The Greek is drawn from *PG*, vol. 6.
[67] See *Epid.* 10-11.
[68] See *Epid.* 12, *Haer*. 4.11.1-2, 4.38.
[69] *Epid.* 11.

himself, and to those who were accounted to be his very offspring, and to the offspring of those who were called his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, and to the children again of these their offspring.[70]

Here Justin—in the main—works from the 'watcher tradition' narrative regarding the role of the angels in creation, and their fall (the first of the extant Christian writers to do so).[71] Justin views creation as made for humanity. The angels, for their part, are to exercise care over creation and humanity. The angels, however, transgressed this appointment and became captivated by love for human women and begot children through them. The offspring of these unions are demons—the same demons now plaguing humanity and fueling the persecution of Christians.[72]

The only other place where Justin speaks of the fall of the angels is *Dial.* 45. There he speaks of 'the serpent that sinned from the beginning [ὁ πονηρευσάμενος τὴν ἀρχὴν ὄφις], and the angels like him [καὶ οἱ ἐξομοιωθέντες αὐτῷ ἄγγελοι]. Justin here seems to distinguish between the sin of the Devil (which came first) and the sin of the angels (which followed). However, the phrase is sufficiently vague in order to render a more precise interpretation difficult.

Based on these texts, it appears that Justin views the fall of the angels as taking place in Genesis 6, as an event distinct from the fall of the Devil.[73] In any case, Justin is clearly following the watcher tradition, and thus—in keeping with that tradition—posits an ontological distinction between fallen angels and demons. Justin's use of the watcher tradition, as well as his distinction between angels and demons, is consistent with Irenaeus.[74]

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[70] *2 Apol.* 5. Note, however, that in *1 Apol.* 5 and *Dial.* 79, Justin is less clear about the distinction between angels and demons, seeming in both instances to conflate the two. His comments in both passages, however, are less precise than what we find above.

[71] Russell comments, 'Justin was original in combining this late Jewish doctrine of the angels of the nations with the apocalyptic idea of the Watcher angels who sinned through lust'. See his *Satan,* 64.

[72] Barnard notes that Justin substitutes demons for giants, and suggests that Justin is following a 'line of interpretation that may be reflected in Papias's reference to "the angels which had formerly been holy" (*Frag*. 4)'. See his commentary *Justin Martyr: First and Second Apologies,* 190. However, the fact that Justin replaces demons for giants may be nothing more than a matter of emphasis. In the watcher tradition, demons are the disembodied spirits of the giants that were killed in the flood. Justin may here be simply skipping past the demons' 'giant' phase insofar as he seems generally more concerned with the role of demons in the present.

[73] See Russell, who agrees. 'Justin was unclear about the nature of [the angels'] sin, but he leaned strongly to the theory of the lustful Watchers. He was also uncertain about whether Satan induced the angels to fall, or whether they sinned on their own; in any event they followed the Devil's example and their fall assimilated him so that they came to share in his evil labors'. *Satan,* 65-66.

[74] *Epid*. 18; *Haer*. 4.16.2, 36.4.

C. The Devil Is (Likely) a Wicked Angel

Justin is not explicit regarding the ontology of the Devil, yet his comments in *Dial.* 79 suggest he likely views the Devil as a fallen angel. As the *Dialogue* progresses, Trypho takes offense that Justin has spoken despairingly of the angels [ἄγγελοι]. Justin is then burdened to prove from Scripture that evil angels do in fact exist. To make his case, Justin references Isaiah's statement that the Egyptian princes [ἀρκόντων] in Isaiah 30:1-5 are 'evil angels' [ἄγγελοι πονηροί],[75] Zechariah's vision of the Devil [διάβολος] in Zechariah 3:1, the account of the Devil [διάβολος] in Job 1:6, and the serpent's [ὄφιν] beguiling of Eve in Genesis 3. For Justin, scriptural texts that reference the Devil are sufficient to demonstrate the existence of evil angels. The line of reasoning is indirect, but it does suggest that Justin views Satan as an evil angel.

The picture is made more complicated, however, by Justin's closing comment in the chapter. He concludes his scriptural argumentation by drawing upon Psalm 96:5. 'And you are aware that David said, "The gods of the nations are demons [δαιμόνια]"'.[76] As we have already seen, Justin follows the watcher tradition's ontological distinction between angels and demons.[77] Thus the introduction of δαιμόνια into his line of argumentation regarding the existence of wicked ἄγγελοι may indicate that Justin is not concerned here to prove the existence of wicked ἄγγελοι *per se*, but rather only concerned to prove the existence of wicked spirits—either ἄγγελοι or δαιμόνια. If so, the fact that Justin has linked Satan to the evil ἄγγελοι should not be pressed too far. As clear statements elsewhere in Justin are absent regarding the exact ontology of the Devil, his comments in *Dial.* 79 are suggestive, but not conclusive. For his part, Irenaeus clearly refers to the Devil as an angel.[78]

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[75] See also *Dial.* 124, where Justin refers to Satan as one of the fallen 'princes' [ἀρκόντων]. Joost Smit Sibinga argues that Justin's Bible is an early Greek text that most likely represents a recension of the LXX typically used by Jews between 70 and 135 A.D. See his *The Old Testament Text of Justin Martyr,* 21.

[76] *Dial.* 79. The Hebrew reads אֱלִילִים, commonly rendered 'worthless idols'.

[77] *2 Apol.* 5. The amount of time between the *Apologies* (cir. 151-155 AD) and the *Dialogue* (cir. 160), does not favor the idea that Justin's comments in *Dial.* 79 reflect development beyond his clear affirmation of the 'watcher tradition' found in his *2 Apology*.

[78] See *Epid.* 16; *Haer.* 4. preface. 4, 4.40.3, 5.21.2, 24.3.

