CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Anthropological models in Patristic thought

This thesis, a study of the development of Christian thought in the Patristic period, examines the correlation of selected anthropological and eschatological themes, namely, the way in which different views of the nature and relationship of body and soul influence conceptions of resurrection, immortality and judgement. It is not possible in the scope of this study to discuss these themes in every detail, nor examine every shade and nuance of opinion and every passage bearing on the issues in the works of every Patristic writer.[1] Rather, the intention is to explore the specific "models" of anthropology underlying the different approaches used by Patristic writers in discussing these themes. This method makes it possible to discern continuities and convergences in their thought otherwise obscured under variations in detail, and to demonstrate correlations between writers who differ, sometimes significantly, on other issues.

The Scriptures present the person as an integral whole created by God and standing in covenantal relationship with Him. However, it is a fundamental presupposition, found throughout the Patristic period, that the human person is a dichotomy of body and soul.[2] This dichotomy, introduced into the Christian thought-world from Greek speculation,[3] thereby created problems for Christian doctrine for which no solution could be found, as they are in no way addressed in the Scriptures, and are in fact, in terms of Christian thought, merely pseudo-problems.[4]

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[1] The Patristic authors who are cited are considered to be representative of the main streams of thought. Additional references could be given for many of the ideas discussed, but these would not add to the substance of the discussion.

[2] There seem to be no known anthropologies which are **not** dichotomistic. Cf. J N D Kelly. **Early Christian Doctrines**, pp. 166, 344. Some Patristic writers used a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit [Cf. Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.6.1. ANF 1, p. 531] but this is to be considered a subdivision of dichotomistic conceptions. For instance, Augustine says that the "three things of which man consists - namely spirit, soul and body" are nevertheless "spoken of as two, because frequently the soul is named along with the spirit." *On faith and the creed* 10.23. NPNF 1/3, p. 331], See Gordon Spykman. **Reformational Theology**, p. 233. Others criticised trichotomist views. Theodoret. *Eranistes*, Dialogue 2. NPNF 2/3, p. 183. *Letter 145, to the monks of Constantinople*. NPNF 2/3, p. 313. Jerome queried "...how there can be said to be two substances and two inner selves in one and the same man, entirely apart from the body and from the grace of the Holy Spirit." *Commentary on Daniel* 3.39. G L Archer, pp. 41-42.

[3] For details of the understanding of body and soul in Greek thought, see: Jan N Bremmer. **The early Greek concept of the soul**. Princeton University Press, 1983. Simon Tugwell. **Human immortality and the redemption of death**. Darton Longman and Todd, 1990. R A Norris. **Manhood and Christ**. Chapter Three: The nature of the soul.

[4] The controversy over the soul's origin, concerning pre-existence, creationism or traducianism, is rooted in this very pseudo-problem which leads only to contradictions and as such is insoluble. See the comments by G C Berkouwer. **Man: The image of God**, pp. 292-293. Augustine was always troubled by the problem of the origin of the soul and addressed this issue in a number of places. *Letter* 143.7-10. NPNF 1/1, pp. 492-493. *Letter* 190.5. FC 30, pp. 279-288. *Retractations* 1.1. PL 32, 585-587. *The literal meaning of Genesis* 10.24.40-10.26.45. ACW 42, pp. 128-132. *Letter* 166. NPNF 1/1, pp. 523-532. See Kari E Börresen.

Even those writers who assert the wholeness of human nature still thought of it in terms of the unity of a body and a soul, dichotomistically conceived. Considering the person in terms of a dichotomy of disparate substantial parts necessarily results in speculation concerning the inter-relation of these parts, which then becomes a dominant theme in theology.

I do not attempt in this thesis to develop an exhaustive analysis of the different ways in which the Patristic writers explain the relationship of body and soul, but focus on what can be considered the two dominant models which underlie the treatment of the issues discussed in this thesis. These may be called for convenience the unitary model and the instrumentalist model.

The unitary model presents the human person as an integrated whole of body and soul, both of which are necessary for the normal functioning of the person, so that when separated in death, the person is incomplete in significant ways. The instrumentalist model, on the other hand, locates the human person in the soul, while the body is the instrument by means of which the soul expresses its life in the world.[5] In this model, the soul is assigned priority and superiority over against the body, in a relationship often understood as antagonistic.[6]

While the complexities of Patristic thought mean that other models and correlations could perhaps be found which would group various writers differently with respect to other issues, these two anthropological models have been found useful in clarifying the specific issue dealt with in this thesis, namely, how conceptions of the relationship of body and soul, that is, the nature of the human person, shape and influence conceptions of resurrection, immortality and judgement. Because these two models persist underneath variations in detail throughout the Patristic period, it is possible to provide an historical analysis of the development of Patristic thought, by tracing the way in which ideas develop and unfold, and how later concerns and ideas are

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"Augustin, interprète du dogme de la résurrection." *Studia Theologica* 23 (1969) 145-146. See also Nemesius. *On the nature of man* 2.17. LCC 4, pp. 280-285.

[5] There are of course varying ideas as to how the body and soul are interrelated in each of these two main categories, but for our purposes these can be ignored. The principal difference with which we are concerned is whether or not the person is a composite of **both** soul and body, or is located in the soul only. While a number of Patristic writers who held to a unitary anthropological model speak of the soul using the body as an instrument [e.g. Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 2.33.4. ANF 1, p, 410. Cyril of Alexandria. *Answers to Tiberius* 9. Oxford Early Christian Texts, p. 163], this should not be taken to mean they are using an "instrumentalist" model, as this use of the term "instrument" refers to the relationship between body and soul, which together form the person. This is not true of instrumentalist models in which the soul is the person.

[6] This distinction between a *unitary* and an *instrumentalist* model is noted but not discussed by Ugo Bianchi. "Of course, in order to appreciate fully the difference between original sin and previous sin or fault, it is necessary to refer to the position of the author under consideration: whether man is for him (as in the Platonic, and already Orphic tradition) his own soul, conceived as teleologically separable from, and incompatible with, its corporeal "vehicle" (*ochema*), or instrument...or, alternatively, whether man, consisting essentially of body and soul (*animale rationale*, an expression found also in Origen), is a teleologically irreducible totality expressing itself in the notion of resurrection..." "Augustine on Concupiscence." *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989) 204-205.

integrated with earlier views, within the parameters provided by these two basic anthropological models.

While detailed studies of the thought of individual writers are essential, it is also necessary at times to evaluate the history of how these ideas unfold and develop through time,[7] a development which extends beyond individual lifetimes, and so cannot be seen in the thought of any one writer.[8] In addition, each writer presupposes and builds on, either positively or negatively, the work of predecessors and contemporaries, and leaves a legacy of thought for those who follow. Such a study reveals commonalities not always apparent from studies of individuals, but which are brought to light through tracing the way ideas and anthropological models are used by different authors at different periods.

For instance, a seemingly trivial idea may not have sufficient significance for the thought of any one individual for it to warrant comment. However, the recurrence of such a "trivial" idea in many writers, whose work covers several centuries, has its own significance. It is as important to examine the ways such ideas are taken up and continued, consolidated and perpetuated as it is to examine the way they are used in individual writers. These ideas thus may be worthy of attention they would not otherwise warrant. A "cross-sectional" study such as this, encompassing the treatment of a number of correlated themes by various writers, is the only way to reveal developments, connections, diverging streams of thought, and otherwise unsuspected relationships between writers in different times and places.

