A theological evaluation of T.F. Torrance’s understanding of the humanity of Christ

E. Mwale

25755463

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Supervisor: Rev. Dr. R.C. Doyle

Co-supervisor: Prof. C. Coetzee

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Abstract

The question of whether the humanity Christ assumed was fallen or unfallen forms one of the current interesting issues in Christology. Thomas F. Torrance is one of the key contributors to this debate. This mini-dissertation seeks to critically evaluate Torrance’s concept of ‘free divine movement’ or ‘voluntary vicarious self-emptying’ as a paradigm for the articulation and testing of a possible fresh framework for understanding the humanity Christ assumed in the incarnation. The mini-dissertation will therefore analyse and evaluate Torrance’s concept against the norm of Scripture, its systematic interpretation and the coherency of the solution it offers. This will be done by considering the main issues involved between the fallen and unfallen views of Christ’s humanity, Torrance’s further development of the significance of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature, and finally, how his concept of free divine movement can help clarify issues with regard to the human nature Christ assumed.

Keywords: real incarnation, God as man, fallen human nature, vicarious humanity, non-assumptus, covenant.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

The fallen-unfallen debate is one of the critical areas in the current Christological discussion that is focused on the nature of the assumed humanity of Christ with reference to the meaning of Gregory Nazianzen’s axiom “The Unassumed is the Unhealed”\(^1\). There is an on-going tension as to whether the *non-assumptus*\(^2\) should be understood to mean that Jesus assumed a fallen or unfallen human nature in the incarnation. MacLeod (1998:224) argues that the axiom is misappropriated when understood in terms of the assumption of fallen human nature as it was annunciated in order to combat the Apollinarian heresy which denied the inclusion of the mind in the Lord’s assumed humanity. Thus, the axiom was meant to delineate the assumption of complete humanity. This runs straight against the advocates of the fallen nature view, Thomas F. Torrance (2008:62) in particular, who uses the axiom to argue for the inclusion of fallenness in the Lord’s assumed complete humanity.

Thus, the fallen view is a position that argues that in the incarnation the eternal Word of God took upon himself human nature that is identical with Adam’s nature after the fall. Such a nature is one that is vulnerable and bound by sin. This position is believed to be a novel view that was first introduced in the nineteenth century by a Scottish minister Edward Irving (1866) in his work: *The Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened*. Later, it was taken up by Karl Barth (1957, 1.2:152-153) who vigorously defended and advanced it. On the other hand, the advocates of the unfallen view such as Oliver Crisp (2004:272-273) argue that in the incarnation the Word assumed human nature that was identical with Adam’s nature before the fall. This view is believed to be the traditional view. The researcher’s personal interest is to find out what is at stake in this discussion.

1.2 Problem statement

The issue this study seeks to explore is well set out by McCormack (1993:17) in the following:

\[\ldots\text{how are we to understand the human nature assumed by the Logos in becoming incarnate? Was it somehow a new creation, the miraculous emergence in time of that uncorrupted nature which Adam had before the fall, a human nature uncorrupted by original sin? Or was it a nature like unto our own in every respect? Was it a fallen human nature, a human nature tainted as our own is by original sin?}\]\(^3\)

The challenge McCormack sets forth cannot be fully appreciated without calling to mind the Definition set forth by the church Fathers at the council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. which asserts the two

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\(^1\) Gregory Nazianzen’s letter to Cledonius. *Select letters of saint Gregory Nazianzen*  859.

\(^2\) *Non-assumptus* is the abbreviated Latin term for Nazianzen’s “the unassumed is the unhealed”.

\(^3\) Italics added.
natures in the one person of Christ.\textsuperscript{4} That is, Christ is not just divine or just human exclusively but the divine-human person; the God-man. The problem, then, in the fallen-unfallen debate emerges clearly as having to do with the relationship between deity and humanity granted that Christ took a fallen human nature. For the advocates of the unfallen nature, that would implicate God with our sinfulness (Crisp, 2004:284).

Diverse responses have been offered in attempting to address this problem. McFarland (2008:399), in his article, *Fallen or Unfallen?* defends the Augustinian doctrine of original sin as consistent with the fallen view of Christ’s assumed humanity. He argues for the fallen nature view by making a distinction between fallenness and sinfulness. McFarland (2008:412) reasons that fallenness belongs to nature and nature *per se* does not sin. It is a human person who sins and so sinfulness belongs to the person and not to their nature. In another article, *Spirit and Incarnation*, McFarland (2014:145) clarifies this with another distinction between “nature” and “person” by defining *nature* as the *what* while *person* is the *who* of a being. Thus, it is not human nature in the abstract but the concrete person that sins. With this, McFarland addresses two concerns. Firstly, by distinguishing fallenness and sinfulness, he meets Crisp’s objection to the fallen nature position. Crisp (2007:93) believes that fallenness and sinfulness belong together and cannot be separated. In which case, Jesus can never be thought of as assuming fallen nature without at the same time implying his being sinful; which by implication, makes God a sinner. Secondly, McFarland (2008:412) meets this objection by arguing that deity was not implicated, but rather, it is the reason Christ could not sin since his person — the *who* — was that of the Word.

Darren Sumner (2014:197) in his article: *Fallenness and anhypostasis*, argues in defence of Karl Barth on “the *communicatio gratiarum*”. Sumner reasons that the assumed humanity of Christ, considered anhypostatically, was fallen. However, because of its assumption into the deity where it belonged to the Divine person of the Word, it received its on-going sanctification and purification from that union; apart from which it remains fallen.

Kelly Kapic (2001:154-166) in his article: *The Son’s Assumption of a Human Nature*, gives a historical background on the debate tracing it back to both the Patristic and the Reformation periods. Kapic highlights areas of convergence and divergence between these two positions. One of the common points both parties agree on is the sanctifying role of the Holy Spirit prior to or during the assumption. Further, Kapic (2001:166), proposes the need to give clear definitions to the concepts of “sin, guilt, and vicarious” which will help move the debate forward and clarify issues with regard to the unassumed is the unhealed.

\textsuperscript{4} Schaff, P. *Creeds of Christendom* 52.
One of the aspects lacking in the above responses is an explanation on how did the Word assume a fallen human nature at the actual incarnation. What they suggest is the role of the Word, as a hypostasis, helping Christ during his earthly life not to sin. This leaves the question of the assumptional relationship between the second person of the Holy Trinity and the fallen human nature at the actual incarnation unanswered.

This answer is supplied by Torrance (2008:64) in his conception of the incarnation as a free, revealing and reconciling divine movement. In his work *The unassumed is the unhealed: the humanity of Christ in the Christology of T. F. Torrance*, Kevin Chiarot (2013:21) presents what he believes is a “comprehensive study of Torrance’s Christology with an exclusive focus on Christ’s assuming of our sinful flesh.” He (2013:23) argues that Torrance’s view of the assumption of fallen humanity is informed by his “Christological exegesis of the Old Testament”. After presenting Torrance’s foundational narrative of God’s dealings with Israel, Chiarot (2013:82) goes on to develop, analyse, and critique different aspects of Torrance’s Christology with a particular attention on the role of the *non-assumptus* as an indispensable feature. In the course of his presentation on Torrance’s doctrine of the hypostatic union, Chiarot (2013:134) briefly touches on Torrance’s “reconstruction of the doctrine” of God, particularly the concepts of impassibility and immutability.

Torrance’s (1959:ixxv) understanding of the doctrine of God is another important aspect that informs his argument on the assumption of the fallen human nature. He (2008:65) points out that God freely “willed” to take upon himself the nature of man as it is after the fall so as to heal it from within his own being. In this act, Torrance (2008:41) argues, God had to find an “entry” into our realm that defied all obstacles. He identifies God’s assumption of Israel into a covenantal union with him as the initiation of the incarnational movement which finds its fulfilment in the New Testament’s Word become flesh. By becoming a man, God takes the place of man and fulfils the covenantal obligations “*both from the side of God and from the side of man.*” Hence, covenant with Israel, as Torrance (2008:60) employs it, is one of the main categories this study seeks to focus on. Torrance uses his understanding of the covenant to argue why it was necessary that God “without any diminishment of his freedom or of his eternal nature” should voluntarily at last assume a fallen human nature in the incarnation.

In his recasting of the doctrine of God, Torrance builds on the Reformed view of God as a dynamic being who loves and freely moves himself. Thus, Torrance (1980:65) rejects the Aristotelian and Medieval concepts of God as the Unmoved Mover who is inherently static, immutable and impassible.⁶ In his reconstruction of the Reformed heritage, Torrance (1996c:221) argues that God in his own inner life and being, as eternal faithfulness and eternal love is immutable. But, with regard to his external

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5 Incarnation 56.
6 Trinitarian faith 89.
relations as seen in the incarnation and atonement, Torrance (1996c:108) argues that out of his “sovereign ontological freedom” God chooses to be other “than he eternally was, and is, and to do what he had never done before.” Torrance (1996c:237-238) points to the creation of the world out of nothing and the incarnation as God’s works which were not eternal, therefore, God is able to introduce new things in his very life. Accordingly, in the incarnation God out of his love for man freely moved out of his eternal reality and came into space and time to share and save people from their burden of sin.

By emphasizing the free divine movement, Torrance secures the most important aspect of the relationship of the deity and the fallen humanity at its conception, that aspect overlooked in McFarland, Sumner, and Kapic (above). Torrance couches the incarnational relationship between the Logos and man’s fallen human nature in terms of anhypostasis and enhypostasis. Quoting Heidegger, he (2008:228-229) writes that “the Logos, the Son of God, in the very moment of formation and sanctification assumed the human nature void of an hypostasis of its own [anhypostasis] into the unity of its own person [enhypostasis], in order that there might be one and the same hypostasis of the Logos assuming and of the human nature assumed, outside of which it neither ever subsists, nor can subsist”, thus, “the incarnation was of pure grace alone”.

The enhypostatic relation of human nature to the person of the Word, Torrance (2008:228) argues, means that the human nature subsists in “the personal subsistence of God the Son”. This, by implication, introduces fundamental changes both on the side of God and on the side of man. With the assumption of human nature, Torrance (1995a:155) argues, “the incarnation must be regarded as something ‘new’ even for God, for the Son was not eternally man any more than the Father was eternally Creator”. There is an introduction of humanness in the triune life of God through the assumption of human nature in the person (hypostasis) of the Son, thus, Torrance (1995a:155) argues, the incarnation falls “within the being and life of God”. But there is also a corresponding radical change in God’s relations with his creation through what Torrance (1995a:166, 168) refers to as “representation and substitution”. Here God, in the person of Jesus, comes himself to take man’s place and to ontologically heal man’s human nature in his own life and being so that there is restoration of “union and communion” with God.

This dynamic view of God lifts Torrance’s argument for the assumption of fallen human nature from the covenantal history with Israel and establishes it in the very life and being of God as love. Torrance (1981:xv) insists that God out of his love “refused to be alone or without us”, hence the incarnation. Consequently, this mini-dissertation and Chiarot’s book are critically complementary as they are addressing Torrance’s Christology from two different directions. Chiarot (2013:142) is concerned with Torrance’s use of the non-assumptus as a “pervasive, indispensable, and formative feature of his Christology”. With this, he focuses on what may be thought of as the human informant of Torrance’s Christology — the non-assumptus.
By contrast, this research seeks to look at the divine informant of Torrance’s Christology and is controlled by Torrance’s (1995a:150, 153) phrase of “God as man” which constitutes what he calls the “real incarnation”. Torrance’s (2008:183-190) emphasis on the “real incarnation” (God as man) has far reaching implications for his understanding of a number of key theological issues associated with the saving acts of God, i.e. the impassibility and immutability of God, the saving significance of Christ’s humanity which underlies his insistence on a not merely instrumental view of the assumed humanity, the virgin birth and the hypostatic union with its anhypostasis and enhypostasis character and his insistence that Christ is “our brother, flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood”7, hence, an heir with us of the blessings of the Word’s “humanizing and personalizing”8 grace. If Chiarot’s and this study were to be categorised in terms of the from below and from above concepts, Chiarot’s book is on Torrance’s Christology “from below” while this study is on Torrance’s Christology “from above”. Thus, similar material will be used but from different angles and with different results. With this emphasis on the real incarnation, Torrance’s (1995b:7, 10) distinction between “Word of God”, for the second person of the trinity, and “word of God” for scripture9 shall be employed.

One conspicuous pastoral aspect in Torrance (1996b:158), which of course is challenged by Chiarot (2013:164) in his initial denial of the coherence of the non-assumptus in Torrance’s Christology, is his insistence on the Word’s vicarious assumption of man’s actual fallen humanity in order to accomplish with it the whole work of salvation from justification to sanctification. Here Torrance links together justification and sanctification so that sanctification is part of the completed work of Christ. If this be so, it is good news to the church which at times tends to take a legalistic view of sanctification when considered as the believer’s personal response, thereby, troubling souls with the lack of assurance due to personal failures in their Christian walk.

However, Torrance’s concept of divine free movement is not without its own problems when considered from the unfallen point of view:

- The unfallen view defendants believe that Christ assumed an unfallen human nature because that is consistent with the fact that he was primarily a divine being (Crisp, 2004:284). Thus, the assumption of fallen human nature would make Christ sinful. On the other hand, the fallen nature defendants argue that if Christ assumed an unfallen human nature, he could not identify with the sinners he came to save and his humanity could merely be instrumental (Barth, CD. 1. 2. 1957:153 & Torrance, 2008:212).

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7 Theology in reconciliation 157, 227.
8 Theology in reconciliation 136.
9 Mediation of Christ 66-70.
10 The unassumed is the unhealed 30.
Furthermore, the unfallen nature defendants believe that the fallen nature view is novel since the early church Fathers did not teach it (Macleod, 1998:224; Bathrellos, 2005:113). By contrast, Torrance (1975:151) believes that the fallen nature position is taught both in scripture and by the early church Fathers. Torrance (2008:65), working with a main storyline of the Bible, argues that Christ, sinlessly, freely and vicariously assumed fallen human nature in order to fulfil man’s covenantal obligations.

A major problem the advocates of the unfallen view identify is that fallen human nature is characterised by guilt and sin. How could the Son of God, whom scripture states is without sin, be guilty? It would make God a sinner (Crisp:2004:284). By contrast, Torrance (2008:61-65) believes that God, as a free, loving and moving being, out of his love, could assume fallen human nature in order to save without himself becoming a sinner.

In light of the above differing positions, the question arises: Does Torrance’s view of the free divine movement guarantee the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature? This is the problem which this study will undertake.

Other questions to be considered in view of the above problem are the following:

- What does it mean to say that Christ took an “unfallen” human nature in contrast to “fallen” nature?
- What does Torrance mean when he says that Christ freely, sinlessly and vicariously assumed a fallen human nature?
- How does Torrance’s concept of free divine movement help clarify the incarnational assumption of a fallen human nature in relation to other pertinent Christian doctrines e.g. God, sin, Christ and salvation?

1.3 Aim and objectives
1.3.1 Aim
The main aim of this research is to examine Torrance’s concept of free divine movement as a paradigm for understanding the incarnational assumption of a fallen human nature.

1.3.2 Objectives

- The specific objectives of the study are to:
  - survey and delineate the main issues between the fallen and unfallen views of Christ’s humanity;
  - study and evaluate Torrance’s development of the significance of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature; and to
study and evaluate Torrance’s concept of free divine movement and how it informs his understanding of the incarnational assumption of a fallen human nature in relation to other pertinent Christian doctrines.

1.4 Central theoretical argument
The central theoretical argument of this study is that Christ’s assumption of a fallen human nature, when understood in terms of the free divine movement, gives a better ontological ground on which to coherently understand his saving solidarity with sinful mankind without either divesting him off his deity or implying that he himself was sinful.

1.5 Methodology
This study is a critical literature study of Torrance’s view of Christ’s humanity. The research is done from the perspective of the Reformed Tradition. The following methods are used to answer the various research questions:

- In order to survey and delineate issues between the fallen and unfallen views of Christ’s humanity, works by O.D. Crisp, D. Bathrellos, D. Macleod, E. Irving, and T.F. Torrance will be analysed.
- In order to study and examine Torrance’s development of the significance of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature, his works such as *Incarnation: Person and Life of Christ* (2008), *Mediation of Christ* (1992), and *The Trinitarian Faith* (1995) will be consulted.
- In order to study and evaluate Torrance’s concept of the free divine movement and how it informs his view of the incarnational assumption of fallenness in relation to other important Christian doctrines, some of his works such as: *The Christian Doctrine of God: One being Three persons* (1996c); *The School of Faith* (1959) and *Atonement: Life and Work of Christ* (2009) will be consulted.¹¹

¹¹ Comprehensive bibliographies of T. F. Torrance’s writings appear in:
1.6 Ethical assessment

There are no human subjects in this study. The research involves identifying, analysing, and evaluating appropriate primary and secondary literature, and applying the findings to the problem. The study falls within a research entity, and includes a postgraduate student, the researcher Edwin Mwale, under the supervision of Rev. Dr. Robert C. Doyle, an academic from Moore Theological College, Sydney Australia who teaches and supervises in the postgraduate program at George Whitefield College (GWC), Cape Town in the first semester of each academic year and Prof. C. Coetzee an academic from North-West University. There are, therefore, no vulnerable participants, no measuring instruments and questionnaires that need psychometric interpretation, nor anything else of a potentially ethically sensitive nature. There are no conflicts of interest. The study is not a collaborative effort. There are no contractual agreements. There are no risks to confidentiality. There are no risks of a physical, psychological, social, legal, economic, dignitary or community kind. There are no risks to which the researcher, Edwin Mwale, and the supervisor, Dr. Robert Doyle, or any other entity associated with the research, which could be subject to complications that may lead to summonses. The researcher will derive both direct and indirect benefits. Directly in the sense of an increase in research and problem solving skills preparing him for further studies on doctoral level in preparation for an academic career. Indirectly in the sense that another well qualified teacher will be able to assist in tertiary education, specifically in the sphere of Theology. The facilities in which the study will be implemented are more than adequate for the proposed research. They include the extensive libraries of GWC, Cape Town, and the NWU; supervision within a department (Systematic Theology) of GWC which has three lecturers with research doctorate qualifications (including one in the work of the main subject of the study, TF Torrance) and extensive publications and first class IT facilities. Furthermore, the student is a member of the GWC’s Evangelical Research Fellowship, which means that he pursues his studies in a community of research students and supervisors. GWC also systematically provides pastoral care, especially through the Dean of Students, Dr Mark Norman. In that context, health and personal issues are regularly reviewed, and assistance provided. Regarding privacy, it must be stated that all records on the candidate are kept in a secure server at GWC, only accessible by authorised academic staff. Confidentiality is not really applicable as this research does not involve human subjects but is a literature study. Furthermore, information on the researcher and his progress and work can only be gained by access to the Registrar’s Department, GWC and any applicant for information has to demonstrate a “right to know”. Research is closely and continuously monitored through meetings with the researcher every two weeks from January to June 2016 for discussion of submitted written material and feedback. From July to November 2016 submission of written work is by email which is reviewed and feedback is given by email; as necessary, contact of researcher and supervisor is done by via “Skype”. Overall, the potential risk level is minimal.
1.7. Chapter division

Chapter 2 consists of a survey and delineation of the main issues between the fallen and unfallen views of Christ’s humanity. The main focus is on the doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ as the key for understanding the different approaches to the patristic heritage. Thus, problems regarding the fallen/unfallen debate cannot be properly determined by whether the early church Fathers taught the assumption of fallen human nature or not. Rather, problems in this debate are relatively determined by the way both the biblical and the patristic resources are interpreted.

Chapter 3 explores Torrance’s further development of the significance of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature. The main focus is on Torrance’s covenantal reading of the incarnation which identifies Israel as the womb of the incarnation. In the cutting of the covenant with Israel, God assumes Israel into a living relationship with him through the three ontological offices of priest, prophet and king. The tension between God and Israel characterised as the “love-hate” relationship, ensuing from the one sided covenant faithfulness on the side of God, requires that the faithful God comes himself and assumes human nature in order to fulfil the covenant both from the side of God as God and from the side of man as man and in doing so making peace.

In chapter 4 an analysis is offered of Torrance’s concept of free divine movement and how it informs his view of the humanity of Christ in relation to other pertinent Christian doctrines. The implications of Torrance’s real incarnation, where God, without ceasing to be God, becomes man and a real man, are drawn in light of his understanding of the doctrines of God, sin, Christ and salvation.

Chapter 5 is the summary and conclusion, where the main arguments are restated in summary form and the pastoral implications in the area of justification and sanctification are developed.
1.8 Schematic presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Aim and objectives</th>
<th>Research method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does Torrance’s concept of free divine movement guarantee the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature?</td>
<td>The main aim of this research is to critically examine Torrance’s concept of free divine movement as a paradigm to an understanding of the incarnational assumption of a fallen human nature.</td>
<td>This research is done from the perspective of the Reformed Tradition. It is critical survey of literature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What does it mean to say that Christ took an “unfallen” human nature in contrast to “fallen” nature?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does Torrance’s concept of free divine movement help clarify the incarnational assumption of a fallen human nature in relation to other pertinent Christian doctrines e.g. God, sin, Christ and salvation?</td>
<td>To study and analyse Torrance’s concept of free divine movement and how it informs his understanding of the incarnational assumption of a fallen nature in relation to other pertinent Christian doctrines.</td>
<td>In order to study and analyse Torrance’s concept of free divine movement and how it informs his view of the incarnational assumption of fallenness in relation to other pertinent Christian doctrine some of his works such as: The Christian Doctrine of God: One being Three persons (1996c); The School of Faith (1959) and Atonement: Life and Work of Christ (2009) will be consulted.</td>
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Chapter 2

A survey and delineation of issues between the fallen and unfallen views of Christ’s humanity

The major task in this chapter is to offer a broader survey of some of the critical issues in contention between the proponents of fallen and unfallen nature views. These issues are summarised under five headings, namely historical precedents on the nature of the humanity Christ assumed, interpretation of the patristic teaching on the humanity of Christ, a biblical examination of the nature of the humanity Christ assumed, a biblical examination of the existential sinlessness of Christ and finally, why fallen human nature. At the end of this chapter, two things will become clear. Firstly, the disagreement between the fallen and unfallen advocates over what the early church Fathers actually taught with regard to the nature of the humanity Christ assumed shows that understanding and deploying patristic ideas requires careful attention to the progression of thought and its polemical context. Overall, patristic thought is best viewed as setting the horizons of what is orthodox, not as a repository of ‘credal’ formulations, those of the Nicene Creed excepted. Secondly, that the problems surrounding the fallen/unfallen issue are relatively determined by the way both biblical and historical facts are interpreted. With these two premises, the ground will be cleared for further discourse on Torrance in the rest of this study.