D. The Devil Is Linked to the Serpent in the Garden

Justin links the Devil to the serpent in the garden.[79] His comments along these lines are numerous throughout his works, especially in his *Dialogue*. 'For among us the prince of the demons [δαιμόνων] is called the serpent [ὄφις], and Satan [Σατανᾶς], and the devil [διάβολος], as you can learn by looking into our writings'.[80]

And again, speaking of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, 'For when he [Christ] became human, as I previously remarked, the Devil [διάβολος] came to him—i.e. that power which is called the serpent [ὄφις] and Satan [Σατανᾶς]—tempting him, and striving to effect his downfall by asking him to worship him'.[81]

All of this is consistent with Irenaeus.[82] But unlike Irenaeus, Justin nowhere offers us an explanation as to the exact relationship between the serpent and the Devil. Assuming that Justin views the Devil as a fallen angel, in what way then, are the Devil and the serpent related? Did the Devil possess the serpent and use it as a disguise (as Irenaeus suggests)?[83] Or does the Devil adopt the form of the serpent—a sort of transmorphing? Justin does not say.

E. The Devil's Fall Is Linked to His Temptation of Eve

In Justin's conversation with Trypho, Justin comments to the effect that Christians are children of God. This causes consternation with Trypho, and so Justin quotes a portion of Psalm 82 for support, after which he adds his own commentary. 'I said, "You are gods, and are all children of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes [καὶ ὡς εἷς τῶν ἀρκόντων πὶπτετε]". Arise, O God! Judge the earth, for You shall inherit all nations'.[84] Justin then provides the following commentary,

[79] Kelly, 'Adam Citings', argues that Justin is the first to associate Satan with the serpent. This is true if one looks beyond scripture. But Revelation 12:4 points in this direction by referring to Satan as 'that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world'.

[80] *1 Apol.* 28. Notably, Justin here tacitly suggests a certain commonality among the Christians regarding their view of Satan. For Justin, the Christian view of Satan is sufficiently unified that he can say 'among us', and 'as you can learn by looking into our writings'.

[81] *Dial.* 125. See also *Dial.* 39, 45, 79, 88, 103.

[82] *Haer.* preface.4; *Epid.* 16.

[83] *Haer.* preface.4; *Epid.* 16.

[84] *Dial.* 124.

> But in the version of the Seventy it is written, 'Behold, you die like men, and fall like one of the princes', in order to manifest the disobedience of humans,—I mean of Adam and Eve,—and the fall of one of the princes, namely the one called the serpent [ὄφεως], who fell with a great overthrow, because he deceived Eve' [διὰ τὸ ἀποπλανησαι τὴν Εὔαν].[85]

Justin here makes a causal connection between the fall of the Devil and his deception of Eve. Justin's purpose in quoting the Psalm relates primarily to the fall of humanity—not the Devil. As such, he offers us here no additional commentary regarding the timing of the Devil's fall. But what he does say is unambiguous. For Justin, the Devil's fall does not take place prior to the start of the biblical narrative, but rather occurs within the biblical narrative and is due to his deception of Eve. Notably, the Devil's fall is distinct from the fall of the angels.

Only on one other occasion does Justin make an oblique reference to the timing of the Devil's fall. He writes of 'the serpent that sinned from the beginning [ὁ πονηρευσάμενος τὴν ἀρχὴν ὄφις]'.[86] Given his more explicit comments in *Dial.* 124, Justin's reference to τὴν ἀρχὴν likely refers to the beginning of the biblical narrative—namely Genesis 3 and the temptation of Adam and Eve.[87] On the whole, Justin is economical in his commentary regarding the timing of the Devil's fall. Yet his statements are consistent with what we see in Irenaeus, namely that the fall of the Devil occurs in Genesis 3 as a result of his temptation of Eve.[88]

F. The Devil and the Wicked Angels Are the Chief Objects of God's Wrath

Throughout his works, Justin makes it clear that God's judgment is directed first toward the Devil, the demons, and the wicked angels—not fundamentally toward humanity. Justin writes, 'But when the Lord appeared, and the Devil clearly understood that eternal fire was laid up and prepared for him and his angels, he then began to plot without ceasing against the faithful, being desirous to have many companions in his apostasy, that he might

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[85] *Dial.* 124. Irenaeus likewise deploys Psalm 82 to speak of the fall of humanity into mortality and death, though he does not extend his use of the Psalm to include the phrase, 'fall like one of the princes'. See *Haer.* 3.19.1, 4.38.4. Daniélou also links Justin and Irenaeus (and Papias) at this point. See *SC*, vol. 188 no. 50.

[86] *Dial.* 45.

[87] Irenaeus likewise speaks of the Devil obtaining dominion over us 'at the beginning' (*initio*), *Haer.* 5.1.

[88] *Haer.* 4.40.3, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16.

not by himself endure the shame of condemnation, comforting himself by this cold and malicious consolation'.[89] Condemnation looms on the horizon of the Devil's future. The Devil, not wishing to fall under God's judgment alone, seduces humanity into his own demise. And again, emphasizing that God's wrath is directed primarily toward the serpent and 'the angels like him', he states,

> Since those who did that which is universally, naturally, and eternally good are pleasing to God, they shall be saved through this Christ…in order that, by this dispensation, the serpent that sinned from the beginning, and the angels like him, may be destroyed, and that death may be contemned, and forever quit, at the second coming of the Christ himself, those who believe in him and live acceptably,—and be no more.[90]

For Justin, the point of Christ's coming was to undo the work of the serpent and demons—to save humanity from death and restore the children of God to immortality.[91] The salient point here is that for Justin, humans—even after their disobedience and fall—are not the primary objects of divine wrath. Only insofar as human beings reject the salvation offered by God in Christ, and thus align themselves with the Devil, do they likewise fall under the Devil's condemnation.[92] This basic framework is consistent with what we see in Irenaeus.[93]

G. The Devil Is Ignorant of His Doom Until the Incarnation

In two fragments, one from Irenaeus and another from the writings of John of Antioch, Justin maintains that the Devil was ignorant of his doom until the coming of Christ.[94] In the Irenaeus fragment Justin states,

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[89] Fragment 4, from the writings of John of Antioch, also quoted by Irenaeus in *Haer.* 5.26.2.