1.1 The focus of the study

There is a remarkable shift in beliefs concerning the judgement in the eschatology of the Patristic era. The earliest Patristic writers held that at the return of Christ, all the dead would be raised, and together with those still living, believers and unbelievers alike would face the judgement and then be allocated rewards and punishments according to their deserts.[9] This is correlated with a unitary anthropology, in which both body and soul had participated in the deeds for which the person was being judged, and so would be held accountable together. For justice to be done, the whole person had to be present at the judgement to share together in the subsequent

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[7]   Most surveys of Patristic eschatology are only brief articles or sections of books. The only up to date comprehensive study published in English (which was not available to me until this thesis was in the final stages of preparation) is that by Brian E Daley. **The hope of the early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Daley comments, "no single large-scale survey exists of the whole development of ancient Christian eschatological hope." (Idem, p. xi.) Daley's work, while comprehensive, is according to his own description, "a historically-ordered handbook... rather than a theological encyclopaedia or a broad, interpretative historical synthesis." (Idem, p. xii.) This thesis seeks to contribute to the evaluation and critique of the historical development of aspects of Patristic eschatology.

[8]   While it is possible to trace developments in the thought of individual authors, for instance Tertullian or Augustine, this includes only limited changes, which may in fact be significant turning points in the overall development, but still do not reveal the whole picture.

[9]   Many passages of the Bible teach a resurrection of all the dead to face the judgement on the Last Day. They include: Matthew 10:15, 12:36, 25:31-46, John 5:21-30, Acts 24:15, Romans 2:5-11, 14:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8, 1 Timothy 5:24, Hebrews 9:27, 10:27, 2 Peter 2:9, 3:7, 1 John 4:17, and Revelation 20:11-15.

punishments and rewards; thus nobody could or would be judged prior to the resurrection of the body.

While this view persisted throughout the Patristic period, it was increasingly held that each soul would face a judgement immediately after death, at which appropriate rewards and punishments would be determined, which the soul then received, prior to the resurrection and the "last judgement."[10] This view was based on the growing prominence of an instrumentalist anthropological model in which the body was considered merely the instrument for carrying out the desires of the soul, and thus the soul could legitimately face the judgement alone, apart from the resurrection of the body. While the idea of a general judgement on the Last Day was maintained, the immediate individual judgement eventually assumed priority, and thus the former became increasingly problematic as it appeared to serve no real purpose: the fate of the soul was known from its judgement at death, and a general judgement at the end of the age could only confirm the decision already passed. Thus the implications of these two models in eschatology are significant, as the first focuses on the resurrection as the true commencement of eschatological life, while the second makes possible the entry of the soul into eschatological life immediately after death and independently of the resurrection of the body. These models shape the interpretations of Scripture adopted and the answers given to philosophical and theological questions.

In this context, some Patristic writers developed the idea that neither the wicked nor the saints would be judged, based on Psalm 1:5, *Therefore the wicked will not rise up in the judgement, nor sinners in the council of the righteous*, in conjunction with John 3:18, which states that *Whoever believes in [Christ] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son*. The correlation of these two verses provided, in the opinion of these Patristic authors, both the express statement and the causal justification of the view that neither the wicked nor the saints would face the judgement. This was also based on a particular understanding of what the term "judgement" indicated.[11] The various meanings ascribed to that term indicate the problems created by asserting in particular that the saints would not face the judgement, in spite of numerous passages in Scripture to the contrary, such as 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10-12.

However, if neither the wicked nor the righteous would face the judgement, who then will do so? It was proposed that the judgement would investigate the character, and pronounce the fate, of those who were neither completely righteous nor completely wicked, who thus did not obviously belong to either group.

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[10]   The very use of the term **last** (or general) judgement is evidence of the problem, since it became necessary to distinguish it from the **first** (particular) judgement of the soul at death, and from God's present judging in providence. Cf. the discussion of this in Augustine. *The City of God* 20.1. NPNF 1/2, p. 421. The Scriptures do not use such terminology, and speak of only one judgement, that at the Last Day.

[11]   There is some confusion evident in Patristic literature over the meaning of "judgement." Some interpreted this as the process of judging, while others understood it to mean the punishment consequent on that process. Some later authors, for instance Augustine, distinguished the various meanings and discussed their applicability in different contexts. See Chapter 6.4 below.

In contrast to this interpretation of Psalm 1:5, other Patristic writers took the view that the wicked would indeed face judgement. They understood this text to mean that when they were raised, the wicked would not participate in the process of judging. That process was reserved for the apostles, who would *sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* [Matthew 19:28], together with the rest of the saints, who would also have a share in the judgement, since *the saints will judge the world* [1 Corinthians 6:2]. It would be the wicked on whom the apostles and saints would pronounce judgement, and so the wicked would definitely be judged.

These diverging interpretations of Psalm 1:5 in conjunction with John 3:18 reflect a number of important developments in Patristic theology, in anthropology as much as in eschatology. This study will examine the changing presuppositions which were necessary for these developments to take place, and how they are evident in the Patristic interpretation of Psalm 1:5, in order to ascertain how this text was understood, and to explore the reasoning behind this interpretation.[12] In this way we can integrate the various themes studied in this thesis.

Many early writers rejected the immortality of the soul as a pagan philosophical view,[13] partly in the desire to protect belief in the resurrection, and held that immortality is granted to those who believe as a gift of God through Christ at the time of the resurrection, when both soul and body together will receive "life in immortality."[14] However, by the end of the Patristic age, the inherent immortality of the soul was accepted as orthodox Christian belief, as a consequence of the influence of pagan philosophical speculation on Christian writers, often correlated with an instrumentalist anthropology.[15]

It should be noted, however, that there is no direct correlation between the two anthropological models discussed here, and what are often presented as two alternatives in eschatology: immortality of the soul and resurrection of the dead.[16]

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[12] I have located only one paper, dealing with only a few authors, which specifically studies the Patristic exegesis of Psalm 1:5. H de Lavalette. "L'interpretation du Psaume 1.5 chez les peres "misericordieux" latins." *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 48 (1960) 544-563. He examines Augustine, Jerome, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, and Gregory the Great. As a result, it is not surprising that inaccurate comments on this exegesis have been made, for instance by J N D Kelly, who considers the characteristic Patristic view a peculiarly Western tradition. **Early Christian Doctrines**, p. 481. However, it can also be found in a great number of Greek and Syrian texts. These will be examined below in Chapter Eight.

[13] The term "pagan" is used here not in a derogatory way, but as a technical term for a polytheistic image-worshipping, magically inclined religious outlook, which deifies various aspects of the creation and sees in them the source of meaning for the creation. See Roy A Clouser. **The myth of religious neutrality**, pp. 36-37.

[14] Berkouwer points out that a dualistic anthropology is evident from the use of the term "immortality of the soul," since the Scriptures speak only of the immortality of the **person** and not of a **part** of the person. G C Berkouwer. **Man: The image of God**, p. 234.

[15] Speculation is the attempt to go beyond the information Scripture provides on a given subject, extrapolating from the known to the unknown (and unknowable), accepting no limits for human knowledge. The opposite error is to refuse to acknowledge, in a sceptical manner, the extent of the information which is given in Scripture on a particular subject.

[16] This contrast has been made famous in recent times by Oscar Cullmann. **Immortality of the soul or resurrection of the dead?** London: Epworth, 1958. See the comment by Ambrose,

While the contrast between resurrection of the dead and immortality of the soul is of considerable importance, it does not in itself provide sufficient explanatory power to elucidate the complexities of Patristic thought with respect to the judgement, and no doubt this is also true of contemporary Christian writers. Only some Patristic authors who hold to a unitary anthropology believe in the inherent immortality of the soul, but they all agree that the resurrection of the body is essential in order to face the judgement on the Last Day,[17] a view not necessary for the instrumentalist model. Views on the timing and nature of the judgement can be correlated with the anthropological model used by an author, but cannot be correlated with his view on the immortality of the soul.

