# 'Kicking the Daylights out of the Devil': The Victory Motif in Some Recent Atonement Theology

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## SUMMARY

In 1930, the Swedish theologian Gustav Aulén began to bring back into vogue the patristic notion of Christ's triumph over demonic powers (*Christus Victor*). There have been further re-appropriations of this theme in the 'Word of Faith' theology (Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland), feminist theology and by the Emerging Church

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## RÉSUMÉ

En 1930, le théologien suédois Gustav Aulén a remis en vogue la conception patristique de la victoire de Christ sur les puissances démoniaques (*Christus Victor*). Cela a donné lieu par la suite à plusieurs ré-appropriations de ce thème, notamment dans la théologie de la « Parole de Foi » (chez Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland), dans la théologie féministe ou encore au sein du mouvement

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## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Im Jahr 1930 begann der schwedische Theologe Gustav Aulén den patristischen Begriff vom Triumph Christi über die dämonischen Mächte (*Christus Victor*) wieder populär zu machen. Seitdem hat man sich dieses Motiv erneut in der „Wort des Glaubens" Theologie (Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland), in der feministischen Theologie und der „Emerging Church" Bewegung

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movement. In these new contexts the Ransom to Satan idea is never appropriated wholesale. Rather, adaptations of the patristic model are being formulated within the context of a desire to move away from submissive, defeatist or austere styles of religion in favour of something more muscular and less individualistic. The present article analyses this new trend.

de l'Église émergente. Dans ces nouvelles approches, la notion de rançon versée à Satan n'est jamais reprise telle quelle. Ce schème patristique subit plutôt des adaptations dans ces nouveaux contextes où se rencontre le désir d'abandonner un style de religion caractérisé par la soumission, le défaitisme et l'austérité pour aller vers quelque chose de plus musclé et moins individualiste. Le présent article analyse cette nouvelle tendance.

(„Gemeinde in Entwicklung") angeeignet. In solch einem neuen Kontext hat man sich nicht die These einer Lösegeldzahlung an Satan als solche angeeignet. Man nimmt eher Anpassungen an das patristische Modell vor im Zusammenhang mit dem Wunsch, sich von einer untertänigen, defätistischen oder streng religiösen Sichtweise abzuwenden zugunsten einer eher kraftvollen und weniger individualistischen Perspektive. Der vorliegende Artikel analysiert diese neue Tendenz.

## 1. Introduction

The subject of this article will be those theories of the atonement that, in various ways, emphasise that the death of Christ was a victory over evil. Normally classed as a single theory of the atonement with a number of subdivisions,[1] this is the classical patristic view of the atonement which, at the hands of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, came to be dominated by notions of a ransom paid to the devil, before finally transmuting, at the hands of Augustine and Gregory the Great, into a legal theory, anticipating Anselm.[2] This patristic concept is one that has, perhaps surprisingly, been seen as an especially attractive option for those seeking

a theory of the atonement that pictures God as having dealt in a very decisive, cosmic and supernatural way with the problem of evil. Especially notable is the way in which this particular theory of the atonement is being busily re-invented not just within the academies but, as we shall see, at a popular level among leading ministry practitioners.

Serious theological reflection on the patristic doctrine of the atonement dates back to the origins of the discipline of historical theology itself, with a number of historical theologians including significant discussion of the origins and development of the Ransom to Satan,[3] culminating in 1919 with Hastings Rashdall writing one of the most scathing treatments of the Ransom to Satan theory that would ever be written.[4] Complementing the offerings of the historical theology tradition came a serious treatment of the patristic theory from the Anglican Nathaniel Dimock.[5] The three British historians of the atonement, Franks,[6] Grensted[7] and (much later) McDonald,[8] helpfully summarise the findings of the earlier Continental historians of dogma without adding anything new to the discussion. The contributions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were important in producing a body of critical reflection on the history of the theory sufficient to bring it to the attention of a new generation of theologians at mid-century.

Not until bishop Gustav Aulén's Olaus Petri Lectures of 1930[9] was there any serious attempt at a contemporary re-appropriation of the doctrine. Until him, the Ransom to Satan was treated entirely as an historical curiosity. Further similar treatments of the doctrine would yet appear[10] but it seems that there was no going back from this point. Within a few decades, discussions of the *Christus Victor* model from a great variety of perspectives appeared in articles,[11] especially after the American edition of the book went to press in 1951.[12] In 1953, F.W. Dillistone[13] persuasively added his advocacy of a *Christus Victor* approach as the one most in line with the general tenor of salvation history in both Old and New Testament. John Macquarrie also lent his weight.[14] Volume 2 of Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, appearing in 1957, broke new ground in re-appropriating *Christus Victor* categories in the service of his existentialist vision of the Christian faith.[15] Oscar Cullmann also gave some support.[16]

Next, in apparent isolation from the still growing *Christus Victor* debate, there arose within the Neo-Pentecostalism of the 1970s an extraordinarily dramatic and, at times, grotesque view of the atonement that utilised the patristic belief in a descent into Hades as a key component in the defeat of Satan.[17] The *Christus Victor* view also spoke to liberation theology better than other models of the atonement.[18] Darby Kathleen Ray,[19] taking her cue from Paul Fiddes,[20] adapted and demythologised the Ransom to Satan for the feminist argument. She was followed by J. Denny Weaver, who, during the 1990s, began to recognise the nonviolent appeal of the model. He applied a similar re-appropriation to black and womanist contexts, culminating in his *The Nonviolent Atonement*.[21] Euegene TeSelle, in a short but significant work, also retrieved the model in the interests of social and political justice.[22] More recently still, the Emerging Church movement favours a transition from penal substitution to *Christus Victor* as the preferred model.[23] Other Evangelical responses have also continued to flow steadily.[24]

It is to the first appearance of this new paradigm in modern theology that I will now turn in more detail.