[90] *Dial.* 45. See also *Dial.* 100. See also *1 Apol.* 28.

[91] Justin's focus in his *1* and *2 Apology* tends to focus mostly on divine deliverance from demons—not Satan. In any case, the point remains that it is not humans that are the primary object of God's judgment.

[92] For more here see Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 122-25.

[93] See *Haer.* 3.23.3, in which Irenaeus says that hell was originally prepared for Satan, and not humanity. Likewise God, in Eden, pronounced no curse against humanity, but rather against the earth; Satan, however, was cursed directly.

[94] *ANF* vol. 1, 294-302, contains an extended fragmentary work on the resurrection, plus an additional 19 fragments that have, at various points, been attributed to Justin. Barnard follows Harnack's dismissal of all but four of these fragments. See Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, 172 and Harnack,

> Before the Lord's appearance Satan never dared to blaspheme God, inasmuch as he did not yet know his own sentence, because it was contained in parables and allegories; but that after the Lord's appearance, when he had clearly ascertained from the words of Christ and his apostles that eternal fire has been prepared for him as he apostatized from God of his own free-will, and likewise for all who unrepentant continue in the apostasy, he now blasphemes, by means of such people, the Lord who brings judgment [upon him] as being already condemned, and imputes the guilt of his apostasy to his Maker, not to his own voluntary disposition.[95]

And in a passage that closely parallels the above, we find the following in the writing of John of Antioch,

> Before the advent of the Lord, the Devil did not so plainly know the measure of his own punishment, inasmuch as the divine prophets had but enigmatically announced it; as, for instance, Isaiah, who in the person of the Assyrian tragically revealed the course to be followed against the Devil.[96] But when the Lord appeared, and the Devil clearly understood that eternal fire was laid up and prepared for him and his angels, he then began to plot without ceasing against the faithful, being desirous to have many companions in his apostasy, that he might not by himself endure the shame of condemnation, comforting himself by this cold and malicious consolation.[97]

The two fragments differ at certain points, but both affirm the idea that Satan was ignorant of his doom until Christ; what the prophets foretold enigmatically, Christ makes known clearly. This revelation results in a deepening of the Devil's apostasy. In the Irenaeus

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Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, I, 99-114. As is the case with other ancient fragments, it can be difficult to know if the fragments in question represent a direct quote from Justin, or merely a summarizing of his thoughts. Likewise it is difficult to know where the quotations end and the primary author picks up again. For arguments in favor of the four 'authentic' fragments (two of which contain comments about the Devil and are noted below), see R. M. Grant, 'The Fragments of the Greek Apologists and Irenaeus', 182-88.

[95] Fragment from Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.26.2.

[96] The reference here to Isaiah is intriguing, though unspecified. Likely Justin is referencing Isaiah 10:12-32, where the judgment of God is decreed against Assyria. In any case, the reference is not to Isaiah 14, and the king of Babylon—a passage that later became commonly understood as referring to the fall of Devil.

[97] Fragment 4, from the writings of John of Antioch.

fragment, the Devil restrains his open blasphemy against the Lord, supposing that somehow he might escape divine retribution through subterfuge.[98] But once his ultimate demise is made plain, he throws off all restraint and blasphemes the Lord openly. In the John of Antioch fragment, knowledge of the Devil's pending judgment causes the Devil to work more aggressively at enfolding the Christians into his doom. Obviously, Irenaeus is sympathetic with Justin at this point, insofar as he quotes approvingly from Justin to this effect.[99] Notably though, Irenaeus does not here claim dependence on Justin for this perspective. Instead Irenaeus, in a rhetorical fashion, seems to use Justin as evidence that Irenaeus' own position is correct.

H. Mary's Victory Recapitulates Eve's Defeat

Justin, like Irenaeus, views the overthrow of the Devil as a recapitulation of humanity's first defeat in the Garden of Eden.[100] In his Christological interpretation of Psalm 22, Justin makes a connection between Eve and Mary. Just as the Devil overthrew humanity by deceiving Eve, Christ overthrows the Devil through Mary's obedience. He writes,

> …and that he [Christ] became man by the Virgin, in order that the disobedience which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overshadow her: wherefore also the Holy Thing begotten of her is the Son of God; and she replied, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.' And by her has he been born, to whom we have proved so many Scriptures refer, and by whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and humans who are like him; but

[98] See Irenaeus' comments leading into the quote from Justin, 'For he [i.e. the Devil] did not venture to blaspheme his Lord openly of himself; as also in the beginning he led humanity astray through the instrumentality of the serpent, concealing himself as it were from God'. *Haer.* 5.26.2.

[99] Yet differences are notable; Irenaeus' fragment makes the interesting comment that the Devil post-incarnation tries to impute the guilt of his apostasy to God, rather than himself.

[100] Justin does not here use ἀνακεφαλαίωσις ('recapitulation'), but the concept, such as we find it in Irenaeus, is present.