These anthropological models also shaped other aspects of doctrine. In the instrumentalist model, the soul was thought to aspire to spiritual and eternal things, while the body craved gratification with earthly and transitory temporal things.[18] The result of positing a dualism between the "material" fleshly body and the "spiritual" soul was the abandonment of the significance of the body and the denigration of bodily life, which came to its fullest expression in asceticism, the rejection of marriage and the glorification of virginity. The resulting "spiritual" and non-earthly conceptions of eschatological life contrasted strongly with the early Patristic conceptions of the millennium and the resurrection body, which came to be considered "materialistic." This false distinction is based on the idea that while God and the soul are spiritual, the earth and all that is related to it is "material."[19] The eschatological hope was then focused on a "spiritual" heaven, rather than a "material" earth, even though this was to be the new earth promised in Isaiah and Revelation. This dichotomy between the "spiritual" and the "material" misplaces the antithesis found in Scripture, between God's covenant love towards us, and human sin with its effects, and results in a creation-negating mentality which seeks for salvation in setting the soul free from its material (bodily) mode of existence. When such views, originating in the Greek thought-world, are introduced into the Christian thought-world rooted in divine revelation, the doctrine of the bodily resurrection is compromised, and human bodily life is denigrated.

The increasing emphasis on an individualistic, immediate eschatology which centred on the fate of each soul at death resulted in speculation about the "intermediate state" between death and resurrection, and obscured the supra-individual aspects of the

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that in contrast to the Christian hope of the resurrection, the pagans console themselves with the thought of the immortality of the soul. *On the belief in the resurrection* 2.50. NPNF 2/10, p. 181.

[17] L Boliek comments that the fact that in the Patristic period *resurrection* rather than *eternal life* was stressed, may indicate an awareness that "the expression *eternal life* by itself could be distorted into a concept of the continuation of the soul separated from the body." **The resurrection of the flesh**, pp. 22-23.

[18] The "eternal" and "temporal" should not be contrasted in this way, since eternity is the future consummation of this present time. The difference lies between the limited time of this life (cut off by death) and the infinite time of the eschaton, where there is no more death [Revelation 21:4]. See Peter Steen. "The Problem of Time and Eternity in its Relation to the Nature-Grace Ground-motive." In: **Hearing and Doing**, pp. 135-148.

[19] While it is valid to distinguish God from the creation, any conception which considers part of the creation to be similar to God and dissimilar to the rest of the creation violates the Biblical witness to the creatureliness of the **whole** of human nature.

parousia, so that the confession of the resurrection of the body was "reduced to a formal dogma with no room for the real expectation concerning the future,"[20] and the locus of eschatological life was eventually considered to be in "heaven." This individualistic eschatology is one reason why the doctrine of the judgement on the Last Day declined in importance.

> During the Middle Ages the doctrine of the last things was mainly left to popular piety and those outside the main stream of theology... The fervent hope for the coming of the Lord was gradually replaced by the sacrament of penance, through which one was assured of entrance into heaven, and by an increasingly elaborated system of purgatory. Once people passed through this vale of tears, they would enter eternal bliss, since the church as the visible representative of the heavenly city mediated their salvation. Salvation as the end of world history was exchanged in favour of salvation at the end of individual history. The cosmic dimension of eschatology receded and the existential component gained.[21]

These developments in the Middle Ages arise largely from the legacy of thought left by the Patristic period, and the difficulties created can be detected in that literature as well as in the theology of subsequent generations. Quistorp has expressed the opinion that the failure of the great Reformers to grapple with eschatology adequately led to disastrous consequences for subsequent Protestant theology, which became

> ...subjected to a perverse spiritualization and individualization of eschatology - a process whose beginnings are to be found with the reformers themselves, who in this respect are not original but are following mediaeval Catholic and humanist prototypes.[22]

The problems inherent in this eschatological conception arise from the tensions inherent in Patristic thought because of their attempts to forge a synthesis, an artificial merger, between two opposing and incompatible viewpoints: divine revelation and pagan philosophical speculation.

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[20] G C Berkouwer. **The return of Christ**, pp. 34, 61-62. Cf. Donald E Gowan. **Eschatology in the Old Testament**, p. 21.

[21] H Schwarz. "Eschatology." In: **Christian Dogmatics**. Vol. 2, pp. 504-505.

[22] H Quistorp. **Calvin's Doctrine of the Last Things**, p. 11.

1.2 The problem of synthesis

The inscripturated revelation of God confronts humankind in an antithesis which stands over against our false conceptions of the way things are, including philosophical speculation based on pagan myth.[23] This is rooted in a repudiation of our covenant relationship with God, and hypostatises the creatures he has made, turning them into idols which purportedly provide the source of ultimate meaning. Divine revelation is therefore incompatible with the pagan speculations which form the basis of Greek philosophy,[24] and any synthesis formed between them is inherently unstable. As a result, it is necessary to continually seek a new synthesis in an effort to resolve the problems of earlier synthetic viewpoints. Spykman comments that this is because "methodologically dualist axioms refuse to yield unifying conclusions," only a "pseudo-unity which yields little more than a comprehensive yet precarious synthesis of the very bipolar problematic with which it began, held together in a new tension-laden dialectic."[25]

In Patristic literature we find such a synthesis being formed through the attempt to merge the theoretical speculations of the various schools of Greek philosophy with the covenantal message of divine revelation, leading ultimately to the subordination of revelation, to a greater or lesser extent, to the thought-forms and concepts of pagan philosophy. The influence of Platonism, neo-Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism and other pagan Greek philosophies on Patristic thought is well documented.[26]

A number of the disputes in the Patristic period can be traced to the influence of the thought of the various competing schools of Greek philosophy.[27] This can be seen, for

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[23]   Myth is understood to be the formulation by the unbelieving imagination of a pseudo-revelation, a humanly fabricated authority for faith, that stands in opposition to Scripture, and provides the grounds on which pagan philosophy is based. See W V Rowe. "The character and structure of myth." *Anakainosis* 6 (1984) 4:1-9. A Christian philosophy takes divine revelation in Scripture as its authority, and not the postulates of pagan myth or autonomous reason. Thus Christian philosophy will always be in conflict with other philosophical systems, and is incompatible with them. See Gordon Spykman. **Reformational theology**, pp. 98-105 for a discussion of the relationship between Christian philosophy and theology.

[24]   Cf. the comment by E L Fortin, that both Christianity and Greek philosophy make absolute claims on the allegiance of their followers. "The viri novi of Arnobius and the conflict between faith and reason in the early Christian centuries." In: **The Heritage of the Early Church**, p. 226.

[25]   Gordon Spykman. **Reformational Theology**, pp. 20-21. He further comments that the answers produced are "not really solutions at all but reinforcements of the problem." Ibid., p. 26.

[26]   See for instance A H Armstrong and R A Markus. **Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy**. K A Bril. **Westerse Denkstructuren. Een probleem-historisch onderzoek**. Marcia L Colish. **The Stoic tradition from Antiquity to the early Middle ages. II. Stoicism in Christian Latin thought through the 6th Century**. Henry Chadwick. **Early Christian thought and the classical tradition. Studies in Justin, Clement and Origen**.

