Compatibilist Freedom in the Garden: A Defense for the Possibility of Adam's Fall

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The compatibilist view of human freedom and divine sovereignty claims that a person is only free when permitted to act according to his or her strongest desire at any moment. Furthermore, it insists that everything is ordained or determined by God, and that he is not morally responsible for any evil committed. Given these requirements that the compatibilist view demands, how could Adam, who was presumably created in the image of God and possessed fully good desires, have sinned, and sinned in a manner excusing God of reprehensibility? This problem of original sin is perhaps the greatest stress point of the compatibilist view. Can a defense be made that is both logical and consistent with the Bible? In this article, I will provide a defense for the possibility of Adam's fall under a compatibilist view of freedom, arguing that Adam was able to be influenced to sin due to a lesser understanding of God's glory, was necessarily mutable, and outwardly introduced to the idea of sin by Satan's temptation which provided sufficient intramundane cause for the development of a false imagination leading to sinful action. To accomplish this, I will first give two helpful compatibilist views on the problem of the first human sin given by Francis Turretin and James Anderson. Then I will provide a defense of my own view with a

summary of the greater-glory theodicy proposed by Scott Christensen and a response to two possible objections to my view.

Francis Turretin: Primary and Secondary Causation

In his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* on his discussion of the first sin, Francis Turretin ponders how it is that a perfect creature could sin. Adam fell despite his existence as an "innocent man" in which there could be found no "error ... in his mind" or "disorder in his will." How could such a man "in whom was original righteousness" have sinned? To answer this question, Turretin first denies the view that Adam was created with "a headlong inclination to vice." Adam and Eve could not have been created as individuals with an inherent inclination to rebel. This would make God the immediate creator of all moral evil, since the possession of such a flaw would indicate that God created a flawed thing. Furthermore, as Turretin points out, "all things were very good in man before the fall, since he was made in the image of God." To say that mankind was created in the image of God and yet possessed an inherent disposition towards choosing evil violates the character of God and the nature of the law, since "it is repugnant to the law." Turretin then points to the first man's existence as both holy and just, yet mutable. Adam could choose either to stand righteous before God or choose evil. Here Turretin finds the "proximate and proper cause of sin … nowhere else than in the free will of man" as influenced by the temptation of Satan and decreed to occur from before creation by God in a way that excuses God from guilt.[1]

How does Turretin understand mankind's free will considering God's sovereignty? Turretin's understanding of God's decree(s) must be understood in order to better understand his view of free will and Adam's fall. Earlier in the *Institutes,* Turretin argues against the concept of middle knowledge and the condition of God's election on the absolute free will of man to choose. Against "the design of the Socinians and their followers on this subject ... to confirm the figment of middle knowledge (*scientia media*), to establish election from foreseen faith and to extol the strength of the human will," Turretin argues that "there are no conditional decrees" of God since "every decree of God is eternal; therefore it cannot depend upon a condition which takes place only in time." God's decrees are dependent only upon his will and good pleasure. Turretin goes further than this and argues that any decree

conditional upon a created being is "highly derogatory to God" and "cannot and ought not to be ascribed to him," since such an understanding of God's decree would indicate that God is reliant upon his own creation. Turretin distinguishes between the decree of God that everyone who will be saved will be saved "through legitimate means" against the view that the decree is a conditional event. He argues that "although faith and perseverance are related as the condition prerequisite to the decreed salvation (so that without them it ought not to be expected), yet they hold not the relation of powerful conditions to God's eternal decree of bestowing salvation." To Turretin, faith and perseverance in the Christian are evidence of God's decree of election as opposed to conditions (foreseen by God before creation) for salvation. Thus, following Turretin's arguments, man is not free in the libertarian sense (always able to choose one or the other option and unbound to either),[2] rather, he is bound to make one choice and one choice alone according to the divine decree.[3]

Given this understanding of God's decree, how can man — and especially Adam, who was created without flaw — be held responsible for sin? Turretin distinguishes between primary and secondary causes ordained to happen by the decree. God decreed from before creation that primary causes would be separate from secondary ones. As Turretin explains,

> … the same decree which predetermined also determined the mode of futurition, so that the things having necessary causes should happen necessarily and those having contingent causes, contingently. Therefore the effect may properly be called both necessary and contingent at the same time, but in different respects: the former on the part of God and relative to the decree; the latter on the part of the thing and relative to second and proximate causes which might be disposed differently.[4]