## 2. Re-appropriations 1: Mid-twentieth-century forays

### 2.1 Aulén's *Christus Victor*

By the 1930s, while Europe was recovering from unprecedented military bloodshed and careering into unknown new worlds fashioned by increasingly powerful dictators and their ideologies, the patristic ways of looking at the cross of Christ took on a new value to the Swedish professor and bishop Gustav Aulén (1879-1977).[25] The decline of Enlightenment naturalism is also named, and very plausibly, as a factor that allowed a resurgence of interest in and belief in the existence of supernatural evil powers at work in the world today and probably accounts for the increasing popularity of the Aulén paradigm over the past 80 years.[26]

Aulén essentially rewrote church history in favour of his view, claiming that it always was the 'classic' view of the atonement. To argue that this was the case from the Fathers was straightforward enough. But to get around the overtly penal views of the atonement held during the Reformation, he had to claim that Luther himself held the *Christus Victor* view of Christ's death as a victory over Satan, and that this had been ignored by subsequent advocates of penal substitution, beginning with Luther's successor, Melanchthon. Aulén,

not surprisingly, calls into question all subsequent scholarship, urging a return to the classic view of the Fathers and Luther. Here is a definitive passage from Aulén:

> This type of view may be described provisionally as the 'dramatic'. Its central theme is the idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ – *Christus Victor* – fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants' under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him reconciles the world to Himself.[27]

As we saw, a wave of responses followed the American edition of the book in 1951. Some of these were serious evaluations while others seem to use the term *Christus Victor* as a trendy slogan related only in the most general way to the Aulén paradigm.[28] Colin Gunton's biblical critique is among the more serious treatments.[29] His two main concerns are, firstly, that Aulén's view needs to be extended from a mythology of a past event into something of ongoing significance. Paul speaks of an ongoing life of victory that is available to believers (Rom 8:37) but Aulén seems content with a mere 'story of the gods'.[30] Aulén claims that his purpose in writing the book was not 'apologetic' but 'historical'.[31] He argues that his primary intention was not to advance the theory as something that should inform contemporary praxis, though he clearly believed that it should; and he concludes:

> I am persuaded that no form of Christian teaching has any future before it except such as can keep steadily in view the reality of evil in the world, and go to meet the evil with a battle-song of triumph. Therefore I believe that the classic idea of the Atonement and of Christianity is coming back – that is to say, the genuine, authentic Christian faith.[32]

Secondly, according to Gunton, Aulén is too triumphalistic, not taking into account 'the human and even tragic elements in the story'.[33] These two observations, namely, that the model is too dualistic and mythological and, arising out of this very other-worldliness of the theory, that it fails to acknowledge tragedy and suffering both in the Gospel narrative itself and in human life, generally recur in the critiques surrounding *Christus Victor*.

## 2.2 Tillich's *Christus Victor*

Paul Tillich is among those who, mid-century, made some preliminary forays into a re-appropria-

tion of the patristic model. This was not to say that he was especially favourable to the patristic doctrine in its original forms; he describes Origen's depictions as 'almost a comedy'.[34] He understood the world of early Christianity to be steeped in fear of demonic powers from which people were in need of liberation. Life was filled with a fear that he describes as existential estrangement: 'Without the experience of the conquest of existential estrangement, the *Christus Victor* symbol never could have arisen either in Paul or in Origen.'[35]

Tillich's analysis of *Christus Victor* as part of a conversation between the questions of philosophy and the answers of theology anticipates the recent efforts on the part of Emerging Church advocates to re-contextualise the model within Postmodernity.

## 3. Re-appropriations 2: The late twentieth century

### 3.1 Word of Faith *Christus Victor*

Fundamental to Word of Faith theology is the belief that humanity came under the authority of Satan at the Fall. Salvation therefore had to involve a decisive blow to Satan's dominion. The consequent re-titling of humanity with a renewed authority over creation and over Satan himself is commonly appropriated via various spiritual warfare strategies.[36] However, the Word of Faith theory of the atonement goes significantly beyond this basic understanding and envisages a highly dramatic showdown between Jesus and the devil in hell.