[27]   Tertullian pointed to the confusion among the philosophers as to the truth concerning the soul, since while some consider the soul to be "divine and eternal," others say that it is "dissoluble." *Apology* 47. ANF 3, p. 52. Cf. *The soul's testimony* 1. ANF 3, p. 175. Cf. the views of Ephrem of Syria, who rejects philosophising about the soul, since "...those that philosophize about it miss of it. For one confesses that it exists, another that it exists not. One puts it in subjection to death, another above the power of death." *Rhythms upon the faith, against the disputers* 1. **Rhythms of St Ephrem the Syrian**, pp. 107-108. Regarding the way

instance, in the way in which some Patristic writers attempted to trace heretical movements to Greek philosophers, while it was assumed that "orthodox" Christians were instructed by revelation.[28] Jerome stated that "Churchmen are truly rustic and simple men, but all the heretics are Aristotelian and Platonic."[29] He makes this case even more strongly by claiming that the heretics do not use one philosopher as their authority, but resort to whatever system is convenient at the time.

> They [the heretics] are well stocked for debate. If you refute them in one proof, they turn to another. If you contradict them by Scripture, they take refuge in Aristotle; if you rebut them in Aristotle, they by-pass to Plato.[30]

On another occasion, Jerome made an even more polemical attack on the pagan philosophers.

> Just as a serpent that sees someone coming to strike it instinctively makes a coil of its entire body and protects its head, even so these heretics hide themselves in the winding utterances of Aristotle and the other philosophers and so shield and defend themselves.[31]

The frequent attempt by Patristic writers to trace heretical beliefs back to pagan Greek philosophy seems to be an unacknowledged, and possibly important recognition that synthesis with alien thought-forms is in fact the source of many problems. For instance, in the passage where Tertullian claims that heresy originates with Greek philosophers, he rejects "all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic composition!"[32] However, according to Wolters, his very

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in which Patristic writers inherited pre-existing debates about anthropology, Crouse comments: "All those problems are present, and more or less explicit, in the history of Greek and Roman religion and philosophy, from the earliest of the Greek poets to the latest of the pagan Neoplatonic schools, and are not peculiar to Christianity." "The meaning of creation in Augustine and Eriugena." *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989) 229.

[28] Tertullian was perhaps the first to make the claim that all heresies are instigated by philosophy. *On prescription against heretics* 7. ANF 3, p. 246. Tertullian's contemporary Hippolytus also uses the basic theme that all heresies are merely travesties and adaptations of pagan philosophy. *Refutation of all heresies: Proemium.* ANF 5, pp. 10-11. Tugwell comments that Hippolytus asserts that doctrines of heretics derive from ancient philosophical sources to prove that they "antedate the coming of Christ and so cannot be ascribed to Christian revelation." **Human immortality and the redemption of death**, pp. 4-5.

[29] Jerome. *Homily 11, On Psalm 77* (78). FC 48, p. 86. W Telfer notes that Nemesius considers the philosophy of Plotinus false because a heresy has been built upon it. **Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa.** LCC 4, p. 227.

[30] Jerome. *Homily 54, On Psalm 143* (144). FC 48, p. 386. This view Jerome condemns is very similar to that of Karl Barth, who says that theologians should not be committed to any particular philosophy, but should utilise whatever system seems appropriate in any given circumstances. **Church Dogmatics**, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 731. This sceptical approach to philosophy is inherently unstable and lies at the root of Barth's "dialectical" method.

[31] Jerome. *Homily 50, On Psalm 139* (140). FC 48, pp. 363-364.

[32] Tertullian. *On prescription against heretics* 7. ANF 3, p. 246. Here Tertullian (mis)uses Colossians 2:8 as a warning against philosophy **as such**, and not against false philosophy. He then makes his famous statement, "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" This is usually interpreted as an obscurantist repudiation of all philosophy, but even so he is still

rejection of these pagan thought-forms is "patterned after the best models of classical rhetoric." Wolters goes on to add:

> Paradoxically, Tertullian in his violent opposition to the representatives of classical culture interacted a great deal with them and was profoundly shaped by them. In the process of trying to demonstrate (in his *De Anima*) that every Christian heresy could be traced back to a pagan philosopher, he defended an essentially Stoic theory of the soul.[33]

Jerome's famous dream in which he was accused by Christ of being a Ciceronian and not a Christian indicates the depth to which he felt this situation.[34] But he was also able to say that he had read the works of the Pythagoreans, and maintained that "Pythagoras was the first to discover the immortality of the soul and its transmigration from one body to another."[35] It is surprising after making this comment that Jerome was able to continue to assert the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, since it clearly comes from a pagan religious source.

While it may be legitimate to make some use of the thought-forms of the day in articulating Christian thought, the crucial problem with Patristic thought, and indeed the Christian thought of any age, is the uncritical adoption and use of ideas fundamentally incompatible with revelation, even though at times the Patristic synthetic approach was selective about the ideas which were adopted.[36] It is only as

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acknowledging the fundamental incompatibility of Christianity with pagan speculation. Tertullian states that the speculations of the philosophers "have perverted the older Scriptures," and "even adulterated our new-given Christian revelation, and corrupted it into a system of philosophic doctrines." The result, according to Tertullian, is the "variety of parties among us," which he fears will be considered the equivalent of the different schools of philosophy and obscure the truth of the Gospel. *Apology* 47. ANF 3, p. 52. Cf. the views of Ephrem of Syria, who said "Blessed is the one who has never tasted the poison of the wisdom of the Greeks." [*Rhythms on Faith* 2.3. **Select works of S. Ephrem the Syrian**, p. 112] S H Griffith. "Ephraem the Syrian's hymns `Against Julian.'" *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987) 246.

[33] [Tertullian. *On the soul* 3. ANF 3, pp. 183-184.] A M Wolters. "Christianity and the Classics: A typology of attitudes." In: **Christianity and the Classics**, p. 196. Tertullian concedes that some things are known from nature, rather than from revelation, including the immortality of the soul, and justifies using Plato's ideas. "I may use, therefore, the opinion of a Plato, when he declares, 'Every soul is immortal'." *On the resurrection of the flesh* 3. ANF 3, p. 547.

[34] Jerome. *Letter* 22.30. NPNF 2/6, pp. 35-36.

[35] Jerome. *Apology Against Rufinus* 3.39. NPNF 2/3, p. 538.

[36] For instance, Macrina rejected some of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle concerning the soul, but then says that the Scripture "lays it down as an axiom that there is no excellence in the soul which is not a property as well of the Divine nature" [Gregory of Nyssa. *On the Soul and the Resurrection*. NPNF 2/5, p. 439], an idea of pagan Greek origin. Runia says that such a view "is diametrically opposed to the biblical perspective on man and the cosmos, which always preserves a radical distinction between Creator and creature." The result was, according to Runia, "a 'slow hellenization' of the Christian message..." D T Runia. "Dooyeweerd, Bos and the *Grondmotief* of Greek culture." *Philosophia Reformata* 54 (1989) 162. V E F Harrison comments in this connection that for Gregory of Nyssa, "the divine and human natures have the same attributes though the substrata in which these attributes occur are radically different. Thus God and human persons are ontologically linked and their authentic properties can be correlated with each other." "Male and female in Cappadocian theology." *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1990) 441. Harrison refers for this idea to

we become self-critically aware of the way in which we are influenced by alien views that distort our understanding of Scripture that we can legitimately critique Patristic thought. Otherwise, we will merely criticise the views of a past age from the perspective of the views of the present, without engaging in a critical analysis of both in the light of Scripture.