Thus, all sin, while decreed to occur, is decreed to occur through only secondary causes. Turretin maintains that "the decree which is the cause of the futurition of sin is nevertheless neither its physical cause ... nor its ethical cause ... So although sin necessarily follows the decree, it cannot be said to flow from the decree." When creatures make choices and act upon them, they are free to act on whatever desire they may possess and are not compelled to act contrary to their desire. In this way they have free will;

but they cannot be said to be innocent of their actions if they sin, since they possess awareness of good and evil and willfully choose evil. With this (very) brief analysis of Turretin's view of man's free will and God's decree, I can now return to his exploration of the first sin.[5]

Turretin views Adam's sin (and all future sins) both necessary and free: "the former with respect to the decree ... the latter with respect to his will and as to the mode."[6] The actual process of Adam's sin is, however, slightly different than every other human sin afterward, since Adam was not yet bound by the curse and was created fully good with no inclination towards evil. Consequently, he had to corrupt himself as opposed to pre-possessing any corruption. The ability to sin required an outward (and false) idea proposed by an instrument that had already succumbed to such an idea, hence the role of Satan. Turretin views the process by which Adam was capable of sinning as such: first, due to Satan's speech, Adam was "imbued with a false idea … [then] corrupted himself and … received the error suggested by Satan." Because Adam was mutable — as a mortal creature, capable of change — it should not "seem strange that man … changed and fell." God gave Adam the ability to sin and decreed from before time (unknown to Adam) that Adam would do so, but did not compel him to do so. Adam was first created with the desire to obey and please God but was not given efficacious grace (grace given through the Holy Spirit that would ensure proper desire), and so his desire was capable of being changed through the imbibing of a falsehood.[7] Furthermore, Turretin points out that such efficacious grace was not demanded of God. Combined with his (correct) view of God's absolute freedom and independence, it should be asserted that no grace could be demanded of God, otherwise it could not be considered grace and would place God in a position in which he could be considered accountable to the demands of his creatures.[8]

Turretin's position as to the cause(s) of Adam's fall and the manner of its possibility can, perhaps, be summarized in the following way. God decreed that Adam would fall through the secondary causes of Satan's temptation leading to Adam's subsequent change of desire through the imbibement of Satan's false reasoning. Because Adam was both mutable as a creature and not bestowed efficacious grace, his desire could change to choose evil. So, Adam's desire changed, and that desire was acted upon by his own ability

to choose. Through all this, God is not directly responsible for sin, although he decreed that such a sin would occur through the free choice of Adam.

James Anderson: The Authorial Model of Providence

James Anderson, in his essay "Calvinism and the First Sin," argues for what he calls the Authorial Model of Providence against the Domino Model of Providence. The Domino Model asserts that only one form of causation exists in the universe, such that God directly causes E1, which directly causes E2, E3, etc. "In the Domino Model," Anderson explains, "the lines of causation are entirely 'horizontal.' They all operate on the same ontological plane. On this view, God and the universe amount to an arrangement of univocal causal chains." Thus, God's causation is no different than his creatures' causation. This model of providence, Anderson asserts, "Calvinists ... ought to firmly repudiate." The Authorial Model of Providence, as Anderson argues, defines two different forms of causation: α-causation (divine causation) and β-causation (intramundane causation). α-Causation is a fundamentally superior form of causation which decrees all things, including β-causation, to occur, but is not morally responsible for any β-causation which occurs.[9] Anderson describes the view in this way:

> For every creature C: (1) God α-causes C to exist in the first place; (2) God α-causes C to *continue* to exist (i.e., α-causally sustains C's existence); and (3) God α-causes C to have the β-causal powers that it has. Furthermore, as I think Calvinists should also affirm: (4) God α-causes C to exercise its β-causal powers in precisely the way that it does. Given that α-causation and β-causation operate on different levels, we should avoid saying "God caused C to cause E," which suggests a univocal, horizontal causal chain.[10]