> works deliverance from death to those who repent of their wickedness and believe upon him.[101]

Here Justin highlights two distinct parallels between Eve and Mary; both were virgins, and both received angelic 'words' (in Eve's case the angelic word came through the serpent). But whereas Eve doubted the word of God and was thus overthrown by the serpent, Mary believed the word of God and brought forth the savior of the world. This same basic connection between Eve and Mary is found consistently in Irenaeus.[102]

I. 'Satan' Is a Hebrew Compound Word for 'Apostate Serpent'

In one of the more striking similarities between Irenaeus and Justin, Justin incorrectly interprets the name 'Satan' to be a Hebrew compound name meaning, 'apostate serpent'. Again, interpreting Psalm 22, Justin writes,

> Or he [the psalmist] meant the Devil by the lion roaring against him: whom Moses calls the serpent, but in Job and Zechariah he is called the Devil, and by Jesus is addressed as Satan, showing that a compounded name was acquired by him from the deeds which he performed. For 'Sata' in the Jewish and Syrian tongue means apostate [ἀποστάτης]; and 'Nas' is the word from which he is called by interpretation the serpent [ὄφις], according to the interpretation of the Hebrew term, from both of which there arises the single word *Satanas* [Σατανᾶς].[103]

Contrary to Justin's claim, the etymology of שָׂטָן (*satan*) is not 'apostate', but rather 'adversary'. Justin (or his source for this idea) has here almost certainly confused שָׂטָן (*adversary*) with שָׂטָה (*deviate*).[104] Irenaeus, in *Haer.* 5.21.2 and *Epid.* 16, offers us the same flawed etymology.[105] That both Justin and Irenaeus arrive at the same wrong conclusion

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[101] *Dial.* 100.4-5.

[102] See *Haer.* 3.21.10, 3.22.4, 5.19.1; *Epid.* 33. This same connection is found in Tertullian, *Carn. Chri.* 17.

[103] *Dial.* 103. See also 125, where Justin refers to Satan as the serpent, and as one who became an ἀποστάτης (apostate) from the will of God.

[104] See Smith, *Proof*, 153.

[105] Hitchcock believes that by the time Irenaeus wrote *Epidixeis* he had discovered the proper etymology of 'Satan'. See Hitchcock, 'The Apostolic Preaching of Irenaeus', 285. But

regarding the etymology of 'Satan' must be more than a striking coincidence. But whether they are both drawing upon a common lost source or whether Irenaeus is following Justin directly cannot be determined with certainty.[106]

J. Three Points of Difference between Justin and Irenaeus

At no point do Justin and Irenaeus make contradictory statements regarding the Devil's identity, aims, etc. As such, the differences between Justin and Irenaeus with respect to the Devil tend to be differences of omission, rather than proper disagreements. These differences of omission can be grouped into three broad categories: Justin's exegesis of key Old Testament texts, his view of the pagan myths and deities, and his silence regarding the Devil's envy. We examine each in turn.

1. Typological Interpretations of Satan

Justin, in a manner not uncommon in early Christian exegesis, interprets 'Leviathan' as a reference to Satan.[107] Arguing that Old Testament narratives are to be understood typologically, Justin observes, 'Shall it be thought, then, that the serpent saved the people at that time; the serpent which, as I pointed out, God cursed at the beginning and slew with a great sword, as Isaiah testifies?'[108] Justin's reference here is to Isaiah 27:1, 'In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea'.[109]

In another typological interpretation, Justin views the serpent on the pole as a sign of the Crucified One who would cause the Devil's defeat. Justin writes,

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according to Smith, 'The rendering "Widersacher" [*adversary*] given in EP* [i.e. *editio princeps* of *Epid.*] misled Hitchcock…into thinking that Irenaeus had found the true meaning of the word [in *Epid.* 16] since writing A.H. 5.21.2'. Smith, against Hitchcock, observes that the Armenian in *Epideixis* reads *apstamb,* which correlates with ἀποστάτης, and renders the key term 'rebel'. See Smith, *Proof*, 153. MacKenzie renders the term 'apostate'; see MacKenzie, *Irenaeus' Demonstration,* 5.

[106] Smith sees the connection here as evidence of Irenaeus' dependence on Justin. Smith, *Proof,* 153.

[107] For this connection in other early Christian writers, see Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.24; Augustine, *Civ.* 11.15; Gregory the Great, *Moral.* 3.23.

[108] *Dial.* 112.

[109] For more on Justin's use of the scripture, see Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy.* See also Aune, 'Justin Martyr's Use of the Old Testament'.

> And it seems that the type and sign, which was erected to counteract the serpents which bit Israel, was intended for the salvation of those who believe that this sign was to show that through the crucified one death was to come to the serpent, but salvation to those who had been bitten by the serpent and had sought protection of him who sent his Son into the world to be crucified.[110]

And again,

> For by this, as I previously remarked, he [God] proclaimed the mystery, by which he declared that he would break the power of the serpent which occasioned the transgression of Adam, and [would bring] to them that believe on him [who was foreshadowed] by this sign, i.e. him who was to be crucified, salvation from the fangs of the serpent, which are wicked deeds, idolatries, and other unrighteous acts. If this is not the interpretation of the passage, give me a reason why Moses set up the brazen serpent on the sign…in spite of the fact that he himself had forbidden them to make an image of anything whatsoever.[111]

Such typological interpretations are consistent with Irenaeus' overall stance on the Devil. But in his extant works, Irenaeus does not make use of either Leviathan or the serpent on the pole.

2. View of Pagan Myths

According to Justin, the similarities between Greek myths and the Christian narrative are Satanic attempts to counterfeit the real thing. Thus the use of a cave in Mithraic initiation rites is an imitation of Daniel's vision in 2:34: 'Now when those who transmit the mysteries of Mithras claim that he was born of a rock, and call the place where they initiate his believers a cave, am I not right in concluding that they have imitated that saying of Daniel, "a stone was hewn without hands out of a great mountain"? In a similar fashion, have they not attempted all the sayings of Isaiah? For the demons urged the priests of

[110] *Dial.* 91.
[111] *Dial.* 94.