William Atkinson's dissertation was the first major analysis of the atonement in Word of Faith teaching.[37] Like all other aspects of Word of Faith teaching,[38] the genealogy of the Word of Faith view of the atonement is traceable to the nineteenth-century New England preacher and prolific writer, E.W. Kenyon.[39] He in turn appears to have been influenced at least by Irenaeus and possibly by other patristic writings.[40] From Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin[41] and then Kenneth Copeland[42] derive all their leading ideas. At the heart of the Word of Faith concept of the atonement is the 'Jesus Died Spiritually' idea, a doctrine so controversial as to have aroused some opposition from within the Word of Faith movement itself.[43] On this view, the substitutionary nature of Christ's death is taken to dramatic extremes. The notion is introduced that, if the sinful nature of humanity is

at its core satanic, Christ must have taken on himself a satanic nature on the cross.[44] This was what caused him to die spiritually, that is, to be cut off from God. But not only was he cut off from God, he descended into hell where, as the bearer now of a satanic nature, he was required to 'serve time'.[45] Satan mistakenly thought he had the Son of God in his grasp. I will let Hagin tell the rest:

> I'm certain that all the devils of hell raced up and down the back alleys of hell rejoicing, 'We've got the Son of God in our hands! We've defeated God's purpose!' But on that third morning, the God who is more than enough said, 'It is enough! He has satisfied the claims of justice.'[46]

Copeland is still more theatrical as he describes the climactic moment:

> … the power of the Almighty God began to stream down from heaven and break the locks off the gates of hell… Jesus began to stir. The power of heaven penetrated and re-created His spirit. He rose up and in a moment of super conquest, He kicked the daylights out of the devil and all those who were doing his work… Then Jesus came up out of that place of torment in triumph, went back through the tomb, into His body, and walked out of there.[47]

This version of events clearly falls within the *Christus Victor* tradition but to what extent it resembles the patristic Ransom to Satan theories has been the subject of debate.[48] The dissimilarities, according to Atkinson, are these:

1. Nowhere in these writings is the atonement referred to as a ransom. There is no concept that anything was paid to the devil. Instead, as we saw from the extracts, it is God's justice that is satisfied in true penal substitutionary fashion.
2. The location of Christ's victory over the devil is hell. In the patristic theories, there is a descent into hell, which is understood to be plundered by Jesus, yet the moment of victory occurs on the cross itself.[49]

### 3.2 Feminist *Christus Victor*: Darby Kathleen Ray

The fact that such a triumphalistic view of the cross has recently begun to appeal to feminism has come as a huge surprise. Darby Kathleen Ray has been the strongest advocate of this feminist re-appropriation of the patristic view of the atonement.[50] Its attraction to her appears to be the fact that, on this view – and this is especially noticeable in Irenaeus to whom she refers often – God demonstrates the ultimate nonviolent resistance of evil to us. Even though God is almighty, he chooses, Narnia style,[51] to enter into negotiations with the enemy and to set humankind free from the power of evil by observing the rights ceded to it by human sin.

Even the later developments of the ransom theory from Origen and Gregory of Nyssa onwards, in which the deception of Satan is overtly included, seem not to present a stumbling block to Ray. Regarding the bait, mousetrap and snare metaphors so despised by Rashdall,[52] she claims that, 'All were metaphorical attempts to express the conviction that the powers of evil were defeated at the moment of their apparent victory, and that, paradoxically, Christ was triumphant at the moment of his defeat on the cross.'[53]

Ray's crucial move as she attempts to retrieve the patristic theory is to demythologise and broaden the concept of a ransom paid to the devil into a ransom paid to evil. She takes her cue from Paul Fiddes' work, *Past Event and Present Salvation*.[54] Fiddes wrestles with the question of just how, in the face of so much present-day evil, we can claim that a comprehensive victory has been won, or even that a turning point in the war has been reached, as had been Aulén's claim. He begins to answer this by more clearly identifying the 'tyrants' that held humankind so that we then understand in what realm, from God's viewpoint, this victory is meant to have been won. For Fiddes, there are three tyrants, all taken from Paul's letters: sin, the law and death. It is this move away from a victory over demons into a theory resting on a victory over less mythological and more specific evils that seems to have caught Ray's eye.

However, her broadening of the concept into a general evil threatens to lead her into a corner where she could be accused, in an age rampant with evil, of describing a fictitious victory. This she anticipates by emphasising the volitional element. We have all given evil permission to reign whenever we failed to resist it. In the case of women, this is the failure to assert oneself, which is understood to be just as serious a sin as the more masculine sin of pride that traditional depictions of the cross are intended to address. It is not lack of humility, Ray argues, that needs atoning for in women – at least not typically. It is lack of self-assertion. She cites a Methodist set prayer that emphasises obedience, saying, 'Prayers such as this one, though seemingly innocuous, inscribe their petitioners

with an ideology of quietude that treats resistance to authority as a shameful transgression.'[55] Using this female kind of sin on the one hand and the male kind of sin, '…the unjust or avaricious use of power',[56] on the other as definitive of evil, she is in a position to disable the main objection to the Ransom to Satan theory, namely that it presupposes that the devil has rights. In her version, there is no devil and there are no rights to bestow upon him. Evil, however, has been given great power by both men and women, such that it 'seems to take on a life of its own'.[57] We have given evil rights by not resisting it. Evil is thus depersonalised, but then begins to be re-personified as a power that, to quote Irenaeus, 'transgresses all boundaries'.[58] Her ideas are summed up in the following appraisal of Irenaeus. She agrees with his conviction that:

… in the person of Jesus, God has acted not only to reveal the true nature of evil but also to decenter and delegitimate its authority by luring it into exposing its own moral bankruptcy and thus defeating itself, hence opening up the possibility for human beings to escape enslavement to evil.[59]

She identifies the following weaknesses of the patristic view: firstly, it is too dualistic, by which she means that it implies a moral, over-simplistic, self-justifying dualism that demonises certain groups. Definitions of good and evil are too clear-cut.[60] Secondly, it is too cosmic. Humans are passive and irresponsible. It is susceptible of a comic-book superhero interpretation.[61] Lastly, it is too triumphalistic. The patristic view portrays the victory as a done deal, whereas 'the suggestion that good has defeated evil, even from an eschatological perspective, seems impossible to confirm'.[62]

