

Free Will and the Stages of Theological Anthropology

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The Stages of Theological Anthropology

Our primary goal in this chapter is to explore the role of human free will in theological anthropology.¹ More specifically, we aim to address how human freedom relates to the progression from the *status integritatis* through the *status corruptionis* to the *status gloriae*.² In exploring these three stages of theological anthropology, we will contrast libertarian and compatibilist views of what humans are and are not able to freely do at each stage.³ We will argue that either account can give an acceptable account of these stages. There may well be either philosophical or theological reasons for preferring libertarian or compatibilist

¹ In this chapter our focus will be on human free will. For an account of divine free will, see chapter 7 of Kevin Timpe, *Free Will in Philosophical Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). We also won't be addressing the issue of the free will of angels, although it would probably parallel the stages that we outline here.

There are also issues about the relationship between free will and human nature that we cannot explore here. Most important here, perhaps, is the relationship between how we understand free will and debates between substance dualists, hylomorphists, and materialists regarding human nature. For relevant scholarship on these issues, see, among others, Richard Swinburne, *Mind, Brain, and Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); E.J. Lowe, *Personal Agency: The Metaphysics of Mind and Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Helen Steward, *A Metaphysics for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Peter van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman, eds, *Persons: Human and Divine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); S.C. Gibb, E.J. Lowe, and R.D. Ingthrosson, *Mental Causation and Ontology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Steward Goetz, *Freedom, Teleology, and Evil* (London: Continuum, 2011); Kevin Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul* (2006); James Madden, *Mind, Matter, and Nature: A Thomistic Proposal for the Philosophy of Mind* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013); Nancy Murphy and Warren Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It? Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

² The *status integritatis* is sometimes referred to as the *status naturae elevatae* or the *status iustitiae originalis*. The reasons for this last name will be made clear in the third section below. See, for example, Ludwig Ott who describes the *status naturae elevatae* as "the primitive state of the first human beings before the fall through sin in which they possessed both the absolute supernatural gift of sanctifying grace as well as the preternatural gifts of integrity" (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch (St. Louis: B. Herder Books Co: 1955), 105). An alternate phrasing for these states that is especially widespread among Reformed theologians is: (a) *posse peccare/posse non peccare* (able to sin/able not to sin); (b) *non posse non peccare* (not able not to sin); (c) *posse non peccare* (able not to sin); and (d) *non posse peccare* (unable to sin).

³ Though in what follows we treat these stages as historical, some theologians approach them instead as merely possible states. See, for example, the discussion in Ott, 105f.

accounts;⁴ we do not think, however, that the desire to affirm the traditional claims of theological anthropology regarding the stages pushes one toward either of these views.

As Marc Cortez notes in a recent introduction to the topic, “theological anthropology takes the human person as an important object of theological reflection because the triune God has drawn the human person into the theological narrative and, consequently, has made a theological understanding of the human a necessary and vital aspect of the theological task.”⁵ Cortez continues, saying that “without question, the two central issues of theological anthropology traditionally have been understanding the *imago Dei* and sin.”⁶ For humans to image God means that they reflect an important truth or truths about God’s nature. But something needs to be said about the way in which sin has affected the image. There are a number of different ways that theologians have approached humans’ being created in the image of God. Cortez contrasts four different general approaches:

The most prevalent way of understanding the image of God throughout history has been in terms of some capacity or set of capacities constitutive of being human that reflects the divine being in some way ... A second approach argues that the imago Dei is something that human persons do, rather than something that human persons are. The image is a function of the human person (or the human community) and not a structure of the human person’s being ... [A third approach holds that] human persons are fundamentally relational beings—related to God, to other humans, and to creation—and it is this relationality that truly images a God who is himself a relational being ... [A] last approach to understanding the imago Dei has been developed by thinkers who contend that the image of God is a multifaceted concept that cannot be restricted to one set of categories. These scholars argue that the important criticisms leveled against the other three approaches suggest that none of them is sufficient to serve as an adequate explanation of the imago. Instead, we should appeal to all three in developing a robust view of the imago.”⁷

Given that the topic of our focus is free will, we will tend to focus on structural capacities that are involved in free will; however, it is not our intention here to claim that the only relevant factors involved in the *imago* are structural capacities that humans share with God. That is, we don’t mean for our discussion to deny the importance of function or relationality to a full understanding of the *imago*. Our view is thus consistent with what Cortez calls the “multifaceted approach.”

Even with respect to this fourth approach, Cortez differentiates between a broad and a narrow aspect of the image: “The image of God has a broad, structural sense that refers to any and all of humanity’s capacities that have an analogical parallel to the divine being (e.g., capacities of rationality, will, love). In the narrower sense, however, the image of God is properly displayed when these capacities are rightly used to reflect the glory of God.”⁸ We will argue that it is in the *status gloriae* that this narrower sense of the *imago* is perfectly realized.