2.1 Historical precedents on the nature of the humanity Christ assumed

Crisp (2004:270) opens his chapter on the humanity of Christ with a challenge to the historicity of the fallen nature view. He asserts that the fallen nature view has been in existence for only about two centuries. He traces it back to the Scottish minister Edward Irving in the 19th century and Karl Barth in the 20th century. Crisp identifies Colin Gunton and J.B. Torrance as some of the modern theologians who have embraced the fallen nature view. Likewise, Bathrellos (2005:113) criticises advocates of the fallen view for attempting to put words into the Fathers’ mouths in their claim that the Fathers conceived of Christ’s assumed humanity as fallen.12 Macleod (1998:224) holds a similar position when he asserts that “none of the fathers held that Christ took fallenness.” Karl Barth himself (CD. 1. 2. 1957:153), one of the main advocates of the fallenness view, concedes that the Fathers were reluctant to assert Christ’s assumption of a fallen human nature. Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:154) traces the strongest voices on the issue from Gottfried Menken in 1812 up to Edward Irving in 1827.

Contrary to the above opinions, Irving (1866:215) asserts, “I am fighting the battle which the apostle John began, and which the holy Fathers of the Church, for seven centuries, ceased not to wage.”

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12 In his note number 2, Bathrellos identifies T.F. Torrance as an example of “modern theologians” who are attempting to “read into the Fathers of the church the view that Christ bore a sinful humanity”. 
It is from this conviction that Irving (1866:4) goes on to set forth a robust account of the fallenness of Christ’s humanity which includes the presents of “the law of the flesh” throughout the life of Christ.\(^\text{13}\) Colin Gunton (1988:359-376) offers a helpful analysis and evaluation of Irving’s Christology as thoroughly “Trinitarian and supralapsarian” and based on a “real incarnation”. The challenge with Irving’s view, which at the same time is its strength, to borrow Gunton’s (1988:365) words, is “the radical condescension” of the divine Son and the “radical construal of the humanity of Jesus”. The radical condescension of the divine Son means that Irving assigns a none-active role to the divine person in the outworking of Christ’s sinlessness on earth in favour of the Holy Spirit.\(^\text{14}\) This is a radical expression of the fallenness of the humanity of Christ. The problem, as Dorner (1892:230) has it, is that by attributing the role of Christ’s sinlessness entirely to the Holy Spirit, Irving puts Jesus Christ at the same footing with every other believer who is aided by the Spirit in his/her sanctification. With this, Dorner argues, Irving dissolves the mystery of the incarnation.\(^\text{15}\)

Another 20th-21st century advocate of the fallenness view is Thomas F. Torrance. Like Irving, Torrance (1992:39) insists that he is teaching nothing new apart from what the church has always believed and embraced about the humanity of Christ. Thus, Torrance (1975:151-184) goes ahead and sets forth one of the most rigorous accounts of Christ’s humanity as fallen. Chiarot (2013:18) arguing statistically, reports that the doctrine of the assumption of fallen human nature is explicitly found 66 times in about 19 of Torrance’s various publications.

Contrary to the above denials that the early church Fathers did not teach that Christ assumed a fallen human nature, Torrance finds in Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria what he believes to be the patristic teaching on Christ’s assumption of fallen human nature. However, Torrance (2008:199), like Barth, recognises the lack of explicit reference to this teaching in the later Fathers. He observes that

> in the post Nicene period . . . there grew up a shyness of speaking about the assumption by the Son of our flesh of sin, in case that would detract from the perfection of the incarnate Son. And again, when after Chalcedon attacks were launched against the fullness of Christ’s human nature, there was no encouragement to take in all its seriousness the fact that he who knew no sin was made sin for us, lest the assumption of ‘flesh of sin’ should detract from the perfect humanity of Christ.

Thus, for Torrance the problem in the later patristic period was more apologetic and polemical than it was a denial of the fact that Christ took the human nature of sin. Barth \((CD.\ 1.2.\ 1957:153-154)\) also has a similar view in this regard. He writes: “Jesus Christ is very God . . . The early Church and its

\(^{13}\) Irving, *Doctrine of the incarnation opened* 340.

\(^{14}\) CD. 1.2. 154.

\(^{15}\) Mackintosh, *Doctrine of Christ* has helpful evaluated Irving’s position 276-278.
Theology often went too far in its well-intentioned effort to equate these statements with those about the sinlessness of Jesus. All earlier theology, up to and including the Reformers and their successors, exercised at this point a very understandable reserve, calculated to dilute the offence, but also to weaken the high positive meaning of passages like 2 Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:13." Despite this tendency, Torrance finds abundant evidence from the patristic extant writings that supports his argument for the assumption of fallen human nature. One such is the patristic axiom running from Origen, but has its perfect formulation in Gregory Nazianzen, "The Unassumed is the Unhealed". At this juncture it is necessary to turn to Kevin Chiarot (2013) in his The Unassumed is the Unhealed: The humanity of Christ in the Christology of T. F. Torrance.

Arguing on Classical and Reformed Orthodoxy Christology, Chiarot (2013:3) writes that:

Classical Christology holds that Jesus Christ assumed a humanity free from original sin. Ludwig Ott summarizes the traditional doctrine as resting on the nature of the virgin birth and the hypostatic union. This freedom from original sin entails the consequent freedom from concupiscence. Ott cites the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (553) which rejected the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia that Christ 'was burdened with the passions of the soul and with the desires of the flesh. Thus, Christ’s humanity was perfectly holy even as Adam’s was in the original pre-fall situation.

Chiarot argues that the view presented above was accepted and endorsed by John Calvin and the Reformed confessions. The assumption of humanity "without sin", owing to the nature of the virgin birth and the hypostatic union, Chiarot (2013:4) contends, means that there was no "battle with concupiscence or our fallen humanity" in Christ’s life.

Against this Classical Reformed Orthodoxy background, Chiarot (2013:6-19) traces the divergent "counter-genealogy" of Torrance’s view of Christ’s humanity as fallen from Irving, John McLeod Campbell, Mackintosh to Barth. He also considers those following after Torrance and his critics. While Chiarot (2013:9) argues for Torrance’s integration of Irving’s stress on the sanctifying role of the Spirit, such a view must be critically considered as Torrance does not show much sympathy with Irving and there is a real difference between them which has to do with their views on the Logos. Torrance is a strong advocate of the active role of the Logos in the working-out of Christ’s humanity which is contrary to Irving. Torrance’s theology in general is much grounded in Calvin among the Reformers, and in the later writings of McLeod Campbell, Mackintosh (Torrance confesses that Campbell and Mackintosh were his spiritual Fathers) and Barth.

Chiarot (2013:23) continues in his chapter 2 to trace Torrance’s “Christological exegesis of the Old Testament” with Israel as the “womb of the incarnation”. He (2013:24-72) explores Torrance’s main

16 A passion for Christ 24.
ideas such as the election of Israel, the mediation of revelation, the permanent structures of thought and speech, doctrine of revelation and reconciliation, the covenanted way of response, conflict between God’s revelation and the sinful mind of Israel, and the doctrine of the servant of the Lord. He (2013:85) concludes his chapter 2 with the words “what is important for our thesis is that this reading of Israel’s covenant relationship with God is unthinkable without Torrance’s Christology and in particular, the assumption of Israel’s, and thus man’s, fallen humanity . . . Thus, the assumption of fallen humanity is not simply a feature of Torrance’s reading; it pervades and, indeed, gives birth to the shape of the overall presentation.” One important question arising from the foregoing presentation, which will be addressed in the next chapter, is what necessitates the incarnational assumption of fallenness in Torrance’s mind? Is it merely the “social dimension” of the covenant between God and the sinful Israel as Chiarot (2013:83) suggests?

Chiarot (2013:87) continues in chapter 3 to flesh out the above presentation with Torrance’s discourse on The once and for all union: the Word made Flesh. He considers Torrance’s account of the virgin birth with a view to the non-assumptus’ incoherent. Chiarot questions Torrance’s use of the non-assumptus in view of the initial sanctification which Torrance claims to have taken place in the virgin birth. To use Chiarot’s (2013:100) own words in this regard “In what sense does the virgin birth sanctify the humanity Christ assumed? What is the relationship between the sanctification in the virgin birth and the sanctification throughout the whole life of Christ? . . . In what state does this healing assumption leave the post virgin birth humanity of Christ?” He (2013:102) concludes his critique by stating that “His [Torrance’s] silence on the nature of ‘initial’ sanctification in the decisive moment of the virgin birth results in a lack of clarity about the fallen nature of the assumed humanity.” This ambiguity will be focussed on in detail below and in the next chapter by looking at the two decisive stages of sanctification of the assumed fallen nature in Torrance’s presentation which Chiarot blurs.

In chapter 4 and 5 Chiarot (2013:103-203) looks at Torrance’s teaching on the continuous union of Christ and man’s humanity in light of the homoousion, the hypostatic union and the anhypostatic-enhypostatic couplet, and the vicarious filial life of Christ throughout his life prior to the cross. In chapter 6 he (2013:223) looks at Torrance’s teaching of the cross and the extent of the atonement. He (2013: 226) concludes his discourse in chapter 7 by stating that “The net result . . . requires moving the whole of Christ’s atoning work in a more forensic direction. Once that is granted, it is not at all clear that the non-assumptus, as narrated by Torrance, can be salvaged.” Two of the most outstanding critiques of Chiarot seem to be what he considers an ambiguity over the state of Christ’s humanity post virgin birth in Torrance, and the incoherence of “the unassumed is the unhealed” since Torrance argues that the centre of man’s personality is not assumed.
2.1.1 Torrance and the patristic heritage

Proceeding with this study the author will engage some of the issues raised by Chiarot. To start with, it is important to consider how Torrance uses the patristic heritage in his theology which includes the *non-assumptus*. Torrance (1975:153) draws from many sections of Athanasius’ work *Contra Arianos* an argument that Athanasius took “seriously the Pauline teaching that ‘God sent his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh’ (Rom.8:3)”. He continues to argue that for Athanasius the condemnation of sin took place in Christ’s very being “for it took place in and with the Incarnation of the Son into our actual humanity where we suffer from corruption, slavery to sin, curse and death and divine judgment.”

Torrance’s entry point into the patristic heritage must be sought from three premises of his theology. Firstly is his (1995a:153) emphasis on the “real incarnation” which means, out of his “self-abnegating love”, without any “contraction, diminution or self-limitation of God’s infinite being”; God, “freely took upon himself . . . our abject service condition, our state under the slavery of sin, in order to act for us and on our behalf from within our actual existence.” Secondly is the emphasis on the vicarious and not merely instrumental interpretation of the humanity of Christ, and third is the *non-assumptus*. The first emphasis is considered in section 2.1.1.1) below, the second in 2.1.1.2) and the *non-assumptus* in 2.1.1.3).

2.1.1.1 The incarnate one

It is a common feature of Torrance’s theology to define the work of Christ from the person of Christ; in that way, the identity of Jesus becomes central. Thus, the question of who is it that became incarnate is important for Torrance. Defining who Jesus is, he (1995a:65) writes “Jesus Christ is none other than God the eternal Word and Son revealing himself to us and acting directly on our behalf within our human existence and life.” There are two important things in the preceding statement, first is that the incarnate one is Jesus who is God but he is God the Son, the eternal Word; and the second is that this God and eternal Word reveals himself to us and acts directly on our behalf within our human existence and life. The task of explicating the Godness of Jesus and his eternal Sonship as the eternal Word of the Father and how he reveals himself and acts humanly on man’s behalf from within man’s creaturely realm and existence is at the heart of Torrance’s exposition of the Nicene *homoousion*.

Following the Nicene Fathers, Torrance (1995a:129, 132) explores and uses the term *homoousion* in four possible senses, namely hermeneutical, theological, evangelical and soteriological. Relevant for this section are the last three functions. Firstly, the theological use of the *homoousion*, Torrance (1995a:131) writes, is to designate the “immanent personal relations in the Godhead. Within the one

17 *Trinitarian faith* 212.
being of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are each distinct (ἀλλος) from one another, are all consubstantial, yet in relation to one another they are hypostatic (ὑποστασεως).” The personal immanent Trinitarian relations mean that God is one being in three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son, who is the eternal Word of the Father, is of and in the being of the Father. This is underscored in Torrance’s (1975:226) Athanasian argument of the inheritance of God’s being in his Word and his Word in his being as he argues that the Son “is internal to the being of God” (Italics original). Torrance (1969a:1) is here concerned with the eternal generation of the Word who the Nicene Creed defines as “one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.” Unlike “creation”, the “generation” of the Son, Torrance (1975:221) argues, denotes the “identity of nature” which is not the case with creation, hence the difference between “theology and cosmology”. Accordingly, the function of the homoousion here is to highlight the antecedent and eternal Trinitarian relations of the oneness of “being and nature” (Ousia) and the distinction of persons (hypostases) between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus, in the incarnation, Torrance (1996c:108) writes, it is “not the Godhead or the Being of God as such who became incarnate, but the Son of God, not the Father or the Spirit.” The implication of the Trinitarian identity of being and nature is that in the incarnation it is God himself in the person of the Son who comes and does his works among men.

Secondly, Torrance (1995a:132) uses homoousion “evangelically” to designate the continued Father/Son relationship with the incarnate Son. At issue here, Torrance (1995a:116) reasons, is the church’s thoughts on the relations between “the incarnate Word and the eternal Word” and the incarnate Son and the Father. The eternal Word is the Word that became flesh and the incarnate Word enfleshed is the eternal Word. Torrance (1995b:264), quoting Athanasius, writes “Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God, who alone in the flesh is hypostatically one with the divine and eternal Word, perfect God and perfect Man” (Italics original). This very eternal, but now incarnate Word and flesh, was still ὁμοοσσιον τῷ Πατρι. Nothing changed of his eternal nature or relations with the Father when he became incarnate. The incarnational unbroken Father/Son relationship is good news to the church in its twofold definition. Firstly, Torrance 1995b:344) states that this means that “what he [the Son] was toward us in his incarnate activity he was inherently, and therefore antecedently and eternally, in himself”. Secondly, Torrance (1995a:130) states that it also means that “what God is ‘toward us’ and ‘in the midst of us’ in and through the Word made flesh, he really is in himself; . . . the very same Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” This is a theme that Torrance often returns to and its importance is noted by Eugenio (2014:33) in his observation that here is a connection between the Trinity ad intra and the Trinity ad extra. Concomitantly, owing to

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18 Trinitarian faith 59, 130-131.
19 Theology in reconciliation 212.
20 Divine meaning 264.
this continued eternal Father/Son relationship, which, in the incarnation is projected into space and time, Torrance (1995a:155) argues, that the incarnation falls “within the being and life of God”.

The continued eternal relationship with the Father undergirds the reality and validity of Jesus’ words and actions.\(^{21}\) The works Jesus performed during his earthly life bear full evidence of his continued harmony with the Father. Thus, Torrance (1995a:147) reports that Athanasius wondered at the Jews’ questioning of Christ’s authority when they asked “why do you as man make yourself equal to God”? Rather, Athanasius reasoned, they should have been asking “why have you, being God, become man?” Torrance (1995a:146) is here concerned with the Christ who was “conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary”. The Christ, who suffered and was crucified, was fully God and still ομοοσσιον τω Πατρι albeit born in a humble form of a servant and died the cruel death of the cross.

Thirdly, Torrance (1995a:146-190) “soteriologically” and thus economically, uses homoousion to designate the reality of the incarnation whereby without ceasing to be God, the Word takes upon himself man’s “contingent and mortal” humanity, which, from thereon is inseparable from his person. Thus, Torrance (1995b:262) states “though our creaturely nature was alien to the pre-existent Son of God, he has taken it up into himself and made it his very own, so that his assumption of and appropriation of our human nature is reality even for God”. While the incarnate Son was fully of one being with the eternal Father, Torrance (1975:172) reasons that he did not “hold likeness to us inadmissible and reject being man” but he fully shared with us our humanity in its completeness in order to save. Here, Eugenio (2014:37) observes that the Nicene “ομοοσσιον τω Πατρι” is supplemented with the Chalcedonian “homoousion hemin ton auton kata ten antropoteta” in order to highlight the fact that the human reality is as important as the divine reality.

The homoousion with mankind, as in the Definition of Chalcedon (451), is meant to affirm Christ’s assumption of a real and complete human nature of body, “rational human soul” and spirit.\(^{22}\) Whereas the humanity of Christ was not eternal, Torrance (1969a:4) argues that the assumption of humanity was not temporary; it was not taken off with the completion of the work of salvation. This has two significant results. Firstly, it affirms Christ’s permanent priesthood for his people before the Father in his duo ontological identification with the Father and mankind. Tsoi (2007:73) reports that Cyril of Alexandria insisted that “In order to mediate between two parties, one must be ontologically connected to both sides.” Christ’s humanly and priestly mediation continues even after the ascension (Heb.4:14-15). Secondly, the post-resurrection continuity of the incarnate Son’s humanity affirms that his assumption of complete humanity does not detract anything from his complete deity and that his complete deity does not imply the assumption of a merely putative humanity. Rather, what happens is the “perfecting” and

\(^{21}\) Trinitarian faith 147.
\(^{22}\) Theology in reconciliation 147.
“personalizing” of human nature by being renewed and upheld by God in the person of the Son.\(^2\) Torrance (1995a:145), thus, concludes “Unquestionably it is of Jesus in the wholeness and integrity of his human being and nature that we must say “όμοουσιο(ν) τὸ Πατρὶ”. What this means, Torrance (1995a:144) reasons, is that “the man Jesus, Son of Mary, who lived a fully human life among us as one of us, is none other than God himself come to us as man, and forever belongs to the innermost being and life of the Godhead”. Thus, Chiarot’s (2013:111) critique that Torrance’s use of the homoousion of Christ’s human nature makes the human nature part of the deity is unintelligible.

2.1.1.2 The vicarious and the not merely instrumental humanity of Christ

The soteriological exposition of the homoousion with man is bound up with Torrance’s emphasis on the vicarious and not merely instrumental view of Christ’s humanity. Christ’s bearing of man’s nature must not be understood necessarily but vicariously. On the one hand, the vicarious assumption of human nature does not mean that the Logos was imperfect in his divine nature, for that would imply that the assumption of the flesh was necessary for his perfection. But rather, it is for man’s salvation that he voluntarily became flesh. On the other hand, the vicarious nature of his humanity does not imply that the humanity was merely instrumental or temporally in nature. Torrance (1995b:344) writes:

> While the homoousion of the Son with the Father expressed the conviction that what he was toward us in his incarnate activity he was inherently, and therefore antecedently and eternally, in himself, the conjunction of ‘came down’ with ‘for us men and our salvation’ makes it clear that the involvement of the Son in our lowly condition is to be understood as an act of pure condescension on his part and not as an indication of imperfection in him . . . but he humbled himself to be one with us and to take our finite nature upon himself, all for our sakes. This is what patristic theology called his ‘economic condescension’ (Italics original).

The combination of the theological homoousion with the soteriological, economic or vicarious condescension of Christ defines the real incarnation where God and man meet in one person. This, in turn, defines the doctrine of grace and Torrance’s position with regard to his use of the patristic heritage. Because the Logos is homoousion with and internal to the being of the Father his coming means that God has given himself to man as one of “us and with us”. This is what Torrance defines as grace. He (1995a:140) writes that grace is “the self-giving of God to us in his incarnate Son in whom the Gift and the Giver are indivisibly one . . . grace is the self-gift of God in Jesus Christ, which, or rather who, cannot be separated or detached from him in any way, for he is of one and the same being as God the Giver”.

The patristic doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ and its significance, Torrance (1975:229) believes, is a missing piece in most contemporary patristic scholarship. He finds this gap in Grillmeier, whose interpretation of Athanasius’ position with regard to the humanity of Christ, Torrance

\(^{23}\) Theology in reconstruction 155, 230.
believes, is amiss. Grillmeier (1975:308,317-325) argues that “it is undeniable” that in Athanasius’s view of Christ, the human soul was not a “theological factor”, and there is a possibility that it was “not a physical factor” also. This interpretation, Torrance (1975:230) believes, is due to an “alien conceptual scheme” Grillmeier used, other than the vicarious humanity framework Athanasius employed. It must be concluded that Torrance’s interpretation of the Fathers (Athanasius in particular) with regard to the humanity of Christ, depends on the vicarious view of Christ’s humanity. Hence, any fair critic of Torrance’s reading of the patristic writings must take this into account. This is exemplified by Twombly (1989: 239-241) who defends Torrance’s interpretation of the role and place of a human soul in the Athanasian Christ as proper and congruent to the vicarious view of Christ’s humanity.24

The economic25 and soteriological assumption of man’s actual humanity is dependent on Torrance’s non-necessity view of God become man. It is a common feature of Torrance’s (1975:164) theology that there is no necessity in God. God does whatever he does out of his freedom and love.26 Thus, becoming man is of God’s own choosing. This non-necessity view of God undergirds Torrance’s argument for the not merely instrumental view of Christ’s humanity because God in his love has great freedom to act, and that implies that he may act directly, not indirectly, from within man’s creaturely existence. He (1995a:150-151) writes: “This understanding of Jesus Christ, as, not God in man, but God as man, implies a rejection of the idea that the humanity of Christ was merely instrumental in the hands of God, but it also implies, therefore, that the human life and activity of Christ must be understood from beginning to end in a thoroughly personal and vicarious way.” Thus, negatively, the not merely instrumental view, in Gunton’s (1988:363) words, asserts that the incarnation is neither “a mythological epiphany nor a temporary visitor in human dress”. Positively, it asserts that God personally becomes man and works as man. Christ’s mediatorial and priestly work, Torrance (1975:152) writes, “is carried out in his humanity and through human means, and in a human way (Italics original).” This insistence on the personal and ontological nature of the incarnation means, for Torrance (1995a:155), that atonement takes place within “the incarnate constitution” of the saviour. Accordingly, the sufferings of Christ apply to his complete being and not merely to his humanity.27 Torrance (1995a:185) writes “we cannot think of the sufferings of Christ as external to the Person of the Logos. It is the very same Person who suffered and who saved us, not just man but the Lord as man; both his divine and his human acts are acts of the one and the same Person.”

24 Theology in reconciliation 151.
26 Divine meaning 283.
27 School of faith lxxv-lxxvi.
The oneness of the person of Christ as he who suffered and saves underlies the saving significance of Christ’s humanity contrary to Ebionite, Docetic and Nestorian dualist Christologies. Torrance (1995a:113) writes in this regard:

. . . docetic Christology sought to explain on a dualist basis how God became man in Jesus Christ in such a way as to give full weight to his divine reality, and yet in such a way as not to compromise his eternal immutability and impassibility through union with the flesh. The effect of this was to treat the human nature and suffering of Christ as unreal and thus to idealise the Gospel message and to undermine the objective and historical reality of Christ. The incarnation of the Word could thus be no more than the instrument in the hands of God for the introduction of divine truth into the world, but which was bound to come to an end when that purpose was fulfilled.