The synthetic approach was built on the use of pagan thought by the Alexandrian Jews in the century before Christ, which Runner argues was an adaptation to the Greco-Roman culture, and not a critique of it, resulting in the view "that Divine Wisdom (Chokmah) had illumined both the Hebrew prophets and the Greek philosophers," which turned "a religious antithesis of direction (Light and Darkness) into a mere difference of degree of clarity of insight."[37] Therefore, the Patristic writers failed to penetrate to the deepest roots of Greek philosophical speculation, which was founded on an idolatrous religious perspective, inseparable from that philosophy. As Armstrong comments:

> The Hellenic classics could not be purged of their Hellenism and domesticated to the service of the Church... they transmitted a whole complex of ways of thinking, feeling and imagining which are not compatible with Biblicist and ecclesiastical Christianity. The Muses and the Lady Philosophy are not to be recommended as priests' house-keepers.[38]

The Patristic writers used various justifications for adopting pagan thought-forms and ideas,[39] and sought to demonstrate the basic agreement between Greek philosophy and divine revelation.[40] These included the doctrine of *preparatio evangelica*, which

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Gregory's *On the making of man* 16.12. PG 44, 184D [NPNF 2/5, p. 405]. See also Karl Barth. **Church Dogmatics** III/1, p. 360 for a critique of this approach.

[37] H Evan Runner. "On being Christian-Historical and Anti-Revolutionary at the cutting-edge of history," p. 6.

[38] A H Armstrong. "The way and the ways: Religious tolerance and intolerance in the fourth century A.D." *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984) 8.

[39] Apart from the intellectual attraction of pagan thought, another factor which stimulated defence of Christian use of pagan writings was the decree of Julian the Apostate in 362 AD which prohibited Christians from teaching the pagan classics on the grounds that it was unethical to teach literature referring to gods the Christians do not believe in. G W Bowerstock. **Julian the Apostate**, pp. 83-84. Robert Browning. **The Emperor Julian**, pp. 169-174. Christians responded by defending their use of such texts. Gregory of Nazianzus. *Oration* 4.5. PG 35, 536A-B. Cf. Augustine's comment: "Did he [Julian] not persecute the church, who forbade the Christians to teach or learn liberal letters?" *The City of God* 18.52. NPNF 1/2, p. 393. Socrates. *Ecclesiastical History* 3.12. NPNF 2/2, p. 85. Ibid., 3.16. NPNF 2/2, pp. 87-88.

[40] It is curious to note that while Christian writers were trying to demonstrate the compatibility of the Bible with Greek philosophy, several pagan writers (e.g. Galen and Celsus) were writing refutations of Christian beliefs on the grounds that they were incompatible with Greek philosophy. Cf. Albrecht Dihle. **The theory of will in Classical Antiquity**, pp. 4-8. Eusebius reports the criticisms made by Porphyry of Origen's "mingling Grecian teachings with foreign fables." *Ecclesiastical History* 6.19. NPNF 2/1, pp. 265-266. Ambrose wrote a refutation (now lost) of Neoplatonists who saw Christianity as a counterfeit Platonism, and who insisted on the incompatibility of Christianity with Platonism. Pierre Courcelle. "Anti-Christian arguments and Christian Platonism: From Arnobius to St. Ambrose." In: **The conflict between paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century**, p. 158.

posited that these ideas had been revealed to the pagans by God to prepare the pagan world for the Gospel;[41] the idea that the pagans had plagiarised their doctrines from the Old Testament;[42] that Christians had the right to "plunder" the pagans of their riches (using the image of the "spoiling of the Egyptians" in Exodus 12:35-36);[43] or that pagan thinkers had access to the truth through logical thought, which was only possible through the Logos which created all things and informed all things.[44] The pagan ideas which lay behind these various justifications were themselves seldom if ever examined.[45] For instance, Runner insists that through allegorising of history, the *spoliatio* motif confuses the jewels created by God and hidden in the earth, found in the possession of the Egyptians, with ideas that arise in the (rebellious) human heart. The analogy thereby breaks down, and prevents insight into the corrupting influence

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[41]   See for instance the treatise of Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, which was based on this theme.

[42]   This view was to become a popular one in the Patristic period, and was used to justify many diverse (and contradictory) opinions as Biblical. Origen stated that "It seems to me, then, that all the sages of the Greeks borrowed these ideas from Solomon, who had learnt them by the Spirit of God at an age and time long before their own; and that they put them forward as their own inventions and, by including them in the books of their teachings, left them to be handed down also to those that came after." Prologue. *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. ACW 26, p. 40. This idea also appeared in the Talmud, from where it may have been borrowed by Patristic writers. Louis Ginzberg. **The Legends of the Jews**. Vol. 6, pp. 282-283. See also Josephus. *Against Apion* 1.22. Loeb, pp. 229, 231. Early in his career, Augustine held that Plato had met Jeremiah in Egypt and was "initiated" into the Hebrew Scriptures. *On Christian Doctrine* 2.28.43. NPNF 1/2, p. 549. Later he corrected this view on the basis of chronology, which showed that Plato was born about a century after the time of Jeremiah. However, Augustine conceded that Plato could have learned the contents of the Scriptures through an interpreter, as indicated by the similarities Augustine discerned between Plato's *Timaeus* and Genesis. *The City of God* 8.11. NPNF 1/2, pp. 151-152. Justin Martyr saw the same similarities. *First Apology* 59. ANF 1, p. 182. This theme has been studied by J Moorhead. "The Greeks, pupils of the Hebrews." *Prudentia* 15 (1983) 3-12. See also the careful warnings against the dangers of this approach to pagan philosophy in J Klapwijk. "Antithesis, synthesis and the idea of transformational philosophy." *Philosophia Reformata* 51 (1986) 138-154.

[43]   Found for instance in Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine* 2.40.60. NPNF 1/2, p. 554. An interesting inversion of this is found in Jerome, who describes the true insights of the pagans as symbolised by the sacred vessels of the temple at Jerusalem which were stolen by the Babylonians. These insights were limited since they stole only some of the vessels, "and not all of them in their completeness and perfection." Thus he combines the *spolatio* motif with the idea that the truths of philosophy were learnt from the Hebrews. *Commentary on Daniel* 1.2. G L Archer, p. 20.

[44]   Cf. Justin Martyr. *Second Apology* 13. ANF 1, p. 193. This rationalistic concept of the cosmos presupposed that "...revelation was in harmony with philosophy at its best because philosophers had in part been inspired by the Logos." Robert M Grant. **Augustus to Constantine**, p. 109. See also the discussion of this theme by Graham Keith. "Justin Martyr and religious exclusivism." *Tyndale Bulletin* 43 (1992) 1:60-63 and passim. Theodoret said that the idea of a judgement after death was held by the Greek poets and philosophers because of "natural reason," by which such truths are also accessible to us. *On Divine Providence* 9.24. ACW 49, pp. 126-127.

[45]   For a detailed analysis of such approaches see A M Wolters. "Christianity and the Classics: A typology of attitudes." In: **Christianity and the Classics**, pp. 189-203. K J Popma. "Patristic evaluation of culture." In: **The Idea of a Christian Philosophy**, pp. 97-113. B J van der Walt. "Eisegesis-exegesis, paradox and nature-grace: methods of synthesis in mediaeval philosophy." In: **The Idea of a Christian Philosophy**, pp. 191-211. The Patristic use of the "spoliation of the Egyptians" is dealt with in detail in J Klapwijk. "Antithesis, synthesis and the idea of transformational philosophy." *Philosophia Reformata* 51 (1986) 138-154.

of alien ideas on the articulation of Christian thought.[46] This can be seen, for instance, in the commentary on the Psalms by Cassiodorus, which is intended to give proof that all secular learning is derived from the Bible. This allowed Christians to study pagan works without guilt, since it starts with the assumption that it is the pagans who have stolen from the Bible.[47]

One way in which this synthesis resulted in distortion of Scripture was through seeing Moses as a philosopher, who taught the Hebrews philosophical doctrines which were copied by the Greeks (but in a somewhat distorted form),[48] a view found in Eusebius,[49] who says these "philosophical doctrines" of Moses were then disseminated to the other nations by Christ through his disciples.[50] This intellectualistic view forces Scripture into a theoretical mould, and thereby obscures and negates its central covenantal character.