Mithras to exhort their followers to perform righteous acts'.[112] Notably, even righteous living is an imitation of Christian righteousness. At the end of the same chapter, Justin suggests that Perseus being begotten of a virgin is a satanic copy of the virgin birth, and so forth. In a similar vein, Justin views the pagan gods as nothing more than demons masquerading as divine beings. (Here it is helpful to keep in mind Justin's commitment to the watcher tradition and his understanding of demons as the offspring of fallen angels and human women.)

This 'slandering' of the pagan gods can be found readily throughout Justin's work.[113] Irenaeus does not follow Justin in this respect, perhaps because he would disagree, or perhaps, more likely, because his primary opponents are the Gnostic Christian sects, rather than the paganism that Justin is writing against.

3. Justin Does not Mention the Devil's Envy

Most significantly for our purposes, Justin makes no mention of the Devil's envy as the motivation behind his temptation of Adam and Eve. Indeed, Justin offers his readers no insight as to why the Devil assaulted humanity. Here we must remember that—according to Irenaeus—Justin has written elsewhere about the Devil.[114] As such, it is possible that Justin had more to say about the Devil's motivations than what we find in his extant writings. Yet without a definitive statement one way or the other, it is impossible to know the extent to which Irenaeus and Justin agreed on this point. It should be noted, however, that Justin says nothing that contradicts what we find in Irenaeus regarding the Devil's envy of humanity.

K. Summary of Justin

In sum, there is a high degree of overlap between Justin and Irenaeus related to their respective views on the Devil, demons, angels, Eve, the fall, etc. As such, it seems evident that both Irenaeus and Justin are working within a common tradition. Yet the extent to which Irenaeus depended on Justin is not certain. Clearly Irenaeus is aware of Justin's work

[112] *Dial.* 70. Mithras was a Persian deity. In Justin's time, Mithraism was Christianity's strongest rival in the city of Rome. See Halton, *St. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho,* 109.

[113] See for example *2 Apol.* 5; *Dial.* 73.

[114] *Haer.* 5.26.2.

(he says so explicitly). Differences in emphasis certainly remain. But as noted above, the differences are not generally matters of disagreement, but rather matters of omission.

Given the above, it seems reasonable to conclude that Justin very likely represents the earliest extant and detailed account of the Devil tradition that we find more fully developed in Irenaeus.

VI. Theophilus

Theophilus of Antioch was a second-century bishop, and a slightly earlier contemporary of Irenaeus.[115] He was born a pagan in around 115, and, by his own account, converted to Christianity by reading Scripture. Theophilus had a Greek education, and likely knew some Hebrew.[116] According to Eusebius, his bishopric began around 169, and ended in 177.[117] We know nothing else about his life. Eusebius mentions his now lost (but then extant) work against Marcion, along with a number of other lost writings.[118] Theophilus' now only extant work is *Ad Autolycum*, in three books.[119] Like Justin, the work is an apology that intends to show the superiority of Christianity over and against idolatry. Tixeront finds Theophilus inferior to Justin in 'depth of philosophical insight', but surpassing him in 'extent and variety of literary culture'.[120] Miggiffert considers Theophilus' literary style to be 'of high order', and considers him a learned writer, 'well acquainted with Greek philosophy'.[121] Marcus Dods observes that Theophilus 'had a profound acquaintance with the inspired writings', and judges *Ad Autolycum* 'well fitted to lead on an intelligent pagan to the cordial acceptance of Christianity'.[122] Walter Bauer is less enthusiastic, describing Theophilus as a 'shallow babbler'.[123] Robert Grant is only slightly more charitable: 'Theophilus' arrangement of his materials thus leaves something to be

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[115] Eusebius is the only early writer to mention Theophilus as bishop. See *Hist. eccl.* 4.24. (Jerome likewise mentions Theophilus' bishopric, but he is merely repeating Eusebius.) Subsequent historical analysis offers us no reason to doubt Eusebius. For the dating of Theophilus' bishopric and limited biographical information, see Miggiffert, *NPNF2*, vol.1, 202; also Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch*, 3-14.

[116] Tixeront, *Patrology*, 46.

[117] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.20. See also, Tixeront, *Patrology*, 46.

[118] For Eusebius' full list of Theophilus' writings, see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.24. Miggiffert notes that Eusebius is the only Eastern writer to mention Theophilus. In the west, Lactantius, Gennadius and Jerome mention his *Ad Autolycum*. See *NPNF2*, vol.1, 202.

[119] *Ad Autolycum* is extant in three Medieval manuscripts and has been frequently published in the original and in translation. Miggiffert suggests that the best edition of the original is that of Otto in the *Corp. apol.*, vol. 8; the best English translation is by Robert Grant.

[120] Tixeront, *Patrology*, 46.

[121] *NPNF2*, vol.1, 202.

[122] *ANF*, vol. 2, 88.

[123] Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 18, no. 38.

desired, and his insistently didactic tone often fails to retain the reader's interest'.[124] Whatever one's assessment of Theophilus as a theologian, his passing remarks with respect to the Devil—insofar as they run along similar lines as Irenaeus—make him of special interest for our study.

Generally, Irenaean scholarship sees at least some connection between Theophilus and Irenaeus. Friedrich Loofs, perhaps more so than any other, did much to establish this connection. In his posthumous work, *Theophilus von Antiochien Adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus,* Loofs attempted to separate the different sources of *Adversus haereses,* and argued that the most important source for Irenaeus was Theophilus' now lost *Adversus Marcionem.*[125] In addition, Loofs argued that there were three or four other sources—the most important being the so called IQA—all of which have likewise disappeared.