⁴ The philosophical arguments we have in mind here are the traditional arguments for libertarianism and compatibilism. Theologically, some argue that libertarianism is required for a satisfactory response to the logical problem of evil, while others think that compatibilism is necessary for a satisfactory account of divine meticulous providence, omniscience, or divine decrees.

⁵ Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 5.

⁶ Cortez (2010), 10.

⁷ Cortez (2010), 18, 21, 24, and 28.

⁸ Cortez (2010), 28.

We’ve already mentioned the basic stages of theological anthropology that we will explore regarding free will below. Before turning toward free will, however, it will be helpful to characterize these stages in a bit more detail. While there are other aspects of these stages that are worth exploring in other contexts (e.g., how the stages are related to grace), our focus will be on what human agents are able to do *vis-à-vis* their free will. As we will focus on the issues, what primarily differs between the stages is not what humans do in fact do, but rather what they are capable and incapable of doing. That is, we will focus primarily on modal facts about persons in the various stages, even though there will also be non-modal facts which differ as well.

The pattern in understanding the stages of theological anthropology that we follow is one which parallels the *exitus reditus* pattern. Speaking of this pattern, Rudi Te Velde says that it is “a double—in fact a circular—movement: the coming forth (*exitus*) of all things from God, and the return (*reditus*) of all things, particularly man, to God as the ultimate goal ... It is, so to speak, a metaphysical scheme, derived from the order of reality itself (*ordo rerum*), providing the Christian theologian with a conceptual framework which allows for a systematic treatment of the whole of Christian religion.”⁹ This pattern traces the overarching relationship of humankind with God from its initial state of creation, through sin and the fall, then returning to God in the eschaton. We think that this pattern, with respect to human freedom, is no accident, but is instead woven into the Christian narrative regarding human nature and its relationship to God. It is, in other words, an attempt to illustrate the contour of the Christian theology that it assumes.

In following this pattern, we will treat human freedom as it is in three different stages: *status integritatis*, *status corruptionis*, and *status gloriae*. In brief, we understand the traditional view of the stages as follows:

status integritatis—the pre-fall state in which humans are freely able to sin and freely able not to sin;

status corruptionis—a post-fall state in which fallen humans are freely able to sin but, because of the effects of sin, not able not to sin;¹⁰

status gloriae—the post-glorification state in which redeemed and perfected humans are able not to sin but not able to sin.¹¹

We do not, however, mean to suggest that all human agents will, in fact, achieve the *status gloriae*. Insofar as we think both (a) that all humans can, given God’s grace, achieve it and (b) that it represents the *telos* of humanity, we will focus on it rather than other potential eschatological realities for humans.¹²

⁹ Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The “Divine Science” of the Summa Theologiae* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 10f. Te Velde is skeptical of the traditional understanding of Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* as being structured around the *exitus reditus* movement.

¹⁰ This is sometimes also referred to as the *status naturae lapsae*; *ibid.*

¹¹ Ott refers to this as “The state of restored nature (*status naturae glorificatae*), that is, the condition of those who have achieved their supernatural destiny, i.e., the *Immediate Vision of God*. The state includes in its perfection the sanctifying grace. After their resurrection, the bodies of those in this state will also be endowed with the preternatural gifts of integrity (*non posse peccare, mori, pati*)” (Ott, 1955 105f).

¹² See Chapter 5 of Timpe (2013) for a discussion of another potential eschatological reality for humanity, damnation.

Two Approaches to Free Will

As seen in the previous section, the various stages of theological anthropology contain different claims about what human agents can and cannot freely choose to do. We will understand free will to be the capacity or set of capacities which make possible free choices and whose possession serves as a necessary condition for moral responsibility.¹³ Before exploring these stages, in the present section we first contrast two different approaches to the nature of human free will: compatibilist accounts and libertarian accounts. In the remaining sections, we will then show how each of these general approaches can account for the claims about human abilities in the various stages as described in the previous section.