Real incarnation means that from the point of the incarnation onwards, God in the person of the Son, remains a real man thereby there is no room either for adoptionism or phantom humanity as was the case in Ebionism and Docetism or separation of the person as in Nestorianism. The saving significance of the humanity of Christ reaches its zenith in what Torrance (1995a:179) identifies as the patristic doctrine of “the wonderful exchange”. Here Christ takes “what is ours” in order to give mankind “what is his”.28

2.1.1.3 The non-assumptus

Torrance’s understanding of the real incarnation (God as man) combined with his doctrines of the vicarious and not merely instrumental humanity of Christ and the great exchange, define his use of the patristic heritage with regard to the nature of the humanity Christ assumed. It is in this framework that his use of the non-assumptus falls. Torrance (1995a:163-165) traces the developing use of the non-assumptus from Origen, Athanasius and then the Cappadocians among whom it acquired the explicit inclusion of the sinful flesh when they, against Apollinaris, endorsed the assumption of the mind which was considered the seat of evil.29 Torrance (1975:156-175) finds similar application of the non-assumptus in Cyril of Alexandria. He (1995a:179) also tracks the development of the doctrine of the great exchange from Irenaeus to Cyril of Alexandria, identifying its implications in the areas of the infiniteness of Christ’s sacrifice that “outweighs the whole universe”, the redemption of suffering in the suffering of Christ and the deification of man’s human nature through participation in the life of God in the Spirit. Thus the real incarnation of the Word of God becoming a real and complete man constitutes in Torrance the meaning of the mediation of Christ, in which redemption, atonement, representation and substitution take place “within the incarnate constitution of his Person as Mediator”.30 All this must be understood as acts of God’s love for his children.

28 Trinitarian faith 162.
29 Trinitarian faith 181, 184, 188, Theology in reconciliation 145.
30 Trinitarian faith 155,159, 168.
Drawing from one of Torrance’s (2008:231) passages in the *Incarnation* where he argues that Christ assumed human nature in a way that sets aside “that which divides us human beings from one another, our independent centres of personality, and to assume that which unites us with one another, the possession of the same or common human nature”, Chiarot (2013:163-164) questions whether by excluding “concrete personal instance of fallen humanity” in the assumption (i.e. not an independent centre of personality but a common human nature), Torrance does not defeat himself. Chiarot’s issue is that with the absence of concrete fallen human personality in the assumption not everything is assumed, hence the *non-assumptus* does not reach its saving goal as Torrance presumes it does. Chiarot’s point can be met in three steps. Firstly, it must be recognised, as Barth (*CD*. 1. 2. 1957:164) has it, that “personality really does belong to true human being”, hence, its exclusion in the assumption will prove detrimental. Secondly, while properly locating the passage in its anhypostasia- enhancedypostasia context, Chiarot fails to pay attention to the point Torrance (2008:231) is making that in the incarnation “the Son did not join himself to an independent personality existing on its own as an individual”. Here Torrance is dealing with adoptionism. Thus, Chiarot’s omission of the phrase “existing on its own as an individual” alters the meaning of the passage. Thirdly, Torrance (2008:105), following Barth, associates the anhypostasia with the virgin birth and the enhypostasia with the continuous life of Christ. By so doing, the assumptional exclusion of an independent personality must be understood simply as the assumption of human nature with full individuality but without its own prior personal existence. This is the way the ancients understood *anhypostasia* as Barth reports. He (1.2, 1957:164) argues that the impersonal or anhypostasis controversy rests simply upon a misunderstanding of the Latin term *impersonalitas* used occasionally for *anhypostasis*. But what Christ’s human nature lacks according to the early doctrine is not what we call personality. This the early writers called *individulitas*, and they never taught that Christ’s human nature lacked this, but rather that this qualification actually belonged to true human being. *Personalitas* was their name for what we call existence or being. Their negative position asserted that Christ’s flesh in itself has no existence . . .

With this understanding, it may be concluded that Torrance is consistent and coherent in his use of the *non-assumptus* which does not exclude individuality, but rather, he asserts a non-independent-personal existence of Christ’s human nature in the incarnation. He (2008:230) writes “there was no independent personal being called Jesus apart from the incarnation”. What makes people different is the manner of their personal existence, which as Barth (*CD*. 1. 2. 1957:193) has shown, is owed to the sexual union between a man and a woman. There is no preceding marital union between Mary and Joseph underlying the personal existence of Christ’s human nature. Instead, it is the conception by the Holy
Spirit which supplies the human nature with its enhypostasis-personal existence in the Person of the Word.\textsuperscript{31} However, as the church affirmed against Apollinarianism, the \textit{non-assumptus} means that Christ assumed a complete and actual human nature comprising body, rational human soul and Spirit. It is in this way that Torrance (1975:143-150) defines and uses the \textit{non-assumptus}, hence, his insistence on Christ’s \textit{homoousion} with man.\textsuperscript{32}

\section*{2.2 Interpretation of the patristic teaching on the nature of the humanity of Christ: the issue of appropriate patristic horizons}

Although defendants of the unfallen view question the historicity of the fallen view, the real problem in this debate may be said to be the interpretation of the patristic teaching. These interpretational challenges arise from different fronts. To begin with, following Kasper (1976:240), there are two fundamental aspects in the development of Christian doctrine or Theology that must be recognised. Firstly, the construction of Christian theology did not happen all at once. It took place progressively over a period of time in response to the specific needs of the time. Secondly, Christian doctrine emerged mostly from a polemical perspective. The rise of different heretical teachings called for a clear articulation and deployment of necessary terminology that defines the \textit{horizons} of what is orthodox. This implies that the Fathers did not give the church an already fully packaged theology.

The patristic teaching on the doctrine of original sin evinces the developing nature of doctrine and the issue of what constitutes the acceptable patristic horizon. Defendants of the unfallen view repose upon the doctrine of original sin and Chalcedonian theology as the basis for their denial of the fallen view. Crisp (2007:96) argues, from the Western Augustinian-Reformed perspective of the doctrine of original sin, that there is no way Jesus could assume a fallen human nature and still be God and a redeemer. Describing Augustine’s view of original sin and how it is transmitted, Bonaiauti (1917:163) writes that “Original sin is then described as an infection which propagates itself from father to son through the act of generation, which being an act of organic trouble caused by the sin, is a sin itself and determines the transmission \textit{ipso facto} of the sin to the new creature.” It is with this conviction that Crisp (2004:279-280) reasons that the mere possession of a corrupt flesh is sin enough as it renders a person

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Trinitarian faith} 230.  
\textsuperscript{32} The assumption of rational human soul, body and spirit seems to be the way Torrance defines human nature. It is in this way that he defines and uses the non-assumptus in direct relation to Christ’s \textit{homoousion} with us. The assumption of these three basic human components is important for Torrance as it constitutes the universal ontological union of Christ with all mankind. It is on the same basis that he at times speaks of Jesus in a way that seems to imply the presence of a human person which Chiarot decries as leaning towards Nestorianism. For example, Torrance (2008:30) writes, “this does not mean that in the incarnation there was no particular individual called Jesus existing as a particular human being, with a rational human mind and will and soul; and therefore it does not mean that he did not completely possess human nature.” The direct interlock between the non-assumptus and Christ’s \textit{homoousion} with us is basically laid out in \textit{Theology in reconciliation} (1975:146-149). Here Torrance evaluates and responds to the Apollinarian heresy on the basis of the unassumed is the unhealed and then asserts Christ’s \textit{homoousion} with us. These two (the non-assumptus \& \textit{homoousion} with us) rise and fall together in Torrance’s Christology.
unacceptable before God. Thus, it does not even require the inheriting of guilt and the committal of actual sin in order to be damned. Hence, Jesus could not remain a saviour if he had a corrupt flesh.

By way of contrast to the presupposed claims of fixity of the doctrine of original sin, Allen (2007:384) observes that Calvin was unsatisfied with the patristic conception of the doctrine with regard to the link between “guilt and representation”. Due to this patristic “reticence”, Allen (2007:384), while paying attention to the fact that Calvin did not hold the fallen view, argues that he, nonetheless, was able to construct his own view of the doctrine which separates sin from guilt.

The above difficulty with the doctrine of original sin was not peculiar to Calvin only. Nassif (1984:287-300) argues that the Augustinian doctrine of original sin prior to and after Augustine’s time was and is not the Catholic doctrine of the church. A general Western doctrine of sin prior to Augustine, Nassif argues, is found in Ambrose who did not argue for the attribution of actual sin and guilt of Adam to all his posterity. Summarising Ambrose’s doctrine of sin, Nassif (1984:288) writes that “the general doctrine of Ambrose is that while the corrupting force of sin is transmitted, the guilt belongs to Adam himself, not to us”. Nassif (1984:291) argues that a shift from Ambrose’s view took place when Augustine in his controversy with Pelagius brought about his view of original sin that attributes both liability to punishment and guilt on account of Adam’s sin to all his posterity. Unfortunately, as Nassif points out, Augustine’s exegesis was dependent upon a Latin version of the Bible with its mistranslation of the Greek text of Romans 5:12. It is this error which shaped Augustine’s pessimistic anthropology.

Nassif (1984:294) continues to argue for the Eastern church’s alternative view, which, while maintaining the freedom of the will after the fall, endorses mankind’s mystical union with Adam and the moral and mortal effects of the fall of human nature. This mystical union, well translates into what Doyle (2014:109, 112) identifies as an Athanasian emphasis on mankind’s “racial solidarity from creation to the fall” designated as “the race of man” in the De Incarnatio. Nassif (1984:295) presents John Chrysostom as one of the influential exponents of the Eastern church’s doctrine of sin. From his exegesis of Romans 5:12, 19 and 1 Cor. 15:21-22, Chrysostom rejected the imputation of Adam’s actual sin to all but he endorsed what Nassif (1984:295) calls “a born bias toward evil to all”. However agreeing with Augustine on the intellectual, moral and spiritual corruption resulting from the fall, Nassif argues that Chrysostom, in the spirit of the Eastern church, argued that eternal damnation is on account of one’s personal sin. The Eastern optimistic view of humanity is also found in Cyril of Alexandria according to Maxwell’s report. Concluding his account on Cyril’s doctrine of sin, Maxwell (2005:381) resounds Nassif’s comment that i.e. “one often hears the claim that the East is more optimistic about the human condition than the West because they are not affected by the Augustinian notion of original sin”. Nassif (1984:295) cautions the Augustinian school’s reluctance to endorse the Eastern alternative view “on the assumption that no theory of original sin is valid except the fully articulated theory based on Augustine's works.”
The problems discussed above are not a buried memory from the past; they still exist in the contemporary church. Crisp’s discourse on original sin in his 2003\textsuperscript{33}, 2004\textsuperscript{34} and 2007\textsuperscript{35} articles resuscitates all these problems. He argues from the Augustinian-Reformed doctrine of original sin that post-fall human nature is not only inherently corrupt but it is also guilty of Adam’s actual transgression. Evaluating Edwards’ view on the nature of the union between Adam and his posterity that allows for the imputation of Adam’s sin to all, Crisp (2003:308, 326) reasons that Edwards incorporates aspects from Augustine’s realism and Calvin’s federalism to “forge a via media”. He (2003:325), states that Edwards’ via media couples a realist ontological union with the federal headship of Adam as the ground for the immediate imputation of his sin to all his posterity. He further refers to Shedd as one of the main advocates of the realist view. Shedd (1894:348-349) holds that the will of Adam was the will of all men, as all men were one man so that his sin was every man’s sin. Shedd’s view anticipates Crisp’s conclusion on Edwards’ conception of the imputation of Adam’s sin to all. Crisp (2003:327) asserts that Edwards held that the sin of Adam is “our sin”. Hence, all people are guilty.

Upon reading Crisp’s presentation of Edwards view, it is not clear how Edwards’ doctrine, or via media as he calls it, is faithful to scripture. The same is the case in the 2004/7 articles where he mounts up an argument against the fallenness view on the basis of the Reformed doctrine of sin. While admitting the “transference” problem in the doctrine and suggesting the need for adjustment, Crisp (2004:278) does not show any sensitivity to the said doctrine’s poor biblical alignment. The complexities encompassing the doctrine of original sin, in light of fallen-unfallen nature debates, demand that close attention be paid to the text of scripture. Thus, Davidson (2008:398) sounds a timely caution when he writes the following: “The entailments of fallenness (in terms of proclivities, liabilities and the like) require to be pondered in the register of the Bible’s own accounts of creaturely circumstances in the light of Jesus Christ rather than with reference to an external lexicon of corruption, however influential its terms.”

Unlike Crisp, Blocher (1997:128) scripturally and exegetically analyses two streams of interpretation of Romans 5:12-21, namely the Looser and the Tighter interpretation. He concludes that Romans 5:12-21 does not hold the concept of imputation of Adam’s actual transgression to all his posterity. Blocher (1997:76-81) argues that while all have sinned in Adam, it is not the case that Adam’s actual sin and its attendant guilt are imputed to all. Hence, both Edwards’ via media and the traditional teaching are faulty at this point. Blocher’s analysis would have strengthened Crisp’s presentation of Edwards in that, while affirming the sinfulness of all and due to the inherent born bias resulting from the fall all are held guilty, the actual transgression of Adam is not imputed to any. Furthermore, Blocher

\textsuperscript{33} On the theological pedigree of Jonathan Edwards doctrine of imputation.
\textsuperscript{34} Did Christ have a fallen human nature?
\textsuperscript{35} Divinity and humanity: the incarnation reconsidered.
(1997:115) takes to task the Augustinian-Reformed view of original sin in its failure to account for individual responsibility. While Paul in Romans 5 groups men into two, i.e. in Adam or in Christ, he elsewhere in his teaching considers men as individuals. In the final judgment each person will be judged according to what he has done in this life (2 Cor.5:10).

In the final analysis, all these problems put in question any rigid appeal to patristic sources that denies room for further critical and fruitful theological inquiry and engagement. It would be better to heed Coakley’s suggestion (2004:161) that patristic resources must be used as “horizons” that guide all conscious and faithful theological inquiry.

2.3 A biblical examination of the nature of the humanity Christ assumed

In his remark on the need to overcome the sin of Adam, Blocher (1997:132) comments that “Scripture tells us, the Redeemer had to come in the Adamic flesh, in the very likeness of the sinful flesh, to break the power of sinfulness in the flesh.” Blocher’s comment encourages an inquiry into what the scriptures mean with the assertion that Christ came in the likeness of the sinful flesh. While John 1:14 can be used to argue for the nature of Christ’s humanity as fallen, as Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:147-159) has done, this discussion will focus on Romans 8:3 seeking to understand the meaning of Paul’s phrase “in the likeness of the sinful flesh”.

Romans 8:3 is a three part verse comprising what God has done, how and why He has done it and what has been achieved: (3a) “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. (3b) By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, (3c) he condemned sin in the flesh.” (ESV). Verse 3b is of special interest as it addresses the how and the why questions. The decisive issue in this text is the interpretation of the phrase in the likeness of sinful flesh (v.3b). Hughes (1991:150) makes two important observations which serve as controlling factors in the interpretation of this phrase. Firstly, he observes that Paul does not say God sent his Son in the “―sinful flesh‖’ which would have carried the notion of Jesus being sinful. Secondly, Hughes observes that Paul does not say God sent his Son in the ““likeness of the flesh”’ which would have carried the Docetic notion of putative humanity of Christ. Jesus’ life was a real human life in a real body (Mk.6:48-51; Lk.24:39; 1 Jn.42-3). But it was also a sinless life (2 Cor.5:21; Heb.4:15; Jn.14:30).

Now the only remaining difficulty is whether “in the likeness of sinful flesh” means unfallen or fallen flesh. Calvin (1947:281), in his commentary on Romans, understands this phrase to mean nothing more than the apparent seeming of Christ’s flesh to be sinful in that he was punished for man’s sins. It is imputational likeness and not ontological. Unlike Chemnitz (1971:53), who in his interpretation of likeness argues for a soteriological assumption of infirmities, Calvin (1947:281) does not imagine any such assumption of infirmities. He rather sees the infirmities in the life of Christ as necessary for Christ’s own shaping when he argues that “Christ underwent our infirmities that he might be more inclined to
sympathy, and in this respect also there appeared some resemblance of a sinful nature.” Fitzmyer (1993:485) interprets the likeness in terms of Jesus’ social relations. Christ “became a member of the sin-oriented human race;” a situation which subjected him to the power of sin. This he had to “cope with” in himself. Hughes (1991:150) captures Calvin’s and Fitzmyer’s views by asserting that “Christ became a ‘sin offering’ as he took our sin without sinning. Thus his flesh . . . remained strong and unfallen.” Thus, Calvin, Fitzmyer, and Hughes understand in the likeness of sinful flesh to mean unfallen nature.

Does Romans 8:3b hold the view that Christ’s human nature was that of Adam before the fall? Hodge (1972:230) observes that Paul in Romans 8:3 does not merely say Jesus came “in human nature … for that might have been said, had he appeared in the glorious, impassive nature of Adam before the fall”. Having ruled out the notion of pre-fall humanity in Christ, Hodge interprets in the likeness of sinful flesh to denote the assumption of a metaphysically fallen human nature. Dunn (1988:421) takes the argument further by interpreting “in the likeness of sinful flesh” not as a mere resemblance but as reality “in the very likeness of sinful flesh”. He argues that “the concrete form which the divine purpose took was sinful flesh”. Sinful flesh, Dunn asserts, “is an epochal reality” shared by all.36

In his analysis of the word flesh in the immediate context of Romans 7:5, 14, and 18, Dunn (1988:421) argues that flesh is used to denote “man in his belongingness to the age of Adam, that is, under the domination of sin, its weaknesses and appetites unscrupulously used by sin to bind man more completely to death.” When Dunn’s analysis of flesh in Rom.7 is applied to Paul’s flesh-spirit comparison in Rom. 8:4-8, a similar conclusion is reached; flesh denotes sinfulness. In 8:3b the term is used without any reference to Jesus’ sinlessness. Hence, Dunn (1988:421) argues that “whatever the precise force of the ὅμοιωμα, it must include the thought of Jesus’ complete identification with ‘sinful flesh’. “ Moreover, Gillman’s (1987:602) analysis of Paul’s use of likeness in Rom.8:3 in light of Phil.2:7 shows that it does not merely denote semblance but reality. Therefore, it must boldly be said that “likeness” is used in Rom.8:3b to denote Christ’s humanity as “sinful”. That is, there is continuity between Christ’s humanity and the rest of Adam’s posterity. If the term is to be understood from the context of chapter 7 and 8:4-8 only, it could violate the horizon set above, as it could imply Christ was sinful like all other men. Paul’s tendency not to explicitly refer to the miraculous Spirit-virgin conception of Christ leaves the dilemma about the nature of Christ’s humanity undecided.

However, the first part of verse 3b resolves the dilemma. There Paul writes that “By sending his own Son.” Instead of the Spirit-virgin conception, Paul now appeals to the pre-existent nature of the Son.37 That it is God’s own pre-existent Son who was sent in the likeness of the sinful flesh, Torrance

36 Romans 1-8, 421
37 Gal.4:4; Phil.2:6; also Gillman, Another look at Romans 8:3, 602.
(2008:63) asks “how could God sin?” That it is God’s own pre-existent Son who assumed the flesh of sin. Cranfield (1987:177) argues that it means that fallen nature was not “the whole of Him”. That it is God’s own pre-existent Son assuming the flesh of sin means that the sinful flesh no longer sins. That the sinful flesh assumed by God’s pre-existent Son no longer sins, Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:156) argues means that sin is condemned and the flesh is sanctified. The condemnation of sin, Hodge (1972:231) argues, is the reason “Christ took on himself our nature, in order to expiate the guilt of that nature. The expiation must be made in the nature which had sinned.” Hodge’s reasoning well sums up the why part of Romans 8:3b — and for sin. It was to break the power of sin by being a sacrifice for sin that the Son was sent in the very likeness of the sinful flesh.

Jesus’ victory over sin in the sinful flesh accounts for the discontinuity between his humanity and that of the rest of mankind. Barth (1957, 1.2:155) attributes the discontinuity of Christ’s humanity with that of the rest of mankind to his sinlessness in the flesh arguing that in becoming human, Jesus did so in a different way. He omitted what mankind normally do in the flesh, while he did what mankind omits. Cranfield (1987:176) also states that the word likeness does not minimize “the reality of Christ’s fallen human nature”, but rather, it underscores the fact that “while the Son of God truly assumed fallen human nature, He never became fallen human nature.” This discontinuity created by the Son of God inhabiting the flesh of sin so that the flesh is inhibited from sin is the most plausible way of interpreting the phrase in the likeness in of the sinful flesh. Here, in the words of Davidson (2008:387), “homoiousia does not erode homoousios hemin as we are”. Here nothing has changed yet about the metaphysics of the flesh. It is still sinful flesh but without the sinful activity. The inhibition of the flesh from sinning implies that the flesh is sinless though still fallen.

2.4 A biblical examination of the existential sinlessness of Christ

Having argued above for the assumption of fallen human nature, how then can Christ’s sinlessness be accounted for? On what grounds is Christ considered sinless, granted that he assumed a fallen human nature? McKinley (2011:30-45) presents four patristic categories in which Christ’s impeccability was construed. These categories include “Sinless by Inherent Impeccability”— sinlessness grounded in Jesus’ identity as God, “Sinlessness by Deification”— sinlessness as a result of the union of deity and humanity, which in turn, deifies the humanity, “Sinless by the Divine Hegemony”— sinlessness as a result of the Logos’ presiding over all the activities of Christ, and “Sinless by Empowering Grace”— sinlessness based on the co-operation of the human to the divine grace.38

38 McKinley (2009:81-244) has nine models on Christ’s impeccability which he fully discusses in his monograph Tempted for us: theological models and the practical relevance of Christ’s impeccability and temptation.
Whatever position one takes on impeccability, the sinlessness of Christ ought to be interpreted as a living or existential factor. Crisp (2009:125) accounts for the sinlessness of Christ on the basis of innate impeccability which he believes the New Testament authors have in view, even though only implicitly. Contrary to Crisp’s view, Kasper (1976:233) argues that the question of Christ’s inner constitution came as a later post New Testament inference arising from a reflection on “the presuppositions inherently implied” in the Father-Son unity and when Jesus’ “unique ontic, factual existence” was ontologically interpreted. Accordingly, the impeccability view is a result of this later development which denotes Christ’s inherent sinlessness consequent upon his ontological identity as God. This ontological argument of Christ’s holiness is designated by Bavinck (2006:314) as “necessary sinlessness”. However, owing to the inherently mysterious nature of Christ’s identity as God, which is only made known through revelation, the sinlessness of Christ must be approached from the New Testament existential and therefore empirical perspective. Mackintosh (1912:37) underlines this point when he comments that Jesus’ holiness is presented in scripture in the light of his life not as an automatic “metaphysical substance”, but as a “perfected fruit” of a “continuous moral volition pervaded and sustained by the Spirit”. Similarly, Bavinck (2006:315) writes:

The goodness or holiness of Christ according to his human nature is not a divine and original goodness but one that has been given, infused, and for that reason it must also—in the way of struggle and temptation—reveal, maintain, and confirm itself . . . the inability to sin (non posse peccare) was not a matter of coercion but ethical in nature and therefore had to be manifested in an ethical manner.