Wingren, following F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock's critique of Loofs, is unconvinced by Loofs' attempt to reconstruct the sources of *Adversus haereses.* 'Loofs, in fact, treated any discrepancies or differences that occur in the *Adversus haereses* as indications that there are various sources traceable within it, and having established what he took as sources, he then proceeded on the assumption that each one of these sources is homogenous, and therefore contains only one dominant line of thought, but not more than one'. Wingren then appropriately asks, 'But can all this be ascertained about a document that is unknown to us?…It is completely impossible to solve a problem which provides nothing but unknown quantities…'[126] Wingren does not contest Loofs' fundamental thesis that *Adversus haereses* is constructed on sources, or even that Irenaeus may have been dependent on Theophilus; but insofar as none of the sources Loofs postulates are extant, Wingren sees little (if anything) to be gained by such lines of inquiry.[127] Osborne agrees with Wingren's assessment; Loofs' 'general claim for multiple sources stands, but his procedure is regressive rather than progressive'.[128] Loofs may be right about the connection between Irenaeus and Theophilus, but I here agree with Wingren and Osborn: far reaching speculation on lost sources is of limited value in interpreting Irenaeus.

Laying aside theories about lost sources, Armitage Robinson—on more solid footing—suggests Irenaean dependence on Theophilus based on a close reading of Theophilus' extant *Ad Autolycum.* Armitage notes strong similarities in their respective

[124] Grant, *Theophilus of Antioch,* xi.
[125] Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochien,* 44-80.
[126] Wingren, *Man and Incarnation,* xviii-xix.
[127] For more on Loofs' thesis, see Wingren *Man and Incarnation,* xvi-xx.
[128] Osborne, *Irenaeus,* xi.

views on the Holy Spirit and the creation of humanity.[129] And most relevantly for our purposes, Smith and Steenberg note similarities between Irenaeus and Theophilus with respect to the Eden narrative in Genesis 3.[130] The similarities here between Irenaeus and Theophilus are threefold: the 'infancy' of Adam, the identity of the Devil, and the envy of the Devil, each of which is examined below.

A. The 'Infancy' of Adam

One of the more striking similarities that can be found between Irenaeus and Theophilus is their mutual belief that Adam was created in some form of infancy. In a chapter where Theophilus argues that God was justified in forbidding Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, he writes,

> But Adam, being yet an infant [νήπιος] in age, was on this account as yet unable to receive knowledge worthily. For now, also, when a child [παιδίον] is born it is not at once able to eat bread, but is nourished first with milk, and then, with the increment of years, it advances to solid food. Thus, too, would it have been with Adam; for not as one who envied [φθόνῶν] him, as some suppose, did God command him not to eat of knowledge. But he wished also to make proof of him, whether he was submissive to God's commandment. And at the same time he wished the man, being an infant [νηπιάζοντα], to remain for some time longer simple and sincere.[131]

The similarity here between Theophilus and Irenaeus is strong.[132] Theophilus is the earliest writer to assert the idea of Adam's infancy, followed next by Irenaeus.[133] For both Irenaeus and Theophilus, Adam is created in 'infancy' and not yet able to receive

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[129] See Smith, *Proof*, 53-62. The similarities are striking, and it is difficult to imagine that Irenaeus was not familiar—even if not in a derivative way—with Theophilus' basic theological framework. Grant likewise suggests a connection between Irenaeus and Theophilus, stating that Irenaeus 'corrected Theophilus' language about God's two "hands," his Word and his Wisdom'. Robert Grant, *Irenaeus*, 40.

[130] Smith, *Proof*, 38; Steenberg, *God and Man*, 20. See also Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation*, 16-19.

[131] Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.25. The English translation of Theophilus used throughout is drawn from *ANF*, vol. 2, which I have revised and updated as necessary. The Greek text is taken from *PG*, vol. 6.

[132] Cf. *Haer.* 3.22.4, 4.38. 1-4: *Epid.* 12, 14.

[133] See Behr, 'Gaul', 373.

knowledge.[134] What is more, in both Irenaeus and Theophilus, Adam's infancy is the reason for why he is denied the Tree of Knowledge. In contrast to Gnostic conceptions of an envious Demiurge, God does not 'envy' humanity knowledge in the sense of denying it to humanity altogether, but intends for Adam and Eve to partake of the Tree of Knowledge as they mature.[135] Likewise, in both Irenaeus and Theophilus, the Tree of Knowledge is given as a test for humanity, in order that they might learn obedience.[136]

B. The Identity of the Devil

In the main, Theophilus' comments about the Devil are sparing. The Devil is mentioned only twice (2.28, 29), and does not seem to play a vital role in Theophilus' conception of the fall of Adam.[137] Yet what Theophilus does say maps closely on to Irenaeus. Theophilus writes,

> This Eve, on account of her having been in the beginning deceived by the serpent [ὄφεως], and become the author of sin, the wicked demon [δαίμων], who also is called Satan [Σατάν] who then spoke to her through the serpent [ὄφεως], and who works even to this day in those humans that are possessed by him, invokes as did Eve. And he is called 'demon' [δαίμων] and 'dragon', [δράκων] on account of his revolting [ἀποδεδρακέναι] from God. For at first he was an angel [αγγελος]. And concerning his history there is a great deal to be said; wherefore I at present omit the relation of it, for I have also given an account of him in another place'.[138]

Satan was first an angel who 'revolted from God';[139] Satan speaks through the serpent to tempt Eve in the Garden;[140] Satan is called a 'dragon'.[141] All of this is in keeping with Irenaeus. However, Theophilus refers to Satan as a δαίμων —something that Irenaeus does not do (insofar as we can tell from the Latin translation). Irenaeus' account of demonic

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[134] Cf. *Epid.* 12.

[135] For Gnostic conceptions of an envious demiurge, see *Haer.* 1.23.2, 1.29.4, 1.30. See in particular *Haer* 3.23.6 where Irenaeus says that God does not envy Adam the tree of life.

[136] *Epid.* 15.