"On this way of thinking," Anderson says, "God's acts of creation and providence are analogized to the human authoring of a novel."[11] With this view of providence in mind, Anderson is capable of defending a form of compatibilism that excuses God from bearing any guilt for evil committed by his creatures. As Anderson points out, in this compatibilist model, S creatures choose evil at some time *t* when the S creature's internal state at *t* is combined with external circumstances (β-causes) at *t*. Yet this

view poses the question: if all evil action is caused by a combination of both internal and external β-causes, and β-causes cause creatures to sin (a β-cause for post-Adamic humanity would be the fallen nature), then how could Adam, whose "internal state prior to the first sin was wholly good," have sinned? There is seemingly no sufficient internal β-cause and "while the external circumstances included a diabolical tempting agent, that outside influence cannot be considered a *sufficient* explanation for Adam's sin."[12] Anderson swivels around this apparent flaw in the Authorial Model by pointing out that "Calvinists *can* affirm that there is a sufficient *ultimate* explanation for Adam's sin: God decreed it. Indeed, there is a sufficient *causal* explanation: God α-caused Adam's sinning."[13] In this way, Anderson is able to say that God's decree that Adam would sin is a form of decree which both guarantees that Adam will sin and that God is not responsible for that sin, since God's α-causation is of an entirely different form of causation than that of creaturely β-causation.

Anderson, continuing, points out that "no doubt some will view this response as a dodge," then admits that "at this point I must confess that further answers are not readily forthcoming." He then proposes what he considers to be a possible way forward: "the phenomenon of *akrasia:* weakness of will." According to Anderson, it is entirely possible that Adam possessed a weak will and acted in contradiction to what he knew to be correct. Admittedly, Anderson's explanation of this process is not particularly clear and even he admits that "in this case, this proposal is no more problematic than the standard Christian claim that Adam was created sinless but not impeccable, uncorrupted but not incorruptible."[14]

My View

In order to begin a defense for my view of how Adam could sin and why God is not morally responsible, I must first begin by summarizing a theodicy for the overall problem of evil; specifically what Scott Christensen calls the greater-glory theodicy for the problem of evil, which he accompanies with a narrative defense. I agree with Christensen's theodicy and his narrative defense. This combination of defense and theodicy will help give the second part of my view greater clarity. Then I will explain my own view in full by using Christensen's theodicy alongside Anderson's Authorial Model of

Providence and applying them to Adam while slightly adjusting the model with my own understanding of how Adam could have generated his own β-cause. To summarize, my view is that Adam was (1) able to sin because he was a mutable creature with a lesser understanding of God's glory and (2) outwardly (through secondary, or β-causes) provided enough cause to inwardly β-cause his own sin.

In *What About Evil?* Christensen presents a comprehensive greater-glory theodicy of the Bible. Before he begins his theodicy, however, he wisely points out that "Scripture contains little in the way of explicit propositions that might form a basis for constructing a theodicy." Anderson goes on to explain that this is likely because "the power of a biblical theodicy is better conveyed in the deeply affective nature of the metanarrative of Scripture ... the *monomyth.*"[15] The monomyth is the paradigm of all other stories. All good stories contain fragments — usually broken, often misguided fragments, but fragments nonetheless — of the biblical narrative. He then goes on to briefly frame the storyline of the Bible using Freytag's pyramid, placing the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection at the climax of the story.

Christensen locates the return of Christ and the arrival of the new heavens and new earth at the *denouement* of the storyline. Here it is shown that not only will the finale be as good as the perfect beginning, but it will be better. The reason for this, Christensen claims, is that only after comprehending the whole story and the horror which Christ suffered on our behalf will we be able to truly appreciate God's glory and our identity in him. As Christensen says,

> "When we, the redeemed of God, circumspectly reflect on the depths to which the conflict has dragged us fallen creatures, then the glory of our redemption begins to emerge … When we realize that the divine hero was dragged even deeper through the conflict we created, and then rose up victorious — this is where glory is supremely magnified."[16]

Christensen here appears to imply that one of the results of the glorified state given to all Christians at the return of Christ will be a deeply powerful emotional and perfectly accurate (though not all-encompassing) intellectual understanding of Christ's deeds as the great hero of history — an act which was only possible due to the presence of sin. It is true that stories have a

strong capability to move passions and change our thoughts. How much more would the ultimate story be capable of moving us? But as Christensen points out, "it is not enough for the mere *showing* of the story. There must be a fuller *telling* of its meaning to clarify its remarkable power."[17] Christensen's narrative argument flows into the greater-glory theodicy.