The continuing use of Greek philosophy by the Patristic writers was in part necessitated by the fact that adoption of pagan anthropological theories, rooted in a dichotomy between body and soul, posed insoluble problems for the interpretation of the Scriptures. Because these problems in the relationship of body and soul were at root philosophical in nature, imported into Scripture from outside, they could only be tackled philosophically.[51] Thus the Patristic writers increasingly resorted to philosophy to develop theories that explained their anthropological concepts more precisely. The Scriptures do not present theories of human nature,[52] but present a non-

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[46]   H Evan Runner. "On being Christian-Historical and Anti-Revolutionary at the cutting-edge of history," p. 6.

[47]   J L Halporn. "Methods of reference in Cassiodorus." *Journal of Library History* 16 (1981) 73.

[48]   According to Lactantius, the poets corrupted the truth of the resurrection and the judgement, interpreting these in terms of their idolatrous religion. They did, however, have some inkling of the truth even though it was misunderstood. *The Divine Institutes* 7.22. ANF 7, pp. 217-218. Jerome, using his interpretation of the *spoliatio* motif (see note 42 above) says that the heretics misuse the testimony of Scripture according to their own inclination, citing the way the sacred vessels from the Temple were used in a banquet by the Babylonians. *Commentary on Daniel* 5.4. G L Archer, p. 56.

[49]   Eusebius. *Preparation for the Gospel* 11.26-27. E H Gifford, Vol. 2, pp. 594-595. Clement of Alexandria refers to the Scriptures as "barbarian philosophy" which was plundered by the Greeks, whom he calls "thieves" since they did not acknowledge their sources. *The Stromata* 5.1. ANF 2, p. 446. See also Minucius Felix. *Octavius* 34. ANF 4, p. 194. Pseudo-Justin. *Exhortation to the Greeks* 27-28. FC 6, pp. 407-409.

[50]   Eusebius. *The proof of the Gospel* 3.2. Translations of Christian Literature. Vol. 1, p. 105. John G Gager points out that there was at the time no general term for "religion" and that the term "philosophy" was used instead, meaning not a theoretical system but a "cult of wisdom." **The origins of Anti-Semitism**, p. 85. While this is important to note, the term "philosophy" in the sense of "theoretical system" was also applied to Christianity by writers such as Eusebius. See also the discussion of this issue in A H Armstrong and R A Markus. **Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy**, pp. 149-152.

[51]   Cf. the comments of John Cassian, who says he must "...put aside for a little Scriptural proofs" in order to discuss "the nature of the soul itself." *Conferences* 1.14. NPNF 2/11, p. 302.

[52]   Cf. Karl Barth. "We remember that we shall search the Old and New Testaments in vain for a true anthropology and therefore for a theory of the relation between soul and body... The biblical texts regard and describe man in the full exercise of his intercourse with God. Their authors have neither the time nor the interest to occupy themselves with man as such, nor to

theoretical picture of human beings in covenantal relationship with God.[53] While we can formulate theoretical anthropologies through codifying our discerning of the structure of created reality in the light of Scripture, that theory should not be in conflict with the basic picture presented in Scripture, as was unfortunately the case with Patristic anthropologies.

When the Scriptures use the terms commonly translated as "body" and "soul," this does not refer to the components of human nature, substantially conceived, but human beings as a whole,[54] looked at as from the outside or from the inside.[55] This terminology of "inward-outward" used in Scripture (e.g. 2 Corinthians 4:16) provides us with the basis of an anthropology which is neither dualistic nor monistic,[56] but considers human nature as a whole, although from different perspectives. An alternative anthropology which seeks to be faithful to the Scriptures must avoid the false problematics of both monism and dualism.[57]

A number of contemporary scholars see nothing amiss with this synthesising approach, and seek to defend the Patristic writers from the charge of distorting the Christian message through blending it with Greek philosophy. For instance, the

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give to themselves or their readers a theoretical account of what is to be understood by the being of man." **Church Dogmatics** III, 2, p. 433. Note, however, that Barth is still working with an anthropological dichotomy of body and soul, and consequently sees a problem in their relationship.

[53]   A theory is the artifical construction in abstract thought of **explanations** of the nature and relationships of aspects of concrete things. Non-theoretical thought uses concepts about concrete things. It is fundamentally **descriptive** and does not seek to explain. Cf. M D Stafleu. "Theories as logically qualified artifacts." *Philosophia Reformata* 46 (1981) 2:164-166. It is in this sense that Scripture is spoken of here as covenantal and non-theoretical. For a detailed discussion of this approach to Scripture see Henry Vander Goot. **Interpreting the Bible in theology and the Church**. New York: Edwin Mellen, 1984.

[54]   Cf. J Chryssavgis. "A philosophy of disembodiment is a philosophy of death. Genuine philosophy reflects upon aspects of life in its entirety and the compartmentalisation of man into "body" and "soul"; each self-contained, is a symptom of a loss of wholeness, resulting in a variety of dualistic philosophies." **Ascent to Heaven**, p. 37.

[55]   For detailed examination of this approach see H Ridderbos. **Paul: An outline of his theology**. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975 (esp. pp. 115-117), and G C Berkouwer. **Man: the image of God**. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962 (esp. Chapter Six: The whole man). See also Lesslie Newbigin. **The other side of 1984. Questions for the churches**, pp.38-39.

[56]   Dualism postulates the existence of two separate and distinct original substances from which things are made, resulting in a tension between two dissimilar components, e.g. body and soul. Monism postulates only one original substance, so that the dichotomy of body and soul is between two different structures formed from the same substance. The problem of dualism is how to account for the *unity* of things, while the problem of monism is how to account for the *diversity* of things. These are pseudo-problems created by speculative thought, since the unity of the diversity in creation is found in the subjection of the creation to the one law-order, encompassing all of created reality, established by God for the creation. The Biblical idea of creation is that God made **whole things** with their own individuality. See C J Gousmett. "The miracle of nature and the nature of miracle," p. 75. For an exposition of an alternative Christian ontology, see Kent Zigterman. "Dooyeweerd's theory of individuality structure as an alternative to a substance position, especially that of Aristotle."

[57]   The frequently made claim that while we must reject dualism, it is necessary to maintain a **duality** in human nature, is an essentially monistic approach, and still unsatisfactory. See for instance, Henri Blocher. **In the beginning: The opening chapters of Genesis**, pp. 87-89.