At its heart, compatibilism is simply the claim that it is possible that an agent be both fully determined and yet have free will. In other words, it is possible for an agent to be fully determined in all of her choices and yet still freely make at least some of her choices. It is important to note that compatibilism *per se* makes no claim about whether or not determinism is true. Given that there are at least two kinds of determinism—causal determinism and theological determinism—we also need to differentiate between what we might call causal compatibilists and theological compatibilists.¹⁴ Let the thesis of causal determinism be the thesis that the future is necessitated by the conjunction of the non-relational past and the laws of nature. A causal compatibilist thinks that the existence of free will is compatible with the truth of causal determinism. Most causal contemporary compatibilists, who John Martin Fischer calls “free way either way theorists,”¹⁵ want their view of free will to be compatible not only with the truth of causal determinism, but also with its falsity. Indeed, if such a view were true, the existence of free will would not depend on either the truth or falsity of determinism. This fact is a strong motivation for many contemporary compatibilists as it protects human free will regardless of the discoveries of physics regarding the laws of nature. It should be noted that while compatibilism *per se* doesn’t commit one to belief in the existence of free will, the vast majority of compatibilists do think that humans are free in the sense at issue.¹⁶

In the theological realm, compatibilism is the view that an agent’s choice may be free even if God has determined the person to make that choice. Consider, for example, Lynne Rudder Baker’s compatibilist account of free will:

- (CFW) A person S has compatibilist free will for a choice or action if:
- i. S wills X,
 - ii. S wants to will X,
 - iii. S wills X because she wants to will X, and
 - iv. S would still have willed X even if she (herself) had known the provenance of her wanting to will X.¹⁷

¹³ We do not think that free will is sufficient for moral responsibility. See Timpe (2013), Chapter 1.

¹⁴ There is an important distinction between causal and theological determinism. Although the debate about free will and causal determinism parallels the debate about free will and theological determinism, the two are orthogonal to each other.

¹⁵ See John Martin Fischer, “Excerpts from John Martin Fischer’s Discussion with Members of the Audience,” *The Journal of Ethics* 4.4 (2000): 413.

¹⁶ The most striking counterexample is Neil Levy, *Hard Luck: How Luck Undermines Free Will and Moral Responsibility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), which argues for free will skepticism.

¹⁷ Lynne Rudder Baker, “Why Christians should not be libertarians: an Augustinian challenge,” *Faith and Philosophy* (2003), 467. In Lynne Rudder Baker, “Moral responsibility without libertarianism,” *Noûs* 40.2 (2006), 307–33, she contends that a similar account, with only the added stipulation that each piece of the account be attributed to an agent with a first-person perspective, is also sufficient for moral

According to this account, “a person freely wills what is good—to love God, say—if (i) she wills to love God; (ii) she wants to will to love God; (iii) she wills to love God because she wants to will to love God; and (iv) even if she know the provenance of her wanting to will to love God—namely, that wanting to will to love God was caused by God Himself—she would want to will to love God.”¹⁸ Under this compatibilist account there is no conflict between God being the ultimate cause of a person’s willing of X and that person having free will with regard to X.

Incompatibilists think that the central claim of compatibilist accounts of free will is false; that is, according to incompatibilism, the existence of free will and the truth of determinism are logically incompatible. Insofar as we differentiated causal and theological determinism above, we can also differentiate causal and theological incompatibilists. It is possible for a person to be a compatibilist about one kind of determinism and an incompatibilist about the other.¹⁹ However, in what follows we will simplify our discussion by assuming that the two kinds of incompatibilism go together.

Like compatibilism, incompatibilism is a claim about the modal relationship between the existence of free will and determinism. It, in and of itself, takes no stand on either the existence of free will or the truth of determinism. There are thus a variety of directions incompatibilism can be developed, depending on the stand one takes about these other two issues. Some incompatibilists think that determinism is true and thus that no agent in the actual world possesses free will. Such incompatibilists are often called “hard determinists.” Other incompatibilists think that we lack free will for some other reason than the truth of determinism.²⁰ Those incompatibilists who think that humans do, in fact, have free will (and thus that determinism is false) are referred to as “libertarians.” (Libertarianism as a position regarding the nature of free will should not be confused with the political view which goes by the same name. There is no intrinsic connection between these two views.) In what follows, given our focus on human freedom in the various stages of theological anthropology, we will primarily contrast libertarians with those compatibilists who do believe in free will.

The Status Integritatis

The first stage of theological anthropology that we will examine is the *status integritatis*, the state of humans (and, by extension, other created moral-agents) prior to their first sin. Insofar as they are created in God’s image and are thus morally responsible agents, these agents have free will. Traditionally, Christianity has understood such agents’ free will to be capable of choosing either to sin or to refrain from sinning. That is, it is understood

responsibility. She calls this the Reflective-Endorsement view and the added stipulation only makes explicit what is implied in the fourth condition of CFW. Here, she defends a challenge to her account by claiming that manipulation that cannot create first-person perspective, such as hypnotism, does not fit within the bounds of her account of free will and moral responsibility.

¹⁸ Baker (2003), 467–8.

¹⁹ For a paper on the difference between “soft compatibilism” (according to which freedom is compatible only with natural determinism, but not determinism by another agent) and “hard compatibilism” (according to which freedom is compatible with being determined by another agent), see C.P. Ragland, “Softening Fischer’s hard compatibilism,” *Modern Schoolman*, 88.1/2 (2011), 51–71.