By arguing for an existential interpretation of Christ’s holiness there is no attempt to present Jesus as a moral ideal or hero, an attempt which Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:156) warns against. Rather, it is an attempt to take seriously the “vere homo” of Jesus’ life to which also “belongs . . . man’s inner nature”39 Jesus’ humanity is not just a trunk in which the deity hides and expresses itself through. It is a real humanity that struggles with the realities of life. On reading this, one can neither be startled nor ashamed, hence, there is no need either to apologize or theologize, the “why do you call me good” response to the rich young ruler’s assertion of Jesus’ goodness (Mark 10:18-19). While such a response might have been directed towards the condemnation of his questionnaire’s underlying presupposition of a legalistic self-righteousness (v. 21), notwithstanding the proceeding none exceptional statement that “no one is good except God alone”, reveals how Jesus took his own humanity more seriously than some would want to admit. When challenging the Jewish audience (Jn. 8:46) about his sinlessness, Jesus refers not to his necessary inability to sin. He rather points to his positive truthful speech and his being a messenger sent by the Father. In John 14:30-31, Jesus makes the same positive existential interpretation of his sinlessness

when he asserts that the devil had nothing in him. Giving reason for this claim (v. 31), he makes an existential positive reference to his doing of the Father’s will and loving him.

Peter’s (1 Pt. 2:22-23) exposition of Jesus’ sinlessness attests to a positive and existential interpretation. He writes: “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” Furthermore, Peter’s own paradigmatic intention for putting forth such an account, as an example for believers to follow (v.21), demands the existential interpretation. Consequently, this paradigmatic, existential view, Gunton (1984:369) argues, demonstrates the relevance of Christ’s human holiness to the saints by appealing to its pneumatological rather than the logocentric source.

In order to hold together the temptability and impeccability of Christ, proponents of the unfallen view posit a distinction between sinless and sinful, internally and externally generated temptations (Bathrellos, 2005:118-119; Shedd, 2003:665). It is then argued that Christ only suffered the external and innocent temptations as such could not impinge upon his necessary sinlessness. This line of thought turns the New Testament portrayal of Christ’s fiery inner battle against temptations into “a mock battle”. It undermines the agony of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and the dereliction cry on the cross. Thus, Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:158) writes in this regard that “the temptation narrative (Mt.4:11) obviously describes the very opposite of a mock battle, and it would be wrong to conceive of it as a merely ‘external molestation by Satan,’ to reject it as an ‘inward temptation and trial of Jesus’”.

With the external and innocent temptations presupposition, is a failure to see the deeper connection between the temptations of Christ and his person and ministry. From Barth’s (CD. 1. 2. 1957:157) account of Jesus’ temptations, two pertinent points emerge, namely the temptations were directed at his person —“if you are the son of God” (Matt.4:3, 5) and his serving mission through the giving of his life as “a ransom for many” (Mk.10:45). This is indicated in his rebuke of Peter when he attempted to divert him from the cross and his loud cries and tears in Gethsemane (Mk.8:31-33; Heb.5:7). Accordingly, Jesus’ sinlessness, Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:157) argues, is precisely grounded in his refusal to live as Son of God and his refusal to move away from his redemptive mission; thus, he is the second Adam who opened up a new and living way to God. It is in the exercise of his humanly and creaturely limitations as Son of Man, by contrast to the first Adam, who desired to live as god, that Christ was free for God and man. O’Collins (2003:193) hints at this in his description of Christ’s obedience when he states that “The Gospels present Jesus as one who is totally oriented towards his Father and unconditionally obedient to the divine will. In that dedicated mission in the service of God’s kingdom, he

40 Incarnation 124.
does not appear to be controlled by some inner compulsion or outer force but to be self-determining vis-à-vis his Father and other human beings.” Similarly, Christ’s priestly sympathy with man’s weaknesses also turns into a mock sympathy if he did not test the inner force of temptations (Heb.4:15). How does a Christ who is ignorant of a “fully human experience of pain, distress, agitation”, as Torrance (1975:147-8) argues, be trusted to authentically identity with man’s inner feelings and agony arising from suffering and temptation?

When the premise of Christ’s positive, existential, and dynamic sinlessness is applied to the issue at hand it leads to an inquiry into Jesus’ necessary ontological identity. This is the pattern of the Gospels. The Gospels invite the readers to see, hear and believe in Christ through what he does and says. This in turn, incites the question “who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mk. 4:41 ESV).

2.5 Why fallen human nature and not the unfallen?

There are three serious implications if fallenness is excluded in the assumed humanity of Christ. Firstly, it diminishes the very purpose of the incarnation, “the great exchange”. The unfallen view of Christ’s humanity, Eugenio (2014:43) argues, rests upon the presupposed “distinction between an original …. pre-Fall Adamic humanity and a post-Fall fallen humanity—and it is argued that it is the first type that Christ assumed.” This implies that it is a pre-fall humanity that is saved. The opposite is true of the fallen human nature view which, according to Gunton (1984:366), works on the presupposition that Christ assumed the fallen humanity simply because “there was no other in existence to take”. The fallenness view thus merges Christology and anthropology with a view to soteriology by arguing for the actualisation of man’s redemption in the very being of God’s Son when he assumed the very nature that was enslaved by sin, death, and Satan in order to deify and to transfer to it his righteousness out of its filth.41

Secondly, the assumption of fallen nature affirms the permanence of God’s first creation even in the face of sin. The New Testament’s identification of Christ as the Son of Adam and of “the seed of David according to the flesh” (Matt.1; Lk.1; Rom.1:3) points to the assumption of a fallen nature. Shedd (2003:638) argues for the assumption of an unfallen nature based on the Spirit-virgin conception of Christ so that Christ’s body was as good as that of Adam and Eve before the fall. Such a view puts into question the on-going goodness and permanence of the flesh and creation in spite of its fallenness, as it rejects any ontological identification between Christ and Adam’s post-fall posterity. In that way, Christ and his work are distance from those it was designed for.42 Conversely, Dunn (1988:421) argues that it is not by

41 Trinitarian faith 188-190.
42 CD.1.2:155.
“scrapping” the first creation that God creates a new humanity in Christ. What the pure Spirit-virgin generation of Christ’s body does, is to forge a unique union between deity and humanity in one person without creating an altogether new humanity.

The ontological identification with Christ is only possible on the basis of what Chemnitz (1971:35, 49, 54) identifies as “accidental properties” which came because of sin. By accidental properties Chemnitz is asserting what scripture (Rom.5:12) asserts that man was not always fallen or a sinner; “sin came into the world” at a later point. Thus, employing his view is not adopting a weakened argument for the fallen nature view. In his consideration of Christ’s humanity in its own light apart from the *genus majisticum*, Chemnitz argues that Christ was ὄμοούσιον with the rest of mankind sin excepted. He (1971:60) strongly asserts:

The depravity of sin, however, does not cling only to the substance of the body and soul, but is also in the very appetites, drives, faculties, and activities. Therefore the Son of God took on our entire human nature with all the conditions or properties which are proper to and characteristic of our nature, in order that we might have a sure pledge of the restoration of our entire corrupt nature, whose cure He as our physician undertook.

Chemnitz’s position, as Watson (1994: 73-86) shows, is consequent upon his reliance on the Eastern Orthodox for his Christology and methodology. His position on the vicarious, voluntary and sinless assumption of a corrupt human nature draws him close to the fallen category. This position is further reinforced by Chemnitz (1971:35, 49, 54) when he postpones the absolute newness of Christ’s humanity to post-Easter in order to give room for the ontological identification of nature between Christ and humanity which makes Christ “a sure pledge”, a true substitute and representative of sinners. How can he be such on the unfallen view?

Thirdly, if Christ assumed an unfallen human nature it makes the judgment he bore on the cross enigmatic or not effective for the sinner. In which case, as Torrance (1981:xvi) argues, man has to fear lest there be “an angry, inscrutable and arbitrary Deity behind the back of Jesus” since the very nature which offended has not been judged. The assurance of God’s favourable disposition towards man can only be attained through a certainty of knowledge of God’s love and holiness which was poured as his “holy wrath” on man’s fallen nature on the cross43. In this regard Calvin (*Inst. 2. 16. 6. 1962:440*) writes the following: “But that these things may take deep root and have their seat in our inmost hearts, we must never lose sight of sacrifice and ablution [sic]. For, were not Christ a victim, we could have no sure conviction of his being, *our substitute-ransom and propitiation.*” (Italics original) While Calvin treads the narrow imputational path that interprets Christ’s death as consequent of the transference of man’s sins on him, Shedd (2003:646) and Bathrellos (2005:118) take a merely instrumental view with an implicit

43 Incarnation 249-250.
necessitarian view of death as evidence of Christ’s mortal humanity and Torrance adopts a strong and not merely instrumental, vicarious assumptional view of Christ’s humanity. He (1976:54) conceives of the whole life of Christ as a vicarious bearing of a fallen human nature and that death is “unnatural” for man.

As St. Augustine argued, Adam before the fall was peccable and had he not sinned, he could have by-passed mortality.\textsuperscript{44} Thus, it is not in unfallen man to die as such. Just by overcoming all the temptations of Satan prior to the cross, Jesus qualified to be a redeemer without a test of death. However, as if that was not enough, he had to experience death on man’s behalf. While his death was a voluntary laying down of his life (John 10:17), it nonetheless, attests to Jesus’ vicarious bearing of a nature that had incurred the penalty of death in Adam. The vicarious death of Christ was God’s judgment on the very nature that had offended, hence, the dereliction cry and the concomitant bearing of the \textit{curse} where the sinless one was made sin for us.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, the vicarious assumptional view allows man’s saving identification with the second Adam, in the whole course of his life, to be at the very depths of mans’ sin-corrupted being. Because of that assumption, he truly is, in all man’s wretched rebellion, man’s representative and substitute who saves to the uttermost.

With the above broader survey and delineation of some of the issues between the unfallen and fallen nature views, the next chapter now turns to a consideration of how Torrance further develops this argument on the significance of Christ’s assumption of fallen human nature \textit{vis-à-vis} Israel’s history and the Virgin birth.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{City of God, Book} 13:3, 568.
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Gal.} 3:13; \textit{2 Cor.} 5:21
Chapter 3

Torrance’s further development of the significance of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature

Having analysed issues surrounding the fallen-unfallen debate in the previous chapter, the focus in this chapter will be on Torrance’s further development of the significance of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature. This will be done by considering Torrance’s views on God’s covenant with Israel as a paradigm for the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature, the internalisation and actualisation of the covenant in the New Testament Word become flesh and the Virgin birth. By the end of this chapter, it will be clear that Torrance’s discourse on the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature is informed by the covenantal vacuum he discerns in the old covenant which was created by Israel’s unfaithfulness, thus, the appropriation of that response in a human way and for man can only be provided by God as man.

Right at the beginning of his discourse in the *Incarnation: Person and Life of Christ*, Torrance (2008:40, 42) introduces two key ideas from which two principles are drawn that will guide the analysis of this and the next chapter. He (2008:40) writes that “if the first creation was the creation of man in the image of God, the recreation is through an act in which God condescends to take on himself the image of man . . . it is the principle of incarnation”. With the principle of incarnation, the emphasis is on the connection between creation and redemption. The God who created is the God who in the incarnation comes himself to save and he saves as man, hence, the God-Man.\(^{46}\) But how does God, who is immortal, invisible, and infinite come to save as man? To this end, Torrance (2008:41) states the following:

> In his purpose to reveal himself to mankind, and to enter healingly within human existence, God refused to allow our limitations and weaknesses to inhibit his purpose of love and redemption. He condescended in incredible humility to find a way of entering within our beggarly weakness and poverty, to find a mode of divine entry into our finite and mortal existence, in order from within as creator and saviour to restore us to complete fellowship with himself, both in knowing and in being.

This excerpt shows how in the incarnation the infinite One comes to man’s rescue. This is the second principle and it is the sub-title of this mini-dissertation, namely *The divine free movement or voluntary vicarious kenosis as a paradigm for understanding the incarnational assumption of a fallen human nature*.

In the development of these two principles (the incarnation and the free divine movement), it is to be noted that the recreation, and therefore the restoration of mankind, comprises both the epistemological

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\(^{46}\) *Trinitarian faith* 146.
and ontological fellowship between the creator redeemer and the fallen humanity. This then throws into critical focus and centrality both the person and teaching, prophetic and priestly aspects of Christ’s life. These aspects, Torrance (1995a:66) believes, are means through which “knowledge of the truth of God” and “the vision of God” is made possible as the foundation upon which “union and communion” with God rests.

Thus true salvation consists both in what is known about God and how that brings man to participate in God. Such knowledge is accessible through the incarnation and Pentecost. Hence, any distortion in man’s understanding of God, as he is revealed in the incarnation, seriously affects man’s understanding of the atonement. The doctrine of God is important for Torrance as it is from within the saviour’s being that the complete restoration of human nature takes place. The internal healing of man’s corrupt human nature from within the very being and life of God, Habets (2009:83) argues, constitutes Torrance’s doctrine of “incarnational redemption” and “ontological atonement”.*47 The incarnational redemption demands Christ’s ontological kinsmanship with us in his assumption of fallen human nature.*48 The forging of that ontological kinship is at the heart of Torrance’s (2008:41) discourse on the “mode of divine entry into our finite and mortal existence”. This entry is in two successive phases, beginning with God’s covenant relationship with Israel and its final fulfilment in the divine personal entry into the world through the Virgin birth. Torrance (1969a:52) argues that God’s entry into space and time cannot be conceived as a resolving into or an entire mergence of his being into a human reality. Rather, it is of a voluntary self-kenosis whereby without ceasing to be God or changing, the Son of God personally becomes man and identifies with the finite, weak, poor and beggarly humanity. Thus, in this chapter attention will be drawn to the incarnational principle as it relates to God’s entry into the world through the covenant with Israel and the Virgin birth. The next chapter will focus on the implications of the incarnational free divine movement as it relates to God, sin, Christ and salvation.

In order to unpack the incarnational principle in relation to God’s entry into space and time through the covenant with Israel, Torrance (1992:18) employs what he believes are thought enabling tools in grasping God’s dealings with man in the world. These concepts he terms “conceptual tools” or “permanent structures of thought and speech” provided in the Old Testament revelation. Among them are the name of God; revelation; mercy; truth; holiness; messiah; saviour; prophet; priest and king; father; son; servant; covenant; sacrifice; forgiveness; reconciliation; redemption and atonement.*49 Of these, covenant is the crucial concept which shall be analysed in this chapter as it provides Torrance with a

*47 Trinitarian faith 156.
*48 School of faith lxxviii.
*49 Mediation of Christ 18.
foundation on which he argues his case for Israel as “the womb” of incarnational assumption of fallen human nature.

3.1 God’s covenant with Israel: a theological conceptual tool that constitutes Israel as the womb of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature

Chiarot offers a detailed exposition of Torrance’s “Christological exegesis of the Old Testament” as the basis for his position on the assumption of fallen human nature. He (2013:86) argues that “the bottom falls out” of Torrance’s reading of Israel’s history as “the pre-history of the incarnation, if it is not followed by a Christology in which Christ assumes our fallen humanity from the womb of the Virgin Mary”. In light of this, the question undertaken in this chapter is on how Torrance’s reading of the covenantal history leads to his position on the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature.

Torrance (2008:38, 41) locates the incarnation within the covenantal history of salvation in Israel in which he identifies Israel as the “womb” of the incarnation. The covenantal relationship between God and Israel, which Torrance (1992:10) characterises as “the love-hate relationship”, offers him a pre-historical Old Testament analogy and background of the incarnation. He (1992:23) reasons that “Jesus Christ is to be recognised and known as Son of God and Saviour of the world, in accordance with his own claims, from the normative framework of basic preconceptions divinely prepared and provided in the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus to detach Jesus from Israel or the Incarnation from its deep roots in the covenantal partnership of God with Israel would be a fatal mistake.” What Torrance does here is to build a covenantal reading of his incarnational theology. Colyer (2001a:66) comments that, for Torrance, without Israel “the incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ would have been a bewildering enigma.” When Jesus is detached from Israel, Torrance (1992:19) argues, two dangers follow, namely one is left with an “abstract Gentile Jesus” and “theology” becomes “an alien and sterile philosophy”50. The following are three crucial implications of Torrance’s covenantal reading of the incarnation.

1) Torrance’s covenantal reading of the incarnation, first and foremost, closes the gap between God and man in the world. He (1976:181) writes the following: “The covenant embraces not only man but the whole of creation, visible and invisible, for all that God has made is made to be the theatre of his glory and the sphere of his revelation”. However, God cuts this covenant with Israel in her sin. Torrance (1992:28) writes that “the covenant was not cut with a holy people, nor did its validity depend upon a contractual fulfilment of its conditions on the part of Israel”. The cutting of a covenant with a sinful people brings about two realities of which man is seen for what he really is as a “self-willed” and “stiff-necked” (Ex. 34:9) unfaithful covenant partner, and God is seen for what he really is as a faithful

50 Conflict and agreement vol. 1. 301.
Thus, the essential aspect of the covenant, to use Horton’s (2011:380) words, is that it is “a meeting place between God and humanity”.

Torrance’s (1995b:15) covenantal dialogue between “God, the world, and man” undercuts and removes any disjunction/dualism between God and the world inherent in Ebionism, Doceticism, Arianism, and Nestorianism. Colyer (2001b:209) defines disjunction/dualism as “the separation of reality into two isolated or incompatible domains.” The removal of dualisms is important for Torrance (1975:238) as it leaves man and the world open to God as their creator and God is also open to his creation as its Creator. Even after the fall man and the world are not autonomous. God is free to interact and manage his creation. This is important and central in Torrance’s discourse on the real incarnation. He (1980:146) argues that any deistic chasm between God and the world leads into “the apothgetic doctrines of immutability and impassibility”. Under these conceptions, knowledge of God as he in himself is unattainable since God is so transcendent and therefore not directly involved in man’s and universe’s affairs. Accordingly, Kettler (1991:127) comments, that the removal of this disjunction opens up “the possibility of the interaction of the living God with space and time.” This interaction is what characterises the whole of the salvation history as seen in the love-hate covenantal dialogue between God and Israel.

2) Concomitant with this “interactionist” God-world covenantal dialogue is Torrance’s realist theology. Torrance (1992:10) reasons that one must “seek to understand things in the light of their internal relations in virtue of which they are what they really are into their inherent constitutive structures whereby they are distinguished from other things.” This, Molnar (2009:32) says, constitutes Torrance’s “realist theology”. Defining realist theology, Colyer (2001b:210) writes that it refers to the belief that “revelation is real and redemptive self-communication by a living God who is free to enter the world of space/time and act within the universe God has created”.

Torrance’s realist theology, Colyer (2001b:210) continues, rejects “a view of revelation as symbols or myths constructed by the human imagination out of heightened religious experience”. Here the emphasis is, Colyer (2001b:219) argues, on “the integration of form in knowing” which opens up a possibility for a penetration into the “interrelational character” of reality where form and being are held together. Thus, the covenantal love-hate dialogue is not a mere symbol empty of reality. Rather, what is conveyed in and with it about God is a true revelation, albeit not final. It is with the New Covenant that the final revelation of God’s intrinsic inter-Trinitarian relations as Father, Son and Holy Spirit comes into view. Such knowledge, Torrance (1980:151,157-158) believes, is opened up through the economic trinity as it confronts man in the new covenant from the incarnation to Pentecost. In Torrance’s (1980:157)

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51 Mediation of Christ 28.
52 How to read T. F. Torrance 70.
53 Ground and grammar 64.
three-dimensional gradation of God’s trinitarian knowledge, the economic trinity opens a window into God’s immanent Trinitarian inter-relations. Thus the new covenant is a step further in the self-disclosure of God.

3) The realist covenental dialogue between God and Israel implies God’s self-giving to Israel and the assumption of Israel into union with God. This happens through the close identification of the word of God with Israel’s deep, permanent ontological structures of prophet, priest and king. Torrance (2008:45) reasons that: “The activity of grace within the covenanted people of God involved the self-giving of God and the assuming of Israel into oneness with God through prophet, priest, and king.” In these three offices, Torrance sees what may be designated the external assumption of sinful Israel into union with God. God expresses and reveals himself to the Israel and Israel responded back to God through these structures. At the centre of these offices is God’s self-revealing and giving mediated through his word.

Torrance goes beyond tradition in his understanding of the three offices of prophet, priest and king as constituting an analogy of the incarnational assumption of humanity into union with God. This understanding goes beyond what is in Calvin at this point. Whereas Calvin (Inst. 2. 15. 1. 1962:426) emphasizes the messianic anticipation which the prophetic office inspired in the Old Testament saints, and how Christ perfectly fulfils them, he does not draw any pattern for the incarnation as Torrance does. In the prophets Torrance (1960:122) finds the unveiling of God’s future messianic fulfilment of his covenant through a Servant. While upholding the corporate identity of the servant as Israel and its allusion to Moses, he (1980:98) believes that, the Deutro-Isaiah “doctrine of the suffering servant” pointed to a specific future messianic figure who would vicariously and perfectly fulfil and mediate God’s new covenant will. This incarnational revelation, Torrance (2008:47) reasons, begins to emerge with the intense identification of the Word of God with the prophet whereby God “began to narrow down his assumption of Israel into union with himself toward the point of the incarnation where, in the midst of Israel, he was to assume man into oneness with himself in the ultimate act of incarnation and reconciliation”.

This external kind of assumption Torrance (1995:150) depicts in terms of God being in man where the Word or the Spirit of God was at work in and through the person of the prophet. This may be thought of as an impersonal incarnation on the side of God since it was not God as man but God through man. This is precisely the reason the old covenant failed. The fulfilment of the covenant requires that God personally become man. This is the one step God reserved in the old covenant and Torrance finds such reservation expressed in Deutro-Isaiah’s promise of the second Exodus. He (1995a:171) argues that the redeemer depicted by Isaiah as the “Holy One of Israel”, who is afflicted with God’s judgments as he bears the iniquity of his people, is not identified with the go’el. The go’el is a person who takes the place of another as a redeemer, hence, identification of the go’el with Yahweh, Torrance argues, would have implied that “God had become incarnate within the existence of his people, had actually taken their sin on
himself and made expiation for it in atoning self-sacrifice in order to redeem their life. It remained for the New Testament to make that identification in the incarnate Son of God.”

Torrance (2008:48, 51) identifies two intentions of God in assuming Israel in this way, which were to transform it as a people by the writing of his law on their hearts, and to use her as a vessel for universal evangelisation and blessing. The forward anticipation of the fulfilment of this promise, Torrance (1960:122) argues, was symbolised by circumcision, while its fulfilment, founded in “the body and blood of Jesus”, is symbolised by baptism. He further (1960:98-99) deems the cutting of the flesh in circumcision as congruent to the external assumption and enactment of the old covenant which would later be internalized in the cutting of the heart and sealed by the Spirit thereby translated into the new covenant. It is only with the internalization and the circumcision of the whole person that in all truth God becomes man’s God and man becomes God’s Son. Thus Torrance (2008:52) reasons that the external assumption foreshadows God’s intention to make Israel, and humanity by implication, his own people and his self-giving to them as their God. The universal dimension of atonement which embraces the whole cosmos finds its ultimate and “transcendent” actualization in the New Testament’s Word become flesh.