Christensen lays the greater-glory theodicy argument out like this:

1. God's ultimate purpose in freely creating the world is to supremely magnify the riches of his glory to all his creatures, especially human beings, who alone bear his image.
2. God's glory is supremely magnified in the atoning work of Christ, which is the sole means of accomplishing redemption for human beings.
3. Redemption is unnecessary unless human beings have fallen into sin.
4. Therefore, the fall of humanity is necessary to God's ultimate purpose in creating the world.[18]

Christensen portrays both the traditional monomyth U-shaped storyline and his own view of the J-shaped Biblical/historical storyline. Whereas in traditional monomyths, the story ends either slightly better, slightly worse, or on par with the goodness of the beginning, the J-shaped picture of the Biblical storyline ends infinitely better. This infinitely better ending is only made possible through the horrible struggle of sin and the incarnation of Christ. This is because, for God to maximize the glory attributed to himself, he necessarily foreordained the fall of humanity and death and resurrection of Christ.

But why were the death and resurrection of Christ so necessary? Christensen argues that such an act was the only act capable of perfectly displaying the mercy of God, which is made visible by both eternal redemption and eternal punishment. "Thus, the maximization of divine glory," Christensen says, "is connected to two important realities. First, maximal love to God's creatures is uniquely displayed in his mercy ... Second, this mercy is further maximalized when contrasted with those who get ... divine wrath." Since such amazing mercy is only possible when shown to completely undeserving creatures mired in sin, horrible sin must be allowed to exist. Since God is fully good and just, then he would not have created a world with more sin than is needed to properly express his

mercy in a way that would fully ensure that redeemed humanity would no longer be capable of sinning while present in good, glorified bodies. In addition, the presence of hell as just punishment for sin would act as equally important evidence for the glory of God and the magnificence of his grace. Christensen continues, "Part of this maximal love is experienced when sinners who have been pardoned by God's mercy contemplate the torments of the damned ... The Judge allowed his Son to absorb those fires ... in their stead, and this produces a far-reaching awe." Hell both reveals the punishment from which God redeemed the elect while also impressing upon them the realities of the agony that Christ endured.[19]

Christensen's theodicy contains particular importance for an explanation, in part, of my own argument for why Adam and Eve were capable of sinning. In the garden of Eden, neither Adam nor Eve had experienced the true glory of God because they had what I consider to be a *lesser understanding* of God's mercy — and thus a lesser understanding of his glory — compared to those who will be unable to sin upon the return of Christ. Unlike humanity after the fall, Adam possessed no record of God's redemptive acts. He undoubtedly knew that God was good since he himself was created good and in God's image, thus he was not pre-possessing of any flaw (as Turretin correctly argued); yet he had not experienced the full grace of God as made evident through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and thus did not possess a perfect ability to resist temptation. Given no outer source of temptation, Adam would have continued to act in accordance with his perfectly good desires; but when provided sufficient temptation through an outward source, Adam's understanding of God's character would not be (and was not) comprehensive enough to perfectly prevent a sinful rebellion.

From the beginning, Adam had been told that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would die. It is not clear that Adam could have understood what death really meant, having never experienced it himself. A creature with no experience of the curse could not appreciate its horrors. He clearly passed this knowledge on to his wife, Eve, as is evidenced when, in Genesis 3:3, she recalls her own slightly altered version of God's command: "'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"[20] Genesis 3:5 is the crux of Satan's lie in the Fall narrative: Satan promises Adam and Eve that they will be like God, and verse 7 tells us that the tree was *good,* a *delight* to the eyes,

and to be *desired* by Eve. Here are three descriptions which are meant to be attributed to God. To one who had truly seen God in his full glory, who has received miraculous grace and been given a mind to comprehend the wonders of redemptive history, the tree would likely pale in comparison to God's own goodness and delightfulness. To an Adam and Eve who had been witnesses to God's marvelous splendor as made manifest through the greatest story of all, desire could only ever be to serve in blissful obedience. To do otherwise would be utterly unthinkable. Yet Adam and Eve had not taken part in the grand narrative.