Platonic views of Clement of Alexandria mitigated against the possibility of him developing a fully Biblical eschatology. But Wagner seeks to absolve Clement from the charge of being a Platonising synthesiser whose theology was antithetical to Pauline thought. He comments for instance, "While most Lutherans rejected Clement as un-Pauline and a hellenizing Platonist to boot, some have a more balanced attitude." He comments further on: "Unfortunately, an occasional writer appears who stubbornly pits Paul against Plato in order to denounce Clement."[58] While he condemns unsympathetic criticism of Clement which fails to understand him in the context of his world, he seeks to deny that the Platonising synthesis of Clement was a problem.[59]

Some scholars go to great lengths to deny the influence of external sources on Patristic thought. Fahey comments regarding Cyprian,

> In his survey on Stoicism in the Church Fathers, Spanneut notes that Koch has pointed out and often exaggerated Seneca's influence upon Cyprian. Despite Cyprian's repudiation of Stoicism, Stoic influences may underlie his ethical strictures against cosmetics, hair-dyeing, the theatre, and property, and his distain for the body reflected in Dem 9. Obviously, this philosophy had no influence on Cyprian's exegesis.[60]

The latter comment is incorrect, as there were definitely various philosophical influences on Cyprian's exegesis as well as on his doctrine, and it is naive to imagine that his cultural and intellectual heritage had no influence on him.
Prestige argues that rational method is neither particularly Greek nor pagan, but was discovered and developed by the Greeks through God's providence. He agrees that ideas were adopted from pagan Greek sources to explain Christian doctrines, but never without modification: ideas were adapted to the Christian faith, the faith was not "trimmed to square with the imported conception." Doctrines were reached by "true rational development, and not by syncretism between Christianity and paganism." Prestige rejects Harnack's theory of the "Hellenisation" of Christianity, which posits the contamination of the faith by Platonism, and defends what he calls "Christian rationalism." He asserts that "No other rational method existed then, or exists now, but what has been derived ultimately from the great Greek philosophical schools." He goes on to assert that "the world is a rational universe and that God is intelligent Mind," and states that his book is designed to support this view.[61]

This approach is the opposite of that taken in this thesis. Indeed, I would assert that his confidence that the universe is rational and that God is intelligent Mind is a thoroughly Greek conception, one which exaggerates the significance of theoretical

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[58]   W H Wagner. "A Father's fate: attitudes toward and interpretations of Clement of Alexandria." *Journal of Religious History* 6 (1971) 221-222.

[59]   See for instance Clement of Alexandria. *The Instructor* 1.13. ANF 2, p. 235, where he uses Stoic ethics to expound on the nature of Christian conduct.

[60]   M A Fahey. **Cyprian and the Bible: a study in Third-Century Exegesis**, p. 27 (emphasis mine).

[61]   G L Prestige. **God in Patristic thought**, pp. xiii-xviii.

thought.[62] In contrast, a distinctively Christian philosophical system, which seeks to develop its ideas on the basis of God's revelation in Scripture (including the development of a characteristically Christian system of logic),[63] enables the inner critique of the synthesis formed between pagan Greek philosophising and the message of Scripture.[64] Such a critique is impossible when the basis of the problem, namely the adoption of Greek categories of thought, is also taken as the basis of the critique, since the existence of the problem cannot be perceived. It is only when the synthesis between pagan philosophy and Scripture is recognised as a problem that the extent to which this has shaped our thinking can be comprehended. Thus in this thesis, the formation of a synthesis between pagan philosophical ideas and divine revelation in Scripture is considered illegitimate and problematic, since they are founded on incompatible religious roots.[65] Through examining the consequences of this synthesising approach, the resulting distortions and constrictions in Christian thought can be revealed, and the validity of this approach will, I trust, become evident as the study proceeds.

A central concern in this thesis is to ask whether in the thought of the Patristic writers we are dealing with genuine problems, or with pseudo-problems generated by the attempt to blend two incompatible thought-worlds: pagan Greek thought and divine revelation. Only by addressing the problem of synthesis can we assess the validity of Patristic theology and exegesis. In addition, study of the way in which enduring theological problems first arose gives insight into the issues really at stake. If a problem was generated by a false formulation of a genuine question, through being expressed for instance in terms of an alien ontology or anthropology, or if we are dealing in fact with a pseudo-problem imported from an external and incompatible viewpoint, then we need to address the root from which that problem arose, and if

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[62] The universe can certainly be analysed theoretically, but it is not rational in nature. This latter is a reductionistic approach that obscures and distorts the many-faceted character of God's creation. Similarly, God is not "intelligent Mind," but a person of diverse characteristics that cannot be reduced to **thought**.

[63] See for instance D H Th Vollenhoven. **De noodzakelijkheid eener Christelijke logica**. Amsterdam: H J Paris, 1932. idem, **Hoofdlijnen der logica**. Kampen: Kok, 1948. N T van der Merwe wrote an M.A. thesis on Vollenhoven's conception of a Christian logic. "Op weg na 'n Christelijke logica. 'N studie van enkele vraagstukke in die logika met bezondere aandag aan D H Th Vollenhoven se viesie van 'n Christelijke logica." Potchestroom University, 1958. For further discussion of different types of logic see R G Tanner. "Stoic influence on the logic of St. Gregory of Nyssa." *Studia Patristica* 18/3 (1989) 557-584.

[64] Such a Christian philosophical system is articulated by Herman Dooyeweerd in his monumental work of scholarship, **A New Critique of Theoretical Thought**. Dooyeweerd's views, and those of other members of the school of philosophy he founded together with Vollenhoven (see previous note), provide the theoretical framework for this thesis.

[65] For instance, Wolfhart Pannenberg states that Greek philosophical conceptions of God cannot be used simply by adding revealed truths to the philosophical doctrine of God, which cannot tolerate supplementation. It contradicts the idea of a philosophy if certain truths are reserved for revelation to be added to that philosophy. Neither can Christianity tolerate the idea that the content of revelation is non-essential supplement or mere illustration of the philosophical concept of God. Panneberg states that "every mere combination here must remain superficial," and what is required is the transformation of philosophical ideas "in the critical light of the biblical idea of God." While the details of the approach taken by Pannenberg differ from that used in this thesis, this underlying rejection of synthesis is basic to both. **Basic Questions in Theology**. Vol. 2, p. 139.

necessary, reject the approach which generated the problem itself, so as to avoid fruitless pursuits along dead-end pathways.

The significance of Patristic exegesis lies partly in the fact that there we first find developed and disseminated many interpretations of Scripture which are still influential. Some of our interpretations have a history longer than we may care to acknowledge, and have roots in problematics and perspectives which we may not wish to own. The failure to examine such exegesis carefully means that we may either somewhat blindly perpetuate interpretations with roots which have been lost in the distant past, or else reject these older interpretations in favour of new and "scientific" exegesis which lacks the richness of thought of the Patristic legacy and overlooks problems which may have been addressed and resolved in an earlier time. It also obscures the catholicity of the church, which is not created anew in each generation, but which must faithfully handle *the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints* [Jude 3]. We live in continuity with the Patristic church; a church which has forgotten its past has no certain future, in exegesis as in anything else. Kannengiesser has given an incisive analysis of the way in which modern attitudes to Patristic exegesis shape our appreciation for their thought.

> [Patristic exegesis] assumes a faithful dedication to the church. Its motivation is doctrinal and apologetic in shifting focuses between the Ten Commandments and the Creed. Its discussion of biblical texts, while bound to the grammar and rhetoric of late antiquity, always serves the purposes of highly spiritual and religiously-minded interpreters. At its best, patristic exegesis communicates more about the church-experience undergone by the exegetes of the second through the seventh century than about the data pertaining directly to the sacred text. Modern exegesis, as a response to the Enlightenment, focuses exclusively on such data. As a discipline, its motivation is no longer theological, nor is its purpose to encounter in scripture the living God. It is a professional exercise of text criticism and historical enquiry, which dispenses the interpreters from being Christian believers, and omits to address scripture as holy. In short, it is a form of exegesis without scripture. Much needs to be clarified about the status in the church of contemporary exegesis. Being by definition a scholastic business, it leads contemporary exegetes, happily confined in their professional specialties, to declare that patristic exegesis is non-critical and therefore irrelevant for the modern reader of the Bible.[66]

While we must give due attention to the contribution of Patristic writers as learned and devout men to the life of the church, we must not be uncritical in our reception of their work. They were not infallible, nor immune to the influences of the culture in which they lived. All exegesis must be critiqued, to assess how it succeeded and where it failed to faithfully expound the Scriptures as the Word of God. We must, therefore, critique their work and allow their work to critique ours, which similarly has its successes and failures. Patristic exegesis is not without value for us today, as

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[66]   Charles Kannengiesser. "The Bible as read in the early church: Patristic exegesis and its presuppositions." *Concilium* 1991/1. London: S.C.M., 1991, pp. 35-36.

we are in continuity and fellowship with the Patristic writers in a common task of grappling with Scripture.