### 3.3 Broadening the appeal: J. Denny Weaver

Another writer who is attracted to the notion of nonviolent resistance in the patristic model is the Mennonite, J. Denny Weaver.[63] He takes up the cause not only of feminists but also of black theologians generally,[64] and womanist theologians specifically. He also sides clearly with the primitivism of Anabaptist churchmanship by drawing parallels between the post-Christian West and the pre-Constantine Church in which *Christus Victor* views of atonement held sway.[65]

His particular theory is 'narrative *Christus Victor*', by which he means, '*Christus Victor* depicted in the realm of history'.[66] Reflecting on the Book of Revelation, he explains that narra-

tive *Christus Victor* is 'The historical framework of emperors and the construct of church confronting empire'.[67] He further claims that the Gospels fit Revelation in this regard, reinforcing this 'universal and cosmic story of the confrontation of reign of God and rule of Satan'.[68]

Narrative *Christus Victor* is indeed atonement if one means a story in which the death and resurrection of Jesus definitively reveal the basis of power in the universe, so that the invitation from God to participate in his rule overcomes the forces of sin and reconciles sinners to God.[69]

Weaver understands that the devil is not a literal person but an accumulation of evil within human institutions, organisations and cultures. These are the 'principalities and powers' of which Paul speaks. Chief of these was the accumulation of evils that conspired to kill Jesus. Christ's non-violent resistance to these abusive powers is good news for victims of abuse today:

When Jesus confronts the rule of evil … there is no longer the difficulty of a problematic image for victims of abuse. Jesus depicted in narrative *Christus Victor* is no passive victim. He is an active participant in confronting evil…[70]

### 4. Re-appropriations 3: Emerging *Christus Victor*

Though anticipated by earlier movements elsewhere in the English-speaking world,[71] from the late 1990s in America there arose a scattered movement that sought to deconstruct modernist ways of being church in favour of a wholesale adoption of postmodernism by the Church.[72] A leading light has been Brian McLaren whose interest mostly lies in deconstructing North American Evangelical churchmanship. A typical effect of this style of deconstruction on atonement theology has been what has recently been termed the kaleidoscopic view of the atonement[73] – a commitment-free embrace of all ways of looking at the atonement.

Leading the way in theological reflection on behalf of the Emerging Church movement has been Gregory Boyd. He is distinct in his attempt to offer some positive alternatives to traditional Evangelicalism. While McLaren is known more for his relentless and provocative criticism of Evangelical orthodoxy, Boyd attempts something more constructive. He insists that, while diversity in atonement theology should be celebrated, there

is an underlying and unified reality to it that repays careful study.[74] He presents a convincing case for the fundamentally cosmic and demonological context in which salvation is understood in both Testaments.[75] In a nuanced way, he is even able to support from Scripture the patristic notions of God deceiving the devil and he successfully retrieves the notion from its notorious crudity.[76] He does this by ingeniously appealing to the fact that, while demons clearly understood who Jesus was, they were seemingly not aware (as in 1 Cor 2:8) of why he came since their evil blinded them to the sacrificial love that had sent the Son into their realm.

Via the Emerging Church, the *Christus Victor* approach promises to speak to a new generation of church-goers who are conscious as never before of pernicious global evils to which more individualistic versions of the gospel message seem to have few answers. However, it is significant that the leaders of the Emerging Church movement are classic members of 'Generation X' (people born between 1960 and 1980), which is characterised by distrust of authority and established social structures. The generation succeeding them, often termed the 'Millennials' (because they were born within the two decades before the year 2000), are much less prone to deconstruction and much more concerned with connectedness. It remains to be seen whether the other major facet to patristic atonement theology – the participation in Christ – will prove popular amongst them.[77]

## 5. Summary and evaluation

The views considered in this article can be summed up by saying that the cross is seen as a victory over evil, often either personified as the devil or as other equally personal powers that are in perpetual antipathy towards God and His rule. This evil is dealt with in one of three ways:

1. Undoing its basis. The patristic theories understand humanity as having come under the authority of the devil or under the control of corruptibility. A ransom is paid to buy off the devil's claims. The Emerging Church retrieval makes use of this original patristic understanding that evil somehow implodes and defeats itself at the cross. Evil, through its ignorance of the Son's mission, oversteps the mark and is forced to relinquish its claims.
2. Non-violently resisting it. This is the feminist approach to the patristic theory, that takes note of the way in which the devil is overcome in the ransom theory. He is not overcome by force, even though it lies within God's power to do so. God instead stoops to overcome the devil's hold on humankind in a nonviolent way that honours claims made by the devil, however legitimate or otherwise these are. This amplifies the element identified above of evil defeating itself.
3. Taking power from it. This is the Word of Faith understanding, which shares the fundamental patristic starting point, namely, that humans surrendered their authority to the devil at the fall. From that time the devil has held a legal right over humanity and over what was intended as man's domain, creation. With this understanding of the problem, the cross and resurrection are construed as a dethroning of the devil and an enthronement of born-again humans.