[137] Rogers, *Theophilus*, 45, 68.

[138] Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.28.

[139] Cf. *Haer.* 4.41.4; *Epid.* 16.

[140] Cf. *Haer.* 5.26.2, book 4, preface; *Epid.* 16.

[141] Cf. *Haer.* 2.31.3.

ontology is consistent with the 'watcher tradition', wherein demons are distinct from angels, and have come about as the result of the sexual union between the fallen angels and human women (Cf. Genesis 6). Thus according to Irenaeus, Satan, as a fallen angel, was not technically a demon. Theophilus' use of δαἰμων in *Ad Autolycum* is sparing, thus no final conclusions can be made about the semantic range for this term in his work. In any case, the difference here seems minimal in comparison to the wider similarities between Irenaeus and Theophilus.

C. The Envy of the Devil

The most significant parallel between Irenaeus and Theophilus relates to the central theme of our study: the Devil's envy of humanity. Like Irenaeus, Theophilus suggests that the Devil was motivated by envy toward humanity. He writes,

> When, then, Satan [after the temptation of Eve] saw Adam and his wife not only still living, but also begetting children—being carried away with envy [φθόνῳ] because he had not succeeded in putting them to death,—when [Satan] saw that Abel was well-pleasing to God, he wrought upon the heart of his brother called Cain, and caused him to kill his brother Abel. And thus did death get a beginning in this world, to find its way into every human race, even to this day.[142]

Satan is 'carried away with envy' toward humanity when he sees that he has not been able to put Adam and Eve to death.[143] Theophilus' statement regarding the Devil's envy immediately precedes a clear allusion to Wisdom 2:24 wherein the Devil's envy is stated as the means by which death first came to humanity.[144] All of this is consistent with Irenaeus.

Yet a key difference remains. In Theophilus, the Devil's envy is introduced only *after* the original fall of humanity, whereas in Irenaeus, the Devil's envy is the basis for the Devil's original temptation.[145] Of course, these envy narratives need not be mutually

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[142] Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.29.

[143] Cf. *Haer.* 4.40.3, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16.

[144] Cf. *Epid.* 16. Irenaeus' use of Wis 2:24 is less explicit than what is found here in Theophilus.

[145] Russell fails to note this difference. Russell correctly points out that Theophilus is the first Christian writer to link together the Devil's envy and Genesis 3. See his *Satan,* 78-79. However,

exclusive. While Irenaeus notes the Devil's envy as the motivation for the original temptation, this need not exclude an ongoing posture of envy by the Devil toward humanity.[146] And Theophilus' statement that the Devil was envious of humanity when he saw them begetting children and not dying, need not discount the possibility that envy also motivated the Devil's first assault upon humanity. But Theophilus' exact opinion regarding the Devil's motivation in his initial temptation of Eve must remain speculative.

D. Summary of Theophilus

As stated above, nowhere does Irenaeus claim dependence on Theophilus—for either his treatment of the Devil, or any other matter of doctrine. Yet the similarities are suggestive, if not conclusive. The basic contours of the Genesis 3 narrative run along similar lines in Irenaeus and Theophilus. Humanity is created in infancy; the Devil is referred to as 'Satan' and 'dragon' and was at first an angel; the Devil is associated with the serpent in the garden; he was motivated by envy toward humanity. Steenberg notes that the connection between Theophilus and Irenaeus is more widely accepted today than it has been in the past in Irenaean scholarship, although he acknowledges that dependence is impossible to prove.[147]

VII. Conclusion

While the earliest Christian writings of the 'apostolic fathers' do not offer us much either way, I find in the extant works of Athenagoras, Justin, and Theophilus, a Devil narrative that is—overall—consistent with Irenaeus. While differences between the three writers can be seen, the differences almost entirely tend to be differences of emphasis and omission. At no point do we find strong statements of contradiction between these writers with respect to the Devil, demons, etc. Irenaeus is clearly familiar with Justin's work (he says so explicitly), and the parallels between Irenaeus and Theophilus are even more

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Russell perhaps too readily concludes that the Devil's envy of humanity is his motivation for tempting Eve. This is not explicitly stated in Theophilus.

[146] In *Epid.* 17, Irenaeus states that the Devil filled Cain with his own 'spirit'. Given the preceding context—as well as Cain's disposition toward Abel—we might easily suppose this to be a spirit of envy.

[147] Steenberg, *God and Man*, 20. Steenberg, in *Irenaeus on Creation*, 16-19, argues for Theophilus' influence on Irenaeus, based on their common readings of the Eden narrative. For more on Irenaeus' connection with Theophilus, see Grant, *Christian Beginnings*, 196.

developed than what we find with Justin. While no final conclusion can be made regarding dependency, it seems evident that Irenaeus is working within an established tradition.

The chart on the following page details the main lines of Irenaeus' account of the Devil with respect to the Christian writers who came before and after. I have done my best to provide a thorough account of each author listed. A blank text box indicates that the author did not make mention of a particular idea—whether positively or negatively. Red text denotes disagreement with Irenaeus in a particular area. The overall picture presented in the graph suggests that Irenaeus' account of the Devil (with some variations) was the standard account of the Devil in the first three and half centuries of the church.

The Devil in the Early Christian Writers (First Four Centuries)

NOTE: Red text indicates disagreement with Irenaeus. A blank text box indicates that I did not locate a comment one way or the other on the topic in question.