²⁰ See, for example, Derk Pereboom, *Living Without Free Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) for a defense of hard incompatibilism. Pereboom argues that free will is incompatible with determinism. Free will would require agent-causation, which he thinks there is good reason to think doesn’t exist. As a result, he thinks we’re not free (or responsible).

that agents in this stage have a two-way power which can be exercised either in alignment with God's will or against it. Insofar as these creatures are created good, nothing about their agential structure prevents them from choosing to will the good. However, insofar as Christian theology holds that they did in fact freely choose to sin, it must have been possible for them to freely choose to sin.

Reflecting on the human choice to sin brings us to one of the primary motivations for theists to endorse incompatibilism, namely the problem of evil.²¹ The free will defense to the logical problem of evil holds that the existence of moral evils does not contradict God's essential goodness because it is possible that the existence of free will, as well as those other goods made possible by free will, are such great goods that they justify the existence of evil, which free will also makes possible.²² Alvin Plantinga, for instance, writes that "the heart of the Free Will Defense is the claim that it is possible that God could not have created a universe containing moral good (or as much moral good as this world contains) without creating one that also contained moral evil. And if so, then it is possible that God has a good reason for creating a world containing evil."²³ If, as the incompatibilist holds, God cannot determine how creatures use their free will, then his giving them free will explains how it is possible for them to sin. However, insofar as they have not lost original righteousness—that is, they had not yet been contaminated with original sin—it is still going to be possible for them not to sin.

However, it is hard to see how the free will defense will provide the same explanation for moral evil if compatibilism is true. If human's having free will is compatible with God determining them to choose as they do, then God could actualize the good of free will, as well as those additional goods which presuppose free will, without the possibility of moral evil by determining all free creatures never to do evil.²⁴

In an article on theistic compatibilism, Paul Helm defends the claim that "in the matter of God's responsibility for evil, 'standard libertarian theodicies' are in no better a position than are compatibilist theodicies." He does acknowledge that there are significant differences between the two theodicies, but since God creates and sustains all of his creatures with perfect foreknowledge of their actions, both good and evil, he's not convinced that there is "much of a moral difference."²⁵ He suggests that if "for the libertarian God knowingly and hypothetically necessarily permits evil that good may come, for the compatibilist He knowingly and hypothetically necessarily ordains evil that good may come."²⁶

However, the compatibilist must still be able to answer the following question: "Why the fall, given that God could have determined humans never to sin?" The compatibilist could argue for a different version of the greater good defense, one in which sin is necessary

²¹ We have in mind here the logical problem of evil, not the evidential problem of evil. Furthermore, we're not suggesting that the free will defense completely solves even the logical problem of evil, for there might be kinds of evil that it doesn't explain.

²² The free will defense is thus a species of the greater goods defense according to which the greater good which justifies the existence of moral evil is either free will or some other good for which free will is a necessary component.

²³ Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 31.

²⁴ Though a compatibilist, Cowan agrees: "the FWD works only if creatures have the libertarian freedom that makes it possible for them to sin" (Steven Cowan, "Compatibilism and the sinlessness of the redeemed in heaven," *Faith and Philosophy* 28.4 (2011), 418). For recent arguments that compatibilists can also make use of the free will defense, see John Bishop, "Compatibilism and the Free Will Defense," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 71.2 (1993), 104–20 and Jason Turner, "Compatibilism and the Free Will Defense," *Faith and Philosophy* 30.2 (2013), 125–37.

²⁵ Paul Helm, "God, compatibilism, and the authorship of sin," *Religious Studies* 46.1 (2010), 121.

²⁶ Helm (2010), 122.

for some other greater good, rather than it being the result of the greater good, namely free will. Despite being an incompatibilist, Plantinga offers a contemporary theodicy along these lines. In a discussion on possible worlds, he suggests the "splendid and gracious marvel of incarnation and atonement" as a greater good that requires the presence of sin. According to him, "no matter how much evil, how much sin and suffering a world contains, the aggregated badness would be outweighed by the goodness of incarnation and atonement outweighed in such a way that the world in question is very good."²⁷