Turretin calls the special, empowering grace of God "efficacious grace." He defines efficacious grace in this way: "grace (taken effectively) indicates all the gifts (*charismata*) of the Holy Spirit gratuitously given to us by God: whether ordinary ... for each one's salvation bestowed upon us in calling, conversion, and sanctification; or extraordinary or miraculous."[21] This form of grace is provided directly through the Holy Spirit's action, who only came to dwell in man permanently *after the resurrection.* Efficacious grace, as Turretin defines it, could be said to only be rightly given by God after the great sacrifice of his son and the revealing of his greater glory through the death and resurrection, which required the arrival of the fullness of time (Gal 4:4, Eph 1:10). Complete perfection, so that a person cannot sin, is not achieved until the human person sees Christ in the flesh, is given new eyes with which to see and a new heart and body with which to understand the fullness of God's glory. This, I imagine, will undoubtedly be a result of finally understanding the fullness of God's grace by reflecting on our own lives and the reality of Christ's sacrifice — an ability given through the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, not only was Adam capable of sinning due to a lack of understanding the greater glory of God, but he was capable of sinning due to his inherent nature as a creature capable of change. Adam was mutable, not a rigid, unmoving thing. Moreover, he was created in the image of God. While there are infinite differences between the creator and the creature, to possess desire is something which is in God himself. God desires his own glory: this can also be called his will, since he wills that he shall receive glory. "God wills all created things not to make himself perfect," Turretin declares, "but to communicate himself and to manifest his goodness and glory in them."[22] A God without desire could not do anything but exist

without aim. A God without desire could not even recognize his own glory. Such a God would no longer be the God of the Bible. A human life without desire would be incapable of enjoying the life given to him. A life without desire would be incapable of bringing glory to God through loving devotion. No real praise could erupt from a desireless creature. Yet unlike God, Adam's desires could change due to his nature. God cannot change (since he has no need to); his creatures can (and should). Adam, though good, had the ability to change. However, his being mutable should not be considered a cause of his sin, but merely a good aspect of his nature. It is a blessing that God bestowed his creation. Why is this so? The ability to change is a conduit through which a finite creature can experience the infinite God, for through it he may experience in a limited amount at different times and in different ways different infinite aspects of the eternal God. Just as a stiff, dead tree would be toppled by a large gust of wind, so would a creature incapable of changing passions be destroyed by experiencing God.

Two premises have now been argued: first, that Adam had a weak understanding of God's glory due to a lack of knowledge and personal experience of his efficacious grace, and second, that Adam was a creature necessarily capable of change. Now I will discuss the process and manner in which it was possible for Adam to have sinned in a way that excuses God of moral responsibility for Adam's evil act. Here, James Anderson's Authorial model of Providence will provide a useful way of conceiving divine causation as contrasted with intramundane causation. As I will argue, Anderson's argument that Adam was his own intramundane cause can be further elaborated upon, though I do not believe *akrasia* is an adequate theory, neither do I believe that the claim that Adam was not impeccable and was corruptible in his pre-fall state is problematic.[23] However, the Authorial model provides a useful theory for the two different levels of causation. Anderson simply assumes that Satan's temptation in which Adam found himself did not provide enough intramundane cause, but he does not consider that Satan himself is enough of an intramundane cause to influence Adam's internal intramundane cause, which itself (as in all humans) becomes a self-generating cause for sin. Regardless, Adam's fall was still ultimately divinely caused.

Intramundane causation is the process by which all created things affect other created things. All intramundane (β) causes remain on the same

ontological level and can be said to directly impact one another. A moral creature in the world is responsible for their actions, and they are also impacted by other actions and situations. God, however, is not bound on the same ontological plane as his creation. Divine (α) causation is altogether above everything. The "authorial" aspect of Anderson's model is a particularly helpful analogy. Much like a human author cannot be said to be guilty of the crimes that his fictional characters commit, despite the author having dictated that it would be so and writing in every necessary detail, so God cannot be held guilty for his divine causation of evil. God's divine causation is also unbound by time and thus not the same as intramundane causation, which moves moment by moment. Intramundane causes follow the domino effect, in that one cause impacts another, which continues to impact others. In contrast, divine causation is fully present at every moment and causes every single domino to fall without being the β-cause. The α-cause did not hit the other dominoes and watch them fall. It set every domino up, decided that they would fall and at what times, and α-caused each one to fall just as the dominoes hit each other as they β-caused each other to fall. Given this model, God is never morally reprehensible for sin while also divinely causing sinful actions.