A number of things worked together to bring the victory motif in from the cold within Christian reflection both at an academic and a practitioner level. Firstly, the existence of systemic evil attaching itself to ideologies and governments to the point of bringing about two world wars has made a cosmic understanding of evil much more imaginable than it could have been before the twentieth century. Secondly, advances in biblical theology have allowed us to see that the Bible itself was all along infused with this kind of world view, so that whatever we understand salvation by the cross to be, it must fit in with this framework in order to be exegetically credible, before we even begin to apply such insights to the Church or the life of faith. Thirdly, the retreat of Christianity from public life and socio-political privileges has inevitably spawned religious radicalism such as that found within the Word of Faith movement. A gospel that aligns itself with the victory of Christ over evil powers finds a ready audience amongst those whose faith claims are newly marginalised by a pluralist, relativist and radically secular society.

By way of evaluation, the least credible of the various attempts at retrieving the ransom theory would seem to be the Word of Faith version because it misunderstands the crucial inner logic of the theory. In the context of the systemic evil of Rome, the persecuted church of Irenaeus' era was comforted by the idea of a God who did not stoop to the level of the brutally oppressive, satanic methods of the empire but subverted and

dismantled their power in a nonviolent way.[78] Seizing upon the dramatic flavour of *Christus Victor*, Hagin and Copeland (however they came by this model) instead end up distorting the model into something intensely violent in which Christ 'kicks the living daylights out of the devil'. For similar reasons, the strongest of the retrievals would be that of Darby Kathleen Ray. She depersonalises Irenaeus' devil and pictures humankind as needing liberation from the power of systemic evil, to which humans have ceded their authority. This hubristic evil is made to implode by Christ drawing its sting, concentrating all its powers on achieving the death of the Son of God, only to find that death could not hold him. This retains the spirit of Irenaeus' original view, which was dominated by the thought that divine ingenuity proved more powerful than brute force, at the same time as bringing us back to what Boyd correctly observed was the biblical as well as the early church worldview of a cosmos locked in combat.[79]

## 6. Application

What are we to do in light of this victory if it is to amount to more than a mythic fiction? Darby Ray's outcomes are perhaps a little too exemplarist for our liking, though surely worth reproducing here:

> His [Christ's] use of courage, creativity, and the power of truth to uncover and disrupt the hegemony of power-as-control becomes a prototype for further strategies and action.[80]

Thus, at the cross, we are shown what it looks like for 'power-as-control' to be replaced by 'power-as-compassion'.[81] But to be true to Irenaeus (and to the Bible), something more than this is needed, and Irenaeus supplies it. The other half of Irenaeus' theory was his 'recapitulation' model: Christ's participation in every aspect of the human, which was always coupled with what would later be called *theosis*: our partaking of the divine nature: '[Christ became] what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.'[82] Our actual participation by faith in the risen life of the Victorious Christ empowers us to live in the good of that victory as part of the answer to, no longer part of the problem of, satanically-inspired human evil.

And so this model of the work of Christ seems worthy of continued attention from those who seek culturally relevant ways of communicating the Christian gospel. There remain, I believe, untapped riches within the many facets of this model that could be received and understood as truly good news by people caught at a personal, social or political level in the terrible power of evil.

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## Endnotes

1 In 1949, H.E.W. Turner gave his Passion Week lectures a title in the singular; they were later published as *The Patristic Doctrine of the Atonement* (London: Mowbray, 1952). More recent taxonomies have, as part of a trend that is now familiar, emphasised the multifarious nature of patristic approaches to the atonement; TeSelle, e.g., has three variants: ransom, abuse of power and the overcoming of death, see E. TeSelle, 'The Cross as Ransom', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4.2 (1996) 147-154, while Shelton also divides patristic atonement theory into three but has recapitulation, ransom and *Christus Victor*, using 'dramatic' as the one unifying epithet: R.L. Shelton, *Cross and Covenant: Interpreting the Atonement for 21st Century Mission* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006) 159-172.

2 See S. Finlan, *Problems with Atonement* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005) 67-69. Aulén understood judicial categories to be already poised for takeover as early as Tertullian and Cyprian: G. Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (London: SPCK, 1931) 97-99.

3 R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* Vol. I (originally 1898) English translation: *Text-Book of the History of Dogma* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956); A. von Harnack, *History of Dogma* Vol. II, transl. from 3rd German ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1901) 367-368; F. Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studien der Dogmengeschichte* (Halle: Max Niemayer, 1906); J. Riviere, *Le dogme de la Redemption* (Paris: Librairie Victor LeCoffre, 1914).

4 H. Rashdall, *The Christian Idea of Atonement* (London: Macmillan, 1919).

5 N. Dimock, *The Doctrine of the Death of Christ* (London: E. Stock, 1903).

6 R.S. Franks, *A History of the Work of Christ in its Ecclesiastical Development* Vol. I [1918] (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1962).

7 L.W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1920).

8 H.D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).

9 Originally entitled *Den kristna försoningstanken* (The Christian Idea of the Atonement). This was published in 1930 following his series of lectures

that were delivered in Uppsala that same year. The English translation appeared in 1931, cf. note 2.