The Status Corruptionis

On, then, to the second stage, the *status corruptionis*. In this stage, like the prior, humans are capable of choosing to sin. However, the primary difference between the *status integritatis* and the *status corruptionis* is the loss of original justice (sometimes also referred to as original righteousness). A central element of the loss of original justice is that the individual created will is no longer oriented toward the good of alignment with God. However, as a result of the loss of original justice, Christian orthodoxy maintains that humans are not able to save themselves, that is, that humans are not able to be the efficient cause of their own saving faith in Christ.²⁸ They are instead saved by divine grace. For example, Augustine writes that "unless this [sinful] will, then, is freed by the grace of God from the servitude by which it has been made a 'servant of sin,' and unless it is aided to overcome its vices, mortal men cannot live rightly and devoutly."²⁹ Aquinas echoes this sentiment: "a man cannot perform meritorious deeds without grace."³⁰ And the Council of Trent declares that "the efficient cause [of our justification] is the God of mercy who, of his own free will, washes and sanctifies, placing his seal and anointing with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantor of our inheritance."³¹

Here we encounter the theological debate tracing back to Augustine and Pelagius (as well as his disciple Caelestius). The present venue doesn't afford a full discussion of the issues here.³² Nevertheless, a clarification of what Pelagius was (and wasn't) claiming is necessary for present purposes. Pelagius' view is sometimes described as one according to which grace is not needed for even a fallen human to will the good. This, however, is incorrect. Pelagius consistently maintained that the giving of human nature is itself a grace and thus grace is needed for an individual to will the good. This grace is sometimes referred to as "enabling grace" or "the grace of creation." Augustine understands Pelagius' view of the grace of creation as "reduce[ing] to the natural capacity for free choice and to the gift of

²⁷ Alvin Plantinga, "Supralapsarianism, or 'O Felix Culpa,'" in *Christian Faith and the Problem of Evil*, ed. Peter van Inwagen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 10.

²⁸ Here, we have in mind the act of coming to faith in Christ, and not the theological virtue of faith. The act of coming to faith is sometimes also refers to as the act of justification, "whereby someone from being unjust becomes just, from being an enemy becomes a friend, so that he is an heir in hope of eternal life" (Council of Trent, Sixth Session, Chapter VII, in Norman Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 673).

²⁹ Augustine, "Grace and free will" in *The Fathers of the Church*, trans. Robert P. Russell (Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 1968), 35.

³⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, trans. S.J. Robert Schmidt (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Co. 1954), 139.

³¹ Council of Trent, Sixth Session, Chapter VII, in Norman Tanner (1990), 673. Also note the efficient causation is the only kind of causation that we are concerned with in the present chapter.

³² For a further treatment see Chapter 4, "Realigning a Fallen Will," of Timpe (2013).

knowledge of the law."³³ Elsewhere, Augustine notes that according to Pelagius "power God placed in our nature, but will and action are ours by His will; accordingly He does not help us to will, He does not help us to act, He only helps us to be able to will and act."³⁴ In holding that each individual has the ability to choose the good in the *status corruptionis* on the basis of only the grace of creation, Pelagius was effectively denouncing the doctrine of original sin.³⁵ Pelagius also thought that each individual is born as free as Adam was before the fall, and thus is able to choose the good through her own will. On this view, then, there is no difference with respect to free will between the *status integritatis* and the *status corruptionis*.³⁶

In writing against Pelagius and Caelestius, Augustine—and ultimately Christian orthodoxy—emphasizes that, due to the loss of original righteousness in the fall, all humans in the *status corruptionis* are in bondage to sin and death, unable to will the good (and thus refrain from sinning) apart from a further grace than the grace of nature. Freedom from the bondage of sin can come only through a further grace of Christ, made possible by his atoning life, death, and resurrection. According to Augustine, through Adam's sin "the entire mass of our nature was ruined and fell into the possession of its destroyer. And from him no one—not one—had been delivered, or ever will be delivered, except by the grace of our Redeemer."³⁷ This additional grace is sometimes called "cooperative grace" or what Augustine calls "a unique grace."³⁸ For Augustine, "this grace is not nature, but that which supports a weak and corrupted nature."³⁹ For this reason, Augustine asks, "Would it not be the height of absurdity for us to maintain that there was some antecedent good merit in any man's good will to bring about the removal of his stony heart when, in fact, this stony heart simply signifies a will that is obstinate and absolutely unbending in its opposition to God? For where a good will precedes, there is, to be sure, no longer a heart of stone."⁴⁰

Pelagius was excommunicated, largely because of his teachings on grace, by Pope Zosimus in 418. His view was further condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431 for holding that humans could do good apart from the grace of God. The Council of Orange in

³³ William Collinge, "Introduction" to *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* in Augustine (1992), 105. In contrast, Augustine writes that "unless we are assisted by grace, the law will only be a power of sin. Unless we have the spirit of grace to assist us, concupiscence is increased and strengthened by the law and its prohibitions" (Augustine 1992, 260).

³⁴ *De Gratia Christi et de Peccato Orinali contra Pelagium* 1.5.6, as quoted in Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989), 109. According to Gregory Ganssle, "The development of Augustine's view of the freedom of the will (386–97)," *Modern Schoolman* 74 (1996): 1–18, Augustine himself held this position when writing book I of *On Free Choice of the Will*.