The Authorial model of Providence is useful; however, how can it explain the first sin? If human evil is a result of a combination of internal and external intramundane causes, how could a perfect creature with no sinful disposition have fallen? Adam, if he was created good in the image of God, could not have contained a disposition to create sinful intramundane causes. It seems a perfect disposition would result in only good causes. Before I continue, I will admit that any attempt to further explain the process through which the first human sin came about is mostly theory. As any wise theologian will admit, the true origin of sin is a mystery. A quick gaze at the vast sum of ever-changing scholarship on the complexities of the human mind, the mystery of death, eternal life, and the human soul, should be evidence enough that we are far from close to determining the mystery of sin. Anything other than speculation is beyond human knowledge. As Herman Bavinck points out, "we must be satisfied with the straightforward account of Scripture ... Sin was brought into being by the will of the creature ... It is unlawfully there but its existence is no accident."[24] Anthony Hoekema concurs when he writes, "The fact that we can discern ... stages in the temptation and fall of our first parents

... does not mean that we have in the Genesis narrative an explanation for the entrance of sin into the human world."[25] With this said, I will continue to (humbly) present a possible theory of the process of the first sin.

As Anderson has argued, the lies of Satan cannot be the sole cause of Adam's fall. If it were, then Adam could not have been considered morally reprehensible. Interior motives from a moral creature must also account for sin. How could Adam, who possessed only good motives, have sinned? Under the Authorial model, Adam must have become his own β-cause. Satan's deceptive words promised a theoretical scenario in which Adam and Eve would be like God. Adam, knowing God to be a beautiful and powerful being, must have used, perhaps for the first time, what all humans possess to some degree: an imagination. This imagination, introduced to a new idea (the possibility of Godhood and rebellion), unchecked by a greater understanding of God's glory, and capable of changing, must have fueled a new desire: a desire to usurp God. Bavinck explains it straightforwardly: "The mind entertains the idea of sin, the imagination beautifies and converts it into a fascinating ideal, desire reaches out to it, and the will goes ahead and does it."[26] It is possible that, before the curse of death, Adam's perfect mind could present far grander, far more illustrious imaginations than any human afterward. So, though Satan's lie was not enough of a β-cause to explain the first human sin, it was certainly enough to compel Adam's powerful, perfect imagination which, upon creating itself an imaginative concept, was enough to redirect Adam's desire for good to a desire to please himself rather than God. Most importantly, God α-caused Adam's sin. The sin was willfully β-caused by Adam while being willed to exist by God.

Two Possible Objections

There are two possible objections to my proposal.

First, the authorial model of providence seems to regress infinitely backward. The argument may work to explain the first human sin, but it cannot pertain to the first actual sin, namely Satan's. If a creature requires both external and internal circumstances in which to sin, and if Satan was created good in a perfectly good creation absent of any sinful thing, then how could he have fallen? Surely his fall required at least a sufficient

outward prompt, just like Adam's fall. The problem seems to infinitely regress unless you consider God to have directly caused Satan's fall, in which case we must say he is morally repugnant, and Satan is innocent.

Second, the divine author analogy breaks down because, unlike human authors, God's authorship creates actual living beings. God is also intimately involved and fully present within the story, so much so that he physically entered it through the incarnation. Unlike a human author, God's creation is capable of genuinely acknowledging him, morally choosing, and feeling real pain. God's creation is *real;* thus, he is both morally obligated to ensure they do not suffer and morally reprehensible for allowing them to sin; much like a pet-owner is morally responsible for allowing an unchained, violent beast to maul an infant knowing that given the option, the dog would do so.

Responses to These Two Objections

As to the first objection, all Christians must admit that the manner of Satan's fall is truly a mystery. The Bible does not present a comprehensive explanation and most references to the nature of Satan's fall are vague.[27] While the Bible considers angelic beings to be morally responsible, we are not given details regarding the exact nature or manner of their fall, though pride seems to be the sin. While sin emerged from pride in Adam as well, Bavinck wisely advises that "We must not, however, think of angelic and human sin and fall in parallel terms."[28] Angelic beings are entirely different creatures and, unlike humanity, were not created in the image of God. Whereas Adam was led astray (i.e., provided an external β-cause), Satan's sin seems to have emerged entirely from within himself. Bavinck points out that Satan's tempting words were aimed at the fleshly aspects of human embodiment; "the lust of the eyes, the craving of the flesh, and the pride of life."[29] However, like humanity, Satan is still a creature; thus, he is ontologically beneath God. This is why we can say that God is not morally responsible for Satan's sin: God α-caused Satan's fall, and God's α-causes are always good and always end in his greater glory. Furthermore, Satan's acts as a creature do not contradict the compatibilist notion of freedom, since he seems to act only according to his greatest desires, all of which are evil. Whatever the exact nature of spiritual beings, it seems that Satan does not desire reconciliation with God or repentance. Finally, Satan fits into the

greater-glory theodicy as the ultimate enemy in the grand narrative. Evil must have a first cause, and Satan willfully accepts that role. Much more can be said on this point. However, the aim of this paper was to defend the possibility of Adam's sinning, not Satan's.