10  Most notably, Turner, *Patristic Doctrine of the Atonement*.

11  First, not surprisingly given Aulén's radical reinterpretation of Luther, there came a Lutheran response: George O. Evenson, 'A Critique of Aulén's *Christus Victor*', *Concordia Theological Monthly* 28.10 (1957) 738-749; later Ted Peters, 'The Atonement in Anselm and Luther, Second Thoughts About Aulén's *Christus Victor*', *Lutheran Quarterly* 24.3 (1972) 301-314; then, from an Anglo-Catholic perspective, Eugene Fairweather, 'Incarnation and Atonement: An Anselmian Response to Aulén's *Christus Victor*', *Canadian Journal of Theology* 7.3 (1961) 167-175. There appeared a study around *Christus Victor* and J.S. Bach: Charles B. Naylor, 'Bach's Interpretation of the Cross', *Theology* 78 (1975) 397-404, followed by Calvin Stapert, '*Christus Victor*: Bach's St. John Passion', *Reformed Journal* 39 (1989) 17-23; then *Christus Victor* and youth work: R.H. Edwin Espy, 'In Celebration of Amsterdam 1939', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 16 (1979) 1-212; now, a Roman Catholic response: Mark Heath, 'Salvation: A Roman Catholic Perspective', *Review & Expositor* 79.2 (1982) 275-278; and from an Anglican perspective came William P. Loewe, 'Irenaeus' Soteriology: *Christus Victor* Revisited', *Anglican Theological Review* 67.1 (1985) 1-15; and more recently, Michael Ovey, 'Appropriating Aulén? Employing *Christus Victor* models of the atonement', *Churchman* 124.4 (2010) 297-330. Colin Gunton engaged with the model in '*Christus Victor* Revisited: A study in Metaphor and the Transformation of Meaning', *Journal of Theological Studies* 36.1 (1985) 129-145 and in *The Actuality of Atonement: A study of metaphor, rationality and the Christian tradition* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) esp. 57-58. Rather more recently came a series of Mennonite responses: J. Denny Weaver, '*Christus Victor*, Ecclesiology and Christology', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 68.3 (1994) 433-576; and *idem*, 'Some Theological Implications of *Christus Victor*', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 70 (1996) 483-499; a Mennonite response to Weaver is Thomas Finger, '*Christus Victor* and the Creeds: Some Historical Considerations', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 72 (1998) 31-51 and his, 'Pilgram Marpeck and the *Christus Victor* Motif', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78 (2004) 53-77; later Thomas Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004) 331-365. From a Nazarene perspective William M. Greathouse, 'Sanctfication and the *Christus Victor* Motif in Wesleyan Theology', *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 38.2 (2003) 217-229. There is also a recent Brethren response to Weaver's particular version

of *Christus Victor*: Kate Eisenbise, 'Resurrection as Victory? The eschatological implications of J. Denny Weaver's "Narrative *Christus Victor*" model of the atonement', *Brethren Life and Thought* 53.3 (2008) 9-22.

12  G. Aulén, *Christus Victor: A Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, (New York: Macmillan, 1951). Boersma goes so far as to say that the 'earlier publication of Aulén's work in 1931 was an isolated occurrence': H. Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004) 194 n.52.

13  F.W. Dillistone, 'A Biblical and Historical Appraisal of Theories of the Atonement', *Theology Today* 10 (1953) 185-195.

14  J. Macquarrie, 'Demonology and the Classic Idea of the Atonement', *Expository Times* 68 (1956) 5-6, 60-63.

15  P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Vol II (London: James Nisbet, 1957) 197-198.

16  O. Cullmann, *Christus und die Zeit*; English *Christ and Time* (London: SCM, 1962), especially his discussion of Psalm 110:1 on page 193.

17  Analysed most recently by William Atkinson, 'A Theological Appraisal of the Doctrine that Jesus Died Spiritually, as Taught by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Edinburgh University, 2007).

18  S. Maimela, 'The Atonement in the Context of Liberation Theology', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 39 (1982) 45-54.

19  D.K. Ray, *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, abuse and ransom* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998); similarly T. Megill-Cobbler, 'A Feminist Rethinking of Punishment Imagery in Atonement', *Dialog* 35.1 (1996) 14-20.

20  P. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian idea of atonement* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989).

21  J.D. Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); see also his 'Narrative *Christus Victor*: The Answer to Anselmian Atonement Violence' in John Sanders (ed), *Atonement and Violence: A Theological Conversation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006) 1-32.

22  E. TeSelle, 'The Cross as Ransom', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4.2 (1996) 147-170.

23  Greg Boyd, popular within the Emerging Church movement, is co-author of G. Boyd, J.B. Green, B.R. Reichenbach and T.R. Schreiner, *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (Nottingham: IVP, 2006) and *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1997). He has also named his ministry '*Christus Victor* Ministries'. See a number of recent studies of *Christus Victor* in dialogue with contemporary culture, in particular Brad Harper, '*Christus Victor*, Postmodernism and

the Shaping of Atonement Theology', *Cultural Encounters* 2.1 (2005) 37-51, and Charles Brown, 'The Atonement: Healing in a Postmodern Society', *Interpretation* 53 (1999) 34-43.

24 Youssouf Dembele, 'Salvation as Victory: A Reconsideration of the Concept of Salvation in the Light of Jesus Christ's Life and Work Viewed as a Triumph Over the Personal Powers of Evil' (PhD Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2001); Henri Blocher, 'Agnus Victor: The Atonement as Victory and Vicarious Punishment' in J. Stackhouse (ed), *What Does it Mean to be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

25 Reflecting on the 1951 edition: 'In the wake of Auschwitz and Hiroshima the notion that malevolent forces twist and pervert relations among nations and persons, spawning countless forms of sin, began to sound strangely plausible.' Finger, 'Pilgram Marpeck and the *Christus Victor* Motif', 54.