1.3 Methodology of the study

This study will proceed from the contention, as discussed in the previous section, that the synthesis of pagan Greek ideas with Scripture compromises the integrity and distinctiveness of the message of Scripture, and only through uncovering the influence of such ideas can we begin to recover that distinctive message. The worldviews of both ancient and modern interpreters shape their exegesis. By examining how the worldviews of Patristic authors were influencing their exegetical moves, we can uncover something of the roots of the traditions which still influence our exegesis today. T F Torrance has drawn attention to this phenomenon.

> All exegesis, not least present-day exegesis, is caught up in, and determined by, presuppositions that have their roots deep in the centuries behind it. Presuppositions of this kind are all the more powerful and damaging when we are unaware of them, and they require to be exposed by the kind of self-criticism and repentant re-thinking into which examination of the interconnections between dogmatic constructions and exegetical elaborations of our forefathers cannot but force us.[67]

This has been emphasised by Neill and Wright.

> It is impossible for any of us to work without presuppositions. What is important is that we should ourselves be aware of what our presuppositions are, and that we should make allowance for the distorting influence that they are likely to have on our work which professes to be critical and unprejudiced.[68]

This study will pay attention to the way in which specific views of human nature (anthropology) influenced Patristic exegesis, and thus uncover some of the roots of exegetical traditions which still persist. These anthropological models shape and restrict the possible options for eschatological doctrines in consistent theological systems, with special reference to the judgement. That is not to say that Patristic writers are always consistent; often they are not. But where consistency is sought, then prior decisions concerning human nature often provide the direction in which eschatology will develop. We will trace developments within Patristic eschatology, showing how anthropological views, as well as other aspects of Patristic worldviews, led to the variety of approaches which are evident in the literature.

In this thesis I am working with a paradigm for a typology of eschatological views which seeks to avoid the problematic, and essentially unhelpful, classification of such views in terms of their approach to the millennium. Using the traditional categories of

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[67]   T F Torrance. Foreword. James P Martin. **The Last Judgement in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl**, p. vii.

[68]   Stephen Neill and Tom Wright. **The interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986**. 2nd Edition, p. 29.

pre-, post- and a-millennialism fails to provide adequate distinctions between such views, as sometimes there are more commonalities on other issues than differences over the millennium. Also, it seems counter-productive to classify eschatological views solely on the basis of the approach to the millennium, which is not necessarily determinative for the rest of the interpretation of eschatology. A similar rejection of these categories is found in Adrio König.[69]

As an alternative to using approaches to the millennium to classify eschatological views, I will use the attitude adopted to the future of the creation as a whole, that is, creation-affirming and creation-negating approaches. This then enables us to see which thinkers saw the future of the creation in terms of renewal, and which in terms of replacement with another reality. This has more connection with other aspects of Christian theology than is found in millennial views, and thus helps classify different approaches more accurately.

The sources of ideas utilised by Patristic writers have not been examined in detail. Often the Jewish apocryphal literature, especially apocalyptic writings, and pagan sources such as the Sibylline oracles, are drawn on for material.[70] This literature requires specialist treatment in its own right, a task outside the possible scope of this thesis. It is the ideas presented by Patristic writers in the context of the problems under study which is the focus, and not the origins of those ideas themselves.

The temporal extent of the Patristic period is treated according to convention, that is, from the post-apostolic writers to Gregory the Great in the West and John of Damascus in the East. While there have been arguments against this criteria for the Patristic period,[71] there would be little to gain from attempting to establish new ones for the purposes of this study.

1.4 Outline of the chapters

This chapter (Chapter One) is an introduction to the thesis as a whole. The main part of the thesis is divided into three sections. Part One deals with unitary anthropology, and the ways in which Patristic writers who adopted this approach addressed the relationship of body and soul, the nature of death, the intermediate state, resurrection and judgement. Chapter Two discusses the nature of the person in unitary anthropology, examining issues of the goodness of bodily life, the nature of the

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[69]   Adrio König. **The Eclipse of Christ in eschatology**, p. vii, and pp. 128-137.

[70]   Part of this problem arises from the fluid nature of the canon of Scripture in the first three centuries. Many different texts were treated in the same manner as those which now form part of the canon of Scripture, and thus the Patristic writers often cite as authoritative sources which have no such status today. See for instance the use made by Ambrose of 4 Esdras, concerning the storehouses for souls between death and judgement. *Death as a good* 10.46. FC 65, p. 103.

[71]   For instance, J P Smith suggests that we should characterise the Patristic period in terms of the authority of a Father, i.e. a bishop, who upheld orthodoxy, as opposed to the authority of a scholar. On this criteria John of Damascus would not be a "Father" as he was not a bishop, as he defended orthodoxy as a theologian, nor would Isidore of Seville be a "Father," even though he was a bishop, because he wrote simply as a scholar. Smith would place the end of the Patristic period in the fifth century. J P Smith. "The limits of the Patristic period." *Studia Patristica* 9 (1966) 600-601.

"flesh," the conflict with Gnosticism and Docetism over the salvation of the fleshly body, the state of the soul when separated from the body, and arguments for and against the immortality of the soul. We also examine here the immortality possessed or promised to Adam and Eve and the consequences of their sin in this connection. Chapter Three discusses the intermediate state in more detail, contrasting Greek and Latin approaches with those of Syrian Patristic writers; and the status of the martyrs in comparison with other Christians. We then discuss arguments for the doctrine of the resurrection on the basis of the doctrine of creation, and the nature of the resurrection body, including a comparison of the resurrection bodies of the righteous and the wicked. Chapter Four examines the judgement on the Last Day, especially the argument from justice for a judgement of all humankind, the resurrection of the dead to face judgement, and the nature of the judgement itself. We then discuss views of the nature of the eschaton, including the millennium on earth, followed by either the new earth or eternity in heaven. Some who adopted a unitary anthropology did not hold to millennialism.

Part Two deals with the way these same basic issues are treated by those who used an instrumentalist anthropology. Chapter Five commences with a discussion of that anthropological model; considers the attitude towards the fleshly body found in that approach, and examines the origin of asceticism, rejection of sexuality, longing for death as the separation of the soul from the constrictions of the body, and the arguments used to demonstrate the inherent immortality of the soul. Chapter Six discusses the doctrine of the intermediate state, the story of Lazarus in Luke 16, a classic passage on which many arguments for the intermediate state are based; the idea of the individual judgement of the soul and its relationship to the judgement on the Last Day; the idea of purgatory, and the nature of the resurrection body. Chapter Seven examines the idea of heaven as the destination of the soul in instrumentalist thought; reasons for the rejection of millennialism, and the problem of the purpose of a resurrection body in heaven.

Part Three (Chapter Eight) is a discussion of the Patristic exegesis of Psalm 1:5, which for some writers excludes both the righteous and the wicked from judgement, in conflict with the clear teaching of other passages of Scripture. The basis of this interpretation, and how it was supported by and harmonised with the rest of Scripture is considered.

Chapter Nine concludes the study by summarising important findings, and points towards areas still needing to be examined in detail in order to provide clarity on problems discovered in the course of this study.