³⁵ A similar position seems to have been held by Pelagius' disciple Caelestius. Augustine quotes Caelestius as having written that "the grace and assistance of God is not given for individual acts, but consists in the freedom of the will, or in the law and doctrine" (Augustine, *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. John Mourant and William Collinge (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1992), 141). The Council of Trent condemned the denial of original sin as heretical: "All [have] lost their innocence in the sin of Adam ... as is set out in the decree on original sin. ... [None are] freed from or rise above it by the force of nature ... though their free will, for all that it had been weakened and sapped in strength, was in no way extinct" (Council of Trent, Sixth Session, Chapter I, in Norman Tanner 1990, 671).

³⁶ Augustine agrees with Pelagius that had it not been for the effects of the fall on human nature, a human would be able to refrain from sinning: "What he [i.e., Pelagius] says is true: God, being as good as he is just, created man with sufficient ability to be without the evil of sin, if only man had been willing" (Augustine 1992, 60). Pelagius' error, then, is holding that humans have this same ability post-fall.

³⁷ As quoted in Kenneth Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Harper, 1975), 178.

³⁸ Augustine (1992), 69.

³⁹ Augustine (1992), 131.

⁴⁰ Augustine (1992), 282.

529 furthered this condemnation.⁴¹ Among the pronouncements of the Council of Orange are the following:

*If anyone ... believes ... that the freedom of the soul remains unimpaired ..., he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture.*⁴²

*If anyone affirms that we can form any right opinion or make any right choice which relates to the salvation of the eternal life, as is expedient for us, or that we can be saved, that is, assent to the preaching of the gospel through our natural powers without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, ... he is led astray by a heretical spirit.*⁴³

*He [who] denies that the free will of all men has been weakened through the sins of the first man ... has no place in the true faith.*⁴⁴

The Council concluded that original sin has so weakened free will that "no one thereafter can either love God as he ought or believe in God or do good for God's sake"⁴⁵ apart from a unique divine grace which alone makes these good actions possible. Furthermore, the Council declared that "in every good work it is not we who take the initiative and are then assisted through the mercy of God, but God himself first inspires in us both faith in him and love for him without any previous good works of our own."⁴⁶

It is relatively easy to see how the theological compatibilist could account for the abilities attributed to the *status corruptionis*. Insofar as they are fallen, humans are unable to freely choose a good, including the good of coming to faith apart from a unique grace. However, given that they are still free and responsible agents, they still possess free will; that is, they are free to sin. Given compatibilism, God could determine individuals to freely choose any good (including the good of coming to faith) by bestowing upon them a unique but determining grace.

On a libertarian understanding of free will, there's nothing that prevents both of the modal claims (i.e., that it is possible to choose to sin, and that apart from a unique grace it is not possible not to sin) from being true. (The specifics here will, of course, will depend on the specifics of the libertarian in question.) The first ability is the same as found above in the *status integritatis*. If a non-fallen human agent is capable of choosing to sin, then so will be a fallen human agent. And among the effects of sin will be the loss of the ability not to sin apart from a unique grace, either via the damaging effects of original sin on the agential faculties, or the loss of original justice (or both). Because of this impact of sin upon the individual, a unique grace will be needed for the agent to will the good.⁴⁷

⁴¹ While the Council of Orange was not an ecumenical council, Pope Boniface II ratified the teaching authority of the council in 531. Thanks to Tim Pawl for this historical information.

⁴² *The Canons of the Council of Orange*, Canon 1, http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_orange.html.

⁴³ *The Canons of the Council of Orange*, Canon 7, http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_orange.html.

⁴⁴ *The Canons of the Council of Orange*, Canon 8, http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_orange.html.

⁴⁵ *The Canons of the Council of Orange*, Conclusion, http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_orange.html.

⁴⁶ *The Canons of the Council of Orange*, Conclusion, http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_orange.html.

⁴⁷ For libertarian accounts of how an individual's will can cooperate with a unique grace, see Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003); C.P. Ragland, "The trouble with quiescence: Stump on grace and freedom," *Philosophia Christi* 8.2 (2006), 343–62; and Kevin Timpe, "Grace and controlling what we do not cause," *Faith and Philosophy* 24.3 (2007), 284–99.