26 Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 193-194, who cites in support Aulén, *Christus Victor* (1951 edn) 7-15, Boyd, *God at War,* 61-72 and Dembele, 'Salvation as Victory', 12. Weaver notes that '… cosmic and demonic imagery …' had been '… incompatible with a modern world view …': J.D. Weaver, 'Atonement for the NonConstantinian Church', *Modern Theology* 6.4 (1990) 307.

27 Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 20.

28 E.g. Stapert, '*Christus Victor*: Bach's St. John Passion', *passim* and Espy *et al*, 'In Celebration of Amsterdam 1939', *passim*.

29 Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*, esp. 57-58.

30 Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*, 57.

31 Aulén's closing caveat does not appear to have been persuasive for most reviewers, however, e.g. Boersma: 'It is clear that Aulén feels that we need a return to the *Christus Victor* theme…' Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 182, a fact that Boersma clearly agrees with: Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 181-182.

32 Aulén, *Christus Victor,* 176.

33 Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*, 58. He is similarly accused of being too 'monergistic', making salvation into the work of God alone to the point of effectively denying the full humanity of Christ in docetic fashion: Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,* 185, who also cites Fairweather, 'Incarnation and Atonement', 161-175, and Dembele, 'Salvation as Victory', 65-66 in support. Boersma also calls for a more participatory element to Aulén's model: Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross,*185.

34 Tillich, *Systematic Theology* II, 198.

35 Tillich, *Systematic Theology* II, 198.

36 Scholarly works relating to spiritual warfare include W. Carr, *Angels and Principalities* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1981); W. Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); A. Walker, *Enemy Territory: The Christian Struggle for the World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987); N.G. Wright, *The Fair Face of Evil* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1989); R. Guelich, 'Spiritual Warfare: Jesus, Paul and Peretti', *Pneuma* 13.1 (1991) 33-64; C.E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 1992); P. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 203-215; Andrew Walker, 'The Devil You Think You Know: Demonology and the Charismatic Movement' in T.A. Smail, A. Walker and N.G. Wright (eds.), *Charismatic Renewal* (London: SPCK, 1995) 86-105; C.E. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); W. Ellis, *Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religious Movements, and the Media* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

37 Atkinson, 'Theological Appraisal'; it is also available as a book: *The Death of Jesus: A Pentecostal Investigation* (Leiden: Brill, 2009). An earlier version of part of the work appeared as an article: William Atkinson, 'The Nature of the Crucified Christ in Word-Faith Teaching', *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31.2 (2007) 169-184.

38 See my 'What the Faith Teachers Mean by "Faith" – An evaluation of the Faith Teachers' concept of faith in the light of Hebrews 11:1 and Mark 11:22-24' (Unpublished MA dissertation, Manchester, 2004) for an analysis of the faith concept.

39 Three books of his are significant: E.W. Kenyon, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1989 [1945]); *Identification: A Romance in Redemption* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1986); and *The Wonderful Name of Jesus* (Lynnwood: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, first published 1927).

40 Atkinson, 'Theological Appraisal', 227-228.

41 See his *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1979); *Authority of the Believer* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1967); and *El Shaddai* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1980).

42 Especially his *Jesus Died Spiritually* (Fort Worth: KCM, n.d.) and his *Jesus in Hell* (Fort Worth: KCM, n.d.).

43 H. Freeman, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually? Exposing the JDS Heresy* (Warsaw: Faith Ministries & Publications, n.d.).

44 Humanity must apparently '… partake either of God's nature or of Satan's nature', see E.W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption* 2nd ed. (Lynnwood: Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society, 1969) 28; see also Dan McConnell's appraisal: 'Spiritual death is thus "a nature" leading to a "new Satanic creation"' in D. McConnell, *The Promise*

of *Health and Wealth: A Historical and Biblical Evaluation of the Modern Faith Movement* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990) 118, citing E.W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of our Redemption*, 28. Likewise Hagin: 'Spiritual death means having Satan's nature.' K. Hagin, *Redemption* (Tulsa: Faith Library, 1981) 29.

45 Fred Price, writing in his *Ever Increasing Faith Messenger*. The most reliable citation of this seems to be that it was June 1980 (page 7), quoted in McConnell, *Promise of Health and Wealth*, 120. Original source not found. The saying attributed to him is this: 'Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on a cross? If that were the case, the two thieves could have paid our price. No, the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God.' Of some interest on this subject is Wayne Grudem, 'He Did Not Descend into Hell: A Plea for Following Scripture Instead of the Apostle's Creed', *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 34.1 (1991) 103-113.

46 Hagin, *El Shaddai*, 7.

47 Kenneth Copeland, 'The Gates of Hell Shall not Prevail', *The Believer's Voice of Victory* 25.4 (1997) 4-7. I am indebted to Atkinson for both of these extraordinary extracts.

48 According to Atkinson, those who stress the similarities include A. Perriman (ed.), *Faith, Health and Prosperity* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003) 115; McConnell, *The Promise of Health and Wealth*, 119, 125-126; T.A. Smail, Andrew Walker and Nigel Wright, '"Revelation Knowledge" and Knowledge of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy' in Smail, Walker and Wright, *Charismatic Renewal*, 70-71; W. DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit: Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy Spirit* (Altamonte Springs: Creation House, 1992) 240, 270-271; J.R. Spencer, *Heresy Hunters: Character Assassination in the Church* (Lafayette: Huntington House, 1993) 102. Emphasising the differences there is a mere footnote in H. Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1993) 395 n.2.