With the above two purposes of God to transform and send Israel out into the world follows the self-giving of God to Israel and the anticipated self-surrender of Israel to God. Torrance (2008:46, 57) points out that God unreservedly gives himself to Israel in the “I am who I am” (Exodus, 3:14) and anticipates Israel’s obedient response “I will be your obedient child” in view of its adoption to sonship. This Father/Son relationship between God and Israel is the heart of the covenant initiation. The mutual and reciprocal nature of God’s self-giving and man’s reception of that gift constitutes the full consummation of the covenant. The unfortunate fact, which Torrance (2008:47) depicts from Hosea, is that Israel did not answer back to God in faithfulness just as Adam did not in the first place. Contrary to Israel’s rebelliousness, is the staggering truth of God’s persistent and consistent covenant commitment and faithfulness which is depicted by St. Paul in 1Timothy 2:13: “If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself”. Accordingly, Torrance (1960:121) reasons that “The whole Covenant thus rested upon the divine faithfulness.” It was a “unilateral covenant” of love and mercy solely founded and preserved by the self-communication of God to Israel in the I am who I am and not otherwise. This unilateral nature of the covenant is further reinforced by J.B. Torrance’s Son, Allan Torrance (2007:104), who describes it as an unconditional promise of love, and not a contract, that binds two parties together. Annexed to this love and mercy, Allan Torrance (2007:117) argues, is God’s faithfulness: “Covenant denotes God’s unconditional faithfulness to a people whom he had delivered from slavery as his own.” Thus, it is God who loves, saves and is faithful to the end.

However, God still demands man’s faithful response in the covenant. How that response is going to be secured is Torrance’s (2008:56, 114) main concern. It is precisely this empty spot in the old
covenant that Jesus comes to fill up for man as man and as an Israelite man; hence, the prior danger flag Torrance waved on detaching Jesus from Israel. Thus, it is not so much a “Christological exegesis”, however true that may be, or the mere “social dimension” of covenantal dialogue with a sinful Israel, as Chiarot (2013:83) seems to imply, that necessitates in Torrance’s mind the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature. Rather, emphasis must be put on the covenantal reading of the incarnation. Torrance (2008:56) writes the following “But God knows that his children in their sin and frailty are unable to fulfil his covenant, and so he provides for them a way of covenant response and fulfilment . . . in the very being and life of man.” As to when man’s full and faithful covenant response would happen, Torrance continues in saying “That would take place when God provides from within Israel, and from within man’s actual existence and life, complete and final fulfilment of the covenant both from the side of God and from the side of man.” By now it must be noted that the language of “actual” in Torrance stands for fallen human nature. Thus, it is the appropriation of man’s covenant faithfulness from within Israel and out of Israel’s/man’s actual existence that is at stake. Here Allen (2014:20) well captures the case by arguing as follows:

The problem throughout the Old Covenant was the one-sided fulfilment of the covenant fellowship between God and his people. ‘I will be your God’ – God showed himself capable and committed to this task. ‘You will be my people’ – in spite of some impressive beginnings and the occasional hiccup of loyalty, Israel faltered in this calling. Indeed, the prophet identifies the flaw identified by God, who is lamenting ‘my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord’ (Jer. 31:32; cf. Heb. 8:9). The one who is called into a fellowship of faith needs life – yet Israel proves to be a valley of dry bones. New hope must be stirred – the Spirit must brood over the depths and bring newness.

3.1.1 Covenanted way of response

The unilateral nature of the covenant means that, on the one hand, God prescribes an appropriate way of relating to him. And on the other, because of man’s inability to fulfil his covenant obligations, God has to provide a means that keeps man in the covenant as he awaits its final fulfilment. It is, thus, in a theological and not an anthropological way — the man-made way of Cain, Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah — that God is to be approached and the covenant fulfilled. This theological way of approaching God in Torrance’s words (1960:122) is termed a “covenanted way of response”. He argues that God in his “sheer grace …. has provided man with a covenanted way of response in the obedient life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ”.

The covenanted way of response is God’s provision of an “obedient” way of responding to his self-revealing and giving. Torrance (2008:40) finds this theological way of response expressed across the entire history of God’s people, from the provision of clothing for Adam and Eve after the fall, to the Day

54 Gen.4:3; Lev.10:1; 1 Ks.6:5-10.
55 Incarnation 122.
of Atonement when one of the two goats was slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on the alter and the people, while the second goat was sent away into the desert carrying the sins of Israel.\textsuperscript{56} This theological way of response is crucial for Torrance (1992:75, 77) on two accounts, namely (a) it proclaims “the fact that God alone can expiate guilt, forgive sin and bring about propitiation between himself and his people Israel”; and (b) it finds its ultimate fulfilment in the vicarious and messianic humanity of Christ who is the mediator of the new covenant.\textsuperscript{57}

Torrance argues (2008:47) that the unresponsiveness of Israel in the covenant resulted in the suffering of both God and Israel. The “recalcitrance” of Israel engendered God’s response expressed in “judgment, punishment, and mercy” as God refused to let go of Israel. Concomitant with Israel’s suffering, is the suffering of God’s Word expressed in the Deutro-Isaiah’s suffering servant. Torrance (2008:51) reasons that “The resistance of God’s people to live as God’s people (\textit{λαος}) in covenant faithfulness led to their suffering at the hand of God in his intention to make them his special people. It is in that agony that the Word of God through the prophet takes the character of an individual Israelite — for that is the only way in which the Word assumes human nature and existence into oneness with itself”. The suffering of God in and through the prophet in “contradiction” to the sin of his people creates in Torrance’s (1992:11) thought the pointer to the cross. Hence the covenanted life of God and Israel supplies him with the analogies of the incarnation and the cross.

Israel’s utter rejection of God’s grace happens in the crucifixion of the messiah. While most of the accounts on Israel’s life with God end with the exile, Torrance overlaps the Old and New Testaments by extending his account of Israel up to the crucifixion before he begins to discourse on the New Testament Word become flesh. While this is informed by his refusal of the dualistic methods that even divides the Old from the New Testament and vice-versa, it also provides the logic of his argument for the assumption of fallen human nature. This can be noted in the sub-titles of the two sections of chapter 2 of the \textit{Incarnation} i.e. “The incarnation and the old Israel” (2008:37) and “The incarnation and the new Israel” (2008:56). This continuity with Israel is meant to show that Jesus has come to do what Israel could not do in the covenant. He has come to take the place of man in the covenant due to man’s persistent failure, hence, the importance of the incarnational vicarious assumption of fallen human nature.

\textsuperscript{56} The mediation of Christ 35-37.
\textsuperscript{57} Conflict and agreement vol. 1, 121.
3.2 The internalization and actualization of the covenant in the New Testament with the Incarnational assumption of fallen human nature

The persistent failure of Israel in its covenantal obligations to remain loyal and faithful to God requires that God takes a further step to secure and ensure man’s covenant faithfulness. How this happens, as is seen in the above mentioned, is when God provides from out of man’s actual existence a faithful and final response. God’s provision of a faithful response from man’s side, Torrance (2008:56) argues, takes place in the incarnation where “God comes himself, freely condescending to enter into our lost and estranged humanity, taking our lost condition upon himself in order to effect, through judgment and mercy, reconciliation with himself.” This excerpt carries all the defining aspects of Torrance’s incarnational assumption of fallen human nature. In a free divine movement of condescension God has invaded man’s realm in order to internally personalize the assumption of human nature in himself representatively, substitutionary and therefore salvifically. The essence of this internalization lies in the fact that it is “God himself” and “not a prophet” who comes voluntarily and vicariously to assume man’s estranged lost humanity so as to bear its judgment and reconcile it to himself. This is the only way the covenant is going to be faithfully actualized.

John’s identification of Jesus as the “Word which was in the beginning” helps Torrance (2008:57) to quickly identify this Word as the Word which was associated with the suffering servant in Deutero-Isaiah. With this connection, Torrance (2008:60) wants to show that the word which was externally hypostatised in the prophet has now fully become flesh so that the Word is both the object — “The Word of God who addresses man” and the subject — “man addressed by and answering the Word”. In this way, there is for the first time a vicarious faithful appropriation of God’s revelation by the man Jesus Christ who is understood in terms of the three ontological offices of prophet, priest and king.

Having established this connection between the prophetic word and the Word made flesh, Torrance now addresses the question of the flesh the Word became. He appeals to the biblical and patristic witnesses to argue his case for the assumption of fallen human nature. He first turns to the New Testament passages that identify Christ’s humanity as fallen. Key here is the dereliction cry. Torrance (2008:61) contends that “There can be no doubt that the New Testament speaks of the flesh of Jesus as the concrete form of our human nature marked by Adam’s fall, the human nature which seen from the cross is at enmity with God and needs to be reconciled to God.” What Torrance sees in the dereliction cry is the judgment of God on the very sinful nature of man. Christ is there pierced for man’s transgressions, crushed for man’s iniquities and chastised for man’s peace (Isaiah 53:5). He connects this bearing of judgment to Paul’s thoughts in Galatians 4:3-4, Romans 8:3, and 2 Corinthians. 5:21, to argue that Christ was made under the law — “subject to the bondage of judgment and death” because of the sinful flesh which he bore, hence, was made a curse for man. Further, the Gospels’ witness to Christ’s baptism and temptations, where he completely and humbly identifies himself with the sinful humanity, furnishes
Torrance with further evidence of Christ’s actual solidarity with mankind in its fallenness.\textsuperscript{58} This biblical evidence is then substantiated with the patristic notion of “the unassumed is the unredeemed” and the Athanasian doctrine of the great exchange of Christ’s riches for man’s poverty (2 Cor.8:9). Colyer (2001a:93) comments that the great exchange is a defining piece of Torrance’s theology of incarnational redemption when he states that: “For Christ’s union with us in our actual broken and sinful nature entails the humiliation and self-sacrifice of the incarnate Son, but also the transformation and the exaltation of our humanity that is lifted up in and through Christ to share in the communion that God is in God’s own trinitarian life.”

Torrance further makes an ontological argument based on Jesus’ birth from of Mary. He (2008:62) reasons that “Christ took from Mary a corruptible and mortal body in order that he might take our sin, judge and condemn it in the flesh.” Why should God, the Word, become flesh through a fallen Mary if he did not intend to ontologically forge a bond with the fallen stork of Adam? If Horton’s (2011:472) confession that “the incarnate God had Mary’s genes” be true, then it is not as Horton avers that Christ’s humanity is unfallen. Such a view can only lead to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary’s Immaculate Conception or a merely instrumental view of her agency. Neither does Calvin’s (\textit{Inst.} 2. 13. 4. 1962:414) appeal to the mighty sanctifying act of the Spirit at conception as the ground for his unfallen position, suffice. Hastings (2005:287-288) argues that Calvin held that “immediately prior to” or right “in the conception”, corruption was negated. While for Jonathan Edwards, Hastings (2005:289) continues, this was not an issue because for him the virgin birth was a “creation, \textit{ex nihilo}”. But for Torrance (2008:62) none of these options are viable; since neither was corruption negated prior to nor was the virgin birth a \textit{creatio ex nihilo}; for how could Christ then represent man?

With the derivation of fallenness from Mary, Torrance introduces an important distinction between \textit{neutral}, \textit{actual} and \textit{true} human natures. He (2008:61) contends that Jesus assumed neither a \textit{neutral} nor a \textit{perfect} human nature but “our actual human nature and existence in the bondage and estrangement of humanity fallen from God and under divine judgment”. This actual human nature, according to Nassif’s (1984:297) “four-fold” presentation of the Augustinian categorization of sin, falls under the \textit{non posse non peccare} category. Under this category it would mean Christ inevitably had to sin.

However, concomitant with the assumption of the actual human nature, Torrance (2008:63) argues that “in the very act of assuming our flesh the Word sanctified and hallowed it, for the assumption of our sinful flesh is itself an atoning and sanctifying action”. Thus, there is an immediate transition of the actual human nature to a true human nature (\textit{posse non peccare}). Torrance (2008:73) writes that “Here within our fallen and disobedient humanity where we are less than human because of our sin . . . he the

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Conflict and agreement} vol.2, 93-106.
Son of God becomes true Son of Man, true man for the first time in utter obedience, that is in true sonship toward God the Father. True man does not sin.” The significance of Christ’s human nature, as it is seen in his life, Torrance (2008:202) reasons, is that it becomes the “norm and criterion of all true human nature”. Thus the human nature Christ assumed was not human nature as it was in Adam before the fall. However, when he assumed it he transformed it to its original though not a glorified sinless state. At each stage of Christ’s life, to which stages Torrance assigns the term “Christological moments” (Habets, 2009:82), the human nature he assumed was continuously undergoing healing. Thus, there is no ambiguity as to the state of the nature that was assumed — it was actual — and the state in which it was in the post assumption period — it was true human nature. Once this two-stage sanctification is recognized, all ambiguity as to “the post virgin birth” state of the assumed humanity vanishes. This will become clear below when Torrance’s exposition of the virgin birth is examined.

Torrance’s emphasis on the continuous sanctifying role of the Word as the ground for the sinless assumption of the sinful nature is strong. He (2008:63) reasons that “if the Word became flesh, God the Word is the subject of the incarnation, and how could God sin?” This is a distinct aspect of Torrance on Christ’s sinlessness as compared to Irving. The presence of the Word is an indispensable aspect of the real incarnation and it well correlates with Torrance’s view of the humanity of Christ as vicarious. Without the Logos, Habets (2009:72) argues, it would mean that Christ inherited sin naturally, thereby dissolving the person-nature distinction which only holds when the Logos is recognized as the hypostasis that assumed the fallen nature.

The sinlessness of Christ is important for Torrance because it is the means by which he (Jesus) triumphs over sin in the flesh throughout the course of his life. Torrance (1995a:161) writes the following in this regard: “However, far from sinning himself or being contaminated by what he appropriated from us, Christ triumphed over the forces of evil entrenched in our human existence, bringing his own holiness, his own perfect obedience, to bear upon it in such a way as to condemn sin in the flesh and to deliver us from its power.” The assumption of human nature was not merely a static event or instrumental but dynamic in as far as it involves a healing impartation of his holiness and perfect obedience unto the unholy flesh he assumed. This healing correspondence between Christ’s holiness and man’s sinful humanity, Torrance continues, “carries us right into the heart of the atonement. That atoning exchange begins right away with the incarnation, with its assumption of our flesh of sin, its condemnation of sin in

59 Italics added.
60 The unassumed is the unhealed 100.
61 Habets, 2009:73.
the flesh, its sanctification of our humanity through the gift of divine righteousness and sanctification of man in Christ.”

Granted Torrance’s position on the active presence of the Word, what then is his position of the temptations of Christ; were they a mock battle? With regard to the temptations, Torrance (2008:212) appeals to the dyothelite view of Christ’s humanity. The reality of the temptations of Jesus depends on the fact that they ensued from his fallen human will; a “will of estranged man in estranged adamic human nature”. Similarly was his obedience. Without the human will in Christ, all his temptations and obedience could not be real human temptations and obedience. Torrance (2008:212) reasons that if the person of the Son of God, “who could not choose to sin any more than he could choose not to be God”, assumed unfallen will into union with himself, “then the humanity of Christ could merely be instrumental in the hands of God”. One of the major concerns of Apollinaris in the fourth century, which is shared by advocates of the unfallenness view, is that salvation is put at risk by positing the assumption of fallen mind in Christ’s person. By contrast, Torrance (2008:212) reasons that the assumption of human will, and will in its fallen state for that matter, does not put redemption at risk. The human will of Christ was neither alone (anhypostatic) nor was it the controlling centre since it belonged (enhypostatic) to the divine Son of God. Consequently, the twin affirmations of Christ’s deity and the assumption of an “actual” human will and flesh are pertinent aspects for ensuring the reality of Christ’s humanity and reckoning of his life experiences as agonizing realities, without jeopardizing his person and mission.

Having established the nature of the assumption, Torrance moves further to find how the Word made flesh answers his own word as man, and thus, fulfils the covenant. But how does Jesus answer his own word in his life on earth? There are a number of ways in which Torrance deals with this question but here attention will be on the inseparable double movement of revelation and reconciliation as worked out in the life of Jesus. Torrance reasons (2008:57) that the Son of God “comes to enter our rebellious estate in order to effect reconciliation by living out his life of filial obedience where we are disobedient, and he comes as God the Word to enter into our darkness and blindness in order to effect revelation by manifesting the love of God and by achieving from within humanity faithful appropriation of divine revelation”. Here the twin pillars of Torrance’s understanding of the covenant as fulfilled in the incarnation through revelation and reconciliation can be seen. In the covenant God reveals and gives himself to be man’s God, and man is required to give a faithful response to God and appropriate God’s revelation and self-giving by becoming God’s obedient Son in love and worship. This reciprocal double movement of revelation and reconciliation Torrance finds fulfilled in Jesus’ filial life in a twofold ways,

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62 Trinitarian faith 161.
63 Divine meaning 9.

Torrance (1996a:298) follows Macleod Campbell’s understanding of Jesus’ filial relation of love, obedience and faithfulness to the Father as the sphere within which the atonement must be understood in its “moral, and spiritual, as well as physical” aspects. It is the filial life of Christ that Torrance finds to be a comprehensive and faithful presentation of the life and work of Christ and within which the various views of atonement are covered. He (2008:114) argues that how Jesus vicariously fulfils God’s covenantal will from the side of man, cannot be grasped if the applied investigation is limited to only the passive without the active obedience, or “forensic and judicial righteousness and obedience” without the “positive communion and filial love, and worship” of Jesus. Thus, Colyer (2001a:89) comments that Torrance’s incarnational redemption incorporates both aspects of the “forensic and exemplar” categories of atonement. In fact, Torrance (1976:52) has his own revised filial version of the Anselmian satisfaction theory too. Thus, he does not detest the forensic theory per se; rather, it is the emphasis on the legal in isolation from the filial framework that he deems faulty. 64

It is in the filial life of Christ that Torrance (1995b:9) believes man’s fallen will is converted and restored back to God. One way Jesus expresses his filial relation to the Father is through prayer. Torrance (2008:117) argues that through prayer, Jesus lived out the Creator-creature distinction by showing the creatures’ total dependence on the Creator. God also expresses his Fatherhood by answering prayer. In this way the covenant will of God to be a Father and for man to be his son is fulfilled. As such, Torrance (2008:118-119) finds in Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane — “not my will but your will” — a rejection of man’s self-will as Christ submits himself to the Father’s will. Similar submission and trust in prayer is identified in Jesus’ (Lk.23:46) final prayer where he entrusts his soul unto the Father’s hands.

Torrance (2008:120) sees the actualization of reconciliation beginning to unfold in Jesus’ prayer life where he teaches his disciples to call upon God in prayer as “Father”. The name “Father”, Torrance argues, is a sign of a “recreated bond of the covenant between man and God”. 65 Father is a term that signifies the natural relationship between Jesus and God (Matt.26:39; Lk.10:21, 23:46) and so, by putting similar words in his disciples’ mouths, Jesus is already introducing them into a higher dimension of participation in the very life of God, both epistemologically and ontologically. Thus, Torrance envisages a restored relationship. 66

Not only the Lord’s Prayer, but the creation of a messianic community of disciples also signals the incarnational reconciling work of Christ prior to his atoning death. Jesus’ gathering of disciples,
Torrance (2008:159-160) believes, constitutes a “fellowship of reconciliation”, and “real union and communion with God through their sharing in his own relation of sonship with the Father”. Torrance understands Jesus’ constitution of the disciples to be the nucleus of the church as the formation of a covenant community. He (1959a:lxvi) argues that it is in the church, as the historical-spatial and temporal sphere of the New Covenant of the children of God that the self-revelation and giving of God is experienced and met with an appropriate obedient response of love and worship in the Spirit.

3.3 The assumption of fallen human nature and the virgin birth

The virgin birth, in Torrance’s (1976:59) words, is a “mode of the Creator’s entry into his own creation as Man among men”. It offers us a bridge through which man moves from the Old Testament external assumption to the New Testament internal assumption. To summarise Torrance’s (2008:95,96) thoughts, it may be said that the virgin birth is a symbol of a creator who creates himself in the midst of history by means of his creation. Torrance (2008:95,100) reasons that the virgin birth is neither a “theory of explanation” for the how of the incarnation, nor is it a “creatio ex nihilo”. The “how” (emphasis original) of the incarnation is a mystery that “recedes into” the creative act of the Spirit and has its source in the eternal divine initiative.

Torrance (1976:59) develops two parallel lines of the Christ event in the incarnation which run from birth to death and from birth to resurrection. These two lines, he (2008:97) argues, constitute the veiling and unveiling of the mystery of Christ’s life. Beginning with the veiling, it comprises the virgin birth as an “outward sign” and the hypostatic union as its inner content and reality. Torrance argues that the mystery of the person of Christ, as true God and true man, is concealed through its insertion into the flesh of sin. In the second line from birth to resurrection, there is the unveiling of the mystery of Christ as God in the perfected flesh. The key for Torrance (1976:57) here are Christ’s miracles and the transfiguration which reached their zenith in the resurrection. In the spirit of Psalm 16:10, Torrance (2008:97) contends that the “resurrection tells us that the life and person of Jesus are not held under the tyrant forces of this world, that though he was born of woman and made under the law, Jesus Christ was not dominated and mastered by our fallen flesh and its judgment, but is triumphant over it all, in achieving his redeeming purpose of reconciling our humanity to fellowship with God”.

The essence of the virgin birth lies in the once and for all hypostatic union between the divine and human natures in which, Torrance (2008:82) argues, original sin is dealt with and human nature is sanctified. This is the first stage of the sanctification of human nature as Torrance conceives it. Thus, contrary to Chiarot’s (2013:100-102) view that there is ambiguity in Torrance as to what happens to human nature in the virgin birth, it is affirmed that there is no such ambiguity. The problem with Chiarot is that he flattens out Torrance’s two-stage pattern of sanctification. He (2013:201) presents Torrance as arguing that the “healing of our original sin” was a gradual event. This confusion leads to supposed
challenges of inconsistencies that Chiarot raises in his analysis and critique. He fails to properly see the difference in Torrance’s view between the sanctification of human nature in the virgin birth and the post virgin birth state of Christ’s humanity.

The difference in the two stages of sanctification in Torrance’s discussion is clear. He (1995b:9) argues that in Jesus’ obedient life on earth, it is man’s actual sins that were dealt with. This is the second stage sanctification that carries on throughout the life of Christ. At this second stage, it is the consequences or the metaphysical effects of fallenness that Christ deals with. This sanctification, as was seen above, happens through the filial life of Christ both in his active and passive obedience. It is in his filial life that Torrance envisages Christ’s progressive aligning of man’s wills with the will of the Father. It is in this line that Torrance (1976:156) appeals to Calvin’s words that by completing the whole cycle of life through, “his conception, birth, childhood, youth, manhood,” Christ, “sanctified our conception, birth, childhood, youth, manhood, and death, in himself.” Chiarot’s error may be informed by his undergirding presupposition that if Christ’s humanity be fallen, he must have carried concupiscence throughout his life which is not what Torrance argues for. This is actually what differentiates Torrance from Irving. The important question here is what does it mean to say that original sin was removed in the virgin birth?