The Status Gloriae

In the previous sections, we've outlined how both compatibilists and libertarians can account for the traditional perspectives on what humans can and cannot will in the *status integritatis* and the *status corruptionis*. In this final section, we will show how both views regarding the nature of free will can also account for the inability of the redeemed to sin in the *status gloriae*. Consider, for example, the following passage from Augustine:

*Neither are we to suppose that because sin shall have no power to delight them [i.e., the redeemed], free will must be withdrawn. It will, on the contrary, be all the more truly free, because set free from delight in sinning to take unfailing delight in not sinning. For the first freedom of will which man received when he was created upright consisted in an ability not to sin, but also in an ability to sin; whereas this last freedom of will shall be superior, inasmuch as it shall not be able to sin.*⁴⁸

Reflecting on this line of thought, Simon Francis Gaine writes, "That impeccability belongs to the orthodox Christian concept of heaven is ... beyond any doubt."⁴⁹

The truth of compatibilism would allow a relatively easy defense of this aspect of the *status gloriae*. For if compatibilism were true, then an agent's being free is consistent with that agent's being determined by God to will as she does in fact will. And if God can determine how agents use their free will, then, by determining them never to sin, He can ensure that the redeemed in heaven do not sin without taking away their free will. If we adopt, for example, Baker's particular compatibilist account of free will outlined above, if a person wills never to sin; she wants to will never to sin; she wills never to sin because she wants to will never to sin; and she would still have willed never to sin even if she had known the provenance of her wanting to never sin (i.e., God's determining that she never sin), then that person could have free will as understood by the compatibilist.⁵⁰

We turn then to libertarian understandings of the *status gloriae*. Here it might seem that the libertarian will have a difficult time accounting for the inability of the redeemed to sin. For how can an agent be free in the way understood by the libertarian and yet be incapable of sinning? If the redeemed are kept from sinning, how they freely use their wills must be reined in in some way. But if the exercise of their free will is reined in, it looks like the central commitment of incompatibilist understandings of freedom is violated.

One might think that the way for the libertarian to respond is to give up one of these claims by which we are understanding the *status gloriae*. Some scholars reject that the

⁴⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Ethereal Library, 2010), XXII.30. Retrieved www.ccel.org/schaff/npnf102.html. For other affirmations of heavenly freedom see Anselm, *On Free Will and De Concordia*, section I, chapter 6. Both of these latter works can be found in Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury: the Major Works*, eds Brian Davies and Gill Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ Simon Francis Gaine, *Will there be Free Will in Heaven? Freedom, Impeccability, and Beatitude* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 11. Gaine's book is a wonderful historical discussion of this issue. See also Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Jerry Walls too writes that "there is ... broad agreement among all Christian traditions that heaven is a place of perfect holiness and nothing sinful or impure can enter here" (Jerry Walls, *Purgatory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37).

⁵⁰ Baker (2003), 467.

redeemed are free, while other reject that they will be unable to sin.⁵¹ In our view, to go either of these routes would be to reject one of the two modal claims that have historically been at the heart of the *status gloriae*. It would be better to not reject either of these claims if it's not necessary. And, on our view, the libertarian need not reject either. There are a number of ways that the libertarian could develop her view here, again depending on the details of the view of agency the libertarian adopts. Elsewhere, one of us has argued (with a different co-author) that an agent's moral character puts constraints on those actions that she is capable of choosing.⁵² So long as the agent's moral character is freely formed and thus an internal, rather than an external, constraint, it need not count against her being free. Or one might argue that a person is capable of freely choosing X only if she sees a reason for choosing X, and hold that the redeemed see no reason for doing any sinful action.⁵³ The redeemed in heaven may be such that their moral character prohibits them from choosing any sinful action insofar as they see no good reason for doing so. Both of these approaches can be seen in the following example:

*A person has the ability to form a moral character which later precludes that person from willing certain things. For instance, neither author of this paper can will to torture an innocent child for a nickel. Our characters are such that we cannot will that; we simply cannot see a good reason for engaging in such behavior. But it doesn't follow that we aren't free, particularly given that our evaluative conclusions are not necessitated products of causally external forces. We are free in that we can choose to perform morally good actions, but our freely formed characters preclude us from doing morally bad actions insofar as those characters lead us to evaluate reasons for acting, or not acting, in certain ways. ... One might wonder how it is that one's character could preclude certain actions. We think that one's character directs decisions by both influencing what one sees as reasons for actions and influencing how one weighs reasons for and against those actions. To put this point a slightly different way, in making free decisions, one's character not only affects the weights; it also affects the scales. Both of these aspects can be seen as follows. First, as stated above, given our present moral characters we can see no good reason to torture a child for a nickel (i.e., the nickel is not a good reason). Furthermore, we weigh the good of having a nickel against the goods of the child's bodily and psychological integrity and find that the child's welfare wins. Our characters are involved insofar as if we were more avaricious, we may find monetary gain, even small monetary gain, a good reason to inflict bodily harm on another. Similarly, if we were less empathetic, we may weigh the good of monetary gain more heavily than we do against the good of an innocent child's welfare.*⁵⁴

The libertarian can argue that the redeemed have perfected their character so that they perfectly understand the reasons for acting (and not acting) in various ways, weigh these reasons perfectly, and never act contrary to this proper weighing. For such a person

⁵¹ Stewart Goetz appears to deny the first claim in his (2009), 196 note 40; and John Donnelly clearly rejects the latter claim in John Donnelly, "Eschatological enquiry," *Sophia* 24 (1985), 16–31 and John Donnelly, "Heavenly eviction," *Philosophy Now* 56 (2006), 27–8.