49 Atkinson, 'Theological Appraisal', 225-226.

50 She is at the moderate end of a scale that, at its most radical, despairs of any existing soteriology that is relevant to women; Elaine Storkey provides a helpful summary of viewpoints in 'Atonement and Feminism', *Anvil* 11.3 (1994) 227-235 [227-228]. From a similar perspective see also Margo Houts, 'Classical Atonement Imagery: Feminist and Evangelical Challenges', *Catalyst* 19.3 (1993) 1-6. Darby Kathleen Ray is given a very positive review by Evangelicals Joel Green and Mark Baker in *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000) 171-183. Much cooler is Boersma's treatment in *Violence, Hospitality and the Cross*, 196-199. Besides feminism, Ray also speaks

to Latin American liberation issues: 'Together [Christ conquering and conquered], these two sides of the same Christological coin feed the violence of the few and the passivity of the many.' Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 88.

51 See Charles Taliaferro, 'A Narnian Theory of the Atonement', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41.1 (1988) 75-92.

52 Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, 241-310.

53 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 121.

54 Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, especially 115-124.

55 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 25. Storkey sums up the view of many feminist theologians in saying that all that is involved with Christ being a sacrificial victim 'leaves women anchored in their own victim status which is justified and romanticised as identification with the Saviour'; Storkey, 'Atonement and Feminism', 231. In a similar vein is Rita Nakashima Brock: 'The shadow of the punitive father must always lurk behind the atonement. He haunts images of forgiving grace.' R.N. Brock, 'And a Little Child will lead Us: Christology and Child Abuse', in J. Brown and C. Bohm (eds), *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique* (New York: Pilgrim, 1989) 53.

56 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 121.

57 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 122.

58 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 123 endnote 13, citing *Against Heresies* V.21.2 and V. 21.112.

59 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 123. Similarly, TeSelle gives an important insight into what the cross does to the abuse of power. He defines the abuse of power as: 'overstepping one's authority and consequently being discredited'; TeSelle, 'The Cross as Ransom', 161.

60 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 126-127.

61 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 126-128.

62 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 128.

63 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*. This book is most rigorously critiqued from within the Mennonite movement by Peter Martens, 'The Quest for an Anabaptist Atonement: Violence and Nonviolence in J. Denny Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement*', *Mennonote Quarterly Review* 82 (2008) 281-311.

64 See also J. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury, 1975) 131-132; Black liberation theology seemingly frowns upon all models of the atonement but least so when it comes to the patristic ransom approach: Maimela, 'Atonement in the Context of Liberation Theology', 50. For an interesting discussion of the cross and Afro-American Christians from the lynching period onwards see A. Yong and E. Y. Alexander (eds), *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2011) chapter 6.

65 'It is the modern "post-Christian generation" which has rediscovered *Christus Victor*. That is, the renewal of attention to this view of atonement has come at a time when the western world is starting to be aware of the disintegration of the Constantinian synthesis.' Weaver, 'Atonement for the NonConstantinian Church', 316.

66 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 25.

67 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 27.

68 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 34.

69 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 45-46.

70 Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 211-212.

71 For instance, the now discredited 'Nine o'Clock Service' in the UK.

72 The earliest significant work was R. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); he recommends a return to the *Christus Victor* approach on pages 43-61. Attracting far more attention, however, was B. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian* (San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001). A fairly reactionary appraisal of the movement has come from D.A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005). The most recent assessment is J. Bielo, *Emerging Evangelicals* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

73 Boyd *et al*, *The Nature of the Atonement*, chapter 4; Rob Bell's *Love Wins* (London: Collins, 2011) 121-157 is a typical example; see also Stephen Burnhope's critique of this approach: 'Beyond the Kaleidoscope: Towards a Synthesis of Views on the Atonement', *Evangelical Quarterly* 84.4 (2012) 345-368.

74 Greg Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', in Boyd *et al*, *The Nature of the Atonement*, 24.

75 '... the biblical narrative could in fact be accurately described as a story of God's ongoing conflict with and ultimate victory over cosmic and human agents who oppose him and who threaten his creation'; Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', 25; also, 'Everything the New Testament says about the soteriological significance of Christ's work is predicated on the cosmic significance of his work.' Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', 34.

76 '... the truth embodied in the most ancient ways of thinking about the atonement was that God did, in a sense, deceive Satan and the powers, and that Jesus was, in a sense, bait'; Boyd, '*Christus Victor* View', 36-38.

77 The classic text so far on Millennials is N. Howe and B. Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Generation* (New York: Vintage, 2000); for a Christian take on the subject T. and J. Rainer, *The Millennials* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2010). For a critique of generational approaches in popular Christian writings see D. Hilborn and M. Bird (eds) *God and the Generations* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002).

78 This critique of empire is, for Wink, definitive of the shape that pre-Constantinian atonement theology took, in contrast to the later legal, punitive approaches more acceptable to a church that was now part of the empire: Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 150.

79 The New Testament belief in a personal devil who orchestrates systemic evil need not be abandoned, of course.

80 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 144.

81 Ray, *Deceiving the Devil*, 144.

82 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V Preface.