The removal of original sin in the Spirit-virgin birth is what Torrance (1960:131) refers to as the great regeneration of man’s humanity. Thus, the individual regeneration in conversion, Torrance (1959b:65) argues, becomes “an actualization in the believer of the risen life of Christ”, and “an anticipation in conditions of time of the final resurrection”. While the Fathers, Augustine (Enchiridion, 1819-1893.43:31) in particular, thought of baptism as an event that removes original sin, Torrance (1960:82) reasons that “the holy assumption of the unholy human nature in the incarnation is the event that destroyed original sin in the flesh while the obedient life of Christ deals with our actual sin”. This distinction means that Christ’s humanity post-virgin birth is similar to that of the believer. The intensity Torrance attributes to Christ’s continuous life does not entail an internal conflicting turmoil between good and evil principles or aspects of his human nature which could be due to the presence of a corrupt, concupiscent human nature, as it is with man. Torrance (2008:107) speaks of such inner intensity as

67 School of faith lxxxvi.
68 Theology in reconciliation 170.
69 Chiarot’s (2013:200) presentation of Torrance’s portrayal of Jesus’ “psychological and anthropological” life misrepresents Torrance’s arguments. Chiarot argues that Torrance presents Jesus as undergoing a fierce internal war in order to “bend back the wayward” will unto obedience to God’s will. He then asks whether this means Jesus had to fight against a sinful intention to teach falsehood. This is a caricature of Torrance’s view. Upon reading Torrance’s chapter 5 on The Continuous Union which Chiarot presents in his chapters 4 & 5; there is nothing of the inconsistencies Chiarot presents. Throughout the chapter in Torrance, he consistently speaks of Jesus’ humanity as perfect humanity of the Son on earth. Many of the quotes Chiarot brings up are pulled out of their context. Two examples will suffice. When speaking on Jesus’ total dependence upon the Father through prayer, Torrance (2008:116-121) uses the first line of the Lord’s Prayer many times “Our Father who art in heaven” and then later and only once goes half-way through the prayer to show how Jesus carries out
pattern to Christ’s external dealings with sinful men and women which looks back to the agony between the Word and Israel in the old covenant. He also applies similar intensity as he develops his narrative of Jesus’ movement towards the cross.\(^70\) The removal of original sin does not abrogate the cross where sin is “supremely” condemned.\(^71\)

How is original sin removed in the virgin birth? The riposte to the traditional argument that Christ was not tainted by original sin because of the absence of sexual union between Joseph and Mary is, what is wrong with sex? How is sex a means through which original sin is transmitted? Torrance (2008:100), briefly argues that “the virgin birth represents a break in the sinful autonomy of man” as man’s sovereignty in “the person of Joseph is set aside”. The break in man’s sovereignty which happened in the virgin birth vis-à-vis the removal of original sin, is fully unpacked by Barth in his argument that in the virgin birth God judges and nullifies sin.

Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:190) argues that the “ex virgine” does not provide “a technical proof of the conquest of original sin that took place in Jesus Christ.” He reasons that all of man’s life, sex included, is involved in sin and is sinful. Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:191, 192) points out three things that the exclusion of sex in the virgin birth do not mean. Firstly, contrary to the traditional view, he argues that the exclusion of sex does not imply the exclusion of original sin. Secondly, it is not “because of the nature of sexual life” or, thirdly, “because of its sinfulness” that it was set aside. Why then is sex set aside and how is original sin removed? Barth’s answer is that sex is set aside and original sin removed “because every natural generation is the work of willing, achieving, creative, sovereign man.” The human erotic activity of sex, Barth asserts, could not be “the sign” of the unfailing and sacrificial “divine agape” which is expressed in the mystery of the person of Christ.\(^72\) Thus, it is in the exclusion of Joseph as a “willing, achieving, creative, sovereign man” and the involvement of the Virgin Mary as a “non-willing, non-achieving, non-creative, non-sovereign man”, who is “merely ready, merely receptive” of and by God’s

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70 *Incarnation* 148.
71 *Incarnation* 112.
72 CD.1.2, 192.
grace, that “peccatum originale” [original sin] which is “antecedent to” all of man’s life and activities, is judged and set aside (CD. 1. 2. 1957:191).

In his review of Torrance’s *Scottish Theology*, Macleod (2000:67), contests this incarnational, virginal healing and redemption as too radical a concept that undermines Christ’s cross in favour of his incarnation and his work in favour of his person. What Macleod’s criticism fails to appreciate is Torrance’s (2009:251) “theological” and not merely “historical” interpretation of the virgin birth. For Torrance, the work of Christ is not considered in abstract apart from the person of Christ; it is the person of Christ that defines the work of Christ. Molnar (2009:13) comments that for Torrance, the “uniqueness” of the person of Christ as true God and true man, is a central theme that must permeate all aspects of theology, hence, Torrance’s tying together of the incarnation and the atonement. Torrance (1995b:313) writes that “It was through this profound union and indeed oneness with us that the incarnate Son of God penetrated into the inner depths of our alienation from God, and brought his holy condemnation and atoning activity to bear upon us at the very root of our sinful existence, thus even of our original sin. That is what atonement conceived as an external legal transaction could not do.”

With this reading of the virgin birth and the hypostatic union it facilitates, in light of the burial and resurrection, the whole event is Christologically and soteriologically elevated. The incarnation, thus, becomes not merely God’s way of humanising himself in order to die for man. Rather, it is a definitive point where God makes a decisive statement about man’s salvation and destiny-union with God. This reading answers the question which seems to be most daunting for the advocates of the unfallenness view: how could Christ redeem mankind if he took a sinful human nature? To which Torrance (1995a:161) responds by stating that “from beginning to end, from his birth of the Virgin Mary to his resurrection from the empty tomb, the whole incarnational assumption of our human nature was at the same time a reconciling, healing, sanctifying and recreating activity”. Further, Torrance (2008:100) discerns in the virgin birth an analogy of salvation by grace through faith alone. While Emil Brunner (1952:355) thinks the doctrine of the virgin birth is docetic as it compromises the true humanity of Christ, since no “true man” is man without a “human father”, Torrance sees something different. In the setting aside of man’s lordship in procreation, in Mary’s faithful reception of the angelic annunciation, there is for Torrance (2008:101) an analogy of monogenism where God alone is at work in and through and with man for man’s salvation. And because it is God who is at work in this way in the depth of man’s fallen humanity, his children’s salvation is secure.

73 CD.1.2, 193.
74 *The Person of Christ: Contours of Christian Theology* 21-43; Macleod thoroughly responds to Brunner’s and other objections to the doctrine of the virgin birth.
Up to this point Torrance’s principle of incarnation is discussed as a free divine moment in relation to the old covenant with Israel and its fulfilment in the New Testament’s Word become flesh via the Virgin birth, as it was proposed at the beginning of the chapter. In the following chapter the discussion will turn to the explanatory role of the concept of “free divine movement” in relation to the doctrines of God, sin, Christ, and salvation.
Chapter 4
Torrance on the incarnational divine free movement

In this chapter the task is to interact with Torrance’s understanding of the free divine movement or voluntary vicarious kenosis as it relates to the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature. With respect to this assumption, Torrance’s understanding of free divine movement is important because it allows resolution at greater depth of a key theological issue raised in affirming that the Son assumed fallen human nature, meaning how a holy God can be said to work in and through a nature marked by sin, for “(ASV) Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil (Hab.1:13).” Furthermore, in conceiving of God engaging with his creation in person in terms of a “free divine movement”, appropriate consideration has to be given to the fact that the Christian tradition recognises that God is in his being impassible and immutable. To identify and analyse the import of the notion of free divine movement then, the argument needs to begin with Torrance’s understanding of the doctrine of God, then sin, Christ, and salvation.

4.1 God

With regard to the doctrine of God, Torrance does not discuss it apart from the doctrine of Christ. He (1996c:1) reasons that “The Christian doctrine of God is to be understood from within the unique, definitive and final self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, that is, from within the self-revelation of God as God become man for us and man’s salvation … It is, thus, in and through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit that the distinctively Christian doctrine of God in his transcendent triunity is mediated to us.” This Incarnational-Pentecost way of articulating the doctrine of God is consistent with the New Testament claims of Jesus as the sole exegete of the Father (Jn. 1:18) who is identical with him (Jn.14:9) and knows him perfectly (Matt.11:27), and that it is only the Holy Spirit who knows and searches the deeper things of God and reveals them to man (1 Cor. 2:10-11). Torrance believes that with the incarnation and Pentecost, the doctrine of God can no longer be discussed as a standalone for God is only known as he is revealed in Christ through the Spirit.

The problem with a standalone discourse of God, as Torrance (1995a:73) sees it, is that it is the human mind that takes precedence instead of God’s self-revelation made possible in the incarnation. Torrance (1996b:110) contends that man no longer can know God from natural theology, that moves from cause to effects, or from the Latin “philosophical ontology”76, that identifies God’s being with the creature’s being only distinguishing God from the creature by some transcendent attributes that are later validated from scripture. Furthermore, Torrance, like Mackintosh, asserts that neither is God known “by

75 Mediation of Christ 115-116.
76 School of faith lxx-1xxi.
digging into ourselves‖ (McGrath, 2006:37). These methodologies have their “centre in the human mind” and resemble what Torrance (1980:28, 147) calls the “Kantian dictum that we cannot know things in themselves, but only as they appear to us in their external relations”. This kind of thinking, Colyer (2001b:210) comments, is informed by an epistemological dualism that separates “the human knower and the object or reality the human subject attempts to know”. The implication of such thinking, Torrance (1980:28) argues, is that neither Jesus nor the Father can be properly known according to their inner reality. These man-centred devices, he (1995a:51) reasons, are subjective, imprecise, therefore, non-scientific and ungodly arising from the “epistemological, cosmological, and religious dualisms”. They have their effect in polytheism and idolatry. Overall, Torrance (1980:37) argues, “theology degenerates into [bad] anthropology”.

By contrast to these anthropomorphic ways of knowing God, Torrance (1980:151) insists on the need to “develop our theological inquiries . . . in movements of thought in which we seek to know God strictly in accordance with his nature, and in terms of his own internal relations as they become disclosed to us through the incarnation”. Thus, the incarnation, and by implication Christology, is decisive in as far as the true Christian doctrine of God is concerned. This is because (1959a:lxiii) “There is no God except He who has shown us His Face in Jesus Christ, so that we cannot go behind the back of Christ to find God, or know anything about Him apart from this God, for there is no other God than this God. Here then, it is not some prior ontology, but Christology which is all-determining in our knowledge of God.” Torrance (1981:xviii) is emphatic on the unconditional self-giving of God in the incarnation in as far as Jesus is understood to be equal with the Father in being and action “for that is who God is, he who came in Jesus Christ, and that is what God does, what Jesus Christ does”. Thus, Christ is truly sufficient and pre-eminent.

The decisiveness of the incarnation and Christology for the doctrine of God and theology at large constitutes what Torrance (1995a:47) believes is “a theological way of thinking” where all talk about God is objectively supplied and controlled “from a centre in God”. Good news is that in the incarnation and Pentecost, God has planted such a centre in this world. In Torrance’s (1959a:ixx-cxxvi) book, The School of Faith, the importance of the incarnation and Pentecost as foundational truths for understanding God’s self-revelation is conspicuous. There he critiques the Latin philosophical concept of God in two pages and then turns to the Reformed doctrine of God under the title “God in Christ”, followed by the doctrines of Christ and the Spirit. Thus, in The Trinitarian Faith (1995:69), he argues that one ought to
think of God from “a centre in God as he reveals himself to us through his Word incarnate in Jesus Christ.” This, Torrance (1995a:73) believes, is what distinguishes theology from mythology and it constitutes realist, objective, scientific and godly method.

It is in the incarnation and Pentecost that God reveals himself for what he really is in his inner being as a Trinity. Hence, Torrance (1980:158) can insist that with the incarnation man now can “acknowledge that what God is toward us in the three-fold economic activity of his revelation and redemption, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he is in himself antecedently and eternally in his own Being in the Godhead”. 82 The three-foldness of God’s economic activity is important as it signifies the oneness and the distinctiveness in the One Godhead of the three persons. This distinction helps one grasp what Torrance means when he designates the incarnate Son God as man. Torrance (1995a:49,87) is fond of the Athanasian statement that: “It would be more godly and true to signify God from the Son and call him Father, than to name God from his works alone and name him Unoriginate”. This is because “while God was always Father, he was not always Creator or Maker” (Italics original). Fundamental here is the eternal Father/Son relation, which denotes the eternal Trinitarian distinctions within the Godhead. As was seen in chapter 2, Torrance (1995a:125) maintains the ancient meaning of homoousion which denotes both the oneness of being and the distinction of the persons of the Godhead since “nothing can be ὀμοοσζιος with itself, but one thing is ὀμοοσζιος with another”.

It is within this trinitarian distinction that the impassibility and immutability of God is to be understood in relation to the sufferings of Christ. Torrance (1996c:247) argues that while the whole trinity was involved in the sufferings and death of Christ, “it was not the Father or the Spirit who was crucified but the incarnate Son of God, crucified certainly in his differentiation from the Father and the Spirit in being and activity”. However, Torrance (1996c:252) continues to argue that that does not mean God the Father was untouched by the suffering and death of Christ; for Christ suffered not only in his humanity but in his deity also which he equally shares with the entire trinity. As such, the Father suffered deeply the sending of his beloved Son to be an atoning sacrifice for sin and, because of the “coinherent” trinitarian “perichoretic coactivity”, the sufferings of Christ touches the whole trinity in “their different but coordinated ways”. 83 Thus the sufferings of Christ in his unbroken oneness with the trinity provides Torrance (1996c:254) with a link between the economic and the immanent trinity which guarantees Christ’s work of salvation as an act of the Triune God himself.

Furthermore, this trinitarian distinction is important for the Christian positive knowledge of God. Unlike Judaism, Greek philosophy and all other world religions where God in his “undifferentiated”

82 When Torrance speaks of the knowledge of God as he is in himself, he does not refer to the what of the being of God, which is infinite, but to the Trinitarian internal and eternal relations of God. Theology in reconstruction 237.
83 Christian doctrine of God.
simple being is “unknowable” and “nameless”, the incarnational Christocentric theology, Torrance (1995a:50, 65-68) argues, allows one to know God positively and not merely in negatives. The Christian positive knowledge of God, he (1996c:4) reasons, depends on God’s freedom “to go outside of himself” and accommodate himself to man’s limited and feeble capacities and incapacities so that people can know him and have fellowship with him. The incarnation proclaims such freedom of God to be one with his creatures without any detrimental effects to his being or the creatures’ being.

It may be legitimately asked at this point whether Torrance does justice to theology when he accords the incarnation and Christology such a place. Does that mean God never made himself known in and through creation and history prior to the incarnation? Addressing this question, Torrance (1996c:1, 25) argues that the centrality of Christology does not imply the reduction of all theology to Christology. Rather, he reasons that in light of Christ’s sole mediatorship between God and man, all Christian doctrines must have their “inner coherence” and “correspondence with the objective reality of God’s self-revelation in Christ”. It is also in this framework that Torrance’s position on natural theology is to be understood.

Torrance raises two further points about the primacy we must give Christology which further demonstrate its foundational place in understanding God’s acts in the world. Firstly, he (1995a:66) writes that “before God’s Word became flesh in the fullness of time the faithful were not brought into such a close personal relation with God that they came to know him directly in himself as he became known in Jesus Christ”. The knowledge of God then was not personal in a direct way because it was mediated through men as in the prophet, priest and king. Thus, God was in men. But with the incarnation, Torrance (1959a:ixxvii) argues, there is a revolution in the knowledge and doctrine of God. This revolution demands that Paul’s statement that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” should mean, “not only that God was at work in man, but that God came to work as man”. Thus, it is God himself that we are dealing with in the person and work of Christ.

Secondly, the finality of the incarnation depends on the homoeousion. The distinctive character of the Christian concept of “word or logos”, Torrance (1995a:72) argues, is its identification of the Logos as the eternal Word that “inheres in the very being of God” and is ontologically “identical” with the hypostasis of the Son who became incarnate in Jesus Christ. It is only when Jesus is understood in this way, as the eternal Word of the speaking and acting being of God, Molnar (2009:40) comments, “that Athanasius, Barth, and Torrance could then insist that what God is toward us in his saving acts he is eternally in himself in such a way as to cut out any other approach to God than that which takes place in

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84 Christian doctrine of God 3, Trinitarian faith 66.
85 Calvin’s doctrine of man 130; Christian doctrine of God 14.
86 Mediation of Christ 101.
faith through the Son by the Holy Spirit and toward the Father”\textsuperscript{87}. Hence, the finality of the incarnation and Christology may not be questioned. The divine free movement of God can only be foundationally understood from this vantage point. Thus, only from here may it be understood what it may mean for God to be impassible and immutable.

4.1.1 The speaking, acting, moving, and the living-loving God and the incarnation\textsuperscript{88}

If Jesus is identical with God, how then does this correlate with the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature? Torrance (1980:65) vigorously repudiates any Aristotelian-Medieval notion of God as unmoved mover who is inherently and utterly impassible and immutable;\textsuperscript{89} for in the incarnation we see a God who is dynamic, active, passionate, and merciful at work. The incarnation brings to the fore the revelation of a living, loving, speaking, acting, and moving God who is identical with Jesus.

Torrance (1996c:221,237-238) grounds his dynamic view of God in what he considers to be changes that have taken place in God such as the creation which was not eternal but had a definite beginning effected by God, the incarnation, which was a new thing in God for “the Son was not always incarnate”, the death and resurrection of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{90} This dynamic view of God, Torrance (1980:52) believes, undergirds the Christian doctrine of creation out of nothing and the corresponding doctrine of the contingency of creation with its contingent rationality and freedom. Thus, “the incarnation”, Torrance (1996c:108) argues, “was not necessary for God to be God and live as God: it flowed freely, unrereservedly and unconditionally from the eternal movement of love in God …. it took place in the sovereign ontological freedom of God to be other in his external relations than he eternally was, and is and to do what he had never done before”. Before the incarnation, Torrance (1975:223) asserts, “God was not man, but only God in God”. Thus, the argument made in the previous chapter that in becoming man, God defied all obstacles to his relations with creation, such obstacles include his being God \textit{qua} God before the incarnation and man’s creatureliness and sinfulness. Here Torrance further elevates his argument for the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature from the covenant and seats it into the very being and life of God as love. Thus, it is an error to think of his argument for the assumption of fallen human nature as merely grounded in God’s covenant relationship with Israel.

From this dynamic conception of God, Torrance (1980:65) dismisses any idea of God’s impassibility and immutability that does not allow him in his life and being to be actively related to his creation and “untouched” by the suffering of creatures.\textsuperscript{91} A static notion does not accord with the God

\textsuperscript{87} Christian doctrine of God 108, 130.
\textsuperscript{88} Christian doctrine of God 4.
\textsuperscript{89} Christian doctrine of God 239.
\textsuperscript{90} Trinitarian faith 89.
\textsuperscript{91} Trinitarian faith 185.
who meets us in Jesus. Rather, God’s being, “rightly understood”, Torrance (1996c:240) argues, is dynamic with the “constancy [immutability] of his self-living, self-moving, and self-affirming personal Being”. With regard to impassibility, Torrance (1996c:250) holds that God is impassibly passible in so far as “he took upon himself ‘the form of a servant’”.

In the same vein, Torrance (1995a:153) repudiates any kenotic account which attempts at harmonizing the infiniteness of God vis-à-vis the incarnational deity and the humble humanity of Christ in space and time, by positing a metaphysical change in the laying off of some of his attributes as God. Concomitantly, he (1995b:367) also repudiates the Lutheran receptacle conception of space as that which contains as it equally leads to “a false kenoticism”.92 Reflecting on Mackintosh’s kenotic understanding, Torrance (1987:165) writes that “kenosis has to be understood as the utterly astonishing and incomprehensible act of God’s self-humiliation and self-abnegating love in which he freely made himself one within our actual existence in order to share the shame of our sin and guilt and through atoning sacrifice to effect our salvation”. Kenosis, he continues, is the costly self-surrender of God to “humiliation and death in order to forgive our sins”. This, Torrance argues, “was a revelation of the inexhaustible power of God’s love”, with which is the message that “God loves us better than he loves himself.”93 Hereby, Torrance, affirmatively answers the main research question of this study of whether the divine free movement guarantees the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature.

However willing and free to partake of man’s shame, sin and guilt, God’s incarnational freedom does not imply a compromise of his transcendence and holiness nor is it a compromise of his very freedom, a fact which Torrance (1996c:108) is well aware of. How then does this freedom of God relate to the contingency and sin of man?

4.2 Sin

Following Athanasius, Torrance (1995a:99-102), identifies two problems of creation and mankind in particular, namely: the creation’s contingency and the sinfulness of man. The contingency of creation means that it was created by God out of nothing, thus is totally dependent on God though it is endowed with its own inherent autonomy by God. This contingency constitutes the fragility and instability of creation which, Athanasius (Incar. 1893. 3-4:262-264) argues, if left without the sustaining power of its creator — the Word of God, creation drifts into corruption. Besides, the fall of man, Torrance (1995a:101) argues, “infected” mankind “with a deep-seated corruption, beyond the corruptibility of their

92 Torrance’s reference to “false kenoticism” here is defined by Molnar as “theories that fail to think of the Father and Son ‘in accordance with their natures’ as fully divine in their mutual indwelling;” it is a failure to “take seriously the fullness or the perfection of the Son and Father together”. *Incarnation & resurrection* 92.
93 *Theologian of the cross* 165.
natural contingence, which worked for their utter dissolution”. Thus the incarnation was for the purpose of reversing and restoring man and creation from its original inherent unstableness and the additional corruption brought about by the fall.

Highlighting this double problem of creation and its resolution provided through the incarnation, Torrance (1995a:102) reasons that the Word of God, “by taking our frail, contingent nature upon himself who is the one source and origin of all creaturely being, he transferred our origin into himself, in order to secure our being from final dissolution into nothingness, but at the same time he took upon himself our alienated and corrupt nature, including the curse of sin, in order to redeem us and renew our being in himself”. But how does the holy God relate to man in his sinfulness so that he can assume man’s fallenness into himself in order to save man? In all truth, it is held by the advocates of both the unfallen and fallen view that it is the nature of sin to spoil all kinds of relationships be it between God and man, man and woman and creation as is recorded in Genesis 3. This is what constitutes the problem in arguing for the assumption of fallen human nature which is at enmity with God, for that would be associating the holy God himself with man’s sin, and in that way incriminating him along with us.

