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### The Unification Doctrine of the Fall and the Writings of Irenaeus of Lyon

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Theodore T. Shimmyo's article "The Unification Doctrine of the Fall"<sup>[1]</sup> presents the Unification position on the subject analytically, distinguishing between the doctrine of Adam's Fall and the doctrine of Original Sin proper. Shimmyo mentions Augustine and other Christian thinkers whose understanding of the Original sin contradicts the Unification position.

This supplementary note on Shimmyo's article aims to present the thought of Irenaeus of Lyons,<sup>[2]</sup> whose theological view differs from Augustine on the doctrine of the Fall,<sup>[3]</sup> demonstrating the similarities between the Irenaean and certain Unification positions as a contribution on patristic dogmatics.<sup>[4]</sup>

#### ***Adam and Eve's Fall was due to immaturity***

Regarding the doctrine of the Fall, Shimmyo explains that according to the Divine Principle, "Adam and Eve fell because their free will or freedom did not fully and perfectly function, as they were still in the process of growth in the growing period, during which they were therefore supposed to obey God's commandment of not eating the fruit, in order to avoid falling."

Irenaeus agrees that Adam and Eve were created in God's image with the potentiality to become like God, although they failed to achieve their destiny. They were not created perfect but could achieve perfection gradually.<sup>[5]</sup> Irenaeus presents Adam and Eve as young children, immature by nature, with the ability to mature spiritually and become like God.

He writes in *The Preaching of the Apostles* [PA]<sup>[6]</sup>: "Having made man the lord of the earth and everything in it, God also secretly made him lord of those angels who were in it. They already had their full maturity, but the man was, in effect, like a small child who had to grow to perfection. In order that he might be nourished and grow in a plentiful environment, God prepared for him a place that was much better than this world. That place is called the Garden (Genesis 2:8), perfect in climate, beauty, light, food, plants, fruit, water, and all other necessities of life" (Chapter 12).

In *Against Heresies* [AH]<sup>[7]</sup> he clarifies his thought further: "For as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant [but she does not do so], as the child is not yet able to receive more substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God Himself to have made man perfect from the first, but man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant." (AH IV.XXXVIII.1).

Finally, Irenaeus notes that Adam and Eve in Paradise "were both naked and were not ashamed," having been created a short time previously; they had no understanding of the procreation of children, for they needed to first come to adult age, and then multiply from that time onward.

#### ***Adam and Eve's Fall was due to Satan's envy***

According to Shimmyo, the Divine Principle teaches that Lucifer, symbolized by a serpent, "was the channel of God's love to the angelic world" and "virtually monopolized the love of God," but that after God created Adam and Eve as his children, Lucifer as God's servant realized that God loved them "many times more than" him. So Lucifer, "feeling as though he were receiving less love than he deserved, wanted to grasp the same central position in human society as he enjoyed in the angelic world."

Irenaeus also views Satan as the protagonist in the cosmic drama that caused humanity's exodus from Paradise (PA, chs. 18-20). Satan is a creature of God who became the chief enemy of God. He is not evil by nature since God does not create evil creatures, but by choice (AH IV.XLI.1). Satan is the source of evil, an enemy not only of God but also of man.<sup>[8]</sup> Irenaeus writes that although Adam and Eve were guilty of disobeying God, nevertheless, God curses the Devil (AH III.XXIII.5).

What was the motive behind Satan's action? Irenaeus believes that it was envy for humanity's spiritual destiny.<sup>[9]</sup> He writes: "Likewise, also, the Devil, being among those angels, who are placed over the spirit of air... becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law... and his (the Devil's) apostasy was exposed to man... he (the Devil) set himself with greater and greater determination in opposition to man, envying his life, and wishing to involve him (man) in his (the Devil's) own apostate power" (AH V.XXIV.4).

The consequences of the Fall are dramatic for humanity. Human beings are deprived of blessings that they received from God. We read in the *Preaching of the Apostles*: [God] sent the man away from His presence, sending him to dwell outside the Garden, for no sinner can live there. Expelled from the Garden, Adam and Eve began to experience great despondency and mental torment, going about this world with toil, sorrow, and regret. They tilled the earth under the rays of our sun, and thorns and thistles, and the punishment of sin sprang up (PA chs. 16-17).

#### ***The Original Sin manifested in the life of the human race***

The Divine Principle understands the Fall in a physical/sexual way. Shimmyo notes the following: "Lucifer, using the power of illicit love, first dominated Eve sexually and became Satan, and then dominated Adam sexually through her who was in the position of Satan to him." Thus "Adam and Eve formed a family through the husband-and-wife relationship centered on Satan rather than God." Shimmyo explains, regarding the doctrine of the original sin proper, that "What original sin really means, as differentiated from the fall of Adam and Eve in the Divine Principle... [is] that *after* their sexual fall in illicit love centered on Satan, they [Adam and Eve] and their descendants were now put in the state in which they were linked to the lineage of Satan... Original sin thus means that "due to the Fall of the first human ancestors, human beings are of the lineage of Satan." He adds: "the transmission of original sin naturally occurs through the sexual relationship of sinful parents for procreation centered on Satan, and it started from the very first human parents, Adam and Eve."