	Devil Is an Angel	Devil Is Envious	Devil Is Envious of Humanity	Devil Is Envious of Humanity Prior to Humanity's Fall	Devil's Envy of Humanity Is Occasion for Gen 3 Temptation	Devil's Temptation of Humanity is Occasion for Devil's Fall	Devil as Steward of Creation	Angels as Stewards of Creation	Devil Is Associated with Serpent	Post Gen. 3, The Devil Becomes Captor of Humanity	Post Gen. 3, The Devil Is Not Ruler of this World/Age	Infancy of Humanity at Creation	Affirms Watcher Tradition
Ignatius (c. 35-107)		*Rom.* 5; *Trall.* 4.2									**_Trall._ 4.2**		
Papias (Eary 2nd Century)						**Frag. 24 (but only three of the seven Papias collections contain this fragment)**		Frag. 11, (24)					
Martyrdom of Polycarp (c. 155-60)		*Mart. Pol.* 17.1											
Justin (c. 100-165)	*Dial.* 79					*Dial.* 124.3		*2 Apol.* 5	*Dial.* 39, 45, 79, 100.5-6, 103, 112.2-3, 125, *1 Apol.* 28	*2 Apol.* 5			*2 Apol.* 5
Tatian (c. 120-180)	*Graec.* 7					*Graec.* 7							**_Graec._ 16**
Athenagoras (Later 2nd Century)	*Leg.* 24						*Leg.* 24-25	*Leg.* 10, 24, 25		*Leg.* 25	**_Leg._ 24, 25?**		*Leg.* 24-25
Theophilus (Later 2nd Century)	*Autol.* 2.28	*Autol.* 2.29	*Autol.* 2.29						*Autol.* 2.28			*Autol.* 2.25	
Irenaeus (c. 130-200)	*Haer.* 4. preface, 4.40.3, 5.19.1, 5.21.1,3, 5.24.3, 4; *Epid.* 11; etc.	*Haer.* 3.23.3-5, 4. preface; 4.40.3, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16	*Haer.* 3.23.3-5, 4. preface, 4.40.3, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16	*Haer.* 3.23.3-5, 4.40.3, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16	*Haer.* 3.23.3-5, 4.40.3, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16	*Haer.* 3.23.3, 8; 4.40.3, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16	*Epid.* 11; *Haer.* 5. 24.4	*Epid.* 10-12; *Haer.* 5:24.4	*Haer.* 4. preface, 3.23.4-7, 4.40.3, 5.21.1-2, 5.24.4; *Epid.* 16, etc.	*Haer.* 3.8.2, 3.18.2, 3.20.1, 3.23.1-2, 7, 4.33.4, 5.1.1, 5.21.1, 5.24.4	*Haer.* 3.7.1, 4.29.1, 5.22.2, 5.24.1	*Epid.* 12, 14; *Haer.* 3.22.4, 3.23.5, 4.38.1-2	*Epid.* 18; *Haer.* 4.16.2; 4.36.4
Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215)		*Strom.* 2.13, 4.4	*Strom.* 2.13, 4.4						*Paed.* 3.2?	*Prot.* 10	**_Prot._ 10?**	*Prot.* 11, *Strom.* 3.17,	*Paed.* 2.2
Tertullian (c. 160-225)	*Apol.* 27, *Marc.* 2.8, 4.26, 5.6; *Spect.* 2	*Pat.* 5; *Virg.* 15	*Pat.* 5; *Spect.* 2	*Pat.* 5; *Spect.* 2	*Pat.* 5; *Spect.* 2	*Pat.* 5			*Spect.* 18; *An.* 16; *Marc.* 4.24; *Carn. Chri.* 17.	*Idol.* 18; *Marc.* 5.17; *Pud.* 9; *Spect.* 2; *De Paen.* 7; *Idol.* 18	**_Idol._ 18; _Marc._ 5.17; _Pud._ 9; _Spect._ 2; _Paen._ 7; _Idol._ 18**	**_Marc._ 2.8; _De Cult. fem._ 1.1**	*Apol.* 22; *Marc.* 5.8, 18; *Idol.* 4, 9; *Virg.* 7; *Cult fem.* 1.2; *Ad Nat.* 2.13
Hippolytus (c. 175-240)									*Fr. Prov*; *Antichr.* 14	*Comm. Dan.* 2. 18; *Antichr.* 14	**_Antichr._ 14?**		
Origen (c. 185-254)	*Princ.* Preface 6; *Hom. Exod.* 8.2	*Comm. Rom.* 5.1.29, 6.5; *Hom. Jer.* 2.1.1	*Comm. Jo.* 20.235-236; *Hom. Lev.* 12.7	*Comm. Jo.* 20.235-236		**_Princ._ 1.5.5, 8.3**	*Cels.* 7.17, 8.6	*Princ.* 5.2; *Cels.* 1.25, 8.36, 42	*Cels.* 6.42, *Comm. Rom.* 2.6, 5.1.2	*Comm. Rom.* 2.13.29, 5.10.12; *Hom. Exod.* 6.9; *Hom. Jer.* 17.2.1, etc.	**_Hom. Luc._ 30.2**		
Cyprian (c. 200-258)	*Zel. liv.* 4	*Zel. Liv.* 3-4	*Zel. Liv.* 3-4	*Zel. Liv.* 3-4	*Zel. Liv.* 3-4; *Pat.* 19	*Pat.* 19							
Commodian (c. 250)		*Instr.* 43											
Methodius (d. 311)		*Res.* 1.7, 3.7	*Res.* 1.7, 3.7	*Res.* 1.7, 3.7, Lib.	*Res.* 1.7, 3.7	*Res.* 3.7?	*Res.* 3.7 (implied)	*Res.* 3.7	*Banq.* 3.6, 8.7		**_Banq._ 4.2**		
Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373)		*Comm. Gen.* 2.22	*Comm. Gen.* 2.22	*Comm. Gen.* 2.22	*Comm. Gen.* 2.22	*Comm. Gen.* 2.32			*Comm. Gen.* 2. 16, 18, 19, 32, etc; *Hymn. par.* 15.14			**_Comm. Gen._ 2.14**	**_Comm. Gen._ 6**

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