However, following Calvin, while endorsing the spoiling nature of sin, Torrance (1996b:99) argues that true knowledge of man derives from true knowledge of God. He (1952:83) asserts that the doctrine of sin ought to be understood not in isolation but in the light of God’s grace and love just as scripture does. Torrance (2008:246, 253) holds that sin is an attack and rebellion against God in which man attempts to assert his own autonomy against the reality of his contingent life and being. Adam’s primal revolt, as Calvin (Inst. 1. 15. 4. 1962:164) argued, resulted into a “fearful deformity” of the imago dei and incurring of God’s judgment which is experienced in terms of man’s separation/alienation from God. This separation, Torrance (2008:247) reasons, should not be construed in terms of a “metaphysical magnitude” nor does it mean that “God gives man up and turns His back upon His creation, but that God holds Himself at a distance from man and keeps man at a distance from Himself, precisely for man’s sake”.

Torrance (1996b:94) appeals to God’s providence and argues that man’s existence, including “the wicked and the reprobate” is maintained both “in being and order” by God through the presence of his Holy Spirit. Correspondingly, he (1959:cxiii) writes, “man wants nothing less than to be laid hold of by God in spite of his sin and be restrained from his sinful movement away from God”. Consequently, Torrance (1996b:107) reasons that even the Reformation doctrine of total depravity does not mean man’s “ontological break” with God, but rather, a perversion of man’s fundamental relations with God.

94 Incarnation 245.
95 Theology in reconstruction 108.
96 Theology in reconstruction 106.
97 School of faith ci.
By Creator-creature ontological relation, Torrance (1959a:cxii) means that God is the maker and giver of being “to realities distinct from himself”. As such, the relation is irreversible as it is established, maintained and can only be dissolved by God alone. He (2008:255) further argues that even though “the creature sins and God resists sin”, God, nonetheless, “will not let the sinner go”. In fact, this relation between God and man in his sin, Torrance (2008:247) believes, presupposes God’s nearness which intensifies the conflict and it is precisely the denial of this proximity which “minimizes the conflict”. The dynamism that permeates Torrance’s theology is not only in relation to God’s saving acts; it extends to his doctrine of sin. Under all circumstances man is still held up by God. Whether it be man as a sinner or man as redeemed, man in heaven or man in hell, his entire move, life, and being are from God (Acts 17:28). The ontological relation that still holds between God and humanity constitutes a perverted version of the creator-creature relation.

However, Torrance (2008:247) argues, that a survival or providential kind of relationship is not enough as man was made not merely for existence but for an intimate fellowship of love. The door to more life fulfilling relations between God and humanity is opened up in the incarnation and Pentecost. With the incarnation, man’s inherent unstableness is resolved by having his being anchored by the very being of God as man. The healing of man’s inherent instability rules out the possibility of annihilation. Even in hell, Torrance (1959a:cxiii-cxv) contends, men do not end up into non-existence nor does the love of God cease to be love for them. The incarnational ontological union with Christ is reinforced with the Pentecost-out pouring of the Spirit upon all flesh, making salvation a reality for all although not all are saved. Torrance (2009:189) believes that “Pentecost is part of the atonement” where the Spirit is indiscriminately poured upon all flesh so that Joel’s (2:28) prophecy is fulfilled. This extravagant outpouring, he (1959a:cxviii) argues, is for the purpose of unveiling the innermost secrets of man’s heart, hence, convicting men of sin, righteousness and judgment.

If both the incarnation and Pentecost ontologically and spiritually affects all people, then it should not be surprising that Torrance (2009:187) joins Athanasius and McLeod Campbell in asserting the universal “sufficiency” and “efficiency” of the atonement over against the “twin heresies” of Calvinistic limited atonement and universalism. However, Torrance (2009:190) argues that this universal sufficiency and efficiency are only actuated in the church, where “the inner range of redemption” is personally experienced through the communion of the Spirit. Thus the alienation that came because of sin can be thought of as a judgmental separation in which God, without abandoning man, maintains distance.

98 Scientific theology 66.
99 School of faith cii, Trinitarian faith 183.
100 School of faith cxvii.
101 Trinitarian faith 182, Scottish theology 288.
102 An introduction to Torrance theology 54.
in judgment upon man’s sin when he sent him out from the Garden; while the incarnational union is a saving union whereby God graciously, in Torrance’s (1981:xv) language, “refused to be alone or without us, but insisted on penetrating into the heart of our sin and violence and unappeasable agony in order to take it all upon himself and to save us”.

How does God deal with sin and evil in the incarnation? Torrance (2008:150) writes that “In the incarnate life of Jesus, and above all in his death, God does not execute his judgement on evil simply by smiting it violently away by a stroke of his hand, but by entering into it from within, into the very heart of the blackest evil, and making its sorrow and guilt and suffering his own.” Here then, sin and fallenness become the material cause of the incarnational assumption. He writes (1992:29) that “in his marvellous wisdom and love God worked out in Israel a way of reconciliation which does not depend on the worth of men and women, but makes their very sin in rebellion against him the means by which he binds them forever to himself and through which he reconstitutes their relations with him in such a way that their true end is fully and perfectly realized in unsullied communion with himself”. What this entails is that Christ’s incarnational identification with us does not incriminate his deity with man’s sinfulness. But rather, because of his double identification with God the Father and us in the God as man, Torrance (1995a:186) reasons that sin and evil is directly and fully absorbed and exhausted into God’s own being, hence, man’s new recreation is wrought at great depths. Accordingly, this is what he implies when he argues that Christ’s reconciling work is not external to him but it falls within Christ's own being. With this direct and bold delineation of God’s relation to sin and evil in the incarnate life of Christ, which eliminates any need for a “third party in the conflict between God and man” (Chiarot, 2013:155), Torrance (1995a:175, 178) reprimands Origen and Gregory Nyssa’s idea of paying the redemption price to the devil.

However, in light of the “myriad of healings” and “exorcisms” Jesus performed, Chiarot (2013:203) questions whether Torrance’s language of sin and evil as being “absorbed” and “exhausted” in Jesus’ being and that Jesus “bears” sin and evil means that all the sins, diseases, and demons were transferred into Jesus’ body. This is an overly literalistic reading of the language which overlooks the fact that Torrance, unlike Owen, who thinks of the atonement in terms of “price”, does not regard Christ’s bearing of man’s sin in quantitative terms. Furthermore, here Chiarot has not paid enough attention to the fact that Torrance refuses to view Christ’s humanity and his actions in a merely instrumental way, which if he did, could raise the question of discrete and quantitative transference of sin and evil in all its different forms. Torrance (2008:134, 147) emphasizes Jesus’ physical and spiritual experiences in dealing with sin and evil and its various manifestations, hence, his emphasis on Jesus’ groanings, tears, and sighs after or before some of these encounters. He (2008:135) argues that such experiences were pointing to

103 Christian doctrine of God 249, Trinitarian faith 184-185.
104 Death of death in the death of Christ Bk. IV 297-300.
“the secret of the cross” that was in Christ’s heart. The direct impact such experiences had on Jesus are well registered in the Gospels where, after preaching, he goes away to pray (Mk.1:35), upon being touched by a sick woman, he complains that power went out of his body (Mk.5:30), he sometimes withdraws from the multitude with his disciples just to take a break and refresh (Mk.6:30). This is how Jesus redeems man’s suffering, as Barth argued, by directly allowing them to inflict their sting on him so that man will not have to suffer such eternally.105 This is why Torrance (1995a:155) insists on an atonement that takes place “within the incarnate constitution of the mediator” and reaches to the “root of our sinful existence”, something which cannot be conceived in transactional terms.106

Again, here Chiarot (2013:203) fails to balance up Torrance’s use of the language of “bears it” with “bears it away”. Torrance (2008:135) does not only say that Jesus “bears” sin and evil in his own being but that he also “bears it away”.107 Bearing evil and bearing it away is Torrance’s language of atonement. He (2008:136) writes that “it was only in anticipation of Calvary that Jesus wrought those miracles, in which he healed the sick, drove out demons, forgave sins and raised the dead. All through his life and ministry…. he was at work in holy atonement, bearing the sins of the people on his spirit and through the Spirit offering himself in sacrifice to God”. Writing on how Jesus as truth and love exposed and carried “the infinite guilt of humanity”, Torrance (2008:151-152) says “he drew it fully and completely upon himself in all its utter violence in order to bear it and bear it away as the lamb of God in atoning sacrifice”. This is what the words absorb, exhaust, and bear mean.

Furthermore, Torrance’s language of God having absorbed and exhausted sin and evil in his own being in Christ, should not be mistaken for Moltmann’s “Panentheism” or “process theology” where “God and humans participate in a common history”.108 Evaluating Moltmann’s The Crucified God, Cooper (2006:238) observes that “in the interaction of love and abandonment between the Father and the Son in Jesus’s crucifixion and resurrection . . . the suffering and renewal of all humanity are taken into the life of the Triune God”. Moreover, God’s “self-love” is conceived as actualized through his experience of sin and evil. The problem is noted by Molnar (2002:217) that Moltmann defines God’s being and action in terms of his [God’s] experience. This has the effect of blurring the distinction between God and the world and leads to the idea of “mutual perichoresis” (Vanhoozer, 2010:153) between God and the world, eternity and time. By contrast, as stated above, God’s experience of sin and evil in the incarnation and the cross, according to Torrance, is for the purpose of atonement which is accomplished in our humanity vicariously assumed by the Son109. Thus, Torrance’s (1995b:344) emphasis on the vicarious humanity of

105 Christian doctrine of God 249.
106 Divine meaning 313.
107 Christian doctrine of God 248.
108 Cooper, Panentheism 243.
109 Italics added.
Christ which was freely assumed for man’s sake, and that the incarnation and the atonement were not needed to address any lack in the Son’s, and thus the triune, eternal being, rules out any suggestion of Panentheism.

The above arguments show that the differences between Torrance and the advocates of the unfallen view are bigger than mere arguments about the assumed nature. It goes back to their views of God and his relations to man and creation after the fall. The assumption of an unfallen human nature is coherent with a static doctrine of the impassible and immutable God as it presupposes an unbridgeable ontological separation between God and man, the sinner. In this view, God cannot relate to human nature after the fall by grace and love.

In his critique of Calvin’s exposition of the atonement, McCormack (1993:26) finds Calvin in a limbo where he has to reconcile God’s righteousness and love in the atonement. McCormack believes this problem arises from Calvin’s misinterpretation of Rom.5:10 where he believed God was man’s enemy whereas the passage puts such enmity on man towards God. This confusion, in turn, creates a righteousness-love tension in Calvin which he resolves by appealing to the idea of divine accommodation that we cannot fully understand the truth as it stands in God. McCormack (1993:27) appreciates that Calvin was able to say that the atonement ensues from God’s mercy and love, notwithstanding, he takes issue with Calvin’s idea of divine accommodation as it entails that what God is in himself is not what he reveals to us. Whether McCormack has done Calvin justice or not is not the point; the interest here is in the love-righteousness contradiction Calvin wrestled with. A similar problem, Torrance (1996a:293-294) argues, was at the heart of McLeod Campbell’s ministerial contemporaries who held God’s justice and mercy in contradiction. The polar opposition led to a common belief amongst ordinary church-goers that God was an angry God until he was placated and reconciled to men by the sacrifice of Christ. They could not grasp, as Calvin (Inst. 2. 16. 4. 1962:436) expressed it in his institutes quoting Augustine, that “in a manner wondrous and divine, he loved even when he hated us”. It is in the context of this key error that the doctrines of double predestination, limited atonement and conditional grace flourished with their corollary of lack of assurance which Campbell sought to resolve. Consequently, it is not surprising that such views are coupled with the merely instrumental view of Christ’s humanity which only accomplishes a forensic salvation of the elect few. It is as if God was under constraint in the work of redemption. It is this dualism between God’s being and his works that, following Athanasius, McLeod Campbell and Barth, Torrance (1996a:295) passionately rejects.
4.3 Christ

Torrance’s Christology has already been engaged with in chapter 2 and in the above discussion on the doctrine of God. At this point this study will only touch on the implications of Torrance’s view of Christ as *homoousion* with man in light of his being *homoousion* with the Father which constitutes the *God as man*. As was seen in chapter 2, the incarnational *homoousion* with man is simply Torrance’s way of saying God became a real, complete and actual human being of body, rational soul and spirit in man’s Adamic fallen human nature. The God as man is important for understanding Torrance’s (2008:182-183) view of the “saving significance of the humanity of Christ” (Italics original). What does it really mean that God became man as humans are? What is its significance in the hypostatic union and the atonement? What does this mean for salvation?

While the *homoousion* in relation to Jesus’ deity constitutes the natural identity of being and action between God the Father and the incarnate Son, the *homoousion* with man constitutes the meaning from the side of man of the significance of the incarnational becoming of the eternal Word. Here Torrance’s covenantal reading of the incarnation, which demands the fulfilment of the covenant from both the side of God and the side of man and how that is accomplished by God as man, comes in full view. He draws from Cyril of Alexandria three implications of what the incarnational God as man means for man. Firstly, Torrance (1975:163) writes that “God become man means that God as man acts and lives within the limits (ὅροι), principles (λόγοι), measures (μέτρα), and laws (νόμοι) of what is inalienably and properly human.” This means that throughout his “life of continuous kenosis in the flesh” (Italics original), Christ “refused to transgress the limits of the creaturely and earthly conditions of human nature”111. If Christ lived as man and within the creaturely limits, what about his miracles?112 All the works of Christ in his life on earth were done by God as man and not only as God. This is the context in which must be located Torrance’s (2008:124) argument that from his Baptism onwards Christ lived “only as the Son of Man”. It does not imply either negation of the deity or the Nestorian split of the Christ into two persons.

Secondly, Torrance (1975:167) writes that, “God become man means that what God has taken up into union with himself he redeems, and, conversely, that if he had not taken into his own nature our mortal nature we could not be saved and renewed . . . ‘The Word of God united with himself the whole nature of men, that he might save the whole man. For what has not been taken up, has not been saved.’” Torrance (2008:65) furthermore unpacks this soteriological assumption of complete human nature in relation to the word “egeneto” (John 1:14) from its ancient church’s definition as “assumptio carnis”. He

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110 The incarnation: Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed xiv.
111 Theology in reconciliation 166.
112 The unassumed in the unhealed 198.
reasons that the *assumptio carnis* should be understood in terms of God as “willed” to become a creature and “coexist” with the creature as its “human partner” so as to take the creature’s place in the covenant and fulfil it as a human representative. God’s becoming flesh in space and time, Torrance (2008:66) argues, happened “without ceasing to be God” and not apart from man’s fallen human nature, but, precisely, it took place in that very nature so as to sanctify it.

Here Torrance once again advances the idea of the incarnation as an act of God’s freedom. In the incarnation, he (2008.184) reasons, God “had to become” one with his creatures where the “had to” must be understood as “an act of sheer grace and not necessity”. The freedom of God is so important because, with the incarnation, it means that God “necessarily” submitted himself to “the laws of human nature” which includes the “unspeakable humiliation” of the cross. The *assumptio carnis* is here used also to express the real incarnation. God in his completeness — without ceasing to be God or undergoing any metaphysical change — freely took man’s undiminished fallen human nature into himself. That is, that God as God, his dynamic being, which is characterised by ”divine free movement”, lies as the foundation for the incarnation, and, thus, the congruity of him assuming fallen human nature for its healing.

Thirdly, Torrance (1975:171) argues that “God become man means that in taking up our human condition into himself the Son of God has condescended to be the Mediator between God and man.” This mediation will be considered *vis-à-vis* the hypostatic union, atonement and salvation. The hypostatic union in Torrance (2008:201) is not merely another “static” theological technical jargon that explains the how of the union of the divine and human natures in one person without any soteriological significance. In fact, Torrance (1959a:243) understands along with Karl Barth the relation of human nature to the person of the Logos in terms of anhypostasis and enhypostasis. Anhypostasis means that Jesus’ human nature had no independent centre of existence, enhypostasis means that his humanity founds its personal centre and thus its saving power in the person of the eternal Word. Accordingly, Torrance does not only talk about the “hypostatic union” but he couples it with what he calls the “atonning” or “reconciling union”. These two, the hypostatic and reconciling unions, Torrance (1992:66), argues “interpenetrate each other in Christ’s mediation of reconciliation to mankind”. The hypostatic union ensues from and is “grounded” in the “consubstantial communion” within the Trinitarian relations of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It is “projected . . . into the actual conditions of our estranged humanity where we are in conflict with God, so that the hypostatic union operates as a reconciling union in which estrangement is bridged, conflict is eradicated, and human nature taken from us is brought into perfect sanctifying union.

113 *Theology in reconciliation* 164.
114 *Incarnation* 227.
115 *Incarnation* 228-229.
with divine nature in Jesus Christ.” Torrance (1995a:156) argues that this should not be mistaken for a “physical theory” of atonement. Rather, what it (1992:66) means is that the “incarnation and atonement” are “internally and essentially intertwined” so that from his birth, life, and death to resurrection Jesus was “paying the price of redemption”.

The significance of the atonement, then, flows from this foundation of the God as man. Atonement is not accomplished by God alone, nor is it God’s act done upon man. Rather, atonement is an act of God as man in so far as he is and acts in man’s actual fallen humanity so that mankind is truly represented. Thus, Torrance (2008:186) states the following:

Atonement is real and actual only if and as the mediator acts fully from the side of man as man, as well as from the side of God as God . . . But if atonement is to fulfill its object, it must be not only act of God upon man, but act of man in response to God, man’s sacrifice, man’s oblation, satisfaction by man for sin before God. Apart from the human obedience and human life and death of Christ, apart from his human sacrifice, we have nothing at all to offer to God, nothing with which we can stand before God, but our sin and guilt.

Christ’s actual identification with man means human beings are objectively represented in the passive and active sacrifice and obedience he offered to the Father in life and death. It is important to note that Torrance is very concerned with the fact that now every sinner can stand before God no longer empty handed, but with a true human sacrifice for sin offered by Christ on behalf of man. Christ’s sacrifice is man’s sacrifice in so far as Christ truly identified with man. To this end, Torrance (1975:172) identifies “the Gospel as [the] saving and justifying act of God, at once human and divine, an act of pure grace done by God in man or rather by God as man, and made to issue through the self-offering of Jesus out of human being as our offering to God”. This is the saving essence of Christ’s “actual” humanity which was necessary and not merely instrumental, for if it was so, Torrance (2008:212) argues, then salvation would only be “an act of God done upon us and for us, and not also a real human act done in our place and issuing out of our humanity”. Again, what this means is that the judgment and condemnation of Christ to death is the sinner’s judgment and condemnation. Jesus’ agonizing God-forsaken prayer is the sinner’s prayer. Thus the incarnational homoousion is foundationally important for the objective fulfillment of the covenant from the human side.

But not only does the sinner need to be represented, but she/he must be substituted for also. As such, Torrance (2008:195) argues that if atonement is to take place, it “must take place in man’s life, from man’s side, but if it is to be saving and life giving atonement, it must be atonement for man, by God for man, for God alone can repair the past”. That is, Jesus as the God-man does not only represent the sinner

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116 Mediation of Christ 66.
117 Incarnation 158-159.
but he also substitutes for the sinner so that the atonement derives its saving power not from the side of man but from the side of God who alone can atone for sin. The saving significance of the humanity of Christ from his birth to his death lies in that it represents man’s humanity as sacrificed and judged but it is Christ’s deity which gives the sacrifice its saving efficacy. Both actions, Torrance (2008:195) argues, are of the one indivisible Person of the Word, hence, no Pelagianism or Nestorianism. In a summary paragraph on the saving significance of Christ’s God-manhood, Torrance (1960:184), quotes F.W. Camfield:

The background of the atoning deed is not the Godhead per se, but the God-manhood of Christ. But if that be so, then the idea of substitution is inevitable, and is constitutive of the doctrine of atonement . . . What we could not accomplish Christ accomplished on our behalf. The infliction and judgment which we could not bear, He bore for us. He took our place and on behalf of us all He made satisfaction for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. It was not the Godhead qua Godhead that atoned; it was the God-manhood. And that means, not simply God in man, but God as man. The manhood was integral and essential and not merely instrumental. And that means in the acutest sense, substitution.

But then, what precisely is the significance of Christ’s God-manhood for salvation?

4.4 Salvation

Finally, it is time to consider what all the above discussion means for salvation. Here, Torrance’s two aspects of vicarious humanity of Christ and human response will be central. The soteriological import of Christ’s homousion with man in his incarnate constitution, Torrance (1995a:169) argues, is that human salvation is vicariously carried out and completed in Christ’s humanity. This means that salvation is carried out representatively and substitutionary in Christ. Thus, Torrance (1995a:168) often turns to Athanasius’ prepositions “(ἀντί, ὑπὲρ, διὰ, περὶ) ‘for us’, ‘for our sake’, ‘for our salvation’, ‘on our behalf’, ‘in our place’, in our stead’, ‘for our need’,” in order to express “the range and depth of the vicarious work of Christ”. Stating the reason why the vicarious salvation was carried out in Christ humanity, Torrance (1995a:169) writes that “No one can provide for himself or for another a means of salvation which will be accepted in exchange for his life or soul.” Consequently, the Word of God, the second person of the trinity, had to freely and voluntarily become man so as to substitute and represent man in himself for God alone can save. But not merely so, that salvation, reconciliation, is by the God-man who assumed man’s fallen humanity, and that this incarnation is an act within the Person of the Word himself, and thus God himself, means that salvation is at great ontological depth. The benefits of it, Torrance (1987:168) reasons, reach to the very “dark depths of our fallen and enslaved humanity” and are infinite.
However, this view of vicarious substitution and representation is not without challenges. As was briefly referred to in the previous chapter, MacLeod (2000:67) brings up again Robert Letham’s concern and criticism that the advocates of the vicarious view of Christ’s humanity tend to displace the cross. Such criticism fails to appreciate Torrance’s (1995a:175) high view of the dereliction cry and his comprehensive three dimensional view of the atonement comprising the “dramatic, priestly and ontological” aspects. It is in the dramatic aspect that the cross and the resurrection are discussed as “mighty acts of God” in which he triumphed over all the forces of darkness. In fact, Torrance is so emphatic about the cross, as Colyer (2007:47) notes, that he even speaks of God as having put his own “existence and being as God” at risk “for the sake of overcoming the sin and evil entrenched in our world and in our fallen humanity”. Again, Torrance (1981:xv) writes: “But put God on the Cross, let Jesus Christ be God himself incarnate . . . and the whole picture is transformed.” Thus David Torrance (2007:5) observes that the emphasis upon Christ’s vicarious humanity is not meant to detract from the cross but rather it magnifies Christ’s redemptive work on behalf of man.

With the vicarious humanity of Christ, Torrance (1995a:171) does not only think of the provision of atonement for sin, but with it is the universal and cosmic restoration to favour before God. Torrance (1995a:183) believes that with the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus “we are to think of the whole human race, and indeed of the whole creation, as in a profound sense already redeemed, resurrected, and consecrated for the glory and worship of God”. Here Eugenio (2014:70) admits that Torrance is so extravagant in his use of language that it exposes him to charges of universalism. However, it may be helpful to understand such language from Torrance’s background laid in the concepts explored above on ontological incorporation of every man in Christ, the regeneration of man’s humanity in the humanity of Christ and the universal sufficiency and efficiency of God’s love made manifest in the atonement. These concepts lead to Torrance’s (1959a:cxiv) ever unceasing concern and wonder that “we simply cannot understand: that a sinner face to face with the infinite love of God should yet rebel against it and choose to take his own way, isolating himself from that love—that is the bottomless mystery of evil before which we can only stand aghast, the surd which we cannot rationalise, the enigma of Judas”.