For Irenaeus, the Fall is not only an event that concerns Adam. The Fall under the influence of the "spirit of the fallen angel" becomes an existential problem for every human being. In other words, Adam's sin lives in all humanity because all humanity is under the influence of the "spirit of the fallen angel" (PA ch. 18).

But what is the “spirit of the fallen angel”? Is it connected with the Unification’s sexual interpretation of the Fall and of humanity’s original sin? Although we do not have a clear answer from Irenaeus, we read the following in Chapter 18 of the *Preaching of the Apostles*: “And for a very long while wickedness extended and spread, and reached and laid hold upon the whole race of mankind, until a very small seed of righteousness remained among them; And illicit unions took place upon the earth, since angels were united with the daughters of the race of mankind; and they bore to them sons who for their exceeding greatness were called giants. And the angels brought as presents to their wives teachings of wickedness, in that they brought them the virtues of roots and herbs, dyeing in colors and cosmetics, the discovery of rare substances, love-potions, aversions, amours, concupiscence, constraints of love, spells of bewitchment, and all sorcery and idolatry hateful to God; by the entry of which things into the world evil extended and spread, while righteousness was diminished and enfeebled.”

The association with the fallen angels, including the aforementioned sexual association, makes man captive to evil. It is interesting how Irenaeus compares Adam's sin with the sin of Cain, Adam's son, in A.H. III.XXIII.4-5. This comparison between Cain and Adam observes the way they reacted after committing their sin. Adam was deceived, confused, and afraid of God. He was a victim of Satan. On the contrary, Cain committed an intentional crime; he was aware of his action and was not afraid of God. That means that Adam's children, having lost the *similitudo*(the opportunity to become like God), became worse than their father, following Satan's way willingly and not by ignorance as Adam did.

## Findings

A comparison of the Irenaean and Unification theological views on the Fall of Adam and Eve shows the following similarities:

1. Adam and Eve were not created as perfect beings by God but had the ability to achieve perfection gradually.
2. Satan [Lucifer] is responsible for the Fall of Adam and Eve out of his envy for them.
3. Regarding the sexual interpretation of the Original Sin by the Divine Principle, it must be noted that it does not appear directly in Irenaeus's writings but only indirectly in the *Preaching of the Apostles*, chapter 18.

## Notes

[1] *Journal of Unification Studies*XX (2019).

[2] Irenaeus was born somewhere between AD 130 and 140 in Asia Minor. He was a student of Polycarp of Smyrna, and therefore was able to directly study, experience and appreciate the apostolic tradition of the Church. The influence of Polycarp in Irenaeus' life was significant, as we appreciate by reading a letter of Irenaeus preserved by Eusebius in his *Church History* V.20.4-8 (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004]).

[3] John Hick writes: “Instead of the doctrine that man was created finitely perfect and then incomprehensibly destroyed his own perfection and plunged into sin and misery, Irenaeus suggests that man was created as an imperfect immature creature who was to undergo moral development and growth and finally be brought to the perfection intended for him by his Maker. Instead of the fall of Adam being presented as in the Augustinian tradition, as an utterly malignant and catastrophic event, completely disrupting God’s plan, Irenaeus pictures it as something that occurred in the childhood of the race, and understandable lapse due to weakness and immaturity rather than an adult crime full of malice and pregnant with perpetual guilt” J. Hick, *An Irenaean Theodicy: Encountering Evil* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 220-21.

[4] Other positions in Shimmyo’s article, such as referring to the Christian baptism as an atomistic ritual offering only spiritual rebirth, will not be addressed as they refer to liturgical dogmatics. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Irenaeus, in *Against Heresies*, makes the following points: 1) the unity of Spirit and water at the ordinance of Baptism preserves the unity of the human soul and body (AH III.XVII) and 2) The Holy Spirit embraces all faithful through the ordinance of Baptism (AH III.XII.15). Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Ante-Nicene Fathers 1: 307-602 (2004).

[5] According to Brown, “On the Necessary Imperfection of Creation,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975):23, Irenaeus viewed the imperfection of humanity as necessary for his own good, since this imperfection is not permanent, but the starting point towards maturity. Simonson, in *Irenaeus and the Future of Man: A World more Human; A Church more Christian* (New York, NY: The College Theological Society, 1973), p. 60, remarks that for Irenaeus, humanity and the world could not be perfect at the time of creation because they were still becoming. God’s plan was to lead humanity little by little to perfection through a developmental process.

[6] Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. By J. Armitage Robinson (New York: Macmillan 1920).

[7] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Ante-Nicene Fathers 1: 307-602 (2004).

[8] Schultz, in “The Origin of Sin in Irenaeus and Jewish Pseudepigraphical Literature,” *Vigilae Christianae* 32 (1978):173-175, notes that Irenaeus’ blaming the devil as the cause of the Fall reveals his dependence on the Jewish book of Enoch. The book of Enoch states that “the whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel [Satan].”

[9] Irenaeus’s interpretation of Satan’s motive derives from the Jewish book *The Life of Adam and Eve* (Schultz, op. cit., p.188) where the devil says: “O Adam. All my hostility, envy and sorrow is for thee... and we were grieved when we saw thee in such glory and luxury and with guile I cheated thy wife” (cc.12-17).