As to the second objection, I have two responses. First, the objection assumes that God does not have a greater good for allowing his creation to suffer and/or commit evil. As I have already argued, I believe God does have a greater good, namely, the display of his glory. Second, the objection makes the mistake that God and his creatures exist on a similar ontological plane. In the case of the zookeeper analogy, both the zookeeper and the animal are kinds of creatures. They exist on the same ontological level and so the zookeeper is held to certain expectations and demands within his ontological reality (i.e. he is morally responsible for any acts taken against another creature within his ontological realm). While the author analogy is not perfect (no analogy is), one of its primary purposes is to express just how vastly different God is from his creatures. He does not exist on the same ontological level as that which he creates. Furthermore, unlike the zookeeper, God is his own authority. He is beholden to no one else but himself. If God were morally responsible for his creation, then he would cease to be the God of the Bible. The incarnation is such an unfathomably remarkable event in time because God was not *obligated* to save us. If he were, then Jesus's life, death, and resurrection would have been entirely expected and quite unremarkable.

Conclusion

The exact origin of sin and how it could have arisen within a morally good creature such as Adam is a mystery. However, the greater-glory theodicy provides a compelling defense for a compatibilist view of Adam's fall. Adam's capability to sin despite his existence as a good creature is not entirely inexplicable if one considers his creaturely aspects, namely, his mutability and imagination. Furthermore, the Authorial Model of Providence provides an adequate logical defense for God's divine causation of Adam's sin.

1 Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* vol. 1, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1997), 606–7.

2 I recognize that the use of "libertarian" to describe free will as opposed in Turretin's writing is anachronistic, since the word was only used after Turretin's time; however, the concept of what would later be called libertarian free will is present in Turretin's arguments. See Drew Sparks, "Dependent Freedom, Scripture, and Francis Turretin: An Argument for a Compatibilist Reading," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 26, no. 3 (2022).

3 Turretin, *Institutes,* 316–17.

4 Turretin, *Institutes,* 321.

5 Turretin, *Institutes,* 321.

6 Turretin, *Institutes,* 321.

7 Turretin, *Institutes,* 242.

8 Turretin, *Institutes,* 607–8.

9 James N. Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," in *Calvinism and the Problem of Evil,* eds. David E. Alexander and Daniel M. Johnson, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 209.

10 Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 208.

11 Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 208.

12 Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 203.

13 Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 216.

14 Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 216–18.

15 Scott Christensen, *What about Evil? A Defense of God's Sovereign Glory* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2020), 253.

16 Christensen, *What about Evil?* 277.

17 Christensen, *What about Evil?* 278

18 Christensen, *What about Evil?* 282.

19 Christensen, *What about Evil?* 338.

20 John Calvin believes that Eve was not accusing God of harshness in the command but was instead expressing "her pious disposition by anxiously observing the precept of God." John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis.* vol. 1. (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 97.

21 Turretin, *Institutes,* 243.

22 Turretin, *Institutes,* 219.

23 As I have already argued, the possibility of change is itself a necessary and good thing for a finite creature. This in combination with a lesser understanding of God's mercy and thus his glory could have rendered an Adam who, though he knew God was good, could in theory be subject to confusion and wrong desire. Anderson, "Calvinism and the First Sin," 218.

24 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 352.

25 Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 130.

26 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 350.

27 "The rest of Scripture is relatively silent about the fall into sin; the principal verses (Job 31:33; Ps. 90:3; Prov. 3:18; 13:12; Eccles. 12:7; Isa. 43:27; 51:3; 65:25; Joel 2:3; Hosea 6:7; Ezek. 28:13–15; John 8:44; Rom. 5:12ff.; 8:20; 1 Cor. 15:21– 22, 42– 49; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14; Rev. 2:7; 22:2) are open to different interpretations and often contain little more than allusions." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 341.

28 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 350.

29 Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 350.