Another soteriological aspect that logically follows from the vicarious humanity of Christ in Torrance (1995a:179) is that of the great exchange. In the vicarious humanity of Christ there took place the great and beautiful exchange between Christ’s humanity and man’s humanity. With the great exchange the idea is that Christ became all that his people are so that they can become what he is as expressed by Athanasius. This great exchange is well described by David Torrance (2007:5) when he

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118 Letham, Review on Kettler’s The Vicarious Humanity of Christ and the Reality of Salvation 358.
119 Divine meaning 75-92.
120 Trinitarian faith 188.
argues that, with it, Thomas and James (Thomas, James, and David Torrance were brothers, David is still alive), are summing up Paul’s doctrine of the believer’s incorporation “in Christ”. Christ’s identification with man goes as far as the taking up of man’s humanity, sin, and death upon himself; offering his perfect humanity up to God as sacrifice of good fragrance. Thus, David continues, Christ’s vicarious “humanity becomes our new humanity, his faith and righteousness becomes our faith and righteousness”.

If the vicarious humanity and work of Christ means that his life, death, faith, and righteousness are fully attributed to man, what then is the place of human response? This is another area Torrance faces criticism from scholars, that he does not give room for the personal response of faith. Habets (2009:78) analyses and responds to MacLeod’s critique of Torrance at this point. Likewise, Kettler (1991:139) does with Smail’s.

Torrance fully gives room for the personal response of faith. He (1960:159) writes that “Jesus took care in His preaching never to give a compelling manifestation of Himself, lest by an open display of His majesty and might He might crush men to the ground, leaving no room for faith or repentance or decision.” Again, he (2008:194) states that “If God came openly in his glory and majesty, we would be smitten to the ground in sin and death; the last judgment would be upon us, with no time to repent, no opportunity for personal decision in faith . . . but his humanity holds mankind at arms length from God, in order to give them breathing space, time, and possibility for surrender to God’s challenge in grace, time for decision and faith in him.”121 These statements show that Torrance is equally concerned with personal decision in faith and repentance. Also basic to human responses, Torrance (1975:182) argues, is the work of the Spirit in uniting man to Christ so that he/she can participate in the life of God. Actually, this union with Christ is what salvation is. Without this union there is no benefit to be construed from the vicarious life and work of Christ.

The humanity of Christ for Torrance does not only serve the vicarious purposes, but it also acts as a bulwark between God’s final judgment and the sinful humanity. The wall Christ’s humanity erects allows the sinner time for decision in faith and repentance. However, having been given such space, fallen humanity left to itself, Habets (2009:75) writes, “is unable to respond to God as it should, making reconciliation impossible”. This failure, as Torrance (1959b:288) sees it, is because the gift man is meant to receive in salvation is the complete self-giving of God in the I am who I am. History shows that man has never been able to receive “God’s gift of Himself”. How may this be resolved? As Anatolios (1996:284) has shown, Athanasius’ doctrine of vicarious humanity of Christ was meant not only to show how God became man but also how humanity can be able to receive and maintain God’s gift of grace. It is to this doctrine, Habets (2009:80) argues, that Torrance resorts.

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121 Also Atonement 262.
Torrance (1992:81) argues that the vicarious humanity of Christ mediates man’s human responses in decision, faith, repentance, and even worship-prayer and evangelism too. The vicarious mediation of Christ defines for Torrance (1999:24, 28) the words of St. Paul “. . . yet not I. But Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Gal.2:20). With the vicarious faith response of God as man, Torrance (1999:25) argues that he does not mean “to denigrate” man’s faith response; but because of man’s physical frailty and moral unstableness, the Bible grounds all feeble and imperfect human responses in Christ’s “unswerving faithfulness”. What Torrance (1959a: cvii, cix) denounces is what he believes to be the Pelagian doctrine of “conditional grace” which underlies the Roman Catholic doctrine of “baptismal regeneration” and a Protestant doctrine of “justifying faith”. Molnar (2007:102) observes that, for Torrance, “it is not faith that justifies us, but Christ in whom we have faith”. Accordingly, Torrance believes any doctrine that bears a sense of human co-operation puts salvation at peril.

The protests against Torrance’s concept of Christ’s vicarious response may be informed by a failure to recognize his covenantal reading of the incarnation with its need for a faithful response from the side of man. It is only God as man who could provide a faithful and final answer to his own word and so fulfil the covenant representatively. Jesus’ own words attests to the need for divine response when he declares that “apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn.15:5). There is absolutely nothing man can do for his salvation apart from Christ. The problem with human nature is the unwillingness to do nothing in spite of the fact that man can do nothing on his/her own; people always want to do something. With the vicarious humanity of Christ, all man’s activities have their validity and durability when they are “laid hold of, enveloped and upheld” by Christ’s “divine faithfulness”. This, Torrance (1957:113) believes, is “The fundamental reality of our salvation.” This is the far-reaching saving significance of the humanity of Christ. Thus Kettler (1991:154) writes: “A Christology has lost its heart when it is so obsessed with defending the ‘deity’, ‘sinlessness’, ‘holiness’, or ‘spirituality’ of Jesus Christ, that it ceases to see deep implications of his vicarious humanity.”

122 Torrance’s own translation.
123 One aspect of the biblical conception of faith 111.
124 The distinction between being justified by Christ through faith in him is noted in the Anglican eleventh article of the Thirty-nine articles. “We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort” (Italics original). The faith we confess, Gerald Bray 72.
Chapter 5
Conclusion

Having come this far, now the discussion can be concluded and that will be done in two ways. Firstly, the main ideas of the foregoing chapters will be rehearsed. Secondly, in order to draw to a conclusion the pastoral implication and the theological significance of the study, Torrance’s thoughts on justification and sanctification in relation to the vicarious humanity of Christ will be developed.

The aim of this study was to explore Torrance’s concept of free divine movement as a paradigm for understanding and articulating his concept of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature. This has been done in three ways throughout the three main chapters of this research.

Firstly, in chapter 2 a broad survey and delineation of some of the contested issues in the fallen/unfallen nature debate was undertaken. The issues were discussed in five steps, namely historical precedents, interpretation of the patristic teaching on the humanity of Christ, i.e. the issue of appropriate horizons, a biblical examination of the humanity Christ assumed, a biblical examination of the existential sinlessness of Christ and why fallen human nature. One of the key arguments was Torrance’s use of the patristic heritage with particular regard to the assumption of fallen human nature. Informative in Torrance’s use of the Fathers are three main aspects of his theology which include the real incarnation, where a real God becomes a real man without ceasing to be God, the vicarious humanity of Christ — the not merely instrumental view of Christ’s human nature and the non-assumptus. It became clear that the patristic heritage can be fruitfully employed as an appropriate horizon for any faithful theological inquiry but not as a rigid definition for all of theology. The chapter finished by identifying from advocates of the fallen view three reasons the assumption of fallen human nature is deemed necessary. Firstly, it was argued that this position correlates with the purpose of the incarnation, the great exchange, for the very nature which needed healing was the nature that was assumed since there was no any other nature to be healed. Secondly, the assumption of fallen human nature ensures the continuity of God’s first creation and affirms its continuing goodness in spite of its sinfulness. Thirdly, without such an assumption, the benefits of Christ’s work remain remote and the sinner is left wondering whether God will not, in the last resort, exact another payment since the very nature that offended was not judged.

In chapter 3, Torrance’s further development of the significance of the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature was elaborated at more depth by examining his deployment of the theme of covenant as a theological conceptual tool. The incarnation is to be grounded in God’s dealings with Israel in the Old Testament. Here is a preliminary entry into Torrance’s realist theology, where God reveals himself to Israel and invites Israel into a living relationship with himself. Important to Torrance’s development of the significance of the covenant, is how God through the three ontological structures of priest, prophet and king, assumed Israel in its fallenness into union with himself, thus, making Israel the
womb of the incarnation. This was described as an external kind of assumption, which Torrance characterises as a “love-hate” relationship that shapes the whole of salvation history. Crucial here is the argument that it is not a mere covenantal “social dimension” which necessitates the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature, but that it is the one-sided fulfilment of the covenant from the side of God. This led straight into the discussion on the internal assumption of the fallen human nature and actualization of the covenant in Christ both from the side of God as God and from the side of man as man. Torrance’s two concepts of Christ’s filial life of obedience before the Father and his faithfulness to man which correspond to revelation and reconciliation were introduced. Here Torrance shows how through filial obedience and faithfulness, Christ bent back the assumed wayward human will into conformity to the Father’s will. The chapter ended with a discussion on the virgin birth in which there occurs the initial sanctification of human nature in which original sin was judged by being set aside. Continuous with this, actual sin was dealt with in the active and passive obedience of Christ in the whole course of his life on earth.

In chapter 4 further implications of Torrance’s realist view of the incarnation and the vicarious assumption of fallen human nature were identified and examined in the context of his concept of free divine movement. These he develops by bringing to bear on the understanding of the incarnation and the assumption of fallen human nature, the doctrine of God, sin, Christ and salvation. Of paramount importance is his dynamic view of God as a self-determining being who is able to introduce new things into his life. The dynamic view of God allows Torrance repudiate any idea of metaphysical kenotic theory and an Aristotelian concept of God as the Unmoved Mover who is statically immutable and impassible, and thus inherently unable to engage with creation in and with his own being, but only externally. The freedom of God to do new things and be different than what he always was as God qua God is defining for Torrance. Because he is not statically immutable and impassable, God became what he never was. This becoming does not imply a change or self-discovery or realisation of some “unrealized potential” or future in God as in Moltmann’s “Hegelian Panentheism”. Rather, it is an expression of God’s freedom and love for his creation. It is on this basis that Torrance is able to argue for the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature as grounded in the freedom and love of God.

This dynamism is brought to bear upon the Christian doctrine of sin and allows Torrance to insist on the sustained ontological union between God and man even after the fall. It became clear that Torrance is concerned with two problems of creation, namely its contingent being and its fallenness. The maintained ontological relationship with God becomes the entry point for Christ’s identification with sinners in the incarnation. By assuming man’s contingent being, Christ, who is the maker and giver of

being, resolves the inherent instability of the contingent nature of created reality by grounding it finally in his being as God incarnate.

With regard to the problem of fallenness, the same dynamism extends to the doctrine of Christ who is *homoousion* with God and man hence is God as man. Christ comes precisely to secure man’s failed response in the covenant. As such, he confined himself to the limitations of creatureliness through his complete identification with man in the assumption of the whole man in order to redeem the whole man. It is in this close ontological relation with man that Christ mediates human reconciliation in his own being starting from the hypostatic union in the womb of Mary to the atonement on the cross. Thus, Torrance proleptically envisions the salvation of the cosmos, which includes mankind, as already in motion. Salvation is therefore fully mediated and accomplished in Christ vicariously.

From this vicarious mediation of salvation, a further key theological and pastoral implication may be drawn. This flows from Torrance’s view of justification and sanctification. If in the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature sin was taken up and judged, the incarnational and Spirit union with Christ is the means for accessing the vicariously accomplished justification and sanctification. Torrance grounds his view of justification and sanctification in man’s union with Christ. He does not think of sanctification apart from justification and the vicarious humanity of Christ. He (1959b:65) understands sanctification as “the continual unfolding and maintaining of our justification”. Sanctification is both vicarious or definitive and progressive or Eucharistic. It is completed in Christ’s humanity vicariously and it is enacted continuously in the Lord’s Supper. Both these aspects depend on justification, which Torrance (1996b:155) believes, is “not simply the non-imputation of our sins through the pardon of Christ, but positive sharing in his divine-human righteousness”. This sharing depends on the once for all “real and substantial union with Christ”. By real and substantial union, Torrance (1959a:cvii) is pointing to the incarnational ontological union, which is the “only one union with Christ . . . wrought out with us in His birth and life and death and resurrection.” It is in this union, Torrance continues, that “we are given to share through the gift of His Spirit” both in justification and sanctification. Torrance (1959a:cx-cxi) argues for union with Christ as prior to and the basis of “the blessing of justification” and sanctification. This model of justification and sanctification that begins with Christ’s incarnational union with mankind is referred to as “Christological” and was first advocated by Calvin and John Knox (Torrance, 1996b:152; McGrath, 2005:255-256).

Because of the already existing incarnational ontological union with Christ, justification and sanctification are personally actualized through the twofold sacrament of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Torrance (1996b:152) connects justification to the once for all sacrament of baptism, in which believers are “ingrafted into Christ to be made partakers of his justice by which our sins are covered and remitted”, and sanctification to the sacrament of the Holy Communion, in which “we are continually nourished” in
faith and being. Thus the Eucharist, Torrance (1996b:152, 159) believes, is a symbol of the believers’
total reliance upon Christ for their sanctification.

By tying sanctification to justification and justification to Christ’s real union with man and man
with him by faith, Torrance treads Calvin’s path. McGrath (2005:255) observes that Calvin held
justification and sanctification together as inseparable “aspects of the believer’s new life in Christ”;
hence, the two cannot be described as William Perkins (1558-1602) did using an idea of “degrees”
(1970:224). While Perkins was thoroughly “Christological and supralapsarian”126 in his theology, his
terminology of “degrees”, by which he meant “steps” (Beeke, 2012:126), might be misleading and
pointing in a direction which Torrance (1959a:65) is nervous about where sanctification is detached from
Christ and his justifying work and is conceived as believers’ personal “response” and a test of their
election.127 This danger is most perceivable in Perkins’ (1970:234-246) emphasis on sanctification as the
practical or experiential aspect of the Christian life. To this he devotes an extensive exposition covering
10 chapters (xxxviii-xlvi), more than any other part of the order of salvation in his work A Golden
Chain.128

The Christological view of justification and sanctification as the completed work of Christ,
Torrance (1996b:162) believes, may resolve the above anthropological view of sanctification. Torrance
(1996b:156-157) argues for objective and subjective justification which already have taken place in
Christ. Objective justification is what took place between Christ and the Father when he became the
mediator between God and man in order to resolve the conflict between God’s justice and man’s sin by
fulfilling divine righteousness in himself.129 Subjective justification is Christ’s appropriation of “divine
saving Righteousness for us” as man’s “substitute and representative”. Thus, again Torrance (1996b:160)
underscores the importance of man’s union with Christ, who he describes as “our Brother, and our
Mediator”, as key for both objective and subjective personal appropriation of the already completed
justification and sanctification.130 One of the reasons believers struggle with assurance of salvation is the
awareness of personal shortfalls in their Christian walk. Thus, neither the surety of one’s election nor the
assurance of faith can be attained through one’s performance in sanctification— “for there is no one who
does not sin” (I Ks. 8:46). Torrance’s view of Christological, vicarious and Eucharistic — progressive
sanctification grounded in union with and “incorporation” of the believer into Christ resolves such doubts.

The Eucharistic view detaches sanctification away from the believer and attaches it completely to
Christ with whom the believer is united. It is by feeding on Christ in the Eucharist, Torrance (1959b:260)

126 A puritan theology 119.
127 Theology in reconstruction 157,161-162; A puritan theology 120.
128 A puritan theology 127.
129 Theology in reconstruction 153, 157.
130 Torrance (1996:160) argues that Christ’s objective and subjective accomplishment of our justification and sanctification is objective
and subjective in the believer because it has been enacted by Christ objectively and subjectively in our humanity.
argues, that the individual believer and “the Church militant” are “daily mortified and daily renewed . . . healed where it is broken, reconciled where estranged” and prepared to engage against all the machinations of the devil. Furthermore, in the Eucharist Torrance (1960:154-165) envisions an eschatological forward looking aspect to the day when the church will eat and drink anew bread and wine in the kingdom of God (Lk.22:16). This view of the Eucharist is a highly neglected or non-existent aspect in the contemporary church. Torrance (1960:139-140) observes that in most of the Holy Communion services, the Eucharist is reduced to a “memorial” service without any day-to-day sanctifying and eschatological significance. This is contrary to the early church Fathers and the Reformers, Calvin in particular, who celebrated the Eucharist with a view to its power to deify and sanctify human nature. Tsol (2007:75) writes that “for Cyril the Eucharist is a sanctifying and unifying experience, not changing humanity into a god, but sanctifying and deifying the individual”.

Torrance is not satisfied with the basic Protestant view of justification as a mere declaration of pardon and the imputation of righteousness to the believer. He goes further in the direction of justification as being made righteous. He (1976:64) writes that “Justification is a continuing act in Christ, in whom we are continuously being cleansed, forgiven, sanctified, renewed, and made righteous.” One may think that Torrance is saying nothing new when he argues for the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer. What is missed in this statement by Torrance is the implication that in the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer, he/she is not only “declared” but is also “made” righteous. Torrance (1976:62) is concerned with both the declaration of pardon, the imputation of righteousness and the actualization of righteousness. This pattern is founded on two basic aspects of his (1996b:157) theology, namely Christ’s vicarious active and passive human obedience and righteousness in the whole course of his life which is imputed to the believer and the incarnational union with Christ by the Spirit through which man is justified and sanctified. But, above all, it is in the resurrection of Christ that Torrance (1976:65) argues for a “realized justification” (emphasis original). In the resurrection and the Pentecost-out-pouring of the Spirit, Torrance contends, there is the realization of Christ’s righteousness in the recreation of man’s being by the power of the Spirit. The renewal of man’s humanity is continually experienced in the Holy Communion where believers “partake of the power of the risen Lord” in awaiting the “new creation and the final resurrection of the body”, Torrance argues.

The once and for all nature of justification and sanctification, Torrance (1996b:161) reasons, means that justification is not the “beginning of a new self-righteousness, the beginning of a life of sanctification which is what we do in response to justification”. This once for all nature of justification and sanctification does not imply a negation of the biblical summons to daily “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”. Rather, Torrance (1996b:162) conceives this summons as a call “to live out day by day what we already are in Christ”. Therefore, the stress must be put on the fact that “it is God who works in you, both to will and to act for his good pleasure” (Phil.2:12-13). Thus Molnar (2007:100)
comments that “salvation cannot be understood properly if there is even the slightest hint of self-justification or self-sanctification. Because Christ’s priesthood arises out of his Sonship he makes true atonement and as the risen and ascended Lord he not only completed our redemption in time and place once and for all, but his priestly sacrifice and oblation of himself ‘are taken up eternally into the life of God, and remain prevalent, efficacious, valid, or abidingly real.’”

Victor Priebe’s words, as quoted by Beeke (2012:127), that “Sanctification, then, is dependent upon a moment by moment renewal as the believer looks away from himself and his deeds to the person and work of Christ” fits better Torrance’s than Perkins’ scheme. This moment by moment focus on Christ becomes most crystallized in the Lord’s Supper, the Eucharist, as the church “feed upon His Body and Blood by faith, giving thanks for what He has done in the whole course of His obedience”.131 This, in turn, opens out the possibility for both ministers and congregants having a better regard for the Holy Communion. It may move from a transactional view to where the depth of what God in Christ has done for man and man’s participation in it is grasped. This Christological view of justification and sanctification is only possible because the one who accomplished it was God as man. If God asks man to respond to his finished work of justification with man’s own self-based sanctification, that would only repeat the old covenant failure. Man is unable to positively respond to God’s self-giving in his/her own strength. Thus the divine free movement of God in the incarnation, justification, and sanctification ensures and secures man’s salvation from regeneration to glorification in Christ’s vicarious humanity.

When justification and sanctification are Christologically preached and believed, as Calvin reasoned, there, “the whole Christ, and not a part of him” is preached and believed.132 Once the truth of justification and sanctification which is appropriated through faith that “is pivoted upon Christ and his faith”, Torrance (1996b:160) avers, questions of assurance “are not needed”. This implies that the Puritan “questions of conscience and soul-searching”, along with the accompanying anthropological, “ethical/moralist” view of sanctification as a test for one’s predestination, are set aside too.133

Now to answer the main research question of this research, which is does the divine free movement guarantee the incarnational assumption of fallen human nature? From the foregoing discussion, one can only give it a resounding yes! This is because God’s being is self-determining and God in his love has great freedom to act directly, not indirectly, from within man’s ontological and creaturely existence. God in his love and freedom is not harmatophobic, he does not fear the creatures’ sinfulness. As Barth (CD. 1. 2. 1957:191) has written “God is also Lord over His sinful creature. God is also free over its original sin, the sin that is altogether bound up with its existence and antecedent to every

131 Conflict and agreement vol.2. 147.
132 Iustitia dei 255.
133 Iustitia dei 252.
134 Theology in reconstruction 160.
evil thought, word and deed.” Thus, Torrance argued the ontological relation between God and man is unbreakable relation even from the side of man as it was initiated and is maintained by God, so much so that the creatures’ sinfulness became the material cause in the incarnation. The delay of the incarnation was not because God was deliberating over how to resolve man’s sin in a way that he could himself escape being incriminated by that sin. Rather, it was about the fullness of time (Gal.4:4; 1 Pt. 1:10-12).

From Torrance’s extensive discourse on the real incarnation, the vicarious and not merely instrumental humanity of Christ, the covenantal reading of the incarnation, justification and sanctification, it may be concluded that God takes man and the world he has created more seriously than people do. God takes man’s sinful birth in a fallen world and man’s whole life of sinful existence more seriously so that he abandoned his heavenly bliss in his majesty as God to follow man down here, through the assumption of man’s “actual” humanity in the virgin birth, and to live a human life, hence the God as man. God takes man’s sinful situation and his judgment and condemnation of it so seriously that God as man had to be judged on the cross in order to set man free. God takes the eternal future of man either in heaven or in hell so seriously that God as man had to descend into Hades and physically rise again from the dead and physically ascended into the heavens where he continues as Jesus of Nazareth to mediate for his children before the Father. God as man, Jesus, has promised to return in person, in his body, to raise the dead up from the grave and separate the sheep from the goats (Jn.14:3; Matt.25:33; Acts 1:11; Rev.1:7). This seriousness in captured by the following words of Moltmann (1974:271-272):

“God takes man so seriously that he suffers under the actions of man and can be injured by them . . . if one starts from the pathos of God, one does not think of God in his absoluteness and freedom, but understands his passion and his interest in terms of the history of the covenant. The more the covenant is taken seriously as the revelation of God, the more profoundly one can understand the historicity of God and history in God. If God has opened his heart in the covenant with his people, he is injured by disobedience and suffers in the people.”

Removed from Moltmann’s Hegelian Panentheism,135 and placed in the context of Torrance’s understanding of the doctrines of God and Christ and theological anthropology, this taking of man’s suffering into God himself means that man’s reconciliation is indeed at very great depth as it falls “within the being and life of God” (Torrance,1995a:155).

135 Dolye (Eschatology 282) observes that Moltmann “adapts Hegel’s dialectic” theology which gets into a full “dialectic panentheism” in the Crucified God. Molnar critiques Moltmann’s panentheistic view which blurs the Creator-creature distinction and defines God’s being in terms of his (God’s) experience of suffering. Divine freedom 216; Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom 23.
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