⁵² See Timothy Pawl and Kevin Timpe, "Incompatibilism, Sin, and Free Will in Heaven," *Faith and Philosophy* 26.4 (2009), 396–417; and Timothy Pawl and Kevin Timpe, "Heavenly Freedom: A Reply to Cowan," *Faith and Philosophy* 30.2 (2013), 188–97.

⁵³ See Timpe (2013), particularly Chapters 2 and 6.

⁵⁴ Pawl and Timpe (2009), 407.

every sinful choice is in conflict with her character. Given the character that the agent has developed prior to entering the *status gloriae*, every sinful action is for her what Ludwig Ott calls a "moral impossibility."⁵⁵ Such people would be what Susan Wolf refers to in a different context as "moral saints."⁵⁶

While the *status gloriae* is the most difficult of the states dealt with here to explain for the libertarian, as we've shown above the libertarian is able to maintain that the redeemed are both free and not able to sin. The desire to preserve tradition regarding the impossibility of sinning in the *status gloriae* need not lead the Christian theist to endorse compatibilism for the sake of eschatological anthropology. While there may well be reasons to prefer a compatibilist account of freedom to an incompatibilist one, both views are able to explain the various states that we've examined above.

Conclusion

Above, we have outlined three stages of theological anthropology with an eye toward what kinds of actions a human agent *is* and *is not* capable of freely choosing at each of those stages. We've also outlined how both compatibilists and libertarians could give an account of the abilities involved at each stage. We have not here argued that one of these approaches to human freedom is superior to the other. That judgment depends not just on issues in theological anthropology, but theology and philosophy more broadly.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ott (1955), 169. For a further treatment of this issue, see Timpe (2013), particularly Chapters 5 and 6.

⁵⁶ Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints," *The Journal of Philosophy* 79 (1982), 419. In particular, we have in mind here what Wolf refers to as Loving Saints.

⁵⁷ This chapter borrows from Timpe (2007) and (2013). We would like to thank Joshua Farris, Charles Taliaferro, Paul Manata, and a number of anonymous referees for helpful comments on earlier versions of the chapter.

Human Beings, Compatibilist Freedom, and Salvation

Paul Helm

Compatibilism

I shall take it that compatibilism is the view that all human actions for which an agent is responsible are consistent with causal determinism, the belief that an account of all the facts at a time, together with a full account of the laws of nature, entails all that is true at that time.¹ This statement is wide enough to leave us with a variety of possible compatibilistic theories. Suppose that one takes a materialistic view of the human person. Then the beliefs or desires of a person will be understood in exhaustively physical, or materialist, or even mechanical terms. If on the other hand one thinks that a human person is a mental-physical duality, then the beliefs and desires will be no more than partly physical, partly or wholly mental. Then the question is how one understands the relation of "being a cause" for the action. Is a sufficient reason a cause? And what is it to be a cause?

Libertarians or indeterminists deny this thesis, requiring for responsibility that human actions be not determined. It may be that they hold that human beings have the power of alternative choice, or that the self is an autonomous agent of choice. On compatibilism human responsibility is grounded in freedom from coercion, and this in turn may be understood as the exercise of a certain kind of control that the agent has over his actions.² I shall assume a version of compatibilism understood in such ways.

In focusing on the relations between compatibilism and theology, it must be remembered that compatibilism is a term employed much later than is the formative Christian theology. Using it generally in theology therefore risks the charge of anachronism. We must be sensitive to this, and not unwittingly impute to classical doctrinal formulations a modern outlook. We must also remember that although our focus is on a philosophical issue, the religious outlooks that a person's theology may represent do not typically arise from the impact of such ideas alone. At least, it is likely that there are few, if any, whose religion arises from compatibilism alone, or from compatibilism in concert with other philosophical doctrines alone. It is much more usual that philosophical concepts enter when people attempt to understand, or understand further the religious and theological ideas they hold.

By understanding here is meant coming to appreciate the logical consistency of one theological position with others that they hold, and the nature of their connectedness, and

¹ I have adapted this from John Martin Fischer (ed.), "Introduction" to *Moral Responsibility* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 33.

² John Martin and Mark Ravizza, SJ, *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

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